
SUNSHINE COAST
Environment Council
www.scec.org.au



ANNUAL REPORT

2021 / 2022

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SUNSHINE COAST ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

*SCEC is the peak environmental advocacy organisation on the Sunshine Coast.
Established in 1980, SCEC represents 53 community groups working in the areas of natural resource management, conservation, environmental restoration and protection and sustainability.*

Acknowledgement of Country

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC) acknowledges that we live, work, learn and create on the land of the Kabi Kabi and Jinibara people and would like to recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Australia's First Nations People. We recognise that these have always been places of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance. The Traditional Custodians' unique values, and ancient and enduring cultures, deepen and enrich the life of our community and environment. We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the important role First Nations people continue to play within the Sunshine Coast community. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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Our Vision

An ecologically sustainable world achieved through individual and community stewardship of the natural environment at local, regional and global levels.

Our Mission

Through leadership, education and environmental activism, to encourage Sunshine Coast individuals and communities to support and participate in working towards the goal of environmental sustainability.



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Derek Foster

Introduction

This year has been a year of consolidation and a year that has seen some challenges for our organisation. The year has seen the consolidation of the 2021 – 2022 Strategic Directions review and recommendations, and it has been challenging because the emergence of the omicron variant of Covid-19. The fact that, whilst being portrayed by some sectors of Government and business as everything is getting back to normal, the global pandemic is actually manifesting as a much larger threat to life, economy and hospital systems than the original Covid-19 of 2020. This has impacted on our normal outreach and membership support activities by reducing face to face gatherings to zoom meetings and digital communication. Nonetheless, I feel we have done a good job in maintaining our services.

I would like to start this short report by alerting the reader to the fact that the actual reporting period finished at the end of March 2022. Whilst the reports from the other contributors will probably restrict themselves to that reporting period, this report will go outside that finish date and reflect on activities up until the time of this meeting in August 2022.

I would like to start the report by revisiting the foundations of the Strategic Directions document and comment about the processes used. The paper was developed through extensive consultation processes and contributed to by all members of the Management Committee (MC), SCEC staff, and contributing member groups. The process was based upon the following principles:

- Appropriate levels of participation used for the various contributing groups;
- Action learning;
- Continuous improvement ; and
- Adult learning.

It should be noted that this process generated positive results for SCEC with major shifts in structure, governance and service delivery. The reason this particular approach was taken was to generate intimate and deep engagement by all in the organisation and thus produce sustainable long term change.

Changes that have occurred within SCEC

Structure

We are now operating on a portfolio model. We have currently five portfolios, Administration, Finances, Protection and Policy, Restoration, and Academic. There is also a distribution of Management Committee members' responsibilities to oversee various portfolios. Staff have been assigned to particular portfolios that align with their respective role descriptions, skills and experience. This process has added functional clarity to service operations and allowed staff more clarity concerning their activities.

Governance

It has become apparent that there is a need to do some minor adjustments to governance aspects of the organisation. These are being slowly addressed and the new Strategic Planning exercise will, hopefully, assist this process. Staff wellbeing is a recognised priority for the MC. Governance in all areas has been addressed over the past twelve months and some of the key areas addressed have been;

- Greater inclusion of member groups in our advocacy activities;
- Policy and procedure review and development;
- Climate Emergency Action Plan;
- First Nations Inclusion and Engagement;
- Fund raising plan; and
- Draft communications plan.

Operational adjustments

Emerging from the Strategic Directions research there were a number of operational issues that were identified

- New office arrangements were generally agreed to be needed. As a result, we are about to move to a new office that will provide greater interaction with the public and much fresher look to SCEC.
- An improved staff time management system
- Car management arrangements
- Staff mentoring and support systems with MC liaisons established
- Purchasing policy

All these changes contribute to SCEC being a more effective and robust organisation that sits comfortably with the ever evolving social and business communities of the Sunshine Coast.

Celebrations

We have had a number of significant achievements and operational activities that we are proud of. These include;

We are the state winners of the Partnerships for Landcare Award for our work in designing and implementing the new look World Environment Day Month celebrations. As state winners we will be sending Natalie Frost and our Vice President, Ben Child, to Sydney in August to attend the National Awards ceremonies.

A local gathering for Green Drinks is now operating once a month. Soon this impressive networking event will be hosted in the new SCEC office.

We have provided consistent support for major court hearings pertaining to two major environmental and social issues. The Sekisui and Twin Waters West court appeals have seen Narelle McCarthy spending a lot of time in Brisbane. We feel the resource commitment to these events is vital.

This year we have again partnered with the Hall family and Sunshine Coast Regional Council to deliver the Les Hall Young Conservationist Award with myself being on the judging panel. It was a very difficult job to find a winner as the two finalists are inspirational and committed to their respective campaigns.

Again this year we ran the WED Festival month and it has been a huge success. The innovative nature of this increases the potential for greater and closer exposure of member groups to the public. On the 10th of November 2021 we saw the Sunshine Coast Regional Council declare a climate emergency. We had a major role as part of the Urgent Climate Action Network (UCAN) to contribute to the success of this declaration.

This year SCEC launched a book entitled 'They Made a Difference'. The book looks at some of the past activities of SCEC and celebrates the people who have worked hard to make a difference to improving the maintenance of Sunshine Coast environments.

We have welcomed two new life members to SCEC, welcome to Professor Ian Lowe AO and Helen Hutchison. In 2021 we celebrated SCEC's 40th year. This celebration was undertaken at the Imperial Hotel in Eumundi with a dinner, speeches and live music.

The member group Round table this year saw a good role up of member groups and provided good information for us to take to the Ministerial Round Table.

Wow what a year and there is plenty to look forward to in the next twelve months!



Things to look forward to

Announcement of the 2032 Olympic Games to be held in Brisbane and surrounds provides a good focus to highlight the importance of the natural environment and healthy lifestyles of the Sunshine Coast. We will be working hard to ensure we all take advantage of this opportunity to contribute to management of our local environment and achieving a carbon negative outcome. We are moving into a new office before the end of the year. We have plans to make the new office more public friendly, more of an information hub and a much more pleasant place for our staff and volunteers. We will be relying on our Strategic Planning to assist in identifying the roles and function of the office.

One of the things we all need to realise is that development is happening all over the coast and happening at a breakneck speed. This means us at SCEC and all of our member groups will need to deal with the associated loss of habitat. We will need to find innovative ways to mitigate this planning fiasco. One of the initiatives that has the potential to make a big difference is Gardens for Wildlife, run by Barung Landcare. We will further explore how we can help get this great innovation across the whole of the Sunshine Coast to deal with increased urbanisation.

Conclusion

We are about to engage in a strategic planning exercise facilitated by an external consultant and it is my hope that this does not generate one that ends up gathering dust on a shelf somewhere. Our job, as a Management Committee, is to ensure SCEC is an organisation that is responsive to both the needs of the member groups and also the shifts and changes that are rapidly engulfing the Sunshine Coast. The coast is not what it was in the 80's, 90's and early 2000's. New technologies, demographics and a new world order sees a landscape that is vastly different and SCEC will need to be innovative and be continuously learning how to assess, value and prioritise the remaining natural environments. Our 'country' is being assaulted by population growth, changing community values, rapid development, and climate change. This landscape demands an impost for each of us to work hard to preserve natural systems as best we can.

We need to think intergenerational about the consequences of our actions within the catchment. The term 'intergenerational' is usually interpreted within an anthropocentric frame. At SCEC we have a frame that is much larger and is shaped by the broad systems of nature as well as the overlap between that frame and the anthropocentric. So, intergenerational consideration of the consequences of human activities on glossy black cockatoos, the sharks in our ocean, the koalas, and all of the currently identified threatened species on the coast should be at the forefront of our thinking. The value of this thinking will flow, then, to human generations ahead.

Taking a specifically SCEC-centric frame, it is my opinion that we need to use the imminent strategic planning process to identify where our limited resources need to be addressed to ensure that no more species are declared threatened or, heaven forbid, extinct on our watch. Rather than responding to a multitude of small bushfires, each one important in its own right, is there a different way of doing business that will generate long term sustainable outcomes for the coast's environment? It becomes more and more apparent that SCEC needs to work closely with the community and its member groups to ensure synergistic value is accrued to combat what appears to be a bleak environmental future on the coast.

I will close by extending my thanks to our wonderful staff for all the work they do both during office hours and for those hundreds of hours they put in because of their passion to try to make this a better world for generations ahead.

I would also like to thank the truly committed members of the Management Committee. For those members who are moving on, a truly heartfelt thanks and wishes for wherever your journey takes you. For those maintaining a role on the committee SCEC is blessed to have you. I would like to extend special recognition to Peter Hogg for all the work he has done for SCEC over the past seven years. Also to Jillian Rossiter for the 40 years of continuous work for the environment on the coast. Safe travels into your respective futures.

Finally thanks to all of the member groups who are daily doing their best to preserve natural systems and develop a better environment on the coast. You are the heart of SCEC and you are the keepers of the environmental flame.

Warm regards

Derek Foster
President



Derek Foster
B.Ed, B. Soc Sc. (Counselling), Master of Applied Sc., PhD Candidate
SCEC President 2022



PEOPLE & GOVERNANCE

We worked together to foster a sense of hope and ambition for the years to come whilst setting the strategic directions needed to carry our work forward

At the SCEC AGM on the 25 September 2021, we welcomed two new members on the Management Committee, Kelly Mathews and Andrew Picone. Three members of the Management Committee moved on from their roles. We thank Michael Kane, Jason Rao Sellaiah, David Robertson for their invaluable service to protect and conserve the Sunshine Coast's environment.

In 2021 we were able to build a fantastic volunteer base with a bustling office of researchers and campaigners. From January to April 2022, we continued to work from home and conduct meetings online due to the impacts of the pandemic. We continued to further develop and review our policies and procedures and implemented the strategic directions which were developed by the Management Committee.



98 Associate Members
53 Member Groups
15 Volunteers
3 Staff
7 Management Committee
Members



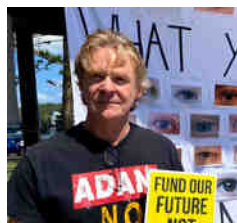
2021/2022 Management Committee



Derek Foster
President



Ben Child
Vice-President



Peter Hogg
Secretary



Sue Etheridge
Treasurer



Jillian Rossiter
Member



Kelly Matthews
Member



Andrew Picone
Member

Staff



Coordinator
Natalie Frost



**Liaison and
Advocacy Officer**
Narelle McCarthy



**Administration
Assistant**
Debra Hoye

Volunteers

SCEC is fortunate to have a fantastic team of volunteers who assist in the operational elements of the SCEC office and the various events, campaigns and projects delivered throughout the year.

Whilst we continued to feel the effect of the pandemic and the challenges to scheduling continued, we welcomed some wonderful new faces to the office in 2021. SCEC would like to especially thank:

- Alison Rickert
- Cynthia Rye
- Debra Hoyer
- Emma Dwyer
- Joanne Kohnke
- Julz Smith
- Madison Barnes
- Makayla Hobday
- Mia Nestor

We were also fortunate to have a great team of university students from the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) public relations course. Their dedication and enthusiasm was crucial to the delivery of the reimagined WED festival. Thank you Holly Clark, Brooke Festa, Georgia James, Rattanakorn Bootem CMN311 Industry Project tutor for setting up the project and partnership.



Emergence See event Gun Cotton Coffee Roasters for World Environment Day Festival 2021, Jason Rao Sellaiah, Narelle McCarthy, Rose Feely, Natalie Frost, Jesse Higgins, Uncle Tais

PROTECTION & POLICY

While the past year was still influenced by Covid-19, we maintained our momentum and our deep commitment to SCEC's vision, our obligations as the peak environmental advocacy group and Conservation Council for the region.

Our fights to stop that all too common form of 'development' - *yes, the inappropriate kind!* - continued throughout this reporting period. Sekisui Yaroomba, Twin Waters West and Coolum West were the headliners with SCEC involved in significant community campaigns and Planning & Environment Court proceedings. We also saw a rising and worrying trend of code assessable applications for rural and coastal areas reinforcing the need to close loopholes and tighten codes and zoning in the next Planning Scheme. And what we can 'fix' in the current one!

Narelle was excited and humbled to be elected as a Councillor for Queensland with the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) in late 2021. This provides important and appreciated opportunities to learn and contribute to issues, actions and solutions with Australia's national environment organisation since 1965.

Community Reigns Supreme in the Sekisui Saga

We left the Sekisui (SH Coolum Pty Ltd) saga in our previous Annual Report with a decision pending on the appeal by Development Watch (DW) to the Supreme Court that Her Honour Nicole Kefford DCJ erred in her judgment made on 15 June 2020 in Appeal No. 166 of 2018 in dismissing DW and SCEC's Planning & Environment Court appeals.

While not an active party to the Supreme Court appeal, we strongly supported DW and Friends of Yaroomba in these proceedings. We also celebrated with them and the broader community when, almost 12 months after the Hearing on 10 March 2021, the Supreme Court found in DW's favour in February! Yes, we won! In upholding DW's appeal, the Supreme Court decision found three errors of law in the Planning & Environment Court decision. Being;

Firstly, no specific finding about the local community's expectations regarding height was made.

Secondly, properly made submissions about the development formed part of the common material and, as such, the assessment was required to be carried out having regard to them. A large proportion of the opposing submissions received were in a pro forma style but there were 16 different variations of those. The height of the proposed development was a recurring ground of objection in virtually all the opposing submissions. The Judge overlooked the need to first determine what were the expectations of the local community concerning the height and the court was required to take that evidence into account as part of the common material but that did not occur.

Thirdly, the primary judge had no regard to the version of the planning scheme current at the time of the appeal. Version 18 not only required the height of buildings and structures to be consistent with the reasonable expectations of the local community, it mandated compliance with the specified height limits, that is to say 8.5 metres.

In essence, the judgment was affected by the three errors of law identified above and they could have materially affected the decision in the first instance.

The Supreme Court orders meant that DW’s appeal was allowed and subsequently upheld by their decision. The Orders also required Sekisui and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to pay costs to DW (apologies to all ratepayers, however, this is just a continuation of the consequences of Council contentiously voting to approve the development back in 2018 and persisting to act in these matters alongside Sekisui against the community!). And, that the matter be remitted to the Planning & Environment Court according to law.

So, this milestone win means we are headed back to the Planning & Environment Court with DW again as the First Appellant and SCEC as the Second Appellant on behalf of the community against the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and Sekisui.

SCEC sincerely thanks the community for their unwavering support. We all know the environment, the wildlife and the marine turtles, the community and amenity of the beautiful Yaroomba are at stake. For these reasons and more, we all haven't and won't give up until, together, we have 'Saved Yaroomba!'

Twin Waters West Ebbs and Flows through the Court

In September 2020, SCEC became a Co-Respondent by Election along with other community groups and individuals in the Planning & Environment Court appeal by Stockland following Sunshine Coast Regional Council’s welcome refusal of their development in July of that year. Joining Council to defend its refusal has seen significant activity in the proceedings which are still underway. Some shared issues include impacts on conservation areas, water quality in the wetlands and Maroochy river, wildlife, ecological and heritage values and, not surprisingly, the flood-prone nature of this 104ha site which sits within the Maroochy River floodplain.



Save Yaroomba! Lyn Saxon, Jim Moore and Narelle McCarthy celebrating the Supreme Court win

The Sun Needs to Set on Coolum West

Of all the inappropriate development proposals on the go, the ‘Coolum West Surf Ranch’ and urban development proposal on a 510ha parcel within the regionally significant Maroochy River floodplain takes the cake! Yes, there’s a theme here! SCEC has indeed been campaigning to protect and restore the floodplains for decades and will continue to do so.

Our ongoing advocacy as part of our joint campaign with five other community groups dubbed the ‘Community 6’ (Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents, Surfrider Sunshine Coast, Friends of Yaroomba, Development Watch, Coolum Residents Association and SCEC) to stop this intensive urban development involved a range of activities throughout the year.

With Consolidated Properties increasing their lobbying of the state government to have its speculatively purchased 550ha parcel declared a Priority Development Area (PDA) as their project conflicts with a raft of long-standing local and state planning instruments, zonings and policies, it was important for people to understand that their proposal was not about a ‘wave pool.’ It is an intensive large-scale residential and commercial development on extremely flood-prone land in the middle of the ‘Blue Heart’ within the Maroochy River catchment. The Blue Heart is an innovative and world leading blue carbon project providing multiple, long term benefits including flood mitigation, habitat and wetland restoration, recreation and jobs in nature based tourism. The extensive filling of the floodplain would also unnecessarily increase flood risk and threaten the ecologically important Maroochy River and its ecosystems.

So, along with making representations, running petitions and meetings with the state and local government, media and more, it was important for the general public to have a better understanding and awareness of what this proposal was really about. Our community driven campaign included a petition with nearly 3,000 signatures and over 500 comments. We showcased the community sentiment about the proposed development by publishing images and comments from the petition, pictured below is longtime SCEC supporter and passionate permaculturalist Bruce Morgan. We also placed some eye-catching road side storyboards created by talented SCEC volunteer Matthew Lynne in and around Coolum to tell the visual story...

- 1500+ houses and extensive urban development within the Maroochy River floodplain
- Extraction of water from the ecologically significant Maroochy River to pump through for the wave pool and ‘waterfront lots’
- The unacceptable impacts on the Blue Heart undermining its objectives and multiple benefits including wetland and wildlife habitat restoration and climate change resilience.
- Increased traffic on an already congested road network and loss of amenity

We maintain that the state can’t ignore the significant constraints of this land, the environmental risks and the considerable and ongoing benefits of the Blue Heart Project and must reject this ill-conceived and unwanted urban sprawl into the floodplain.



Artwork by Mathew Lynne

The Cooloola Great Walk 'Ecotourism' Project

This contentious initiative of the Queensland Government's Ecotourism Trails program, the Cooloola Great Walk ecotourism project has raised considerable concerns for SCEC. While we acknowledge the rights and free consent of First Nations People to determine what happens on their Land and Sea Country, our concerns lie with the proposal granting private long-term leases for a commercial entity to build and operate infrastructure in ecologically sensitive and pristine wilderness areas of the Great Sandy National Park.

We were disappointed at the decision that this project is not a controlled action under the Federal Environment, Protection, Biodiversity & Conservation Act (EPBC Act) when it was referred due to likely significant impacts on Matters of Environmental Significance (MNES). This decision demonstrated the weakness of our Federal environment laws given the outstanding natural values and sensitive ecosystems found here. The decision also demonstrated the limitation for the necessary scrutiny, reporting and oversight required at the federal level.

SCEC continued to press for greater transparency, the elevation of environmental matters and considerations by engaging with the responsible Ministers, the Department of Environment & Science (DES), Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service and the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport as the project leads, other groups and stakeholders. We consistently acknowledge First Nations People have a central role and the right to achieve their aspirations for Country with the inherent cultural significance of this special place.

As the project planning progresses, we remain engaged with all parties, including other community groups, to seek further information and details and provide timely input. Ultimately we advocate for any genuine, sustainable eco-tourism facilities to be located 'off-park' or to adopt the 'adjacency' model. The reinstatement of key legislative clauses and strengthening of provisions to protect our National Parks from incompatible uses to provide for the conservation of nature and species is also necessary.

Borumba Dam Pumped Hydro Project

A proposal to establish a pumped hydro energy scheme (PHES) at Borumba Dam emerged this past year. While investment in renewable energy is obviously welcome and needed for a just and fast transition away from fossil fuels, the proposed location for the PHES on Borumba Dam within the magnificent Mary River catchment needs careful consideration and scrutiny.

National park, state forest, aquatic habitats, native vegetation, environmental water flows, threatened species and biodiversity values will or are likely to be impacted by the proposal.

While it's essential we build publicly-owned energy storage to allow for transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030, this must not come at the expense of threatened species habitat and the health of the Mary River and its ecosystems.

A first step towards receiving community support will be to ensure environmental assessments are thorough and take into consideration Matters of State and National Environmental Significance.

We're working with the wonderful Mary River Catchment Committee, the Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council, Save the Mary and other groups in our discussions and engagement with the Department of Energy and Public Works, Powerlink and the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing & Water as the remaking of the Mary Basin Water Plan concurrently underway is fundamental to ensuring the health and sustainability of the Mary River in the considerations and assessments for the PHES as the project it evolves.

Urgency for Stronger Environment Laws

Much of the shocking state of biodiversity, the growing list of threatened species and the climate emergency stems from weak and ineffective environment laws. SCEC again campaigned with the Places You Love Alliance (an alliance of more than 60 organisations, representing over 1.5 million Australians) to resist regressive amendments to the EPBC Act and to stop the devolution of powers to the states & territories. The campaign also highlighted the critical need for enforceable National Environment Standards.

New Planning Scheme

SCEC contributed as a participant in the New Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme Community Reference Group which focused on the community consultation process - which ended up having to be rejigged and redesigned when the 'next wave' of Covid-19 came through but was still a critical and interactive phase of the preparation of our next planning scheme.

During February and March 2022 the Sunshine Coast Regional Council released preliminary material and information on the proposed vision and proposed regional and local planning directions of the new planning scheme. SCEC also did a presentation to the full Council advocating for:

- Ecologically sustainable development;
- Protection of remnant ecosystems ensuring that wildlife corridors are maintained and strengthened along with a range of other environmental protections;
- Greater improvement in the built environment to encompass sustainable design elements and principles; and
- To be climate responsive and to create and enhance urban biodiversity- no more cookie cutter estates devoid of vegetation, habitat, open space and good, sustainable design.

The new planning scheme will guide future land use and development so it's crucial we, as a community, become involved and have a say in the new planning scheme as it progresses.

UNESCO Biosphere Nomination

It's been incredibly interesting and constructive to be part of the Community Reference Group for the Sunshine Coast's nomination since 2019. We reached a milestone in October 2021 when the nomination arrived in Paris for UNESCO's consideration after having been considered by the Queensland and Australian governments.



Biosphere Community Reference Group

State Forests

Many of Queensland’s native state forests are havens for wildlife, diverse ecosystems and nature-based recreation. Here on the Sunshine Coast, one of these special natural places amongst increasing urbanisation is ‘Ferny Forest’ - a 130 hectare portion within the Beerwah State Forest has been earmarked for logging.

Beerwah State Forest as a whole contains 4561 hectares, of which just under 600ha is remnant vegetation. While this northern section (Lot 1 AP22457) of the forest is relatively small at 130ha, it contains medium regional ecosystem values, with very high values for koala habitat and for climate refugia. Sitting between Ewen Maddock Dam & the Steve Irwin Way, it would make an important and timely addition to the adjoining Mooloolah River National Park. Within the context of the SEQ Forest Agreement which will see the welcome and necessary transition of high-value state forests to the conservation estate by 31 December 2024. However it would be devastating to now lose the significant conservation and cultural values of this forest when biodiversity is in crisis and we’re in a state of climate emergency would be devastating.

The rampant, unsustainable urbanisation of the Sunshine Coast makes it more urgent than ever to conserve biodiversity, protect threatened species, sequester carbon and connect with nature. Despite the requirement to adhere to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) Code of Practice, logging a significant portion of this forest would still have an impact on wildlife through disturbance, modification and loss of habitat and foraging areas.

The fight for Ferny Forest escalated with the newly formed Save Ferny Forest Group and the broader community swinging into action. SCEC exercised its evidenced-based advocacy role and engaged with the responsible State MP’s, Ministers, the Federal Environment Department, DAF and QPWS on harvest operation planning all while expressing our concerns for the viability of the forest. We’ve also undertaken survey work and provided feedback on the various policies and plans proposed while stressing that this forest shouldn’t be logged and should transfer intact into Protected Estate so these trees have a chance to further mature to provide hollows and habitat values. Throughout the campaign we were part of the many community events and gatherings!

The fight for Ferny isn’t over...

We have also been part of the broader State Forests campaign with the Queensland Conservation Council to have 70,000ha of high conservation forests in the SEQ Planning Area transition to Protected Area to contribute to the much needed expansion of the Protected Area Estate.



Ferny Forest with Stella Wiggins, Dave Wiggins, Narelle McCarthy and Andrew Picone

Queensland Environment Roundtable (QERT) and Ministerial Roundtable (MERT)

The Roundtables are always an important time to elevate our regional issues and opportunities as part of a bigger platform with the Queensland Environment Minister, the Department of Environment and Science and other agencies. Canvassing issues across topics such as Reef & Water, Coal & Gas, Climate Change, Protected Areas and Threatened Species highlights actions that need to be taken and improvements made.

Catching up with our fellow regional Conservation Council and sector colleagues is always empowering and reminds of the collective impact we have as part of Queensland’s strong environment movement and conservation sector.

In May 2021, the Roundtables were held outside Brisbane for the first time in many years where we convened in beautiful Cairns. We raised the issues of state forest transfers under the SEQ Forest Agreement to Protected Areas, expanding our National Parks, the impacts on the region’s biodiversity from Native Forest Practice on freehold land, the devastation to the beaches, National Parks and wildlife on Bribe Island from 4WD’ing...and more

It was great to also convene our SCEC Member Group Roundtable which brought together the amazing groups and people we are so humbled and empowered to represent. Learning from and supporting each other continues to strengthen our advocacy work for the benefit of the region and beyond.

Throughout the year, we provided submissions and feedback on 14 topics including the new Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme, Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Project and the Noosa Climate Change Response Plan. We also had representation on 7 stakeholder reference groups including the SCRC Transport Community Reference Group and the New Planning Scheme Community Reference Group.

Once again, I find it nigh impossible to capture and highlight everything that has been going on, what we’ve been working on and involved in at local, state and national levels in this report! The fantastic support of our members, the dedication and expertise of my wonderful colleagues Natalie Frost, Debbie Hoye, SCEC’s invaluable volunteers and of course, the Management Committee, continues to ensure SCEC is well positioned to continue to effect and generate positive change and outcomes for nature and climate.

With sincere thanks and appreciation for all that you do.



Narelle McCarthy
Liaison and Advocacy

7 stakeholder reference groups
5 board positions
14 submissions and feedback



Climate protest, Ministerial Environment Roundtable, Supreme Court and a chat with the Environment Minister, Meaghan Scanlon

RESTORATION

Climate Action

A major focus of our climate work throughout the year was the campaign to get the Sunshine Coast Council to declare a climate emergency. This would make Sunshine Coast Council only the second local government in Queensland to do so, joining Noosa Council who declared a climate emergency in 2019. Nationally, there are 100 other jurisdictions that have made the declaration. As part of the Urgent Climate Action Network Sunshine Coast (UCANSC), SCEC hosted regular meetings with the network and produced the campaign materials to generate community support. The campaign focused on encouraging locals to write to their divisional Councillor to express their concerns about the changing climate and request support for the declaration.

After almost 12 months of campaigning, the network was pleased to see that Cr David Law had put forward a Notice of Motion at the November 2021 Sunshine Coast Council Ordinary Meeting. After a lengthy discussion, the final resolution was passed unanimously and read as follows:

That Council:

1. Acknowledges the significant action already undertaken through the implementation of the Sunshine Coast Council Environment and Liveability Strategy (ELS) 2017 towards mitigation and reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
2. Accepts the Sixth Assessment Report (August 2021) of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) which reveals that the Earth's climate has deteriorated dramatically since they last reported six years ago; and in response to same"
 - a. Recognises that we are in a state of climate emergency that requires urgent and sustained effort to achieve net zero emissions by 2041
 - b. Request the Chief Executive Officer to prepare an interim report on the progress of the Zero-net Emissions Plan and Regional Climate Action Roadmap, including interim recommendations for council actions and a proposed governance structure/framework that strengthens the daily action of Council in response to the climate emergency, and to present this report for Council's consideration by 31 March 2022 and
3. Does not require the endorsement or recognition from any third party or external organisation to give effect to this resolution.

Whilst the motion did not formally 'declare' a climate emergency, it certainly acknowledged the emergency and put forward a plan to rapidly reduce emissions and strengthen council's climate response. In March 2022, the interim report titled Responding to the Climate Emergency was presented which outlined the governance structure and framework along with an update on key bodies of work that were being undertaken by council to address the climate emergency with 7 key actions to be led by the Chief Executive Officer. Acknowledging the significant and successful community led campaign along with a proactive approach within council the network planned a celebratory dinner bringing together community leaders and advocates to celebrate the milestone. It was a fantastic evening to share the campaign story, celebrate the win with friends and look to the future.

RESTORATION

Staying local, this year also saw Noosa Council endorse the Noosa Climate Change Response Plan on 19th August 2021. The plan sets an ambitious target to transition to net zero emissions by 2026 for Council operations and for the community. The plan is structured under 8 themes and sets strategic priorities with identified targets and metrics. Both Noosa and Sunshine Coast Council report annually on their emissions profiles with reporting figures for 2019/2020 being 50,000 tonnes and 201,103 tCO₂e respectively.

The other major focus in the climate campaign this year was partnering with the Queensland Conservation Council to distribute the brightly coloured Climate Action Now signs throughout the region. The signs were given out free at events and market stalls and people were encouraged to hang them on their letterbox, fence or even stick them on their wheelie bins. The signs are part of a national campaign to put pressure on both the state and federal government to take bold climate action. The signs are a demonstration that constituents actively support climate action and want to see the political will needed to address the issue. The signs were a strong feature throughout the World Environment Day Festival and at various market stalls throughout the region. In the lead up to the federal election in May 2022 the signs played a critical role in showcasing the strong community support for climate focused leaders.

Nets Out Now

This year SCEC continued to advocate for the removal of the lethal nets and drumlines that are installed at 23 beaches throughout the Sunshine Coast and throughout Queensland. Following on from our involvement in the 2017 Senate Inquiry into Shark Mitigation and Deterrent Measures we evaluated the 20 recommendations made by the committee and found that unfortunately the majority of the recommendations have not yet been implemented. Of particular note is Recommendation 1 “ The committee recommends that the New South Wales and Queensland Governments:

- immediately replace lethal drum lines with SMART drum lines; and
- phase out shark meshing programs and increase funding and support for the development and implementation of a wide range of non-lethal shark mitigation and deterrent measures.”

Whilst some SMART drumline trials are underway in north Queensland, they have not yet been rolled out here on the Sunshine Coast. Encouragingly however, the first phase of the SharkSmart drone trial occurred in South East Queensland from September 2020 to October 2021 and again throughout the summer school holiday period. Throughout the drone trials all 78 drumlines and 11 nets remained in place across 23 beaches on the Sunshine Coast.



Climate Emergency presentation by Adrian Whitehead at USC

RESTORATION

The controversial shark control program dubbed 'shark cull' program was the subject of a feature length documentary film titled *Envoy: Shark Cull* which was released in theatres in 2021. This film showcased the true impact of the nets and drumlines in use in both Queensland and New South Wales and provided renewed community interest and outrage at their use. Following the release of the film, SCEC joined the Nets Out Now Coalition, set up by the Envoy Foundation, the Coalition brings together 32 organisations to advocate for the removal of lethal nets and drumlines.

It is the position of the members of the Nets Out Now Coalition that:

- 1) Shark culling via the use of shark nets and lethal drumlines is an ineffective method for promoting public safety, providing only a false sense of security to beachgoers
- 2) These methods are extremely detrimental to the health and ecological viability of our marine life and ecosystems, affecting both 'target' and 'non-target' species
- 3) We directly oppose the continuation of outdated, lethal measures of shark control and beach safety programs that are not supported by scientific evidence, namely shark nets and lethal drumlines, and support the immediate transition away from these methods
- 4) We support and advocate for the use of scientifically supported, evidence-based approaches using modern and non-lethal alternatives in these programs, in conjunction with community education and support for lifesavers and first responders, and request the rapid implementation of these measures

It is our position that these updated measures will improve protection for both beach-goers and marine life within Australian waters, as well as positioning Australia as a global leader on shark mitigation, leading to improvements in human safety, tourism, conservation and reputation. As always, the fight continues to work collectively to protect and restore our marine environment.

Sincerest thank you to the phenomenal staff Narelle McCarthy and Debbie Hoyer, volunteers and Management Committee for all of your support throughout the year. It has been an incredible experience working with so many wonderful community members on the climate and shark net campaigns.



Natalie Frost
Coordinator



EVENTS AND OUTREACH

Celebrations a plenty with SCEC's 40th year and the release of a new book showcasing SCEC's Honorary Life Members

This year we celebrated our 40th anniversary and it was an absolute pleasure to honour SCEC's legacy at two events. We celebrated with an evening affair at the 'Green Room' at the Imperial Hotel in Eumundi. The night brought together many wonderful people who have shaped the Sunshine Coast environment and played a critical role in SCEC throughout the years, along with many new faces at SCEC as we continue to grow as an organisation. The night featured special panel discussions and reflections on SCEC's 40 years along with a musical performance by Noel Gardener, Derek Foster and the Landscape Band.

Our second anniversary event was the book launch of *They Made a Difference* by Elaine Green and Jillian Rossiter. The book was a special anniversary edition of the SCEC life member book which included two new Honorary Life Members: Helen Hutchison and Ian Lowe. The launch featured a Welcome to Country by Aunty Beverly Hand, a long time SCEC supporter and advocate, and a range of talks that reflected on SCEC's history and our role in shaping the environment we see today. Professor Ian Lowe finished the day's affairs with a six point plan in tackling the greatest threat today, climate change. Thank you to everyone who celebrated with us and to the many staff, volunteer and Management Committee members who have worked tirelessly to protect and conserve our region's unique environment.

This year, we joined the inaugural Sunshine Coast Big Butterfly Count. We co-hosted an online webinar with Barung Landcare that featured esteemed entomologist Professor Roger Kitching. Roger described the taxonomy of butterflies and explored their ecology whilst highlighting some of the more rare species to be found here on the Sunshine Coast. We then explored the role of conservation and identified the biggest threats to butterfly populations - loss of habitat and the use of neonicotinoids in agriculture. Climate change is also having an impact on butterfly populations, with research showing that over the past 20 - 30 years species of butterflies have moved due to temperature changes, following the physiological preferences. In Australia, species are moving south in search of cooler temperatures. With the ongoing threat of climate change continually pushing species boundaries to their limits, this is pushing butterflies to the brink of their habitat limits.



14,593 Nationbuilder supporters
5,656 Facebook followers
1,517 Instagram followers
6,186 newsletter subscribers

Celebrating SCEC's 40th year, the climate emergency declaration and exploring the butterfly world with Dr Roger Kitching

World Environment Day Festival (WED Fest) 2021

This year the Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact the operational capability of World Environment Day Festival. A sub-committee of the SCEC Management Committee was formed to evaluate the options and assist in the planning of the festival. After discussions and review it was decided to deliver the festival as a month-long program of events and activities, rather than a large 1 day event.

The delivery of the 2021 festival was designed to be an event that reduced financial and resourcing risk whilst still offering an engaging and immersive program. The events were curated around the theme of 'ecosystem restoration', based on the United Nations decade of ecosystem restoration that was launched on World Environment Day (June 5th). Given that the SCEC member groups are primarily land based restoration community groups, their regular activities and events aligned well with this year's theme.

The new festival format delivered:

- Diverse partnership model created for future festivals
- 43 events delivered (2 events postponed due to weather)
- 1500 trees planted across multiple sites
- 26kgs of litter collected from Caloundra beaches
- 25 ecosystem restoration projects showcased
- 18 Community groups highlighted and engaging with a new audience

This year we were again fortunate to have four students from the University of the Sunshine Coast working on the PR and marketing of the festival. We were also fortunate to have an amazing volunteer team to assist with the delivery of the dynamic and immersive festival program, thank you!



Talking Country with Aunty Bev Hand, Doonan WED Fest team 2021, making new friends on the Pumicestone Passage thanks to Healthy Land and Water and tree planting at Doonan Creek Environment Reserve

Feedback from event attendees:

“Loved the concepts. Great opportunity to explore new places and ideas. Hoping you will run most of them again, as couldn't get to them all.”

“I liked the idea of actually walking across the land and learning an experience that took the family into the heart of caring for nature and doing our part”

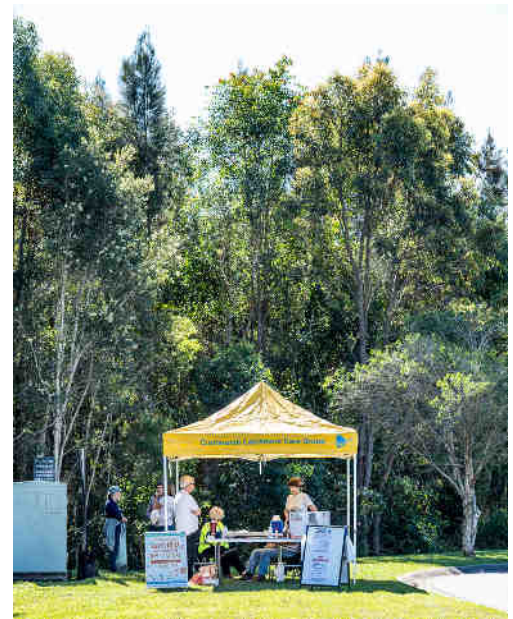
On June 5th at the Doonan Creek Environment Reserve WED Fest celebrations the finalists of this year's Les Hall Young Conservationist Award were announced by Clancy Hall. It was truly inspirational to see so many young people working passionately to protect and restore the environment. This year's winner was Josh McCord for his Farm Forestry Project. Josh took to the stage and shared with us his project outcomes. Congratulations Josh!

The challenge of designing a new festival format well and truly paid off as we were awarded the 2021 Partnerships for Landcare Award at the 2021 Queensland Landcare Awards hosted by Queensland Water and Land Carers. It was an honour to receive the award which acknowledges the strength of the partnership model created by the festival and the opportunities for collaboration for better environmental outcomes.

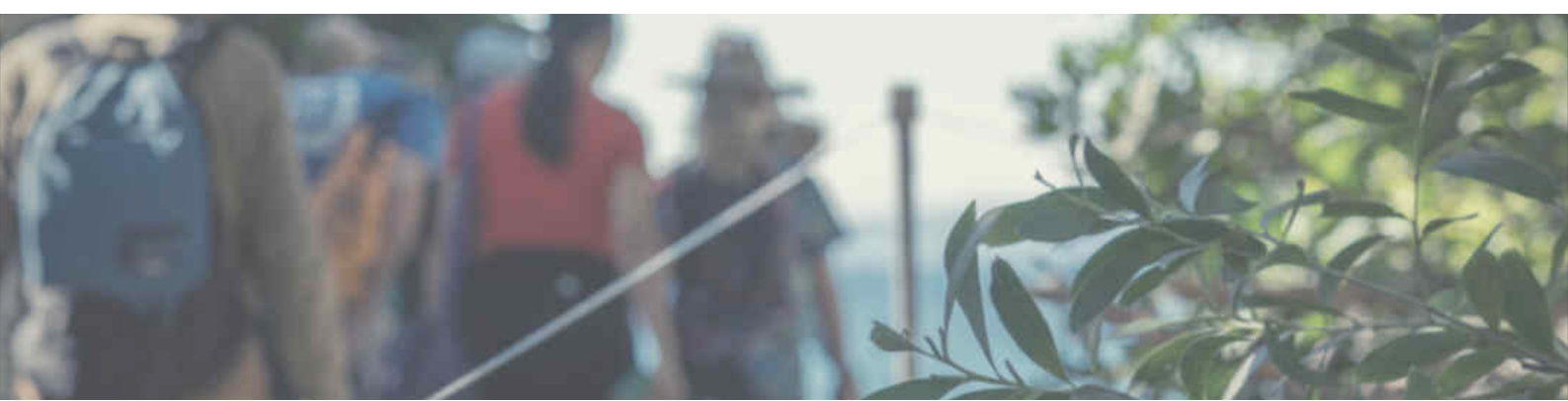
2021 Winner Josh McCord accepting his award from Clancy Hall



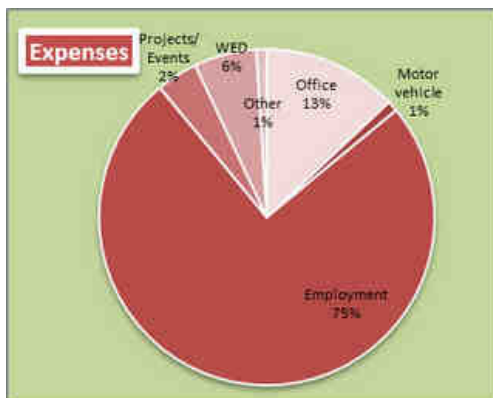
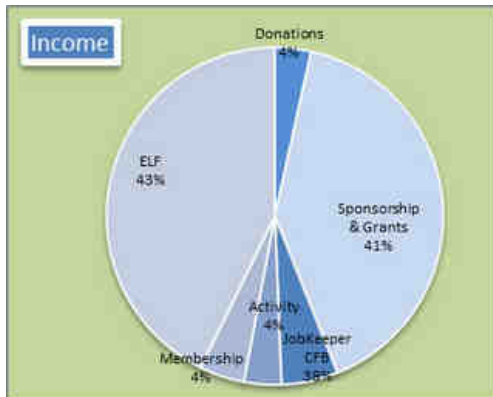
Derek Foster, Mary-Lou Gittins, Narelle McCarthy, Natalie Frost, Jillian Rossiter accepting our award



Bancroft's Red Gum Reserve with Currimundi Catchment Care Group



TREASURER'S REPORT



Despite the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, 2021/22 continued to be a busy and successful year financially for SCEC. Membership fees and other regular income have remained steady, and expenditure, even allowing for increasing employment costs, has been well contained overall. Our total income was \$257,487, and our total expenses were \$258,233. We completed the year with a very small net loss of \$746, leaving our net equity relatively unchanged at a healthy \$70,457.

Thanks to everyone that has donated and assisted in other ways (including staff and volunteers) to contribute to our successful financial year.



Sue Etheridge
Treasurer

Balance Sheet 31 March 2022	
Assets	
Cash on hand	\$102,922
Trade debtors	\$250
Stock on Hand	\$3,942
Property, plant & equipment	\$5,758
Current tax assets	\$0
Total Assets	\$112,872
Liabilities	
Trade creditors	\$119
Tax liabilities	\$10,102
Payroll provisions	\$21,487
Payables	\$10,706
Total Liabilities	\$42,414
Net Equity	\$70,457
Financial Performance 2021-2022	
Income	
Membership Fees	\$11,129
Donations	\$8,909
ELF Dispersal	\$110,000
Sponsorships & Grants	\$104,194
Activity generated	\$9,221
JobKeeper/QRID	\$14,000
Other Income	\$33
Total Income	\$257,487
Expenses	
Office	\$35,705
Motor vehicle	\$2,482
Employment	\$193,224
Projects/Events	\$10,164
WED	\$15,345
Other Expenses	\$1,313
Total Expenses	\$258,233
Loss	-\$746

MEMBER GROUPS

SCEC is privileged to be representing diverse and committed organisations and our advocacy is strengthened by the breadth and depth of the people involved in them. To all these people and organisations we say - thank you!

Australian Marine Conservation Society
 Amnesty Sunshine Coast
 Barung Landcare Association Inc.
 Bat Rescue Inc.
 Blackall Range Land Use and Planning Association
 Bribie Island Environmental Protection Association Inc.
 Bunya Bunya Country Aboriginal Corporation
 Conondale Range Conservation Association Inc.
 Coolum and North Shore Coast Care Inc.
 Coolum Residents Association Inc.
 Cooran Earth Rights
 Crystal Waters Community Co-Operative Ltd
 Currimundi Catchment Care Group Inc.
 Development Watch Inc.
 ECollaboration Ltd
 Environmental Legacy Foundation Ltd
 Fraser Island Defenders Organisation
 Friends Of Buddina Ltd
 Friends of Lake Weyba Inc.
 Friends of the Forest Inc
 Friends of Yaroomba
 Glasshouse Mountains Advancement Network Inc.
 Hinterland Bush Links Inc.
 Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group Inc.
 Landsborough Area Community Association Inc.
 Manduka Cooperative
 Maple Street Co-operative Society Limited
 Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc.
 Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee Association Inc.
 Mooloolah River Waterwatch and Landcare Inc.
 Nambour Transition Towns
 Native Plants Sunshine Coast
 Night Eyes Water and Landcare Inc.
 Noosa and District Landcare Group Inc.
 Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation
 Noosa Integrated Catchment Association Inc.
 Noosa Parks Association Inc.

Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents Inc.
 Permaculture Noosa Inc.
 Petrie Creek Catchment Care Group Inc.
 Positive Change for Marine Life
 Queensland Water and Land Carers Inc.
 Stop Adani Sunshine Coast
 Sunshine Coast Climate Action Now SCCAN
 Sunshine Coast Lets Inc.
 Surfrider Foundation Sunshine Coast
 Sustainable Population Australia Inc.
 Take Action for Pumicestone Passage Inc.
 Ten Little Pieces
 Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland - Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Branch
 Wildlife Volunteers Association Inc.
 Woodfordia Inc.
 Yandina and District Community Association Inc.
 Yandina Community Gardens Inc.
 Zero Emissions Noosa Inc.



SPONSORSHIP AND GRANTS

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council relies on the generous support from our sponsors and grants.

In the 2021/2022 financial year we received the grants from the following organisations:

- Environmental Legacy Foundation
- Queensland Community Foundation
- Queensland Water and Land Carers
- Queensland Government - Sponsorship
- Sunshine Coast Council community grants program and partnership program
- Tides Foundation
- Unitywater

Thank you to all of our wonderful supporters, sponsors, members and member groups for supporting our vital advocacy work.



SCEC gratefully acknowledges the generous support of these organisations



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