

## President's Report, AGM 1 September 2020

The complications of life under the pandemic have meant that it has been almost 17 months since our last AGM. So we have quite a lot of activity to report back on. I will just describe how we have organised ourselves and give a quick overview of the various activities of the association over that period. There will be more detail in the general business section of the ordinary general meeting later when each of our teams can give a concise update on what they have been up to.

The most significant change in your association over the last year has been our adoption of a different organisational structure – one that we now believe to be the way to go. At our Planning Day in September last year (2019) we agreed that the traditional organisational structure tended to place too much weight on too few people. We acknowledged that we tended to take on too many issues and spread the load on a few key positions. We decided to narrow our focus to 3 key areas:

- Coastal Management
- Climate Emergency
- Council Connect (relating to/with Council)

For each of those areas we have a team of key people and a coordinator. In addition, we established a fourth team responsible for administration and communications.

We further agreed that the role of the President in chairing meetings and acting as the association's contact person would be delegated to the co-coordinators as Acting WACRA Chairperson on a rolling three-month roster. That power of delegation is available to us under our rules or constitution. Doing it this way had two big advantages over a formal reorganisation. We could:

1. implement the structure without having to rewrite the Constitution and go through the formal process required under the Incorporated Associations Act – including a Special General Meeting and reregistering our Constitution
2. trial the process and revise or ditch it without too much hassle.

Because of COVID 19 we have had to manage without our usual general meetings and have conducted committee meetings via Zoom through the worst (so far) of the pandemic.

Anyway, we have tried our new organisational structure and processes and it seems to be working very well. Initially Bert Brown, who is the coordinator for the Coastal Management team has been Acting Chairperson. Richard Smith, who is coordinator for the Admin/Communications Team, is taking over for the next three months. The other coordinators are Julie Whitehead for the Climate Emergency group and myself for Council Connect. We will retain and very shortly elect the formal positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer etc, but their roles will be delegated as per the new structure.

So since March last year, we have been actively involved in consultations and disputations about the management of coastal erosion and sand management, the struggles to get the final section of Breakout Creek redeveloped as a wetland, the planning and implementation of the dredging of the channel for Outer Harbor, the management and development of Henley Square including issues of safety, shading and the proliferation of licenced premises, and the process of developing a coordinated approach to governance of the River Torrens. In December last year, after persistent lobbying from us, Charles Sturt Council (CCS) declared a Climate Emergency as a founding member of Climate Emergency Australia. We participated in the consultation for the redevelopment of the Main Street and Military Road precinct and the strategic plan of the development of Adelaide Airport. We supported a proposal for changes to waste collection to encourage composting, recycling and reducing waste to landfill. We continued the 10-year saga of fighting the illegal groundwater extraction and pumping on to the beach by the Baju/H2O building. We have been very active in partnership with other community organisations in the Community Alliance in challenging the rush to a flawed planning and design code.

We have also done the research, the writing, collation and (very nearly) the publishing of a history book telling the story of nearly 60 years of local community activism in WACRA and its precedent manifestations.

In the latter part of the meeting tonight each of the team coordinators will address some, if not all, of these issues in more detail and there will be an opportunity to ask questions. I suggest you hold questions on specific issues till then unless there are questions on the broad organisational issues I have outlined.

Thank you.

Paul Laris  
President