

President's Report – August 2015

With great sadness, I need to report that one of our much loved and valued committee members passed away earlier this year. Mary Armstrong was known to many of you in various capacities and we miss her greatly. My favourite memory of her is from a Land and Environment Court hearing in Oxford Falls where the questioning barrister obviously thought he would easily beat this little old lady who could hardly see over the podium. She gave her presentation then he started asking scathing questions - but she verbally wiped the floor with him and he looked quite stunned.

The last twelve months have been busy and we have appreciated the way our members and supporters have participated in our activities. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Conny Harris and Tony Carr, we have offered a range of outdoor activities that have been well attended. Recently, Tony has added a number of walks around the newly opened Narrabeen Lagoon Circuit. We have had a pleasing number of people participating in our forums which included reports from the World Parks Congress and a fascinating evening of Aboriginal activities. We use our various activities to help people appreciate why our mission is to seek permanent protection for the remaining bushland in the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment. We appreciate the efforts of our wonderful catering team.

Allan Dawes offered a stunning painting which was offered by ballot to a financial member. It was displayed at several outdoor stalls run by Marie Quinn and Sue Mayo and at forums and eventually was won by a relatively new member, Ann Felstead.

Our activities this year included a Clean Up Australia event co-ordinated by Warwick Nowland and Marie Quinn. We collected a large amount of litter from around Narrabeen Lagoon. On one of Conny's walks, a large amount of litter was discovered at Deep Creek and we are pleased to report that Warringah Council helped to remove this.

Some of our members and supporters were involved in an important frog and reptile survey co-ordinated by Nick Skelton. The results of this survey will be useful in ascertaining whether or not portions of bushland can be offered for conservation via biobanking.

Your committee members have been involved in various lobbying activities to do with environmental protection for the catchment – meeting with politicians and staff members of local councils, writing letters and submissions, speaking at council meetings and public hearings. A sample of these activities is on the screen.

The news from the last 12 months is that the Multipurpose Circuit around Narrabeen Lagoon was officially opened last February and is proving to be extremely popular – almost crowded in the weekends; the interim committee to establish the Management Board for Narrabeen State Park has met twice but the Board has not yet been created; negotiations have begun but we are frustrated to report that these negotiations are progressing at a snail's pace between Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the State Government

to investigate establishing Gai-mariagal Aboriginal-owned National Park; biobanking investigations are progressing and negotiations have begun which could result in MLALC receiving an income which would help them conserve and manage their bushland, a decision has been made to establish navigation markers within Narrabeen Lagoon rather than to do any dredging at this stage; the Flood risk and management studies for the Lagoon and surrounds are proceeding. (Stephen Baldwin is our representative on the committee responsible for Narrabeen Lagoon estuary and floodplain management.)

We have a wonderful committee of people who contribute in so many ways and with such good grace and humour. I would like all of them to stand so you can express your appreciation of their efforts. Warwick Nowland has decided not to accept nomination for the next year. He has contributed a lot - helping with outdoor activities, organising the Clean Up Australia event, attending committee meetings and helping with our forums. Warwick if your circumstances change and you can rejoin us, we would be delighted to second you back in. All other committee members have agreed to be renominated for the next 12 months.

Thank you everyone.

Judith Bennett

President