**The Myall Koala & Environment Group Inc.**

**Presidents Report 2023**

As usual it has been a busy year for MKEG. Following is a brief summary of key activities.

**Koalas** – A lot is starting to happen in the area for Koalas. Ian Morphett will present a separate report.

**Bird Monitoring** - The group’s annual survey of the little terns (and other birds) was carried out from October to February in conjunction with MidCoast Council, National Parks & Wildlife Service and DPIE. It was a poor breeding season this year as very few little terns arrived and quickly moved to other areas. Some Pied Oyster Catchers did nest and bread on Corrie Island and the Winda Woppa Sand Stockpile. We did receive a grant of $4500 from Bird Life Australia for the purchase of a viewing scope to in the monitoring work. Special thanks to Trish Blair, Sharon Taylor and Ann Woods for their efforts in carrying out the surveys.

**Dolphin** – Our dolphin sculpture filled with plastic and other rubbish is finally erected near the HN surf club. This has been a long project and I would like to thank Jane Collison for obtaining the dolphin from Sculptor Plus, Rob Hughes for all his work in preparing the dolphin for mounting, everyone who collected rubbish and filled the dolphin and all the workers who put it in place. We had a great dedication ceremony on May 15 with Worimi elders present and an inspiring speech by Elizabeth McEntyre.

**Bitou Busters** - The Bitou Busters sessions are always well attended and I thank all participants for their enthusiasm and hard work. The weather at the end of 2022 and start of 2023 has been favourable and a lot was achieved along the Boulevarde at Wind Woppa, along Moira Pde near the HN boat ramp and the dunes at the end of Sanderling Ave. Thanks to Trish Blair and Adrienne Ingram for their efforts in co-ordinating the group.

**Pindimar Market Day and Tree Give Away -** Last October we had a stall at the Pindimar Market Day. We used this event as a tree give away and also had information on weeds and our other activities in general. This market day is planned to be an annual event. Thanks to everyone who helped on the stall.

**HN/TG Seniors Day** – The HNTG Progress Association ran its second Seniors Day in February. This was a successful day with many visitors interacting with our group to discuss local environmental issues. We also used this as a raffle ticket selling event. Thanks to those who manned the stall.

**Council Submissions** - We have prepared a number of submissions to MidCoast Council regarding inappropriate developments in Hawks Nest/Tea Gardens.

These include:

* Eagle Ave subdivision – not yet determined
* 288 Mungo Brush Rd caravan park – DA withdrawn
* North Shearwater Estate – approved by the Land and Environment Court
* 91 -95 Marine Drive – passed by council
* 32 Yamba St– not yet determined
* Parry’s Cove Marina – No DA submitted as yet

The work required to do these submissions is quite extensive and time consuming. This work has been done by Ian Morphett and I would like to thank him for his tireless efforts.

Whilst mentioning Ian I need to thank him for his 20 years of service as Secretary of MKEG. Ian is retiring as secretary and leaves a great legacy and a very long list of achievements, many of which go beyond the duties of secretary.

These include:

* Long before Bitou Busters he, and others were planting koala trees and weeding around town
* Koala Rescuer in HNTG for many years after Jean Shaw left
* Setting up and maintaining the Koala Hotline and collating local koala statistics for 2 decades
* Kingfisher Ave development – Land and Environment Court refusal
* Walk on the Wildlife Festival organisation for 9 years
* North Hawks Nest development - original proposal
* Fencing regulations recommending “koala friendly” fencing
* The signage around town and the speed signage on the HN side of the bridge
* Myall River Festival organisation and management for MKEG for every year it has been on
* Media interviews regarding non-complying and inappropriate development in HNTG
* Fundraising ventures, Easter Raffles, 5 cent guessing Competition etc
* Corridor planting at the Durness Estate
* Managing the John Davis Grant to MKEG
* Part of the Koala Working Group that included MKEG, Council and NPWS for some years
* Numerous detailed submissions to Council and others regarding developments, tree removal (the 10/50 Rule) etc

**New Projects for 2023/24**

**Bird Viewing Platform** – Council has just developed the MidCoast Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2023 - 2035 (OSRS). Part of the OSRS is an Action Plan with Action 65 in the Plan being to ‘Investigate bird viewing platform at Jimmys Beach’. Thus is listed as a priority project and given it a ‘short-term’ ranking for completion. Dan Aldridge has previously advised that a design concept and costing has already been done. Council will ask for our input on signage etc. We have already suggested that this new platform be named after Pat and Randall Pritchard.

**Hawks Nest Wildflower Walk** - Last year we received a $5000 donation from a member and we have had many discussions about a key project we can carry out. We have decided on a Wildflower Walk which have signage about various plants. We have received strong interest from council on this and will hopefully gain approval soon.

Finally I want to thank all our members, volunteers, our committee and the executive for all their hard work. Without this we would not exist as a group.

We look forward to a great year ahead and hope we can have a positive influence on things happening in our town.

Richard Streamer - President - The Myall Koala & Environment Group Inc.