



**Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting  
Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare Inc.  
Held at  
Coffs Harbour Community Village  
22 Earl Street Coffs Harbour  
Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023**

*These minutes are draft only until accepted at the next General Meeting at which time the date of circulation and date of acceptance of these minutes will replace this entry.*

**Present:**

Barry Powells (Sawtell DC), Jan Allen (Green Bluff LC), Larry Langman (Nana Glen LCG and CHRL), Dave Wood (Sawtell DC), Liz and Keith Philpott (Lindon Lagoon LC), Ron Smith (Karangi LCG), Craig Bellamy (Green Bluff LC), Lorraine Davies (Sawtell DC), Alison King (CHRL Nursery), Sarah Maclagan (Green Bluff and Emerald Beach DC), Bob Piper (Ararwarra CC), Jane and William Chandler (Sawtell DC), Di Kilbride (Green Bluff LC), Peta Fairbairn (CHRL Nursery), Elisabeth Edwards (Friends of Coffs Creek), Ron Smith (Karangi LC), Bill and Jane Chandler (Sawtell DC), Paul and Christine Hatton (Darkum LC)

**In Attendance:**

Melanie Craig (CHRL Local Landcare Coordinator), Karla Gillies (CHRL Landcare Project Officer), Karen Black (CHRL Landcare Project Officer)

**Apologies:**

Rose and Vern Treilibs (Red Rock LC), Karen Black (Administration and Finance Officer), Lindy Davis (Green Bluff LC), Greg Robinson (Sapphire Reserve LC), Steve Thompson (Cochranes Pool LCG), Simon Proust (Korora LC)

**Guest Speaker:**

Ashley Love (Pia Dollmann Award recipient)

The meeting commenced at 4:05 pm with a Quorum present.

**Welcome:**

The President, Barry Powells, as Chair of the meeting, formally welcomed attendees and acknowledged, the Gumbaynggirr people, the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and paid respect to their elders past present and emerging.

The Chair gave a particular welcome to our honoured guest Ashley Love as both the 2022 recipient of the Pia Dollmann Award and as a guest speaker.

**Conflicts:**

The Chair called for potential conflict of interests for matters on the Agenda or likely to be raised. There were no declarations made at this time.

**Presidents Report.**

**National Parks Donation.** The President commenced his remarks by acknowledging the very generous donation by National Parks of \$3,000 towards a fund for the renewal of tools and equipment and supplies for Landcare use. This was deeply appreciated. A letter of acknowledgement will be sent.

**Karla Gillies.** The President formally welcomed Karla Gilles to the Landcare “family”. Karla will be replacing Kylie Brooks as our Projects Landcare Officer while Kylie is on leave. Karla is well known to Landcare and brings a wealth of experience and practical learning to the project management role.

**Alex Floyd.** The President noted that this meeting is our first but not our last opportunity to record the passing of a true “local hero” in the late Alex Floyd, 1926 – 2022. It is difficult to think of a time when we could not call on Alex for his expertise and sound advice. The many species named in his honour and of course his lasting legacy the Botanic Garden, speak to the regard in which this truly remarkable human being was held.

**Dee Wallace Site Visit.** The President drew the meeting’s attention to the previously determined concept of the current Dee Wallace Award Winners holding an event at their site to showcase their award-winning achievements. In 2022 the winner of the Dee Wallace award was Jetty Dunecare. CHRL will invite and support Jetty Dunecare to hold an event in 2023 to celebrate this win.

**Planning.** CHRL will soon host its Site Coordinators meeting. In conjunction with that meeting CHRL will ask coordinators to consider the questions we should put to our membership in a Member’s Survey.

2023 sees a new state-based NSW Landcare Program and new federally based Regional Landcare Program. Both will be of four years duration. Last year saw the start of our own four-year Major Strategic Program through the City of Coffs Harbour Environment Levy. It is timely to consider the longer term and support the development of our planning to cover the next four years.

### **Minutes of the Previous Meeting (14 September 2022)**

The draft Minutes of our last formal meeting of 14 September 2022 having been circulated in notification prior to this meeting and no corrections to those Minutes being advised - the following motion was put:

**MOTION:** That the minutes of the Ordinary General meeting dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022, be accepted, and made FINAL.

**MOVED:** Larry Langman

**SECOND:** Dave Wood

**CARRIED.**

### **Landcare Officer’s Report.**

Mel Craig in presenting the Landcare Officers report focused on some of the recent projects being undertaken. They reflect a diverse range of activity.

### **Mackays Rd Lowland Rainforest remnant**

This project is being undertaken as part of an attempt to harvest seed from the Mackays Rd lowland rainforest remnant prior to its destruction through the construction of the Coffs Bypass. The salvaged seeds and cuttings will be propagated at CHRL’s Community Nursery and then planted back out in the local landscape to try and retain some of the species and genetic diversity of this endangered Rainforest community.

This site is subject to an active community campaign to re-align the bypass to preserve this 0.5 Ha site known as Granpa’s Scrub.

NOTE. On February 17, 2023 yielding to community concern state government authorities advised the preservation of this lowland remnant.

### **Glossy Black Cockatoo Conservation**

CHRL is the delivery partner for Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance’s (JBA) Glossy Black-Cockatoo Conservation project funded through the Coffs Council Environmental Levy Community grants program. This project aims to identify key feeding trees and foraging habitat of the GBC in the Coffs Harbour LGA and carry out on-ground recovery works to protect these important areas.

Glossy Black-Cockatoos (GBC) are currently listed as vulnerable. They feed exclusively on the seeds of *Allocasuarina* trees and are dependent on large hollow bearing eucalypts for nesting sites. A lot of the GBC’s habitat was lost/ impacted during the Black Summer bushfires. This project also looks to restore and establish food sources.

### **Focus on native flora and fauna**

A series of monitoring studies such as flora, bird and other fauna surveys will occur over the period of this project across four of our Landcare sites. The data collected during this monitoring will provide us with better insights into the biodiversity of these sites and allow us to plan and target our future restoration activities to the benefit of the

flora/fauna that naturally occurs there or may be using it. This very much a “citizen science” project supported by professional ecologists engaged by Council.

### **Protecting Grey Headed Flying Fox**

The Grey Headed Flying-fox is listed as a Vulnerable species under the TSC and EPBC Acts. Flying-foxes are known as keystone species, because they help to define their entire ecosystem. They pollinate many of our native plants including Eucalyptus trees by carrying pollen from plant to plant when feeding and spread seeds through their droppings.

This is a project of WIRES, the Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance and CHRL to carry out restoration works at the Woolgoolga Flying Fox Camp. Community education will also occur to improve the community’s understanding and tolerance of the Grey Headed Flying Fox.

Further details of these projects are available on the CHRL website.

### **State Election 2023**

The Secretary also provided details of the proposal Landcare NSW has developed for presentation to both sides of politics with respect of the next stage of Landcare funding.

CHRL along with other district level Landcare networks have been supported by Local Landcare Coordinators and for each of the 11 Regional Networks a Regional Landcare Coordinator. These roles along with opportunities for professional development in the role, has led to a strengthening of Landcare and the success of increasingly larger projects across the state.

Landcare NSW is advocating for full time coordinator engagement, further extension of the Aboriginal Engagement Initiative, further professional development of coordinators and administrative staff and more streamlined access to digital technology.

The program being advocated is called Program Plus and is being promoted to every candidate at every opportunity across the state.

### **Site Reports**

**Jetty Dunecare – Di Kilbride.** Di highlighted the issue of “exotic pigface” that is occurring through the provision of introduced pigface varieties from commercial nurseries. Concern for this incursion was echoed by a number of groups.

**Sawtell Dunecare – Dave Wood.** Dave highlighted the excellent regrowth being experienced on the Boambee Headland site. This site had been devastated with hail damage. A series of focused working bees and interest by local businesses to undertake planting programs had achieved strong re-growth. The odd dieback scenario had been encountered, but regrowth far outweighed these instances. Dave noted that Senna was rampant.

Friends of Coffs Creek – Elisabeth Edwards. Elisabeth noted that recently Coral Berry appeared to be spreading at their site. Recent and continuing wet weather is proving challenging for its removal.

**CHRL Nursery – Barry Powells.** The president provided a comprehensive review of the potential sale by Crown Lands of the strip of land we use for access to our community nursery. This ongoing issue has been addressed with Council, our local member, other agencies but to little real progress. While CHRL has been assured that access will be protected it is difficult to see how this can be assured while a sale is “in the wind”

Our ideal solution both in terms of secure tenure and an opportunity for growth would be a relocation to a new and more secure site but still within the Woolgoolga area. CHRL is making all efforts to pursue this option.

### **Pia Dollmann Conservation and Sustainability Community Award Presentation to Ashley Love and Guest Address by Ashley Love.**

The President welcomed the opportunity to make this award to a most worthy recipient.

Ashley Love has spent four decades working in the area of conservation and land management across many and varied roles and indeed across much of this state.

While Ashley retired from the Department of Environment 15 years ago, Ashley continues to use his substantial insight, knowledge, skills and network to advocate for protection and understanding of this region's abundant natural heritage and reform of government policy giving weight to arguments that could lead to improved, more sustainable management practices.

His leadership through the National Parks Association and support of grass roots environmental initiatives like the concept of the Great Koala National Park, has helped to create a sustainable vision for the environmental and economic future of our region.

The list of Ashley's career achievements presents a real insight into the range of Ashley's interests and the depth of his advocacy and it is with very great appreciation of Ashley's continuing contribution that we make this award.

### **Guest Address – Ashley Love**

Ashley commenced his remarks by acknowledging the Gumbaynggirr people. Ashley recalled with great fondness the memory of Pia Dollmann and her contribution to both the cause of sustainability and the environment. In his remarks Ashley also noted the contribution of the late Alec Floyd and Dee Wallace.

Born and raised in Taree, Ashley joined the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in 1982. One of Ashley's earliest projects was the Bitou Bush mapping project that mapped the incursion of this weed from Newcastle to the Victorian border. This then led with others to the first National Bitou and Boneseed conference in Port Macquarie in 1985 in turn leading to the inclusion of Bitou Bush in the CSIRO's biological control research project. That was the first successful nomination of an environmental weed for inclusion in that research project.

One of the more fascination projects undertaken was the wilderness assessment of the New England, Guy Fawkes, Mann River, Gibraltar Range and Washpool wilderness areas following adoption of the Wilderness Act 1986. While some hopes for this assessment was caught up in the Regional Forestry Agreement (RFA) discussion of those days, we have still achieved one of the most significant wilderness areas in the state and the best might still be "yet to come".

From 1988 to 1997, Ashley worked on the North East Forests Biodiversity database, at the time one of the most comprehensive datasets in the world. Ashley with colleagues, was also involved in building a regional forest biodiversity data base for NE NSW which we think was the best in the World at the time and served us well in the RFA negotiations.

My role was as an overall coordinator the "gofa" for funding for the project. We conducted hundreds of flora and fauna surveys across the North east, built an enormous database and constructed maps or models of distribution of most of our native species, at that scale for that sort of work had not been done before

Under then Environment Minister Tim Moore in 1990 we started lobbying for the Solitary Island Marine Park (SIMP). While it would take till 1996 to get the eye's dotted and t's crossed, this was still a major achievement.

Ashley during this process, recalls receiving a call from an Emerald Beach advocate one evening looking for support for a community building project. This was Ashley's first awareness of the "force of nature" that was Dee Wallace who would attend every council meeting till the Coastal Walk Yamba to Coffs was achieved.

From 1990 right through to 2010 Ashley was involved with the mapping of old-growth forests and RFAs that promoted over 1 million hectares of forest into conservation zones.

From 2010 we started to hear of the decline of what had once been one of the most diverse populations of koalas in the country.

I arranged for the North Coast Environment Council, the Clarence Environment Centre, the Bellingen Environment Centre, the Nambucca Valley Conservation Association and the NSW National Parks Assn to contribute to a study of koalas in the Bellingen, Coffs and Clarence LGA's.

The first output was a brilliant report by local Emerald Beach fauna ecologist Dave Scotts describing koala populations in Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour and Bellingen Shire LGA's. That report led to the development of the Great Koala National Park (GKNP) proposal, first put forward in September 2014.

This is political but establishment of the GKNP has been the Labor party's policy for now three elections. Should Labor be successful then this will lead to one of the largest shakeouts in the local community as we negotiate both the boundary and extent of that park..

The ALP has not committed to the GKNP, but "a GKNP"; and committed to stakeholders that there will be negotiation process with all stakeholders to determine the boundaries and extent of the park.

Final thoughts.

Firstly, a re-discovering of the Solitary Islands Marine Park. Under the current Government the Solitary Islands Marine Park has lost its office at the Jetty, lost its voice and been threatened with downgrading. I support extending the protected zones in SIMP to 30% as recommended by the United Nations and supported by the Federal and some state Governments.

Beyond that, reform of management of our coastline. Replacing the current mismatch of management arrangements through having both state and regional parks, with a single reserve with legislative strength that would help, I hope, the support for hard working volunteers working on the coast. That would stop immediately the flow of a multitude of unsuitable plans for the Jetty foreshores that have emerged in recent years.

Opposing the selloff of public land at the Jetty and supporting retention there of open space. Also strongly opposing other inappropriate coastal development proposals that have emerged from the State Government's flawed approach to management and protection of our coast.

I obviously support the proposal by community groups for the Great Koala National Park and will urge the incoming government to get on with it. I also support offering just transition for workers affected by the proposal into appropriate jobs in environmental repair, park management or other available opportunities.

For the reserves on our mountains and coasts we need protection to the corridors and connectivity that holds our life supporting systems together. We need to support review of Koala Management plans in both Coffs Harbour and adjoining Councils and strongly support other projects such as the Great Eastern Ranges initiative, the Jaliigirr project and local Landcare groups who do an outstanding job with minimal recognition.

Finally, but very importantly, I will support a bypass for Coffs Harbour that does not destroy critically endangered ecosystems or species, such as Grandpas scrub and *Fontainea* sp. Coffs Harbour and "*Pittosporum kororaensis*". Coffs *Pittosporum*. These reserves are too important to lose.

I will continue to ask were other options which avoid this destruction considered for the bypass and why were they dropped. TfNSW has been aware of these unique and irreplaceable natural features for some time. I will not accept contrived and facile excuses about huge budget blowouts and time delays unless they are clearly explained and justified.

Thank You.

**Next Meeting:** May 3, 2023.