



**MINUTES OF THE BIRDLIFE SHOALHAVEN COMMITTEE
3 LOUISA GROVE, VINCENTIA
21 NOVEMBER 2016, 2-4PM**

1. Attendance and apologies - all committee members were present, no apologies.

2. Acceptance of the agenda – no items were added to the agenda

3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting – The minutes of the previous Committee meeting on 29 August 2016 as shown in the Members Only area of our website were a true and accurate record. Moved Rob and seconded Chris.

4. Business arising from the previous minutes

Action 1 - All Committee members to forward any final key correspondence to Brett - Done.

Action 2 - Brett and Chris to liaise to set up an email address and e-signature for Chris, as BLS Conservation Officer – Carried forward

Action 3 - Brett and Rob agreed to look to review the content of the web-site and agree a plan for any potential changes - Carried forward

Action 4 - Chris and Matt agreed to develop a BLS submission template to include references to legislation and research to streamline the writing of submissions - Done, template in Members Only area of our website.

Action 5 - Mike to prepare a design for a standard bird hide - Mike reported that every bird hide he had seen was different from all other bird hides, and that "a standard bird hide" really did not exist. He recommended that the design for specific bird hides be customized depending on the individual requirements of each site - Complete

Action 6 - Rob to develop a bird walks business case for presentation to Council and possible. - Rob outlined that the Council only had 1000 copies of the Bird Trails of the Shoalhaven brochures and none of the bird guide brochures in the Visitors' Centre in Nowra. Given the low stock, they were being held in the cupboard and given out on request. Despite this, they were still distributing over 50 per month. In the Illawarra Visitors' Centre over 400 brochures of the equivalent brochures were distributed every month. Rob would develop the business case for the review of the Committee and further input from Members at the AGM before progressing the issue with the Council Tourism section - Carried forward

Action 7 - Rob to proceed with plans to hold the first meeting on 5 December, subject to the availability of Phil Straw - Done, meeting planned and all arrangements in place.

Action 8 - Rob will propose dates for 2017 committee meetings at the next meeting done – Done, see below.

- Committee - 30 January - week before the AGM
- Committee - 3 April - week before the workshop
- Committee - 3 July
- Committee - 23 October

5. Reports

5a. President: Rob provided an overview of the BirdLife Branch phone meeting on 7 November. Key issues covered were the draft five year BirdLife Australia strategic plan that would be presented at the November Board meeting. This included a focus on campaigns and conservation action plans for woodlands birds, shorebirds, KBAs, preventing extinctions. Longer term consideration was being given to greater focus on moving the organization to a supporter model in conjunction to a membership model. Currently members receive the magazine, while donors often provide greater financial support for the organization, but receive much less in return.

Rob provided an overview of his attendance at the BirdLife Pacific meeting of BirdLife International seven partner organisations in the region. This was attended by the BirdLife International CEO who outlined plans for the World Birds Congress in Singapore in 9-13 October.

5b. Secretary: Letters sent to the Minister of Defence (Marise Payne) and to the Minister of Defence Personnel (Dan Teehan) requesting information regarding who BirdLife Shoalhaven should contact to discuss the fire management regime and its effect on the Eastern Bristlebird population on Beecroft Peninsula after two out-of-control fires within twelve months on Defence Force land. No replies as yet.

Michael Pignataro - field producer / camera operator - Essential Films - producer of video news releases, news stories, local and national plus corporate online videos - contacted BirdLife Shoalhaven to try to arrange an interview with us at Beecroft about our opinions on the fire management regime at Beecroft. I thanked him for his offer, but indicated to him that we would pursue normal channels of enquiry with those responsible for the Defence Force land and would consider his offer if the responses we received were inadequate.

Reported that 51 people have confirmed their attendance at the Phil Straw talk on December 5th, with that number expected to rise significantly.

Reported that BirdLife Shoalhaven had been involved with Ground Parrot Surveys with Dr David Bain and staff from NPWS in the Jervis Bay areas of Vincentia, Hyams Beach and Currarong, with Chris and Marley Grounds, Brett and Karen Davis, Yolande Cozijn, and Casey Gibson - an ecologist from Currarong who had emailed the branch enquiring about membership and volunteering to help in any upcoming projects.

5c. Webmaster and social media report:

Brett reported that Charles Dove has been posting photographs regularly to our Facebook page and receiving good online feedback in response. Brett has added posts on a new population of Night Parrots found in Queensland, the Spring into Sanctuary Point event attended by BirdLife Shoalhaven, and the welcome rejection of the Collingwood Beach dune management proposals.

Brett has added upcoming BirdLife Shoalhaven events to our Facebook page as "events" rather than as posts so that they appear on Facebook on their own page in a virtual calendar format. This is preferable to posting just prior to each event.

Facebook "likes" have increased from 141 in May, to 163 in August, to 187 prior to the meeting.

Twitter followers have increased from 42 to 44 to 50 in the same periods.

Karen was interviewed on ABC radio regarding the Beecroft fires and the effect they may have had on Eastern Bristlebird populations. She expressed our concern about the lack of control over the fires and their potential to change the Beecroft habitat from heathland to grassland which is unsuitable for Bristlebirds.

Brett was interviewed by the local community radio station about the upcoming Phil Straw talk and about Bar-tailed Godwits.

Brett asked the committee if they thought we needed a "radio policy" and after discussion it was agreed that we should take advantage of these opportunities as they arise without the need to consult the committee.

5d. Newsletter editor report:

The next newsletter is due for publication in mid-January. Brett reported he would be away until approximately Friday 13th January but that this should only delay the publication of the newsletter slightly.

5e. Treasurer report:

For period from 29th August to 21st November 2016

Bank Balance at 29/8/16		\$666.00
Income		
Birdlife Funding 2016	\$0.00	
Twitchathon Funds raised	\$720.95	
Sales at S/Point Spring Fair	\$37.00	\$757.95
Expenses		
Hall Hire (Dec 5 2016)	\$56.00	
Twitchathon Funds raised	\$720.95	
Meeting exps	\$0.00	
Postage	\$0.00	
Bank Fees	\$6.20	
		\$783.15
Bank Balance at 21/11/16		\$640.80

5f. Conservation Officer report :

Chris opened his report by stating that much of his report could be found on our website in either his articles and reports in our newsletter, or in his submissions which are in the Members Only area. His additional reporting concerned the two issues shown below.

Bherwerre Wetland - Chris reported that the bio-banking credits generated for the wetland had not as yet been sold, so there was no money available to council to develop the wetland area by putting in paths, signage, bird hides etc. Given BirdLife Australia's opposition to bio-banking, Chris said that having the wetland fenced and left to regenerate naturally was a good outcome anyway and that the sale of the bio-banking credits was not really critical.

Collingwood Beach Dune Management - Chris reported that Shoalhaven City Council had decided not to pursue the two options proposed on its website after a huge response in opposition from the public, conservation organisations such as ourselves, and even from Council staff. He also mentioned a "media release" from the Collingwood Beach Preservation Group (CBPG) which would lead people to believe that the NSW Legislative Council had unanimously agreed that "views" were an essential consideration for dune management at Collingwood Beach. The matter was discussed, with Rob stating that Justin Fields, Greens member of the Legislative Assembly, was appalled at the misrepresentations shown in the CBPG media release and would be engaging in follow-up action to ensure the misrepresentations was exposed. It was agreed that BirdLife Shoalhaven need not concern itself with the actions of minority groups such as the CBPG, and would only address issues when appropriate.

5g. Recent media, presentation & events: Yolande reported that she had given a presentation to the Culburra Gardening Club, re. making gardens bird-friendly and that it had been well-received. She also said that her third article in a series on local bird species had been published in the About magazine which is circulated in the Bay and Basin area.

Action 1. Following up from an offer by Matt to make a presentation on bird photography at a future Bay & Basin Camera Club meeting, Brett agreed to discuss this further with the club President, Lois Sparkes.

Rob mentioned that there was an offer to share space with Shoalhaven Landcare at their stalls at the Bundanon Field Day on 9 April and the Kangaroo Valley markets on the 4th Saturday of the month. **Action 2.** Rob will discuss the opportunity to share stalls with Shoalhaven Landcare and come back to the Committee.

6. Arrangements for talk night on 5th December - The Committee discussed preparations for our first talk night. Karen reported that the hall hire had been finalized and the pickup of the key arranged. Brett reported that we had volunteers arriving early to assist with the hall setup - chairs, PA system, and presentation hardware. Rob reported that Phil Straw's and the Mayor's attendance presence had been confirmed. Final arrangements regarding hardware and software would be made by Rob, Brett and Chris during the next fortnight prior to the talk night. It was agreed to have the talks and videos run one after the other and followed by supper and that items not be made available for sale so as not to complicate arrangements.

7. Engagement with the new Council

Rob mentioned that Chris had rightly reminded him, that while the vast majority of BirdLife Shoalhaven members would have been delighted about the Council election result, we were an apolitical organization and as such our approach to Council should not change. However, given we are likely to have more favourable hearings from an increased number of Councillors, we would need to be careful how we communicate certain issues.

8. AGM, Committee meetings and workshops next year

The date of the AGM was discussed and it was agreed that it should be held on 6 Feb.

The format of the AGM was also discussed, with agreement reached that it would just be an AGM and would not have a keynote speaker or other presentations. Rob suggested that we follow the format of the Vincentia Matters AGM with dinner at 6.30pm at the Vincentia Golf Club with everyone ordering and paying for their own meal and drinks, with food served in the meeting room. After dinner, the formal part of the AGM would be run - reports, financials, Committee elections etc. After the AGM, members would be invited to have input on priorities for next year. Rob said that given we will have our ideas together on bird walks, will have learnt lessons from our talk nights, and are now working with other groups and making presentations to local groups, this input would be very timely and worthwhile. We should conclude the AGM prior to the club closing at 9pm.

Rob proposed that we can continue with quarterly committee meetings and hold one-off meetings on specific issues, if and when we need to. The committee agreed.

Rob said that given Brett's 'work-load', there was a good argument to allocate part of his role and recruit a new Secretary, while he remained responsible for the 'web-site, IT, social media and newsletter. The option of having a Vice-President was also discussed, though it was agreed that a Committee size should be limited to nine with the new position of Secretary. **Action 3.** Brett and Rob to progress arrangements for the AGM.

The committee felt that "workshops" did not adequately describe our presentation nights and suggested that "Talks" be used instead.

- AGM - 6 Feb. - as per above plan - members only
- Talk - 10 April - members and our nature conservation friends
- Talk - 2 September - members and our nature conservation friends
- Talk - 4 December - members and our nature conservation friends

With the AGM being for members only, Rob proposed we have three workshops with keynote speakers as shown above, inviting both our members and nature conservation friends, subject to what we learn from the upcoming Phil Straw event.

The suggested dates avoid the months set for MUD Birders meetings, some of which will have keynote speakers, as was the case with the Jo Foreshaw event.

The actual dates above may be changed to accommodate the speaker.

8. BLS telescope and tripod

Brett and Karen have volunteered to be the custodians of the recently donated telescope and tripod, and to bring it to birdwatching activities when appropriate. If they are unavailable for outings where the telescope may be required, they will attempt to find an alternate custodian for the outing. The Committee agreed that lending or renting the telescope to club members for non-BLS activities would not be appropriate.

Action 4. Brett to write a letter of thanks to the donor of the telescope and tripod.

9. Feedback on Sanctuary Point community event

The Sanctuary Point community event in October had a low turn-out but we had positive feedback at the BLS stall, including interest from a school teacher, which was referred to Jodie Dunn, and the leader of a girl guides group.

Following the event our volunteers at the BLS stall suggested to Rob various ways to improve how we run these types of events. The papers included their comments and Rob's proposed responses.

It was suggested that we get a large folding table and a gazebo, and get our web address printed on the BLS banner. Rob suggested that the expense of all of these could not be justified, given the number of events we will attend.

It was also suggested that we get containers to display items on sale and giveaway items to keep them separate from each other. Rob agreed this had merit and proposed he look for solutions at Officeworks, and believed that \$20 should cover this. Rob also suggested we buy a see-through cashbox, which can be "locked" to a table leg, which are available for \$25.

Another suggestion was for flyers that could be handed out, containing information about the branch, our contact details, and website, Facebook and Twitter addresses. Brett and Karen agreed to update and reprint the flyers that were used when BLS started.

The last suggestion was to print out copies of the latest BLS newsletter to hand out. Rob suggested that we have a couple of copies printed and available in a folder for display purposes only - i.e. we do not hand them out. He agreed to arrange this.

The meeting agreed with these approaches. **Action 5a.** Rob to advise the volunteers on the above outcomes from the Committee meeting. **5b.** Rob to purchase items for events from Officeworks. **Action 5c.** Brett and Karen to update and reprint BLS flyers.

10. Other business

A discussion about possible gifts for guest presenters should be considered for each talk. In relation to Phil Straw, Rob said he purchase a mug with future gifts decided on a case by case basis.

11. Next meeting - 30 January 2017 - one week before the AGM

Outstanding action items:

29 August 2016 meeting

Action 2 - Brett and Chris to liaise to set up an email address and e-signature for Chris, as BLS Conservation Officer.

Action 3 - Brett and Rob agreed to look to review the content of the web-site and agree a plan for any potential changes.

Action 6 - Rob to develop a bird walks business case for presentation to Council and possible funders.

21 November meeting

Action 1. Following up from an offer by Matt to make a presentation on bird photography at a future Bay & Basin Camera Club meeting, Brett agreed to discuss this further with the club President, Lois Sparkes.

Action 2. Rob will discuss the opportunity to share stalls with Shoalhaven Landcare at the Bundanon Field Day on 9 April 2017 and at the Kangaroo Valley markets on the 4th Saturday of the month and come back to the Committee.

Action 3. Brett and Rob to progress arrangements for the AGM.

Action 4. Brett to write a letter of thanks to the donor of the telescope and tripod.

Action 5a. Rob to advise the volunteers at the BLS stall at the Sanctuary Point community day in October on the outcomes from the Committee meeting. **5b.** Rob to purchase the agreed items for future events and arrange for copies of the newsletter to be printed. **5c.** Brett and Karen to update and reprint the BLS flyer.