

**Minutes of BirdLife Shoalhaven AGM
6th February 2017
at Vincentia Golf Club**



birdlife
SHOALHAVEN

Meeting Opened at: 7:07pm

Attendance: 30

Apologies: Phil Craven, Pauline Cook, Geoff and Robyn Tassell, Hugh Capes, Carolyn Ridge, Valda Corrigan, Mike and Rose Clear, John and Gill Souter, Carla Jackett, Sue and Stan Brown, Matt Jones, Marlene Grounds

Acceptance of Minutes of Last Meeting: Moved Brett Davis, Seconded Barry Virtue - Carried

Business Arising: No business arising

Correspondence In and Out

Because of the nature of BirdLife Shoalhaven, major correspondence is handled by individual committee members, primarily our President and Conservation Officer, most of it being in the form of submissions which are detailed on our website, along with any relevant responses - and is freely available to our members at all times. Any additional key correspondence will be mentioned in the reports later in the meeting. As a result, there is really no need for correspondence in and out to be reported by the secretary at the Annual General Meeting, and this agenda item will probably be dropped from all future AGMs.

President's Report: Rob Dunn

The banner on the BirdLife Shoalhaven web-site, proudly asserts that we are "the voice for birds in the Shoalhaven". Are we being heard and are our views making a difference? Has our voice got louder and stronger?

Let's take the first and more difficult question first.

Chris Grounds' Conservation Officer Report and the conservation articles in our newsletters highlight the increasing number of issues that need to be responded to.

This work falls largely upon a small number of individuals within BLS and other community groups. I have only realised what this entails in my involvement in the Save Collingwood Beach. This has been going on for at least four years and has a long way to go still. If you compare that to Heritage Estate or Lake Wollumboola, four years is nothing!

But in 2016 has all this work made a difference? Yes, good progress made on a number of our campaigns. But we still need to be a huge effort in 2017 to ensure that over time these all become permanent wins and that decisions, many of which are not even on our radar yet, go the right way.

For this to happen, we need more people involved in research and conservation, learning about our birds and getting involved.

This leads me to the second, more easy question. Has our voice got louder and stronger?

We achieved a milestone statistic at the end of last year. BLS now has over 200 members, up a third from when we started three years ago, and we have started a new list of supporters and potential members, which is already at 50. We have taken several steps to make sure that these numbers keep heading in the right direction.

In December 100 people came to hear Phil Straw and Mayor Findley speak at the first of our talks in a series entitled 'Nature Conservation through Birds'. We sent the invitation out to other nature conservation groups' members, as even if they do not become BirdLife members, they will still be able to spread the word on BLS and the good and not so good news about our birds. We are planning a second talk in this series on 10 April, focusing on woodland birds, with more in the pipe-line.

We have also been speaking at other community group meetings and looking to expand our reach through local media. Yolande has "trialled" her "Birds in Backyards" talk in the Jervis Bay & Basin area and is backing this up with articles in the local media. She is always looking for new 'gigs', so please get in touch if you can help. One event led to new supporters, attendees at the talk in December and new members. Several of you give talks and write for the local media, which is great. If you can also say "to learn more check out www.birdlifeshoalhaven.org", it will help our birds even more.

Last year we ran bird stalls at a couple of community gatherings and learnt how to get even more mileage from the time that our members put into this. So far, we have only done this in the Jervis Bay & Basin area, but we see this as a great way to build our supporter base across the Shoalhaven. We will be running a stall at a public event at Bundanon on 9 April, sharing space with Shoalhaven Landcare, and anyone who wants to help out please let me know.

MUD Birders and Shoalhaven Birders continued to be really active. MUD Birders recorded 157 birds in the year, including Capertee Valley trip. We have also started to expand on this with additional bird walks advertised through the newsletter. Brett and Karen have run a few and it is great that one of our members, Hugh Capes is running one in Tomerong on 25 March. I am sure Brett and Karen would welcome volunteers to run other one-off walks.

More BLS talks, more talks to community groups, more media, more stalls and more bird walks leading to more members and supporters can only make us bigger, louder and stronger. This is certainly the plan.

Many thanks to the Committee who have all contributed in different ways to the success of 2017.

& to our members who have and will continue to do good deeds as part of conservation battles, projects, like the NPWS Shorebirds Recovery program, running trips with MUD Birders and Shoalhaven Birders, articles in the local press and much more. This all goes towards bird conservation, will spread the word about our birds and on good days let us have fun doing it.

After the election of the Committee, I would like to update you on our plans for 2017.

Conservation Officer's Report: Chris Grounds

I will preface my report by pointing to the major C.O. reports from our 2016 newsletters and BLS records in the Conservation section of our website. This report is thus a reflection of key developments and matters.

I would like to offer a thank you to our new, extended committee for their support and assistance. On many occasions BLS worked well beyond a part-time, volunteer, community organization.

The year 2016 was in many ways an exceptional year in conservation and no less so for BLS. There have been so many issues at all levels. At times the conservation agenda was relentless, especially for the people involved in actions in various local organizations. And this in the hottest year in human history. Given the way this year has started 2017 will certainly be as challenging.

That challenge can be met through our growing BLS network developed over the last three years. This enhanced network is a mark of our progress and perhaps one highlight of our year. It is also a reflection of a necessary, maturing of the conservation movement in the Shoalhaven.

A fundamental conservation challenge of developing a Shoalhaven-wide perspective is being met and the new committee reflects that. That is a key element of our agenda as we are a Shoalhaven conservation group but still needs developing for the Shoalhaven itself as most conservation groups are operating on specific issues and sites. Our BLS advantage is that we have regional, state and a national connection within our organization.

The success and future of conservation efforts requires both this network and perspective.

As always, Lake Wollumboola has been the subject of a number of priority submissions and reports in our newsletters, which attest to still unresolved planning issues related to Halloran development proposals for the lake catchment. It is hoped 2017 may bring this resolution in part or whole.

Dune Vegetation management as it involves Collingwood Beach and vegetation vandalism was and still is a critical matter but this has grown over the summer to be a clear Shoalhaven wide issue as Council's own media releases confirm. The defeat of Council's plan as a result of huge community pressure was a landmark achievement though a new plan is set for release in June 2017.

Shoalhaven Tourism continues to escalate as an environmental issue. The relentless spin around visitor numbers, money and continuing growth as unqualified positives arising from tourism quarters is pushing the environment to its limits. Cruise ships, "Unspoilt Shoalhaven", "Pet Friendly" Shoalhaven are all concepts that must be challenged.

The Heritage Estate has now been blocked to all but emergency vehicles and trail bikes banned and the last round of offers to remaining landholders is being made.

BLS has contributed significantly to the development of the Bherwerre Wetland Concept Plan and to an independently produced a Bherwerre Wetland Teaching Resources Kit for Sanctuary Point Public School, part of which was a photograph catalogue and database of bird species at the site. (The Plan is going to the BV Forum meeting Feb. 20 and then to Exhibition.)

BLS challenged the Council approved Development Application for a Seaplane operation on the Shoalhaven River and floodplain area.

BLS was a party with JBRA and NPA to an interesting application to the state government to consider transferring residual state forest areas into the Jervis Bay National Park.

BLS provided a submission on the Coastal Zone Management Plan stressing the failure to provide adequate recognition to birdlife.

BLS also provided input on the Council Development Control Plan Tree and Vegetation Management, stressing that the role and importance of trees as bird habitat was not being recognized. This is a point that BLS must pursue as such recognition is not yet part of the Council culture.

Another dimension to bird conservation is always the work of many of our members in NPWS Shorebird Project. The erosional impact of the June 2016 East Coast Low and the reconfiguration of coastal morphology and associated nesting sites has been a fascinating lesson in the kind of natural challenges presented to threatened species.

Jodi Dunn reported the fledging of 3 Hoodie chicks on Rennies Beach still to be seen flying about and one chick on Wairo Beach from the Tabourie Lake pair. There were also 2 chicks on Racecourse Beach so close to flying and another 2 chicks at Inyadda Beach at Manyana / Bandalong. The Chicks on Murramarang Beach at Bawley Point but are now reported as gone. Jodi indicated lots of handwritten signs up asking dog walkers to leash their dogs. Most Pied Oystercatchers are finishing up, with many chicks fledging along the south coast in the last month. We still have a chick at Batemans Bay Marina. The chick at Greenpatch was lost.

The Little Terns are nesting at Lake Conjola with about 40 breeding pairs though it has not been a good year at Lake Wollumboola with site changes in beach morphology on the open lake.

The shift in the politics of council after the election has given cause to hope for better things environmentally but it will be a long and winding road. The Councillors' refusal to review Sea level Rise is a serious concern with long term implications for acknowledgement of the impact of climate change on shorebirds in particular.

The two special community evenings run by BLS were each a significant contribution to the conservation cause with the conservation documentary "Understorey" film screening and Phil Straw's migratory bird lecture both attracting and pleasing quite large attendances.

To our members: if you have a conservation interest item or piece of information please forward it to me. It will be of some degree of help and maybe even critical as we all maintain our vigilance for the conservation of birds and their habitats.

Treasurer's Report:

Karen Davis

INCOME AND EXPENSES 2016

| | | |
|--------------------------|----|--------|
| Bank Balance at 1/1/2016 | \$ | 743.60 |
|--------------------------|----|--------|

Income

| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Twitchathon funds raised | 720.95 |
| Misc item sales | 131.00 |
| Talk entry donations | 136.00 |
| Hall hire refund | 90.00 |
| Birdlife Funding | 0.00 |
| | 1077.95 |

Expenses

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Hall Hire | 206.00 |
| Website | 71.76 |
| Twitchathon funds tfr to head office | 720.95 |
| Meeting exps | 111.84 |
| Postage | 0.00 |
| Bank Fees | 9.80 |
| | 1120.35 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Cashbook Balance at 31/12/2016 | 701.20 |
|--------------------------------|--------|

| | | |
|--------------------------|------|-------|
| Add: Unpresented Cheques | # 11 | 75.00 |
|--------------------------|------|-------|

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|--------|
| Bank Balance at 31 / 12 / 2016 | \$ | 776.20 |
|--------------------------------|----|--------|

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was moved by Karen Davis, seconded by Yolande Cozijn – Carried

Webmaster's Report

Brett Davis

Changes to the website have been largely cosmetic, with the addition of some images on the Home page, and a link to Wildlife Rescue South Coast on every page for visitors seeking help with injured birds.

Our Facebook page goes from strength to strength, with "Likes" rising from 131 last year to 216 this year, an increase of 65%. If you have not looked at the Facebook page recently, you will have missed fantastic images from Charles Dove featuring Mistletoe Birds, Beautiful Firetails, Crested Shrike-tits and Glossy Black Cockatoos. You will also have missed the announcement that we are partnering with other community organisations in the Save Collingwood Beach campaign, a report about the Inland Dotterel that appeared at Shoalhaven Heads recently, and a link to an article about Night Parrots on the ABC website where you could hear a Night Parrot's call! And all that has been posted since Xmas, so I recommend that you all "like" our FB page and visit regularly.

Our Twitter page basically echoes our Facebook page, but despite this our Twitter followers have increased 33% in the past year from 39 to 52. You would do well to become a follower of the BirdLife Shoalhaven Twitter page and our Facebook page so that you will receive all the latest news from the branch as quickly as possible.

Newsletter Editor's Report

Brett Davis

The newsletter continues to be well received. A new feature begun in the Summer newsletter is "Web Watch" which contains brief summaries of articles of interest to bird conservationists. If you find anything on the web that you think is worth sharing, please send links to Chris Grounds or myself for inclusion in the next newsletter - or perhaps even on our Facebook page if time is of the essence.

We have some fantastic bird photographers within the branch, and over the next couple of years I intend producing an article featuring one of those photographers in each newsletter - including of course, some of their best images. The first photographer featured will be Brian O'Leary, and I am also hoping to feature Sue Tolley, Ian Brown, Chris Grounds, Warren Wilson, Duade Paton, Lachlan Hall, Matt Jones and Graeme Chapman, and apologies if I have left your name off the list - let me know if you'd like to be included.

As always, contributions of articles and photos are always appreciated and can be sent to me at any time.

Approval of minor changes to Mission Statement and Working Arrangements Rob Dunn

Rob explained the governance arrangements for branches as part of BirdLife Australia, and explained that, while a branch's Mission Statement and Working Arrangements needed to be based on a template from national office, they may be tailored to individual needs and situations. Following a review of BLS's governance some minor changes were now being proposed by the Committee, including the branch's values to line up with a review by BirdLife Australia. Any changes to these documents needed to be approved by the members at an AGM. Rob then detailed the changes to those two documents and moved that those changes be adopted formally. This was seconded by Yolande Cozijn and carried. The revised Mission Statement and Working Arrangements are attached to these minutes and can be found in the member's section of the web-site.

General Business: None

Election of Committee Members Rob Dunn

Rob explained that because only one nomination had been received for each committee position, there was no need for an election to decide committee positions, and he announced the new committee as follows -

President - Rob Dunn

Vice President (new position) - Matt Jones

Secretary - Kim Touzel

Treasurer - Karen Davis

Conservation Officer - Chris Grounds

Media Officer (new title) - Yolande Cozijn

Webmaster & Social Media (new position & title) - Brett Davis

General Committee - Barry Virtue

General Committee - Mike Jefferis

Plans for 2017 Rob Dunn

Rob mentioned two issues that had recently come to the Committee's attention.

Firstly, the upgraded Birds Atlas portal and a new App had now been released. He stressed that this would certainly not change those members and groups using eBird or Atlas of Living Australia databases, but as a branch of the national organisation, the Committee would need to consider how the upgraded system is promoted, supported and administered for the Shoalhaven.

Secondly, Cllr. John Levett has invited Bill Handke, President of Canberra Indian Mynah Action Group, to speak to Council on the possibility of setting up an Indian Mynah humane reduction program in the Shoalhaven. Rob commented that the Committee had not looked at the issue in any detail, but will be following developments and options for BLS.

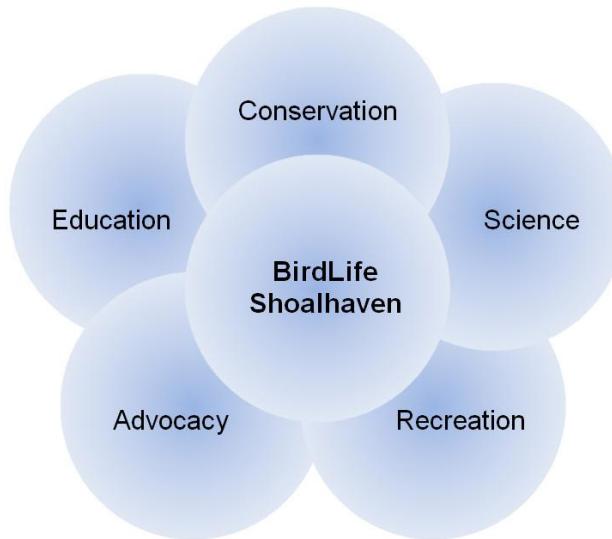
Rob concluded the AGM by detailing our plans for the rest of the year, as more BLS talks, more talks to community groups, more media, more stalls and more bird walks, leading to more members and supporters.

He then finished by announcing that discussions with Council's Tourism Manager, Coralie Bell, had led to their commitment to the promotion of bird-watching and bird walks through the production of a re-vamped Shoalhaven Bird Walks brochure. They had committed to meet all costs of design, printing and distribution and were currently working with us on the selection of walks and photographs. It was hoped that the new brochures would be available in a few months with further promotion of birds through an upgrade to the tourism section of the Council web-site.

Close of Meeting: 7:48pm

BirdLife Shoalhaven Mission Statement

Our vision: A bright future for Australian birds



Our mission: To give Australian birds a bright future by finding solutions to the threats they face and by inspiring action to ensure birds and their habitats flourish.

Goal 1

Improve
conservation
outcomes

- provide a local face and voice for BirdLife Australia
- provide a focus on regional and local conservation matters and advocate for the conservation of birds and their habitats
- conduct research and conservation programs and participate in BirdLife Australia projects
- champion local conservation causes

Goal 2

Promote
the appreciation and
understanding of birds

- encourage and support the activities of members who are actively participating in BirdLife Australia's programs and other bird projects
- promote and foster recreational bird watching
- organise and participate in outings, activities and community events of interest to members, their guests and the community
- pursue the education of members and the community in birds and their conservation to assist development of their interest, understanding and participation

Goal 3

Build
a strong BirdLife Australia
and BirdLife Shoalhaven

- engage and inform all members
- grow the member and supporter base by promoting membership of BirdLife Australia
- build networks and connections with other BirdLife branches and like-minded local and regional conservation organisations and groups

HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

- by the increase in the membership of BirdLife Shoalhaven
- by attendance at outings and talks
- by the number of events and activities undertaken

BirdLife Shoalhaven Working Arrangements

1. These working arrangements are based on the BirdLife Australia (BirdLife) Branch Working Arrangements and only cover key issues relevant to BirdLife Shoalhaven (BLS).
2. These working arrangements will be reviewed by the Committee and any changes approved by the Members at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Special General Meeting (SGM).
3. BLS must operate in accordance with the BirdLife Branch Working Arrangements.
4. Under the Constitution of BirdLife, BLS cannot have the status of a separate legal entity.
5. BLS will adopt the following values when conducting its business:
 - Passion - We bring people together around a love of nature.
 - Excellence - Science and knowledge is at the centre of everything we do.
 - Leadership - We empower and inspire people to lead with courage and purpose.
 - Collaboration – We embrace diversity and work in partnership with mutual respect.
 - Integrity – Our success is based on experience, honesty, trust and fairness.
 - Impact – We think globally, lead nationally and act locally.
6. All BirdLife Members who reside in the Shoalhaven Local Government area will be deemed to be members of BLS, unless they choose to opt out. BirdLife Members who reside outside the area may also register as a member of BLS.
7. No membership fees are payable to become a BLS Member.
8. BLS Members are eligible to participate in the activities of BLS, to receive communications and nominate and vote for the Committee.
9. Visiting members of BirdLife from other Branches shall be eligible to attend meetings or other Branch functions but cannot nominate candidates or vote.
10. The Committee will consist of President, Secretary and Treasurer (at a minimum) and shall be elected annually at the BLS AGM.
11. Meetings of the Committee will be held four times a year by whatever means it sees as appropriate.
12. The timing of the BLS AGM will be set by the Committee but not later than the end of February. The AGM will cover reports on activities of the Branch, approval of the financial report for the year ending 31 December, election of the Committee for the coming year, review of the operating plan and working arrangements and any other business.
13. The Secretary shall give notice of the AGM and call for nominations to the Committee at least 40 days before the AGM. Completed nomination forms may be lodged at

- least 28 days prior to the AGM. The Secretary must distribute the agenda and papers, including names of all Members nominated no less than 21 days prior to the AGM and include procedures for lodging proxy votes.
14. If there are insufficient numbers of nominations, nominations can be taken from any Member present at the meeting. If more than one Member has nominated for the same position, the outcome shall be determined by ballot. All proxies should be in writing and received by the Secretary at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
15. If a Committee member position becomes vacant between AGMs, the Committee may co-opt a Member to fill the vacancy.
16. The Committee shall have the authority to appoint no more than two additional persons to the Committee for a period up to the next AGM for the purpose of providing advice on a specified matter, or to fill newly created committee positions.
17. All Committee Members will hold office from one AGM to another and may be re-elected.
18. The Committee may call a SGM to discuss any urgent matter and shall be bound to upon receiving a written request signed by at least 5% of the Members or by the BirdLife Board. The meeting agenda and papers shall be given to Members no less than 14 days before the meeting.
19. Quorums for meetings shall be ten Members for AGMs and SGMs and four Members for Committee meetings.
20. The Committee will liaise with BirdLife National Office on all operational issues. The Committee must advise the National Office of the receipt of all donations and submission of proposals to fund research, conservation or education projects. A submission for reasonable Branch expenses may be submitted to the National Office. BLS will need the approval of the National Office to set up a bank account. The Treasurer will be responsible for receiving, paying and handling funds and keeping the records of BLS's finances. The annual financial accounts must be approved at the AGM and signed by the President and another Committee member, other than the Treasurer prior to submission to the National Office.
21. No Member shall receive any pecuniary interest from BLS, unless the Committee approves the reimbursement of a Member's expenses incurred in fulfilling BLS's objectives.
22. The Committee, or Members delegated by the Committee, may arrange fundraising, periodic meetings, talks, functions, birdwatching outings and campouts and other activities, for purposes that help achieve the BLS objective's, with all members allowed to attend, plus other persons approved at the discretion of the Committee
23. All BLS materials must be produced with the BirdLife Shoalhaven logo.
24. All key BirdLife Shoalhaven correspondence on local conservation causes must be approved by a majority of the Committee.