

GLOUCESTER ENVIRONMENT GROUP

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 5 December 2024 at 5pm in the Meeting Room at The Roundabout Inn Church St Gloucester 2422

Present: John Watts, Sue Watts, Dianne Montague, Janine Phillips, Terry Hardwick, Brian Hardwick, Megan Dewsnap, Tibor Kovats, Penny Drake-Brockman, Pippa Robinson, Steve Robinson, Megan Benson, Pat Burrows, Louise Duff, Rod Eckels, Sue Sedgewick

Acknowledgement of traditional owners: John Watts

Apologies: Neil Thorne, Chris Russell, Peter Moon, Carolyn Davies, Sue Thomas

Minutes of Previous AGM: Janine Phillips

*Minutes of the previous AGM held on Tuesday 19 September 2023 have been circulated and read and unanimously accepted.

(moved: Janine Phillips; seconded: Penny Drake-Brockman)

President's welcome and Report: John Watts

GLOUCESTER ENVIRONMENT GROUP-PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2024 AGM

I would like to begin my report by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Gathang speaking peoples, and pay my respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging.

Before writing this report, I re-read the last few year's President's reports, and saw that they said following:

"I have been involved with many organisations over the years and sat on a few boards and committees, but I have never had the pleasure of being involved with a group as harmonious and as effective as the GEG committee. Each member of the committee had the same motivation and shared the same vision, which was to work hard for a better environment for the Gloucester area. So, my sincere thanks to all members of the committee for their great work. Being president is a very easy task when there is such a great and supportive committee who do all the hard work."

I am delighted to report that nothing has changed in that regard, and I repeat my thanks for the great efforts of every member of the committee, but also all other Environment Group members who have been involved in some way in our various activities.

Our membership numbers have remained stable with some people moving away and others joining. We presently have 129 financial members.

You will be receiving reports from various committee members who have taken on and run with various tasks, and they will fill you in about all the good things that has been happening with our financial management, bushwalks, Rivercare, Koalaways, Feasts, and our latest project, which is seed gathering and germination. My thanks to all those who will be giving their reports.

Last year I made particular mention of Penny's amazing work in relation to Rivercare, and the fact that we were looking for her replacement. My great thanks to Lou Duff who stepped up to take on the role of Rivercare co-ordinator. She has clearly brought her professional skills to the task.

My thanks also to Marnie Johnson and David Jenkins for agreeing to co-ordinate the new seed saving and germination project. For both Rivercare and Koalaways it has been difficult to source locally grown native trees, and shrubs and this project aims to help with that problem. My thanks to Gloucester Creatives for providing us with the use of part of their property to use for seed raising. The next working bee and workshop is on-site tomorrow and 9am.

Thanks also to Pat for starting the new birdwatching group which is very popular. My thanks to both Janine and Terry for their great work as Secretary and Treasurer. Secretary is such an important role to keep the wheels turning and to keep all members informed about what is happening, and Terry was able to keep us on the financial straight and narrow. Although Janine is stepping aside as secretary, she has kindly agreed to be Sue's assistant looking after membership.

Koalaways has really continued to expand during this past year as Di will report. It is proving to be such a worthwhile and much needed local activity. There is quite a waiting list of local landowners wanting to have us plant on their properties which is a great sign, although as I'm sure Di will mention our capacity to meet the demand is limited and some thought and planning about the best way ahead will be necessary.

I would also like to thank MidCoast Council for their support of Koalaways, especially the help and support we have received from Mat Bell, Anthony Marchment and Caitlin Orr.

Thanks to Tibor for looking after the walks and to Sue for her great efforts to promote us on social media and organising the very popular feasts.

We have made a number of submissions to government and the Council in relation to such things as proposed subdivisions, and gravel quarries etc where we have perceived some adverse environmental consequences. Megan and Tibor have been particularly helpful in this regard. As we continue to witness tardiness from many of our public authorities in relation to the environment, I anticipate that the need for local groups such as ours to keep at them will only increase.

Finally, thanks to those who have agreed to be part of the committee for the year ahead. I look forward to the year as we continue to grow and to further develop our activities and professionalism in a number of areas.

Thanks,

John Watts

5 November 2024

*John thanked the committee for all their hard work and cooperation

*Report unanimously accepted

(moved: John Watts: seconded: Sue Watts)

Treasurer's Report: Terry Hardwick

GLOUCESTER ENVIRONMENT GROUP INC.
ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT for FINANCIAL YEAR 2023 – 2024

GENERAL ACCOUNT: Regional Aust Bank account balance as at 1 July, 2023
\$8179.26

<u>INCOME:</u>	116 Memberships	1,740.00
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Donations at March 24 Feast	120.00
T-shirt sales	10.00
Refund from Gloucester Landscapes	<u>100.00</u>

1,970.00

<u>EXPENSES:</u>	Donations – Aussie Ark Manning River Turtle	300.00
	Vicki Harris Xmas Community Dinner	200.00
	Environmental Defenders Office	120.00
	NCC - - Annual membership fee	90.00
	P/L and Volunteer Insurance	415.00
	DFT – Annual Return Fee	54.00
	AGM Hall hire	45.00
	DMT – Rivercare Trailer registration	75.00
	Printer ink reimbursement to Secretary	146.90
	Property Search (Rivercare information)	109.90
	Camera Stand for group photos	39.00
	Artwork for Gifts: IWD and Penny D-B	260.00
	T'fer KoalaWays (overpayment to Glos Landscapes)	<u>100.00</u>
		<u>1,954.80</u>

Regional Australia Bank account balance as at 30 June, 2024	\$
<u>8,194.46</u>	

<u>RIVERCARE ACCOUNT:</u>	Regional Australia Bank account balance as at 1 July, 2023	\$
435.80		

<u>INCOME:</u>	Nil	
<u>EXPENSES:</u>	Tools and tubestock	98.23

Regional Australia Bank account balance as at 30 June, 2024	\$
<u>337.57</u>	

<u>KOALAWAY ACCOUNT:</u>	Regional Australia Bank account balance as at 1 July, 2023	\$
533.74		

<u>INCOME:</u>	From General A/c for Refund for overpayment	<u>100.00</u>
<u>EXPENSES:</u>	Tubestock	32.00
	Tools	58.40
	Flags (guides for planting days)	30.00
	Glos Landscapes for pre-planting mowing	100.00
	Glos Landscapes – double payment	<u>100.00</u>
		<u>320.40</u>

Regional Australia Bank account balance as at 30 June, 2024	\$
<u>313.34</u>	

RAB Balances as at AGM held on 5 December 2024 -

General Account	\$7,109.66
Rivercare	\$ 337.57
KoalaWays	\$ 66.60
Koala Seedling Project	\$ 392.87

Terry Hardwick,
GEG Treasurer.

*Report unanimously accepted
(moved: Terry Hardwick; seconded: Dianne Montague)

Walks Co-ordinator Report: Tibor Kovats

GEG AGM 2024 WALKS COORDINATOR REPORT

Our last AGM was in September 2023.

Following September 2023 9 monthly walks were completed. 2 walks events had to be postponed.

Highlights were, January's walk to Careys Peak via Junction Rocks with 15 walkers; Booti Booti in February with 13 walkers; a combined tree planting and walk in Waulinbakh Forest Sanctuary in co-operation with Council and AWC (15 attendees); as well as several other walks with 6 – 8 walkers in Tapin Tops, Gloucester Tops, Talawah, Rocky Crossing and Saltwater NP.

We have a good selection of walks to choose from and next year we will have the opportunity to expand further with a new Coordinator on board.

Thanks to those members who have stepped up to lead.

Tibor Kovats
Walks Coordinator
5th December 2024

*Report unanimously accepted
(moved: Tibor Kovats; seconded: Steve Robinson)

RiverCare Co-ordinator Report: Louise Duff

RiverCare met 4th Friday of the month with about ten regular volunteers.

Penny's last day as Co-ordinator was Friday 22nd March. Penny's commitment was celebrated with a tree planting in District Park and a beautiful gift hand-made by Neil Thorne and presented at the Autumn Feast. Louise stepped into the role commencing 4th Friday in April.

We had two tree planting days, 28 June and 4 October, planting over 200 endemic plants.

The plantings focussed on vegetating the billabongs behind the pool and Minimbah garden, stabilising the riverbank and underplanting the aging River Oaks to establish the next generation as these reach senescence. Species planted included River Oaks, Sandpaper Fig, Prickly Paperbark, Callistemon salignus and White Cedar.

We weeded to maintain all RiverCare planting sites, nurturing natives and especially tackling the dreaded Balloon Vine, releasing many struggling native trees and shrubs from its grip.

In all RiverCare contributed around 200 volunteer hours across the year.

Thank you Penny and all participants for their consistent efforts. Thanks also to the MidCoast Council parks team who provided safety inductions, tools buckets, a new brush cutter, and a 20L drum of glyphosate. The Natural Systems team supported our Spring planting day with a load of mulch. Thanks also to Janine for sending out our notices.

*Report unanimously accepted

(moved: Louise Duff; seconded: Sue Sedgewick)

KoalaWays Co-ordinator Report: Dianne Montague

KoalaWays Report AGM 2024

Once again the KoalaWays program has been a success for 2024. It's been a busy year with seven plantings, resulting in the planting of 1,460 trees and understory. As usual we had a break in summer and winter. The program includes visiting the properties to work out a plan and coordinating the day with Anthony Marchment from Council. We have had the opportunity this year to have Caitlin and Anthony visit some of the properties which has resulted in more accurate selection of plants and ideas for planting. It has also meant that Council have a more comprehensive knowledge of the Gloucester area and the desire for regeneration from properties owners. Many of the owners are new to Gloucester and in joining GEG have had the opportunity to mix with like minded people.

The highlight for the year was the 'Tweet, Croak, Grunt' workshop. All the feedback was positive with glowing reports for the presenters and of course the morning tea. Thank you to all the helpers prior to and on the day. Such a success. The presenters don't charge for the day which is very generous. I sent photos and a thank you to them all and received positive emails in return.

Koala monitoring has also been a highlight this year. Through GEG and KoalaWays, Council and NPWS have had a point of contact to obtain information and access to properties. This has resulted in greater knowledge of koala numbers in the area and therefore awareness from Govt. that we are a known koala hotspot. We will encourage this to continue in 2025, particularly the reporting of sightings.

There continues to be some problems with plants. They can be old, pot bound, and not a good selection. Hopefully this will improve over time. It will be a bonus when the seed saving program is productive.

2024

The demand for our service continues, just by word of mouth. The size of the properties to plant has also increased, which means an increase in the number of plants. We now average 200 to 300 per site. Regeneration of larger properties is more satisfying than the smaller plots but it comes with a greater need for workers. As the volunteers for KoalaWays are generally the volunteers for Rivercare it's a big ask.

Anthony Marchment, Environmental Officer, Natural Assets, assures me that Council will continue to support our program next year. They believe that KoalaWays is a positive asset to the area, particularly when most of the funding and support goes to the coast. Without our service the work to regenerate in the area will largely discontinue. For 2025 there are ten possible properties on the list.

*Report unanimously accepted
(moved: Dianne Montague; seconded: Tibor Kovats)

Feasts and Social Report: Sue Watts

SEASONAL FEASTS

These continue to be well attended and enjoyed. An average of 20-30 members come along. With the exception of our recent Christmas Party event where an overwhelming 50 members attended. Numbers continue to grow and feasts continue to be well supported. The food is always wonderful, diverse and generous. Feasts are a great way for members to get together with others they may not see at all the working events we hold each year. They are a time to celebrate and enjoy each other in a relaxed atmosphere. Thank you to all who offer their homes each season, it is a big job and very much appreciated.

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

Another highlight this year was our IWD luncheon held in the Reception room at the Avon Valley Hotel. A huge success. This was our first one and proved to be so popular that plans are already underway for the next one on Saturday March 8 2025. It is a great way for women to celebrate women, enjoy a delicious luncheon and hear an inspiring speaker.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Continues to be a good way to connect with members and excellent for event reminders.

Sue Watts

Social Co-ordinator 5.12.2024

*Report unanimously accepted

(moved: Sue Watts; seconded: Dianne Montague)

*Sue has booked Copeland Tops SCA education facility for our GEG Autumn Feast on Sunday 30 March 2025

*Sue asked for some new venues for our 2025 Feasts.

Sue Sedgewick kindly offered her property in Waukivory to host our Spring Feast.

Seed saving Report: Marnie Johnson and David Jenkins

REPORT OF GEG KOALA SEEDLINGS PROJECT

David Jenkins has agreed to be the GEG Koala Seedlings Project (KSP) co-ordinator with Marnie Johnson assisting him with the development of the seedling's nursery. The project aims to grow as many local koala seedlings as possible to support the koala tree planting project. (We plan to grow other native plants as well).

Our first working bee and workshop were a success with 12 members assisting with the clean-up and 6 preparing wicking buckets and planting seeds. A small group of interested members visited Bucca Wauka and collected a couple thousand seeds of E. Canaliculata (grey gum) and Melaleuca styphelioides. We planted some of the grey gum and the seedlings are growing and almost ready to pot up. Misty Ridge has donated sufficient buckets, tubes, seeds and nursery supplies to get this project started. David, Marnie and Terry have collected/donated materials to construct plant stands, a shelter, storage bays and obtained some chairs and other bits and pieces. Terry Hardwick was tasked with sourcing seed collecting equipment and she has obtained an expanding pole secateur and other gear.

The next seed collecting day will be at Honeyeaters near Copeland and once seed is ready for collection a date will be set. At our next working bee, we aim to construct the bays, put down weedmat, dig holes and concrete in the shelter posts and maybe start building a plant stand. At the workshop we will do a quick review of the previous workshop for those that couldn't make it, make some seed raising mixes, plant seeds and more, if time permits. It is envisaged that members once confident, will be able to come to the 'nursery' anytime that suits them and help with plantings, watering and lots more.

Initially Marnie is aiming to be there every Friday (8-10 am). We plan to make it a friendly, relaxed and welcoming environment - as well as productive. We hope many members will come along whenever possible and share their knowledge and maybe learn something new. This will be a rewarding project for all of us.

David and Marnie

*Report unanimously accepted

(moved: John Watts; seconded: Dianne Montague

Bird watching report: Pat Burrows

GEG Birdwatching Group Report, December 5, 2024 (AGM).

The GEG Birdwatching group commenced in March 2024 with an introductory session at Penny's place, where we learned about equipment and resources. This included information about the most suitable binoculars, the pros and cons of various bird books available online and in print, resources available to record bird sightings online for use in environmental research or for recreational birders to understand what species are likely to be seen in various locations, and miscellaneous other resources.

Since then, we have had outings each month on the second Sunday. Usually there are around 5-8 people participating – a small but enthusiastic group. Each month we have invariably seen or heard birds not recorded in the previous months' outings, much to the excitement of our group.

So far, we have visited the following locations:

Date	Location	Species	Observers	Notable species
April 14	District Park	23	8	Rufous Whistler, Yellow and Yellow-Rumped Thornbills
May	No outing due to weather			
June 9	Cemetery Fairbairns Road Dam	17 11	5	Comb-Crested Jacana, Tawny Grassbird, White-Throated Gerygone, Grey-Crowned Babbler
July	No outing due to weather			
August 11	Woods Road property	47		Crested Shrike-Tit, Jacky Winter, 2 kinds of Pardalote
September 8	Glen Road property	21	6	Black-Shouldered Kite, 7 kinds of Honeyeater
October 13	Cattai Wetland	40	4	5 kinds of Cuckoo, many waterbirds and bush birds
November 10	Copeland Tops SCA	25	10	Noisy Pitta, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Spectacled Monarch
December 8	Gloucester Tops			

Our sightings are all recorded on Birddata, a database managed by Birdlife Australia and used for research purposes. We are thus contributing to research supporting conservation. In addition, the sightings from our visit to Copeland Tops were reported to Coralie at the NPWS, and we have been requested to repeat the survey each year.

Each month, I publish a link to our survey on Birddata, both in the GEG members Facebook Group and via email to members, so that everyone may see where we were, how any of us, and what we saw/heard.

We are all learning. As well as learning to identify birds by sight, we have discovered the usefulness of learning their calls, especially in forest areas, as it's often difficult to get a view of them.

We have been offered the opportunity to survey several more private properties in the area, and in addition it's worth while to repeat surveys, preferably seasonally so we can get an idea of which species are endemic and which species migrate here and when. Hopefully we will be able to continue monthly outings, weather and people's availability permitting.

My thanks go especially to Penny DB for sharing her expertise, to Kristy Peters for leading us around her property and her expertise in identifying many bird calls, to Kerrie and Peter Jenkins for allowing us to walk on their property and escorting us around, and to Coralie De Angelis of NPWS for her support in arranging a survey at Copeland Tops.

Pat Burrows, 5 Dec, 2024.

*Pat thanked Kerry Jenkins and Kristy Peters for allowing GEG to birdwatch on their properties and Penny for having the initial meeting of the group at her house and for her invaluable input. Hopefully next year there will be more offers for birdwatching on private properties. The group will be also be involved with some surveys such as Shore Birds.

*Report unanimously accepted

(moved: Pat Burrows; seconded: Tibor Kovats

Determination of the number of ordinary committee members for the next year: John

*The rules of the Model Constitution provide 4 Office Bearers and at least 3 others.

-This term we had 8 committee members

-There are 8 nominations for this AGM

*John Watts moved that all 8 members be accepted as ordinary committee members for this term's GEG committee. (seconded: Tibor Kovats)

*Motion unanimously accepted

Election of Office Bearers:

As Louise Duff was not standing for election, she acted as Returning Officer. Elections were held for 4 executive positions and 8 ordinary committee members. All positions were declared vacant. There being no additional nominations the following Office Bearers were elected unopposed.

Position:	Nominated:	Proposed:	Seconded:
President	Tibor Kovats	Megan Dewsnap	Helen Kemp
Vice-President	John Watts	Janine Phillips	Sue Watts
Treasurer	Terry Hardwick	Steve Robinson	Pippa Robinson
Secretary	Sue Watts	Janine Phillips	Dianne Montague

Committee Members:

Megan Benson	Janine Phillips	Dianne Montague
Pat Burrows	Sue Watts	Terry Hardwick
Penny Drake-Brockman	Neil Thorne	Janine Phillips
Rod Eckels	Tibor Kovats	Megan Dewsnap
Dianne Montague	Chris Russell	Janine Phillips
Janine Phillips	Sue Watts	Dianne Montague
Michael Samerski	John Watts	Sue Watts
Sue Sedgewick	John Watts	Sue Watts

(Note: The committee will be appointing the following: Membership secretary, RiverCare Co-ordinator, Walks Co-ordinator, KoalaWays Co-ordinator, Publicity Co-ordinator, Social Co-ordinator, Birdwatching Co-ordinator, Seed Saving Co-ordinator and Public Officer and any others)

*Louise congratulated the Office Bearers on their election

*John handed over the meeting to Tibor who thanked Pippa and Steve for all the hard work and commitment they have given throughout their time on the GEG committee over many years.

*Tibor thanked the members who have joined our GEG committee for the first time.

The AGM closed at 5.55pm