

GLOUCESTER ENVIRONMENT GROUP-PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2022 AGM

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

Before writing this report, I re-read last year's President's report and saw that I said the 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.

In some ways the last year was one of consolidation after the hiatus caused by covid. 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 Media. My thanks to all those who will be giving their reports, except for Penny who is away but who says that Rivercare has been operating the same as always.

I want to make particular mention of Penny's amazing work in relation to Rivercare with no fuss and much enthusiasm. She has achieved so much by organising regular weeding and planting activities, but she is also often spied working hard by herself at various spots around town. She is an inspiration to us all.

My thanks also 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.

Koalaways has really taken off this last year as Di will report. It is proving to be such a worthwhile and much needed local activity. The recent koala workshop at Barrington Hall was a very popular event and thanks to Di, Candice, and others for arranging such a great activity. My thanks to all the speakers.

I would also like to thank MidCoast Council for their support of Koalaways, especially the help and support we have received from Mat Bell, Council's head ecologist. We recently sent a letter to the Mayor, GM and Councillors expressing our appreciation for all Mat has done to help us and the Gloucester environment.

Candice was new to our committee this year and has made an invaluable contribution both through her work with us but also in her role with National Parks. Particular mention must be made of her activities in relation to biodiversity week.

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.

It is with mixed feelings that we are about to farewell Jeff and Hilary Kite who are moving to Bellingen. They have both made significant contributions to our group over many years-Jeff as President and Public Officer and Hilary by looking after regular articles for the Advocate.

Finally, thanks to those who have agreed to be part of the committee for the year ahead. I look forward to the year ahead.

We were recently approached by Landcare who want to expand their activities in the Gloucester area. They are not in competition with us, and I am pleased that they want to be more active, particularly working with farmers to preserve and increase native vegetation cover.

Some further activities that I would like to see us get more involved with in the year ahead are:

- Working more closely with Landcare,
- Promoting the regeneration of our riverbanks on private land in co-operation with Local Land Services,
- Lobbying MidCoast Council to expand the areas covered by tree preservation orders and to increase its urban tree planting in Gloucester, and
- Lobbying the state government to improve the laws and regulations relating to the clearing on native vegetation on rural land.

Thanks,

John Watts

21 September 2022