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SUNSHINE COAST  
Environment Council  
[www.scec.org.au](http://www.scec.org.au)



# ANNUAL REPORT

2020 / 2021

# SUNSHINE COAST ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

*SCEC is the peak environmental advocacy organisation on the Sunshine Coast.  
Established in 1980, SCEC represents 53 community groups working in the areas of natural resource management,  
conservation, environmental restoration and protection and sustainability.*

## Acknowledgement of Country

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC) acknowledges that we live, work, learn and create on the land of the Kabi Kabi and Jinibara people and would like to recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Australia's First Nations People. We recognise that these have always been places of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance. The Traditional Custodians' unique values, and ancient and enduring cultures, deepen and enrich the life of our community and environment. We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the important role First Nations people continue to play within the Sunshine Coast community. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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## Our Vision

An ecologically sustainable world achieved through individual and community stewardship of the natural environment at local, regional and global levels.

## Our Mission

Through leadership, education and environmental activism, to encourage Sunshine Coast individuals and communities to support and participate in working towards the goal of environmental sustainability.



# PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

*Derek Foster*

At the outset of this address I would like to state that the Coordinator and Liaison Officers' reports will contain specific detail about the activities of SCEC throughout this past year. I do not intend to repeat this information. Rather I would like to make some observations garnered from my childhood on the Sunshine Coast, my association with SCEC since its inception and particularly from the past few months as President. I would like to acknowledge that the environmental history outlined hereafter is a considered reflection of my experiences. In so doing I also acknowledge the Indigenous management of, and coexistence with this land over countless generations. Theirs is an example we should aspire to and to help guide us all through the environmental challenges that lie ahead. I acknowledge the culture, the elders past, present and those to follow, and all First Nation peoples of this land.

Over forty years ago my wife and I settled permanently on the Sunshine Coast in, what was then, the Maroochy Shire. We lived in a small fibro house on National Park Road in Nambour. We both had childhoods that saw us holidaying on the Sunshine Coast, my wife's family owned property in Maroochydoore and we had property at Alexander Headlands and Mudjimba. In 1976 I was a teacher at Nambour and we had a small group of teachers who were surfers. We would get up at four in the morning, be assaulted by a myriad of invertebrates flying around the outside light, tie our boards to whoever's car was being used and head down to Alex to check the surf and decide whether to surf there or venture to beaches north of the Maroochy River. Going down Petrie Creek Road we would have to be careful not to hit wallabies and roos. I remember once we had to stop to allow a carpet python, longer than the width of the road, to slowly move on.

Aerodrome Road was a single lane road with dirt shoulders and there was only one set of traffic lights between Nambour and Alexandra Headland. At Alex I located my take off point by a series of corals. We would share the surf with turtles, large fish and at times very large dark shapes under the water. Fortunately most of the time these turned out to be dolphins. To paddle out into a misty ocean as the sun rises was and remains, for me, a profound spiritual experience.

At that time there was a small but dedicated group of people that were seeing the beauty of the Sunshine Coast through the eyes of those who understand the depth of life that exists in healthy ecosystems. We did not view the beautiful clean ocean waters, the river systems or the rich and vibrant forests as assets to be exploited or plundered. We were, however, in a minority. Out of this minority grew environment groups. Groups of people that cherished the mountains, the wetlands, the rivers and the beaches and reefs. These groups, 'greenies', all worked hard in the face of bigotry, oppression, political ostracism and social resistance to try to stem and guide the growing tide of development that threatened the very integrity and viability of the ecosystems that together made the Sunshine Coast a most beautiful place to live. We were all focused on protecting the environments that we had begun to love and understand. Out of this minority grew the Sunshine Coast Environment Council.

But things change. I still paddle out at Alex but not as quickly and not in big surf like I used to. I no longer can see the corals that guided me to my take spot. One reason is because they are no longer there and the second is because most often these days the water is too turbid to even see my feet as I sit on my board. There are twenty sets of traffic lights on the way to Alex and Aerodrome road is a four lane road. Instead of Wallabies and roos these days one must be alert for feral cats and tradies. What were once coastal heathlands we would walk through to get to the beaches for a surf are now chic villas, restaurants and coffee shops. Black cockatoos have been replaced by the latte set. The political scene has also changed. What was once the Maroochy Shire is now part of the metropolis of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. It is purported that by 2041 we will live in the 'City' of the Sunshine Coast! Once you could chat comfortably with the Shire Chairman, a Councillor or senior staff officer over a coffee. Now, for the average person, there is a strong firewall between the community and the mysteries within the council offices. The politics of the environment movement has changed. Growing from a collection of nature lovers in 1969, the birth of the Queensland Conservation Council (QCC), the environment movement has had to keep up with huge shifts in Government at all levels. Sitting in alliance with the QCC there is now a collective of ten regional conservation councils across the State. QCC has a focus on state-wide issues such as National Parks for Life, Power Up Queensland, Climate Action Now, Sustainable Cities, Towns and Lifestyles and contributing to the Environmental Agenda for Queensland Government.

And things continue to change. During the 1980s, as a component of the Campaign Against Nuclear Power, we were admonished and laughed at for offering the suggestion that homes could be powered by the sun and wind. Our rudimentary devices for solar hot water, photovoltaic cells and wind generators were widely dismissed within a political environment supporting coal, oil and nuclear energies. Things are different now.

High density housing estates abound throughout the Sunshine Coast. No longer do children have a backyard big enough in which to play cricket, no longer can you park cars on both sides of the street, no longer is there an abundance of natural food and a diversity of nesting and perching opportunities for our endemic bird populations. A sea of Colourbond now creeps incessantly across our landscape. Huge tracts of koala habitat are being lost to concrete and bitumen as road systems are constructed to service an ever increasing population. A population that sees the Sunshine Coast offering clean water, green space and clean air, a wonderful refuge from southern climates and city living. An ever increasing population that is slowly killing these very attributes that it seeks. An ever increasing population that is sanctioned and encouraged by governments at all levels. This immigration brings with it a new environment, the Colourbond forest. In a recent presentation by the team developing the Mass Transit Project, the team leader articulated the vision for those living in our coastal area.

High rise projects dot the transit line where proximity to the beach means a morning stroll from one's apartment to the sand and then back for a coffee and breakfast at the coffee shop on the ground floor. Then it is upstairs, get changed and jump on the tram and off to work. This is what is being offered now as the lifestyle for the place in which we live.

I have on my office wall a poster offering the following – ‘You can’t stop the waves but you can learn how to surf’. It would be good if we could stop the waves of change that are impacting on and eroding the Sunshine Coast. Perhaps it is possible to stop the wave and to shift Government policies that currently allow high density housing, don’t limit population growth and don’t encourage population shifts to our regional inland towns to reinvigorate economies and communities throughout Queensland. Perhaps this is possible and perhaps we at SCEC can have a part in doing this, but I would contend that while these massive changes in policy are being dealt with we need to learn how to surf the waves of change that are immediately impacting us at a very local level.

How can we protect and or restore ecosystems within the new social and cultural environments that are being created on the Sunshine Coast? I believe that we need to recognise our place in the scheme of things. Our lifestyle these days is being determined by a complex array of factors. There are images and rhetoric of ‘lifestyle’ associated with housing developments, recreation opportunities and consumer based shopping complexes. The anomalies that are obvious need to be addressed and there are community groups raising issues about ‘lifestyle’ and infrastructure. Building regulations, traffic, crime and social health are but some of the issues associated with the changing lifestyle on the Sunshine Coast that these not for profit community groups are attempting to deal with.

Both SCEC and the QCC have a very specific tenant – to look after the environment. This is our contribution to the issue of lifestyle on the Sunshine Coast. Our social systems are now and will continue to be far more eclectic and diverse in cultural perspectives of lifestyle than in the past. With a population of 500,000 by 2041, people will be descending on the coast from different cultures and with different understandings about what constitutes a healthy ‘environment’. Some predictions suggest a dominant demography of people over 75, some others suggest a dominance of millennials. For some in authority positions there is a vision for the Sunshine Coast to be Australia’s Silicon Valley. SCEC’s primary responsibility is to the environment. Our job is to protect, maintain and restore the environment so that our children, no matter what lifestyle they choose, have a healthy natural environment in which to live. Can we do this in the face of such massive economic, cultural and demographic changes?

Rather than expecting the population of the Sunshine Coast to adhere to a single concept of ‘lifestyle’, I feel we must work with the wave of change and learn to surf it. This does not mean that we don’t fight hard to preserve, protect and restore the environment, it does not mean we give in to the scorched earth manifesto of housing development, road construction and public amenities. We do need to fight these issues constantly. But we also need to deal with the realities of the current situation and undeniable futures of the Sunshine Coast. To this end I would like to offer the suggestion that SCEC needs to apportion effort in three areas.

Firstly, protection. As a regional peak body, we need to maintain a presence in campaigns that are protecting the Sunshine Coast’s natural environments from human activities that lead to their destruction. These campaigns are continually appearing and issues such as Coolum West, Twin Waters West and Sekisui are some examples of current development issues. But such protectionist campaigns are not restricted to housing developments. Land clearing, agricultural demands, transport corridors and rezoning applications are all challenges to the maintenance of ecosystems. Feral pests, both domestic and wild, play havoc with bird populations, turtle nesting, and a myriad of other wildlife. Foreign plants stifle and replace native endemics and thus reduce food supply for our native fauna. Water emanating from human activities in catchments threatens our rivers, oceans and reefs ecosystems. We need to protect the biodiversity of the Sunshine Coast and we need to support the efforts of member groups throughout the region.

Secondly, restoration. I believe we need to restore damage already done. We cannot undo the high density developments that now abound on the coast. We also cannot stop the influx of people from around Australia and, prior to the pandemic, from around the world. These new residents bring with them their cultural norms imbued with values and beliefs that originate in their homelands. I believe that SCEC, in association with member groups, must provide programs that lead to a restoration of natural systems and programs designed to recognise and respond to this growing diversity within our coastal culture. Programs which inspire coasters to aspire to have more endemic plantings in domestic gardens providing natural foods for our fauna, and programs that provide education about our local ecosystems and what individuals can do to look after them will be important in restoring natural systems destroyed by human interventions. We need to build education programs for the children of the Sunshine Coast.

We need to include First Nation Australians' wisdom and collaboratively work out how that information might inform our current situation. Collaboration with member groups will be most important in both developing and providing such programs. There are great examples of this existing on the coast. Barung has a 'Gardens for Wildlife' program, Coolum and North Shore Coast Care has a great education program for children as does the Sunshine Coast Council with their 'Kids in Action' program. I feel that, as a peak body, our responsibility is to ensure these programs are not restricted to small spots in the region but are available throughout the region. This is our responsibility to the people of the Sunshine Coast, this is our responsibility to our member groups and this is our responsibility to the many people who would like to volunteer to assist in achieving these aspirations. Mostly, though, this is our responsibility to our primary client, the environment.

Thirdly, policy change. We need to be ready to contribute some effort to big campaigns that are focussed on major policy shifts in Local, State and Federal Governments that will see relief from the paradigms of 'growth' and 'progress' that are driving the demise of our natural environments. This is a big ask and probably needs to be coordinated by organisations such as the Queensland Conservation Council and the Australian Conservation Foundation. We need to proportionally help in this as the benefits will come to us if positive change is achieved.

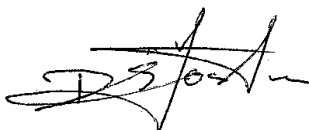
I would like to dispel any notions that I am suggesting we are not doing any of these things I have outlined. This year we saw the impact of the pandemic on our iconic World Environment Day event. It is testament to the innovative and creative thinking of Natalie Frost, our Coordinator, that she developed a month long replacement event. This event engaged member groups and saw an increase in participation, highlighted the work of these groups and gave each participating group an opportunity to share, firsthand, their work with the public. This may prove to be a lighthouse moment for festivals across the nation and I note that the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers has moved to a similar model. The work of our Liaison Officer, Narelle McCarthy, does with State and National environmental groups illustrates the connection with major campaigns. She also has been extremely busy dealing with local campaigns combating ecosystem degradation and loss due to development proposals.

Yes I feel sad when I think about the past and what we have lost. At the same time I feel hopeful, as I realise I am not alone in my continual efforts to protect and restore the beautiful natural systems on the coast. Together, I believe, we can make a positive difference for the future. To do this, though, we must continually evolve and respond to the changing human activity landscapes of the coast. This means continuous improvement processes and working together as a team, both within SCEC and with our member groups. We need to be flexible and innovative, as exemplified by Natalie's new WEDfest approach and my current research into using music as a vector for community attitude and aspirational change. We need to be open to new ideas and we need to be able to accept change. We need to be both reactive and proactive in our endeavours. I feel we need to continuously remember that our primary client is the environment, we must think that protecting and restoring the biodiversity of the Sunshine Coast's environment is our primary goal. Through a wide spectrum of strategic actions we can address the forces that are seeing the loss of Sunshine Coast flora and fauna. By doing this we can share the planet in harmony with nature.

So I thank a great Management Committee for the sterling work they have done throughout the year. Through their combined efforts in generating the 'Strategic Directions Discussion Paper' they have laid the foundation for a vibrant and effective year ahead. Thanks to our many volunteers that contribute so much to the work we do. Thanks to Natalie and Narelle who continue to tirelessly work for SCEC. I would like to acknowledge Deb Hoye for her great work in managing our finances and office systems and supporting Sue Etheridge, our Treasurer. I would also like to personally thank Michael Kane, Peter Hogg and Jillian Rossiter for their personal support and advice throughout this year.

Last word goes to our member groups. Thank you all for doing what you do in the spirit of unconditional love for our Sunshine Coast. Without you and your enormous efforts in environmental protection and restoration over the years I cannot begin to imagine what the coast would be like.

All the best to all for the best future we can make for the Sunshine Coast.



Derek Foster

B.Ed, B. Soc Sc. (Counselling), Master of Applied Sc., PhD Candidate  
SCEC President 2021

# PEOPLE AND GOVERNANCE

*Through an incredibly challenging year we worked together to foster a sense of hope and ambition for the years to come*

At the beginning of the reporting period, April 1st 2020 we transitioned to working from home and attended committee meetings and team meetings online. It was, as for everyone else in the world a huge adjustment as we grappled with what the future may look like and how to transition our work to a digital space and engage with our members, staff, volunteers and partners in a new format.

Due to the public health directives in place our Annual General Meeting was held later than usual, in November 2020. Fortunately we were able to host it in person and provide an online option which enabled a greater amount of people to attend. At the AGM we welcomed four new Management Committee members and sadly said farewell to three existing Management Committee members. We would like to sincerely thank the committee for all of their work and guidance throughout an incredibly challenging year.

We continued to further develop and review our policies and procedures and updated the Management Committee induction process with the new committee.

### Highlights:

- Transitioned to an online working environment whilst maintaining regular communications and campaign outputs.
- Fostered existing and new relationships with partners.
- Developed and updated existing policies and procedures.



Natalie Frost, Jason Rao Shellaiah, Derek Foster, Peter Hogg, Ben Child, Ian Mackay, Jillian Rossiter, Narelle McCarthy



2020 / 2021

## Management Committee



**Derek Foster**  
President



**Jillian Rossiter**  
President  
(partial period)



**Peter Hunnam**  
President  
(partial period)



**Peter Hogg**  
Secretary



**Sue Etheridge**  
Treasurer



**Michael Kane**  
Vice-President



**Ben Child**  
Member



**Jason Rao Sellaiah**  
Member



**David Robertson**  
Member

## Staff



**Coordinator**  
Natalie Frost



**Liaison and  
Advocacy Officer**  
Narelle McCarthy



**Administration  
Assistant**  
Debra Hoye

## Volunteers

SCEC is fortunate to have a fantastic team of volunteers who assist in the operational elements of the SCEC office and the various events, campaigns and projects delivered. Whilst 2020 was a particularly quiet year in the office, we welcomed some wonderful new faces to the office in 2021 once we re-opened. SCEC would like to especially thank:

- Debra Hoye
- Cynthia Rye
- Ariana Magini
- Mia Nestor
- Joanne Kohnke
- Kassia Murphy

In 2018 SCEC received three year partnership funding from the Sunshine Coast Council to support the development of the volunteer program. Due to the pandemic and changes to the working environment it was significantly harder to develop the program and work was carried out to better prepare and plan for volunteer engagement in 2021.

We were also fortunate to have a great team of university students from the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) who assisted with the delivery and marketing of the first ever digital World Environment Day Festival. The students were fantastic to work with and through many online meetings and a handful of face to face meetings we pulled off an innovative and dynamic event, creating over 11 hours of online content. Their dedication and enthusiasm was crucial to the delivery of the reimagined festival. Thank you Cinty Buxton, Sophia Lowcock, Jenna-Lee Kirkham, Jasmine Moore, Chris Nwosu and a huge thank you to Krisztina Morris CMN311 tutor for setting up the project and partnership.



Ariana Migini exploring the ClimateClever app



USC students behind the scenes preparing for World Environment Day Festival



Christmas lunch with volunteers, staff and the Management Committee in December 2020

# ADVOCACY

*We continue to take so much hope and pride from the way our community comes together to fight for their environments and things that matter.*

*Otherwise known as people power!*

With the year framed by COVID-19, we continued to work remotely and in the office when circumstances permitted. We were no less active during this time with the momentum and variety of issues and activities keeping us extremely busy.

We also had SCEC's 40th Anniversary to celebrate!

## The Sekisui saga continued...but there was some hope for the turtles

After an anxious but quietly optimistic wait of almost 6 months following the conclusion of the intense three- week Planning & Environment Court trial in late 2019, we were devastated (to say the least!) by the judgment handed down by Her Honour Judge Kefford on 25 May 2020 dismissing our appeals.

While there was much to be disappointed over and digested, the Judge noted in her judgment that the expert witnesses for the turtle and lighting aspects of the trial had recommended amendments to the original Conditions of Approval. Her Honour subsequently gave instructions that these amendments be incorporated into revised conditions of approval. These revised conditions were to be circulated to the various Parties by 8 June and listed for review in Brisbane on 15 June 2020 for the purpose of making final orders in the appeal.

Council was given the task of preparing and circulating the amended conditions of approval. A marathon review on 15 June for final orders by Her Honour Judge Kefford saw the First and Second Appellants press for, and achieve, improved conditions to protect endangered marine turtles.

While we remain deeply concerned about the potential impacts from this inappropriate development, particularly on nesting and hatching loggerhead turtles, SCEC and the community will continue to hold the developer and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to account.

The final conditions mandate a statistically valid pre-construction light survey, annual surveys during the turtle nesting season, and post-construction surveys after completion of every stage. All of these surveys must show that sky glow has not increased more than one standard deviation from the mean of the original survey otherwise corrective action must be taken to return it to pre-construction levels.

3 stakeholder  
reference groups  
3 board positions  
10 submissions and  
feedback



Legal team, SCEC, Development Watch, Friends of Yaroomba and the community at the Supreme Court Appeal

These surveys must be undertaken using the methodology set out in the Master Sea Turtle Management Plan and Master Sea Turtle Lighting Plan reviewed and endorsed by the experts. In addition, no direct light is to be visible on the beach. An education program and written materials are to be prepared for visitors and (future) residents. The surveys are not only to be undertaken during construction but continue through the operational phase of the development.

The input and expertise in this high stakes and high pressure exercise to secure these improved conditions by Estelle Blair of Coolum & North Shore Coast Care, Prof. Mark Hamann from James Cook University, Barrister Andrew Skoein, P&E Law's Helen Smith and Andrew Williams was greatly appreciated. These statutory conditions at least gave some hope for the turtles albeit under unfortunate circumstances and in the face of a contentious approval.

And it was that contentious Planning & Environment court decision to uphold Council's approval that warranted further scrutiny. So, after careful consideration of legal advice and based on the unwavering and enormous opposition to the Sekisui development, Development Watch lodged a Notice of Appeal in the Queensland Supreme Court on 24 July 2020.

The full day Hearing before three Supreme Court judges was held on 10 March 2021 - the decision is pending. While not an active party to this appeal as we were in the Planning & Environment Court appeal as the Second Appellant, we are strongly supporting DW and the other incredible community groups involved in this fight.

**Coolum West**

The inappropriate Coolum West Surf Ranch/urban development proposal was another major development proposal - dare I say yet another 'inappropriate' one! Continued advocacy was undertaken by SCEC and fellow community groups dubbed 'The Community 6' (OSCAR, Coolum Residents Association, Friends of Yaroomba, Surfrider Sunshine Coast, Development Watch & SCEC) to government as the proponent, Consolidated Properties, continued lobbying heavily with the proposal being considered by the Queensland State government.

The push to have this 510ha site within the regionally significant Maroochy River floodplain being declared a Priority Development Area remains a worrying prospect. This would be a dreadful outcome and result in an assessment process that excludes the community and largely Council with little transparency. Campaigning and representations to state and local governments continue to make sure the state to rejects the proposal and any PDA declaration outright and for the land acquired and transferred into the Blue Heart alongside compatible rural land use and low-impact ecotourism which recognises the site's significant ecological values and constraints.

A petition running on change.org and has garnered over 2,500 signatures to date with over 300 comments from people who are concerned about the environmental and social impacts of the proposal.



Artwork by Mathew Lynn



## Queensland State Election

The election on 31 October 2020 was a key opportunity for SCEC and the Queensland conservation movement to put forward a comprehensive set of actions the next State Government should use to protect the greater Sunshine Coast region and Queensland's unique natural heritage and act on climate change.

The Environment Agenda for the next Queensland Government considers ten major environmental issue areas facing Queensland and proposes solutions for action. The Agenda includes solutions for native vegetation, biodiversity, climate change, rivers, and mining, pollution and sustainable cities and towns.

The Sunshine Coast and Noosa regions boast some of Australia's most spectacular natural assets and biodiversity. However we face enormous pressure from climate change, exponential population growth, and the increasing cumulative impacts from rapid and inappropriate development causing habitat loss and diminishing green space and amenity.

This environment agenda provides a clear and positive pathway to restore and protect the environment, support climate resilience and the legislative reform needed to reign in alarming biodiversity decline and unsustainable development.

As we celebrated our 40th anniversary, SCEC continued to call for better planning and environment protection laws, stronger efforts to conserve threatened species and habitats, increased uptake of renewable sources of energy and water conservation underpinned by greater recognition of the region's First Nations People as the original custodians and exponents of ecological sustainability.

SCEC identified priorities for the Sunshine Coast region over the next four years;

- Increased commitment to preserve native vegetation, create and expand wildlife corridors and protect vital land and sea habitat
- Greater effort and strategic investment to protect the floodplains and restore coastal ecosystems, wetlands and waterways
- A green economic recovery which restores the environment and creates green jobs in renewable energy, land restoration and conservation delivering economic, social, environmental and climate benefits
- Coordinated and urgent actions to address climate change impacts including science-based targets to cut climate pollution to avoid 1.5 degrees global warming and net zero emissions well before 2050
- Statutory protection to preserve and maintain the regional inter-urban break
- This includes the removal of 'Halls Creek' from the SEQ Regional Plan (SEQRP)
- No expansion of the Urban Footprint in the next SEQRP
- No new Priority Development Areas (PDAs)
- Planning reforms to protect habitat and wildlife corridors within the urban footprint and ensure the obligations for ecologically sustainable development are demonstrated
  - The Sunshine Coast has been ranked 4th out of 99 localities in Australia (with a population over 10,000 people) in a recent ACF report for the greatest extent of habitat loss for federally listed threatened species
- The endorsement of the region's submission to UNESCO for Biosphere designation
- Further investment to continue the roll out of the \$500m Land Restoration Fund which helps restore threatened species habitat and supports carbon farming projects, such as Australia's leading blue carbon project 'The Blue Heart' in the Maroochy River floodplain
- Expansion of Protected Areas and increased funding for management and acquisition
- Stronger national environment laws not weakened protections, therefore Queensland should not enter into devolution arrangements with the Commonwealth under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)
- Implement non-lethal shark control measures including removing shark nets during humpback whale migration season
- Expedite the ban on single-use plastics and expand the ban to cover the full suite of single-use plastic products whilst implementing mandatory product stewardship schemes
- No funding cuts to the Environmental Defenders Office.

Over the past four decades, SCEC and many other organisations and individuals have campaigned for the protection of the region's magnificent environment with each decade presenting its challenges, threats and opportunities. This rich conservation legacy includes much of the valued scenic and natural amenity the region is known for in the form of National Parks and coastal areas that would otherwise have been lost to rampant and short-sighted development.

SCEC saw this election, which heralded the start of fixed four-year terms, as pivotal given the increasing and complex pressures facing the region. We noted on the eve of the election that this is a critical time where the future of the region's environment, communities and liveability will be tested, requiring the incoming state government to address these challenges and embrace these opportunities for a sustainable future. We continued to advocate for these agenda outcomes to be met.

### **EPBC Act reform**

As the world and Australia was grappling with a global pandemic, it became increasingly clear how important a healthy environment and planet is for our well-being. With this as a backdrop, the 10-year review of our national environmental law – the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 – provided an opportunity to establish clear, integrated and strategic laws to deliver ecologically sustainable development and build ecosystem health and resilience for all Australians. Professor Graeme Samuel AC, who led the review, delivered a detailed and comprehensive roadmap for reform. This was despite the distraction of the concurrent political process involving a proposed Bill to devolve environmental powers to states & territories before the review had concluded. A move consistently opposed by SCEC and the Places You Love Alliance (PYL) of which SCEC is a member.

The opening key message in Professor Samuel's report was unequivocal "Australia's natural environment and iconic places are in an overall state of decline and are under increasing threat. The environment is not sufficiently resilient to withstand current, emerging or future threats, including climate change. The environmental trajectory is currently unsustainable."

In over 250 pages, the report included 12 themed chapters and makes 38 recommendations.

Ultimately the report recommends re-writing the inadequate national law.

Despite this clear, logical and needed reform 'roadmap' the Federal Government has continued to cherry-pick from the recommendations and the integrated suite of reforms to push particular agendas. With the deepening biodiversity and climate crises, nature needs stronger protections and laws, not weaker ones. SCEC continues its advocacy and work with PYL to see this happen.

### **Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve**

#### **CONSERVATION RESERVE MUST BE OFF-LIMITS TO AERODROME EXPANSION**

SCEC shared and supported the concerns of its valued and long-established member group, the Wildlife Preservation Society, Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Branch when the Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve came under threat from the proposed expansion of the Queensland Air Museum in Caloundra. Queensland Air Museum had petitioned State Parliament to expedite their expansion plans into a land parcel adjacent to their current site at Caloundra Aerodrome, described at the press conference to launch the petition as 'vacant land.' We noted at the time that this parcel is in fact the 'Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve', named after an early member of SCEC who was also honoured for her work by SCEC with a Sunshine Coast Environment Award in 1995. Isabel was also an active contributor and active champion of community causes.

Although a relatively small reserve it consists of coastal wet heath, a rapidly disappearing ecosystem in the increasingly urbanised south of the Sunshine Coast.

The region cannot afford to lose important conservation land such as this. The Reserve status is intended to protect vulnerable bushland and wildlife habitat in perpetuity – not have swathes clear-felled to make way for other incompatible uses.

The Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve is administered for State Government by the Sunshine Coast Council as Trustee and recognised as important for biodiversity and habitat connectivity values. The Reserve allows water to disperse into other wetlands and eventually into the internationally significant Pumicestone Passage. It provides a rare 'green relief' and amenity to the surrounding built environment and traffic along busy Caloundra Road and offers recreational and health benefits for residents and visitors.

SCEC was concerned that if QAM is allowed to take the western part of the Reserve then the eastern portion of the Reserve containing the few remaining areas for spectacular coastal wildflowers) may also be lost. Any expansion into state land would also diminish the connectivity values and should also not be permitted.

We maintained that this is a time for protecting and retaining as much bushland as possible, not destroying what little remains and Isabel Jordan's impressive legacy in the process.

SCEC supported the WPSQ parliamentary petition and their engagement with the Caloundra Aerodrome Master Plan process as we aim to have plans revised to avoid impacting this important reserve.

### TWIST FOR TWIN WATERS WEST

2020 saw a welcome twist in the Twin Waters West campaign. Three years earlier, the Sunshine Coast Council took the disappointing and frustrating decision to controversially amend the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014 to rezone 104ha of rural, flood prone land to Emerging Community Zone. This was a crucial step in facilitating inappropriate urban development. It lodged the application in December 2018 after Sunshine Coast Council approved a change to its planning scheme in March 2018 and 'paved the way' for the development application.

Stockland submitted a revised development application (which sought to go even further than what the major planning scheme amendment windfall had provided!) which attracted 417 submissions with 132 supporting and 285 against during the public notification stage.

The Council vote in July 2020 under a new term of council saw Division 8 councillor Jason O'Pray put forward a motion to reject the application despite Council officers recommending approval. Cr O'Pray was backed by Councillors Rick Baberowski, Joe Natoli, Winston Johnston, Christian Dickson, Ted Hungerford, Jason O'Pray, Maria Suarez and David Law. Cr Peter Cox and Cr Terry Landsberg voted against the motion. Mayor Mark Jamieson did not vote or participate in the debate after leaving the meeting room due to a perceived conflict of interest.

This welcome and justified refusal was unsurprisingly (but still unfortunately) was followed by an appeal to the Planning & Environment Court by Stockland. This opened up the need to support Council in defending its refusal. So SCEC and 10 other parties made up of groups and individuals, joined as Co-Respondents to the proceedings in September 2020. Some shared issues of concern include impacts on conservation areas, water quality in the wetlands and river, ecological and environmental matters, the heritage values and of course, flooding. The court proceedings are continuing.

It's impossible to capture and highlight everything that has been going on and what we've been working on at local, state and national levels in this report. Needless to say, our work is not yet done! However, with the fantastic support and inspiration of our members, the dedication and expertise of my wonderful colleagues Natalie Frost and Deb Hoye, SCEC's invaluable volunteers and of course, the Management Committee, we're well positioned to continue to effect positive change and outcomes for nature and climate.

With sincere thanks,



Narelle McCarthy  
Liaison and Advocacy Officer

# EVENTS AND OUTREACH

*Successfully reimagining and diversifying our signature events allowed us to continue to connect with our community*

Delivering engaging and immersive events in 2020 proved to be particularly challenging throughout the beginning of the pandemic. Crucial to our broader advocacy work is the delivery of events and community engagement opportunities, as such we spent a considerable amount of time reimagining World Environment Day Festival to an immersive digital experience.

Following the easing of the public health directive restrictions, we delivered a range of workshops and film screenings that connected audiences with climate change and the ways in which we can work together to take climate action. One of the lessons to come out of 2020 in regards to events is small is best! Bespoke, smaller scale events are resilient to restrictions as they are able to be easily cancelled/postponed or adapted to suit the restrictions of the time. Moving forward, this philosophy has guided the development of events planning for 2021 and beyond. Events delivered in 2020/2021:

- **Noosa Climate Week Workshops (March 2021)**
  - Circular Economy - Presenters; Karina Seljak, Seljak Brand co-founder and Emily Boyd, Project Officer, Yandina Community Gardens Food Waste Loop
  - Climate Advocacy - Presenters; Narelle McCarthy, Claire Fryer, Climate and Energy Campaigner, Queensland Conservation Council.
  - Climate Clever demonstration with Tess Nicholls
- **Film Screenings**
  - I Am Greta featuring guest speakers Professor Ian Lowe AO and Sadie Harlow
  - Beartrek featuring guest speakers Dr Sarah Pye and live on zoom from Borneo Dr Wong Siew Te

## Urgent Climate Action Network Sunshine Coast (UCANSC)

In December 2020, we co-hosted a casual meeting with Sunshine Coast Climate Action Now (SCCAN) and invited various groups and individuals who work on climate action projects and campaigns. It was identified that a collective approach was needed and there were many groups working in various capacities working towards shared outcomes.

Following the initial meeting, a collective choice was made to continue regular meetings and form a network under the name of UCANSC. Collectively, the network focused on one campaign objective - to get the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to join the 104 other local governments in Australia and declare a climate emergency. We encouraged locals to email their councillor and describe their concerns about the effects of climate change on a local level and request that council make a climate emergency declaration. By the end of March 2021, the network had grown to include over six local groups and 20 individuals. Moving forward, the network provides a great platform for developing a groundswell of community support for climate action.

14,304 Nationbuilder supporters  
5,281 Facebook followers  
1,340 Instagram followers  
5,957 newsletter subscribers



Noosa Climate Week 2021 Circular Economy Workshop



Beartrek Film Screening with Dr Sarah Pye



I am Greta Film Screening with Sadie Harlow and Professor Ian Lowe AO



**Climate Action**

In November 2020 independent MP Zali Steggall tabled Climate Change Bills - Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020 and Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020. They were referred to the House Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy for consideration. The committee received over 6,500 submissions from organisations, businesses and individuals, including SCEC. Of these, 99.9% were in favour of the Bills.

**The Bills include:**

- A Net Zero emissions target by 2050, getting there through emissions reduction plans and emissions budgets
- Risk assessments and adaptation plans, so that the different parts of our continent and economy know the risks of climate change and can prepare for them
- Technology readiness assessment, so that we know the existing and emerging ways we can reduce emissions, with the least risk and cost
- An independent advisory commission (IAC), that can advise the Government, transparently and independently, on our national needs and plans.

At the end of the March 2021, the final report by the committee was yet to be published. SCEC will continue to advocate for a net zero target and association rapid climate action at the Federal level.

**Climate Clever**

To strengthen our climate action initiatives on a local level, we partnered with ClimateClever. The App-based program enables schools, homes and soon businesses to measure, compare and reduce their consumption, costs and carbon footprint from energy, water and waste. People can audit their homes/buildings to help them better understand their carbon footprint, and where they can reduce based on their appliances and usage. They can also analyse and compare their appliances with other users. The App provides tips and recommendations for actions from no-cost, behaviour changes to appliance upgrades. People can manage their action plans online through the platform. The partnership provides a 50% discount to users on the Sunshine Coast.

**Our Futures Activity Pack**

Dedicated locals Jim and Helen developed a children's activity book including a postcard addressed to Hon Scott Morrison MP demanding stronger action on climate change and commitments for renewable energy. The book and postcard are available for free and we have been supporting the initiative since its inception. Upon returning to the office following the Christmas break in 2020, we were delighted to open a hand written letter from the incredible Sir David Attenborough! Little did we know that Jim and Helen had sent him a copy with our office address as the return address and Sir David Attenborough took the time to hand write a letter personally thanking them for the initiative and describing "the shallow seas of the Queensland Coast with all its reefs and islands as one of the greatest treasures in the natural world". What an incredible way to start 2021. Thank you Jim and Helen for your incredible work!

**Nature For All**

#NatureForAll was launched by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2016 to increase support for nature access, deepen connection, support conservation, and integrate diverse sectors such as health, planning, education and tourism.

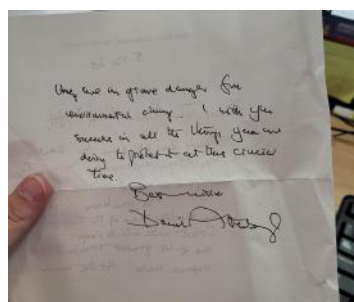
In 2020 SCEC joined as one of the founding Australian partners, joining 28 other organisations in raising the profile and supporting the #NatureForAll vision.

The #NatureForAll Australia vision is for nature to become a part of every Australian's identity and our national story. The mission is to harness the collective power of our partners to promote, improve access to and inspire a meaningful connection with nature to stimulate care, support and action for the environment.

The partnership supports the youth and community education work we are developing and will inform the development of World Environment Day Festivals as we reimagine the program for the future. We are honored to support an international initiative.



The envelope from Sir David Attenborough



The letter from Sir David Attenborough



## World Environment Day Festival (WED Fest) 2020

SCEC's signature event on June 5th brings together thousands of people to celebrate the natural environment and the dedicated organisations working to protect it here on the coast. Each year the festival follows the theme set by the United Nations Environment Program, in 2020 the theme was 'biodiversity' with the hashtag #ForNature.

WED Fest 2020 was a celebration of the festival's 40 year history. Given the significance of the event and the support from the fantastic University of the Sunshine (USC) Coast PR and marketing students, rather than cancelling the event due to the public health directives, we opted to reimagine the event into a weekend long online event with videos submitted from member groups and a live stream set up from a dedicated USC recording studio.

The online event included live and pre-recorded performances from local bands, community groups, expert panel discussions and demonstrations. Thank you to all of the fantastic SCEC member groups who submitted videos for the event.

19 media mentions  
15,875 Livestream views  
104,765 total reach



The studio featured an installation by artist and dedicated SCEC volunteer Rose Feely which showcased the diversity of local flora.

The event began on Friday, 5 June at 12 pm with a live stream featuring the launch of author Sarah Pye's new book, 'Saving Sun Bears'. The book launch was hosted by ABC Mornings host Annie Gaffney and included a live interview with Dr Wong, the subject of Sarah's book, from Borneo. Narelle McCarthy did a fabulous job hosting the remainder of the afternoon's program which featured member group spotlights and the announcement of the Queensland Conservation Council's photography competition winners.

The event wasn't without it's complications however. As this was the first time we had run an event like this, there were plenty of technical challenges to overcome and a steep learning curve with only 7 weeks to plan the event.



On the green screen - Natalie Frost and Narelle McCarthy



That's a wrap! Narelle McCarthy, Sondra Smit, Krisztina Morris, Rosanna Natoli, Sophia Lowcock, Natalie Frost

## EVENTS AND OUTREACH

Saturday's program featured content accessible on the WED Fest website. The main event was Sunshine Coast artist Gabrielle Quakawoot, founder of The Art of String Theory, who presented her live sacred geometry art on Coolum Beach.

The Sunday live stream was the highlight of the festival with Channel 7 Presenter Rosanna Natoli the MC for the day. Starting at 1 pm, a variety of content was presented including:

- Announcement of the Les Hall Young Conservation Award winner, Ella Woodborne
- Expert environment panel on climate change featuring:
  - Host, Susie Chapman
  - Professor Ian Lowe AO
  - Professor Dave Schoeman
- Expert environment panel on local biodiversity challenges featuring:
  - Narelle McCarthy (host)
  - Sandra Tuszyńska
  - Meghan Halverson
  - Vanda Gabrowski
  - Professor Stuart Parsons
  - Rachel Lyons
  - Robyn Jackson
- Musical performances by local bands Bearfoot, Dear Doonan, the Landscape Band and Maleny choir, Mouth Orchestra
- A truly unique experience with academics, researchers and professionals from around the world sending in videos including Gibraltar and Tuvalu
- Sponsor segments including Good Harvest, Queensland Water and Landcarers(QWALC), Sunshine Coast Council and Australian Association of Environmental Education
- Renewables Expo coordinated by Sunshine Coast Climate Action Now (SCCAN) showcasing local companies including tiny houses, boats, scooters, bikes and more.

The content reached over 100,000 people and was showcased on the WED website for 12 months. Thank you to all of the supporters and contributors for making it happen!



Gabrielle Quakawoot at Coolum Beach



Climate panel - Professor Dave Schoeman, Susie Chapman and Professor Ian Lowe



Biodiversity Panel - Vanda Grabowski, Narelle McCarthy and Meghan Halverson

Sincerest thank you to the phenomenal staff, volunteers and Management Committee for all of your support throughout the year.

Natalie Frost  
Coordinator



# TREASURER'S REPORT

*Despite the impacts of COVID-19, 2020/21 was a still a very busy and successful year financially for SCEC.*

Membership fees and other regular income have remained steady, and expenditure, even allowing for a small increase in employment costs, has been well contained overall. Our total income was **\$267,497** and our total expenses were **\$236,937**. We completed the year with a profit of **\$30,560** increasing our net equity to a healthy **\$71,204**.

## BALANCE SHEET - 31 MARCH 2021

### ASSETS

CASH ON HAND	\$65,966
TRADE DEBTORS	\$3,850
RECEIVABLES	\$50,000
PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT	\$4,999
CURRENT TAX ASSETS	\$0
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$124,815</b>

### LIABILITIES

TRADE CREDITORS	\$346
TAX LIABILITIES	\$8,760
PAYROLL PROVISIONS	\$17,436
PAYABLES	\$27,070
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$53,612</b>

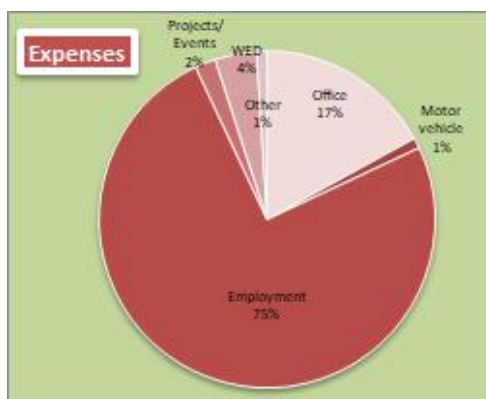
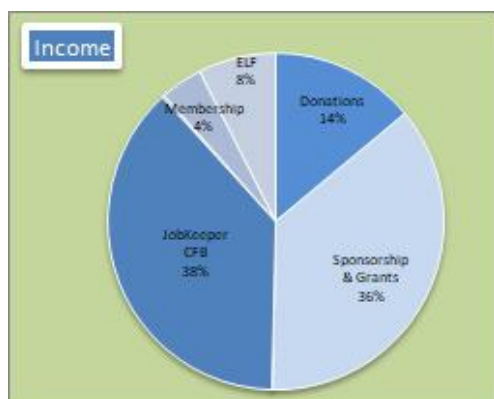
**NET EQUITY** **\$71,204**

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2020-2021 INCOME

MEMBERSHIP FEES	\$10,890
DONATIONS	\$37,319
ELF DISPERSAL	\$20,000
SPONSORSHIPS & GRANTS	\$97,400
ACTIVITY GENERATED	\$600
JOBKEEPER/COVID CFB	\$101,264
OTHER INCOME	\$24
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$267,497</b>

### EXPENSES

OFFICE	\$39,052
MOTOR VEHICLE	\$3,367
EMPLOYMENT	\$178,252
PROJECTS/EVENTS	\$4,718
WED	\$9,849
OTHER EXPENSES	\$1,699
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$236,937</b>
<b>PROFIT</b>	<b>\$30,560</b>



Thanks to everyone that has donated and assisted in other ways (including staff and volunteers) to contribute to our successful financial year.

Sue Etheridge  
Treasurer

# MEMBER GROUPS

*SCEC is privileged to be representing diverse and committed organisations and our advocacy is strengthened by the breadth and depth of the people involved in them. To all these people and organisations we say - thank you!*

- Australian Marine Conservation Society  
 Barung Landcare Association Inc.  
 Bat Rescue Inc.  
 Blackall Range Land Use and Planning Association  
 Bribie Island Environmental Protection Association Inc.  
 Bunya Bunya Country Aboriginal Corporation  
 Conondale Range Conservation Association Inc.  
 Coolum and North Shore Coast Care Inc.  
 Coolum Residents Association Inc.  
 Cooran Earth Rights  
 Crystal Waters Community Co-Operative Ltd  
 Currimundi Catchment Care Group Inc.  
 Development Watch Inc.  
 ECollaboration Ltd  
 Environmental Legacy Foundation Ltd  
 Fraser Island Defenders Organisation  
 Friends Of Buddina Ltd  
 Friends of Lake Weyba Inc.  
 Friends of the Forest Inc  
 Friends of Yaroomba  
 Glasshouse Mountains Advancement Network Inc.  
 Hinterland Bush Links Inc.  
 Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group Inc.  
 Landsborough Area Community Association Inc.  
 Manduka Cooperative  
 Maple Street Co-operative Society Limited  
 Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc.  
 Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee Association Inc.  
 Mooloolah River Waterwatch and Landcare Inc.  
 Nambour Transition Towns  
 Native Plants Sunshine Coast  
 Night Eyes Water and Landcare Inc.  
 Noosa and District Landcare Group Inc.  
 Noosa Integrated Catchment Association Inc.  
 Noosa Parks Association Inc.  
 Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents Inc.  
 Permaculture Noosa Inc.  
 Petrie Creek Catchment Care Group Inc.  
 Queensland Water and Land Carers Inc.  
 Stop Adani Sunshine Coast  
 Sunshine Coast Climate Action Now SCCAN  
 Sunshine Coast Lets Inc.  
 Surfrider Foundation Sunshine Coast  
 Sustainable Population Australia Inc.  
 Take Action for Pumicestone Passage Inc.  
 Ten Little Pieces  
 Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland - Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Branch  
 Wildlife Volunteers Association Inc.  
 Woodfordia Inc.  
 Yandina and District Community Association Inc.  
 Yandina Community Gardens Inc.  
 Zero Emissions Noosa Inc.



# SPONSORSHIP AND GRANTS

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council relies on the generous support from our sponsors and grants.

In the 2020/2021 financial year we received the grants from the following organisations:

- Sunshine Coast Council community grants program and partnership program
- Queensland Community Foundation
- Environmental Legacy Foundation
- Noosa Council

Thank you to all of our wonderful supporters, sponsors, members and member groups for supporting our vital advocacy work.



**SCEC gratefully acknowledges the generous support of these organisations.**



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SUNSHINE COAST  
Environment Council  
[www.scec.org.au](http://www.scec.org.au)



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