

CWCN ANNUAL REPORT.

For this, my last of three annual reports, I can again claim 2018 CWCN was a busy and successful year, with the marquee event being the National Landcare Program (small grants) support to run a series of ten workshops, in response to our being successful with the grant application compiled by Jutta Godwin. Brisbane City Council provided the ancillary support to cater for these events. Of the six workshops conducted so far, we have been over run by demand from the public to attend. With making additional arrangements like setting up support materials under marquees in the grounds, we still have to cap attendance. As such it is a classic opportunity to deliver against one of our objectives of

❖ *Promoting the environmental values of the Catchments to the public*

Before relating the numerous events, actions and issues I want to acknowledge and offer sincere thanks to all the supporters (especially financial) of CWCN, our sponsors. These are

- Brisbane City Council – the community conservation partnerships (the Creek Officers and Habitat Brisbane) and Lord Mayors Environment Grants.
- The State Government through Department of Environment and Science - Community Sustainability Action Grants.
- The Australian Government - National Landcare Program
- Healthy Land and Water through the Whats Your Nature Program using Caring for Country grant funds from the Commonwealth Government.

- Bunnings to provide fund raising events and donating resources
- Coles providing consumables for our fundraisings
- Woolworths providing consumables for our fundraisings
- Brisbane Inner West Lions Club support for events
- The Local Bulletin for publicising events and communicating our messages to our largest audience
- Golder Associates for the most enduring corporate volunteering at Dillingen Street
- Sugar Research Australia for corporate volunteering at St Lucia Golf Course
- Conservation Volunteers Australia and Green Army

Without this support and resources, we would be much more constrained in what we can achieve.

I then want to look to others of our objectives:

❖ *Linking 24 local bushcare groups with an interest in the environmental health of the Catchments and their waterways,*

As a Catchment Committee, we get torn between doing our thing (ie on ground works etc) and that of setting the strategic directions for our Catchment. This year the number of local Bushcare groups (so capably supported and directed by our Habitat Brisbane Officer – West) have remained stable and all contributing to and achieving something in their individual locations. Cubberla Witton acts as the legal entity for each and any of these who seek or can benefit from our support, which occurred again through applications for grants, auspicing their financial dealings and promoting their work. They in turn deliver the majority of on ground works and

environmental improvement which help us deliver another of our objectives ie

- ❖ *Supporting and facilitating funding for projects to improve the environmental health of the catchments*

All the 24 Bushcare groups deliver against this, as can be seen in the Diary of events on CWCN website, where every week of the year one or more Bushcare groups are doing something big or small.

Our Seed Propagation Facility and the team has gone from strength to strength this year, completing more training and mentoring from other Landcare Nurseries. Throughput has improved both in diversity of plant types (including doing our own seed collecting) and numbers. Security has been enhanced so that now hardening out can occur outside the individual shade houses. Watering however still relies on regular and recurring attendance by a team member.

Where there are no Bushcare groups yet, then CWCN has stepped in to facilitate and perform activities. This year significant projects have been undertaken in Dillingen Street Park and at Handel Street Park. At Dillingen Street we have been privileged to receive the continuing support from Golders our most long standing corporate volunteers. At Handel Street Park we were able to harness resources of a Green Army team and get financial support under Whats Your Nature. Following on from that we joined with Brisbane Catchments Network to conduct a combined national tree day and Landcare for Singles event at Handel Street Park. Keeping our plantings going in the dry weather this year has proved challenging and losses were noted across many sites.

We also were able to provide financial as well as technical support to Ambrose Treacy College in their rehabilitation of “Brothers Gully” from a Whats Your Nature grant. This type of activity extends our reach and it was pleasing to see that of all the people we nominated for Healthy Land and Water awards it was the Young Environmental Champion Alex Davies, from Ambrose Treacy who was successful in being recognised.

As we look at what we in CWCN do each year, the one thing I believe we deliver on better and more effectively than any other equivalent or better resourced group is contribute to Citizen Science through our natural resources monitoring. Our stated objective is

- ❖ *Facilitating research into the condition and environmental trends of the catchments*

We are proud that we have inherited and continued to deliver an impressive temporal longitudinal water quality monitoring data set. The small team of Tony Pressland, Henry Camacho and Don Begbie routinely every month, irrespective of weather etc perform a standardised set of physico chemical monitoring in each of our four creeks, using our newly acquired and updated Horiba probe. This data (Both historical and current) is now being recorded in new database established by Healthy Land and Water. Quality Assurance of all this work is critical to its value and utility, and it's a tribute to the team working with our Catchment Officers and Urban Utilities to have the machine always calibrated.

This year following the first NLP workshop entitled Water Bug Blitz we sampled and recorded the macroinvertebrates at multiple sites in each of our four creeks. With the serious rainfall deficit immediately after that, and until the last week or

so there has been no runoff in our creeks and thus inadequate sites to sample. Although the recent rains have topped up the creeks we need wait approximately six weeks for the invertebrate populations to stabilise.

This monitoring is well supplemented by enthusiastic birding team who also regularly and systematically monitor the local environment as represented by the avian populations. Then we add in the work being done on microbat monitoring at key locations which builds on the strategic study “Microbats of Brisbane’s Inner West” commissioned by Cubberla Witton in 2015. An evening monitoring following another of the NLP workshops showed there is still a vibrant population of microbats where we sampled along Cubberla Creek, being in the ‘tail of the dry weather’ we felt it was still a rewarding result.

This year we hope to get involved in the Urban Rivers Initiative which will build on the various local work programs

Our education events are conducted to deliver against

- ❖ *Promoting the livability of the Catchments for residents of the Western Suburbs*

These are conducted at all three levels of the formal education spectrum. Our most extensive work is the environmental education events at the primary school level. These are conducted in each and every school holidays, where sometimes the facilities here at the Centre are packed out learning all sorts of environment themes and moving to in field outdoor based activities contributing to overcome the nature-based deficit which possibly can result from emphasis on NAPLAN thinking.

We have delivered events in water quality natural resources and environmental education in a number of the schools in our catchment. We note particularly the perseverance of Tony and Jutta to keep these available and in front of those very select and few teachers who see the potential to incorporate such initiatives in an otherwise tightly packed curriculum.

With UQ this year our success was around some two volunteering activities with GEMS (The Geography and Environmental Management School) students. I am pleased to report again on the example of social capital building where Jack Wade has continued to inspire students who live in Kings College to continue maintaining our first Landcare for Singles site on The Esplanade at St Lucia.

CWCN holds bimonthly “speaker evening” where various scientists and citizen contributors deliver addresses which enlighten and motivate us. Without listing all the events, it is singular to note that we seem to pack out the centres accommodation each and every time, indicating there is support for these and continuing such initiatives.

Another aspect on this same theme is the very popular and monthly Book Club events which Robin so capably runs. Robin comes up with very stimulating book topics for each month. Attendances are at the upper limit that the format of the events can accommodate.

Advocacy It is interesting that in recent fora, it has been raised that in many ways we may now see ourselves as being “**Influencers**” rather than just advocates. There have been a number of ‘issues’ which have challenged our thinking and our need to obtain the right facts, to formulate an appropriate response strategy and then express

this in an objective manner as possible. It is surprising when we look at the attendance book and peoples time how much your committee spends on dealing with issues like the ZipLine, Taringa Parade, various developments especially adjacent to our creeks, and to work with our fellow Catchment Committees on the Oxley Creek transformation, the Belmont sporting complex, off road biking access to critical public reserves, the ceding of private sporting open space to Aged Care facilities. This quite time-consuming work which delivers against

- ❖ *Liaising with government (local, state and Commonwealth) and other agencies on environmental issues affecting the catchments;*

Our membership and communicating with members and the wider community have devolved to using emails, the website and social media. These all are posing challenges for us, with our Membership Officer, Maggie able to steadily not only replace the departing members but increase our representational base.

Anniversary and History. In the near future CWCN will celebrate the 20th anniversary of its coming into existence. We are well advanced on planning for the event and the compiling a record of the first 20 year history. I am pleased to say that not only Robin as our leading historian, but also Maggie with her excellent writing skills are being supported by a dedicated volunteer Sila Felix who has worked over and above to comb our old records, newsletters etc and also convene live meetings with some of our original and founding members. We appreciate that these founding members are still around and what they are doing to ensure we have a true record of our beginnings and progress to the current date.

Container Exchange. CWCN has a community scheme ID number of **C10007872** and it is good to see that it brings a small amount of financial resources back to the organisation, which we hope may grow with time

Our Finances on the surface look remarkably similar to what we reported last year, as the Treasurer will illustrate, but if we look at a couple issues, one being the routine income we generate from our social enterprises as compared to the resources we are able to obtain from grants, it shows we are possibly too dependent on the latter. Last year I spoke a tad how for the first time in over a decade we were not successful in receiving that valuable assistance called the Administration grant from Brisbane City Council. Accordingly we spent a lot more effort in our writing our grants applications this year, still not all being successful but with a satisfactory level of success to keep our business rolling on. However we still are subject to the whims, changes and nature of granting organisations.

Receiving our tax deductible gift recipient status this year opens up new opportunities and I am pleased to report the bank account for our Public Fund has been opened and already has the benefits or donations received so far.

So summing up I give you that CWCN has delivered against a most of its strategic objectives, and the new committee has the challenge in an outlook where there is hard work and 'no money for jam'.

Brian Venz

President

Cubberla Witton Catchments Network

30 March 2019