

- Ros and I joined the Curl Curl Lagoon Committee soon after we moved into North Curl Curl in late 1981.
- I credit Max Osborne, a neighbour and former Chairman himself, with persuading me to do a bit more than just paying my subscription, and I eventually put up my hand for an Executive role.
- Now I'm not sure whether I spent 1 or 2 years on the Executive, before taking on the Chairman's role after the 1992 AGM.
- Anyway, it was during the previous year, 1991, under the Chairmanship of Des Dunstan, that great strides forward were made towards improving the quality of Greendale Creek and Curl Curl Lagoon.
- From my recollections, the major kick-start came from the AGM in July 1991, where an unprecedented 60+ people turned up to hear two widely anticipated presentations.
- The first was by the just recently elected Independent State MP Mr Peter Macdonald, who spoke of his experiences of local resident action groups and how the successful ones achieve their objectives.
- The second presentation was by Sue Lennox, a science teacher at Freshwater High School, who presented the Streamwatch video "Fresh Water" produced by her students, with the assistance of the Water Board and long term resident Alan Newton.
- The enthusiastic discussion that followed these presentations resulted in the unanimous acceptance of the proposal put forward by Sue, and her husband Colin, to conduct a "Think Tank" four weeks later, in August 1991, with the intention of converting the new found enthusiasm into actions.
- It worked. A re-invigorated Committee then went forward, initiating a wide range of new ideas to get things happening.
- The Executive formed half a dozen very active sub-committees covering things such as community education, water quality monitoring, flora issues, industrial impacts and political lobbying.
- By then I was hooked, and after the AGM in July 1992, I put my hand up and was elected Chairman.
- Our Executive then organised further think tanks and information nights, and we held regular meetings to ensure that we remained in touch with the community's views on all matters, particularly on the plans to rehabilitate the creek and lagoon.
- A key feature of my term, was the strategic decision the Executive took to work at establishing a positive relationship with our key stakeholder Warringah Council, seeing them as our partner in environmental action, not our adversary.
- We were later told by Council that the competent, friendly and professional style of operation of our Executive in those times was a major factor in their support of us and our success.

- Whilst the elected Council's "style" has, how should I say, varied ? in the intervening years, I note with pride that the professionalism of Curl Curl Lagoon Friends has never wavered.
- Over the three years of my term, which finished in July 1995, I was able to see the Rehabilitation Plan for Greendale Creek and Curl Curl Lagoon, developed by Council and Consultants, debated in the community, modified and improved.
- Slowly, we built up community and political awareness of the virtues of the Rehabilitation Plan, gradually gaining full Council support, but never quite getting the State Government to "sign on".
- My biggest disappointment was at my last AGM in 1995, when Mayor, Brian Green, had the difficult task of breaking the news of the State Government's rejection of the Council's major funding application.
- But, as you would all be aware, subsequent Executive teams led by Reg Paling, Alan Newton, Charles Hamlyn-Harris and our long-term, tireless stalwart Lorna, have continued to chip away, and we have since enjoyed seeing the completion of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd stages, with the 4th and final stage now being readied to move forward.
- Success is measured in many ways, and certainly the pleasure you get from being involved in a community group such as our Curl Curl Lagoon Friends is not tied to the ups and downs that you will inevitably face as you negotiate the minefield of Local and State Government bureaucracies.
- The pleasure comes from associating with a diverse group of individuals, the friendships you form, and that warm feeling you get from volunteering.
- The three-year limit on consecutive terms for Executive members set by our Constitution is designed to encourage new blood and ideas to come forward. I believe it has been effective.
- I would encourage everyone who has not previously done so, to nominate for a position on the Executive. I have found the experience incredibly rewarding.
- In closing, I would like to congratulate the current Executive for their good work, and to thank them for their kind invitation to tonight's celebration of what is a wonderful milestone of 25 years of continuous excellence in community and environmental activism.

Thank you