



# President's report 2023

American neuroscientist and host of the #1 Health podcast on Apple, Andrew Huberman, holds that the keys to positive mental health are agency and gratitude.

I believe this holds true as much for an individual as for a group of people. In fact, for a member organisation like our own, I'd go one step further and add a third element that adds the dimension of meaning to what we do.

So tonight, I'd like to frame the report with a triple A rating: Agency, Appreciation and Advocacy.

There will be a test at the end, so see if you can hold those three in your mind.

Let's start with Agency, our capacity to effect change and reach our potential.

## **AGENCY**

It's easy, but ultimately unfulfilling to walk past a problem. All of us gathered this evening know the power of taking action.

For Curl Curl Lagoon Friends, that can be on an individual basis - pulling out a weed before seeds drop to the ground, picking up litter before it blows into the creek, reporting graffiti and so on.

We also anticipate the future and a longer-term horizon. This year we've discussed approaches to restoration with council staff and supported related grants.

## **1. Restoration of Curl Curl Beach - Dune Bay 2 - NSW Government's Coastal and Estuary Grants (2023/CEI/0033)**

The site identified by Northern Beaches Council is impacted by weeds such as lantana and foot traffic better directed to existing paths.

The site needs thorough preparation and planting over years to come. We would value the ability to replace these invasive weeds with plant species endemic to the area, able to withstand climate change and / or able to provide the right home for our reptiles, birds, mammals and insects.

Recent dune planting days organised by Northern Beaches Council have been well-organised and well-attended by the local community. It has helped to create connections with the spaces and strong interest in the outcome.

A special thanks to Adam Burrowes for leading the initiative and jollying us along.

## **2. Habitat Action Grant from the Department of Primary Industries**

The site identified by Northern Beaches Council - Curl Curl Lagoon west of the Adams St bridge - currently supports a variety of fish species that are a valuable part of the food chain for many forms of life.

The installation of log jams or fish hotels to re-s snag the Lagoons will provide additional key nursery habitat for native fish.

We value the balance this will bring to the ecosystem, providing for birds and other wildlife that benefit from increased biodiversity in the waterway.

A special thanks to Jone Wright and Jason Ruszczyk from Coast & Catchments for progressing this.

## **3. Bushlink support**

Bushlink, proudly operated by Northside Enterprise Incorporated, is dedicated to creating real and valued employment for people with disability, through a network of working environmental project teams.

CCLF supported Bushlink's activity in February this year in a day of weeding, clearing and freeing our native plants to grow. We are so appreciative of their expert attentions on the banks of Greendale Creek removing Morning Glory around the wooden bridge and removing seeding weeds near the concrete bridge.

A special thanks to Pic Andrews for noticing what needed doing along the lagoon banks and proposing the engagement with Bushlink.

#### **4. Clean Up Australia**

No doubt the best excuse for getting in among the reeds and exploring parts of the creek we wouldn't normally take the time to squelch into. We were thrilled to see the return of so many volunteers post Covid and post La Nina coming to remove bottles, signage, bikes, plastic debris and more from a waterway that should sustain, not choke life.

A special thanks to James Brickwood, Mark Stack, Ross McInnes, Jane Lush and Paula Cowan for organising the day.

### **APPRECIATION**

We're primed to tune into the environment around us, the subtle seasonal changes as well as the lifecycle of flora and fauna. Noticing and being grateful for these is one of the best ways to stay connected to nature and maintain good health.

#### **Dune Planting**

CCLF members joined Council staff, Scouts and locals in establishing new plantings in the North Dune at North Curl Curl Beach.

You head down there thinking you're volunteering your hard labour and are instead reminded yet again what a phenomenally beautiful beach, headland and waterway we enjoy.

More of these days will be scheduled throughout the year as we replenish existing plantings and move onto the bay closer to the road.

### **Flower Meadows**

An initiative of NB Council, and championed on our committee by Jane Lush, we've seen some gorgeous pockets of native flower plantings at the entrance to community spaces at Alan Newton Reserve and the North Curly Community Centre.

We hope to inspire locals to consider planting and taking care of meadows in other pockets of the catchment.

### **Ngara**

A special native garden planted with the intention of encouraging reflection and thought, Ngara continues to grow steadily. We hope this sanctuary in Stirgess Reserve brings locals and passers by as much joy and shady relief as we intended when first conceiving of it. There's almost always something in flower as you pass by or sit to think.

We thank Pam and Vik and the faithful weeders and tenderers to the garden.

### **Bird Count Survey**

Keen-eyed observers gather on the fourth Friday morning of the month to spot and count birdlife supported by the lagoon. The very definition of mindfulness, surveyors have observed the ebb and flow of waterbirds and begun to note breeding patterns, weather patterns and feed stock.

Thank you to Alicia for faithfully organising this monthly event.

## **Honouring Ray Cox**

We made a submission in support of refurbishing the viewing deck at the duck pond in John Fisher Park so that it can be proudly renamed in honour of Ray Cox. We anticipate this will be formally ratified by council shortly (28th Nov) and for Ray's legacy to be understood and cherished by new generations of nature lovers and defenders.

A seat will be installed at Ngara at the same time in his memory.

## **ADVOCACY**

We're honoured to advocate on your behalf. We speak for the environment and we speak for you on issues we consider crucial to the flourishing of our locale. This year we've made a further two submissions to council.

### **1. SUBMISSION RE: Watercourse, Wetlands and Riparian Lands Study**

Our concern is for the area within Riparian Buffer around Alan Newton Reserve. This land adjoining the Riparian Corridor is intended to protect and minimise disturbance to the Riparian Corridor. We note in recent years that this buffer is being encroached on through development allowed by Council and we call on council to ensure stronger controls to prevent further impervious surfaces or construction in this sensitive zone.

The area on the North West side of the Griffin Road bridge is of particular concern. Here a concrete skate park, hard surfaced car park and telecommunications infrastructure has been installed in recent years despite a Plan of Management for the area disallowing such development.

We strongly recommend that no further hard surfacing be installed within this clearly delineated riparian buffer zone.

## **2. Conservation Zones Review**

We welcome Northern Beaches Council's published study and move towards a consistent approach to mapping Conservation Zones and applying protections.

Our submission CCLF proposes that the banks of Greendale Creek - an example parcel of land below indicated - be split from RE1 surroundings and categorised as C2 due to it being a heavily planted natural area in a riparian zone.

This would help protect it from impacts of recreational infrastructure encroachments and ensure valuable pockets are kept for wildlife.

## **3. Meet the Candidates night**

CCLF members organised a State election Meet the Candidates night earlier this year. It enabled locals to connect with prospective State representatives, ask questions and help make up their minds. It was well attended by all candidates, had a full house here in the surf club and made it into the Manly Observer.

We congratulate James Griffin on being returned to office and look forward to a continued and constructive relationship.

## **4. Pollution event**

This year we were dismayed to see paint had been dumped into the creek. The quick thinking and action of CCLF member, Deb Moffat, led to a rapid response by HAZMAT, Council and the EPA. The spill was contained as much as was possible at the time and traced to a site and to those responsible. We were very glad not to see a fish kill or long-term damage to the area.

## **Executive Committee Members**

I'd like to acknowledge and thank members of the executive committee who volunteer in service of protecting and enhancing this place that we love so much. This past year's committee included: Susan Stack, Mark Stack, Jane Lush, Ross McInnes and Paula Cowan.

Stepping down from the committee this year is Jane Lush who's contributed enormously to bush regeneration, plant propagation and flower meadow establishment. We'll miss her artistic flair, passion for action and ability to create community connections.

We're very excited to welcome new committee members this year.

We would love to hear from any members or soon-to-become members who would like to volunteer on special projects. It's a rewarding experience to contribute to preserving the natural environment with others in the area. There's really no substitute for seeing something you've planted or protected thrive for years to come.

If you have a few hours free and are looking to contribute and connect, we have roles in grant writing, social media creation, bush regeneration, event organising, liaising with Council and local members, clean-up day support and bird counting. We're a friendly bunch and would welcome some new or reappearing faces.

### **So what are the Triple As of Health and Wellbeing?**

We prescribe three things:

1. **Agency** - take action when you can. Invite others to pitch in if the task is too big for one.
2. **Appreciation** - stop and take it in when you can. Share it with others when the beauty becomes too much for one.
3. **Advocacy** - speak up on the things that matter when you can. Join with others if the fight is too much for one.

