



President's report 2022

This year, we've invited members and residents to consider what it takes to make a place special, and what's so special about our place.

Visitation to Greendale Creek, Curl Curl Lagoon, John Fisher Parklands and Curl Curl Beach has visibly increased over the pandemic years and beyond, so it's clear people enjoy the nature of the place.

We know that we have something pretty special on our doorstep. It's one of the few undeveloped Sydney beaches with dunes intact, a waterway that supports native plants and wildlife and many ways for people to make connections with the environment and with each other.

Just over forty years ago, visionary and passionate locals banded together to start Curl Curl Lagoon Friends and begin the important work of rehabilitating a heavily-impacted ecosystem.

We owe an incredible debt of gratitude to those plucky community members and we benefit from their environmental activism to this day.

But it's not a set-and-forget exercise.

This past year alone, Curl Curl Lagoon has experienced a range of negative impacts.

- Illegal clearing of bushland, vandalism, construction of unauthorised bike jumps has degraded sensitive riparian zones and will take years to recover.
- Approval of telecommunications infrastructure in a patently unsuitable location - the literal bank of Curl Curl Lagoon - despite community outcry, rejection of the proposal and lack of demonstrated need has set a terrible precedent and permanently degraded a sensitive riparian zone.
- We're seeing the effects of climate change with the increased intensity of weather events resulting in flooding, erosion and heavily waterlogged parkland.

- Pollution - litter continues to be an issue, both historic and recent, affecting our natural environment and being washed out into the ocean
- Concrete creep - Northern Beaches Council continues to selectively ignore the John Fisher Park plan of management by introducing more hard surfacing in the park and contributing to run-off pollution.

It's why our executive committee, members and volunteers are so crucial. Our people power is what makes a difference.

In response to these threats to the natural environment, Curl Curl Lagoon Friends undertakes projects and special initiatives.

- In March, we ran our annual Clean Up Australia Day event, albeit in driving rain. La Niña did not relent this year! We're noticing fewer plastic bottles discarded (thanks to the return and earn scheme) but continued dumping of larger items.
- Our executive committee worked with residents, Northern Beaches Council staff and councillors, police crime prevention officers and the local school to address the issue of illegal bike jumps in the park. We collaborated on design of an authorised bike jump creation area, lobbied for signage to educate and deter, requested mulch to cover areas exposed by clearing, liaised with police and rangers regarding patrols and provided schools with information they needed to educate students on respecting the environment. We've noticed a slow-down in activity and feel hopeful the damage has now been contained.
- Bushcare teams and Northern Beaches Council contractors continue to regenerate the bushland surrounding the lagoon, especially the banks, riparian zones and sand dunes. It progresses incrementally so as not to remove precious habitat and food sources for native fauna.
- Our executive committee partnered with concerned residents to mitigate an even worse outcome of the Optus Tower approval. We were unsuccessful in appealing the bitterly disappointing decision to grant Optus a development application for its tower and associated infrastructure. However, we were able to push for a reversal of the private certifier's decision to install fencing around the tower and

box and raise the height of the box. With persistence and support from councillors and council staff, we were successful in restoring pedestrian thoroughfare in the area and height reduction of the box.

- We continue to support Northern Beaches Council and the local scouts group who've been progressively revegetating the dunes from mid-beach to North Curl Curl. Removing lantana's no joke and the north dune re-planting will be a major push next year.

Many of our activities are proactive, however, and we love a special project that makes our place even better.

- Harry Elliffe Way - the boardwalk between South Curl Curl and McKillop Park - named in honour of our greatly-missed friend, is looking spectacular. The bush regeneration efforts of his group continue to make this a truly wonderful walk.
- Our native garden, Ngara, continues to delight. With particular thanks to Pam Rawling and Vik McDonnell who lead the Friday sundowner weeding sessions, the garden put on quite the show this spring and continues to show promising growth.
- The floating wetland pilot project progressed this year, with a sample wetland being installed in the duck pond area. The reeds are growing well, providing interest for birds and habitat for aquatic creatures below. Particular mention to committee members Mark Stack and Susan Stack for managing the project and the grant funding, and much gratitude to Northern Beaches Council staff David Hellot, Jason Ruszczyk and Joné Wright for installing and maintaining it.
- Bird count surveys continue on the last Friday of the month at 7:30am starting on the wooden bridge. We appreciate Alicia Parmiter's commitment to organising, educating and motivating our dedicated birders. We're grateful to Russell Beardmore and Dana Lanceman who collaborated on writing and publishing the 5-year waterbird survey results in May this year and can be found on our website. We've noticed the water birds making use of the many snags washed

down in the heavy rains and may look to secure these and others in a more permanent way in the years ahead.

- Native Flower Meadows are a new initiative we're trialling and hope to extend out to the community after developing some success stories at Alan Newton Reserve and the entrance to the community centre.

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: Pam Rawling, Susan Stack, Mark Stack, Jane Lush, Viktorija McDonell and Paula Cowan.

Stepping down from the committee are Pam Rawling and Viktorija McDonell. They both remain dedicated volunteers who'll continue to work with the committee on bush regeneration in Alan Newton Reserve and Ngara.

Pam - 16 years on the committee. Quite the powerhouse of the organisation and it'll be quite the task to live up to the standard set.

- Ngara
- Bushcare
- Council correspondent
- Connector and carer
- Archivist

Vik - exec since 2013

- Ngara
- Leaflet delivery
- Big picture view, world events, NSW right down to our 2099 postcode
- Long time resident now living in DY

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.

What's so special about our place? Well it's nature and it's nurture.

We prescribe three things:

1. Learn the name of a local, native plant. You'll love to spot it around the place, you'll come to know its habits and its flowering time.
2. Learn the name of a local, native bird. You'll love to spot it around the place, you'll come to know its habits and its nesting time.
3. Learn the name of a local person. Introduce yourself to someone new here. You'll love to spot them around the place, you'll come to know its habits ... you get the picture.

VALE RAY

Executive committee member 1996 - 2020

On behalf of Curl Curl Lagoon Friends Executive Committee, I'd like to extend our deepest sympathies upon hearing of Ray's death.

It's difficult to fully capture the sense of loss we're feeling as Ray has been a guide, mentor and friend to each of us and now we must manage without him. His visible legacy in the bushland of John Fisher Park, Stirgess Reserve, Greendale Creek, the

banks of the lagoon, Alan Newton Reserve and on our headlands is a bittersweet reminder of what Ray gave to our community.

He was so kind. A squeeze of the hand from Ray could keep your spirits up and give you the boost you needed to pick up the pen to write a letter, pull just one more weed, plant one more native, put up one more poster, deliver one more street's worth of newsletters, hand out another how-to-vote card or summon the courage to speak up.

Ray welcomed each of us into CCLF's Executive Committee and counselled us wisely, "Don't burn out, stay the course, fight the good fight." He instilled a love of the natural environment that has enriched our lives and provided purpose.

We could rely on Ray. He did the hard yards in litter clean-ups, removing bag upon bag of plastic debris and rubbish every Clean Up Australia Day. He was a bushcare regular, sharing knowledge, local news and a gentle joke.

Ray did not shy away from a fight when native habitat was under threat. He defended Manly War Memorial bushland around Manly Dam arguing that we need and deserve places of tranquility that honour those who served. He stood up to politicians and government staff too ready to sacrifice trees for concrete. He made a strong case. Principles mattered.

Ray connected people and made much-needed bridges between those volunteering in nature conservation organisations across the Northern Beaches. It made us all stronger, more empathetic and passionate.

Thank you for sharing Ray with us. It's an honour and a privilege to continue his vision and his work.

Please know we'll grieve with you, remember him with love and give thanks for all he gifted us.

Celebration of life Friday 18th November at North Head, open to everyone who'd like to pay respects and support the family.

Intro notes:

Georgia Williams, Environmental Volunteers Field Officer

Members of the committee have had the pleasure of working with Georgia at the nursery and at bush care and really value her support, knowledge and assistance.

Tonight we'll learn more about the plants we see around us and the plants we should see more of in our area.

Jason Ruszczyk

Senior Environment Officer - Catchments

His knowledge, skills and ingenuity have enabled our committee to try some truly innovative ideas in service of improving water quality in Curl Curl Lagoon.

Instrumental in seeding oyster castles, water monitoring pilot and now our floating wetland pilot program.