

Sustainable Living Armidale Inc.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 2nd July 2020 at 7.00pm.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions the meeting, held by Zoom video-conference in accordance with clause 34 of the SLA Constitution. SLA zoom room <https://une-au.zoom.us/j/97045414464?pwd=TmJEVGNCdjJBOXh6NUZsRUtrMkE3QT09>

Present: Mahalath Halperin (Convenor), Joc Coventry, Jo Leoni, Kate Boyd, Jody Evans (Treasurer), Mike Evans, Tom Fisher, Sarah Johnstone, Iain MacKay, Liz O'Hara, Helen Webb, Terry Manley, Dorothy Robinson, Joy Bowles, Annette Kilarr, Tanya Howard, Tim Collins, Jan Brahe, Peter O'Donohue, Andrew Lawson.

Apologies: Patsy Asch, Bar Finch, Graham Patterson, Wendy Smith, Vanessa Bible.

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 4th July 2019, which had been circulated in advance, were confirmed. Moved Sarah Johnstone; seconded Peter O'Donohue.

2.0 Business Arising

There was no business arising from the minutes.

3.0 Convenor's Report and Acknowledgement of Country

The Convenor, Mahalath Halperin, gave the Acknowledgement of Country, welcomed members, and spoke to a presentation listing SLA's achievements over the past year, which included the following monthly forums and events:

- RetroSuburbia – David Holmgren – July 2019
- Update on water security with Armidale Regional Council Mayor Simon Murray – August 2019
- Women, Leadership, Climate Change & Antarctica – Dr Mary McMillan – September 2019
- Youth Futures – SLAYA launch and singer MONTAIGNE – October 2019
- Protecting the Pilliga – Lynne Hosking – November 2019
- Community Garden shared meal – December 2019
- Public Water Forum – panel discussion at the Town Hall – February 2020
- Protecting Koalas – Dave Carr – March 2020
- Potential of Nature Play – Sue Elliott, Sue Motley and Matt McKenzie – May 2020
- Woodsmoke Advisory Group Report – Mahalath Halperin – June 2020

Mahalath noted it has been a challenging year with drought, bushfires and COVID-19 (which disrupted the April forum due to sudden restrictions on the use of public venues). Nonetheless, it has been a year of achievements including:

- Passage of the Climate Emergency Declaration through Armidale Regional Council – October 2019 – and formation of the SLA Climate Action sub-group.
- Well attended Climate Strikes in September and November 2019.
- 9th annual Black Gully Festival – November 2019
- Successful 'Homegrown Garden Tour' with eight showcase gardens and hundreds of participants – March 2020
- Rapid adaptation to Zoom format for forums and committee meetings
- Participation in the RENEW Armidale process – June 2020 – and ongoing involvement.

She then invited Convenors of the Groups to briefly outline the main activities of each Group.

SLAM and website

Iain MacKay reported 1,700 posts on the SLA website over the past 12 months. The website has successfully been moved to a secure server, and SLA has adapted quickly to a Zoom format for meetings and forums.

Armidale Action on Coal Seam Gas and Mining (AACSGaM)

Jan Brahe reported on new representatives for the Boggabri Coalmine Community Consultative Committee (CCC). AACSGaM has regularly participated in North-West Alliance meetings and events. The group's activities over the past 12 months have included a submission to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC), letters to government, and Knitting Nannas.

Community Garden

Jo Leoni reported that the severe drought and Level 5 water restrictions has affected the gardens, and limited plantings. This had a flow-on effect on sales at the Farmers' Market, though the group operated a box sales program. The gardens attracted some major donations over the last 12 months, including water, a worm farm, compost, straw, and garden beds. A 10,000 litre water tank has been installed as a drought-proofing measure.

Armidale Local Food

Jo Leoni reported on a successful Garden Tour 2020, despite drought and water restrictions. The Community Gardens stall moved with the Farmers' Markets to Saumarez House, though bushfire smoke and the COVID-19 restrictions have disrupted the markets (hope to resume in September 2020). Jo noted the retirement of Alan Cunningham from the group and thanks Iain MacKay for support and promotions.

Energy

Mahalath reported on the Climate Emergency Declaration, which was passed by Armidale Regional Council. The group was also active with Council on water issues, as well as preparing questions on energy options, which were put to candidates in the 2019 Federal election. The group continued its regular column – 'Climate Matters' – in the Armidale Express.

Transport

Tom Fisher reported on the group membership over the past 12 months, comprising five long-term members and two new members. The group was unable to co-ordinate the annual NSW Bike Week promotion due to COVID-19 disruptions, but produced two short bicycle safety videos – 'Ride safe in Armidale' and 'Look out for cyclists'. Both were posted to the SLA Facebook page and have had thousands of views. Tom thanked Iain Mackay and Richelle Roberts for production. The group has been active with Council on electric cars.

Reduce, Recycle and Reuse Boomerang Bags

Peter O'Donahue reported on a quiet year for the group, though the campaign to reduce waste from single-use plastic water bottles is ongoing.

Wildlife Habitat Group

Liz O'Hara reported on the group's activities this year, including the campaign to save habitat on Edgar Lane, other campaigns on decisions by Armidale Regional Council (offsets for the airport site, heritage tress, etc.), involvement with the network aiming to develop a regional Koala management strategy, and development of web- and Facebook sites at <https://habitatarmidale.com/wildlife-habitat-group-whg/> and https://www.facebook.com/groups/142550803417679/?ref=group_header. The group also worked on the Frog Dreaming Conference for Kids with Southern New England Landcare (SNELC) in October 2019, participated in tree planting, and made several submissions throughout the year, including submissions to NSW Parliamentary enquiry on koala populations and habitat in New South Wales, and to the review of the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Climate Emergency Working Group

Helen Webb reported on the formation of a new action group, which grew out of the work of local community people urging Armidale Regional Council to pass a *Climate Emergency Declaration*. This

was achieved with unanimous support of councillors in October 2019. Council invited residents to join the Climate Emergency Working Group, set up as a sub-committee of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee. The working group facilitated community input into a major climate report to Council. Helen noted the group has scheduled a meeting with the new Council administrator.

Mahalath thanked Convenors for their reports,

4.0 Treasurer’s Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2020

The Treasurer, Jody Evans presented the SLA annual financial statement (attached). Jody noted that drought, bushfires, and Covid-19 had interrupted some of SLA’s usual income streams (e.g. Community Garden sales at Farmers’ Markets), resulting in an overall net loss for the first time in many years. In summary:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Total Income | \$5,806.34 |
| Total expenses | \$7,958.90 |
| Net Surplus/Deficit | - \$2,152.56 |
| Opening Balance as at 1 July 2019 | \$39,032.82 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) for Current Year | - \$2,152.56 |
| Closing Reconciled Balance as at 30 June 2020 | \$36,880.26 |
| Comprising: | |
| <i>General funds</i> | \$16,152.08 |
| <i>AACSG&M trust</i> | \$1,026.68 |
| <i>Boomerang Bags trust</i> | \$497.65 |
| <i>Community Gardens account</i> | \$19,203.85 |

Acceptance of Treasurer’s report moved by Mahalath Halperin, seconded Dorothy Robinson.

5.0 Election of Office Bearers

Iain MacKay assumed the Chair, declared all positions vacant, and invited nominations for the following positions.

- **Convenor:** Tanya Howard, nominated by Mahalath Halperin, seconded Helen Webb. There were no further nominations, Tanya elected unopposed.
- **Secretary/ Public Officer:** Andrew Lawson, nominated by Sarah Johnstone, seconded Tom Fisher. There were no further nominations, Andrew elected unopposed.
- **Treasurer:** Jody Evans nominated by Jo Leoni, seconded Liz O’Hara. There were no further nominations, Jody elected unopposed.

ACTION ITEM: Convenor, Secretary and Treasurer to organise change of signatories and inform relevant authorities (e.g. NSW Fair Trading of change of public officer).

The following delegates were recommended by their Action Groups, and endorsed by the meeting to become members of the Co-ordinating Committee:

- SLAM & Web editor – Iain MacKay
- Armidale Action on Coal Seam Gas and Mining – Jan Brahe
- Transport – Tom Fisher
- Energy – Mahalath Halperin
- Wildlife Habitat – Liz O’Hara
- Community Garden & Armidale Local Food – Jo Leoni

- Reduce, Recycle and Reuse – Peter O’Donohue
- Climate Action – Helen Webb

Mahalath offered to continue her liaison role with RENEW Armidale.

The meeting thanked outgoing members for their service to SLA and the action groups, including Mahalath (SLA Convenor), Patsy Asch (Energy), and Graham Patterson and Wendy Smith (Armidale Local Food).

5.0 Close of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:00pm.