**Sustainable Living Armidale Inc.**

**Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 4th August 2022 at 6.30pm.**

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions the meeting was held as a hybrid format at Kent House, Rusden Street, Armidale and by Zoom video-conference in accordance with clause 34 of the SLA Constitution.

|  |
| --- |
| **Vision, Mission and Values**  The vision of the association is:  A thriving, proactive, self-reliant community, with low carbon emissions.  The mission of the association is:  To raise awareness of the implications of climate change and the depletion of natural resources, to build networks, and inspire and empower our community to build a more self-reliant, resilient and sustainable future.  The association values:   * caring for the earth and caring for people * empowerment * inclusive, participatory and democratic processes, which value the contribution of others * optimism and encouraging positive change * inter-generational equity * sharing of knowledge and resources   The main aim of the association is to pursue the vision, mission and values in the community of Armidale and district.  (*SLA Constitution* s 3) |

**Present:** Helen Webb (Convenor), Viv Nano (Treasurer), Jo Leoni, Iain MacKay, Elizabeth O’Hara, Terry Manley, Annette Kilarr, Patsy Asch, Sanaz Alian, Nicky Larder, Jen Hamilton, Tom Fisher, Dorothy Robinson, Ali Cairns, and Andrew Lawson (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Sarah Johnstone, Bar Finch, Craig Johnson, Imogen Semmler, Sujata Allen, Lauren Moss, Kade Smith, Jim Vicars, and Vanessa Bible

1. **Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 8th July 2021, which had been circulated in advance, were confirmed. Moved Iain Mackay; seconded Annette Kilarr.

1. **Business Arising**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

1. **Convenor’s Report and Acknowledgement of Country**

SLA Convenor, Helen Webb, gave the Acknowledgement of Country, welcomed members, and tabled her written report – see attached. Helen outlined SLA’s Vision and Mission, as well as achievements and Action Group highlights over the past year.

1. **Treasurer’s Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2022**

The Treasurer, Viv Nano, presented the SLA annual financial statement, summarized below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total Income | $6,594.87 |
| Total expenses | $3,588.63 |
| Net Surplus/Deficit | $3,006.24 |
| Opening Balance as at 1 July 2021 | $41,800.79 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) for Current Year | $3,006.24 |
| Closing Reconciled Balance as at 30 June 2022  Comprising: | $44,807.03 |
| *General funds* | $18,116.31 |
| *AACSG&M trust* | $896.68 |
| *Boomerang Bags trust* | $497.65 |
| *Community Gardens account* | $22,138.08 |
| *Unspent ARC grant monies* | $3,158.31 |

Treasurer’s report accepted; moved Andrew Lawson, seconded Iain Mackay.

1. **Election of Office Bearers**

Iain MacKay, acting as Returning Officer, declared all positions vacant, and invited nominations for the following positions.

* **Convenor**: Helen Webb, nominated by Annette Kilarr, seconded Iain MacKay. There were no further nominations, Helen was elected unopposed.
* **Secretary/ Public Officer**: Andrew Lawson, nominated by Helen Webb, seconded Nicky Larder. There were no further nominations, Andrew was elected unopposed.
* **Treasurer**: Viv Nano, nominated by Annette, seconded Jo Leoni. There were no further nominations, Viv was elected unopposed.

The following positions and Action Group convenors were endorsed by the meeting to become members of the Co-ordinating Committee:

* SLAM & Web editor – Iain MacKay
* Transport – Tom Fisher
* Community Garden – Jo Leoni
* Wildlife Habitat – Elizabeth O’Hara
* Climate Action – Annette Kilarr
* Peace – Vanessa Bible
* Armidale Local Food – Nicky Larder
* Armidale Action on Coal Seam Gas and Mining – Pat Schultz

Action Groups in recess:

* Energy
* Reduce, Recycle and Reuse

Meeting participants thanked outgoing convenors for their service.

1. **Close of meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7:30 pm.

**Convenor’s report (Helen Webb)**

**WHAT HAVE WE DONE?**

There has been extensive effort and focus directed by SLA volunteers throughout the year towards achieving our mission and in the context of our vision and values.

I wish to thank all those involved for their commitment, enthusiasm creativity, time spent, hard work and successful outcomes during the year that I have been convenor.

It is evident that there is much greater awareness and acknowledgement of the implications of climate change and action on climate than there was when SLA was first formed in 2007. This is a big step forward but has taken many valuable years in which global greenhouse gases have continued to increase and the impacts of climate change are our lived experience locally, regionally, nationally and globally. We have achieved much but there is still a long way to go in terms of achieving our vision.

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

It has been a very eventful year, with changing restrictions to community gatherings and travel due to coronavirus, unfolding of the State Government Renewable Energy Zone, local government elections, new council management mayor and councillors, new Council Community Strategic Plan and budget, COP 26 meeting seeking international commitments to emissions reduction, regional and global scale adverse impacts of climate change, federal government election, and opportunity to co-host the Nature Conservation Council of NSW regional conference. Our dedicated volunteers were pro-active and creative in responding to these challenges and opportunities.

**CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

The Coordinating Committee were active throughout the year, participating in a planning meeting and organising and participating in regular monthly meetings via zoom or in person, organising forums and events, managing finances, membership and insurance, recording minutes, meeting statutory requirements, attending relevant meetings, writing letters, submissions and emails, and managing correspondence.

**ACTION GROUPS**

Volunteers from SLA Groups continued their commitment to climate action and sustainable living across the broad spectrum of issues that they represent. Notably, the Community Garden Group was active four afternoons per week rain, hail or shine, the Climate Action Group in association with Climate Action Armidale was active throughout the year, the Wildlife Habitat Group met every 6 weeks, Armidale Local Food organised the Sustainable Gardens Tour and the Transport Group organising the e-bike event.

**Community Garden & Armidale Local Food – convenor Jo Leoni**

* Ongoing Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons plus three additional working bees
* Participants sharing information, building networks, contributing valuable skills and actively involved in growing healthy organic food to share and for sale at local markets, creating compost and weed management
* Hens cared for and producing eggs to share
* Drainage works carried out by energetic volunteers to drain wet areas is much appreciated
* A donated small third rainwater tank was installed to increase water availability during future dry periods
* Council licence renewed

**Climate Action – Annette Kilarr**

* Pop-up Climate Cafe and climate conversations 7 November 2021
* Climate Action Now promotion and conversations to engage others to make their vote for climate action count in the federal elections
* Markets - PCYC and Farmers
* Partner with Australian Religious Response to Climate Change and Sacred People, Sacred Earth with Uniting Church
* Strike 4 Climate support

**Local Food** –

SLA welcomed **Jen Hamilton and team** who have capably led and evolved the Local Food Group, exploring challenges and opportunities for growing healthy food.

* Funding for the Climate and Health Project (UNE and Armajun Aboriginal Health Service) helped to enable organisation of a a very successful Home Grown Garden Tour with 126 tickets sold, involving transport by 21 cyclists and 105 cars and visits by 252 people across the weekend despite rain at time . There was very positive feedback and $1,277 profit for Sustainable Living Armidale.
* Sustainable Gardens tour video uploaded to SLA website

**Peace Group – Vanessa Bible**

SLA welcomed Vanessa´s establishment of a Peace group focusing on Environmental and Sustainable Peace, Social Justice and Creative Activism

* Continuing to work on the upcoming UNE Peace Conference 1-5/12/2022

**Transport – Tom Fisher**

* Information gathering re community experience of cycling
* E-bike forum March 2022 held at Curtis Park with Farmers Market generated considerable interest and information sharing as well as community choices to purchase electric bikes
* Council budget commitment of $60,000 for cycleway maintenance
* Meeting with council management, Correspondence to ARC

**Wildlife Habitat Group – Elizabeth O’Hara**

* Facebook and website <https://habitatarmidale.com/>
* Meetings each six weeks and with Council (16 August 2021, 10 March 2022),
* Encouraging signing of petitions and letters;
* Participate in Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) campaigns, webinars, zooms and participate in and present at NCC Regional Conference
* Current concerns: Protecting and restoring habitat; biodiversity offsets, platypus and rakali and dingo project planning, water, nature play, Keep your cat safely at home campaign, impacts of REZ, logging (the Styx; of native forests) and adverse impacts of wood smoke from wood heaters.

**Armidale Action on Coal Seam Gas and Mining – Elizabeth O’Hara, Pat Schultz, Jan Brahe**

* The group has been in recess but has continued Pilliga tours and representation at meetings held by the [North West Alliance](https://www.csgfreenorthwest.org.au/about) (an affiliation of 40 groups across the region) for a csg free northwest.
* Convenors are looking to re-activate the group in the face of continuing threats from the Vickery Extension coal project and Santos Gas Project at Narrabri. A presence at AgQuip is likely.
* See Armidale Action on Coal Seam Gas & Mining [facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/groups/214485771980632) and join email list through SLA website.

**AWARENESS RAISING, KNOWLEDGE SHARING, INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING OTHERS**

**Web editor – Iain McKay**

* Ongoing maintenance and updates to SLA website and facebook page and monthly SLA newsletter alerting members to group activities and actions and events of relevance to SLA vision and goals,
* Workshop on how to write and post stories for the SLA website / facebook page

**Communication Working Group – Annette Kilarr James Vickers, Andrew Lawson Helen Webb**

* Communications group started to facilitate communications via website, facebook, local media and with organisations such as Armidale Regional Council

**FORUMS**

Diversified formats used for awareness raising, some forums held via zoom and at Kent house with recordings available on the SLA YouTube channel (see links below), others at markets as part of climate cafes and conversations, some in collaboration with other organisations such as UNE SMART Region Incubator.

* Focus on protection of New England’s threatened birds of prey with Dr Stephen Debus, Euan Belson and Assoc Prof Paul McDonald September 2021 <https://slarmidale.org/2021/08/16646>
* Engaging in and Benefiting from renewable energy with Dr Jarra Hicks Director Community Power Agency and Dan Boyce, Chief Officer, Sustainable Development Armidale Regional Council October 2021 <https://slarmidale.org/2021/10/16811>
* What makes COP26 so vital- Nov 2021 Associate Professor Annette Cowie- Nov 2021 <https://slarmidale.org/2021/11/16868>
* After the tornado - Disaster Resilience Workshops in conjunction with Scorched program and UNE SMART Region Incubator March 2022
* Extreme Weather – are we ready? with Ellie Bird (Resilient Lismore), Sewa Emajong (Scorched Program) and Stephen Bramley, Backtrack April 2022 <https://slarmidale.org/2022/04/17411>

**NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NSW REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

**4-5 JUNE 2021 at Echidna Gully**

* SLA worked with representatives from Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Climate Action Armidale, the Armidale Branch of the National Parks Association and Armidale Tree Group to organise the Nature, Climate Change and Renewables \Regional Conference. This conference attracted almost 100 participants and gave SLA and other local groups opportunities to highlight issues such as the renewable energy zone, natural values in the area, Aboriginal connection to country, regenerative and holistic agriculture and climate resilience. A visit to Metz Solar Farm, Gara TSR, the Aboriginal Keeping Place and Cultural Centre and Keeping Place and Armidale Tree Group. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xtv2v9XA5bM>
* Due to the dedicated effort and time put in particularly by the main organisers, but also by everyone involved (including the participants) the conference was a great success and helped to build networks and capacity locally and regionally. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all of those who contributed, particularly Lynne Hosking, Kate Boyd, Garry Slocombe and Ed Mortimer. Thanks to Iain McKay for his skilled assistance with communications, sound and video recording

**COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION AND NETWORKING**

* Black Gully festival organising committee (festival deferred until November 2022)
* SLA members also participated in a big range of activities, relevant workshops and events held by other organisations such as the Climate Action Network, Southern New England Landcare, UNE SMART Region Incubator (eg Clean Tech Future series 2022, Climate Adaptive Agriculture - Agmentation July 2022), Nature Conservation Council Annual Conference and National Landcare Conference 2021.

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION PROJECTS**

The installation of solar panels at Monkton Swimming Pool has been completed by Armidale Regional Council as part of its early response to the 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration.

A planned energy efficiency workshop for the Ezidi community as part of the ‘I Can Do It!’ energy efficiency workshops funded by Armidale Regional Council was cancelled for health reasons. The project has also been stalled by Coronavirus gathering and travel restrictions. An energy efficiency brochure is being prepared by Mahalath Halperin and Patsy Asch for distribution.

**ADVOCACY**

SLA coordinating committee members and action groups advocated for effective action on climate change, water resource and biodiversity conservation, active transport opportunities and other sustainability issues with a range of relevant local, state and government representatives (including Armidale Regional Council General Manager, Mayor and councillors) and departments through phone calls, meetings, emails, letters and submissions.

Armidale Regional Council:

* SLA representation on the previous Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee of council (ESAC) gave detailed input into identifying sustainability priorities for Councils budget, including climate risk action plan, biodiversity action plan, renewable energy project and healthy winter air project. The ESA Committee was not continued by the current council. Environmental Sustainability representation is to be followed through via Key Pillar Working Groups aligning with key pillars identified in the Community Strategic Plan. These Working Groups are yet to be fully implemented.
* SLA encouraged well-informed choice relating to local government elections and ongoing communication aiming to highlight sustainability issues to council management and the mayor and councillors.
* SLA action group members monitored monthly council meetings for relevant issues
* Summary document on biodiversity offsets compiled and sent to council management and councillors in September 2021 and on water issues in Guyra and Armidale Feb 2022 https://slarmidale.org/2022/04/17547
* SLA made submissions on a number of issues including Draft Renewable Energy Policy October 2021 and Renewable Energy Zone Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing for Renewable Energy Projects Nov 2021, Community Strategic Plan and Annual Budget; Risk Management Strategy and Tourism Strategy

**STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

* Submissions made by SLA action groups to State and Federal representatives and draft planning documents including New England Northwest Regional Plan 2021 and the Design and Place State Environmental Planning Policy.

**BIG THANKYOU TO CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE, ACTION GROUPS ORGANISERS AND PARTICIPANTS MEMBERS.**

Helen Webb

Convenor

Sustainable Living Armidale

August 2022