



DECEMBER 2020

## From the President

I'm sure you will agree that 2020 has been an interesting year.

Covid-19 has caused angst for many of us impacted by the isolation, loss of employment and uncertainty about the future. It has also really changed the way we relate with others and how we operate as a community.

2020 also hosted both local and State elections. We saw a few changes to our representatives both locally and in State portfolios. CCC will continue to work with our elected representatives and encourage environmentally sustainable decision-making.

Despite constraints, 2020 also saw some fantastic onground work undertaken by dedicated community volunteers.

And before signing out, I am pleased to welcome Dr Coral Rowston to the CCC Coordinator role. Please don't hesitate to make contact. CCC is the Central Queensland 'voice for the environment'!

Happy festive season to all.

*Paul Bambrick*  
President



Wishing everyone a safe, happy and healthy festive season.

Remember that we can all make a difference – so please consider giving our environment a thoughtful gift this Christmas.

## Coral in hot water

Last summer was Queensland's second warmest on record and this summer is looking like it will also be a scorcher.

Hot weather results in warmer water – sometimes too hot for many species of coral to survive. Last year, there was widespread coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef.

Corals across Woppaburra Sea Country in the Keppel Islands experienced very high levels of bleaching on some reefs. At Outer Rocks and Halfway Island, most corals were very white, and some mortality was recorded.



Photograph copyright: Australian Institute of Marine Science

The good news is that coral bleaching was less widespread at other sites and many of the juvenile corals (~2 years old) showed no signs of bleaching. The water temperatures did start to cool around March giving the bleached corals a chance to recover. Hopefully this summer won't send their recovery backwards.

*Australian Institute of Marine Science, 2020. The Reef Report – Keppel Islands Coral Project.*



## Beach and waterway clean-ups



Photograph credit: Malcolm Wells



Photograph credit: Malcolm Wells

Our aquatic and marine wildlife have a healthier environment thanks to the many groups and individuals that have given up their time to pick up the rubbish left by others. Trailer loads of litter have now been disposed of appropriately thanks to these dedicated volunteers.

A special mention to Capricorn Coast Landcare, Capricornia Catchments, ReefClean and Tangaroa Blue for organising the many public volunteer clean-up days, and to those special people that work tirelessly to keep our environment free from rubbish.



Photograph credit: Malcolm Wells

## Bushfire recovery

In November-December 2018, 1250 bushfires hit Queensland – 140 of these were in Central Queensland. These were touted as being ‘unprecedented’ and the largest in Queensland’s history with 1.4 million hectares of land burnt.

Then came the 2019 bushfire season, and more than 7 million hectares of land burnt across the state. Our Capricorn Region was hit hard with over 11,500ha burnt in the Cobraball/ Lake Mary area. People’s homes and livelihoods were lost, and habitat for our local wildlife was devastated. The 2019 fires were ‘catastrophic’.

The Capricornia community stepped up to help our wildlife impacted by the devastating fires.

Local wildlife carers prepared for the influx of sick and injured wildlife, local residents helped with providing drinking water and some supplementary food for the surviving wildlife. Donations to help our wildlife recover came from near and far – a great community effort for our wildlife.

Capricorn Coast Landcare and BirdLife Capricornia received a Landcare Australia Bushfire Recovery grant to install and monitor 90 nesting boxes for birds and other wildlife in the Cobraball area. The boxes will provide some replacement nest and shelter sites until the vegetation recovers from the bushfires.

With temperatures on the rise and changes in weather patterns, we can expect more dangerous fire weather conditions in the future. Wildlife and their habitats need to be considered in all fire preparedness and management plans.



Photograph credit: Malcolm Wells

The CCC Committee extends a sincere thank you to both Sherie Bruce and Michael McCabe for the magnificent work they have done coordinating CCC activities over the last couple of years. While it is sad they have stepped back from the Coordinator role, both Michael and Sherie are still around and helping out with CCC’s important work. Thank you!

## Meet the new coordinator



A little about me, Coral Rowston, the new CCC Coordinator.

As a starting line, I am passionate about the natural environment and protecting its priceless values.

My education (ecology) and work life has largely been focussed on conservation and environmental management. I consider myself very lucky to have had the chance to work in a variety of environment jobs in many amazing places across Australia. The Snowy Mountains, Moreton and Bribie Islands, central Queensland, Norfolk Island, the Riverland in SA and the Pilbara are some of the places I’ve worked.

Late last year, I decided to return to the Capricorn Coast – a beautiful, diverse and special part of Australia. Now I look forward to working with you to protect our precious local environment.

Together we can make a difference.

## Climate change in Capricornia

*“The electorate of Capricornia stands to be heavily impacted by climate change. Increasing natural disasters, drought and heatwaves will impact the community’s health, infrastructure and vital industries, particularly agriculture and mining unless decisive action is taken to tackle climate change.”*

Mark Ogge, The Australia Institute, 2019



What to expect if we continue with current emission levels:

- \* Temperature will increase in all seasons
- \* The number of hot days and warm spells will increase
- \* The average number of days above 35°C will more than double
- \* There will be an increase in the intensity of extreme rainfall events
- \* More dangerous fire-weather conditions will prevail
- \* Sea levels will continue to rise
- \* The height of extreme sea-level events will increase
- \* Changes in rainfall are less confident, but a decrease in winter rainfall is likely.

*CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology, 2015.*

All these climate induced changes will have a big impact on all of us. Our wildlife and natural areas are also going to see significant impacts. But, we have a chance to reduce, or possibly even circumvent these impacts if we make a few changes. What’s more, the measures we need to take are entirely consistent with a prosperous employment future for workers in our region.

As we are regularly reminded, burning coal is Australia’s leading cause of climate change. What many don’t know, is that Queensland is Australia’s biggest carbon polluter. Replacing coal-burning power stations with renewable energy is the most effective way for us to combat global warming.

The Capricornia region with its reliable sun and wind has excellent resources for renewable energy development. Just the current proposed wind, solar, bioenergy and green hydrogen, combined with three storage batteries would result in an estimated 13,783 jobs for this region. We just need certainty through a transition plan and government policy to get these industries up and running.

*Queensland Conservation Council, 2020*

## Environmental Politics

Who are the elected ‘environment’ representatives after the 2020 elections?

Here’s a snap-shot:

### State Government

Environment Minister:  
Meaghan Scanlon (Labor)

Member for Keppel:  
Brittany Lauga (Labor)

Member for Rockhampton:  
Barry O’Rourke (Labor)

Member for Mirani:  
Stephen Andrew (One Nation)

Member for Burdekin:  
Dale Last (Liberal National)

Member for Gregory:  
Lachlan Millar (Liberal National)

### Local Government

Elected representative representing environmental matters:

Rockhampton  
Cr. Donna Kirkland

Livingstone  
Cr. Andrea Friend

Central Highlands\*  
Mayor Kerry Hayes

Issac\*  
Mayor Anne Baker

Banana Shire  
Cr Colin Semple (Deputy Mayor)

\* Councillors are responsible for divisions rather than portfolios

## State government election commitments

The new Labor government made a number of significant commitments for the environment, including:

- \$60 million over four years for the Protected Area Strategy which includes \$28 million for new parks and \$8m for private nature reserves. The Strategy reiterates the commitment to protect 17% of Queensland for nature conservation.
- \$145million to connect three Renewable Energy Corridors to the grid and a \$500million fund to build publicly owned renewable energy power stations.
- A 10-year Climate Action Plan to meet the target of cutting climate pollution by 35% by 2030 and set Queensland on the path to net zero emissions.
- An independent Environmental Protection Authority to better enforce our environmental laws.



Photo credit: Malcolm Wells

## Focus on fauna

### Rainbow bee-eaters

It's breeding season for rainbow bee-eaters – so watch where you walk (or drive)!. These stunning birds usually breed between September and November, and sometimes after the rainy season up until the weather cools.

Their nests are at the end of a long tunnel in the banks of waterways, on roadside cuttings, cliff faces and on our coastal foredunes. They are sometimes hard to spot as the entrance is only the size of the bird and may be covered by vegetation.

Capricorn Coast Landcare president, Malcolm Wells, has found some nests and shares with us some photos from the foredunes of Farnborough Beach. A nesting tunnel in beach sand is fragile – so please stay off the foredunes and give the bee-eaters a fighting chance of success.



Photograph credit: Malcolm Wells

## Meet the CCC Committee

### Committee Executive:

- ★ President: Paul Bambrick
- ★ Vice president: Tarquin Moon
- ★ Secretary: Doug Crossman
- ★ Treasurer: Ian Herbert

### Committee members:

- ★ Tom Sjolund
- ★ Anna Hitchcock
- ★ Bob Newby
- ★ Willy Newman
- ★ Maryanne Smith



Wishing everyone a safe and happy Christmas!

## Get involved - Make a difference

**CCC** has been campaigning for the environment since 1973.

We provide a voice for the Central Queensland environment whenever the environment needs help.

Help CCC, help the environment. Here's how:

**Join:** \$5 concession, \$10 individual \$15 family, \$20 group

**Donate:** All donations are tax-deductible with funds going to worthy environmental projects in the region.

**Volunteer:** CCC is always keen to have help. What ever your skills, we would be grateful to have you onboard!

**Visit our website and follow our facebook site**

### CCC works to:

**Protect**  
*Biodiversity*

**Enhance**  
*Ecological resilience*

**Promote**  
*Ecologically Sustainable Development*

**Ensure**  
*The environmental voice is heard*

**Develop**  
*Partnerships for nature conservation*



## Capricorn Conservation Council

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### References

Dowdy, A. et al, 2015. East coast cluster report for Climate Change in Australia Projections for Australia's National Resource Management. CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology, Australia.

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Queensland Conservation Council, 2020. Power Up Queensland. A path to 100% renewable energy.

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