President's Report - AGM 2024

Please get in touch at catastromick@gmail.com with any feedback or questions.

It has been a huge year for CCC, and we've done important work building up our procedures and support for staff. As the year goes on and other causes call, I've made the decision not to seek to continue in the role as president of CCC. We've put a lot of work into the committee over this year, but I'm moving on and I'll be approaching community campaigning from a very different perspective in the near future. I'll try to be around over the next month to help with handover, but I'm dealing with some personal issues that are limiting my capacity.

Handover

I'll be around to assist with handover as much as I can in the Month of July, particularly if people need assistance with our grant acquittal process. I can't offer as much as I was hoping, but I'll do my best to answer questions and point people in the right direction. Please note as part of handover that we should update our ACNC portal with new "responsible persons" - notably treasury and other members of the executive. There is also some data admin to do- we have used a google doc system for a lot of work this year, but we'll need to merge that back into the CCC onedrive to keep everything in one place and (relatively) easy to find.

Compliance and Disclosures

As noted above, with my currently limited capacity I will do my best to assist with handover. Coming up in the next few months, CCC will have to manage the Acquittal for our standard grant from DESI, the Acquittal for our new trial grant from DESI to consult with the community over renewables, the update to our non-profit status/charity register through the ACNC, and potentially an acquittal for the "Konomic Island Weed Whacker" event as well. Most of these tasks are straight forward, particularly as we have now completed our annual audited financial statement. Work from that statement and the previous one, and you'll have most of the info you'll need for the other disclosures.

Coordinator Support

Our Coordinator, Sophie, has been doing amazing work this year and I'm glad to say we've just offered her a new contract. In accordance with federal regulations, we've made this an ongoing contract as Sophie has been working for CCC for long enough that that is appropriate. This is also a positive sign for CCC as one of our key goals this year has been to retain and better support our Coordinator. Our coordinators are vital and we must find ways to support them as much as we can. Congratulations to Sophie for a big year, and for her work with CQU and CMERC.

Capacity and Growth

It's vital that CCC grow its membership, capacity, and connections to the community in order to maintain our place and continue the good work of CCC for years to come. We are not stable or sustainable in our current form - financially or otherwise. When we struggle to recruit people, it tells us we need to reach more people. When we recruit people and can't find the capacity to mobilise them, it shows us the challenge we face. That takes work- and work takes people - it's vital we build this into a virtuous cycle.

CCC's capacity issues and lack of growth continues to be a concern this year- we have been dealing with so much administration, consultation, and "front line work" that Sophie and I have both reflected on being unable to spend as much time as we would like to mobilize and organize volunteers. As a result, more and more of the work has fallen on fewer and fewer shoulders - even though there were people offering to help us with more. Ironically, much of our work was in trying to grow our capacity- here we have met with mixed results.

This year we made a great many efforts to grow CCC. Some of this was successful, some of it was very promising but not sustainable at present, and some was, frankly, very time consuming with little outcome - in effect costing us hours of volunteer and staff work, instead of gaining us those things.

We have experimented with different staffing and outside paid support models, and made some progress. Hiring a book-keeper to assist our volunteer treasurer has worked well, but we still need to address our IT and website issues- which escalated badly just before the AGM. We brought on a trainee and attempted to bridge them to a longer term paid role, but our limited finances did not allow for that to continue past an interim contract, and raised issues with how well we can manage administration at present.

I'd like to offer my personal thanks to Denise, Summer, and Dina for being such a positive part of this process.

As flagged in the strategic plan, we're advising the upcoming committee to focus capacity building work - including spending - in areas which are likely to grow the committee's volunteer base, AND staff support. CCC will need to seek out grants and other support that help us to grow. This includes the ways the community can engage with us - everything from our website to accessibility to The Hut. But it also involves a concerted effort to grow the baseline funding of the org so that CCC can support more paid staff, who in turn can support (and grow) our volunteer base.

This is vital so we can grow CCC into an organisation that can face the challenges to come- and maintain the good work and legacy of the work that has been done. It is vital that this work includes a great deal of outreach - we can't mobilise people we don't reach. Particularly in light of this, I'd like to commend Sophie for her excellent work building good connections with our local representatives, the media, and notably the First Nations people of our region, and who's land we meet and live. These relationships are vital.

Liaising with QCC and other regional conservation orgs

We have spent a great deal of time this year liaising with other regional conservation orgs, and with QCC. We've learnt a great deal and built relationships all over the state. We'd like to thank Jen from QCC in particular for her tireless work in this regard, and our colleagues from MCG, CAFNEC, GCC, and NQCC. I also want to give a shout out to other eco groups in our region like ENVA and further north, ECoCeQ, with their amazing "living wonders" campaign.

Together we have done- and seen- amazing advocacy work for the environment - including in very difficult areas like the rollout of renewables - where we have had a great deal of support from QCC and CAFNEC, to name just two. When we're campaigning, we do our best work together.

That said, we feel that the current model of consultation needs a great deal of work - we have put in a lot of time, and while outcomes have been very good from a campaign perspective, we collectively need to do better and get better from our work consulting on systemic internal issues, like culture, wages, capacity, funding, and more.

We have included detailed notes on some of these larger issues in our letter to the Presidents Meeting recently hosted by QCC.

Thank You

I'd like to thank everyone on CCC and beyond for the support they've given me this year. I must give particular thanks to my dear colleagues Sophie, Sean and Nichole. I know this has been a very challenging year, and I deeply appreciate your time, care, hard work, and patience. I hope that we have put CCC on a good path, and I look forward to seeing CCC grow, as a voice for the environment for this generation, and the next.

Solidarity,

Mick Jones

President (outgoing)

Capricorn Conservation Council