

Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment




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President's Report to Friends of Narrabeen Catchment **AGM 9 September 2025**

Good evening, Committee Members, Members and Supporters of Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment.

Welcome to our 2025 Annual General Meeting.

Thank you all for your continued support in promoting our mission to preserve the remaining bushland in the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment.

 It's inspiring to see such dedication to protecting the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment. Every bit of support helps build momentum for conservation, and your involvement in this mission is vital in making a real impact.

Each year we find that there are many challenges that threatens our valuable Local natural environment, and we need to continue with our mission to address these environmental threats during the coming years as the density of our urban areas increases.

Committee membership changes

This year brought several challenges and changes to our organisation. Despite these transitions, we remained committed to addressing key issues and ensuring continued progress.

At last year's AGM we reported that two members were unable to continue on our committee.

During this year Stephen Baldwin has had to stepped down from the committee, and it is with great regret that I need to report that Judith Bennett will no longer be able to continue on the committee.

Judith is stepping down due to health reasons.

We will miss her input, knowledge and presence on the committee. Judith has been a driving force for our organisation and passionate about preserving the natural environment over several years.

The Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment commenced in 2005.

Judith and some of the other existing committee members were on the original committee.

The original committee members were members of the National Parks Association; in 2005 it was decided that a Local Community Association was required to address the preservation of the valuable and beautiful natural environment of the catchment. Judith has been the secretary of the committee most of the time and for a few years was the President.

Judith's skills, knowledge and work went well beyond the usual role of a Secretary and we now find that we have a few members on the committee sharing the tasks that were performed by Judith.

We wish Judith well and following this AGM we will send out from the Committee and all Members, our thanks and appreciation to her for all she has done for our beautiful Catchment.

As you are aware we sent out an invitation letter to all members to find other members who would be willing to serve on our committee.

I am now pleased to inform you that two new members have joined our committee: Marcia Rackhan and Kylie Bedwell. We warmly welcome them and look forward as they contribute to our organisation.

Marcia and Kylie will be joining the others on our committee - Jo Drewett, Jacqui Marlow, Ann Sharp, Margaret Woods, Conny Harris, and myself.

During this year we held 6 Committee Meetings where many Decisions were made, or actions taken.

Changes to our Website and email address.

During last year and continuing this year we had to set up a new Website and a new email address.

www.narrabeenlagoon.au <<http://www.narrabeenlagoon.au/>>

The Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment general email address is now- contact@narrabeelagoon.au

This was necessary as the sites were hacked, and we were unable to contact all members. To set up the new system we needed to engage a consultant and to have someone with good computer knowledge to liaise with the consultant.

We need to acknowledge and give a big thank you Stephen Baldwin for working on this challenge at the beginning and to Ian Ralph who also worked with Stephen and has volunteered to continue to support us in working through this challenging issue. Ian is continuing to ensure that the new systems are operating correctly. Ian is Jacqui Marlow's husband and is very familiar with the workings of computers and the workings of our

organisation. We thank Ian for all his time and dedicated efforts to bring about these changes.

We have maintained our submissions on inappropriate Development Applications and any State or Local Government planning matters.

We held one Forum during the year and Conny Harris continued with walks and weeding through the catchment, Margaret Woods has been capably managing our Facebook, please check out our FB Page, Anne Is our Minute Secretary and keeps an eye on our waterways in the catchment and the biodiversity of the catchment area. Jacquie is hands on keeping updated with our local fauna that roam our catchment along with keeping eye out for destruction that keeps happening in our catchment and our Wonderful Treasurer Jo Drewett has been so diligent in the way she has been active in keeping our administration up to date, this is a big job.

Proposed new Local Environment Plan for the Northern Beaches LGA

A Local Environmental Plan (LEP) is a document containing the Planning Controls for all Development Applications. Although it is prepared by Council the Plan can only be implemented after it is signed off by the Minister for Planning.

The preparation of the New LEP began in 2019 where the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement was placed on exhibition.

This Statement provides the basis of priorities to be incorporated in the LEP.

The preservation of the natural environment is at the top of the priority list.

Following the start for the new draft LEP many other studies were exhibited such as the Housing Strategy, Employment Strategy, Conservation Zones, and Environmental studies. We made many submissions and had various discussions with the relevant staff at Council. The draft LEP was adopted by Council in June 2024.

This draft LEP provided zonings in the catchment area which is currently controlled under WLEP2000 which has Locality Statements.

A draft LEP was adopted by Council last year and it is still being assess by the NSW State Department of Planning. We consider that the Draft LEP does not have strong environmental clauses to preserve the bushland, and, in some areas, the proposed zonings will allow intense development that will destroy bushland.

Following the assessment the Plan will go through the State Government's 'Gateway' process, and the Council will be permitted to place the Draft LEP on exhibition. This draft LEP will contain amendments required by the State Government.

When the Draft Local Environment Plans and Draft Development Control Plans are placed on exhibition (expected in 2026) by Northern Beaches Council, we will study the documents and make relevant submissions where needed to ensure preservation of our catchment.

Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Council Patyegarang Project (Lizard Rock)

As you are aware this project is an application by the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Council to rezone 70ha of bushland with frontage in the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment. This property is in the centre of a larger non-urban bushland area.

Last year there was a Zoom Public Meeting held by the Sydney North Planning Panel. The Panel listened to presentations from many organisations including our organisation and many individuals throughout a whole day in December 2024.

A submission by the Rural Fire Service did not support the proposal, however the Panel determined that the applicant negotiate with the Rural Fire Service to determine if there is a modified project that would be supported by the Rural Fire Service.

Members of our Committee have been in communication with the Local Member for Wakehurst, Michael Regan.

We understand that the project and any modification are still being assessed by the Rural Fire Service and the Department of Planning.

If rezoning is approved over this land the next step will be a Development Application, which we will study very carefully and make appropriate submissions.

Development Applications

Our submissions have mainly been on inappropriate Development Applications with frontages to Forest Way and Willandra Road.

The properties on Willandra Road at the intersection of Lady Penrhyn Drive has been the subject of many applications and the adjoining property in Willandra Ave has been the subject of two applications.

As each development Application is made to Council, we study the application with its supporting documents from many consultants and then we prepare a submission to Council.

These applications are assessed by the Council staff and presented to the Local Planning Panel for determination where we prepare and make a presentation detailing our objections.

If the Panel refuses the application the applicant can then apply to the Land and Environment Court.

This has occurred on all these applications where we prepare a written submission and attend the Court Hearing to make a verbal presentation.

Often, the Court will find in favour of the applicant. This results in further destruction of our valuable bushland.

We hope that the new LEP will include stronger controls to prevent further destruction of the bushland.

National Parks

During this year the Upper House of the State Government initiated an enquiry into "Access into National Parks"

The Government has been receiving many applications from various groups who want access into National Parks e.g. shooters/shooting, 4-wheel drive vehicles, motorised trail bikes etc.

We prepared a submission that strongly objected to any of these applications and stated that National Parks were created to preserve our valuable natural environment.

Part of the submissions stated," These protected areas are vital sanctuaries where natural systems are safeguarded for present and future generations. They serve as critical refuges for biodiversity, cultural heritage, and ecological resilience. These sanctuaries are vital for the mental and physical health of all people, particularly for the people in urban areas where the densities of residents are rapidly increasing.

Any weakening of protections risks undermining decades of conservation progress."

We consider that the government should be strengthening the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, and the Government should be looking to create New Parks and expand parks and marine sanctuaries to address climate and biodiversity crises.

Forum

Last September we held a Forum jointly with the National Parks Association.

At this Forum we met the candidates for the Northern beaches Council election.

This was an important forum where we could all meet the candidates standing for the election and question the candidates to ascertain if they represented the views and desires of our community.

We consider that it is essential that we hold these Forums to promote and inform the community of the importance of preserving and maintaining our valuable natural environment.

We are always looking for speakers to present relevant subjects at our 'forums and we encourage our members and supporters to suggest to myself and any of our committee members of any speakers for our Forums.

Thanks to all and Conclusion.

As the surrounding urban areas become more densely populated the importance of these nearby natural environmental areas are essential to all for our physical and mental health.

The Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment Committee (FoNLC) continues to serve as a vital community-led advocate for the diverse catchment around Sydney's largest coastal lagoon.

The Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment's mission centres on permanent protection of the remaining bushland in the Catchment, through active stewardship of waterways, and the fostering of environmental awareness and sustainable living among local residents, in the face of intensifying urban development, climate pressures, and government policy shifts.

The Committee's multifaceted activities-ranging from formal submissions and evidence-based advocacy to citizen science, forums, biodiversity education, and volunteer-driven restoration -reaffirms our critical role in environmental preservation and community engagement in Sydney's Northern Beaches.

Thank you again for your support.

Ron Patton

President, Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment.