

# **South Coast Environment Centre Annual General Meeting**

## **Chair's Report, Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

COVID-19 certainly had an impact on how we lived and how people worked this year. The South Coast Environment Centre takes directives from the NRM Board and was required to sign a Deed of Variation which meant the closure of the office and a halt to all volunteer activities and other activities such as the Veggie Swap, the walking group and talks and films. Gayl, SCEC Coordinator, worked from home and kept in touch with members through Facebook and newsletters. The Management Committee conducted an online meeting using Microsoft Teams. As restrictions are lifted members will be informed of the resumption of activities.

Apart from uncertainty due to COVID-19, there is still some uncertainty about funding of all the Environment Centres because of the changes brought about by the new Landscapes SA Bill. SCEC is in the Hills and Fleurieu region and as yet we do not know what impact there will be from the new Hills and Fleurieu Board. We have been assured of funding for the next financial year with funding coming from Green Adelaide region but after that we do not know. Gayl and Anita had a meeting with David Greenhough, Presiding Member of the Hills and Fleurieu Board, and Carol Schofield, a member of the Board. We were heartened that David has experience with the AMLR Board and Environment Centres and so has a good understanding of how they were run and funded.

The SCEC always operates on a carefully managed budget and so we have been very grateful to have received \$5,500 through a Community Environment Grant for setting up a native plant nursery and signage for the Valley View Scrub at the Openlight camp site. SCEC facilitated a community meeting for Shine Hub, a solar power company. The \$2,500 in commission SCEC received from Shine Hub for the sales of solar panels and batteries helped set up the Community Garden at Openlight. We also received a 75% rebate on our rates from Victor Harbor Council. These have been pluses for SCEC, but we have faced a rent increase which means other flow on increases through fees and costs.

The Management Committee and Gayl continued the work on developing a Strategic Plan which has now been completed and signed off by Anita as Chair of SCEC. A South Coast Environment Centre Human Resource Handbook has also been completed. The comprehensive handbook covers codes of behaviour for employees and volunteers, internal grievance resolution, general procedures, communications, reporting requirements, volunteer conditions and procedures and paid employee conditions and procedures. The committee was very grateful for Gayl's assistance in developing these documents.

During the year Gayl regularly attended Environment Centre Coordinators' Alliance meetings and Anita attended Environment Centre Management Committee Chairs' Alliance meetings. The meetings are an opportunity to share ideas, concerns and to be informed of developments as the NRM Board is disbanded and the new Boards come into place. The Alliances have been strong, united groups to voice concerns to NRM about the changes taking place especially concerning funding.

At the end of last year Lorraine Cocks resigned from the SCEC Management Committee. Her background in administration has been invaluable to SCEC during development of the Strategic Plan and policies. The time Lorraine put into the Veggie Swap and helping at many SCEC events was greatly appreciated. In February Mark Rudiger was appointed to the SCEC Management Committee. Mark has strong interest in the environment and is a Scrub Saver volunteer and is involved with the Openlight Community Garden.

The success of the South Coast Environment Centre is due to our dedicated volunteers, a cohesive Management Committee and an outstanding coordinator, Gayl Males.

Grant Westbrook, Lesley Westbrook, Nedra Haines, Lynn Egberts and Lynda Hamilton are to be thanked for their regular volunteer work in the SCEC office. Getting the SCEC Newsletter sent out, "holding the fort" when Gayl is out of the office and assisting in data entry of information required for reporting by the NRM Board are some of the tasks that are carried out by our volunteers and are very much appreciated by not only Gayl but also the Management Committee. SCEC is lucky to have a cohesive Management Committee and Aza Newland, Cherrie Morrison, Lynn Trenorden, Marilyn Henderson, Mark Rudiger and Sue Jones are to be thanked for input into the running of SCEC and their assistance at SCEC events.

**Motion:** that the Chair's Report be accepted as a true report of the business of the SCEC over the last year.

Moved:                      Seconded:                      Carried

Anita Leak

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Date:    /    /2020