



Minutes of General Meeting  
4<sup>th</sup> May, 2024

David Maunders opened the meeting with acknowledgement of country and welcomed those attending.

**1 Attendance:** David Maunders, Cecily Woodberry, Pauline Taylor, Terry Holman, Bonnie Taylor, Tom O'Dea, Don Johnstone; David Woodberry; Ruth O'Dea; Anne Davie; Robyn Holman; John Eddy; Christine Grayden; Dan Kallstrom & Kate Adams.

**2 Apologies:** Jeff Cole; Linda & Doug Dendle; Irene McKell.

**3 For President's report;** Treasurer's and Membership Secretary's Report please see attached. The Restoration Report; Farm Manager's report & Curator's report are all in the Newsletter.

Presentation: Dan Kallstrom – Attractions Manager Churchill Island and The Koala Conservation Reserve.

Dan began by showing us the new NP management structure with: General Manager, Mark Anderson overseeing the Sales Manager, Melissa Coleman; The Commercial Manager, Stephanie James; The Attraction Manager Koala Conservation Reserve & Churchill Island, Dan Kallstrom; The Attraction Manager Penguins & Nobbies, Stuart Stevens and the Project Manager Tourism, Delyce Colin.

Dan told us he had had 20 years' experience working full time at NP more recently as Senior Ranger. Being Attraction Manager, he is responsible for staff, tours and operations for both the Koala Reserve & Churchill Island (CI).

Dan reported that the touch screen for CI has been ordered (there was a 2 month wait for production) and it is expected in a couple of weeks. They will also put a sound bar on the wall.

Dan said that CI operationally runs at a loss and they are looking at ways to make it more profitable to keep it open and successful. Currently the revenue from the Koala Reserve is holding up CI.

He reported that NP inherited assets that are in need of repairs and at end of life. For example the technology for the wonderful Antarctic Journey was out of date and the attraction had to be closed. The Nobbies building itself is needing major repair and at end of life, as are the board walks and platforms all down the southern coast. They were built 30 years ago.

They are pleased with very promising applicants for the Curator's position and expect an appointment by next week.

## ***Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc.***

Registration Number: A0021907W

ABN: 78667051020

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NP restructure with new departments also involves updates to many other aspects: ticketing, car parks, the website, etc.

Visitor numbers at CI are starting to return to pre Covid numbers. They are looking at how to incorporate Chinese New Year into the visitors' attractions.

Churchill Island New Products:

- Bandicoot Tours (held 3 nights per week)
- Guided tours
- Behind the scenes – Farm animal feeding
- Extra Shows including wet weather options
- Premium Wagon Rides

The Bandicoot tours were a great success but have to be managed carefully as the Bandicoots are a threatened species and constant research and health checks are done to ensure the tours are not negatively affecting the bandicoots. Next tours will be in September.

Guided tours are proposed for the Farm buildings. They are currently training staff for the tours but this also involves training for other roles locking up, warden etc. Cecily asked where volunteers fit in. FOCIS already offer guided tours. Dan explained that while FOCIS is valued, legally NP cannot use volunteers instead of paid staff. There are also issues with advertising volunteer tours in terms of being sure they will be available etc.

They hope to have attractions which fill the day so visitors don't feel they "miss out" if they arrive in the morning, rather than in the afternoon.

It was commented that the shearing shed is currently an underused venue.

The CI Easter festival was a great success. It was questioned whether the live music was worthwhile, but the chainsaw, food and wagon rides were very popular. They had 3275 paying visitors overall, the majority being on Saturday & Sunday.

Suggestions for increasing visitor participation were:

- A town crier (in costume) announcing the whip cracking, shearing etc. at the Farmer's market each month as we get huge numbers at the market and few go in to the CI attractions.
- Making it a farmers' and craft market.
- A Garden festival (it has been offered in the past and very successful).
- Theatre performances such as The Wind in the Willows, A Midsummer Night's Dream etc.

The Koala Conservation Reserve has outgrown its site as a self-guided attraction.

New Products:

10m short talk

1 hr guided tour run by visitor experience officers

The Café is poor – not attractive and has no connection with the venue.

There are accessibility issues with gravel paths both at the Koala reserve & CI. NP has an accessibility plan in progress and looking at improvements across all sites.

Visitor Demographic to CI: The vast majority are domestic visitors.

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For just the month of March, 2024, more that 50,000 domestic, less than 20,000 international and 10,000 unknown visitors were recorded at CI.

Dan commented that attractions do not make much money from tour buses but things such as the sale of lanolin at CI made \$40,000 per year pre Covid.

Thank you, Dan, for your interesting and informative presentation.

Kate Adams: Community Impact Manager

Kate's role encompasses:

- Reconciliation
- Accessibility
- Community Engagement
- Community Events
- Volunteers &
- Community Partnerships

Kate's team includes Andrea who is now the Community Engagement Officer & Kerri & Louise who have been job sharing the volunteer co-ordinator role (this will finish at the end of June. NP are currently recruiting and they would like one person for the role).

Kate reported that they are about to receive the 4<sup>th</sup> endorsement for their Reconciliation Action Plan.

Key stakeholders in community impact are: the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation who must be consulted for all areas such as welcome to country.

The Bass Coast Reconciliation network (Est. in 2019) with whom they work together to champion change.

Two engagement campaigns mentioned were the Sharing our Shores and Dark Sky so Shearwaters Fly.

Kate reported that a growing number of shops and commercial venues are turning off their lights at night to aid the shearwaters.

There was general discussion about volunteers & role they play.

Community day is going ahead (possibly 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> September) and they would like FOCIS to be involved and Harmony choir.

It was raised that we need to make better use of Amess house and CI for visitors.

Thank you Kate for your presentation.