



Friends of the Barwon Annual General Meeting 2023 Minutes

www.friendsofthebarwon.org.au

Date: Wednesday 22nd November, 2023

Time: 6.00pm

Venue: Jeff Sykes Rowing Centre, South Geelong.

Welcome and acknowledgment of country: Trevor Hodson. I would like to welcome all attending today and at the same time acknowledge the peoples of the First Nations who occupied the land on which we meet for many millennia, especially the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar and pay my respects to their elders - past, present and emerging.

Our Purpose: As you all know, Friends of the Barwon was formed with the goal of having “a healthy, flowing and life sustaining Barwon River system which is valued by the community”. We continue to work to achieve this.

Present: Phil Bade, Geoffrey Bell, Sandy Bell, Cr Mike Bodsworth, Colin Bridges, Sarah Brien, Amber Clarke, Mary Dracup, Ian Farran, Lach Gordon, Janet Gordon, Trent Griffiths, Liz Hamilton, Josephine Harte, Trevor Hodson, Ros Hodson, Christa Jones, Laura Kendall, Ewen McMillan, John Nolan, Richard Riordan, Beth Ross, Cr Adrian Schonfelder, Hugh Stewart, Jared Scott, Geoffrey Waite.

Apologies: Elissa Ashton-Smith, Seamus Butcher, Jan Calaby, John Cotton, Clare Cotton, Colac Otway Shire Councillors, Shaun Cumming, Cr. Brett Cunningham, Lyn Downard, Geoff Downard, Mark Earles, Catherine Earles, Fiona East, Richard East, Corrina Eccles, Cr Peter Eddy, Andrew Fennessy, Sen. Sarah Henderson, Cr. Rose Hodge, Sarah Holland-Clift, Sue Howell, Evan King, Juliet Le Feuvre, Cr Jim Mason, Stewart Mathison, Peter McCracken, Bronwyn Merritt, Andrea Montgomery, Jennifer Morrow, Mayor Liz Pattison, Kaye Rodden, Peter Spear, Sue Walpole, Heather Wellington.

Minutes: of previous meeting moved by Mary Dracup, seconded by Janet Gordon - passed.

President’s report: presented by Trevor Hodson **(see attachment 1.)**

Executive Officer report: presented by Liz Hamilton **(see attachment 2.)**

Financial Report: presented by Hugh Stewart. Moved by Hugh Stewart, seconded by Trent Griffiths - passed **(see attachment 3).**

Election of committee:

Chair:	Trevor Hodson	nominated by Lach Gordon, seconded by Ewen McMillan.
Deputy Chair	Lach Gordon	nominated by Mary, seconded by Lach Gordon.
Secretary	Hugh Stewart	nominated by Trent, seconded by Trevor Hodson
Treasurer	Hugh Stewart	nominated by Trevor, seconded by Lach.

All positions accepted by nominees.

Additional Committee members: (returning) Andrea Montgomery, Peter McCracken, Mary Dracup, Trent Griffiths, Ewen McMillan.

Retiring Committee member: Sarah Brien

Other business: request for more FOTB members and non-members to consider offering their skills to help the FOTB Committee to achieve our aims. These include assisting in the development of our Strategic Plan and production of a film about the Barwon River. Please contact Liz Hamilton at friendsofthebarwon@gmail.com if you'd like to help.

Meeting close: 7:00pm

Guest Speaker: Amber Clarke

Dr. Amber Clarke, recently appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) was our guest speaker for the evening. Amber outlined her background, including her PhD research on macroinvertebrates in headwater streams. Amber also talked to us about the CCMA's vision and goals for waterways in the region, (in particular for the Barwon River system) and resource condition monitoring now and in the future. **(see attachment 4 for Amber's presentation).**

Attachment 1. FOTB President's Report – Trevor Hodson

I would like to welcome all attending today and at the same time acknowledge the peoples of the First Nations who occupied the land on which we meet for many millennia, especially the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar and pay my respects to their elders - past, present and emerging. As you all know the Friends was formed with the goal of having "a healthy, flowing and life sustaining Barwon River system which is valued by the community". We continue to work to achieve this.

The work of the Friends is largely done at the Committee level and I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their contributions in the last year. The Committee is the engine room that drives us forward and renewal is inevitable. I would like to place on record my gratitude for the service that Sarah Brien has given from the beginning of our organisation. Sarah will be standing down from the Committee this year but without her help in the early days we would not be where we are today. Thank you, Sarah.

I would strongly urge anyone in the audience who feels they can make a contribution on the Committee to do so. It's easier to make changes from inside the tent. Joining a committee can be daunting but after a while what was unfamiliar becomes familiar.

I would like to thank our Executive Officer, Liz Hamilton for her work over the year following up on communications with members via the regular newsletters, the website and social media.

We welcome the new heads at Barwon Water and the CCMA. Shaun Cumming has replaced Tracey Slatter at Barwon Water and Amber Clarke succeeds John Riddiford at the CCMA. We look forward to engaging with them both to progress our work.

At our last meeting in February, we announced the gazetting by the government of changes in Planning Scheme Amendment VC201 to introduce Significant Landscape Overlays on all waterways in the State. These measures are now being adopted by all Councils when proposals come before them for development applications on river frontages.

Much of our work involves responding to planning issues. Some of these take a long time to resolve. The rehabilitation of the Fyansford motor cycle facility is a case in point – a plan was expected in June but still awaits the final sign off by the relevant authorities. The residential village at de Goldis Road is still with COGG. An application to subdivide a block on River drive in Teesdale was rejected by Golden Plains Shire but is now heading to VCAT in February. We are aware a developer is hoping to develop a housing estate with 5,000 homes at Modewarre but this is very much in the earliest stages but needs us to be aware that it is at least a bit more than a thought bubble.

The NWGGA strategic plan is proceeding and we have made representations, asking for more detailed assessments of floral and faunal species to ensure they are protected as well as for wider riparian protection zones to act as refuge areas for wildlife as well as corridors especially along waterways. The current plan is not holistic as it allows for the development to proceed with individual precinct structure plans and not consider the whole.

We remain involved in the discussion on the Places of Many Stories (Kitjarrdja-bul Bullarto Langi-ut) and the Place of the Brolga (Porronggit Karrong), projects being undertaken with the Wadawurrung and the CCMA and Barwon Water.

We have membership of various reference groups hosted by Barwon Water – Community Advisory, Environmental Advisory and Seasonal Water Advisory groups for the Upper and Lower Barwon.

This is just a snapshot of the issues we have faced in the last year, but there are challenges ahead as we enter into a period on El Nino. We cannot predict the future with certainty but the last three months have seen below average rainfall and even the casual observer will be aware of how our wetlands are drying out after three years of above average rainfall. A recent concern is the development of an algal bloom in the West Barwon Reservoir. Whilst not the first time such an event has occurred it worrying that one possible factor is the low level of storage in the reservoir. It is only 40% full and we may have many dry months ahead. This could mean rather than relying largely on West Barwon for its water, Geelong will become more reliant on water sharing via the Melbourne-Geelong Pipeline. Given the run up required it does suggest we need to push for more use of recycled water or manufactured water and start planning now to ensure we have secure water supply in the future. Technology is becoming available to break the cycle of returning legacy chemicals like PFA's to the environment by treating the biosludge generated in our water treatment plants to biochar. We still wait for the proper allocation of water to the Barwon and Moorabool for both environmental and cultural needs as identified in the Sustainable Water Strategy.

In closing I would say as I said last year, we cannot take our eyes off the end game. If you feel you can make a contribution, get in touch with me or a member of the Committee. Much is done by a few and age is getting the better of some of us. If we do not have that renewal there may be a case for winding up the Friends and working with other groups like the Concerned Waterways Alliance or the Clean Oceans Foundation. Both these groups are working at a higher level than we are in the sense that their reach is statewide and they may be more effective in promoting change in policies despite the entrenched attitudes of the current government to the use of recycled water.

Thank you, Trevor Hodson, President.

Attachment 2. Executive Officer report – Liz Hamilton

The following is a summary of key EO activities during the 2022/2023 financial year:

- Our membership currently sits at around 88, which includes a number of Affiliate groups such as Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Geelong Environment Council. We have streamlined membership so that they all become due at the beginning of each financial year.
- We have redesigned our website to make it more user friendly and have since posted 12 articles (6 during the 2022/234 FY. We have also included a section in our website where people can make donations to FOTB.
- FOTB have also lodged all the necessary paperwork to the ACNC required to obtain our own DGR status for donors to receive tax deductibility for their donations. In the meantime, donations to FOTB are tax deductible if they are made via Landcare Victoria Inc. who have established a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Fund called the [Landcare Victoria Fund](#) that allows for tax-deductible donations in support of landcare.
- FOTB published 3 newsletters in the 2022/23 financial year which were circulated to members and made available to read on our website and Facebook. We are on currently drafting our December newsletter.
- Facebook followers of FOTB grew from around 950 to 1050 in the 2022/23 FY. We use social media to help keep you up to date between Newsletters and to raise awareness of issues and the activities and events that FOTB and other like-minded organisations are involved in.
- We have held 7 well-attended Committee meetings.
- Seeking sources of funding for Executive Officer role and to fund the production of a film about the Barwon River.
- Drafting up a process for the development of a Strategic plan for FOTB with Trent and Lach. Seeking assistance from FOTB members....

- Attended the Victorian Landcare Forum.
- Conflict of Interest Policy prepared.
- Submitted our mandatory Australian Charity and Not for Profits Commission annual information statement for 2022/2023.
- Drafting up our Child Safety Policy which is a requirement of being a Landcare Victoria Inc. as a condition of membership and insurance coverage.

Attachment 3. Financial Report – Treasurer Hugh Stewart

Friends of the Barwon Financial Report 1/7/2022 - 30/6/2023

Friends of the Barwon – Financial Report		1/7/2022 to	30/6/2023
Trading Income			
Memberships	Direct payment	\$350.00	\$626.16
	PayPal	\$276.16	
Grants	Barwon Water		\$15,000.00
	Bendigo Bank		\$700.00
Book sales			\$30.00
Interest			\$4.38
Total			\$16,360.54
Operating Expenses			
Executive Officer		\$19,233.50	
Website domain (C Steele)		\$580.00	
AGM catering (Steampacket)		\$597.30	
Landcare Victoria insurance		\$715.00	
S Brien (Reimbursement for CAV fees)		\$38.20	\$99.40
		\$61.20	
CWA donation		\$1,500.00	
Total			\$22,725.20
NET			-\$6,364.66
Cash Statement			
Opening balance	1/7/2022	\$42,380.18	
Net 1/7/2022-30/6/2023			-\$6,364.66
Closing balance			\$36,015.52
Bendigo Bank A/C Balance	30/6/2023		\$36,015.52

Attachment 4. Amber Clarke’s presentation – to attached to email and available on the [FOTB website](#)

Acknowledgment and Thanks

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