

JUNE 2021

From the President

CCC has had a busy few months since my last TOC column.

We welcome a new CCC committee with the unassuming but fervent Willy as vice President and energetic new secretary James. Monumental thanks to outgoing secretary Doug and committee member Bob – we have benefitted enormously from your sage advice.

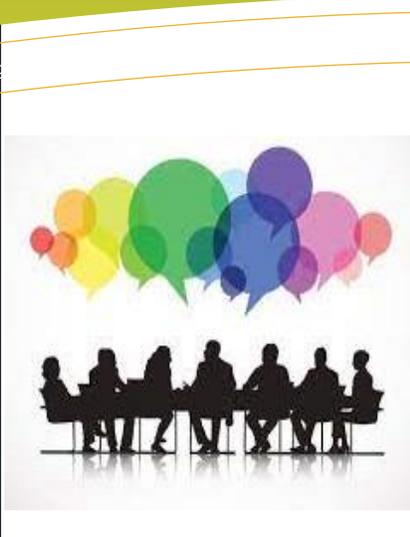
What began as a simple suggestion round the meeting table turned into a well-attended and CQ focussed Climate Change Symposium. The take away messages for me: coal/gas fired electricity is no longer economically viable (hooray), and professional fire fighters acknowledge that catastrophic bushfire is a product of climate change. Communicating these messages to the public and outlining the vast positive economic and environmental opportunities that are on offer is the vital task we have set for ourselves.

CCC is not in the business of chaining ourselves to bulldozers but we recognise the community's desire for organised protest. When we invited people to make a stand against the nonsense of a coal mine at Ogmoo just 10K from the reef they came in droves. The Queensland Government felt enough pressure to knock back a coal mine – the first time in history!

I hope you enjoy the newsletter – feedback is always welcome!

Paul Bambrick

President



A new CCC management committee was elected at the recent Annual General Meeting.

Some returned members and some new faces!

See page 4 for the new committee details

Rally for our reef

What a fantastic community turn out to protest against a new coal mine just 10km from the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and the Broad Sound Fish Habitat Area and nationally significant wetland.

Over 80 people turned up (at short notice) to help send a strong message to the Queensland government that this coal mine proposal is not supported – Save our Reef and don't approve Clive Palmer's Central Queensland Coal proposal.

And we have had a win! The Queensland Government, for the first time ever, has determined that this coal mine proposal is "not suitable". It is now with the Federal Environment Minister, Sussan Ley, to assess the proposal under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act. With both her Independent Expert Science Committee and the Queensland Government not supporting the proposal, we can only hope that she too takes on her responsibility to protect the Great Barrier Reef and not approve a mine that will cause significant and irreversible impacts to the reef.

Also see *the National Day of Action story on page 2*



Gathering for a National Day of Action

The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) organised a day of action in key federal MP electorates to urge the Federal Government to reject the Central Queensland Coal mine proposed 10km from the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Gatherings were held in Cairns, Brisbane, Mackay, Albury and Rockhampton.



Rockhampton



Mackay



Cairns

The small gatherings in key locations really made sure that our Federal elected representatives were aware of the impacts that the Central Queensland Coal mine would have on the environment and that many people don't want our reef impacted for the sake of 200 jobs, particularly when 1000's of jobs rely on our reef, wetlands and fish habitat areas.

The 'clock has been stopped' a few times during the next assessment stage and we now expect an outcome in the second week in July. Fingers crossed that our reef is not threatened.



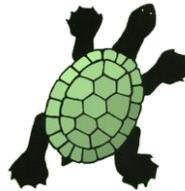
Brisbane

What's with the turtle as the CCC logo?

The CCC turtle logo is the very interesting, very unique, and quite threatened Fitzroy River Turtle – *Rheodytes leukops*.

Like CCC, the Fitzroy River Turtle cares about its environment and wants (needs) clean waterways, fewer feral animals and weeds, less habitat loss and people to think about them when undertaking sustainable development.

As its common name suggests, *Rheodytes leukops* is only found in the Fitzroy River and its tributaries. It is also the only living *Rheodytes* species – the other *Rheodytes*, *R. devisi* from the Darling Downs, is now extinct.



The Fitzroy River Turtle, *Rheodytes leukops*
Photo: Angus McNab

Why is it interesting and unique? Many reasons, but one fun fact is that the Fitzroy River turtle is also commonly known as the "bum breathing turtle".

While all turtles breathe air through their lungs, *Rheodytes* also has the unusual ability to absorb oxygen through cloacal gill respiration – they can breathe through their bum! This also means that they can stay underwater for long periods of time.

An extract of a letter sent to AMCS

I am writing today to confirm for you and your associates that I have indeed recently and personally discussed the issue of the proposed Central Queensland Coal Mine with my colleague Sussan Ley MP, Minister for the Environment and her staff.

I have expressed my very strong opposition to this project as the Special Envoy for the Great Barrier Reef. In my view, it is entirely inappropriate for the mine to proceed, particularly given its proximity to the Great Barrier Reef.

I note that the Queensland Government has already come to this conclusion through its rejection and referral of the proposed mine to the Federal Government. I expect that through her relatively quick deliberations, Minister Ley will also come to the same conclusion that this mine should not proceed.

I thank you and your associates for expressing your concern on this issue and wish you well with your continued advocacy in support of our Great Barrier Reef.

 The Hon. Warren Entsch MP
Federal Member for Leichhardt

Central Queensland Climate Change Symposium



What a fantastic event! A full day of facts from climate scientists about the likely impacts of climate change on our region and how we can prepare and grasp the economic opportunities available to us. Here are a few of the messages from our speakers:



Dr Sarah Boulter - Based on current emissions, by 2050 in Rockhampton:

- temperatures will be 3.8°C hotter – far exceeding the global average temperature increase,
- days of above 35°C will increase to over 45 days per year,
- the number of days with increased extreme fire weather will significantly increase

Prof Hilary Bambrick – Health impacts will include direct heat impacts; particularly for those directly exposed. There will also be less direct health impacts including mental health issues exacerbated by increased in severe weather events and natural disasters, and spread of tropical diseases into new areas.



Dave Copeman – Queensland is the Sunshine State and yet we are currently more reliant on coal than any other state or territory in Australia. We are also the country's biggest carbon polluter.

He outlined a plan where Queensland could stop burning coal for power by 2030 and play our part in keeping global heating to 1.5°C in line with the UN's Paris Agreement targets.

Lee Johnson – Advise us that bushfire is an increasing threat to Central Queensland. The bushfire season is now getting longer and more severe – something we have seen in the Rockhampton and Yeppoon areas in recent years.

We need to up our planning and prescribed burning in collaboration with neighbours as bushfire is tenure blind.



Dr Theresa Eyre – Spoke about the challenges that our wildlife are facing. What we can all do is to:

- Keep and manage– native vegetation and ecosystems
- Restore – habitat and connectivity
- Protect – habitat through fire, weed and feral predator management
- Watch – monitor vulnerable species
- Stay positive, collaborate, engage and get involved

If you missed out on the event– have a look at the “What’s coming up?” on page 4.

Central Queensland Climate Change symposium

Some extra environmental outcomes

Waste-free

A full day symposium with over 80 participants and NO waste went to landfill!

We avoided any handouts and relied on QR code scanners to distribute extra information. Our wonderful caterers worked with us to ensure that all the crockery and cutlery was either re-useable or home compostable.



Carbon-neutral

It wasn't possible to run a zero-emission symposium, but we did the next best thing and offset ALL the CO₂ emissions to make it a carbon-neutral event.

This is to certify

Capricorn Conservation Council

offset 7.00 tonnes of CO₂-e with Greenfleet.

Your support will help us restore native forests and ecosystems, which provide crucial habitat for endangered wildlife, help counter the devastating impact of the bushfires, and reduce the impacts of climate change.

Greenfleet will plant enough biodiverse native trees on your behalf to offset these emissions.

Thank you for helping us grow our forests and grow climate hope.

Wayne Wescott | Greenfleet CEO

22/05/2021

What's coming up?

The final details are still being developed, but here is a sneak-preview about some of the events CCC are planning to host in the near future.

Platypus Watch

Capricorn Conservation Council has partnered with Wildlife Capricorn in a new project, "Platypus Watch Capricornia".



Platypus Watch is a community-based program that aims to improve our understanding of the local distribution and habitat of the platypus.

The formal launch of this citizen science project is planned for September 2021 which will include an information and training session.

Climate Change

Following on from the CQ Climate Change Symposium we are keen to continue to run some further events such as:

- A webinar series with expert scientists on hand for Q&A after their presentations
- An introduction to sequestration and the programs that offer funding that are available to the community.
- A marine-focused information event to help us plan for managing our inshore environment
- A show-case of local businesses, industry and landholders that are taking climate actions to enhance their future.

Community comment

CCC has a new section on its website where community have the chance to put their environmental issues, thoughts or stories on our website.

So far, we have a few short articles with a couple of more to be published very soon.

You'll find the page on our website at:

<https://cccqld.org.au/community-comment/>

Meet the CCC Committee

Committee Executive:

- ★ President: Paul Bambrick
- ★ Vice president: Willy Newman
- ★ Secretary: James York
- ★ Treasurer: Ian Herbert

Committee members:

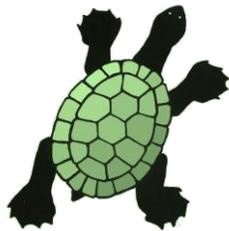
- ★ Doug Crossman
- ★ Tom Sjolund
- ★ Anna Hitchcock
- ★ Steve Elson
- ★ Peter MacGillvray
- ★ Bret Heath



Get involved - Make a difference

Help Capricorn Conservation Council and help the environment

- ✦ **Join:** \$5 concession, \$10 individual \$15 family, \$20 group.
- ✦ **Donate:** All donations are tax-deductible with funds going to worthy environmental projects in the region.
- ✦ **Become a citizen scientist:** Platypus Watch Capricornia.
- ✦ **Volunteer:** CCC is always keen to have help. Whatever your skills, we would love to have you onboard!
- ✦ **Visit our website for more information:** ccc@cccqld.org.au



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