

CHAIRMAN REPORT

General Meeting to be held on 12 December 2019

Welcome to Birak, the season of the young. A time of fledglings and reptiles shedding their skin. A season represented by the colour red, symbolic of heat, sun and fire. A time traditionally used to burn country in mosaic patterns.

Meetings and Events

November began with the big news of the State Administrative Tribunal's determination to affirm the Shire of Murray's decision to refuse the DA for the first stage of the Point Grey Marina. This fantastic result restored a lot of people's faith that we have a voice in the protection of our Estuary. As a community we rely on planning authorities to ensure that our valued environment is protected and that development is respectful to this. The Tribunal's determination that the proposed development was not consistent with 'orderly and proper planning', speaks volumes.

While the SAT's ruling vindicates the Shire's decision, I'm sure you are all aware that this is just the first step in a long road ahead to see a better outcome for the site.

It fills me with great confidence that the media's wide coverage demonstrates the wide interest and value community holds for the protection of the estuary.

In late November, the results of the Australian Research Council Linkage Project, *Balancing estuarine and societal health in a changing environment*, were released. This research project, led by Murdoch University and the University of Western Australia will fill some current knowledge gaps regarding the ecological health of the estuary and we hope that this new information will inform future decisions. This new evidence will provide the Commonwealth Government the ability to review the existing overarching approval under the EPBC Act.

Early interpretation of the work indicates that;

1. The ecological health of the estuary is declining despite the Dawesville cut
2. The rivers are in poor health
3. The climate shift is substantial
4. Economic arguments to sustainable development are justified

In summary our estuary, the lifeblood of our region, is at great risk and is in need of significant help.

On the 29th Jane O'Malley, Steve Fisher and myself met with David Bolt, Rod Peake, Eric Lumsden, Rhys Williams, Fiona Valesini and Matt Hipsey to discuss the ARC Linkage Project and the possibility of a scope extension relevant to Point Grey. This investigation will provide vital data for future determinations.

On the 25th and 26th, Sharon Meredith and team ran a two day Shorebird identification workshop with Ornithologist Bill Rutherford. On completion of the training, the workshop participants are competent in local shorebird identification and are equipped to volunteer with the Peel-Yalorup shorebird count held in December as part of BirdLife's National Shorebird Monitoring Program, coordinated by the PHCC. I was fortunate enough to attend and it was absolutely fantastic.

Jane and I have been invited to 2 Regional Cabinet meeting events on Sunday 8 December. The first is the Community Reception, hosted by the Premier (Pinjarra) and the second 'Ministers in the Murray', as guests of Sally Talbot. We will report on these at the meeting.

News

We welcome our new Board members Claire Reid and David Prattent.

Welcome Janine, our new Administration Officer and welcome back to Megan LeRoy who takes on the role of Healthy Farms Officer.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for their significant contributions over the past year and to our incredible staff. Their dedication and passion is one of PHCC's most valuable assets. The team is lead by one of our regions true legends, Jane O'Malley, and I thank her for another fantastic year.

I wish you all wonderful Christmas and I look forward to working with you in the New Year.

Warm regards

Caroline Knight

Chairman

We acknowledge the Noongar people as Traditional Custodians of this land and pay our respects to all Elders past and present