

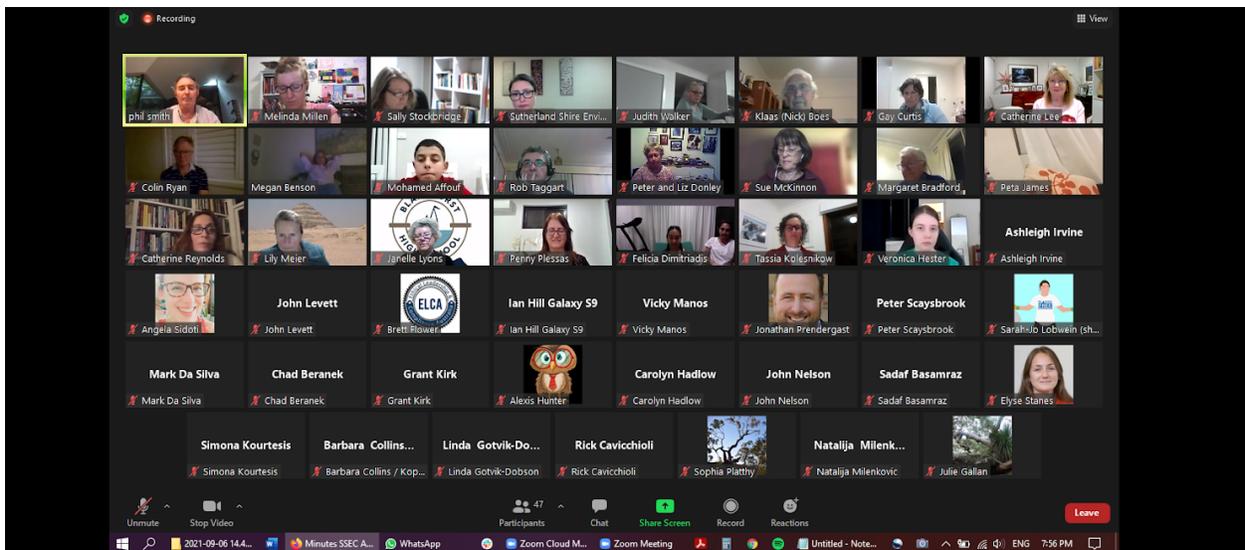
Minutes of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (SSEC) AGM 2021

Thursday, 9 September 7-9pm – Via zoom

The meeting started at 7.01pm

1. Attendance

Present (52): Tassia Kolesnikow (Chair), Melinda Millen (Minutes), Sally Stockbridge (timekeeper), Sally Knight (tech and agenda), Phil Smith, Catherine Reynolds, Peter Donley, Liz Donlyy, Vicky Manos, Felicia Dimitriadis, Brett Flower, Judith Walker, Mohamed Affouf, Raymond Van Den Anker, John Levett, Klass (Nick) Boes, Grant Kirk, Peta James, Gay Burtis, Catherine Lee, Margaret Bradford, Mark Da Silva, Sue McKinnon, Rob Taggart, Jenni Gormley, Peter Scaysbrook, Colin Ryan, Megan Benson, Dean Kelly, Penny Plessas, Lily Meier, Sarah-Jo Lobwein, Ashleigh Irvine, Angela Sidoti, Penny Plessas, Ian Hill, Jonathan Prendergast, Mary Jacobs, Chad Beranek, Alexis Hunter, Carolyn Hadlow, John Nelson, Sadaf Basamraz, Elyse Stanes, Simona Kourtesis, Barbara Collins/Koppe, Linda Gotvik-Dobson, Rick Cavicchioli, Sophia Platthy, Natalija Milenkovic, Julie Gallan, Veronica Hester.



Apologies: Federal MP Scott Morrison, NSW MP Mark Speakman, Sutherland Shire Councillor Jack Floyd.

2. Introduction

Tassia Kolesnikow, SSEC Chair, opened the evening, welcomed those present, made an Acknowledgement of Country, explained zoom etiquette, gave an overview of the evening and SSEC highlights, introduced the board and other participants, and gave a tribute to Norm Dixon. The Centre's history and founding was highlighted, including Bob Walsh's legacy. Details of the Centre's activity can be found in the SSEC Annual Report 2021.

3. Presentation: Dean Kelly

Dean Kelly is a cultural man with fresh and saltwater heritage (through his mother and father's Country) and lives with the responsibility associated with caring for that Country. The bush was his school, and Uncle Mack was his teacher. Nature is the best teacher and university. He lives his culture and research, rather than reading about it.

He summarised the Mountain of Creation story: The rock created the woman then he created man with gifts (rock and tree). The totems include their child and sea animals, and they are all connected. The teaching rock is where they can see much of their country. The mountain belongs to everyone, no matter where you're from, to learn from.

His culture is ancient - since the first sunrise. We are all born of the land and we will return to the land (to grow the next generation of people, plants and medicine). He doesn't own Country, but rather he has to care for it, and he pays gratitude to his ancestors for what Country provides. The old people don't separate food and medicine, and instead view it all as what is needed (and no more than that) for survival.

Q&A:

Describe a moment in your youth when you had an overwhelming connection with nature?

From a young age he was able to run freely in the bush, including around Banksia shrubs in La Perouse. They were learning about the plants by running through them without knowing they were learning. We're all lucky it has survived.

What progress is being made on the marine native title claim that you are involved with? An anthropologist is in the research phase and they're gathering information on people's connection to Country. The native title land is from Eaden to Bundeena and 3 miles out to sea (it's unusual that it contains the sea). It's a divisive piece of legislation and doesn't give them much. Hopefully they'll get a claim in 5 years (but it may take 20 years).

If you had a chance to speak with the Prime Minister about Climate change and the effect it is having on Country what would you say to him? He would speak my mind (as he's not working tonight). Climate change has been here forever. The old people have lived with it, but it's destroying nature. Nature is far too intelligent for us. He would say to Morrison: The economy always wins in politics, but humans rely on nature.

How do you feel about people respectfully visiting aboriginal sites? People need to be aware of Aboriginal heritage so they know to look after it. Aboriginal Peoples have to give away Country in order to keep it.

How do we care rather than just use Country? Planting trees is important, but observing nature talking to us is really important. We usually wait for something to happen, then we react. But actually nature gives warning if we listen. Nature is our hospital, psychologist, etc. The answers for COVID are there in nature, but it's not the plants that have medicine, it's the Mother giving birth to medicine. We need to listen.

How important is it to bring the correct names back to Country? Uluru is an example of that. Dean Kelly is a fan of dual naming and finding a balance for sites. Aboriginal heritage isn't valued

in the same way as European heritage. The government doesn't spend money restoring or maintaining Aboriginal sites, whereas a European pub will get restored.

How do you lift yourself when decision makers make terrible decisions? When he can't go into the bush, he talks to his wife about the issues. He communicates, and doesn't let it contaminate his spirit.

What can you tell the children about the importance of connecting with nature while they are staying at home with their families because of Covid? Dean Kelly takes his grandson to the Royal NP - it's so important for them to wander around and explore so they learn to care for nature.

Favourite spot in the Royal NP? The bush.

4. Break

Speaking for the Planet "Ecosystem Restoration" song by Felicia Dimitriadis was played via video.

5. Speaking 4 the Planet (S4P) Award

Phil Smith, S4P Founder and SSEC Board Member, gave a summary of the competition and presented the below awards for online submissions:

Video category: Felicia Dimitriadis

Speech winner: Mohamed Affouf ([full speech can be seen here](#))

The Artwork and Written submissions winners will be announced shortly. Next year's competition will require students to draw a link between peace and sustainability.

6. Local sustainability

Sarah-Jo Lobwein, Co-Founder of SO SHIRE and Plastic Free Sutherland Shire and SSEC Board Member, introduced Catherine Lee, Director of The Point Preschool in Oyster Bay.

The Point Preschool was the 2020 Sustainable Business category Winner of the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards.

They have a Plastic Free Sutherland Shire categorisation certificate, and have many friends and visitors with a connection to nature. They want to empower children (3-5 years old) to be custodians of the land and twice a week they go walking on Country. They continue to honour the Dharawal people and the founders of the School. They have chickens, rainwater tanks, solar, warm farms, toys from reusable materials, grow bush tucker, wrote a bush tucker cookbook, have a stick library, and sewed 50 boomerang bags and gave them to the local cafe. They also use multiple sustainable building aspects.

The children are very passionate as advocates, for example, they came up with a campaign sign for dog owners to be more responsible for the dog poo in bush areas. The parents and the community listen to, and are influenced by, the children (eg. they have veggie gardens, recycling, and chickens at their homes too). Despite COVID restrictions and kids not attending, families are still spending time in nature. [More information can be found in this video.](#)

7. Bill Ryan Activism Award

Sue McKinnon, a member of SSEC and SCAN, presented the award, to honour the memory of SSEC's most famous life member, Bill Ryan, who passed away in December 2019.

Winner: Peter Donley, who has campaigned on so many environmental and social issues.

Veronica Hester, 2020's Bill Ryan Activism Award Winner, spoke about the causes she will spend her \$1000 award gift on. She will spend \$500 on the [Children's Legal Defence Fund](#) so that they can appeal the case against the Federal Environment Minister, Sussan Ley. They successfully established a Common Law duty of Care, but they weren't able to get an injunction on the new coal mine Vickery Extension Project. The other \$500 will go towards [Just Dig It](#): If nature is brought back by applying cost-effective nature-based solutions, we can mitigate global warming by 37% (e.g. seed banks, local techniques, reforestation).

AGM business

8. Confirm minutes of previous AGM (link was circulated with invitation)

The Minutes of the 2020 AGM were confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

Moved – Phil Smith, Seconded – Sally Stockbridge. Carried.

9. Chairperson's report

A brief Chair's report was delivered by SSEC Chair Tassia Kolesnikow. More details can be found in the 2021 Annual Report.

She welcomed Sally Knight, the new SSEC Executive Officer; and Sadaf Basamraz, our new Public Officer. A special thanks went to Dr Catherine Reynolds, former SSEC Executive Officer; and John Nelson.

She thanked the three resigning board members: Melinda Millen, Sarah-Jo Lobwein, and Dr Sally Stockbridge.

10. Revised Constitution Special Resolution

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre constitution, last updated in 2010, has recently been reviewed. Several changes aim: firstly, to update references to various Acts, Regulations and NSW Fair Trading Incorporated Associations requirements; secondly, to modernise clauses to reflect current practices and; finally, to refine clauses on SSEC "Objects" and "Role" so that these key clauses reflect more clearly what the SSEC does and stands for.

The changes, rationale and the proposed new constitution are included in Agenda Paper 1.

Special Resolution - That the proposed changes to the SSEC constitution, as circulated and described in Agenda Paper 1, be approved.



Moved – Tassia Kolesnikow, Seconded – Phil Smith. Carried.

11. Financial Report

Lily Meier, SSEC Treasurer and Board Member reported on the Centre’s financial position.

It was moved that the AGM approve the delegation of the acceptance of the financial report to the Board.

Moved – Tassia Kolesnikow, Seconded – Sally Stockbridge. Carried.

12. Election of Board

All positions on the Board were declared vacant and the following nominations were announced:

Dr Tassia Kolesnikow (Chair)
Lily Meier (Treasurer)
Ian Hill
Chad Beranek
Catherine Reynolds
Phil Smith

As the number of nominations were not sufficient for the number of positions on the Board, the nominated persons were declared elected by Sally Knight.

Ian Hill, Chad Beranek, and Catherine Reynolds were newly welcomed in joining the board.

13. General Business

Klaas (Nick) Boes: How are we progressing with the World Heritage Listing for the Royal NP (it usually takes up to 10 years to get through)? We have to wait until a change of government, and now there are new criteria. SSEC was considering leveraging an international conference to promote the project, but the current government is firmly opposed.

How has everyone enjoyed the evening and the online format?

- Zoom is great but I really miss connecting with people in person.
- Zoom is accessible for people who cannot attend physically.
- Well organised. Great speaker. Wonderful to connect.
- Zoom is very convenient - sound quality needs improvement: great bunch of people that always bring enthusiasm and conviction - very appreciative of the strong group of movers of shakers in the Enviro Centre.
- I much prefer face to face, can't wait for lockdown to end so I can meet everyone I haven't met yet.
- I think zoom is a great medium for a casual get together from time to time. But I would prefer a physical AGM.
- I think administrative things are better on Zoom. But fun things are better in person.

Catherine Reynolds, Tassia and Klaas Boes made some final comments.

The meeting closed at 8.52pm.