



MINUTES 2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, 18 October 2009
Hastings Community Hall
Main Street, Hastings

The Chair, Rob Gell, opened the meeting at 11.00 am, acknowledging the Traditional Owners and welcoming Biosphere Foundation Members and guests.

PRESENT

Board and General Members

Rob Gell, Jane Jobe, Jack Krohn, Jeff Weir, Jim Kerin, Alison Kuitert, Reade Smith, Rachel Weaver

Laurie Brown, Geoff Duke, Robin Dzedins, Marnee Fraser, Anwyn Martin, David Nicholls, Yvonne Reifenberg, Annabel Richards, Roger Richards, Bruce Ridgway, Jillian Verhardt, Rhys Walkley, Cecelia Witton

Guests

Janet Borley (Watson Creek Project Officer), Andrew Grant (Advisory Panel), Dough Newton and Professor John Swan (Western Port Seagrass Partnership), Peter Belbin (Chisholm TAFE, Rosebud)

APOLOGIES

Dr Michael Kennedy, Allan Bawden, Mike Tyler, Cr John Duscher, Libby Anthony, Ian Stevenson, Greg Hunt (SECCCA)

Neil Beddoe, Robin Borger (BlueScope Steel), Claire Dawson, Bruce Errol, Amanda Frew, Judith Heep, The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Barbara Kuhl, Ray Maino, Jan Oliver, Barry Ross, Ian Weir, Dr Peter Woodgate

CHAIR'S REPORT

Rob Gell presented the Chair's Report, as printed in the Foundation's 2008-2009 Annual Report, and provided a visual presentation, reiterating the role and structure of the Biosphere, the level of regional engagement and support by its stakeholders – the community, local government and State agencies – and the valuable projects generated:

- The Biosphere's Watson Creek Integrated Catchment Management Project (Project Officer Janet Borley) has evolved into a model of how diverse stakeholders and interest groups can be brought together to create a demonstrative example of successful collaboration.
- The iconic Southern Brown Bandicoot Project (Project Manager David Nicholls) will continue to play a crucial role in the management of biodiversity threatened fauna (and flora) across the Biosphere region.
- The proposed Mass Balance Project, envisaged by the Research Committee in conjunction with CSIRO's Division of Sustainable Ecosystems, remains in development.

The Chair also spoke about the role of the Foundation's Advisory Panel, which meets regularly and provides high level strategic advice to the Board, as well as the alliance being forged with Australia's two newest Biospheres – Noosa Biosphere Reserve (designated in 2007) and the Great Sandy Biosphere Reserve (designated in May 2009), with the aim of creating an Association of Australian Biospheres, as a means of evolving into a more effective Biosphere group on the international scene.

In conclusion, Rob spoke of the Foundation's currently tight financial position and called on all General Members to spread the word about the valuable role of the Biosphere Foundation as facilitator across the region to generate dialogue and greater collaboration across all stakeholder groups. Through the ongoing personal support of its Board Members and General Members, the Foundation will continue to build upon its current success and form new alliances within and beyond the region.

The Chair then called on Executive Officer, Cecelia Witton, to present a visual overview of the two international UNESCO sponsored conferences which she attended on Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve, Republic of South Korea, in December 2008 and May 2009.

Cecelia pointed out that Jeju's commitment to the *Man and the Biosphere* program evolved from its philosophy that everyone on the island has a role to play – and hence the heavy government support. The December conference focused on the Impact of Climate Change on Coastal and Island Biosphere Reserves; the May workshop expanded on this theme and delegated exchanged very valuable information about these processes.

The May gathering also brought the MAB International Coordinating Council to Jeju to hold its 21st and first ever meeting outside Paris, and designated the Great Sandy Biosphere Reserve as Australia's newest Biosphere.

Rob thanked Cecelia for her presentation and emphasised that the Foundation has evolved from small beginnings to considerable international potential over recent years.

NB: Information on any of the above subject is available on the Foundation's website at www.biosphere.org.au

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD 12 OCTOBER 2008

These were posted on the Foundation's website already in December 2008.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Honorary Treasurer Jeff Weir reported the Foundation's financial situation as printed in the 2008-2009 Financial Report. He pointed out that the auditors were pleased with Executive Officer Cecelia Witton's management of the Foundation's accounts, and that the Board is satisfied that the Foundation can meet its current financial obligations.

However, Jeff stressed the urgent need for an injection of discretionary revenue, in order to maintain the Biosphere Foundation's strategic position into the future. The *Bandicoot Buddy* fund raising program is intended to generate 35 members per month and demonstrate to potential funding sources (such as philanthropics) that this organisation can resource itself independently to a reasonable level.

The meeting was given the opportunity to ask questions after which Jeff called for a motion to adopt the audited Financial Report.

MOTION:

That the Biosphere Foundation adopts the audited Financial Report for the financial year of 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 as presented.

Moved: Jeff Weir, Seconded: Jim Kerin, Carried.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS 2009-2010

The Foundation's current auditors, WHK Horwath, are being retained to conduct the audit of accounts for the financial year 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

Chair Rob Gell presented Certificates of Appreciation to:

- IAN WEIR for his pivotal role and contribution to the development of the UNESCO nomination and his services as a Director in the Foundation's formative years.
- DAVID NICHOLLS for his contribution to the Foundation's Research Committee and leadership in the Southern Brown Bandicoot Recovery Project.
- MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE COUNCIL for its sustained and considerable leadership, and financial and in-kind support from nomination to now.
- YVONNE REIFENBERG for her substantial volunteer contribution to the administrative and business systems of the Foundation's office.

Cr Reade Smith received the Certificate on behalf of Dr Michael Kennedy who was unable to attend the meeting. Jane Jobe, Deputy Chair and Director representing Bass Coast Roundtable, will pass on to Ian Weir, also an apology, his Certificate.

GUEST SPEAKER – ANDREW GRANT

Rob Gell introduced Andrew Grant as Consultant, immediate past Chair of the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Chief Executive Officer of CO2 Australia Limited, and as a valued member of the Biosphere Foundation's Advisory Panel.

Andrew spoke about the following topics:

- The challenges of achieving effective conservation programs and funding
- Turning a challenge into an asset, as with the Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne (by working with adjacent property planners to retain/create indigenous vegetation links between the two sites)
- The project focus of the PPWCMA this year
- The success that his organisation, CO2 Australia is having with carbon sequestration through extensive tree planting throughout Australia and internationally
- The need to harness the power of a brand to capture the aspirations of average Australians

Andrew also spoke of the Biosphere's role:

- in demonstrating at a local regional level how to achieve good results
- in harnessing the interests of the wider community, many of whom are eager to learn how to implement sustainable outcomes
- in educating government agencies and corporations about the need to value nature in terms other than purely monetary considerations

Rob thanked Andrew for his most stimulating presentation and question were received from the floor.

At 12.30 pm the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the formal meeting.

A light buffet luncheon was served.