

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society

President Address

2024 Annual General Meeting

Thank you Scott and Adrian for your report on our 2023 year. It certainly shows the breadth of OFF activities that we have taken on in support of our local and wider environment!

So, what are our **priorities for 2024**? Some of them, I suggest, are:

- A. **Climate Emergency response** - everything else largely flows from this!
Seek emissions reduction at all levels of national activity to reduce Urban Heat Island impacts.
- B. **Protection of existing trees** – for canopy and biodiversity/habitat.
Ensure the revised Tree Management Policy (which now includes the Significant Tree Register) does the job it is intended to do.
- C. **Lots more tree planting** Local (and regional) Increase **canopy** cover towards the targeted 40%. Work with Council, Greater Sydney Landcare and other community groups.
- D. **Responding to** the State Government's proposed **new housing policies** for increased densities, seeking to ameliorate their significant environmental impacts.

Some key projects/campaigns **contributing to these goals** are:

- 1. Include an assessment of climate change impacts in all council decisions and policies.
- 2. Expand Council climate actions from just GRC's own operations to the whole LGA and its population eg FOGO, EV charging stations, greater use of solar power.
- 3. Save Glenlee –Prevent loss of large area of native forest, habitat and biodiversity corridor along Georges River
- 4. Biodiversity calamity – Australia has an appalling track record on extinctions. Protect, create and supplement biodiversity corridors. Support the recently adopted Wildlife Protection Area Policy.

We will continue to improve relations with GRC developing a cooperative working relationship and greater influence. We have already made much progress and I acknowledge the Councillors from GRRR Party in this regard. We also hope to soon re-establish quarterly meetings with the Mayor and senior staff.

Organisational issues

Membership drive – including younger age groups – Facebook has helped in this endeavour to some extent. It's probably a longer term goal but we have encouraged events with scouts, school groups and general community and family groups to engage with both children and parents.

We need to strike a balance between hope and despair. It's so easy to become despondent about the state of the planet when you feel authorities don't listen. We need to take on a balance of short and long term, bigger and smaller, difficult and easy projects and issues such that wins and setbacks are spread more evenly throughout our calendar and environment. We must keep working together and supporting each other. Learn from the setbacks and take the small wins for the environment and celebrate with glee as they come about.

Thank you

I'd like to thank **OFF committee** members for their support and encouragement and for their contributions across the myriad of issues and projects and campaigns that we have undertaken and for all the hard work in keeping OFF running effectively and efficiently. In particular, thanks go to Liz Cameron who is retiring from Committee after 11 years' service. A remarkable contribution!

Finally, **thank you to all members** for your support of, and participation in, OFF activities. Please continue to provide your feedback on our activities, events, and campaigns both how they could be improved and suggestions for new ones. I look forward to the year ahead. Together we can work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment – locally and globally.

Kim Wagstaff

President