



Friends of North Bruny

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT TO THE AGM

19 OCTOBER 2024

I am pleased to present this report to the members of Friends of North Bruny (FONB), covering the activities of the organisation for the past year.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2023-2024	
Chair	Simon Allston
Vice Chair	Gerald Castles
Secretary	Siobhan Gaskell
Treasurer	Walter Truesdale
Public Officer	Jan Richards
Committee	Alex Matysek, Ros Woodburn, Lindon Haigh, Joanne Naylor

The Management Committee has met four times, with a lot of work undertaken between meetings and decisions often taken by email exchange.

These are the main issues on which I wish to report:

MEMBERSHIP

Friends of North Bruny has 113 financial members comprising residents and ratepayers from Dennes Point, Barnes Bay, Killora, Apollo Bay, Great Bay and North Bruny.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

We are keen to develop strong working relationships with the **Bruny Island Environment Network** (BIEN) and the **Bruny Island Community Association** (BICA), and to work with them on issues affecting the whole of the island.

We are working closely with **BIEN** on their Threatened Woodland Birds of Bruny Island (TWBBI) project, the purpose of which is to improve the prospects for survival of the Swift parrot and the 40-spotted pardalote. I am on the project Steering Committee, and my wife Janeil and I have grown many trees for the project. Many of our members have volunteered on the numerous tree planting working bees that have taken place during the year. As of 13 October, 1,648 trees have been planted this year, with another 1,216 to go. This is on top of 806 last year.

There was some discussion at last year's AGM about whether there might be value in FONB and BIEN merging. I explored that briefly earlier this year, but it did not lead anywhere.

Bob and Marg Graham have hitherto been prime movers in BIEN, but stepped back at the BIEN AGM this year. I have already met with the new Convenor, James Bunker, and a number of members of their new executive committee and hope to work closely with them on issues of mutual concern.

We are also developing a good working relationship with **BICA**, and their President, Tammy Price. Tammy organised visits to the island earlier this year by Dave Stewart, the new CEO of Kingborough Council, Rosalie Woodruff, Leader of the Tasmanian Greens, and Dean Winter, Leader of the Opposition in the Tasmanian Parliament. I participated in each of those visits, and Jan Richards joined me in meeting with Dave Stewart and Dean Winter. Jan has also attended some BICA meetings and engaged with Tammy in other settings, including the Kingborough Consultative Forum, where Jan has represented FONB.

Like us, BICA and BIEN are both concerned about the pressure on the island from the current and expected levels of tourism, and we expect to work with them in the future on that issue. This is likely to become an even more pressing topic when the new Bass Strait ferries enter service. They will not only bring more tourists to the State, but also more recreational vehicles (RVs). The island cannot properly accommodate the RVs which come here now, and they also interfere with the free flow of ferry traffic.

The effect on the island of overtourism is a frequent topic at our management meetings, and it will be remembered that we wrote to all Franklin candidates at the last election to seek their views on how the island might be better protected from excessive tourism. The response was, unfortunately, underwhelming.

A new organisation has lately come forward with concerns about protecting the biodiversity and natural assets of the island. This is **Kuno**, who launched their proposal for an online field guide to the natural history and conservation of the island at Adventure Bay on 14 September. The proposal has the support of numerous organisations and businesses on and off the island and deserves FONB's support.

Another organisation seeking to protect the natural resources of the island is **NRM South**, which has recently been awarded \$3.5m in funding as part of the Australian Government's national investment of \$60m in feral cat management. This will fund some aspects of their multi-faceted 'Biodiverse Bruny' program, which goes beyond work on feral cats and includes initiatives which will protect important habitat and native species, including 40-spotted pardalotes and Eastern quolls. We have joined with BIEN in recommending that Andrew Hingston, the project manager of the TWBBI project, who is one of our members, become the representative of the Bruny Island community on the Technical Advisory Committee which will help oversee the program.

We have also partnered with the **Bruny Island Historical Society** on a number of occasions during the year and have offered a range of informative walks showcasing the built and natural environment. Destinations have included Nebraska Beach, Bull Bay and Kelly's Point. In June, a one-hour exploration of Dennes Point followed by a related Triva Session proved very popular. Our thanks to Suzanne Smythe from the Historical Society for instigating and leading these adventures.

LANDCARE AND COASTCARE

A great deal of work has taken place this year in getting the North Bruny Land and Coastcare group under way. The group is an initiative of FONB and reports to the FONB management committee but is largely operating independently.

I would particularly like to thank Jo Naylor, Sue Rallings, Jim Mulcahy, Siobhan Gaskell, Ginger Briggs and Ros Woodburn for their participation in the group. Jo Naylor has been the group convenor for most of the year, but laid this down in September. I am pleased to say that Sue Rallings then agreed to take over as convenor. Sue and her husband Mark have recently moved to live permanently on North Bruny, and have long experience with a vibrant LandCare group in Queensland.

The work of the Land and CoastCare group intersects with the TWBBI project mentioned above, but the group will be holding separate and regular working bees. We will hear more about their plans in the presentations which will follow our AGM.

MARINE DEBRIS BINS

Members will recall that the bins which we installed around the island for the disposal of marine debris collected by members of the public from beaches were attracting general rubbish, particularly at times of high visitor numbers. Because of this, and our wish to keep the bins in place, we asked Kingborough Council on several occasions to take over the emptying of the bins. They refused for some time to do so, but eventually relented in April of this year. The bins are now emptied on a regular basis by the Council's contractor, and we no longer have responsibility for them. This is a very pleasing result.

BRUNY ISLAND MAIN ROAD

I have corresponded with the Minister for State Growth on a number of occasions this year about the poor state of Bruny Island Main Road north of its intersection with Lennon Road. The road has been graded twice since the last AGM, with extra gravel being spread on some sections in June, and the Minister and his Department insist that the road only deserves grading twice a year.

The problem is that the road deteriorates very quickly during and after big rain events, and does not stand up well to the amount of traffic that uses it. The level of tourism experienced by the island is a factor. So are the truck movements that arise from water cartage, building developments, etc.

We believe that the best way to promote better maintenance of the road is for anyone concerned at the state of the road to ring the Department of State Growth hotline (1300 130 933) to report any dangers and defects. If this is done often enough, it may be that the Department will commit more funds to the road.

SUBDIVISION, 37 NEBRASKA RD

At the time of our last AGM, the appeal lodged by the developers against the permit conditions imposed by Kingborough Council was still in train, but seemed likely to settle. FONB had been added as a party to the proceedings, and was involved in making sure that the soil stability issues of concern to us were properly investigated.

The appeal was resolved through consent orders in March of this year. We were satisfied that the orders were appropriate, and that they did not significantly weaken

the quite stringent conditions imposed by the Council when approving the development.

DENNES POINT LANE

Roadworks have taken place in Dennes Point Lane this year, as required by the permit for the development at the end of the Lane. The roadworks made it necessary that the Council relocate some of the signs for the Heritage Walk, and this has recently happened. The follow-up work by the Council has also included the installation of bollards at the end of the road, to stop vehicles from going out to the point. They will also be reinstating the gate at the entrance to the Lane.

Siobhan Gaskell has been diligent in prompting the Council to complete this follow-up work. We also have Ian Barwick to thank for liaising with the road contractor and Council officers during the works in this very sensitive location.

KELLAWAY PARK

The Liberal Party promised during the election campaign that they would put \$50k towards the renovation of the tennis courts at Kellaway Park, and the recent State government budget made mention of this anticipated expenditure. We have kept in touch with Kingborough Council about this, and have also discussed with them other improvements that might be made to the Park to make it more welcoming and useful. We will continue with this in the coming year.

SALMON

Two members of our management committee, Alex Matysek and Gerard Castles, have a special concern about the salmon industry, and keep us informed of any developments on this front. Alex represents FONB and BIEN on the Tasmanian Alliance for Marine Protection (TAMP), and has done so for some time.

TAMP has not been very active this year, and much of the energy going into raising public awareness about the environmental damage being wrought by the industry has come from Neighbours Against Fish Farming (NOFF), with which we are affiliated, and which demonstrates remarkable creativity and resourcefulness.

I am concerned about the intensification of salmon farming in Storm Bay, and how this might affect life on North Bruny. There are now 28 pens at the Yellow Bluff lease, which is visible from the road on Dennes Hill, whereas I remember only 12 at that lease a relatively short while ago. There are 11 at the Trumpeter Bay lease, and 9 at Variety Bay. These, of course, are additional to the many pens in the Channel which are adjacent to North Bruny.

I thank Alex and Gerard for their vigilance in this area of concern.

ANIMAL AWARENESS SIGNS

Friends who were at last year's AGM will remember Lindon Haigh displaying animal awareness and Slow for Wildlife signs that we intended to introduce.

Thanks to Lindon's efforts, this program has gone well. We continue to introduce new and varied signage to recognised roadkill hot spots and to private roadside properties, but theft, disfigurement and vandalism have been a problem at times.

The use of relocatable signs on portable frames was initially stymied by a resident getting a Council officer to confiscate them. We tracked the signs down and are now working on permits to allow such signs to be displayed during high animal risk periods.

The latest development is a 'Share Our Roads' sign, to warn of children as well as wildlife. These signs have been strategically placed at Dennes Point and Apollo Bay.

BUSHFIRE READINESS

Bushfire is the most likely natural disaster to befall our community, and the risk of catastrophic wildfire is rising all the time as the climate changes.

Although not a member of the management committee, Giselle Nathan puts a lot of thought, energy and time into this issue for us, and for the North Bruny community, and I thank her for that.

Giselle organised a community meeting about bushfire readiness which took place at the Dennes Point Hall on 12 November last year. Over 60 people attended, and heard from a number of TFS officers, and from Belinda Loxley, Resilience Coordinator at Kingborough Council, and Leigh Blackwell, chief of our local fire brigade.

Prompted by Giselle, we have also recently been encouraging our members to participate in the TFS's online Bushfire Ready Challenge.

FERAL DEER

As mentioned in my last report, FONB has played a part in bringing the problem of feral deer on the island to the attention of the State government.

Earlier this year, the government appointed a number of deer control officers. One of these, Rupert Davies, is the control officer for Southeast Tasmania, and has responsibility for deer control on Bruny. Rupert has said to me recently that he believes that it should be possible to eradicate them from the whole of the island, but

the first task is to remove them from North Bruny. Shooting up here has recently begun.

It is important to this effort that all sightings are reported, either through the FeralScan app or directly to Rupert (0492 068 241).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

FONB lodged a submission in February in relation to the report of the Local Government Board into the future of local government in Tasmania. We supported the Board's proposal that the Kingborough and Huon Valley Councils be amalgamated, but did not support the suggestion advanced by Kingborough Council earlier in the process that local government services should be provided to Bruny Island by a Board of Management.

It appears now that the State government does not have any appetite for local government amalgamations.

A recent event of some consequence for our community is that Kingborough Council is about to adopt the new State planning scheme. A draft of the Local Provisions Schedule (LPS) that will attach to the scheme for the municipality has recently been placed on public exhibition until 9 December. Representations about the LPS can be made to the Council during this period. The representations will then be considered by the Tasmanian Planning Commission in its consideration of the suitability of the LPS.

Importantly, the LPS includes a Specific Area Plan for Bruny Island, which will need careful consideration.

I encourage all of our members to have a look at the LPS and in particular the Specific Area Plan for the island, which can be seen at pp 72 ff of the LPS. The LPS can be found at the following link - <https://www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/development/incoming-draft-tasmanian-planning-scheme/local-provisions-schedule/>

BRUNY BOOK BUS

Students at Woodbridge School who take the ferry and bus from Bruny Island are now enjoying a box of age-appropriate books to read on the journey to and from school.

This initiative was first trialled during Tasmania Reads Week 2023. It was so popular that Friends of North Bruny successfully applied for a grant from the LBW Trust

(National Backyard Cricket) to reintroduce the Book Box during Tasmania Reads 2024 (17-24 March), and for it to continue during the school year.

This project was made possible through a partnership with Libraries Tasmania who will select and refresh the books, and the support of the school bus operator, Gordon. Students are encouraged to make suggestions for specific books they would like included in this mobile collection.

I would like to thank Jan Richards for taking the initiative with this project.

COMMUNICATIONS

I would also like to commend Jan on the quality of our communications with members and with the wider community. We frequently need to email members to keep them informed of current events and issues, and Jan very efficiently manages that process. She also maintains our website and our Facebook page, and keeps a general eye out for social media that may be important.

We have also made an effort this year to be more visible through *Bruny News*, after hearing that many people elsewhere on the island did not know of our existence and/or our role. Each issue now usually contains one or more articles about activities in which FONB is involved.

CONCLUSION

I wish to thank all of the members of the Management Committee for their contributions to our work during the year.

Jo Naylor and Ros Woodburn are not standing for reelection this year, and I thank them for all they have done for FONB. I encourage other members to now come forward and serve, to help make the Management Committee as representative as possible of the community of North Bruny.

Simon Allston

Chair

Friends of North Bruny

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