

What has SIRA been doing? A mid-year report to residents



Photo: 1 Marie Minslow, Maddy Bandfield, CB Floyd, Julie Cooper (for first half of year), Julie Paterson, Robyn Iredale (President), Julie Torney, Deb Woods (Secretary), Ian White, Colin Haskell (Vice President), Emma Harvey, Boyd Attewell. Not in the photo were Sharon Kinnison and Basil Daher. Photo by Roy Baker, first appearing in PON.

Much of the important work in SIRA is performed by subcommittees. Subcommittees create and promote proposals for action, which are then presented to the SIRAC meetings. The subcommittee teams are then responsible for carrying out decisions. Activities include advocacy for the island, creating solutions for problems, communicating with islanders, liaison with Council and other government bodies, cooperation with other offshore and onshore community organisations, management of services, and much more.

Here are some of the achievements and efforts of these hard-working teams since the AGM. Note that subcommittee minutes and reports are available in the Document Library on the Scotland Island community website. We also acknowledge the hard work of the Secretary, Deb Woods, who does not appear in the Subcommittee reports.

At the end of this report we acknowledge and thank the many community members involved in volunteering in our community in so many different ways.

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Communications Subcommittee

Team Leader: CB Floyd

Subcommittee members: Lisa Ratcliff, Shane O'Neill, Julie Paterson, Juliet Wills, and Alec Beckett (IT Services).

Overview: The Communications SC ensures residents are informed of key developments, activities, events and opportunities on matters related to the island community, and to seek feedback, comment and discussion from the community.

What we have done since the AGM

- Sent out 30 issues of SIRA News
- Posted numerous notices of events on the Pittwater Offshore Community Facebook page and Scotland Island Residents' Facebook page.
- Re-drafted the Emergency Water page on the website and updated other pages
- Finalised the design of a survey of residents along with the Governance Subcommittee and issued it early in June, with a closing date of 23 June
- Collaborated with the Island Vision Subcommittee on an updated Vision Statement to be presented to the community for feedback soon
- Created this mid-year report on subcommittee activities

Finance and Insurance

Treasurer: from January to July: Julie Cooper (current Treasurer Simon Tucker)

Accountant: Boyd Attewell

Subcommittee members: Tim Turpin, Boyd Attewell, Colin Haskell, Sharon Kinnison, Robert Fox

Overview: This subcommittee, headed by the Treasurer, with substantive support from the accountant, maintains SIRA accounts, reports on profit and loss, prepares budgets and financial statements, processes payments, and advises SIRAC on financial and insurance matters.

The accounts are prepared on a financial year basis and SIRA is in the process of preparing to align the AGMs more closely with this schedule. For that reason, SIRA's AGM in 2024 will be in October.

A few points from the most recent reports include:

- The eleven-month year-to-May P&L result shows a gain of \$4,228 on a turnover of \$205,722.
- The budget for the same period was for a loss of \$2,256 on a turnover of \$146,843.
- SIRA is ahead of budget by \$6,484 for the 11 months to 31 May 2024 due to the surpluses achieved by the SIOCS loan recovery, the Secret Island production, the Two Catherines café and the Moon Dance series.
- Emergency Water is not the profitable service it once was. This is because the water sold by SIRA is deliberately priced to achieve a break-even result, and many costs associated with the supply of water have increased faster than CPI, or have newly appeared since the acquisition of the pump.
- SIRA continues to have a strong asset situation (net assets of \$26,185 including a reserve for water line replacement of \$171,500). The association is solvent.
- SIRA has received \$5,000 in funding for the Three Queens project. \$1,500 has been paid to the playwright for completing the treatment for the play. \$3,500 remains in SIRA's funds.
- \$5,000 was received for Bushcare (Thompson & Fitzpatrick intersection). The funds remaining for the Bushcare project is \$2,595.
- The book value of the Australian Ethical Balanced Investment Fund is \$183,186. At 6 June 2024, that holding had an estimated withdrawal value of \$194,746.

Halls/Recreation Club Subcommittee

Team Leader: Robyn Iredale

Subcommittee members: Colin Haskell, Rosemary Haskell, Sharon Kinnison, Betsi Beem, Boyd Attewell, Julie Paterson, Chris Hampshire, Harriet Witchell, Carly Britton-Tomas, Shane O'Neill

Overview: This subcommittee encourages and promotes activities to engage and entertain community residents of all ages. It also manages bookings and maintenance of the Community Hall and Recreation Centre and works to increase their use as community and entertainment venues.

What we have done since the AGM

This has been a very busy period for the subcommittee. The main events have been:

- Six very successful Two Catherines Cafés, with associated stalls, book launches, games, etc. Thanks to all the manager, baristas, bakers and servers.
- Markus Plattner farewell concert on 5 November, 2023
- Four performances of the play, 'Secret Island', written by Bogue Anthill, directed by Sophie Lepowic and produced by Boyd Attewell and Roy Baker. Profit of \$3,672. Great effort by the two young stagehands – Nakarin and Brayden - and the volunteers who stepped up to assist with food and bar services.
- Three evenings of the Moon Dances series, managed by Brett Johnson in association with SIRA. There were seven musical shows and 400 attendees. SIRA thanks Brett Johnson and his team for their excellent staging of these events. Many volunteered to help with cooking and serving, including Amber Ellis, CB Floyd, Fabienne D'hautefeuille, Gail MacKenzie, Sharon Kinnison, Rosemary Haskell, Julie Patterson, Lisa Ratcliff, Dawn Roughsedge and Stephen and Michelle. Total takings were \$19,206 with a profit of \$1,382.

Other news

- A new hall manager and cleaner have been contracted to look after the halls. Harriet Witchell and Imogen have taken this on and we are delighted they have filled these roles. We would like to thank Roy Baker who capably fulfilled both roles up until a few months ago.
- Jasper Marlow was contracted to prepare the script for a new play. He has provided a satisfactory treatment (concept) and has been paid the first installment.
- A contribution of \$500 and free use of the hall for rehearsals were gifted to 2023 Carols Afloat.
- An allocation of \$500 was made to Juliet Wills for the second Garden Festival to be held on 20 October.
- Due to the shortage of bartenders for island events, an offer for people willing to complete a Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) course at SIRA's expense was made. Two people completed the course.



Markus Plattner Farewell Concert, Markus with Sandy Evans (Australia's top female saxophonist), November 2023

Roads, Drainage and Environment

Team Leader: Sharon Kinnison

Subcommittee members: Ben Dray, Cass Gye, Tim Turpin, Harriet Witchell, Robyn Armsworth-Brack, Betsi Been, Jenny Cullen, Mandy Daher, Basil Daher

Overview: This subcommittee liaises with Council on the many issues related to their areas of responsibility and prepares recommendations for SIRA for advocacy in these areas.

What we have done since the AGM

Planning for capital works is progressing slowly and is unlikely to take place in this calendar year, so the focus of the year has been the environment. It is exciting to see that some of our members and residents are making significant progress on weed control and habitat restoration.

A summary of progress on different areas includes:

Council news

- Two million dollars over two years to build road infrastructure resilience is a reality. Surveys, design and costing is progressing and will be available soon. Priorities are to remediate previously identified sites of significant storm damage at the slip at Richard Road, the gully behind Yamba and to complete a survey by a surveyor of all potential sites, then design and of course cost. It is unlikely there will be on-ground capital works until well into the next financial year.
- Maintenance is ongoing, ideally quarterly but is somewhat on an as-needed basis. Our subcommittee provides critical information through regular monitoring and reporting of road infrastructure issues. Residents are encouraged to report their concerns to Council customer service and the RDE Subcommittee.
- Renee Sands, NBC Streetscapes, has been tasked with managing weed growth along the drainage line. She will provide community education and target spraying as needed, to ensure the road network is not undermined by stormwater flows.
- [Catherine Park Landscape Plan Stage 1](#) is now available on the Council website. The hydrological study for the park drainage will be displayed for public comment soon.
 - Implementation of the Landscape Plan is scheduled for 2025 – 2026, but maintenance or safety issues such as the connection between the community building can be reported and dealt with sooner.
 - Following community consultation, the children's playground is scheduled for an upgrade this financial year. Our subcommittee is hoping to take a proactive approach and provide ideas in advance - anyone interested should make contact.

Bushland management

- Andrew Jennings, NBC Bushland Manager for Scotland Island, has significantly grown the budget for bushland reserves to just under \$40,000. This will be spread over six Island sites.

- Andrew Jennings is also undertaking a Level 5 tree survey to investigate die back on the island. While this only concerns public land, results may prove helpful for island residents. This is very timely due to recent tree fall and tree die-back on the island.
- Council staff will undertake a vegetation map of the Island to assist future management and priorities for weed control on Island reserves.
- Andrew is working to secure funding for follow up to the hazard reduction burn in Catherine Park.

Community initiatives: There have been some wonderful initiatives facilitated by individuals that should be acknowledged.

- **Ben Dray** continues to target madeira vines with many hours of hard work, giving new life to Harold Reserve.
- **Nick Ives** has also contributed hours of revegetation work.
- **Hazel Malloy** is managing the Fitzpatrick Ave Grant and it is progressing well, and she has also offered propagation workshops. New participants are welcome.

Transport Subcommittee

Team Leader: Julie Torney

Subcommittee members: Ian White, John Morgan, Betsi Beem, Andrew Dansie, Jane Rich, Jean-Paul Raynard, Sharon Dwyer, Sharon Kinnison

Overview: The Transport Subcommittee is a new subcommittee created to make access to and around the island, either by public or personal transport, easier for all residents.

What we have done since the AGM

- Worked with Pink Water Taxis to formulate a way to ensure minimum operating hours on Friday and Saturday nights. Plans to be deployed in spring 2024.
- Met with Easylink to start to build new ways of working together and draft a new agreement.
- Updated the Community Vehicle Policy to include a new complaints process and clarified the carrying of building materials.
- Received news from NBC that the Council's Transport Network team are currently reviewing the impact of advice from NSW Transport on the intent of the Scotland Island Traffic Management Plan, and how a suitable way forward for the management of the road network on Scotland Island can be achieved.

Water and Wastewater Subcommittee

Team Leader: Marie Minslow

Subcommittee members: Basil Daher, Robert Fox, Cass Gye

Overview: The Water and Wastewater Subcommittee works to improve access to water and wastewater management for all islanders. This includes lobbying for a mains water and sewerage system and management of the vital Emergency Water system.

What we have done since the AGM: Emergency Water

- A new manager for Emergency Water, John Courmadias, has been appointed and commenced duty. He can be contacted at email water@sira.org.au
- Rowena Dubberley is the water monitor for all three lines and can be contacted at email water1@sira.org.au
- The [Emergency Water page](#) has been updated on the Scotland Island community website.
- Ongoing issues include:
 - **The pump tripping for residents along Richard Road on either side of the pump.** Attempts to reduce the flow through inserting a washer in the affected standpipes has not been successful. A software fix is under development to rectify this issue.
 - **Residents and tradespersons placing items over the blue line water pipe along the road and potentially causing damage to the line.** Residents will be individually contacted about keeping the water line accessible and visible. This includes vegetation that grows over the line, obscuring visual identification.
 - **Non-complying fittings and pipes from the standpipe to some tanks.** Residents will be individually contacted about complying connection to their standpipe which need to be in good order to reduce the risk of contamination into the line. Contact the Water Manager (water@sira.org.au) to purchase the [correct fittings](#).
 - **Damage to flexible pipes that cross the road and risk of contamination to resident's water and the main water line.** Heavy duty pipe should only be used. Contact the Water Manager (water@sira.org.au) to purchase the [correct pipes](#).
 - **Residents renovating driveways that cross the water line.** To prevent damage, galvanised metal pipe should be used to sleeve the water line where there are driveways. Where it presents a trip hazard to access a property, the water line should be buried.
 - **The ongoing replacement of failing valves and fittings.** Unfortunately these system failures cannot be predicted and cause a disruption to the service for residents and loss and waste of water.



- **Late or non-payments by some customers.** Individuals are being contacted.

What we have done since the AGM: Water and Sewerage

- On 15/02/2024 there was an IPART Hearing on the Sydney Water Operating Licence. Marie Minslow attended and presented to the hearing. Marie argued for the inclusion of a Priority Sewage Program in the Licence and for Scotland Island to be identified in that PSP. The IPART representatives said they took on board the remarks and thanked Marie. Final submissions to IPART closed in early March 2024, after which they will provide their report to the Minister for Water. We have no further news on the Sydney Water Operating licence.
- On 10/04/2024 Rory Amon, Member for Pittwater, arranged a meeting with the Water Minister's representative to discuss the provision of water and sewage to Scotland Island. Attending the meeting with Cameron Munro, Advisor to Minister Rose Jackson, were Rory Amon, Sarah Halnan, Advisor, Office of Rory Amon, Robyn Iredale and Marie Minslow and representatives from Sydney Water. It was made clear that Sydney Water does not consider the allocation of budget to deliver water and sewage to Scotland Island a priority, when there are other projects and new housing sites that are a greater priority and where the costs are shared with developers. A Directive would have to come from the Water Minister and there is not an 'environmental driver' (ie. poor water quality readings) for this to happen. They rely on this one indicator only. The suggestion of a levy applied to all Sydney Water customers to pay for connection was not well received.
- Sydney Water estimate the cost of connection to be around \$80 million but it may be higher, given the increase in construction costs in recent years. This equates to about \$200,000 per dwelling. They estimate that it would cost \$140,000 per residence to provide the infrastructure and up to \$60,000 to attach each dwelling to the main lines. Also, some residences will require replumbing to meet the required standards for pressurised Sydney Water.

Unfortunately, in spite of the strenuous efforts of this and previous Water and Wastewater Subcommittees, it is now clear that the NSW government does not intend to fulfil past promises to deliver mains water and sewerage to the island unless islanders provide the funding - which is not feasible.

It is time to take strong community and media action, so watch this space! We will be calling a community forum to make further plans soon.

Wharves and Watercraft Subcommittee

Team Leader: Colin Haskell

Subcommittee members: Steve Seidman (Eastern), John Marshall (Carols); Lizzie Hazelwood (liaison for Tennis). Note: this SC is looking for members to represent Cargo and Bell wharves.

Overview: This subcommittee liaises with Council and with the Tennis Users Group to improve amenities and access to the public wharves on the island.

The last few years have seen major works at Bell and Carols Wharves. There are no funds available from Northern Beaches Council or NSW Maritime this year to improve facilities at Tennis or Eastern, to increase tie ups at these wharves.

What we have done since the AGM

This SC continues to liaise with Council on the current tie-ups situation and waiting list numbers at all wharves managed by them (Bell, Carols, and Cargo).

The Island's amazing volunteers

SIRA is an organisation run by hard-working volunteers, including all of those on SIRAC and on the subcommittees. The vital Scotland Island Fire Brigade is also entirely volunteer managed and staffed. But there are many other unsung heroes contributing to running events, doing bushcare, running the Tennis Wharf Users Group, writing the PON, and many other things. We acknowledge and thank them here.

Community events volunteers

- Moon Dance volunteers: CB Floyd, Amber Ellis, Fabienne D'hautefeuille, Gail MacKenzie, Sharon Kinnison, Tim Turpin, Robyn Iredale, Rosemary Haskell, Julie Patterson, Lisa Ratcliff, Dawn Roughsedge, Anthea Siow, Stephen, Michelle, Meredith Damon and Nikki Gibson.
- Play volunteers: Sophie Lepowic, Boyd Attewell, Tim Turpin, Robyn Iredale, CB Floyd, stage director Gill Unwin, stagehands Nakarin and Brayden, promoter and photographer Shane O'Neill, and the cast: Nettie Lodge, Roy Baker, Emma Harvey, Betsi Beem, Larry Wood.
- Café volunteers: CB Floyd, Amber Ellis, Rosemary Haskell, and all the cooks and bakers who contribute to the success of the café including Jane Rich, Rosemary Haskell, Maddy Banfield, CB Floyd, Amber Ellis, Simon Tucker, Maisie, Sharon Dwyer, Kristina Kerscher, Whitey, Gill Unwin and Antonia Swift.

Bushcare volunteers

Sharon Kinnison, Hazel Malloy, CB Floyd, Jane Rich, Debbie Wood, Nicole Thompson, Jenny Cullen, Petra Godfrey, Boyd Attewell, Nick Ives, Ben Dray.

Clean up Australia volunteers

Ian Holley, Cass Gye, Gwyn Perkins (poster design) Ivan Perez, Lisa Ratcliff, Shane O'Neill, Nicole, Sharon Kinnison, Katie Meyer, Toby Jay and his Laurel May crew - Vince, David, Gibbo, Johnny, Ryan and Jasper.

Community vehicle volunteers

Sharon Dwyer and John Morgan, coordinators. Also drivers, who are only partially recompensed for their time: Roy Baker, Billy Dwyer, Emmie Collins, Gary Hirsch, Sharon Dwyer, Iza Foster, John Marshall, and Sharon Dwyer; plus back-up drivers Branko Kristevic, Cameron Nicol, Cass Gye, Duncan Watts, Greg Taylor, Ian White, John Courmandias and John Morgan

TUG Users group volunteers

Lizzie Hazelwood, Dobbie Dobson, Luke Williams (committee) and maintenance Jon Duhig, Paul Kinnison, Chris Rey, Jonty Rumbold, Trystan Unwin and Dobbie.

Bootcamp volunteer coaches

Shane May, Lisa Ratcliff, Cathy Shelley, Melinda Ham, CB Floyd, Fabienne Hautefeuille, Peggy Havukian, Billy Dwyer, Angus Stranack and Mona Kristevic.

Facebook moderator volunteers

Josephine Carter May, Shane O'Neill, Jessica Kristevic, and CB Floyd.

Carols at Carols volunteers

Josephine Carter May, Maxine Rickman, Jon Ryan, and John Marshall.

Pittwater Offshore Newsletter editor

Roy Baker

But wait, there's more!

Besides all the people listed in this section, there are many other volunteers in our community running events to raise money for mental health, asylum seekers, cancer research and other causes. And then of course there are the invisible helpers who care for neighbours, run errands for people, lend equipment and goods, and perform so many other random acts of kindness that keep our community cohesive and help us to deal with some of the challenges of living offshore. You know who you are! Thank you for everything you do.

If we've forgotten to mention someone, please let us know at communications@sira.org.au