

News on what SIRA has been doing
Jan-June 2024

Mid-year update: a brief report

Note: the full report with further
details can be read [HERE](#).





Photo courtesy Roy Baker

What has SIRA been doing?

Much of the important work in SIRA is performed by subcommittees. 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. This report reviews what these subcommittees have done since the AGM last year, and we acknowledge the hard work of committee members who do not appear in this report, such as Deb Wood, our Secretary.

Communications

Overview

This subcommittee aims to ensure 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've done since the AGM

- 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. Results will be provided in July.
- Collaborated with the Island Vision Subcommittee on an updated Vision Statement to be presented to the community for feedback this year.
- Created this mid-year report on subcommittee activities.
- Sent out over 30 issues of SIRA News

Team Leader: CB Floyd

**Members: Lisa Ratcliff,
Shane O'Neill, Julie**

**Paterson, Alec Beckett (IT
Services)**



Finance and Insurance

Overview

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

A few highlights of financial reports since the AGM

- The 11-month year-to-May P& L result shows a gain of \$4,228 on a turnover of \$205,722.
- SIRA is ahead of budget by \$6,484 for the 11 months to 31 May 2024 due to the SIOCS loan recovery, the Secret Island production, the Two Catherines café and the Moon Dance series.
- Emergency Water is no longer profitable due to increase in the many costs associated with the supply of water.
- 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 play project and \$5,000 for Bushcare.
- 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.

Team Leader: Julie Velina
Cooper to June: new
Treasurer is Simon Tucker

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



Halls/Recreation Club

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've done since the AGM

- Ran six successful Two Catherines Cafés, with associated stalls, book launches, games, etc.
- Offered events including a Markus Plattner farewell concert, four performances of the well-received play, 'Secret Island', three Moon Dances (Dark Side of the Moon, The Beatles, and Crunching Numbers), which entailed seven musical shows and 400 attendees.
- Appointed a new hall manager, Harriet Witchell, and cleaner, Imogen. We thank Roy Baker who capably fulfilled both roles up until a few months ago.
- Contracted Jasper Marlow to write a new play.
- Supported Carols Afloat 2023 with a \$500 contribution.
- Allocated \$500 to the next Garden Festival, being managed by Juliet Wills.
- Paid for training to two people to complete a Responsible Service of Alcohol Course for island events.

Team Leader: Robyn Iredale

Members: Colin Haskell, Rosemary Haskell, Sharon Kinnison, Julie Paterson, Betsi Beem, Chris Hampshire, Harriet Witchell (Hall Manager), Carly Britton-Tomas, Shane O'Neill



Roads, Drainage & Environment

Overview

This subcommittee monitors the conditions of roads, drainage and environment and liaises with Council to advocate for improvements.

Council news

- Two million dollars has been awarded to build road infrastructure over two years. Surveys, design and costing is progressing and will be available soon.
- Maintenance is ongoing, ideally quarterly but is somewhat on an as-needed basis. 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. Implementation is scheduled for 2025 – 2026, but maintenance or safety issues can be reported and dealt with sooner. Also, the children's playground is scheduled for an upgrade this financial year after community consultation. Are you interested? Please contact us with your ideas.

Team Leader: Sharon Kinnison

Members: Ben Dray, Cass Gye, Tim Turpin, Harriet Witchell, Robyn

Armsworth-Brack, Betsi Beem, Jenny Cullen, Mandy Daher, Basil Daher



Roads, Drainage & Environment... continued

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: acknowledging individual efforts for the environment

- **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

Overview

The Transport Subcommittee is a new subcommittee and was created to find ways to make access to and around the island - either by public or personal transport - easier for all residents.

What we've done since the AGM

- Worked with the 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.
- Updated the Community Vehicle Policy to include a new complaints process and respect for drivers 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.

Team Leader: Julie Torney

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





Water and Wastewater

Team Leaders: Marie Minslow and Basil Daher

Members (Emergency Water): Robert Fox, Cass Gye

Members (Wastewater): Ian White, Guyren Smith, Steve York, Robert Fox

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've done since the AGM: Emergency Water

- Appointed a new manager for Emergency Water, John Courmadias. Contact: water@sira.org.au
- Appointed Rowena Dubberley as the water monitor for all three lines. Contact: water1@sira.org.au
- Updated the [Emergency Water page](#) on the Scotland Island community website.
- Worked on ongoing issues including pump tripping, materials laid over water pipes, non-complying fittings and pipes, damage to pipes and ongoing replacement of failing vales and fittings. (See full-report [LINK](#)) for more details.

Water and Wastewater...continued

What we've done since the AGM: Water and sewerage

- On 15/02/2024 Marie Minslow presented to an IPART Hearing on the Sydney Water Operating Licence, arguing for a Priority Sewage Program for Scotland Island in the Licence. Submissions have closed and IPART will report to the Minister for Water. We have no further news on the outcome.
- On 10/04/2024 the member for Pittwater, Rory Amon, arranged a meeting with an Advisor to Water Minister Rose Jackson in which he, an advisor, Robyn Iredale, Marie Minslow and representatives from Sydney Water discussed water and sewage for Scotland Island. Sydney Water said that funding to deliver water and sewage to Scotland Island is not a priority and there is no 'environmental driver' (ie. poor water quality readings). The cost of connection was estimated to be around \$80 million, or about \$200,000 per dwelling.

Unfortunately, in spite of the strenuous efforts of this and previous Water and Wastewater Subcommittees, it is 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

Overview

This subcommittee liaises with Council and with the Tennis Users Group to improve amenities and access to the public wharves on the island. We are looking for members to represent Cargo and Bell wharves.

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've 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). .

Team Leader: Colin Haskell

Members: Steve Seidman (Eastern wharf) , John Marshall (Carols wharf); Lizzie Hazelwood (Tennis wharf liaison).



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 and they are definitely local heroes! 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, 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.



The Island's amazing volunteers (continued)

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 , Nicole, Shane O'Neill, 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