

President's Annual Report for the Year to October 2020

Welcome to the annual report on the 42nd year of operation of STEP Inc. Believe it or not, 2020 has been a positive year for STEP. Our membership total has increased significantly and our publications have become very popular. I will explain the reasons for this later in this report.

Sadly, the past year, as we all know, has been very bad for the environment, especially bushland and wildlife. The long-term impacts of the catastrophic bushfires will only be revealed by detailed scientific research. The bleak situation with government policy at the federal level has not improved but at the local and state government level there has been mixed performance.

Activities

The restrictions on group activities imposed to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus have meant that we have not had any talks since March 2020.

AGM

It wasn't COVID that curtailed participation at the 2019 Annual General Meeting on 12 November. Instead a small bushfire in South Turramurra on a catastrophic bushfire risk day ended up with a lockdown of the area in the late afternoon. Enough brave souls turned up to make a quorum so that the meeting could proceed.

Talks

Talks have been placed on hold since March. We managed to fit in one talk by Dr Ian Percival on Cliefden Caves, a spectacular fossil site in western NSW.

The speaker lined up for the AGM was to speak in April. Professor Culum Brown was to give us some insights into the behaviours of sharks. We hope that talks can be resumed in 2021.

Walks

We ran walks (Two Creeks and the STEP Track) before cancelling our walks program in April. Walks resumed in July with local walks led by Peter Clarke in the areas of Blackbutt Creek, the Wildflower Garden and the Darri Track. John Martyn led a walk in Strickland Forest on

the Central Coast in September showing a great diversity of trees and flowers.

We have limited numbers to about 15 to comply with the COVID-19 requirements. Requests for walks in particular areas, provided they are not too far from our local area, are welcome

Publications

We are currently offering free membership for a year to compensate for the lack of activities. Also, anyone who buys a book or map is offered a year's free membership. There has been a good response to this offer.

As a result of these initiatives our membership is now over 500.

With many people working from home and many types of outdoor activity restricted. taking a break by walking in the bush has become very popular. Sales of our maps have boomed. The South Turramurra Post Office that is close to Lane Cove National Park, has become a successful outlet for map sales.

Committee

The STEP committee has, as always, been a great group of people to work with. We owe a huge thank you for all their efforts. Other individuals have been a great help in specialist areas of our operations.

In particular Helen Wortham has come up with some great ideas that have increased her workload significantly but have led to great boost to our membership and publication sales. There has been a lot of work required by Robin Buchanan and Margery Street in keeping up-to-date and writing submissions on government policies and actions. John Martyn continues to lead walks and add his expertise to all aspects of our work including beautiful photos on Facebook. Peter Clarke continues to be an inspiring walk leader as well as taking on some of the work in putting the newsletter up on the website. Anita Andrew and Jim Wells have kept track of our finances. John Burke and Trish Lynch continue to keep Twitter and Facebook up to date and find lots of interesting items to add on a regular basis.

Accounts

Thanks to the increase in publication sales our net cash balance increased by \$4,400 over the year. The Environment Protection Fund balance has reduced as the funds are being applied to the John Martyn Research grant.

Again we thank Allan Donald, Chartered Accountant for his completion of the audit on a pro bono basis.

Newsletter

We are continuing to publish five issues of the newsletter, *STEP Matters*, each year with most members receiving a pdf version via email. Links to individual topics are also included in the email and are on our website so anyone can pick out particular articles of interest. These articles also have links to previous articles on related topics.

While the newsletter concentrates on local issues and events we also cover broader national environmental issues that affect us all. We aim to be educational but not too technical. I hope they are of interest, but feedback is welcome. Also, contributions from members about local events and developments can be published in the newsletter or on Facebook.

Environment Protection Fund

We continue to maintain the Environment Protection Fund which has Deductible Gift Recipient status so that donations are tax deductible. The Fund's purpose is to support our environmental objectives. We received a total of \$440 in donations in the past financial year.

Due to the uncertainties about restrictions on research processes during the COVID-19 we received a smaller number of applications for the John Martyn Research Grant for 2020. This grant supports student research in an area relating to the conservation of bushland. The award this year went to a Uni of NSW student who is studying the effects of fire seasonality on seed ecology focussing on the GyMEA lily.

Education

STEP is still donating a prize in the Young Scientist Awards run by the NSW Science Teachers Association. We have not done the judging for 2020 yet as the students have been given more time to complete their projects.

Advocacy

The major concern for 2020 has been the NSW government's decision to fast track construction projects, overriding the normal review and consultation process. It is very disappointing that the Mirvac development of the IBM site that contains critically endangered forest and Powerful Owl habitat is proceeding despite huge community opposition and council refusal. We will be keeping a close eye on the details of the development.

Other local areas of focus have been the rehabilitation of Hornsby Quarry, synthetic turf on playing fields and the perennial problem of illegal mountain bike track construction.

There are several common issues that affect all areas of urban bushland. We are currently working with other groups to compile a database of research on these impacts such as bird strike on high rise glass walls, use of synthetic turf and light pollution. This should speed up the process of preparing submissions.

Conclusion

A community group like STEP works best with many lines of communication. We enjoy a good relationship with other community groups and local council staff. Information sharing is an important part of our work. To that end we appreciate feedback from our members and reports on local issues that we may not be aware of. It is becoming harder to keep track of local developments as the local newspapers have shrunk considerably. Contributions on articles for our newsletter are also welcome – please let us know about events and talks.

Jill Green

President

19 October 2020

STEP 2019–20 Treasurer's Report

STEP's audited finance report for 2019–20 is included in this report. The report shows that STEP maintains a sound financial position.

STEP receives its main income from membership fees, publication sales and interest. Expenditure is mainly for publications, newsletters and other communications, events, subscriptions and grants. Publication sales and costs vary from year to year and are higher in years with new publications. The cost of sales includes printing and distribution costs. The latter part of the financial year has been affected by COVID restrictions limiting talks and walks.

While maintaining financial viability for the future, the STEP Committee uses funds to enhance STEP's aims. This includes donations, student awards, and funding research projects and campaigns with like-minded organisations.

STEP's financial strength and community profile owe much to John Martyn's wonderful publications. I would also like to acknowledge Jim Wells for all his work and advice on finances and Allan Donald for auditing our accounts for another year.

Anita Andrew
STEP Treasurer
17 October 2020

Step Inc

ABN 55 851 372 043

**Community-based Environmental
Conservation since 1978.**

**PO Box 5136, South Turrumurra, NSW 2074
secretary@step.org.au**

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the Year Ended

30th June 2020

Step Inc
GENERAL ACCOUNT

	Notes	2020 \$	2019 \$	2018 \$	2017 \$
Income Statement for the year ended 30th June					
Publication sales		9,445	16,359	4,878	4,938
Interest		1,154	932	1,794	1,277
Member subscriptions		3,818	4,351	3,112	1,854
Grants		-	-	-	-
Total revenue		<u>14,417</u>	<u>21,642</u>	<u>9,784</u>	<u>8,069</u>
Cost of sales		4,240	14,564	4,205	4,428
Marketing		-	620	-	-
Newsletters		514	460	566	600
Insurance		420	420	495	360
Web Site		330	440	330	633
Subscriptions		640	570	535	615
Grant expenses		-	-	-	-
Awards		350	646	444	400
40th Anniv. Celebration		-	1,040	-	-
Meetings		226	260	420	685
Fees / Admin		297	491	405	477
Total operating expenses		<u>7,017</u>	<u>19,511</u>	<u>7,400</u>	<u>8,198</u>
Operating surplus / (deficit)		<u>7,400</u>	<u>2,131</u>	<u>2,384</u>	<u>(129)</u>
Grants and Donations	2	3,000	3,200	3,700	3,600
Web site design write off		-	-	-	2,756
Surplus / (deficit)		<u><u>4,400</u></u>	<u><u>(1,069)</u></u>	<u><u>(1,316)</u></u>	<u><u>(6,485)</u></u>

Balance Sheet as at 30th June

ASSETS (current)					
Cash at Bank		14,728	14,107	13,269	2,416
Term deposit		53,156	52,002	51,070	64,277
Prepayments		500	-	-	-
Accounts receivable		-	-	387	-
Inventories - publications		-	-	3,058	2,796
CURRENT ASSETS		<u>68,384</u>	<u>66,109</u>	<u>67,784</u>	<u>69,489</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u><u>68,384</u></u>	<u><u>66,109</u></u>	<u><u>67,784</u></u>	<u><u>69,489</u></u>
LIABILITIES (all current)					
Subscriptions in advance		700	2,825	3,431	3,820
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>700</u>	<u>2,825</u>	<u>3,431</u>	<u>3,820</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>67,684</u>	<u>63,284</u>	<u>64,353</u>	<u>65,669</u>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		<u><u>67,684</u></u>	<u><u>63,284</u></u>	<u><u>64,353</u></u>	<u><u>65,669</u></u>

Step Inc
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION FUND

Notes	2020	2019	2018	2017
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income Statement for the year ended 30th June				
Donations	442	783	63	349
Interest	2	235	75	134
Total revenue	<u>444</u>	<u>1,018</u>	<u>138</u>	<u>483</u>
Grants - Uni of West. Sydney	5,000	-	2,500	-
Other expenses	-	-	-	-
Total expenses	<u>5,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>-</u>
Surplus (deficit)	<u>(4,556)</u>	<u>1,018</u>	<u>(2,362)</u>	<u>483</u>

Balance Sheet as at 30th June

ASSETS (all current)				
Cash at Bank	2,922	7,478	1,150	3,585
Term Deposit	-	-	5,310	5,237
TOTAL (NET) ASSETS	<u>2,922</u>	<u>7,478</u>	<u>6,460</u>	<u>8,822</u>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS	<u>2,922</u>	<u>7,478</u>	<u>6,460</u>	<u>8,822</u>

Step Inc

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30th June 2020

NOTE 1: Statement of significant accounting policies

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporations Act (NSW) and other regulatory authorities. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial statements are based on historical costs, and on an accruals and going concern basis.

The following material accounting policies, which are consistent with previous periods unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report:

(a) Tax The Association is not liable for income tax, and is not registered for gst.

(b) Inventories are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

(c) Revenue from the sale of publications is recognized upon delivery to customers. Grants are recognized as associated expenditure is incurred. Other revenue is recognized when the right to receive the revenue is established.

(d) Type of Organisation STEP Inc is an incorporated association (incorporated on 18th August 1986) and is subject to the Associations Incorporation Act of New South Wales by virtue of which the members have limited liability.

Note 2 Donations

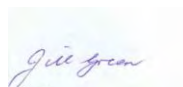
	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Total Env Centre	500	500
Environ. Def Office	500	500
Aust Cons Foundation	250	250
Nat Parks Assoc.	500	500
Nat Conserv Council	500	500
Invasive Species Council	500	500
Bush Heritage	250	250
Forest Media	0	200
Totals	3,000	3,200

Resolution of the Committee

In the opinion of the members of the committee:

- the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at June 30th 2020 and for the year ended on that date.
- At the date of this declaration, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the committee



J Green



A Andrew

Turrumurra, Date 6th August 2020