

Annual Report for the Year to October 2022

Welcome to the annual report on the 44th year of operation of STEP Inc. Our lives have, in theory, returned to normal during 2022 apart from the lingering effects of the COVID virus. One disruptor has been the persistent rain with 2022 achieving the record of being the wettest year in Sydney since records began. The effects on our bushland will be apparent in years to come.

The political landscape has brightened considerably at the Federal level. We await the implementation of new environment policies in relation to biodiversity that the 2021 State of the Environment Report revealed to be very poor. We hope for changes at the state level following the election due in March 2023.

Looking back over 2022 I am surprised by how busy this year has been with the resumption of most activities for members and plenty of demand for submissions and meetings.

Activities

Talks: After several attempts were stymied by COVID we finally managed to arrange a talk by Shane Fitzsimmons, Commissioner of Resilience. Ironically this took place in February just before the severe flooding events on the north coast. He gave a vivid description of the behind the scenes management of the Black Summer fires, particularly the stress placed on the emergency personnel.

4 other talks were held on the role of fungi in ecosystem health and the need to include fungi in bushland restoration programs, banksia regrowth after fire, threatened plant translocation and taxonomy.

Walks: We scheduled 8 walks that featured local plants and indigenous knowledge. Unfortunately, 2 had to be cancelled because of bad weather. We thank our volunteer leaders, David Roberts, John Martyn, Greg Taylor, Helen Logie and Fran Rein who shared their local knowledge and Beverley Gwatkin who has organised these walks.

Publications: We are still offering a year's free membership to anyone who buys a book or map. Sales of our maps is still strong and there is a steady demand for our books.

The supply of Middle Harbour North maps has now run out. We plan to complete a reprint early in 2023.

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.

We thank Jim Wells for keeping track of our finances and compiling monthly finance reports. 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.

There have been several issues to review this year, often this is in association with other groups. The contribution of all committee members has been valuable. As always life would be easier if we could get more members on the committee!

Accounts

The net cash balance at the end of the financial year has increased compared to last year because last year's fee holiday reduced our revenue.

The Environment Protection Fund (EPF) balance is on hold in case a major issue arises. We need to maintain this separate fund that is part of our deductible donation status. The Fund's purpose is to support our environmental objectives. We received a total of \$530 in donations in the past financial year.

Our general fund can be used to support educational projects as well as the EPF. We are keen to support more environmental projects so please contact us if you have any ideas.

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.

Education grants

We did not receive any applications for the John Martyn Research Grant for 2022 and hope there will be more to consider in the future. This grant supports student research in an area relating to the conservation of bushland. In the end we awarded a grant to one of the applicants from a previous year to continue her work at the University of NSW on threatened species conservation through the use of translocation focussing on *Hibbertia spanantha*.

For many years STEP has been donating a prize in the Young Scientist Awards run by the NSW Science Teachers Association. The selection of a winning project out of a wide range of ecological issues is an interesting exercise. This year's award went to a project on the use of organic methods to reduce heavy metals in waterways.

Advocacy

The major issues we have been working on are synthetic turf as part of the Natural Turf Alliance and mountain bike track plans and illegal activity. We are still waiting for the environmental review for the synthetic turf development at Norman Griffiths Oval. Major submissions were made on the Hornsby Quarry and Westleigh Park developments, Kuring-gai Urban Forest Strategy and NPWS cycling strategy. The Mirvac development at West Pennant Hills continues to need scrutiny and 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.

Jill Green
President

26 October 2022

Step Inc, ABN 55 851 372 043
Financial Statements for the 2021/22 Year
GENERAL ACCOUNT

	2022	2021	2020	2019
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income Statement for the year ended 30th June				
Publication sales	11,036	10,277	9,445	16,359
Interest	394	537	1,154	932
Member subscriptions	3,164	1,444	3,818	4,351
Total revenue	14,594	12,258	14,417	21,642
Cost of sales	5,625	5,938	4,240	14,564
Marketing	-	-	-	620
Newsletters	449	472	514	460
Insurance	441	441	420	420
Web Site	45	297	330	440
Subscriptions	570	500	640	570
Awards	450	250	350	646
40th Anniv. Celebration	-	-	-	1,040
Meetings	373	70	226	260
Fees / Admin	329	297	297	491
Prior Period adjust.	-	(441)	-	-
Total operating expenses	8,282	7,824	7,017	19,511
Operating surplus / (deficit)	6,312	4,434	7,400	2,131
Grants and Donations	3,450	4,533	3,000	3,200
Surplus / (deficit)	2,862	(99)	4,400	(1,069)

Financial Position as at 30th June

ASSETS (current)				
Cash at Bank	18,658	15,338	14,728	14,107
Term deposit	54,087	53,693	53,156	52,002
Prepayments	-	-	500	-
CURRENT ASSETS	72,745	69,031	68,384	66,109
TOTAL ASSETS	72,745	69,031	68,384	66,109
LIABILITIES (all current)				
Subscriptions in advance	2,298	1,446	700	2,825
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,298	1,446	700	2,825
NET ASSETS	70,447	67,585	67,684	63,284
ACCUMULATED FUNDS	70,447	67,585	67,684	63,284

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ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION FUND

	2022	2021	2020	2019
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income Statement for the year ended 30th June				
Donations	530	417	442	783
Interest	-	-	2	235
Total revenue	530	417	444	1,018
Grants - Uni of West. Sydney	-	2,500	5,000	-
Other expenses	-	-	-	-
Total expenses	-	2,500	5,000	-
Surplus (deficit)	530	(2,083)	(4,556)	1,018
Financial Position as at 30th June				
ASSETS (all current)				
Cash at Bank	1,369	839	2,922	7,478
TOTAL (NET) ASSETS	1,369	839	2,922	7,478
ACCUMULATED FUNDS	1,369	839	2,922	7,478

Step Inc

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30th June 2022

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 recognised as associated expenditure is incurred. Other revenue is recognised 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.

Resolution of the Committee

In the opinion of the members of the committee:

- (a) the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at June 30th 2022 and for the year ended on that date.
- (b) 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

B Gwatkin

Turrumurra, Date



ALLAN WILLIAM DONALD

Chartered Accountant

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Independent Audit Report to the Membership of STEP Inc

Scope

I have audited the attached financial report, being a special purpose financial report comprising the Statement by Members of the Committee, Balance Sheet, Income Statement and Notes to the Financial Statement for the year ended 30 June 2022 of STEP Inc. The Committee is responsible for the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies used and described in Note 1 to the financial statements which form part of the financial report are appropriate to meet the requirements of the Association Incorporations Act (NSW) and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. I have conducted an independent audit of this financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of STEP Inc. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to the needs of the members.

The financial statements have been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the Associations Incorporations Act (NSW). I disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

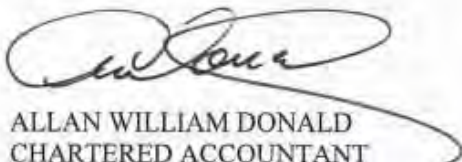
The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. The procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report, and the evaluation of significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 so as to present a view which is consistent with my understanding of the association's financial position and performance represented by the results of its operations. These policies do not require the application of all Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, the financial position of STEP Inc as at 30 June 2022 and the result of its operations for the year then ended.

Signed on:



ALLAN WILLIAM DONALD
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation