

ATTACHMENT TO AGENDA ITEM

Ordinary Meeting

19 November 2019

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Cussen Park Advisory Committee

President's Annual Report

June 2019

In my experience the Cussen Park Advisory Committee has always had plenty of activities and issues to keep it busy and this year has been no different. Not surprisingly a large part of our year has had a 'bat' focus.

The Committee had input into councils Bat Action Plan which will provide a go-to document for the management of the flying foxes in Cussen Park and any other locations in Greater Shepparton that may end up with flying fox camps. We look forward to the plan being finalised in the near future.

There have been many discussions around the actions required to maintain the flying fox population in Cussen Park and how to best manage the immediate landscape and access for the general public with topics including vegetation maintenance, mowing close to the camp, track closures and provision of water.

Flying fox counts in the park, collected by Terry Court and Greg McKenzie, have been continually provided to a national database, and our management is being used as examples around Australia on how 'good' things can be done with flying fox colonies in local parks.

Lisa Cowan arranged the construction of some micro-bat and possum boxes as part of her project for the Fairley Leadership Program. The boxes were constructed by VCAL students at Wanganui College and half of them installed in Cussen Park. Lisa also designed some information signs, with input from local primary schools, and these have also been installed in the park.

A highlight this year was the Community Bat night held in April. Lydia Drake, Greg McKenzie and myself were members of a larger working group that planned and arranged the night. The turnout on the night was fantastic and everyone learnt something from the great speakers. The up close viewing of micro bats caught in the park was a favourite part of the night for many people.

General park management and maintenance issues have also kept us busy. We have actioned and overseen bollard installations, parking bay sleeper replacements and sign replacements. Issues around storm water run off from the adjacent Leocatas property and requirement for brush fencing on 5 William Street's boundary fence have been discussed and dealt with. Silt removal at the Margaret St pump station has been discussed and recommended as a priority to council. The Committee has also liaised with GMW as they undertake channel piping on the park's northern boundary. We still have on going issues with bardi-grubbers, overnight campers and vandalism at the lookout.

A planting day was held in June last year and then several waterings were conducted through the season by the Committee due to the very dry conditions.

Turtle nest destruction has been noted in the park and ways in which this can be prevented are being investigated by Greg McKenzie and myself.

The Committee has had several robust discussions with council around maintenance and vegetation management in park so that park goals are met and the Cussen Park Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is followed. The role of the committee has been regularly examined to ensure we act as an Advisory Committee rather than a Committee of Management, which was our previous role. The Committee is currently developing a key management action list based on the EMP to clarify Park maintenance objectives for workers in the council maintenance teams.

A small project the Committee had over the last few years was developing a promotional brochure for the Park. We are pleased this has finally been completed. We have also supported other community members in their projects that promote the Park in the community.

Tatura student Jacob Dedman produced a 'Birds of Cussen Park' booklet as part of his studies, taking all the photographs himself. The Committee contributed to the publishing of the book, and it is now available to the community at various locations around town.

Rhonda Chrisanthou developed an idea for a local Aboriginal Art Trail as part of the State Government 'Pick My Project' funding contest. If funded, there would be an installation/sculpture made for Cussen Park. Unfortunately the project was not successful.

I would like to thank Committee members Simon, Terry, Greg, Lydia and Sean for their dedication to the Park and its management. This is definitely a unique committee and one that does have impact. Thanks also go to Greater Shepparton Council representatives and Park works managers, Greg McKenzie, Paul Dainton, James Collett and Sharon Terry. We appreciate the detailed work reports and the robust discussions around park activities, and support for actions and activities we would like to see in the park.

Yvette Williams

President CPAC