



PSC AGM 2021

President's report

October 26, 2021

This report will cover the time from our last AGM in Nov 2020 to now.

As I read the President's report at the last AGM there was a real sense of energy and excitement about what we had achieved in terms of clarifying the organisational structural changes we needed, and decisions about employing staff. We had a clear direction for the following year.

I am pleased to report that we have followed through with those plans and many of them are already a reality.

We have employed an Outreach Project leader - Maria Brett, and have extended Beth Hill's role from administration to Program Development Coordinator - each of them now working half time.

Maria has done an outstanding job doing the work of setting up the Climate Aware Network management and associated infrastructure - a new website to support the Network, as well as giving better access to our work for the public and our members and supporters. The Professional Development for Climate Aware Practitioners has begun, is appreciated by those who have so far participated, and is ready to continue on into next year. The Network has begun to be populated by those able to join immediately, with others signing up to complete the PD process before they too can join the network, and take advantage of the website facility to publicise the members' mental health and psychology services to the community. The large counselling and psychology professional bodies are engaged in publicising and supporting the PD into next year, and so too are the GP and psychiatry Colleges. We have had interest too from members of Doctors for the Environment in participating.

Maria has also contributed her experience and expertise beyond the role of Outreach Program Leader, writing policy and procedures for the organisation, helping us build a more solid organisational framework as our organisation grows in size and in responsibility to staff, volunteers and those people and organisations we work with. We are very grateful to you Maria.

Beth, as Program Development Coordinator, has gradually increased her hours since April to now working half time, after taking maternity leave last September. She has been working in support of Maria on the Professional Development, and also running the Programs Working

Group and all the associated work to run workshops, talks and seminars. Central has been providing support and administration for the volunteer facilitators who so generously provide the Professional Development seminars and the supportive workshops we provide to those working for us all on climate change.

The PSC workshops provide a space for participants to give expression to the emotional load they carry, a space to share feelings with others, to learn they are not alone and build team cohesion and support after the workshop

Growing demand for support

Since the release of the IPCC report there has been a notable increase in requests. Demand from community groups for workshops has been growing, as have requests for support from scientists, policy makers and researchers.

Requests for seminars have multiplied, and are often a forerunner to deeper engagement via our workshop programs. Community and climate action groups are requesting help in dealing with stress, worry about the future, the injustice of climate impacts, and the risk of burnout. This is a great opportunity to stress the mental health benefits of being engaged in a group advocating climate action.

Requests for support in understanding the mental health impact of working on climate change is expected to increase if the Glasgow Conference in November doesn't produce the outcomes so sorely needed.

Our current volunteer facilitators have worked tirelessly to keep up with demand, which has increased by 100% compared with last year. In the last 9 months, PSC delivered 14 workshops, compared with 8 during all of 2020. We are planning in the next year to grow the size of our facilitator team from 9 to about 15 to 18.

Requests from the media have increased regarding understanding eco-distress and how to best respond to the mental health toll. This is an invaluable opportunity for PSC to help people understand that one of the best ways to deal with climate stress is to become active in a climate campaign, further building the climate movement.

Our volunteers

As I mentioned Beth shifted from focusing on administration to program development, so we decided to advertise to recruit an administration volunteer. This advertising bore fruit with 4 excellent applicants - 3 of whom were given different aspects of our administration. I will tell you about the fourth one later. Elise took on ensuring we collated all relevant research, Jess took on our Facebook and website blog, and Kat took on the nitty gritty admin of membership, responding to ever increasing email queries and requests, and various support associated with the PD.

They joined Bianca who was already helping Beth with the newsletter.

Thank you to you all for your fabulous and diverse contribution.

We have faced the reality that our administration needs are huge and it is not realistic for them to be totally catered for by volunteers. We plan to employ an Office Manager as soon as possible.

All our facilitators of workshops and Professional Development, and speakers at talks and interactive seminars, are highly committed volunteers: Libby, Charles, Anne, Sally, Carol-Ann, and Sue, with two recent additions to the team, Christie and Brenda. Beth and I are also part of the facilitator team.

Thank you all for all the richness of wide experience you contribute so generously.

The other really significant team of volunteers is the Board. Some are also volunteers in our programs - Charles, Libby and Anne - to our workshops, talks and PD. They have generously taken on a double load of contribution. The other volunteers are our Treasurer who has taken on a huge job coping with the change in the organisation with staff employment and the associated financial and legal requirements. The other volunteer Board Member is Marijn who is the person I referred to before - the 4th admin volunteer applicant - who we spotted as having experience and skills we needed on the Board. We were very appreciative when she agreed to our invitation to join us. We are on the look out for experienced potential Board members who are committed to our work.

So thank you all for the conscientious contribution to our ever demanding Board work and steering us through the transition to the point we are at now.

Fundraising

Our fundraising work is a constant demand and the lack of sufficient funds is a drain on our ability to continue to respond and grow our work. We are very grateful to the generous donors who have trusted in our work, both in response to grant applications and special to appeals. We have applied for several grants this calendar year and have yet to be successful, but here's hoping.

We have engaged fundraising consultants Balanced Effect to support us in building a more secure financial base. We look forward to this investment bearing fruit and relieving us from the distraction from the work we love doing. The current fundraiser, Heart for a Safe Climate is gradually developing as word spreads via social media and our networks. It is an unusual fundraiser in that it offers supportive and creative activities to donors while they support us. Please help spread the word.

Consolidation of our organisational change.

As I will not be standing for re-election as President/ Chair, I look forward to working with the Board while I keep the seat warm for the Executive Director, until we are able to employ someone in the role. I am pleased we are able to continue the journey begun last year, of separating the functioning of the Board from the day to day executive functions of the

organisation. The elections to be held tonight, will be an important marker of where we have come to in that process of change.

Carol Ride
October 26, 2021