

President's Annual Report for the Year to October 2021

Welcome to the annual report on the 43rd year of operation of STEP Inc. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 has turned out to be similar to 2020. Many more people have been getting out in the bush and discovering our maps and books, membership has again increased and our walks and talks program has been severely curtailed. We hope to be able to go back to normal in 2022.

On the environment front some bold decisions have been made by the NSW government but the federal government is as recalcitrant as ever. There has also been plenty of activity at the local level with councils putting out many plans and policies for consultation.

Talks

The restrictions on group activities imposed to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus have meant that we have held only one talk. In March Professor Culum Brown gave a fascinating talk about shark behaviour that highlighted the damage being caused to marine life by shark nets when there are more effective methods of shark control available.

We look forward to the Zoom talk after the 2021 AGM by Mark Schuster from Ku-ring-gai Council on balancing fire management and biodiversity protection.

Shane Fitzsimmons, Commissioner of Resilience, has agreed to give a talk but this has had to be postponed to a date to be decided early next year.

Walks

We were able to hold a few walks before the COVID lockdown in June. We hope to resume the program in February next year subject to the COVID guidelines.

We thank Peter Clarke for his enthusiastic leadership of the introductory walks program. He is not able to continue as he has moved up north. We have a new leader for the introductory walks, David Roberts, who had a great knowledge of the local area.

Membership

We are currently offering a year's free membership to anyone who buys a book or map. There has been a good response to this offer so our membership is now over 550.

Publications

Sales of our maps have boomed. The South Turrumurra Post Office that is close to Lane Cove National Park, has become a successful outlet for map sales.

The supply of Middle Harbour North maps has now run out. We plan to complete a reprint early in 2022. John Martyn is currently checking changes to the tracks shown on the map.

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.

We have had two resignations from the committee. Peter Clarke, as mentioned before, has moved away from the area. We appreciated his help with putting the newsletter onto our website and conducting walks. Anita Andrew has also decided not to nominate as she will be doing lots of travelling. She has done a great job as treasurer checking that our books and banking activities are in order.

We thank Jim Wells for doing the nitty gritty of 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 has been a long list of documents put up by local councils for public consultation. The most significant of these were the Hornsby and Westleigh Park Master Plans and the St Ives Showground Draft Plan of Management. Robin Buchanan, Margery Street and I have put in many hours examining these documents and viewing the sites.

Since our last AGM we have made 17 submissions to local and NSW governments.

Accounts

The net cash balance at the end of the financial year has fallen by \$540 despite the increase in publication sales. Revenue has fallen because we waived annual subscriptions in 2020–21 and increased donations to other environmental organisations.

The Environment Protection Fund balance has reduced as the funds are being applied to John Martyn Research Grant. We would like to be able to support more environmental projects so please contact us if you have any ideas. Our general fund can also be used to support educational projects.

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 *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 \$417 in donations in the past financial year.

We received a small number of applications for the John Martyn Research Grant for 2021 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. The award this year went to a student from the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment at the University of Western Sydney to assist her study of phosphorus limitation on photosynthesis of a range of native plants.

Education

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. We have not done the judging for 2021 yet as the students have been given more time to complete their projects.

Advocacy

One of the major local issues has been the plans to install synthetic turf in many playing fields in Sydney including two sites in Ku-ring-gai and the Hornsby and Westleigh sites. We have formed a coalition, the Natural Turf Alliance, with groups in several locations in Sydney that are also fighting these projects. The group shares data about the social and environmental impacts of these fields and the low impact alternative of natural grass that can provide plenty of playing hours if planned and maintained properly.

There are many children and young adults at a loose end due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Some individuals with no appreciation of the unique and fragile bushland have been carving out tracks and building jumps. Local councils and national parks are struggling to control this destruction and educate the community about the illegal damage to habitat and wildlife.

It is great to see some positive initiatives being taken by the NSW Minister for Energy and the Environment in creating renewable energy zones and funding to help establish green hydrogen projects and incentives to change to electric vehicles. However the NSW government is still supporting new coal projects and the Pilliga gas project, a puzzling situation. How this can be consistent with their pledge of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 is a puzzle.

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 or help with our website are also welcome – please let us know about events and talks.

Jill Green
President

19 October 2021

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 2021

Step Inc
GENERAL ACCOUNT

	Notes	2021 \$	2020 \$	2019 \$	2018 \$
Income Statement for the year ended 30th June					
Publication sales		10,277	9,445	16,359	4,878
Interest		537	1,154	932	1,794
Member subscriptions		1,444	3,818	4,351	3,112
Grants		-	-	-	-
Total revenue		<u>12,258</u>	<u>14,417</u>	<u>21,642</u>	<u>9,784</u>
Cost of sales		5,938	4,240	14,564	4,205
Marketing		-	-	620	-
Newsletters		472	514	460	566
Insurance		441	420	420	495
Web Site		297	330	440	330
Subscriptions		500	640	570	535
Grant expenses		-	-	-	-
Awards		250	350	646	444
40th Anniv. Celebration		-	-	1,040	
Meetings		70	226	260	420
Fees / Admin		297	297	491	405
Total operating expenses		<u>8,265</u>	<u>7,017</u>	<u>19,511</u>	<u>7,400</u>
Operating surplus / (deficit)		<u>3,993</u>	<u>7,400</u>	<u>2,131</u>	<u>2,384</u>
Grants and Donations	2	4,533	3,000	3,200	3,700
Surplus / (deficit)		<u>(540)</u>	<u>4,400</u>	<u>(1,069)</u>	<u>(1,316)</u>

Balance Sheet as at 30th June

ASSETS (current)					
Cash at Bank		15,338	14,728	14,107	13,269
Term deposit		53,693	53,156	52,002	51,070
Prepayments		-	500	-	-
Accounts receivable		-	-	-	387
Inventories - publications		-	-	-	3,058
CURRENT ASSETS		<u>69,031</u>	<u>68,384</u>	<u>66,109</u>	<u>67,784</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>69,031</u>	<u>68,384</u>	<u>66,109</u>	<u>67,784</u>
LIABILITIES (all current)					
Accruals		441	-	-	-
Subscriptions in advance		1,446	700	2,825	3,431
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>1,887</u>	<u>700</u>	<u>2,825</u>	<u>3,431</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>67,144</u>	<u>67,684</u>	<u>63,284</u>	<u>64,353</u>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		<u>67,144</u>	<u>67,684</u>	<u>63,284</u>	<u>64,353</u>

Step Inc
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION FUND

Notes	2021	2020	2019	2018
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income Statement for the year ended 30th June				
Donations	417	442	783	63
Interest	-	2	235	75
Total revenue	<u>417</u>	<u>444</u>	<u>1,018</u>	<u>138</u>
Grants - Uni of West. Sydney	2,500	5,000	-	2,500
Other expenses	-	-	-	-
Total expenses	<u>2,500</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,500</u>
Surplus (deficit)	<u>(2,083)</u>	<u>(4,556)</u>	<u>1,018</u>	<u>(2,362)</u>

Balance Sheet as at 30th June

ASSETS (all current)				
Cash at Bank	839	2,922	7,478	1,150
Term Deposit	-	-	-	5,310
TOTAL (NET) ASSETS	<u>839</u>	<u>2,922</u>	<u>7,478</u>	<u>6,460</u>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS	<u>839</u>	<u>2,922</u>	<u>7,478</u>	<u>6,460</u>

Step Inc

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30th June 2021

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

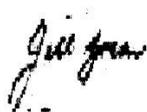
	2021	2020
	\$	\$
Total Env. Centre	500	500
Environ. Def Office	500	500
Aust Cons Foundation	250	250
Nat Parks Assoc.	500	500
Nat Conserv. Council	500	500
Invasive Species Council	500	500
Bush Heritage	250	250
Mirvac Legal Action	1,000	-
Aust. Wildlife	250	-
Other	283	-
Totals	4,533	3,000

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 2021 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 2nd September 2021



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 2021 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 2021 and the result of its operations for the year then ended.

Signed on: *3rd September, 2021*

ALLAN WILLIAM DONALD
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT