



Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre

Annual Report

August 2018 to August 2019

Our vision

A place where everyone can connect with nature to improve health and wellbeing and be inspired to care for our precious natural environment



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Message from the Chair



I am delighted to be writing our first annual report for the Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre.

The idea for 'a centre' has been around for a while and began to take shape when we gained in-principle support from Hobsons Bay City Council and moved into our current home at the Under Keeper's Quarters, Truganina Explosives Reserve early in 2018.

With the help of our volunteer working group, formally established in August 2018, we began our journey towards a purpose-built facility where everyone can enjoy and learn about nature.

The Centre has been managed and operated by the working group of 15 local volunteers with a wide range of expertise and who are committed to progressing our vision. They have developed strong connections with our key partners: Hobsons Bay City Council, Deakin University, Melbourne Water, City West Water, Bendigo Bank and Birdlife Australia all of whom have provided help in the form of grants or in-kind assistance and advice. I am indebted to all our working group volunteers for taking an idea and turning it into a wonderful opportunity for Hobsons Bay.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge our many supporters who have assisted in many and varied ways – from designing logos, taking photographs, to lending equipment, running the BBQ at our community events or writing letters of support.

Early in 2019, as part of the master plan for H D Graham Reserve in Altona Meadows, Council supported our vision that the Centre be located in the south-east corner of the reserve, close to the high biodiversity areas of Truganina Park and Laverton Creek. This location is subject to the findings of a feasibility study and the development of a business plan for a sustainable venue. Our volunteers worked tirelessly and successfully to engage community support for this proposal.

In our first year of operation, we started small with three very successful events. The positive feedback has given us encouragement to continue to provide opportunities for our community to connect with nature at our local wetlands.

I am proud to be the Chair of Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre and it gives me great pleasure to thank all our volunteers and supporters for their help and encouragement. Thanks also to our key partners for their ongoing support. With all your help Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre will continue to develop and grow to be a very important place for our community and our natural environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "M Olliff".

Dr Marilyn Olliff, Chair

About Us

Early in 2018 Hobsons Bay City Council provided a small group of enthusiastic volunteers with a regular meeting place in the Under Keeper's Quarters, Truganina Explosives Reserve, Altona.

By August 2018 the group had grown to 15 individuals who voted to become Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Incorporated. Since that time the working group has focussed on achieving its vision for a place where everyone can connect with nature to improve health and wellbeing and be inspired to care for our precious natural environment.

We aim to create an accessible and inclusive wetlands centre that provides opportunities for:

- recreation for health and wellbeing
- education and learning in our natural environment
- conservation and research programs to care for nature
- connection with others at an inspiring meeting place.

To achieve these aims we are developing a feasibility study and business model to sustain the Centre into the future. We expect to complete the study in the first half of 2020.

Ideally the purpose-built Centre will be located near the bank of Laverton Creek at the bottom of HD Graham Reserve, adjacent to Truganina Wetlands and Truganina Park. This area is a very important location for the rich biodiversity of Hobsons Bay and requires ongoing habitat protection and management. It is adjacent to Cheetham Wetlands, an internationally significant migratory bird area listed under the Ramsar Convention.

In the meantime, we are providing a range of nature-based activities for the enjoyment of our local community from our temporary home at the Under-Keeper's Quarters. We will continue to increase the number of activities as we develop as an organisation. All activities are advertised through our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/hobsonsbaywetlandscentre/> and our Instagram page @hbwetlandscentre.

Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Volunteer Working Group

The Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Volunteer Working Group meets regularly. In 2018/2019 there were 15 working group volunteers with a wide range of experience, skills and networks keen to work together to achieve our vision. Six members of the group formed an executive committee to develop a strategic plan that set and prioritised tasks to progress the Centre.

Five subcommittees were formed to share the tasks. Leaders of each subcommittee sit on the executive committee to maintain good communications between each group. All working group volunteers are invited to participate in the work of one or more subcommittee to share their skills and experiences.

HBWC Executive Committee 2018/2019

Dr Marilyn Olliff	Chair and Governance Subcommittee leader
Jacqui Bramwell	Secretary and Feasibility Study Subcommittee leader
Nick Olliff	Treasurer and Citizen Science Subcommittee leader
Cr Sandra Wilson	Revenue Subcommittee leader
Penny Bell	Public Relations and Events Subcommittee leader
Sandy Gonzalez de la Vega	Student Representative, social media and events manager

HBWC Working Group Members 2018/2019

Working group members take an active role in the development of HBWC and serve on one or more of the subcommittees.

Dr Mike Weston

Dr Rebecca Patrick

Rob Mancini

Dr Rob Walsh

Gordon Lescinsky

Allison Webster

Penny Rawlins

Pamela Sutton-Legaud

Darren Coughlan

HBWC Community Supporters 2018/2019

Throughout the year we have been supported by many people and organisations, including 25 local organisations who wrote to Council in support of the Wetlands Centre during the community consultation for the H D Graham Master Plan.

We would particularly like to acknowledge local artists Chris Rockley and Herman Olguin for our logo design and Jackie Kerin, Sarah Depasquale, Kate Gorringer-Smith, Carol Challis, Matt McArthur, Sharon Walsh and Kim Walsh for their generous help with our World Wetlands Day event.

Key Partners

Hobsons Bay City Council

In line with the Council's strategic goals as outlined in the current Council Plan and Hobsons Bay 2030, activities at the Centre will build on a sense of belonging, promote healthy and active lifestyles and lifelong learning. Council has generously provided:

- shared use of the Under Keeper's Quarters, Truganina Explosives Reserve, Altona
- financial support for activities through small community and environmental grants
- inclusion of a future site at HD Graham Reserve pending the outcome of the feasibility study
- 18/19 Budget support for completion of the feasibility study.

Deakin University

Deakin University strongly supports the idea of the Wetlands Centre in Altona Meadows because it offers strategic alignment with City of Hobsons Bay through the MOU between both organisations, the opportunity to establish a field studies centre in a place where the University has established longterm research and teaching interests, and the potential to engage with school students, community members and visitors.

Deakin University has generously provided:

- in-kind help with partnership brokerage and management
- completion of two projects through the Freelancing Hub
- ongoing advice and assistance in the development of the feasibility study.

Melbourne Water

Melbourne Water's liveability program aims to assist individuals and communities to enhance the wellbeing of a community, and the many characteristics that make a place where people want to live, now and in the future. Through this program, Melbourne Water supports the development of the Wetlands Centre and has generously provided:

- funding support for the feasibility study through the Liveability program
- advice and assistance in the Citizen Science project WaterWatch
- in-kind advice on environmental management of the wetlands area.

Bendigo Bank Altona and Laverton Community

The Bendigo Bank Altona and Laverton Community support projects that make a positive impact on the community. Our local branch has provided funds to assist the Wetlands Centre with public open days.

City West Water

Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre is working closely with City West Water to investigate opportunities for stormwater harvesting at H D Graham Reserve to help maintain the Truganina Wetlands and the amenity of the site.

Birdlife Australia

We are strongly aligned with the vision and aims of Birdlife Australia. Birdlife Australia have designated the mouth of Laverton Creek as a Key Biodiversity Area and are providing advice and assistance as we develop the Centre.

Subcommittee Reports

Projects are managed and completed through five subcommittees.

Feasibility Study and Business Plan - working towards a purpose-built centre

Subcommittee objective – to develop a feasibility study and business plan to ensure that the purpose-built Centre achieves the vision of the HBWC.

The team is led by Jacqui Bramwell with Gordon Lescinsky, Penny Bell, Mike Weston and Rebecca Patrick.

The study will include:

- benefits of a Wetlands Centre
- feasibility of building it in our preferred location
- engaging with key partners to make it a reality
- staged development of construction of the Centre
- potential activities for the whole community.

The business plan will investigate ongoing management options and income sources for a sustainable operational business model.

Work to date and investigation of other wetland centre models indicates that partnerships will be integral to the Centre's development and viability.

Future directions:

- completing our feasibility study and concept design
- consolidating existing partnerships
- exploring the potential of partnering with Department of Education and Training's Ecolinc.

PR & Events – connecting with our community

Subcommittee objective – to promote the Centre through relevant communication channels and invite community participation in events that help people connect with nature.

The team is led by Penny Bell, with Sandy Gonzalez de la Vega, Rob Mancini, Sandra Wilson and Penny Rawlins. The PR & Events team is particularly grateful for the pro bono work done by local artist and graphic designer Rob Mancini.

This year the subcommittee has, amongst other things:

- engaged with the local community through events and social media (Facebook and Instagram)
- held a very successful free public event on World Wetlands Day
- held two ticketed workshops - Learn the Art of Field Sketching and Invertebrates
- participated in events hosted by Council and other community groups including World Environment Day, Migratory Bird Day, Williamstown Literary Festival, and
- commissioned local film director Wain Fimeri to make a short promotional video for our local environment.

In the coming year the subcommittee welcomes new members Mandy Pritchard and Melissa Sheedy to the team, and will deliver an expanded events program, introduce a quarterly newsletter and establish a website for the Centre.

Revenue – securing funds for our future

Subcommittee objectives: To source and secure funding opportunities to make HBWC vision a reality.

The team is led by Sandra Wilson with Pamela Sutton-Legaud and Nick Olliff.

The scope of the subcommittee includes:

- identifying potential sources of capital and operational funding, tied and untied funding
- ensuring alignment with strategic plan and feasibility study
- maximising the potential for future financial sustainability
- applying for small grants and holding fund raising events.

To date the Centre has raised:

- over \$5,000 in-kind contribution from Deakin University
- \$10,000 from Melbourne Water's Liveability funding
- small grants for program delivery, awareness raising, equipment (HBCC & Bendigo Bank)
- HBCC 2019/20 budget allocation for feasibility study at HD Graham Reserve (indirect funding)
- some small amounts of fund raising and ticketing income.

Future directions:

- developing a 'prospectus' to identify specific capital and operational needs to present to potential funding bodies
- engaging with funding sources for capital works and programs.

Governance - the way we do things

Subcommittee objective – to set out the way we do things for an effective, efficient and happy organisation.

The team is led by Marilyn Olliff with Nick Olliff and Sandra Wilson. The governance team is grateful for the help and advice it has received from supporters outside the working group Catherine Curtain and Geoff Mitchelmore.

The scope of the subcommittee includes development and management of

- our values
- our rules, roles and responsibilities
- legal obligations
- strategic planning and quarterly review
- master contact list database
- document management.

Citizen Science - science projects for all

Subcommittee objective – to identify and encourage Citizen science projects that will engage people with the environment.

The team is led by Nick Olliff with Penny Bell and Marilyn Olliff.

The Centre is operating a Waterwatch program through Melbourne Water to monitor the health of our wetlands and to provide opportunities for our members and supporters to engage with nature.

Waterwatch monitoring of Truganina Wetlands involves:

- monthly sampling
- water analysis
- identification and count of the macro invertebrates
- data recording and uploading to Melbourne Water's WaterWatch database.

The subcommittee is currently investigating more Citizen Science projects for the coming years.

Financial Report

Successful Funding Applications

Provider	Amount	Completion date	Purpose
HBCC Small expenses grant	\$1,000	December 2019	To provide funds for the establishment of the working group
Bendigo Bank	\$1,620	December 2019	To assist with holding community events
HBCC Environment grant	\$1,920	December 2019	Nature based learning - To enable the Centre to hold workshops to encourage the broader community to connect with nature
Melbourne Water	\$10,000	June 2020	To assist with the development of the feasibility study
HBCC Quick response grant	\$1,000	December 2019	Presentation equipment for community events
HBCC Quick response grant	\$5,000	December 2019	Protecting our birds and our foreshore – video.
HBCC Budget support for the feasibility study	\$50,000	June 2020	To assist with the development of the feasibility study and business plan.

Treasurer's Report for Financial Year 18/19

A savings bank account was opened at Bendigo Community Bank, Altona in November 2018 with \$141.50 donated from a car boot sale. The account is free and attracts interest, however, we do incur small transaction costs for grants received through our auspice TERPS who use cheque accounting.

HBWC income has been mainly through grants from Melbourne Water, HBCC and Bendigo Bank. In the 2018/2019 financial year we funded one major event and one workshop. On-going projects include development of the feasibility study for the Centre, funding for more workshops and development of a short wetlands film being produced by Wain Fimeri.

As of 30 June 2019 we had available funds of \$ 12,831.78

Financial Statement 18/19

Income	Grants	\$20,570.00
	Memberships	0.00
	Events	0.00
	Workshops	314.34
	Sales*	68.00
	Donations	269.10
	Total	21,221.44
Expenditure	Projects**	4,700.00
	Events	538.30
	Workshops	696.25
	T-shirts	493.16
	Assets	1,535.55
	Misc***	426.40
	Total	8,389.66
Funds Available		12,831.78
Reconciliation		
Bank Statement as of 30 June 2019		12,719.93
Cash In Hand		111.85
	Total	12,831.78

Notes:

- * Sales of T shirts etc.
- ** Projects include the feasibility study and wetlands film
- *** Includes general expenses such as fliers, stationery, food and drink and other support expenses for events, meetings and workshops.



Partners



HBWC working group members

- Volunteers who are willing and able to take an active role
- Encouraged to nominate to assist a subcommittee for specific tasks
- Sign up, provide contact details and pay annual membership fee of \$20
- Attend bi-monthly meetings when available
- Voting rights at AGM

HBWC supporters

- Invited to provide contact details for notification of workshops and events
- Invited to donate/provide in-kind help at events
- No fee, no voting rights

Contact Us

We welcome new volunteers and supporters throughout the year.
Please contact us through email - HBWCgroup@gmail.com or message us through FaceBook - <https://www.facebook.com/hobsonsbaywetlandscentre/>