



SEA LIFE Trust Annual Report 2017

Prepared by Claudette Rechterik

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Message from the Chair

This year we saw the expansion of SO Manly into the Sunshine Coast with SO Sunshine Coast. There is a real appetite in the community for making positive change for our natural environment which is hugely inspiring and very satisfying. Having worked in this space for well over 10 years, it's heartening to see a lot of the hard work over those years starting to come to fruition in the form of improved outcomes for our oceans.

Approximately equal funds were allocated to sharks, habitat restoration and Ocean Youth projects. We've been very fortunate to be invited as an industry partner to the award winning Operation Crayweed which is hitting its strides.

This year the Executive Committee was involved in overseeing the development of the SEA LIFE Trust ANZ Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019 which will forge our direction and enable our partner, SEA LIFE, to help us drive key activities over the coming years.

As per last year, thanks to Merlin Entertainments covering operational costs, over 80% of all donations received go directly to conservation projects; 10% of funds go to business costs such as bank fees, compliance and fundraising & event costs; these costs of doing business are unavoidable. That leaves 10% left over for other expenses to get the job done which are within an acceptable range for a charitable entity. Donors can feel confident that their contributions are making a positive difference for the health of our oceans and wildlife.

We look forward to working more closely with SEA LIFE Trust Global and to integrating our strategies for greater reach and impact globally.

I would like to thank Claudette Rechterik, the driver of the day to day operations as well as growing the reach and recognition of the SEA LIFE Trust across ANZ. I'd also like to thank the Executive Committee for their continued support and valuable, voluntary contribution. We can all be proud that each of our contributions does make a difference.

I look forward to seeing what we can achieve together in the coming year!

Anissa Lawrence
Chair SEA LIFE Trust ANZ



Message from the GM

Here we are; it's that time of year again. And what another productive year it's been.

Off the back of the popularity and impact of SO Manly, we now have SO Sunshine Coast as a home grown Trust project driven by SEA LIFE staff. As with SO Manly there is a huge appetite within the community to do more to protect our natural places and wildlife.

SO Manly was successful in its application to Northern Beaches Council Community Grants and as such Tank the Turtle was born (see page 11). Grassroots awareness raising with local businesses continues to drive increased participation in community events and positive behaviour change.

But an absolute highlight for me was being approached by the Jane Goodall Institute to collaborate on a workshop at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016. Our program 'Ocean Youth' was deemed a perfect partner to complement JGI's 'Roots and Shoots' program.

Covering youth action in both terrestrial and marine environments our workshop revolved around the impact of storytelling to drive behaviour change. Maggie McArthur, our Ocean Youth Ambassador

in the Sunshine Coast was a key feature for our segment.



Claudette (above right) meeting the inspiration behind Ocean Youth, Ocean Elder Dr Sylvia Earle

As we continue to align more closely with SEA LIFE Trust Global, our impact and reach expands further afield and opportunities to have more impact come our way (see Team Turtle on page 8). It's definitely an exciting time at SEA LIFE Trust.

We hope you enjoy reading our Annual Report 2017.

For the oceans.

Claudette Rechterik

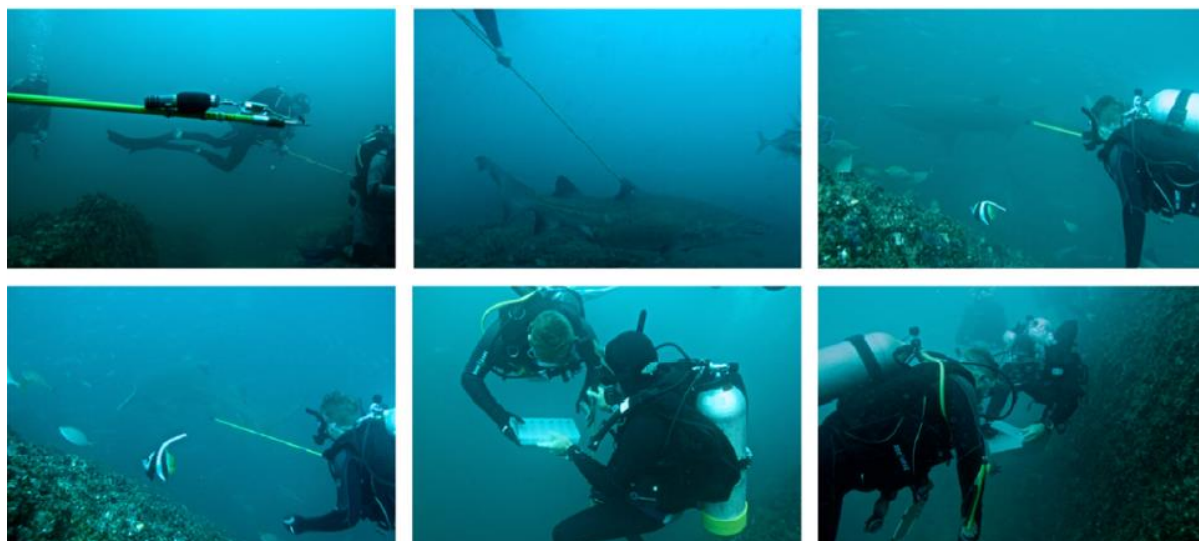
Head of SEA LIFE Trust Aust/NZ

FUNDED PROJECTS

SHARKS \$40,915

Assessing impacts of divers on GNS

University of Queensland's Dr. Carley Bansemmer, along with support from SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast staff continued their research project to assess any impact scuba divers have on critically endangered Grey Nurse sharks at Wolf and Flat Rock, Qld. We're pleased to inform that the State Government has now committed to the project in full into 2018 which is great news! Thanks goes to Aaron Sprowl of SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast who helped co-ordinate staff for the research.



The first picture below, this GNS (ID number 1207) was photographed at Broughton Island, Port Stephens, NSW on 19 February 2008 as a juvenile, and from our recent tagging trip on 22 December 2016 the same shark, which is now a mature female adult with mating scars will carry the acoustic tag from this project.



Grey Nurse Shark Symposium



Representatives from State and Federal government, non profit organisations, researchers, coastal community groups and dive businesses gathered to get an update on the Recovery Plan for the Critically Endangered Grey Nurse shark. Special thanks go to Sue Sargent for guiding the organising committee and ensuring this event happened!

The event was largely sponsored by Burnett Mary Regional Group with contributing funds from SEA LIFE Trust. [You can check out some of the presentations here.](#)

Ocean Gala @ Melbourne Aquarium

As part of its annual fundraising calendar, the SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium team delivered another fabulous fundraising evening for shark conservation. Lower numbers from the previous year meant fundraising targets weren't quite met however a great night was had by all those in attendance and lots of awareness was raised on the plight of the beautiful Grey Nurse shark.



Well done and thanks to the SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium Trust committee and in particular Heather Maginn, Paige Coleman and Peta Howard.

TURTLES - \$13,520

World Science Festival Brisbane Flatback Sea Turtle Hatchling Project

- a collaboration between SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast, SEA LIFE Trust, Qld Environmental Heritage Protection, Smithsonian Institute, and James Cook University.

SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast was invited to collaborate on a signature display to be a first at the World Science Festival. The display consisted of authorized incubation of up to 50 Flatback turtle eggs from Curtis Island in controlled temperature incubation by the Queensland Museum for hatching during the World Science Festival in March 2016.

In addition to the incubation and hatching of the turtle eggs, three Flatback hatchlings collected from the Woongarra Coast will be available for live viewing of hatchlings. The display will also consist of EHP provided videos prepared from past turtle satellite telemetry studies for public viewing during this display and tracking videos of migration of Flatback turtles from nesting beaches such as Curtis Island.

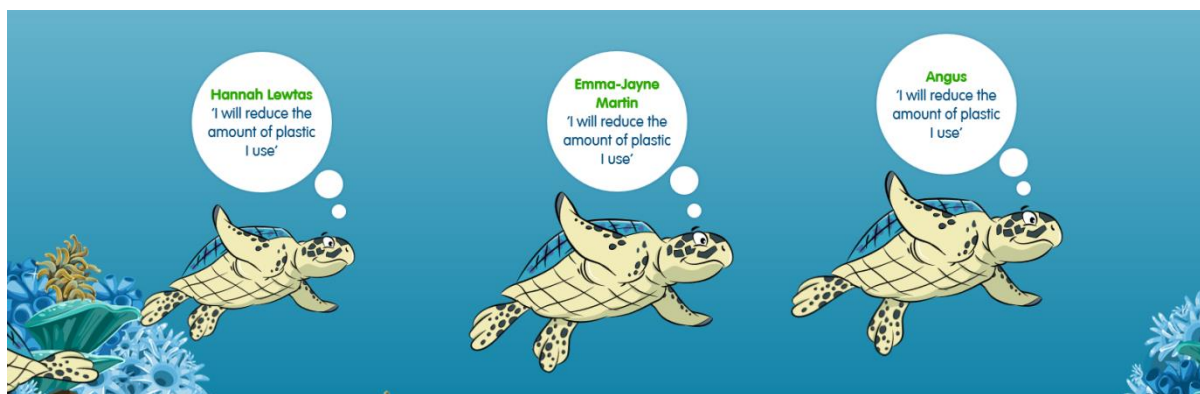
The nine Flatbacks being cared for by SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast over the last 12 months have returned to the sea. Five of them were satellite tagged however one of the five decided to flip on the way up and managed to remove its tag. It went back with no tracking. The other four have been pinging regularly providing researchers with critically needed information on the whereabouts of this endangered species.

Thank you to Regan, Kaleesha, Annie and Izaac for getting up a 2:30 in the morning to travel to Bundaberg for the release. They caught the Main Event boat of the Lady Musgrave Experience who took them out to sea to release the turtles. Thanks also to Aaron Sprowl for co-ordinating the project.

SEA LIFE Trust provided funding for the tags used in this project.



TEAM TURTLE



This year SEA LIFE Trust launched its first global community engagement campaign – Team Turtle. The goal is to get as many people as possible to take a pledge to reduce their plastic footprint and support sustainable seafood consumption.

The campaign drew attention from #OurOcean who asked SEA LIFE and SEA LIFE Trust to join their ‘World Aquariums Against Marine Litter’ campaign, taking the number of aquaria involved to 147 across 38 countries.



Launched by US Senator John Kerry in 2014, #OurOcean is an annual conference which brings together global leaders from across the world to drive collective action to tackle the serious issues facing the present and future marine environment.

“Team Turtle shares the key #OurOcean objective of engaging people to help combat marine pollution, overfishing and bycatch and their effects on the marine environment and especially the sea turtle, one of the oceans’ most iconic species,” said Andy Bool, Head of the SEA LIFE Trust.

Figures compiled by #OurOcean suggest a staggering 10 million tonnes of litter are dumped in our seas every year, and that by 2050 there could be more plastic than fish in the marine world.

You can make your Team Turtle pledge here - <http://teamturtle.sealifetrust.org/>

Update on Blair

In our annual report last year, we spoke about Blair, the rescued and released turtle from SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium. Blair certainly attracted a lot of media attention which was valued at

\$141,236. The story of Blair's release generated 66 media radio, TV and print articles across Australia.

This kind of media exposure is great for raising our profile as a small Not For Profit. As far as research goes, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection want to use Blair's tracks for training purposes. Results will be analysed and published.

HEALTHY HABITATS - \$107,708

Operation Crayweed

This Green Globe Award winning project is making great strides in localised habitat restoration. There are multiple sites along the Sydney coast now and loads of 1st and 2nd generation craybies. This multiyear project is really making waves, and we couldn't be prouder to be an industry partner.

[You can find out more about this inspirational project here.](#)



SO Manly & SO Sunshine Coast



This project started as a trial to see how engaging businesses in an iconic coastal suburb could achieve better outcomes for the environment. Key targets include sustainable food sourcing, greater marine protection, reducing single use plastics, and working towards zero waste.

Alicia Lloyd and Carlita Foster-Hogg, SO Manly project co-ordinators were successful in their grant application to the Northern Beaches Council Community Grant of \$35,000. The funds were for the creation of Tank the Turtle as well as hosting several community based sustainability events.

Tank has proven to be quite the star and is steadily booked for school visits to talk about the impact of plastic pollution on turtles and specifically, plastic bags and balloons.



There are many exciting things planned for 2018 so watch this space.



Based on the appetite for sustainability within the community the project was expanded into the Sunshine Coast. The first 12 months of SO Sunshine Coast were about creating a foundation and awareness of the project within the community. This was achieved by creating community events, public speaking and collaboration with existing community groups and with Sunshine Coast Council.

Events hosted include:

- Monthly Beach clean ups
- Stall at the Youi Building
- WED Festival stall
- Screening of a plastic ocean
- Stall at health and wellbeing event
- Kids in Action – Sunshine Coast Council
- Beerwah Street Festival
- Cross the Oceans – SLT + F45 Caloundra
- Enviro Education workshop – Council + AAEE
- 3 x ABC Radio Interviews

Businesses working with us now include SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast, Cardno, Youi, and Whites IGAs.

A significant number of collaborations have been developed include with:

- Ocean Youth
- Plastic Free Noosa
- Boomerang Alliance
- Take 3
- Noosa Biosphere
- Coolum Coast Care
- The Source Bulk Foods Maroochydore
- Reef Check Australia
- Envirocom



- Sunshine Coast Council
- Turtle Champions
- Noosa Environment Council
- Whites IGA
- Green Fleet

During the first 12 months of the project we have reached thousands of people within the Sunshine Coast Community and raised over \$700. During our monthly Beach Clean ups we have removed over 300kg of litter from Mooloolaba Beach.

Moving forward in 2018

After witnessing many other community groups with similar objectives, it was clear the best course of action for SO Sunshine Coast is to create a hub that businesses and consumers can easily find current sustainability information and events on the Sunshine Coast.

The Hub will be in form of a website and information included will be:

- ❖ Community groups
- ❖ Eco-products
- ❖ Sustainability Blog
- ❖ Sustainability Events
- ❖ Eco- Business (Including Who is offering Discounts for BYO Coffee Cup, no plastic straws, local produce etc)

A key strategy will be forming a relationship with Tourism Mooloolaba and marketing the Sunshine Coast as a Sustainable Tourism destination.

We will also work closely with the Sunshine Coast University as they offer courses in Sustainable Tourism as well as Environmental Studies and Animal Ecology.

Remember the Reef

SEA LIFE Trust was invited to partner on an initiative between Disney, AirBnB and Greenfleet as part of the launch of the long awaited 'Finding Dory'.

Each partner contributed in-kind or dollar contributions to Greenfleet as part of a habitat restoration project to improve health outcomes of the Great Barrier Reef.



Acid Frogs

Driven by SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast aquarist Boyd Watson, aka the frog man (pic below right), this project involved restoration in endangered acid frog habitat combined with art as a community engagement tool. Stocklands, as part of scoping out a new development site on the Sunshine Coast, found acid frogs and became determined to keep them thriving on their site. By incorporating green spaces and habitat restoration along with a community awareness campaign on the importance of these gorgeous, endemic yet endangered critters, it could showcase how development and conservation aren't always mutually exclusive.

The mural pictured below was funded by the SEA LIFE Trust as a partner in this project. As part of the project launch on World Wetlands Day, 2 February 2017, we were invited to the local high school to showcase the importance of acid frogs before heading out to the site to participate in plantings and art activities. A great day was had by all!



Map to Paradise

Our donation of \$5,000 to Bluebottle Film's crowdfunding campaign for their new production tracking the history and successes of marine protected areas around the world was immediately matched by another generous donor. The film is due to be completed in 2018 with the aim of hitting the cinemas in early 2019. SEA LIFE Trust will be recognised as a key supporter in the film credits, aligning to our focus of raising awareness of the need for increased marine protection.



Positive Change for Marine Life

In February of this year, our very own Kasey Turner (pic right) took part in an exciting project and was 1 of just 6 Global Ambassadors for Positive Change for Marine Life's inaugural Global Ambassadors Adventure. The group headed off to Kovalam, India to help local communities and NGOs address the issues most affecting them which was primarily the issue of waste.

The group worked on the ground with schools, local organisations and individuals to identify the pressure points and to help workshop solutions which are now contributing to the development of the [Marine Conservation Masterplan](#), released in September. Some of the team have returned to India full-time from November this year to implement the plan.

Kasey has been an inspirational facilitator for the Ocean Youth program and does not stop taking action for oceans. Well done Kasey and thanks so much for all you do!!





The Global Ambassadors for Positive Change for Marine Life helping in a clean up in Kovalam, India

Gather at the Grove

Due to its focus on conserving marine life and reducing plastic waste, SEA LIFE Trust was approached by Inner West Council to get involved in this local, grassroots community event. We celebrated by launching 'Pick Up 5 and Keep Them Alive', an initiative created by students at Orange Grove Public School. Since launching Pick Up 5, the school has incorporated Waste Free Wednesdays and Waste Warriors within the school program.





Students from Orange Grove Public school being interviewed about their Pick Up 5 campaign

OCEAN YOUTH

It's been an up and down journey for Ocean Youth to date. Some of the most exciting news is that our OY Sunshine Coast Ambassador Maggie McArthur has been chosen as SEA LIFE's Global Turtle Champion along with Jye Parkinson, a Patagonia sponsored competitive surfer, both the ripe old age of 14! The two have taken on the initiative with great gusto, organising the local turtle advisory committee along with key events to raise the profile of turtle conservation.

For the second year in a row, Ocean Youth was awarded the MSC Futures Award which is pretty exciting given we haven't been going very long. We're really humbled to have been chosen but it's testament to the participants on the program and their passion to drive positive change for our oceans.

We were also invited to shoot a segment for Crinkling News, a news channel for kids.

Arya Shinde (pic right) joined Claudette at SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium to talk about what's going down in marine conservation and what Ocean Youth Ambassadors are doing about it. Arya was a total natural! [You can find the article here.](#)



As we picked up a new site (Sunshine Coast) we temporarily lost Melbourne in 2017 due to our awesome facilitators moving on from their roles at SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium. Resource constraints continue and so without existing SEA LIFE team members available to jump in and take the program on in their own local way, we are left without the capacity to hire and onboard new staff to run the program. We are working on developing systems and processes so we can hire staff external to SEA LIFE and as such, have a more sustainable program model that's not reliant on SEA LIFE staff.

But there's definitely more up than down as we learn that SEA LIFE Arizona, SEA LIFE Michigan and SEA LIFE Kelly Tarlton's Auckland are all keen to adopt the program into their sites so going global is definitely on the not too distant horizon!

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

Sustainable Seafood Guides

SEA LIFE Trust and SEA LIFE in ANZ support Australian Marine Conservation Society's Sustainable Seafood Guide, making the mini-guide available to its many visitors. AMCS have reported an uptick



in the amount of downloads of its app, which coincides with the availability of the pamphlet in SEA LIFE Aquaria. You can download the app [here](#).

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016

SEA LIFE Trust was delighted to be approached by the Jane Goodall Institute to collaborate on a joint workshop for the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Honolulu, Hawaii 2016.

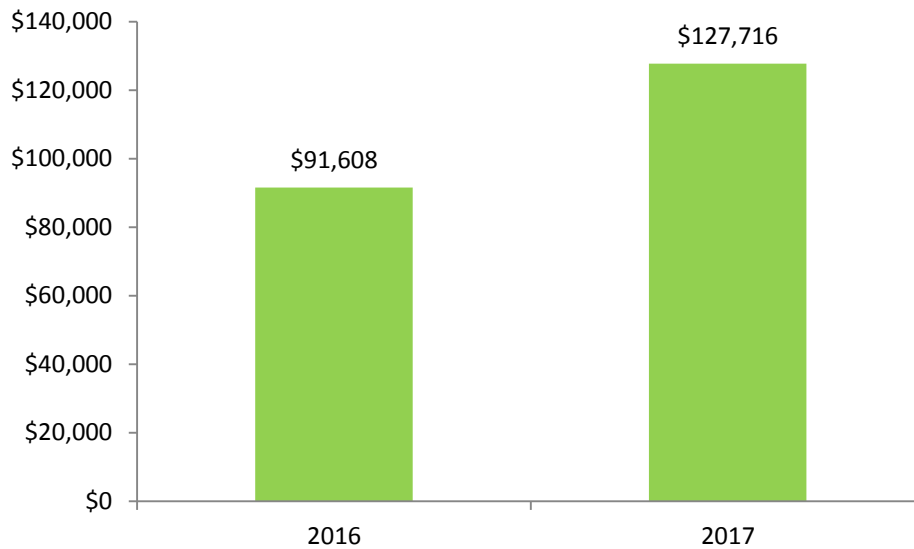
SEA LIFE Trust's Ocean Youth program was deemed a complementary partner to JGI's own youth program 'Roots and Shoots'. The workshop revolved around telling stories and as such



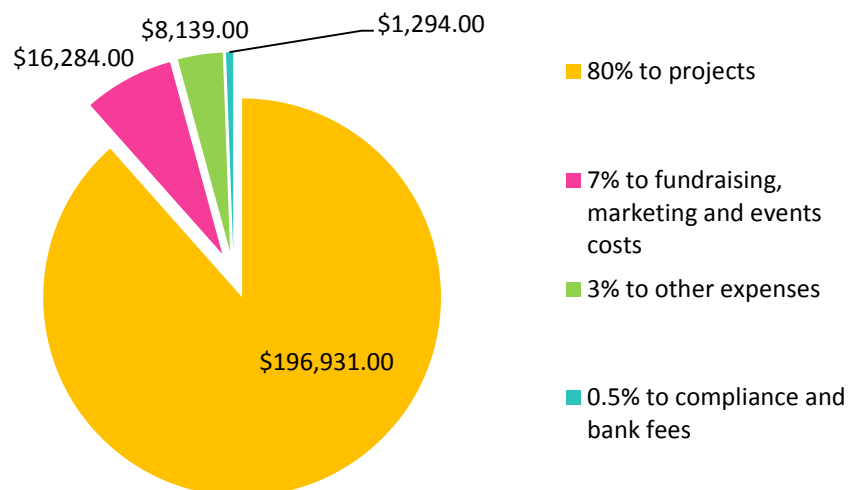
Claudette shared the story of Maggie McArthur, an inspiring Ocean Youth Ambassador on the Sunshine Coast. We were joined by a representative from Hawaii's National Broadcaster, Cath Leach on behalf of Digital Storytellers and Danielle Ryan of Bluebottle Films.

FINANCIALS

Income (excluding Ocean Youth program fees and grants)



Expenditure

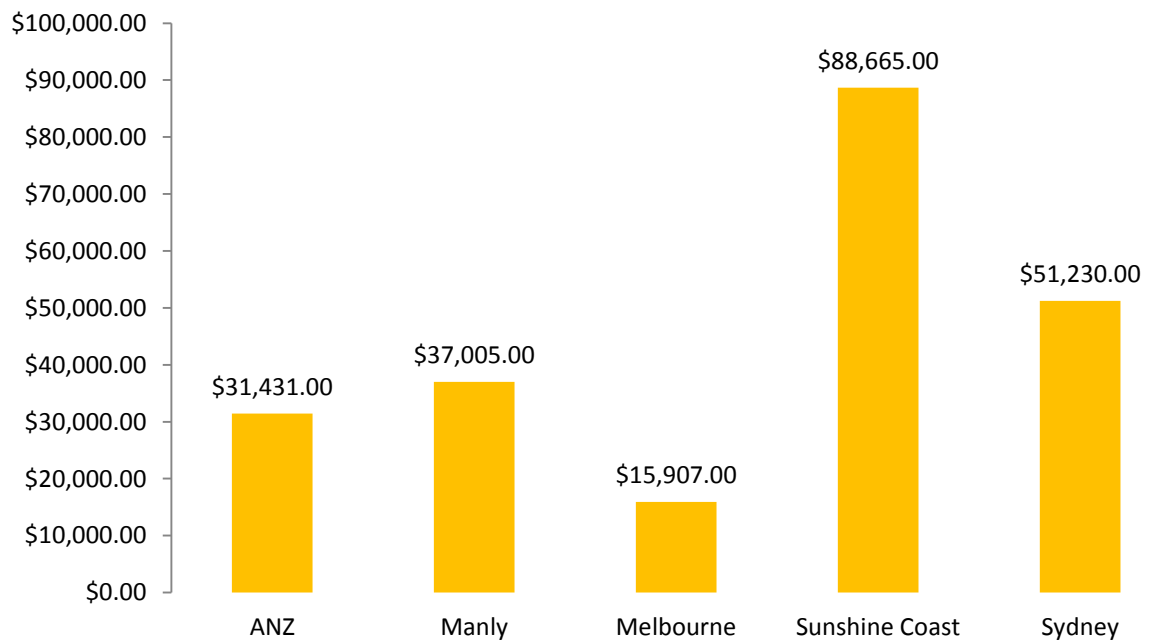


Thanks to Merlin Entertainments for covering SEA LIFE Trust ANZ operating costs (1 PTE wages) we are able to contribute the majority of income earned to conservation projects.

Funding by topic/area



Funding by site



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2016/17



ANISSA LAWRENCE
Chair, SLT ANZ



ANDY BOOL
Deputy Chair, SLT ANZ
Head of SEA LIFE Trust Global



ROB SMITH
Treasurer, SLT ANZ
Divisional Director Australasia,
Merlin Entertainments



DR. ROB JONES
Ordinary Member, SLT ANZ
Managing Director & Founder,
The Aquarium Vet



BEN CHINNOCK
Ordinary Member, SLT ANZ
Community Fundraising
Manager, Barnardos Australia



ROB TOWNSEND
Ordinary Member, SLT ANZ
Curatorial Manager, Manly SEA
LIFE Sanctuary



CLAUDETTE REHTORIK
Ordinary Member, SLT ANZ
Head of SLT ANZ

THANK YOU!

As always, a **HUGE thank you** to all our SEA LIFE visitors who donate to our spinners, SEA LIFE Trust members & donors & sponsors for enabling us to continue funding the work we do.

Special thanks to:

SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium (Merlin Entertainments) who cover the salary for one PTE employee which we would not be able to do much without.

SEA LIFE Trust Executive Committee for donating their precious time and energy to keep the organisation on track with budget and strategy. A particular thanks goes to our Chair, Anissa Lawrence, who has given so much of her time and expertise which is definitely appreciated. We hope to see big changes and subsequent growth in 2018 - 2020.

Alicia Lloyd, Carlita Foster-Hogg and Regan Taylor for their time and effort driving SO Manly & SO Sunshine Coast. Trying to fit a project in around busy working and parenting lives is no mean feat yet they do it with such grace and enthusiasm.

Kasey Turner and Vicki Brown for their incredible support and commitment in driving Ocean Youth and running a million miles with it.

Steve Dafnakis (auditor extraordinaire) for consistently making himself available to put our end of year accounts together.

And all our other volunteers who drop in and out but provide a huge array of value to our organisation; whether it's attending a beach clean, posting for our social media, IT, governance, or design, it's all very valuable work that we as a one part-time equivalent operation can't always get to.

How you can help

Become a member for just \$20 per year (the equivalent of 5 coffees or 2 beers brewed by bearded brewers). **Every dollar raised goes directly to our projects** as our operational costs are covered by our main sponsor, Merlin Entertainments.

Attend one of our events – all proceeds raised from our events go straight back into our projects.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

You can do all of the above including making a general donation or learning more about SEA LIFE Conservation Fund via our website www.sealifetrust.org.au.

We look forward to updating you on exciting upcoming events in 2017!

Claudette Rechterik



Head of SEA LIFE Trust ANZ

