



Friends of Currawong

**What's happening at Currawong?
Keep informed and show your support by being a member of
Friends of Currawong (FOC)**

Ten years ago we were fighting hard to save Currawong from development for private housing. After a long campaign, it was a great victory when Currawong was bought by the NSW State Government in 2011. Perhaps you were one of the many people who helped achieve that victory through letters, submissions and public protests?

Why are we writing to you now?

This email is to let you know what is happening with Currawong and to refresh our membership list of people who want to stay informed. *Membership is free and we will not ask for donations* - you just need to complete and return the attached form. To our long-term members, please confirm your membership and current contact details by also returning the form. Membership simply means we can easily keep you informed through occasional email updates and our Annual General Meeting. We are pleased to have only positive news to report in this update, but in the current political environment it is important for the public to keep demonstrating their support for public ownership of important assets. We hope you will join us to ensure Currawong is always managed to preserve its heritage and provide affordable holiday accommodation.

What is happening at Currawong?

It is now owned by the people of NSW and managed by Northern Beaches Council, through the Currawong State Park Advisory Committee with representatives from the Department of Lands, Council and Friends of Currawong.

Developments so far include:

- Conservation Management Plan prepared and adopted.
- The old homestead, Midholme, has been carefully restored with substantial help from a private donation.
- A new wastewater treatment system was installed.
- Solar treatment of drinking water installed.
- Last October, our local State Member, Rob Stokes announced a grant of \$1.68 million to upgrade the eight holiday cabins. Together with the \$1 million given in 2017, the state government has provided a total of \$2.68 million for these works.
- A private donation is managed through the Pittwater Environmental Fund to care for the natural environment and related projects.
- A walking track is planned from Mackerel Beach to Currawong.
- The eight cabins and Midholme are fairly fully booked, and the income generated is meeting ongoing maintenance costs.

Who are the committee? ... and you?

The FOC committee's ongoing role is to ensure the public have a voice in the planning and management of this historic site. Shane Withington led the fight over many years and remains our president. Sue Martin continues as our dynamic secretary. Other members of the committee bring skills from architecture, media and education. The committee has remained very stable over the last ten years but is also seeking new members. As you'll read below, *we need a new treasurer and IT manager - could you help?* These roles are not too onerous because we are now in a phase of ongoing management, not campaigning. We also need a couple more general committee members to meet several times a year.

Thank you to retiring treasurer, Ken Hughes, and IT Manager, Michael Mannington

At our AGM in December we reluctantly accepted the resignation of both treasurer, Ken Hughes, and I.T. manager, Michael Mannington. Ken and Michael have fulfilled these roles with great dedication over ten years and we are deeply grateful for their vital contributions.

Ken received an Order of Australia Medal in 2018 for his outstanding service to many community organisations. As our treasurer, he skilfully managed the committee's finances and his long involvement in the Rural Fire Service and bush regeneration gave him expertise in the appropriate use of grants and donations for the protection of Currawong's natural environment.

Michael, a digital whizz and gifted photographer, set up and managed the FOC website. The success of the campaign to save Currawong was in no small part due to Michael's use of electronic communication for calls to action. Michael compiled his photographs of Currawong and the campaign into a stunning photobook which was presented to the panel considering the proposed private development.

Show you care, become a Friend of Currawong

Such works involve many decisions and Friends of Currawong offers a way for the wider public to be informed and involved. We are calling out for new members who'd like to be part of this important local story. Would you like to be kept informed of developments? Show your support for Currawong? Offer your skills to the committee? Please complete the attached membership form and return to secretary@friendsofcurrawong.pittwater.org.au

We hope you will take this opportunity to become a Friend of Currawong.

Yours sincerely,

Shane Withington, President, on behalf of the Friends of Currawong committee,
February, 2019