

ANNUAL REPORT for 2021/2022

It is encouraging to look back on a year of successful club activities despite the ongoing Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions. We were unable to return to face-to-face meetings at the Uniting Church, but our well-attended Zoom meetings covered a wide range of topics presented by speakers from near and far, with members' observations a regular highlight. The excursion program went ahead in most months, unlike in 2020. Involvement in Field Naturalist activities has been a positive factor during a year when threats to the environment and the natural world have increased due to human impacts and climate change. So it is pleasing that our membership numbers increased during the year.

At the 2021 AGM we welcomed two new members to the committee – Cathrine Harboe-Ree and Jill Williams – and thanked Richard Piesse, who retired after many years of contributions, especially through his knowledge of the plants in our region. Peter Turner was elected President, Euan Moore Vice-President, Geoff Harris Treasurer and Jenny Rolland Secretary, Noel Young and Jenny Rolland co-editors, with general committee members George Broadway, Cathrine Harboe-Ree, Dianne Thomson and Jill Williams. After the AGM formalities, Reiner Richter spoke about Dragonflies of Victoria and Tasmania and the work to create a new field guide he co-authored with Ian Endersby. The excursion the next rather wet day was to Tullaroop Reservoir, where we learnt about the geology and local history and observed some birds, before retreating as rain continued. An invigorating start to the excursion program!

In April we heard from Jess Lawton (Connecting Country) about Fabulous Phascogales, with an excursion the next day to check on several nest boxes on a property in Yandoit. Following his talk on platypus in 2020, in May Geoff Williams (Australian Platypus Conservancy) spoke about Rakali, the native water rat, and led the Saturday excursion along Campbells Creek to point out suitable Platypus and Rakali habitats – but sadly, no sightings! Bush Heritage's Nardoo Hills reserve is NW of Wedderburn – in June Julie Radford (Bush Heritage) described the ambitious research program to restore Grey and Yellow Box woodlands affected by climate warming induced dieback. Unfortunately, two attempts to schedule full-day excursions to the reserve we foiled by Covid issues. Greg Kerr (Nature Glenelg Trust), who spoke to us last year returned in July to talk about his PhD research on the Stumpy Lizard as an example of detailed ecological studies of animal behaviour. The July excursion led by Joy McClusker (Bendigo FNC) saw a large group of CNFC and BFNC members on Mt Alexander, heads and cameras close to the ground seeking fungi. In August, Rod Orr (Bendigo FNC) enthralled us

with his photos of the Flowers of Fryers Ridge through each month of the year, but Covid prevented an August excursion to the Ridge. In September Cathrine Harboe-Ree took us on an Antarctic trip, illustrated with her stunning photos of birds and icy land- and sea-scapes. This was followed by an excursion led by Chewton Bushlands Association members to view wildflowers, birds and a wetlands restoration project. The annual joint meeting with BirdLife Castlemaine District (BCD) was held in October, when member Chris Timewell (BirdLife Australia) spoke about the status of birds in the BCD area. Managing fire in forests was November's focus, with Phil Ingamell's talk on "some burning questions" and an excursion to Kalimna Park where Euan Moore, standing in for Karl Just, explained the risk management process used to assess the need for Planned Burns, illustrated by examples of the 2020 burn in the park. As a bonus excursion, we enjoyed Rod Orr's deferred excursion to view wildflowers in the Fryers Ridge area. As in 2020, Members Night in December worked well on Zoom, followed by a successful pre-Christmas picnic in the Botanical Gardens. Three successful Wednesday Wildflower Wanders were held in September. And the club's year of meetings was completed in February when Euan Moore took us on a virtual tour through the forests of Taiwan, standing in when Tanya Loos had to withdraw at very short notice; her talk will be re-scheduled later in the year.

We were saddened by the news in March of death of member Joy Weatherill, a keen naturalist and talented artist, whose reports on her travels featured frequently in the Newsletter.

Fourteen members enjoyed a splendid SEANA weekend, organised by Hamilton FNC, during April. SW Victoria is very different from our local woodlands – wetlands, volcanos, and the fascinating Budj Bim Indigenous area, steeped in ancient history. Regrettably, the Spring SEANA weekend planned by Ballarat FNC had to be cancelled.

The committee and several members have been active on a number of important issues during the year. It was pleasing to be invited by DELWP to be part of their consultations with local groups on plans for Strategic Fire Breaks; we raised concern and contributed data for rare and threatened flora and fauna that would be impacted by the proposed Breaks. We have supported the Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting and the Victorian Deer Control Community Network. Euan Moore enrolled the club in the Great Southern BioBlitz, provided training sessions in the use of iNaturalist to report observations (for the BioBlitz but also for all our relevant observations). Our first efforts for the BioBlitz were far more successful than Euan had expected. Several members have been very active supporting Elaine Bayes' project to map potential new sites suitable for Eltham Copper Butterfly. Only two Roadside Cleanup sessions organized by Geoff Harris were possible, in March and November.

The committee has established Working Groups for the active projects - developing a new website (supported by a grant from SEANA), updating and republishing the many leaflets initially prepared by Ern Perkins and others, updating and reviewing the Photopoint project and updating the information for the *Wild Plants of Castlemaine* website

Our newsletter, the *Castlemaine Naturalist*, reached No.500 in August. We are indebted to co-editors Noel and Jenny and the members who provide reports and photos keep us informed each month. We are indebted to Geraldine Harris for distributing the newsletter by email and by post, and for forwarding electronic copies of the Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong FNC newsletters to interested members. Webmaster Ron Wescott maintains both the club website and the *Castlemaine Flora* website when updates to either are required.

Finally, I thank Geraldine, Ron and all members of the committee for their contributions to the operation of the club this past year. I am particularly appreciative of Jenny's efficient work as secretary, and of Euan's support on many fronts. Geoff and Geraldine found internet connections across distant parts of Queensland to ensure the bills were paid and the newsletters emailed. We have achieved a lot through another challenging year.

Peter Turner

<b>CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB</b>						
<b>TREASURER'S REPORT - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 11/03/2022</b>						
Routine operating expenses for the year covered by routine income (see I&E Statement below)						
95 memberships received this year (family memberships counted as 2) - last year total 89.						
All Needlegrass grants now fully acquitted (\$17,400 in total).						
Grant from SEANA to redevelop our website received and must be spent for this purpose (\$1,870).						
Bank Accounts:-						
Bendigo Bank EasySaver		0				
Bendigo Bank SEANA Gathering Cheque		0				
Sandhurst Select Mortgage Fund (0.5% pa interest)		6,930				
Bendigo Bank Club Cheque		335				
		<b>\$8,427</b>				
Specific Fund Account Balances:-						
Needle Grass Project Account		0				
Website Redevelopment		1,870				
General Account		6,207				
		<b>\$8,427</b>				
<b>INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE STATEMENT - 1 FEB 2021 to 31 JAN 2022</b>			<b>2020 FULL YEAR</b>	<b>2019 FULL YEAR</b>	<b>2018 FULL YEAR</b>	<b>2017 FULL YEAR</b>
OPENING BALANCE		8,229	9,017	4,874	4,759	4,479
<b>INCOME</b>						
memberships	2,295		1,870	2,210	2,195	2,060
interest received	42		75	127	119	65
donations	495		340	380	585	410
needle grass project grant	4,400		5,000	5,000	3,000	
SEANA grant for website redevelopment	1,870					
publication sales				48		60
online flora database contributions						800
SEANA gathering surplus				2,212		
		9,102	7,285	9,977	5,899	3,395
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
newsletter printing to 31/01/22	1,284		1,283	1,169	1,369	1,343
newsletter postage/envelopes	362		388	300	488	428
meeting room hire to 31/01/22	0		48	330	330	330
p.o. box rental to 31/03/22	41		39	135	127	124
website registration (castlemainefnc) to 29/03/22	60					
website registration (castlemaineflora) to 19/06/23	66					
insurance to 30/06/22	220		206	253	235	181
SEANA membership to 31/03/22	20		20	20	20	20
Zoom usage to 31/12/21	369		230			
FOBIF - contribution towards publishing Peas book	400					
secondary college award	200		150	150	150	150
needle grass project contractor	5,882		5,465	3,053	3,000	
stationery			44		8	
advert opposed to duck shooting			200			
annual consumer affairs statement					57	55
online flora database setup costs						484
online flora database update costs				147		
speaker travel				50		
printing plant information sheets				227		
		8,904	8,073	5,834	5,784	3,115
CLOSING BALANCE *		8,427	8,229	9,017	4,874	4,759
* note: \$1,870 of the closing balance must be spent on redevelopment of our website.						