

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc #A0003010B

ANNUAL REPORT for 2022/23

Looking back over the activities of the past twelve months I am impressed by what we have achieved, and encouraged by the increases to our membership over the past two years. Our monthly meetings have covered a wide range of topics, presented by experts from our local area and from as far as Wollongong – on threats to native fauna and flora, the intelligence of bees, Antarctic mosses, diseases affecting native mammals and humans, and on the ecology of Powerful Owls. The task of finding speakers and fitting their available dates into our calendar has been shared among members of the committee. As COVID restrictions and concerns abated early last year, it was a real pleasure to return to the Uniting Church and renew and make new friendships face-to-face (even with masks). Members' observations continue to be illustrated with photos where possible, an arrangement started during "Zoom years" and coordinated by Euan Moore. For the Winter months we reverted to Zoom, for talks by speakers who could not come to Castlemaine, and to support members who prefer not to venture out on cold dark nights.

The excursion program has been very successful, highlighted by the full day visit to Seeding Victoria's seed bank in Creswick and nearby La Gerche walk, and the visit to Julie Radford's orchid nursery and laboratory near Big Hill.

I will not go through all the talks and excursions in this report – they are listed on our website on the [Calendar of Events page](#), with the 2022 program found at the base of the page. I would like to note Georgie Custance's talk on the rare Fryerstown Grevillea, *G. obtecta* and related excursion – arranged for October but cancelled due to the widespread and destructive floods – and to record our appreciation to Georgie for agreeing to visit in February for our final meeting and excursion of the 2022-23 club year. We should also recall the wonders of the Spring wildflowers – especially the orchids – highlighted during the September Wildflower Wanders and November's excursion in the Fryers Ranges.

Our monthly newsletter, the *Castlemaine Naturalist*, provides detailed illustrated reports on the presentations by our expert guest speakers and on our excursions, records of members' observations of local fauna and flora, and articles on natural history topics. All issues of the newsletter are available on our website. The intensive work involved in preparing each edition has been shared between long-

time editor Noel Young and our busy secretary Jenny Rolland. We owe Noel and Jenny our appreciative thanks, and I am delighted that Jill Williams has recently joined the editorial team to further share this task. Thanks also to George Broadway for keeping the index of topics covering every issue up to date.

Our new website <http://castlemaine fieldnaturalists.org.au/> was launched in June. It provides far more information on local fauna, complements <http://castlemaine flora.org.au/> and is well used, while being enhanced through regular additions. It is a great improvement on the old website – now decommissioned – and is a credit to Euan Moore, Ron Wescott, Jenny Rolland and Noel Young. Our thanks to them. We now have a challenging new project – to in effect merge the Castlemaine District Plant List (CDPL) last updated by Ern Perkins in 2014 with the Wild Plants of Castlemaine District (“Castlemaine Flora” - CF) database. Cathrine Harboe-Ree and Geraldine Harris have been working through CDPL and CF to find differences needing attention, while Frances Cincotta, with the help of Lesley Perkins, Bonnie Humphries (Connecting Country) and Ron Wescott (CFNC Webmaster) have continued to check the CF for necessary corrections and updates. The new project has emerged out of these activities together with Ian Higgins’ work on a database focused on his concerns about rare and threatened plants in our region, and is being undertaken by Euan, Ian, Cathrine, Geraldine, Jenny, Ron and myself.

The iNaturalist app is being increasingly used by members to record observations, especially during the Great Southern Bioblitz in October; our thanks are due to Euan Moore for teaching us how to use iNaturalist, and for encouraging and facilitating our involvement in the Bioblitz for a second year.

Other activities to note are the regular Roadside Cleanups along the Pyrenees Highway, organized efficiently by Geoff and Geraldine Harris; Cathrine Harboe-Ree’s Publications working group updating the information leaflets originally prepared and published by Ern Perkins and other members; and the final year of our involvement in managing the funding for control of Needle Grasses. Margaret Panter has been the voluntary coordinator for this important program funded by the Shire Council for many years, working with the contractor along roadsides and other Council land in Castlemaine, and organizing working bees of volunteers to control the infestations of these weeds in the Botanical Gardens. The club has also been involved with FOBIF and local Landcare groups in meetings with DELWP’s Strategic Fire Breaks program to do what we can to ensure that in protecting people and their assets, the fire management teams do not destroy precious natural assets, especially threatened flora.

The two SEANA weekend camps this past year – based near Portland in April and at Merricks in October were enjoyed by a number of our members, as reported in the newsletter. These gatherings, hosted

by local field naturalists, are excellent opportunities to learn about the natural wonders and conservation issues of other parts of the State. The two camps this year will be at Port Campbell in April and Yarram in October.

Finally, I wish to express my deep appreciation of the contributions of all members of the committee and other club members to the successful achievements of this past year. Judith Nimmo joined the committee last year, adding veterinary experience to the wide range of expertise of members – so valuable in seeking speakers and topics. Jenny Rolland is a brilliant Secretary (and I know how much work that involves) and Geoff Harris keeps the club's finances under strict control. In addition, Geraldine Harris has continued to manage the distribution of the newsletter by email and post, and maintains an up-to-date list of members, and Ron Wescott has continued as Webmaster. My sincere thanks to them all.

Peter Turner, President

CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB						
TREASURER'S REPORT - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 10/03/2023						
Routine operating expenses were covered by routine income again (see I&E						
102 memberships received this year (family memberships counted as 2) - last						
Grant from SEANA to redevelop our website has been fully						
All Needlegrass grants, now totalling \$23,400, have been acquitted (except for						
Membership fees for 2023 are the same as for 2022 and are now payable						
Bank Accounts:-						
Bendigo Bank EasySaver		0				
Bendigo Bank SEANA Gathering		0				
Sandhurst Select Mortgage Fund (2.9%		6,478				
Bendigo Bank Club Cheque		281				
		\$6,757				
Specific Fund Account Balances:-						
Needle Grass Project Account		208				
Website Redevelopment Account		0				
General Account		6,549				
	0	\$6,757				
<u>INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT - 1 FEB 2022 to 31 JAN 2023</u>						
			<u>2021 FULL YEAR</u>	<u>2020 FULL YEAR</u>	<u>2019 FULL YEAR</u>	<u>2018 FULL YEAR</u>
OPENING BALANCE		8,427	8,229	9,017	4,874	4,759
INCOME						
memberships	2,430		2,295	1,870	2,210	2,195
interest received	140		42	75	127	119
donations	425		495	340	380	585
needle grass project grant	6,000		4,400	5,000	5,000	3,000
SEANA - website redevelopment grant			1,870			
publication sales					48	
SEANA gathering surplus					2,212	
		8,995	9,102	7,285	9,977	5,899
EXPENDITURE						
newsletter printing to 31/01/23	1,179		1,284	1,283	1,169	1,369
newsletter postage/envelopes	330		362	388	300	488
meeting room hire to 31/01/23	180		0	48	330	330
p.o. box rental to 31/03/23	44		41	39	135	127
website registration (castlemaineffc) to	60		60			
website registration (castlemainefflora) to			66			
website registration (castlemaineffldnats) to	33					
web hosting (castlemaineffldnats) to	198					
domain name registrations (2 x .au) to	66					
insurance to 30/06/23	262		220	206	253	235
SEANA membership to 31/03/23	20		20	20	20	20
Zoom usage to 31/01/23	69		369	230		
website redevelopment	1,870					
speaker expenses	141				50	
computer cable	36					
FOBIF - contribution towards publishing Peas			400			
secondary college award	200		200	150	150	150
needle grass project contractor	5,792		5,882	5,465	3,053	3,000
advertisement Mail 'clubs' feature	185					
stationery				44		8
advert opposed to duck shooting				200		
annual consumer affairs statement						57
online flora database update costs					147	
printing plant information sheets					227	
		10,665	8,904	8,073	5,834	5,784
CLOSING BALANCE *		6,757	8,427	8,229	9,017	4,874
<i>less tagged funds (needle grass project)</i>		208	1,870	1,482	1,947	0
<i>= available funds</i>		6,549	6,557	6,747	7,070	4,874