

## Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc #A0003010B

### ANNUAL REPORT for 2023/24

The past 12 months have been another successful year for the club, with stimulating, informative presentations by a variety of speakers, and a range of excursions including our first weekend away for many years. However, the death on 2<sup>nd</sup> January of George Broadway has marked this year as both sad and memorable: George was a leader in every aspect of the club's activities from his involvement in its formation in 1976 until late last year. We miss him as an inspiring skilled naturalist, so generous in sharing his knowledge of the regional environment, and as a dear friend. And we continue to benefit from all the contributions George made to the club in so many ways. Another long-time member who was active in the club for many years, Enid Chapman, also died recently.

The topics covered in talks at our meetings included the amazing diversity of the Southern Australian Marine flora, Coliban Water's Biodiversity Strategy, Predator Control in the Grampians/Gariwerd, the use of highly trained Detector Dogs to monitor the impacts of wind farms on microbats, and the inclusion of Victorian field naturalist clubs' publications in the international Biodiversity Heritage Library – an enormous open-access database. Jane Rusden, Convenor of Birdlife Castlemaine District, was the annual CFNC-BCD speaker, demonstrating how she paints superb pictures of birds in their settings during her birding trip into the South Australian desert. As in 2022, the three winter meetings were held online using Zoom, with talks by speakers from as far away as Brisbane.

Amongst the enjoyable excursions this year, two highlights were the visit to McKay Reservoir – Castlemaine's primary water storage not usually open to the public – and the weekend beyond Ballarat, visiting Roy Pail's private fenced Wildlife Sanctuary on the Saturday, and Birdlife Australia's Clarkesdale Sanctuary (where some members camped overnight) for an orchid and birding tour led by Emily Noble on the Sunday. We were also pleased to participate in flora surveys including the rare *Grevillea obtecta* and a repeat of Ern Perkins' quadrats in the Maldon Historic Reserve. The club's decision to ensure boots are clean and disinfected before and after heading off on tracks has been vindicated by the very regrettable discovery of Cinnamon Fungus, *Phytophthora cinnamomi* along the Loop Track near Porcupine Ridge. Thanks to Cathrine Harboe-Ree for arranging purchase and distribution of Phytoclean disinfectant for members' use. FOBIF and Birdlife Castlemaine District are following our lead.

The full list of the monthly meetings and excursions is available through our increasingly popular new website. The Website Working Group led by Euan Moore continues to add to this invaluable resource, with monthly posts to members and a large group of other people interested in the natural history of

our area. The club's monthly newsletter, the *Castlemaine Naturalist*, is central to the recording of our activities, with the reports on the monthly talks and excursions, lists of fauna and flora, and members photographs and articles on studies of local fauna and flora. The joint editors, Noel Young, Jenny Rolland and Jill Williams, are to be congratulated and thanked on the continuing high quality of the publication. Our thanks also to members who contribute articles and observations.

The Great Southern BioBlitz was held in November this year, and the club was again very successful in recording key fauna and flora within our area using iNaturalist. Sincere thanks to Mez Woodward who has taken on the arrangements, involving publicity and, together with Jill Williams and Euan Moore, preparing reports after the event.

Since the club hosted the 2019 Spring SEANA (South Eastern Australia Naturalists Association) weekend get-together, a good number of our members have been regular attendees at SEANA events, including Port Campbell and Yarram in 2023. These sessions are a great way to learn from local experts about the natural environment in other parts of Victoria.

The work to control invasive Chilean Needlegrass and related species in Castlemaine, led by Margaret Panter for many years, was passed back to Council staff in 2023 after Margaret decided she could not continue. The voluntary time contributed by Margaret and her team of assistants including CFNC members has been a very large saving to the Council. The club's quarterly Roadside Cleanup program organized by Geoff Harris continues, keeping rubbish levels along our stretch of the Pyrenees Highway low.

As I complete 3 years as President, I wish to thank all members of the committee for their many and varied contributions to the life of the club, and to Geraldine Harris who has continued to distribute our and other clubs' newsletters for many years by email and post, and until last year also made the arrangement for supper after meetings. Judith Nimmo will not be continuing on the next committee due to other commitments – thank you Judith for your valuable contributions over the past two years and for taking over the supper arrangements after meetings last year and continuing this year. Thanks also to those other members of the club who support our activities in various ways, including Ron Wescott as Webmaster and Chris Timewell who arranges the annual Challenge Bird Count.

So finally, it gives me great pleasure to announce that your committee has decided to award Honorary Life Memberships to Geraldine Harris and to Treasurer Geoff Harris for their many outstanding contributions to the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club and to members over the decades since they joined in 1976, soon after the club was founded.

Peter Turner, President 2023/24

<b>CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB</b>				
<b>TREASURER'S REPORT - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 08/03/2024</b>				
Routine operating expenses were almost covered by routine income (see I&E Statement below).				
A generous donation of \$1,000 was received from The Good Op Shop in Lewis Drive to support our club's projects.				
Club funds increased by \$306 this year - from \$6,757 to \$7,063. A comfortable position.				
100 members this year (family memberships counted as 2) - last year total 102.				
Membership fees for 2024 will be held at the same level as 2023 and are now payable (details in Newsletter).				
Bank Accounts:-				
Bendigo Bank EasySaver			0	
Bendigo Bank SEANA Gathering Cheque			0	
Sandhurst Select Mortgage Fund (4.5% pa interest)			6,982	
Bendigo Bank Club Cheque			81	
		°	<b>\$7,063</b>	
<b>INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE STATEMENT - 1 FEB 2023 to 31 JAN 2024</b>			<b>2022 FULL YEAR</b>	<b>2021 FULL YEAR</b>
OPENING BALANCE		6,757	8,427	8,229
<b>INCOME</b>				
memberships	2,305		2,430	2,295
interest received	281		140	42
member donations	440		425	495
special donation	1,000			
publication sales	20			
needle grass project grant	0		6,000	4,400
SEANA - website redevelopment grant	0			1,870
		4,046	8,995	9,102
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
newsletter printing to 28/02/24	1,139		1,179	1,284
newsletter postage/envelopes	398		330	362
meeting room hire to 31/01/24	240		180	
p.o. box rental to 31/03/24	47		44	41
website registration ( <a href="http://castlemainefnc.wordpress.com">castlemainefnc.wordpress.com</a> ) to 29/03/23			60	60
website registration ( <a href="http://castlemaineflora.org.au">castlemaineflora.org.au</a> ) to 19/06/25	66			66
website registration ( <a href="http://castlemaineflora.org.au">castlemaineflora.org.au</a> ) to 20/09/25	66		33	
website registration ( <a href="http://castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au">castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au</a> ) to 27/01/25	66		33	
website registration ( <a href="http://castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au">castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au</a> ) to 20/09/24	33		33	
web hosting ( <a href="http://castlemainefieldnats">castlemainefieldnats</a> ) to 22/02/25	396		198	
insurance to 30/06/24	298		262	220
SEANA membership to 31/03/24	20		20	20
Zoom usage to 31/01/24	99		69	369
speaker expenses	81		141	
wireless microphone	205		36	
information brochure printing	135			
secondary college award			200	200
needle grass project contractor	260		5,792	5,882
phytoclean	103			
website redevelopment			1,870	
FOBIF - contribution towards publishing Peas book				400
advertisement/notice Mail	88		185	
		3,740	10,665	8,904
CLOSING BALANCE		7,063	6,757	8,427
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less tagged funds (needle grass project)		0	208	1,870
= available funds		7,063	6,549	6,557