



14th March 2025

President's Report for 2024/25

Our club has had another successful year.

We had a full program of talks and excursions through the year with highly qualified and interesting speakers. The year started with Professor Tim Entwistle (former director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne) talking about his life as a botanist and his research into algae. This was followed by Dr Greg Moore (University of Melbourne) talking about native trees and their benefits during climate change. During the winter months Zoom allowed us to have speakers from further afield. Dr Don Fletcher (Threatened Species Recovery Hub, Canberra) spoke about Rosenberg's Goanna in the ACT and the use of citizen science programs to study it, Associate Professor Jonathan Plett from Western Sydney University spoke about mycorrhizal associations with trees and Reece Pianta from the Invasive Species Council, Brisbane, provided a talk about the highly invasive Red Fire Ants.

In September we held a weekend campout in the northern Grampians. It is some years since the club has held a campout and the weekend was very successful thanks to the wonderful organisation by Geoff and Geraldine Harris. There were field trips to several sites where Russell Stanley identified some of the rarer orchids. In the evenings we had talks from Neil Marriot on Grampians flora and from Geraldine Harris on the impact of recent fires on their nearby property.

Returning to face-to-face meetings in the hall, I presented in October to our joint meeting with Birdlife Castlemaine District on island birds and their evolution over time. In November Brian Bainbridge, biodiversity officer at Hepburn Shire, told us about his project to provide habitat for the Bright-eyed Brown butterfly and led an excursion to some of his sites the following day. Our December meeting was packed with entertainment with nine members giving presentations about their local fauna and flora or travels with an environmental theme.

Our monthly Friday night meetings were followed by an excursion on the Saturday, although our March excursion was cancelled due to the heat. Excursions included Mt Alexander in February, significant trees of the Castlemaine Botanic Gardens in April as we remembered George Broadway, and Coliban Channel at Taradale in May. By June cooler weather and some rain had brought on a start to the fungi season, with Joy Clusker leading a fungi trip to Leonards Hill where there was plenty to see. The July excursion was a walk around the street trees of Castlemaine where there are a number of significant native trees in addition to the exotic species that have been planted over the years. In August and again in October and November the theme was habitat restoration with visits to Spring Plains (Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance project) and Trentham (butterfly habitat restoration) as well as a visit with Ian Higgins to a private property near Walmer to admire remnant native grasslands.

During the year there were two South-east Australia Naturalists Association (SEANA) weekend camps. In April members travelled to Phillip Island for a weekend of interesting walks and talks organised by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria then in October we travelled to Marysville for another very interesting weekend organised by the Ringwood Field Naturalists Club. Our thanks go to both those clubs for organising wonderful weekends in areas that our members do not visit regularly.

Over the year our membership has grown from 100 members in February 2024 to 115 members in February 2025. There are 271 subscribers to our regular club emails, up from 239 at the same time last year. This subscriber list includes most of our membership but indicates that the club is engaging with the wider community. This continues a growth trend that we have experienced over the past 5 years.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of our long-term member Richard Piesse at the end of last year. Richard contributed greatly to the club's work as a committee member and excursion leader, but also in meticulous recording of plants on field trips and in keeping our flora databases updated. We held a special gathering in the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens to remember Richard which was well attended by family and friends.

We are continuing to update the club website with new information. Updates have included new information on the geology of the region. Thank you Noel Young for your input here. We have also updated the information and results for the Challenge Bird Count organised for the Castlemaine region by Chris Timewell. This page will receive further updates as new information becomes available. Please visit our website regularly. We are always updating the information it contains and it has our activities program for the year.

During the year the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) scanned all our old newsletters from the inception of the club in 1976 through until 2007 when the club started producing electronic newsletters. Copies of these scans are now being loaded to our web page by Noel, where they will replace the previous manually scanned documents. Our complete set of newsletters now available on the BHL website is fully searchable, which is useful when tracking some of our earlier fauna and flora records.

In late September we had a very successful Great Southern Bioblitz (GSB) with associated activities organised by Mez Woodward. Our GSB afternoon with local naturalists, Geoff Park, Patrick Kavanagh, Frances Cincotta and Andrew Skeoch was attended by more than 60 people. Special thanks to Mez for her great work on this activity.

At the end of the year we launched the 3rd edition of our brochure 'Indigenous Plants of Castlemaine and Surrounds'. This edition includes the many name changes that have occurred in recent years as well as some new photos. This new edition is the result of many hours work by Cathrine Harboe-Ree, Lou Citroën and Geraldine Harris. We are grateful to Beth Mellick for help in producing the brochure and to the Good Op Shop, Friends of the Box Ironbark Forests and the Wettenhall Environment Trust for financial support.

After months of discussion and deliberations by the committee, our newsletter editors, Jenny Rolland, Noel Young and Jill Williams have, with the help of graphic designer Jane Satchel, produced Castlemaine Naturalist in a fresh new format. It is now printed in A4 format which allows more room for members' photos and articles in an open, easy to read layout.

The committee has also engaged with some of the many conservation issues in our region. This has included letters and submissions on duck shooting and the slow progress in gazetting new national parks in the Wombat Forest. We have had ongoing discussions with regional staff at Forest Fire Management Victoria about the fuel reduction program and potential impacts on threatened species in our area.

I would like to thank the committee who have all worked hard to keep the club running smoothly throughout the year and supported me in my role as president. Without them the club would not be as effective as it is. I would also like to thank all our volunteers who have willingly taken on important jobs for the club such as scanning, clerical tasks, helping lead excursions and generally making themselves useful at meetings and other activities. Special thanks go to Geraldine Harris for looking after the newsletter distribution and membership, Geoff Harris for organising the quarterly roadside clean-ups, Judith Nimmo for organising supper at the meetings and Ron Wescott for his work maintaining the Castlemaineflora and Castlemainefieldnaturalists websites.

Euan Moore

President,

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club.

CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB					
TREASURER'S REPORT - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 14/03/2025					
Membership fees exceeded our routine expenses (newsletters, hall rental/zoom, insurance, speakers, etc) by \$259.					
The new edition of our Indigenous Plants brochure cost \$4,488 which was partly offset by supportive contributions from The GoodOpShop, FOBIF and the Wettenhall Trust (\$1,000 each) so the net cost to our club was \$1,488.					
Other income was received from member donations (\$630), bank interest (\$444), publication sales (\$620) and Grampians weekend surplus (\$900) & totalled \$2,594.					
So in summary, uncommitted Club funds at the start of the year were \$6,063, add surplus for the year as detailed above \$1,365 (+259 -1,488 +2,594) and at the end of the year uncommitted Club funds were \$7,428, which was the balance in our Bendigo Bank accounts. A comfortable position.					
We ended the year with 115 members (family memberships counted as 2) - up from last year's 100.					
There will be no increase in membership fees for 2025 - last increase was in 2017. 2025 fees are now due & payable (details in Newsletter).					
INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT 2024 (1 FEB 2024 to 31 JAN 2025)			2023 FULL YEAR	2022 FULL YEAR	2021 FULL YEAR
OPENING BALANCE		7,063	6,757	8,427	8,229
INCOME					
memberships	2,890		2,305	2,430	2,295
member donations	630		440	425	495
interest received	444		281	140	42
publication sales	620		20		
Grampians weekend surplus	900				
Wettenhall contribution towards indigenous plants brochure reprint	1,000				
FOBIF contribution towards indigenous plants brochure reprint	1,000				
special donation (GoodOpShop)			1,000		
needle grass project grant				6,000	4,400
SEANA - website redevelopment grant					1,870
		7,484	4,046	8,995	9,102
EXPENDITURE					
newsletter printing to 31/01/25	970		1,139	1,179	1,284
newsletter postage/envelopes	309		398	330	362
meeting room hire to 31/01/25	144		240	180	
p.o. box rental to 31/03/25	49		47	44	41
lanyards for name tags	126				
insurance to 30/06/25	360		298	262	220
SEANA membership to 31/03/25	20		20	20	20
zoom usage to 31/01/25	75		99	69	369
speaker expenses	234		81	141	
GS Bioblitz expenses	165				
notice in Castlemaine Mail	179		88	185	
Indigenous plants brochure reprint	4,488				
website registration (castlemainefnc.wordpress.com) to 29/03/23				60	60
website registration (castlemaineflora.org.au) to 19/06/25			66		66
website registration (castlemaineflora.au) to 20/09/25			66	33	
website registration (castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au) to 27/01/25			66	33	
website registration (castlemainefieldnaturalists.au) to 20/09/24			33	33	
web hosting (castlemainefieldnats) to 22/02/25			396	198	
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
		7,119	3,740	10,665	8,904
CLOSING BALANCE		7,428	7,063	6,757	8,427
<i>less tagged funds</i>			1,000	208	1,870
<i>= available funds</i>		7,428	6,063	6,549	6,557