



Annual Report for 2025/26

The last year has been another busy and productive time for the club.

During the year we held eleven Friday evening club meetings with a wide variety of speakers who covered subjects as diverse as invertebrates, grasslands, turtles, birds, habitat restoration, climate change and the impacts of light pollution. We also conducted nine local, half-day excursions. Our March excursion was cancelled due to extreme hot weather.

We again held a weekend excursion in September where we travelled further afield. This time we were based at Wedderburn on the northern edge of the box-ironbark forests. Our program co-ordinator, Jenny Rolland, organised two top-ranking speakers, with Professor Michael Kearney talking about his reptile project at Mt Korong and Russell Stanley talking about the forthcoming revised edition of his orchid book. During the day we had three excursions: visiting Professor Kearney's lizard research site; looking at some of the Landcare work and a Malleefowl mound with Trudy and James Nelsson from the Wedderburn Conservation Management Network; and, going on an orchid search with Russell Stanley. During spring we held four Wednesday Wildflower Wanders using a modified program where the wanders were two weeks apart, which gave a better coverage of the spring season and enabled participants to enjoy a greater range of plants in flower.

Speakers for our joint meeting with Birdlife Castlemaine District were Richard and Margaret Alcorn, who gave an inspiring talk about how citizen science data in databases such as eBird and iNaturalist can be used to determine population trends and changes in bird distribution over time.

Our December meeting was again a chance for members to talk about some of their adventures in the wild. Our eight presenters spoke on a variety of subjects from insects to birds with some including observations on their recent travels.

You can read more about the talks and excursions in our newsletters, which are available on our website. Our newsletters which we produce monthly from February to December are put together by our three editors, Jill Williams, Noel Young and Jenny Rolland. They have been doing a great job with the presentation and layout and deserve special thanks for their efforts. I would also like to thank all the contributors and ask everyone to please keep the articles and photos coming.

In October the club once again took part in the Great Southern Bioblitz on iNaturalist. This is a four-day period across a weekend when people are encouraged to record their observations of life-forms on the iNaturalist platform. Groups from regions across the southern hemisphere take part in this international event. 2025 was the 5th year that the club has participated. Thank you to Mez Woodward for organising our club's participation.

During the year the club wrote to retailers in our area asking that they stop selling Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs), which have significant secondary impacts on predators such as hawks and owls that may eat poisoned rodents, and pointing out that there are safer alternatives available.

We also wrote to our local members of state parliament and associated ministers requesting that there should not be a duck shooting season in our area as the birds are already severely affected by drought.

Our website is regularly updated with new information about the club and its activities as well as information about our local flora and fauna. A new gallery of fungi photographs has been assembled by Noel Young. We have also updated the information about butterflies on the website and now have a complete gallery of those species recorded in our region. Our program for the year is on the website and is updated with changes and new activities as they are planned. I encourage all members to make use of the website and provide information and photographs where this will help fill in gaps in our current knowledge.

With 2026 being our 50th Anniversary year your committee started work on projects that will help us celebrate this milestone.

Lou Citroën, Kerrie Jennings and Rosemary Turner worked on our new brochure, '*Butterflies of the Mount Alexander Region*', which was printed in December and launched at the February 2026 meeting as part of our anniversary celebrations. This brochure is one of the first of this kind looking at butterflies. It has been well received, with almost 25% of the print run being distributed to members, other organisations and retailers in the first few weeks it was available.

Also as part of the anniversary celebrations, the club will host the spring meeting of the South-east Australia Naturalists Association (SEANA). Planning is well underway, having started in April 2025. There is an efficient planning team, lead by Peter Turner, that is looking after all aspects of the weekend.

Club membership was stable last year after five years of growth and there has been good attendance at meetings and excursions. We have continued to see good growth in the subscriber list on our website. People on this list, which includes non-members, receive our monthly emails with information about our talks and excursions. This is an important first step in encouraging people to engage with the club. The list has doubled in size since 2022 when our new website went live, and we now reach almost 300 people.

During the year we lost two of our long-term members, both of whom had participated in club activities and contributed to the club in many ways. Ron Wescott, who had been our webmaster died, in March 2025 and Penny Garnett, a very active member in earlier days, died in July 2025. We are deeply appreciative of the contributions made by Ron and Penny and honour their memory.

Finally, I would like to thank a number of individuals and organisations who have helped to make the Club strong and vibrant. The organisations include the sponsors who made production of the butterflies brochure possible; that is, the Wettenhall Environment Trust, The Good Op Shop and SEANA. The individuals include committee members, all of whom have been essential to the smooth running of the club, and all the other volunteers who have made a significant contribution to the club during the year. Special thanks again to Geraldine Harris for looking after the newsletter distribution and membership, Geoff Harris for organising the quarterly roadside clean-ups, Chris Timewell for organising the Challenge Bird Count and Judith Nimmo for providing supper at the meetings. Your work is appreciated by everyone in the club.

Euan Moore

President, on behalf of the committee

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club

CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB				
TREASURER'S REPORT - 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (13/03/2026)				
Routine expenses (newsletters, hall rental/zoom, insurance, speakers, web, etc) exceeded our membership fees by \$853.				
Other income was received from member donations (\$725), bank interest (\$344), publication sales (\$1,300) and Wedderburn weekend surplus (\$281) & totalled \$2,650.				
The new Butterfly brochure (3,000) cost \$5,808 which was partly offset by supportive contributions from SEANA, the Wettenhall Trust (\$2,000 each) and The GoodOpShop (\$1,000) so the net cost to our club was \$808. We also purchased 200 Grasslands brochures for \$320.				
In summary, uncommitted Club funds at the start of the year were \$7,428, add surplus for the year as detailed above \$669 (-853 +2,650 -808 -320) and at the end of the year uncommitted Club funds were \$8,097, which was the balance in our Bendigo Bank accounts. Again a comfortable position.				
We ended the year with 113 members (family memberships counted as 2) - last year 115.				
There will be no increase in membership fees for 2026 - last increase was in 2017. 2026 fees are now due & payable (details in Newsletter).				
2025 INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT (1 FEB 2025 to 31 JAN 2026)				
		<i>2024 FULL YEAR</i>	<i>2023 FULL YEAR</i>	<i>2022 FULL YEAR</i>
OPENING BALANCE	7,428	7,063	6,757	8,427
INCOME				
memberships	2,495	2,890	2,305	2,430
member donations	725	630	440	425
interest received	344	444	281	140
publication sales	1,300	620	20	
SEANA grant towards butterfly brochure	2,000			
Wettenhall contribution towards butterfly brochure	2,000			
GoodOpShop contribution towards butterfly brochure	1,000			
Wedderburn weekend surplus	281			
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
=	10,145	7,484	4,046	8,995
EXPENDITURE				
newsletter printing to 31/01/26	1,153	970	1,139	1,179
newsletter postage/envelopes	327	309	398	330
meeting room hire to 31/01/26	252	144	240	180
p.o. box rental to 31/03/26	51	49	47	44
insurance to 30/06/26	470	360	298	262
SEANA membership to 31/03/26	20	20	20	20
Zoom usage to 31/01/26	83	75	99	69
speaker expenses to 31/01/26	459	234	81	141
butterflies brochures	5,808			
indigenous plants brochure reprint		4,488		
grasslands brochures	320			
club information brochures	164			
website registration (castlemaineflora.org.au) to 19/06/26	33		66	
website registration (castlemaineflora.org.au) to 20/09/26	33		66	33
website registration (castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au) to 27/01/26	33		66	33
website registration (castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au) to 20/09/25	33		33	33
web hosting (castlemainefieldnats) to 22/02/26	198		396	198
notices Castlemaine Mail		179	88	185
needle grass project contractor			260	5,792
website redevelopment				1,870
miscellaneous	39	291	443	296
=	9,476	7,119	3,740	10,665
= CLOSING BALANCE	8,097	7,428	7,063	6,757
<i>less tagged funds</i>			1,000	208
<i>= available funds</i>	<i>8,097</i>	<i>7,428</i>	<i>6,063</i>	<i>6,549</i>