

## Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Honorary Life Membership citation for Noel Young

13 March 2026

Noel Young joined the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club in 2007, and was elected to the Committee that year, taking over from Geraldine Harris as Newsletter editor in 2008. He has been editor ever since, supported by Jenny Rolland and Jill Williams as co-editors over the past few years. He pays particular attention to detail, especially with plant names, and he helps proof-read every edition.



CFNC President, Euan Moore, presents Noel with his certificate for Life Membership at the club's 2026 AGM. Photo: Jill Williams

As well as leading excursions and Wednesday Wildflower Wanders, Noel has contributed many reports on excursions and other newsletter articles over the past 17 years. When on an excursion, Noel usually keeps a list of birds and other fauna which is included in his or other excursion reports. His expert knowledge of the fauna, flora and geology of our region, and his photographic skills, are well known to members.

Noel was born and grew up in Geelong, where as a child his fascination for flight led to his long-term involvement with model aeroplanes. His love of birds and initiation as a field naturalist began at about 15, bushwalking. Then his school friend (the late) Tom Fletcher – already a bird expert - invited Noel to join a small party of dedicated naturalists led by his cousin Trevor Pescott, who were banding birds in the Otways on weekends. He quickly became a keen banding assistant, and travelled with them to places like Hattah Lakes and the Big Desert. Trevor, with his friend Duncan McKenzie and others, later established the Geelong Field Naturalists Club.

Noel studied geology at RMIT, spending a work-experience year in the Hammersley Ranges with Conzinc Riotinto of Australia (CRA) on Mt Tom Price in its assessment stage. This was when he bought his first 35mm camera and a 400mm lens and began to learn the art of bird photography. He then worked interstate in mineral exploration and geophysics for a few years, mostly in Queensland and Western Australia.

After a couple of years travelling around the UK, Europe and Canada Noel returned to exploration work in Western Australia during the nickel boom, which he says was the craziest experience, giving an insight into what it must have been like in the gold rushes, when the belief that anyone could make a fortune overnight leads to a kind of universal insanity. After the inevitable stock market crash he returned to Victoria and joined the new State Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as part of the multi-disciplinary assessment team. During his 20 years with the EPA, Noel developed skills in the use and programming of desktop computers.

After retiring from the EPA in the 1990s, Noel moved to Castlemaine in 2003, and joined the club in 2007. When he took over as Newsletter editor in 2008, he used his computer skills to introduce a

design change for the newsletter and included many of his and others' excellent colour photos of wildlife.

In addition to his major contribution as newsletter editor for 19 years, Noel has managed the club's computer and audio and video setups for the club meetings for many years, including organising purchase of some of this equipment. He has been a member of the team developing and managing the new website that is now a major resource for members and the general public. Having compiled an extensive collection of photographs of interesting geological sites in the Castlemaine region, Noel was able to use these to set up a new webpage showcasing these geological features, with helpful annotations. More recently, Noel has added a Fungi Gallery to the Flora and Fungi section of the club's website, exemplifying his knowledge of our natural environment and his photographic and technical skills.

A loyal member and quiet achiever, Noel's major contributions to the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club over almost two decades are thoroughly deserving of Life Membership.

Peter Turner