



Friends of Grasslands

Supporting grassy ecosystems

Friends of Grasslands 2017 Annual Report

Compiled by Geoff Robertson, on behalf of Friends of Grasslands,
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geoff.robertson@fog.org.au, web: <http://www.fog.org.au>

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Part 1. Introduction & Highlights - Geoff Robertson

At each annual general meeting, members of the FOG executive are required by law to provide reports including the financial report. Given the tremendous work undertaken by the committee and FOG volunteers these reports have grown in size and complexity and the practice has evolved of consolidating reports into a single document which is circulated before the meeting. The consolidated document provides a comprehensive statement of FOG's achievements during the previous year and helps to plan for the following year. The practice also provides a way to trace FOG's history.

Key achievements

- **Membership** - At the end of 2017, FOG had 214 members - membership has remained steady at around 200 for many years. In recognition of their outstanding efforts, Edwina Barton, FOG's first president, and Naarilla Hirsch, a stalwart contributor in many roles over many years, were awarded honorary life membership in mid 2017; congratulations to you both - more than well deserved.
- **Activities, excluding working bees** - sixteen activities were organised. These mostly involved visits to sites. Many are best described as workshops-in-the-field as they include informative presentations, imparting new skills, plant and fauna surveys, vegetation condition monitoring, and involvement with the community and other groups. 260 people participated in these activities, involving 2280 hours. Some 200 hours were involved in organising these activities.
- **Working bees** - FOG continued to maintain major on-ground work at
 - **National Capital Authority lands in Canberra:** these lands include Stirling Park at Yarralumla, including subsidiary sites at Scrivener's Hut and Attunga Point (52 ha) and Yarramundi Reach Acton (23 ha). In 2017 FOG held 9 work parties, involving 123 people, contributing 650 hours and cutting an estimated 610 m³ of green weeds. Organising these working bees, preparing material and equipment and cleaning up took a further 140 hours.
 - **Hall Cemetery:** FOG held 4 working bees, involving 32 volunteers and 104 hours including preparation and cleaning up.
 - **Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve:** This included six working bees consisting of Conservation Volunteers and FOG volunteers and a Monaro Golden Daisy Monitoring Day attended by six volunteers. In total 66 volunteers were involved in 7 events and 500 hours were contributed.
- **Advocacy:** FOG made 21 formal submissions which took 535 volunteers hours to prepare and submit. In addition, FOG through its membership of organisations like Kosciuszko to Coast, the Conservation Council, Bush on the Boundary, and participations in many other consultations contributed a further 570 hours of volunteer time.
- **Communications:** There have been six excellent editions of *News of Friends of Grasslands* and regular *FOG e-Bulletins*. These are essential components of FOG's services, as is the FOG website which recorded 100,000 visitors for the year and 80GB of downloads. Volunteer hours associated with communications including correspondence and servicing our info hotline was estimated as 1170 hours.
- **Finance:** At the end of 2017, FOG's net equity was \$61,000, comprising cash of over \$41,000 and book stocks of just under \$20,000. This does not include our Public Fund which has a small balance. For some years FOG has been investing in projects and in 2017 this was put on a more formalised basis by establishing our special projects grant. In 2017 FOG gave grants and donations of over \$5,500. In part this was funded by donations to FOG of almost \$1800 and from 580 book sale receipts (mostly *Woodland Flora* and *Grassland Flora*) of \$8100.
- **Grants:** FOG administers two grants which provide essential contributions to our on-ground work while at the same time providing a highly leveraged return to the investors. The National Capital Authority grant pays for volunteer training, tools, plants and weed control services, while the Monaro Golden Daisy Project funded by South East Local Land Services is providing essential control of African Love Grass and St John's Wort at three sites in Cooma, including Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve, which contain healthy populations of Monaro Golden Daisy.
- **Committee meetings:** The FOG committee met six times and there was one annual general meeting and a short special meeting. These meetings were kept to less than two hours, but each requires preparation of

agenda and reports, tabling of correspondence, recording of minutes and filing of papers. In addition, there are separate sub-committees to organise activities, advocacy and supported projects.

- **Presentations:** Two presentations at the Environment Institute of Australian and New Zealand forum in Canberra in May 2017 and a presentation titled *Adventures in Grasslands* to the Australian Native Plant Society in February 2018. In addition two excellent presentations were given to FOG at the FOG mid-winter talks and tea event in July.
- **Summary statistics for 2017:**
 - FOG organised 49 events (including on-ground, activities & committee meetings), involving 545 volunteer attendances and 3200 activity hours. Totting up the associated travel hours and organisation hours, the total comes to over 4350 hours.
 - Other activities of FOG include its strong advocacy work, newsletter and eBulletin, and normal governance workload (secretarial and finance). This involved 3460 hours bringing the total to almost 7810 hours.
 - Placing a value on this work gives us a total value of \$327,000 in 2017. (This is estimated as \$35 an hour for attendance at events, \$25 for travel and \$50 for other activities.)¹

Part 2. Executive Reports, excluding Treasurer's Report

2.1 President's report - Geoff Robertson

Achievements in 2017

It is a pleasant task to compile Friends of Grasslands 2017 Annual Report and to deliver the President's Report for 2017. I have included a series of key achievement in the Annual Report so that readers can see at a glance the quantity, quality and diversity of the services FOG provides to its members and to the broader community who support grassy ecosystems. It is also an opportunity to review what we do well and where possibly we can lift our game.

Thank you

On behalf of FOG, I would like to thank the many people who contribute

- directly to FOG's success by devoting tremendous amounts of time and out-of-pocket expenses. Their names appear in the table of contents attached to particular reports in this document. Each works hard and conscientiously to achieve some remarkable results. More importantly, they are constantly pushing out the envelope.
- by writing for our newsletter, assisting with and participating in our events, agreeing to listen and work with us, and contributing their time and money.
- to supporting grassy ecosystems by caring for land by managing it for conservation, research, making good policy, working for organisations that undertake conservation management, and contributing funding.

We are deeply grateful to each and every one of you.

Lessons and frustrations

Our catch cry "supporting grassy ecosystems" is a powerful challenge and our understanding of its meaning continues to grow, maybe at an accelerating rate. This understanding and how to apply it has many dimensions. It is based on many forms of research, on-ground work, experiments in weeding approaches, trials of various forms of horticulture (including home gardening), the listing and describing of species, studies of flora and fauna behaviour, many forms of citizen science, collation and publication of knowledge of grassy ecosystems and the species and life forms that comprise it, engagement with landowners and land

¹ These rates are conservative as many people who volunteer their time to FOG are highly skilled and if hired out, their services would be charged at a much higher rate. Also the estimate does not include out-of-pocket expenses resulting from people using their own phone, computer devices, web services, transport, equipment, premises, catering etc. Some volunteers also undertake additional unrecorded work such as weeding outside organised working bees - this is not captured.

carers, and - very importantly - coming to an understanding of the culture and land management practices of Traditional Custodians.

However, the slowness of the dissemination and absorption of this knowledge is acting as a brake on what can be achieved. Naarilla Hirsch and Sarah Sharp in their advocacy report point to their frustration with ACT slowness to deliver many of its commitments. People no less than David Lindenmayer have pointed out that the cumbersome processes associated with peer reviews are slowing its acquisition and dissemination of new knowledge.

A growing burden on volunteers arises from the increasing, cumbersome and clumsy bureaucratic processes associated with “health-and-safety-correctness” and project monitoring and evaluation.

Accompanying this is the withdrawal of government funding for biodiversity and outsourcing of many of former government functions. Related issues are crazy notions of funding market mechanisms to allocate scarce resources. Many of these approaches are often costly and inefficient to deliver.

I am not objecting to peer review, better health and safety processes, project monitoring and evaluation, and use of market instruments in the delivery of conservation outcomes but I do object to processes that are poorly conceived, poorly resourced, inefficient and based on ideological and poorly understood economic premises. I also object to reducing funding for conservation and government policy that is short term and frequently changing.

Our response

In 2017 we used our knowledge and experience to push back and push forward. Matters that stand out are our efforts:

- to improve the ACT grassland strategy,
- to lobby harder on grassy issues in both ACT and NSW,
- to encourage presentations at various forums to explain grassy issues,
- to do more in the media,
- to influence the ACT Government’s investment policy,
- to push for more comprehensive ACT economic and biodiversity statistics, and
- to develop the North Mitchell Grassland as a grassland conservation and recreation area.

Two activities we plan in 2018 are *Malleefowl Lore - bringing culture and biodiversity together* (7-8 April) and to participate in 18 May K2C Forum on *A Vision for Grassland Management & Restoration - recent achievements & next steps*.

What else might we do?

Each of us could provide a list of things we might do, but my simple message is:

To support grassy ecosystems,
each of us should explain to decision makers and the community
our values and knowledge
using simple and un-complicated stories, and
each of us should regard ourselves
as spokespeople for grassy ecosystems.

2.2 Secretary’s report - John Fitz Gerald

During 2017, the FOG secretary’s role continued to be shared among a small group of committee members. Minuting of committee meetings and collecting mail from our PO Box were the main tasks shared.

Correspondence was received and sent mostly by email, but PO Box 440 continues to be an important FOG contact. All items of mail, incoming and outgoing, are stored electronically using Dropbox.

2.3 Membership report - Sarah Sharp

Membership expanded to its highest level in 2017, with 214 members. We welcomed 18 new members during the year. Two additional people were given honorary membership, for their contribution to FOG and

to grassy ecosystem conservation over many years – Edwina Barton, who was the founding President and Naarilla Hirsch, who has been the leading advocacy representative for FOG for many years.

A breakdown of the members' interests is provided below; these do not add up to the number of members, as not all members provide details and many members have multiple interests.

| Corporate | NGO | Landholder | Professional scientist | Landcare/Parkcare member | Conservationist, naturalist |
|-----------|-----|------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8 | 11 | 61 | 76 | 62 | 111 |

Contact membership@fog.org.au for more information.

Part 3. Treasurer's Report

3.1 Treasurer's report - Janet Russell

Treasurer's Report to AGM 20 March 2018 Friends of Grasslands Inc accounts as at 31 December 2017

Attached is the Auditor's Report dated 8 March 2018. FOG is grateful to Pauline Hore for the report and thank her for her services.

The Friends of Grasslands' net income available for operational purposes was \$5717. This amount consists of bank funds less the grant funds allocated for payment of contractors' expenses for work done on lands managed by the National Capital Authority and NSW Local Land services in conjunction with FOG.

The breakdown is as shown below.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|--------|--------------|
| Income | | | |
| Total income per accounts 31 Dec 17 | | 25,659 | |
| Less Grants income | | 13,000 | |
| Net income | | | 12,659 |
| Expenses | | | |
| Total expenses per accounts 31 Dec 17 | | 22,840 | |
| Less NCA expenses | 7,469 | | |
| NSW LLS expenses | 8,429 | 15,898 | |
| Net expenses | | | 6,942 |
| Total net income | | | 5,717 |

3.2 Merchandise - Sarah Sharp

During 2017, 578 books were distributed. *Woodland Flora* distribution amounted to 442 copies. *Grassland Flora* is continuing to sell at a steady rate, with 115 copies sold in 2016, its 20th year of production. Of 44 sales, 22 were to retailers or to community groups for resale or free distribution and 22 were retail sales to individuals. Retail sales amounted to only 5% of the total sales for *Woodland Flora* and 13% of total sales for *Grassland Flora*. The number of individual sales has decreased over the years. The regular sales to the retail outlets ensure the book is sold widely across the region and elsewhere, and appears to be the most practical way to sell the books. In addition to the sales, 11 books were given away and one was written off (water damaged).

Prices for Woodland Flora remain \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members and \$15 each for trade or bulk orders, and for Grassland Flora, \$20 and \$12 for trade or bulk orders.

Paul Adam wrote an extremely favourable review of *Woodland Flora* in Australasian Plant Conservation Vol 26 No 1, June-August 2017.

Several other grassland-related books have been bought by FOG to sell on an ad-hoc basis. These are not advertised, but are displayed for sale at events. These include *Restoring Disturbed Landscapes, Putting Principles into Practice* by David Tongway and John Ludwig and *Land of Sweeping Plains*, a comprehensive review of management, ecological and social aspects of grassland conservation in south-eastern Australia. At events, cards with photos by David Wong and drawings by Michael Bedingfield are also sold.

| <i>Results for 2017</i> | Woodland Flora | Grassland flora | Ngunnawal Food Plants | Land of Sweeping Plains | Restoring Disturbed Landscapes | Orchids of the ACT | Grassland brochures | Total sales |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Retail sales | 25 | 15 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 60 |
| Wholesale sales | 408 | 98 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 507 |
| Complimentary | 8 | 3 | | | | | | 11 |
| Written off | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |
| Total distributed | 442 | 115 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 579 |
| Remaining copies Dec 2017 | 1692 | 740 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 20 | |

The accounts for these sales are in the Treasurer's report. As previously, the books are sold at a price to encourage people to obtain copies, and profits gained are used to produce more educational resources. During 2017 \$1500 was provided as one of the Supported Projects to Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park for the production of a brochure on native grasses (in progress). Contact booksales@fog.org.au for more information.

3.3 Supported projects - Andrew Zelnik

The FOG Supported Projects (FSP) Sub-committee was formed in late 2016, absorbing the role of the former Investment Fund. This was in response to FOG becoming a Registered Environmental Organisation (REO) and a general recognition amongst the FOG Committee that with the obligations and potential additional income from tax-deductible donations flowing from this, and with the associated establishment of the Public Fund to manage these donations, there was both a need and scope for FOG to further develop and expand its approach to identifying and supporting external projects. This is intended to provide a holistic approach to better utilising FOG's various accumulated funds and income streams.

The Sub-committee (initially Andrew Zelnik, Kim Pullen, Kat Ng, Sarah Sharp and Geoff Robertson) subsequently developed a FOG Supported Projects Policy document which was endorsed by the FOG Committee in March 2017. It set out the role and aims of the FSP Sub-committee which are to:

- set an annual budget for FOG financial support of external projects. These projects will be funded from the FOG's Public Fund Account and other FOG finances consistent with the various restrictions placed on each source of finance and the nature of the various projects;
- advertise the availability of grants for work to support grassy ecosystems. Grants, generally \$500-\$1500 each, can be spent on publications, research, education, on-ground work, advocacy, publicity, and training in line with FOG's Objectives and priorities. Any individual or organisation can apply;
- decide on what grants to award and what other expenditures should be financed under FOG supported projects e.g. donations to other groups in the form of membership fees, publication proposals, special requests for assistance from individuals and groups, promoting fund raising etc. The Sub-committee may also develop proposals that are intended to be self-funding;
- develop procedures to facilitate grants and other financial support;

- developing criteria against which grants are to be assessed;
- encourage donations through the Public Fund - all funds raised through the Public Fund are to be spent on FOG supported projects;
- making recommendations to the FOG Committee as to who should receive grants; and
- appraising the FOG Committee of the impact of the grants on FOG's overall budget situation.

The Sub-committee also includes the FOG Treasurer and is also open to FOG members not on the FOG Committee. Experts who are not FOG members may also be co-opted to assist from time to time as required. The core number of Sub-committee members is limited to a maximum of six (6).

The Small Project Grants initiative commenced with advertisements calling for submissions via the Jan – Feb 2017 Newsletter, the e-Bulletin, and email to an external list of FOG network contacts. In 2017 ten (10) projects were received for consideration by the FSP Sub-committee. Regrettably one applicant with a promising project on Grassland Earless Dragon research had to pull out due to illness. Grants for five (5) of these projects (see May – June 2017 Newsletter) totalling \$4,825 were selected and are summarized in the table below.

| Grant Ref | Recipient & Project | Intended Use of Grant | Amount (\$ incl. GST) | Funding Source (FOG Bank Account) |
|------------|---|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| FSP2017-01 | Dr Rachel Standish, Murdoch University (WA) – 'Attitudes & latitudes: Towards a global perspective of grassland ecology' literature survey. | Contribute to data analysis and manuscript preparation. | \$1500 | Public Fund |
| FSP2017-02 | Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park (STEP), National Arboretum, Canberra (ACT) - Brochure on local native grasses and grass-like species growing at STEP. | Contribute to graphic design of brochure. | \$1500 | Publications |
| FSP2017-03 | Dr Bob Godfree, CSIRO (ACT) - Quantify awn length variation in Kangaroo Grass seed and other native grasses across Australia using CSIRO collections to explore implications for the success of grassland restoration with Kangaroo Grass and other native grasses. | Travel expenses for university Honours research student. | \$500 | General |
| FSP2017-04 | Dr John Morgan, La Trobe University (VIC) – Research on use of fire for grassland rehabilitation in Kangaroo Grass – Red Gum woodlands, Western Plains of Victoria. | Assist in the purchase of materials for experimental plots. | \$500 | Public Fund |
| FSP2017-05 | Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) ACT – On ground weed control at Old Cooma Common, Cooma NSW. | Contribute to travel expenses. | \$825 | General |

Each successful applicant was sent a Letter of Offer containing an indication of the funding amount being offered, what the granted funding was expected to be used for (e.g. as per their grant application), and conditions of acceptance. Given the modest amounts of funding on offer the conditions of acceptance were not intended to be onerous but nevertheless provided a means for satisfactory acquittal of the grants made by FOG. These conditions typically included acknowledgement of the receipt of the Letter of Offer and consenting to provide, within a mutually agreed timeframes, information and project outputs as requested by the FSP Sub-committee based on information submitted in the grant application and in any subsequent correspondence.

All grant funding amounts were paid out in full up front to all recipients in line with the standard procedure of offer. The CVA ACT project (FSP2017-05) was successfully completed in August 2017 – see report in the Sept – Oct 2017 Newsletter. The other four projects are still in progress and we are advised are on track for completion at various times between May to December 2018. The FSP Sub-committee is tracking progress on the acquittal of these remaining projects, routinely keeping the FOG Committee updated, and will be reporting on project outcomes and outputs to FOG members via the Newsletter and website as information comes to hand or as projects are completed.

As this is a new direction for FOG the Sub-committee was also busy during the year learning from and building on its experience with the Small Project Grants initiative to further develop and refine its documentation and administrative procedures. Key among these have been:

- development of a standard Small Grants Project Application Form to be used by all grant applicants. This will be specific to each calendar year consistent with the FOG Financial Year but can be varied, if required, from one year to the next; and
- expansion and refinement of the FSP Assessment Criteria to align with the Application Form and to better assist the Sub-committee with assessment of grant applications.

Based on the success and progress to date the FSP Sub-committee will be calling for more Small Grants Project applications in 2018. The Sub-committee wishes to thank in particular FOG Committee, Ann Milligan (Newsletter Editor), and Richard Bomford (Webmaster) for their support and assistance throughout the year.

Part 4. Activities Report 2017

(This covers the year commencing on 18 March 2017, since our last AGM)

4.1 Activities report - Paul Archer² & Margaret Ning, Ann Milligan, & Kat Ng³

There was something for everyone in the 2017-2018 FOG activities program. As in previous years our aims were to have at least one activity per month (excluding August) and to include a wide variety of geographic and botanical landscapes.

The year commenced on 18 March with a visit to Helga and David Mossop's property 'Ballyhooly', South-East of Bungendore. Eighteen members inspected a tiny but very beautiful part of this moderately hilly conservation property.

In April eighteen people from FOG, local Landcare groups, the University of Canberra and the Australian National University joined hosts Brett Howland and Richard Milner at Kama Nature Reserve to see and hear about their work in restoring native grassy landscapes.

Saturday 6 May found us at the lovely grassy woodland beside Hall village for a public walk in support of Tree Week led by ecologist Dr Sue McIntyre. We looked at the various eucalypt and acacia and other native tree species there and their relation to topography, management and groundcover.

In June, a party of twenty-two people from FOG, Friends of Yass Gorge, Murrumbateman Landcare Group and Kosciuszko to Coast inspected the Yass Gorge landscape, riverscape, rocks and vegetation. Rainer Rehwinkel and Dennis Dyer (a geologist and FOG member) gave short talks and fielded many questions throughout the morning followed by a congenial lunch in Yass Township.

Where else to be on a cold July day but around the fire at Mugga Mugga for the annual FOG mid-winter talks and tea? Our enthusiastically received speakers were Dr Lydia Guja (*'Ex-situ seed conservation at the National Seed Bank'*) and Ms Karen Retra (*'Getting to know native bees and other pollinator insects'*). Honorary Life Membership was awarded to Edwina Barton and Naarilla Hirsch in recognition of the extraordinary contributions that they have made to FOG, to the support of grassy ecosystems, and to biodiversity and conservation more broadly.

In September, twelve FOG members and local landholders met at 'Mt Oak' to examine various weeding tools and discuss weed control methods. A brief walk along the dry creek and up the hill behind the shed found several uncommon plant species. Members who camped overnight were rewarded the next day with a sighting of two handsome brown snakes.

October saw an enthusiastic group undertake a three day tour of cemeteries, national parks, nature reserves and TSRs in the NSW south-western slopes. A full write-up is included in the January-February 2018 newsletter.

² Activities coordinator.

³ Activities Group members.

On 12 November FOG hosted the Annual Stirling Park Wildflower Walk, led by Jamie Pittock. Lots of wildflowers were spotted and discussed but they were not as prolific as in previous years due to the very dry conditions.

On 14 November, Michael Bedingfield led a group of 10 members on an orchid 'treasure-hunt' at Conder 9 to see what was in flower and hunt for the elusive pink *Diuris dendrobiodes* (Wedge Diuris). Some great photos are included in the January-February newsletter.

November 16 was the annual plant category monitoring exercise at Scottsdale, near Bredbo NSW which included tracking progress in controlling African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*).

November 23 was 'Showcasing the Daisy Day' at the Old Cooma Common, in partnership with Snowy Monaro Regional Council. The day started with a visit to the daisies followed by a workshop on the daisy's future in the afternoon at Council chambers. (See page 6 of the January- February newsletter for a full report.)

December was another busy month beginning with Charles Sturt University (CSU) in partnership with FOG hosting a biodiversity monitoring walk and talk session in the St Mark's remnant grassland at Barton.

From 8 to 12 December a group from FOG and the Australian Native Plant Society, led by Dr Roger Farrow, visited the Gungarlin River, one hour north-west of Berridale and did a 7km wander amongst the wildflowers on the Botherum Plain. (See the March–April 2018 newsletter for a report.)

On 13 December a small but enthusiastic bunch of members led by Kim Pullen found several male golden sun moths in very hot conditions at York Park, Barton, and many more at Dudley Street Yarralumla.

The FOG annual 'picnic' was held on 14 December at Jerrabomberra Wetlands, including a bird-watching tour led by Tony Lawson.

On 10 and 11 February, twenty-one members visited FOG member Lauren Booth's property a few kilometres from Nerriga village and adjacent to Morton National Park. This is an area of rugged natural beauty and

| Date F15E1AA1:F18 | Activity | No. people | Duration (days) | Total time (person days) | Organising time (person days) |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| 18-Mar-17 | FOG visit to 'Ballyhooly' | 18 | 0.5 | 9 | 0.5 |
| 11-Apr-17 | Kama - visit to grassland ecosystem restoration trial plots (with local landcare groups, UC and ANU) | 18 | 0.3 | 5 | 0.5 |
| 06-May-17 | FOG ACT Tree Week walk at Hall | 18 | 0.3 | 5 | 0.5 |
| 10-Jun-17 | FOG visit to Yass River Gorge (with Friends of Yass Gorge, Murrumbateman Land Care Group and K2C) | 22 | 0.5 | 11 | 1 |
| 15-Jul-17 | FOG mid-winter talks and tea - Mugga Mugga | 22 | 0.5 | 11 | 0.5 |
| 23-Sep-17 | Mt Oak - weed control and ecology | 12 | 2 | 24 | 0.5 |
| 21 to 23 Oct-17 | Northern Cemeteries trip - NSW south-western slopes | 15 | 3 | 45 | 8 |
| 22 to 23 Oct-17 | Gungarlin grasslands adventure - Kosciuszko National Park | 10 | 3 | 30 | 2 |
| 12-Nov-17 | Annual Stirling Park Wildflower Walk | 6 | 0.3 | 2 | 0.5 |
| 14-Nov-17 | Treasure-hunting an orchid - Conder 9 | 11 | 0.3 | 3 | 1.2 |
| 16-Nov-17 | Annual monitoring - Scottsdale | 8 | 1 | 8 | 0.5 |
| 23-Nov-17 | Monaro Golden Daisy Day - Old Cooma Common (in partnership with Snowy Monaro Regional Council) | 35 | 1 | 35 | 3 |
| 01-Dec-17 | St Marks Grassland biodiversity monitoring (in partnership with Charles Sturt University) | 15 | 0.5 | 8 | 0.5 |
| 13-Dec-17 | Golden sun moth hunt - York Park & Dudley Street Yarralumla | 5 | 0.3 | 2 | 2.5 |
| 14-Dec-17 | Annual 'picnic' Jerrabomberra Wetlands | 24 | 0.5 | 12 | 1 |
| 10-11 Feb-18 | Nerriga adventure - exploration and plant survey, visit to Nerriga museum | 21 | 2 | 42 | 2 |
| TOTAL | | 260 | 16 | 252 | 25 |

wide biodiversity. (See page 2 of the January– February newsletter for a description of the property, and a report on the visit in the March–April newsletter.)

The activities group (Margaret Ning, Ann Milligan, Kat Ng and Paul Archer) wish to thank FOG's partners in the various activities, the land owners who gave so generously in hosting FOG visits, the experts from within and outside FOG who contribute greatly to our knowledge and understanding of the natural environment and the members whose energy and enthusiasm makes it all worthwhile.

Part 5. On-ground projects

5.1 National Capital Authority Project - *Jamie Pittock*

(Jamie is FOG's National Lands Volunteer Coordinator)

FOG continued its efforts during the year to improve the conservation status of grassy ecosystems on national lands managed by the National Capital Authority (NCA) in central Canberra, namely Stirling Park (52 ha; Yarralumla), including subsidiary sites at Scrivener's Hut and Attunga Point, as well as at Yarramundi Reach (23 ha; Acton). In 2017 FOG undertook nine work parties supporting implementation of the NCA's ecological management plan for these lands. The work involved 133 people registering each day who volunteered for a total of 560 hours. An estimated 610 m³ of green weeds was cut.

Stirling Park is in much better condition than over the past decade thanks to our efforts and those of the NCA. The last of the 'old growth' woody weeds should be dispatched in 2018. Concerted spraying of Briar Rose, Blackberry and St John's Wort over the last two years have greatly reduced their populations. We hired a contractor this summer who has significantly reduced infestations of Fennel and Everlasting Pea. Our plantings of eucalypts, wattles and other shrubs on disturbed land have suffered some losses, but surviving plants are thriving. Most exciting is the spread of a number of species of wildflowers that we planted with Greening Australia in three plots, with wind-blown seed aiding the recolonization of weeded grassland. Happily, dense indigenous regrowth (good small bird habitat) is maturing following the removal of over 200 weed trees on the western side of Stirling Ridge three years ago.

The Attunga Point shoreline remains largely weed free after our work to mop up after the NCA contractors, who removed major woody weeds. At Scrivener's Hut, control of woody weed regrowth and spraying were used to maintain previous restoration work.

Challenges remain, including finding the right method to kill Blue Periwinkle (*Vinca*) infestations. We keep finding more African Lovegrass and Serrated Tussock incursions, and Purple Top has made major incursions in the past year. Illegal dumping of garden waste (e.g. lawn clippings and autumn leaves), especially off the Fitzgerald Street car park, is one source of these weeds.

At Yarramundi Reach our battle against weed grasses (African Lovegrass, Chilean Needle Grass and *Paspalum*) continues, however Blackberry and St John's Wort are considerably reduced. The NCA's enhanced burning program is helping to create the right density of grass cover to allow other wildflower species to thrive.

The NCA is supporting FOG again in 2018 with a \$6,000 grant to pay for volunteer training, tools, plants and weed control services. Priorities for 2018 include spraying weed grasses at all sites, controlling *Asparagus*, Fennel and Everlasting Pea at Stirling Park, suppressing regrowth in previously restored lands and commencing control of *Vinca* infestations. Further efforts are also needed to legally protect the sites.

5.2 Monaro Golden Daisy project - *Margaret Ning*

(This report covers FOG's ongoing work at Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve and FOG's Monaro Golden Daisy project funded by South East Local Land Services Grant.)

FOG received confirmation late in 2015 that we were successful with our application for a \$32,000 South-East Local Land Services (SE LLS) grant for contract spraying of St John's Wort (SJW) and African Love Grass (ALG) at three Cooma sites containing the threatened Monaro Golden Daisy (MGD). The sites are Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve, Cooma Firing Range and the Crown Land site immediately adjacent to the Common.

By the beginning of 2017 around \$12,500 of the grant had already been spent, which was a little behind what had been planned, but FOG was basically meeting its project outcomes. Outcomes for 2017 were to include more weed management activities, another couple of written products and progress reports, one 'awareness raising event' and our annual monitoring. Contract spraying occurred in late January, early April and mid

November 2017, with continuing issues in finding the most optimal time for the SJW to be sprayed, i.e. not too dry, preferably flowering, etc. Our biggest struggle during the grant period has been the difficulty of timing the spraying of the SJW. Other grant expenditure in 2017 was a payment to FOG for its managing of the grant and for monitoring/evaluation, particularly in the areas targeted for spraying, which include the best Natural Temperate Grassland (NTG) areas and a couple of bad SJW areas adjacent to the good NTG areas.

Conservation Volunteers Australia's teams continued to visit the Common from Canberra, making six visits in 2017. On each visit Ann and I gave them an introduction to the site (and NTG) and they then removed (cutting and/or daubing) whichever weeds we chose for that day, including *Verbascum*, Wild Sage, Vipers Bugloss, *Tragopogon*, and, most importantly, on one occasion, previously-sprayed SJW seed heads. The latter was serious 'value adding', as while the spraying kills the SJW plant, it does not necessarily kill all the seed heads on the plant. CVA's contribution over six visits, was approximately 200 hours of on-ground work which was greatly appreciated and very effective on the main MGD patch, as well as in the best quality areas of NTG. To anyone familiar with the site it was obvious that CVA volunteers had had a significant impact removing unsightly weeds in the NTG areas.

Around the middle of 2017 we realised that our grant commitment to hold an 'awareness raising event' needed to be addressed, and following much planning, FOG, in partnership with Snowy Monaro Regional Council, held a 'Showcasing the Daisy' day on 23 November 2017. The day consisted of a half morning on top of the Common in the main MGD patch which was looking truly splendid, with the daisy in full flower and a dearth of weeds spoiling the vision. Thirty-five people assembled on the top of Radio Hill for the morning visit, including members of South East Local Land Services Board, staff from various local and state government agencies, FOG members, a local school teacher, local landowners and Cooma residents. Following lunch at Council's chambers, a workshop attended by 19 people was held with half a dozen speakers who covered vital aspects of the Daisy's history and future on Monaro. (See page 6 of the January-February newsletter for a full report.)

And a handful of us were back there two days later (25 November) for the annual monitoring survey, which was our first monitoring session following the establishment of base line monitoring information approximately a year earlier.

We closed the reporting year with a grant balance of \$11,000 which is earmarked for more SJW and to a lesser extent some ALG spraying in the first half of 2018.

3.3 Hall Cemetery - *John Fitz Gerald*

After fire and water dominated in 2016, Hall Cemetery woodland returned to its quiet dry state in 2017, so much so that grass and weed growth has been relatively modest.

The total group work effort this year returned to previous levels at 94 volunteer-hours. With woody weeds largely in check, most effort was spent on annoying weeds like Plantain, Spear Thistle, Cleavers, Fleabane, Prickly Lettuce and exotic grasses such as Yorkshire Fog, *Phalaris* and Rough Dog's-tail.

3.4 Scottsdale Monitoring - *Linda Spinaze, Volunteer Convenor, Scottsdale.*

In November, 7 keen volunteers assisted Bush Heritage's ecologist Matt Appleby in undertaking the annual FOG monitoring at Scottsdale. Matt and our local specialist, Sarah Sharp, had decided that the previous monitoring sites had delivered their value. They had marked out some new sites, designed to help evaluate the effects of helicopter-delivered spraying of African Love-Grass with a low-concentration of flupropanate. The reward for quick and effective work was visits to the Rutidosis site on the rail-line verge, and the two restoration sites.

Part 6. Communications

6.1 News of Friends of Grasslands - *Ann Milligan*

Thank you to FOG's interesting writers and photographers. There have been at least 30 of you this last year. Your articles and photos have not only drawn admiring and reflective comments from readers but also enabled FOG to publish 82 pages of content (not including the last page of each edition) across the 6 editions.

Our most long-term and regular contributor, Michael Bedingfield, this year has sent glorious photos and word and pencil sketches describing grassland wasps, mantids, pipits and frogs. Michael has also told us the

expanding story behind Canberra Nature Map (CNM) in two articles that are now also published on the CNM website itself. Our two other most regular contributors are John Fitz Gerald, who has sent 'Close Up' microphotography and text for each edition, and Naarilla Hirsch, whose succinct roundup of FOG's continuous advocacy on behalf of grassy landscapes reveals FOG's most essential role. In John's pages we have explored, with him, Tarengo Leek Orchid, local gum trees, how not to kill St John's Wort seeds, daisies, and some elements of a restoration scrape and burnoff recovery. At least 14 other writers have sent in thoughtful illustrated articles for us readers to enjoy; and short contributions and lovely detailed photos have come from at least 13 other FOG people. Thank you all.

Sarah Sharp with (or not) Geoff Butler began a series on weeds, during the 2017 year, and it will be good to see more on this topic during 2018. There was one book review, by Kim Pullen, on '*Field Guide to Butterflies of the ACT*'. Again, I look forward to more reviewers writing for us this coming year.

The number of newsletters sent out by snail-mail each time remains at just over 100, with well over 100 other members receiving the emailed pdf file instead (while some canny recipients get both print and pdf). I wish more people would choose to receive the newsletter both ways, to fully enjoy our members' great photography. 'Mailout' evenings are always fun: 'Thank you' to the merry team who help fold, label and stamp each copy.

'Thank you' again to Webmaster Richard Bomford, who uploads each newsletter in pdf and html to the FOG website, at www.fog.org.au/newsletter.htm, two months after the edition has first been sent to members.

6.2 FOG website - Richard Bomford

2017 was a smooth year for the FoG website. Most work involved keeping the calendar, newsletters and advocacy pages up to date. The statistics package on the server recorded 100,000 visitors for the year and 80GB of downloads.

The principal search terms that got people to the site from search engines were 'what is a grassland', 'grassland definition' and similar. *Grasses of NSW* was again the most popular part of the site, followed by the 'What is a grassland?' page and a 'Grasses: habits and habitats' brochure. So the website ranks well for education. Weightier pages, including 2014 FoG Forum documents and Rainer Rehwinkel's *Plant Communities of the South Eastern Highlands and Australian Alps within the Murrumbidgee Catchment of New South Wales* won out on sheer volume of megabytes downloaded.

The fog.org.au domain is registered with OnlyDomains, the website is hosted by HostMetro in the USA, and FoG email services are provided faultlessly and free by Google.

6.3 FOG e-Bulletin - Ann Milligan

FOG e-Bulletins are emailed to all FOG members and also to non-FOG groups in the months between full newsletter editions. E-Bulletins are intended to be an alert and reminder about relevant activities, both FOG and non-FOG, in the near future. One, or sometimes two, e-Bulletins have been sent out during March, May, July, September, November 2017 and January 2018.

6.4 President@ & Info@FOG - Geoff Robertson

I have combined the president@ and info@FOG as there is much overlap in the type of information and requests arriving via these channels. A lot of inward traffic is notifications of events by other groups and public announcements by agencies calling on FOG to disseminate information and or calling for submissions.

FOG receives many inquiries. Ideally, inquiries should be recorded, categorised, etc. However, there are not enough hours in the day to do this. This year we have had inquiries from at least one Phd student regarding vegetation in the O'Connor (ACT) region, an inquiry for assistance in collecting red leg grass seed, several inquiries regarding the Ginninderry development, an inquiry about the the proposed solar farm at Sutton, an inquiry regarding community growing native grasses on public lands. Sometimes, these inquiries may lead to much work to ensure that the inquirer is satisfied. These inquiries may also be important to alert FOG to opportunities.

Similar traffic is received at our other addresses such as [advocacy@](mailto:advocacy@fog.org.au), [newsletter@](mailto:newsletter@fog.org.au) etc.

6.5 Media - Geoff Robertson

For the most part, the spokesperson's role is one of responding to invitations to talk about issues. I was interviewed several times on development at York Park, Barton.

I was also interviewed at length on two occasions about prosecutions for clearing natural temperate grasslands in NSW. The radio journalist regarded these as largely background briefing and while he said I would be quoted on Landline, I am not aware that this occurred.

We sought and received good coverage in *Monaro Post* about our Monaro Golden Daisy showcase and workshops. A report on this was first published in the *Monaro Post*, on 29 November 2017 and reproduced in the January-February 2018 issue of *News of Friends of Grasslands*.

A great letter by John Fitz Gerald, Friends of Grasslands was published in the *Canberra Times* (17 September) and *The Chronicle* clarifying misleading words in an article warning about grass pollen for asthmatics. It was reprinted in Nov-Dec edition of *News of Friends of Grasslands*.

6.5 Presentations - Geoff Robertson

A number of presentations were given by FOG members and friends which in one way or another summed up issues around grassy ecosystem conservation and or explained FOG's approach join various issues. These included

- Jamie Pittock spoke on *Conservation of threatened species and grassy ecological communities on Commonwealth land* and Peter Beutel on *Good management of national lands with limited resources*, covering FOG's involvement on NCA sites, to an Environment Institute of Australian and New Zealand forum in Canberra on 3 May 2017. Summaries of the two presentations were published in the March-April 2018 edition of *News of Friends of Grasslands*.
- On 15 July presentations to FOG's mid-winter meeting were given by Karen Retra, *Getting to know native bees and other pollinator insects*, and Lydia Guja, *Ex situ seed conservation at the National Seed Bank*. A report appears in the September-October 2017 edition of *News of Friends of Grasslands*.
- A workshop, *Learning about weed control and ecology*, was held at Mount Oak, NSW, on 23 September 2017. A report appears in the November-December 2017 edition of *News of Friends of Grasslands*.
- A Monaro Golden Daisy Day workshop was held in Cooma on 23 November. Presentations were given by David Eddy (LLS), Brett Jones (Snowy Monaro Regional Council), Rob Armstrong (NSW Office of Environment & Heritage), Leon Miners (South East LLS), Tony Robinson (K2C) and me. An article was published in the *Monaro Post*, on 29 November 2017 and republished in the January-February 2018 edition of *News of Friends of Grasslands*.
- On 8 February 2018, I gave a presentation called *Adventures in Grasslands* to the Australian Native Plant Society.

Part 7. Advocacy

7.1 Report by Advocacy Coordinator - Naarilla Hirsch & Sarah Sharp

In 2017 the Advocacy Group prepared 21 submissions. The breakdown of the nature of these is as follows:

| | ACT site development (ACT & NCA) | ACT planning and legislation | ACT strategic and management plans | NSW planning and legislation | NSW sites | Commonwealth legislation |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| No. submissions and / support correspondence | 9 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

Overall issues

FOG remains very concerned about the persistent low priority given to matters of environmental significance as a result of ACT planning decisions. These concerns include:

- Continual loss of areas containing high quality threatened species and/or communities as a result of development;
- The lack of strategic direction in the implementation of protection mechanisms for these species and communities in the development process. Examples include the delay in release of drafts of the Eastern Broadacre Strategic Plan and lack of strategic planning for the development of the Yarralumla Brickworks area;

- Significant delays in publication of key management plans, including the Canberra Nature Park Plan and the Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan (a draft was released in February 2018);
- The lack of evidence to support the value of offsetting in achieving acceptable biodiversity outcomes; and
- The failure to take up recommendations from submissions to draft development applications, whether they are provided by FOG, other conservation groups or ecologists.

These matters will be followed up as a matter of priority by the Advocacy Group in 2018, in conjunction with the Conservation Council's Biodiversity Working Group.

Summary of major submissions

The concerns identified above were exemplified by a call for an **exemption of an EIS for Molonglo Valley Stage 3 urban development**. Issues raised by FOG's response in August were the enlargement of the area identified for development and inclusion of areas previously identified as offset areas in the Matters of National Environmental Significance Plan (MNES Plan). FOG has had no notification of the outcome of the submissions, and this will specifically be followed up as a matter of priority in 2018.

York Park in Barton is an iconic site, containing the most studied population of Golden Sun Moth. Over the years there has been significant pressure to develop this site, which has been gradually surrounded by buildings that impact the Golden Sun Moth habitat. This year we saw yet another development proposal for the Park. In our response we pointed to the lack of conservation management contributing to deterioration of the conservation values of the site as well as its scientific importance.

Unlike our concerns raised above, having provided a detailed submission in May 2017 for the **Draft ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy and Action Plans**, the document was reviewed, with many of our recommendations incorporated into the final Strategy, including a more comprehensive recognition of the role of non-government bodies in research, advocacy and education and the inclusion of a list of sites containing Natural Temperate Grassland and/or threatened species. FOG was specifically acknowledged for its contribution. The final Strategy was published in December 2017, and can be viewed or downloaded at http://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation_and_ecological_communities/grasslands.

Several submissions were made to matters in NSW, specifically to do with **NSW biodiversity legislation and land management reforms**, and the future of **Travelling Stock Reserves and Travelling Stock Routes**. All of the matters may result in further compromise of adequate conservation of natural grassland in NSW, and our concern is that this critically endangered community is not listed as such under NSW legislation. Similarly to ACT planning, we believe that conservation matters are not being considered seriously, and planning and legislation is being used to ensure other matters receive a far greater priority.

Copies of all submissions by the Advocacy Group is available at <http://www.fog.org.au/advocacy.htm>.

Role of the Advocacy Group

A significant role of the Advocacy Group is networking with other environmental and community groups. Advocacy group members attend meetings of groups such as Bush on the Boundary and the Conservation Council's Biodiversity Working Group. We continue to participate in presentations and community consultation meetings concerning conservation matters (including the Murrumbidgee to Googong (M2G) pipeline Environmental Reference Group), and to meet with Canberra Airport Group and the Riverview Group (Ginninderry development).

As usual, the achievements of the Advocacy Group reflect the contributions of all its' members: Naarilla and Sarah, Geoff Robertson, John Fitz Gerald, Tony Lawson and Jamie Pittock, with assistance at times from other FOG members.

The Group would welcome further members, to provide general assistance, or to contribute to specific areas of interest. Please contact advocacy@fog.org.au.

Part 8. Partnerships & Public Involvement

8.1 Participation in Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) - John Fitz Gerald

(FOG is a partner in the Kosciuszko to Coast and a member of K2C Incorporated)

K2C operated for the year without any permanent facilitator position due to lack of funding. The organisation's objectives were followed by K2C participation in several projects that provided part-time payments for contractors to carry out on-ground work and landholder consultations. Those projects included:

- Scarlet Robin component run by South East Local Land Services as part of NSW-wide Saving Our Species program from OEH,
- Yass Gorge project run for the NSW Environmental Trust to increase local activity and improve the natural values of this stretch of river corridor, and
- Land for Wildlife run by Lesley Ishiyama assisting landholders to assess and improve their properties

Geoff Robertson and Tony Robinson took the lion's share of executive responsibility for K2C but assisted by executive committee roles. Each bimonthly Executive committee meeting and the AGM were followed by a mini-forum on a wide range of topics. This has resulted in more active participation by K2C partners and increased interactions between them. K2C communications via website and electronic mail updates were revamped and run by Geoff Robertson.

The big challenge for K2C is attracting funding sufficient to hire professional services to take the place of a few hard-working volunteers and returning the organisation to a more sustainable operation. Reinvigoration of the Greater Eastern Ranges Initiative could be part of the solution.

8.2 Con Council & Biodiversity working group - Sarah Sharp & Tony Lawson

(FOG is an active member of the Conservation Council and its Biodiversity Working Group)

We have continued to represent FOG on the Conservation Council's Biodiversity Working Group. This meets once a month. The BWG is an extremely important network to be involved in, with the exchange of concerns, ideas and knowledge, as well as sharing the load of providing input to some submissions or other matters.

The main issues covered in 2017 were:

- Planning and the role of the planning authorities: particularly in the Molonglo area (on-going issue)
- Planning issues and development in Ginninderra Field Station, Red Hill Golf Club, Ginninderry, Yarralumla Brickworks
- Submission of a nomination to the ACT Flora and Fauna Committee: Loss of Native Hollow-bearing Trees as a threatening process (still under consideration by the Committee)
- The effectiveness of offsets in enhancing biodiversity
- State of finances for pest plant and animal control

The regular Environment Exchange fora held by Conservation Council frequently address major biodiversity issues.

8.3 National Capital Authority - Jamie Pittock

Several members of FOG and I maintain regular contact and from time to time meet the Chief Executive and staff of the National Capital Authority to discuss the National Capital Authority Project (see 5.1 National Capital Authority Project) and to raise any issues of concern such as planning decisions that that may impact grassy woodland and grassland sites management by the National capital Authority.

8.4 OCCGR Management C'ttee & Monaro Reg Weeds C'ttee - Margaret Ning

Neither the Old Comma Common Grassland Reserve Management Committee nor the Monaro Regional Weed Committee met in 2017. However close contact was maintained with members of the OCCGR Management Committee, particularly with Brett Jones, the Snowy Monaro Weeds Officer through the Monaro Golden Daisy Project (see 5.2).

8.5 Bush on boundary - Sarah Sharp & John FitzGerald

Bush on the Boundary - Sarah Sharp

Bush on the Boundary was initially established in 2006 to provide a forum for exchange of information on biodiversity conservation with reference to nature reserves in Gungahlin and surrounding urban developments. Since then four other BOB groups have been established. Molonglo BOB was established in

2010, North Watson BOB later (FOG is not involved in this one), Ginninderry (West Belconnen) in 2015 and Googong. They are an effective means to share information in an open forum, enabling an exchange of ideas and information and frankly discuss issues of common concern. No minutes are taken, and some matters discussed are in confidence.

Molonglo BOB - Sarah Sharp

Although BOB Molonglo has not met in 2017 it has not folded. The Draft Plan of Management for Molonglo River Reserve was released on 8 February, with submissions due in early March. Other key documents have just been published on the ACT Government website, including conservation management guidelines and site operational plans. The BOB group reconvened in mid February to discuss this plan.

West Belconnen BoB Reference Group - John Fitz Gerald

I continue to sit on FOG's behalf on this group of community representatives, convened by the Ginninderra Catchment Group, and scheduled to meet monthly throughout the year. Meetings are held in the new Link building near Strathnairn constructed for the developer Riverview and intended to be used as a residential sales office, but eventually as a community facility.

Meetings were presented with information about plans for both conservation and construction activities. Riverview had its development application approved for Stage 1 of the project in the ACT, but approval was subsequently withdrawn while an appeal against it was heard by the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal. That appeal has still not concluded. Riverview also proceeded during the year with the next stage of rezoning application to the Yass Valley Shire Council. This application also remains under consideration.

Due to these formalities, this BOB group has not met since October at Riverview's request.

8.6 Other involvement

Bullan Mura - Sarah Sharp

(to be submitted)

Grassy Woodlands Stakeholder Group - Geoff Robertson

The Grassy Woodlands Stakeholder Group, consisting of various woodland stakeholders and experts, was resurrected last year. I represent FOG and K2C. The group plans to meet annually and met for the first time in 2017. An important item on this year's agenda is the *ACT woodland strategy*. Sarah sharp will also be invited to joint the group.

ParkCare Convenor's Meetings - Tony Lawson

ParkCare Convenors meetings are held every two months. I attend these on behalf of FOG. These meetings provide a mutual exchange of information.

Canberra International Airport - Naarilla Hirsch & Tony Lawson

We meet regularly (usually annually) to receive reports on the management of grasslands and related threatened species and to discuss any issues that may be of concern.

Murrumbidgee to Googong Reference Group (aka M2G Pipeline) - Tony Lawson & Naarilla Hirsch

Activity now is little more than an annual meeting to visit the Pipeline offset area and look at the work taking place there. Geoff Robertson and I visited the site on 9 November and are happy to report that those responsible for the rehabilitation are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the management of the offset site.

Federal Golf Course Consultation - Geoff Robertson

Federal Golf Course and MBank have proposed that a set number of residential units for seniors be built on the site of the current golf course. The ACT Government held a three-evening consultation on the proposal to obtain conservation and local resident group input. I attended on behalf of FOG.

The proposal recommends handing woodland areas that form part of Federal Golf Course to the ACT Government to become part of Canberra Nature Park. That proposal is on hold while the ACT Government (EPSDD) is preparing a draft integrated plan to encompass Federal Golf Course and Deakin section 66 (which includes another remnant woodland). Various stakeholders (including FOG) and the community will be consulted on the draft plan.

Appendix A: AGM Agenda 20 March 2018

Conservation Council Offices

Unit 14/26 Barry Drive, Ground Floor, Lena Karmel Lodge, Canberra

5.30 pm for a 6.00 pm start - nibbles & wine provided

Agenda

1. Attendance and apologies
2. Minutes of previous AGM and Special Meeting
3. Matters arising from previous minutes
4. Reports:
 - Treasurer, President, Secretary, Advocacy, Activities, On-ground work, Communications, Membership, Sales, Supported projects & Membership of other groups
5. Election of Office Bearers:
 - President, two Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer & up to 11 Ordinary Committee members
6. Motions on Notice
7. Close

After the meeting everyone is invited to dinner at Spicy Ginger Cafe, 25 Childers Street. If you plan join us, please let me know at president@fog.org.au, so I can book a table.

Notes:

1. Reports will be circulated in advance to all members via email. Members who do not have email addresses may request that reports be posted to him or her.
2. Nominations for election to any Committee position must be received by Tuesday 13 March by FOG Secretary john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au. At the AGM, the Returning Officer (John Fitz Gerald) is required to declare persons nominated elected, unless more than one person is nominated for the position. For contested positions, the Returning Officer will fill the position by holding a secret ballot of members present. If no one has nominated for a particular position, the Returning Officer may call for a nomination at the meeting but the nominee must be present and consenting.
3. Motion on Notice: if any financial member wishes to place a motion on notice, they must also attend the meeting to speak to the motion. Wording must be received by 13 March by Secretary john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au to allow time for all members to be notified of any motion on notice.
4. For any other inquiries please contact president@fog.org.au.
5. It would also assist if each of you let me know if you will be/not be attending the meeting.

Appendix B: Auditor's report

To the Members of the Friends of Grasslands Incorporated

Scope

I have audited the financial report of Friends of Grasslands Incorporated as set out in the Consolidated Financial Reports of the year ended 31 December 2017 attached. The Friends of Grasslands Incorporated committee is responsible for the financial report. I have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members.

The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Audit Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free of material misstatement. My procedures included examination of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial reports and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with Accounting Standards, other mandatory professional reporting requirements and the requirements of Friends of Grasslands Incorporated so as to present a view which is consistent with my understanding of the association's financial position and the results of its operations.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion the financial report presents fairly in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards, other mandatory professional reporting requirements and the requirements of Friends of Grasslands Incorporated, the financial position of Friends of Grasslands Incorporated as at 31 December 2017 and the results of its operations for the year ended 31 December 2017

Pauline Hore

Pauline Hore JP(ACT); BEc; CPA
20 Ross Smith Cres
Scullin ACT 2614
8 March 2018

Appendix C - FOG Annual Accounts 2017

FOG Income & Expenditure Statement

FRIENDS OF GRASSLANDS INC INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2017

| | 2017 | | 2016 | |
|----------------------------------|------|---------------|--------|---------------|
| INCOME | | | | |
| Membership | | 3,855 | | 3,670 |
| Sales | | | | |
| Publications Woodland | | 6,674 | | 9,483 |
| Grassland | | 1,433 | | 1,676 |
| Less cost of goods | | 8,107 | | -9,378 |
| Other | | | | |
| Sales of other pubs | | 356 | | 419 |
| Costs of other publications sold | | -48 | | |
| Handling charges | | -221 | 87 | 638 |
| Interest earned on term deposits | | | | 666 |
| Other income | | 390 | | 474 |
| Donations | | 220 | | 323 |
| Grants | | | | |
| NCA | | 6,000 | | 6,000 |
| NSW Local Land Services | | 7,000 | 13,000 | 9,500 |
| | | | | 15,500 |
| TOTAL INCOME | | 25,659 | | 23,471 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | |
| From Current Grant Funds | | | | |
| NCA Contractors etc | | 7,469 | | 3,153 |
| NSW LLS Contractor exp | | 8,429 | | 11,511 |
| Woodland flora | | | | 550 |
| Administration | | | | |
| Storage- Lock-up | | 1,134 | | 1,717 |
| Insurance | | 390 | | 390 |
| PO Box rental | | 130 | | 181 |
| Other | | 71 | 1,725 | 79 |
| | | | | 2,367 |
| Other | | | | |
| Supported projects | | 2,825 | | |
| Support/membership other orgs | | 330 | | 980 |
| Printing & postage | | 1,393 | | 1,886 |
| Hire of room - Mugga | | 150 | | 0 |
| On-ground expenses | | 68 | | 0 |
| Working bee & workshop costs | | 205 | | 321 |
| Travel - general | | 88 | | 0 |
| Purchase of consumables | | 159 | | 532 |
| Printing, delivery & other costs | | | | 1,747 |
| Non-cash adjustments | | 5,218 | | 2,056 |
| | | | | 7,522 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | | 22,840 | | 25,103 |
| NET INCOME/EXPENSES | | 2,819 | | 1,631 |

FOG Balance Sheet

| | 2017 | | 2016 | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| ASSETS | | | | |
| Current Accounts | 35070 | | 32252 | |
| Cash & cheques to be banked | | | 90 | 32342 |
| Investments | | | | |
| Term Deposit 2502 | 9085 | | | |
| Term Deposit 2504 | 6688 | | | |
| Term Deposit 2505 | 10537 | 26310 | | 25681 |
| Accounts receivable | | | | 425 |
| Stock cost @ 1 Jan 17 | | | | |
| Publications Woodland Flora 1st | 1898 | | 1898 | |
| Woodland Flora 2nd | 18565 | | 18571 | |
| Grassland Flora | <u>4480</u> | | 4480 | |
| | 24943 | | | |
| Less cost of books sold | -5414 | | | |
| Value of stock | | 19529 | | 24949 |
| Depreciable Equipment | 142 | | 404 | |
| Less depreciation | -142 | | -262 | 142 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | | 80909 | | 83539 |
| LIABILITIES | | | | |
| Grants | | | | |
| NCA | 8708 | | 8489 | |
| NSW Local Land Services | 11060 | | 12489 | |
| Publications | | 19768 | 7382 | 28360 |
| Accounts payable | | | | 1741 |
| FOG Equity | | 61141 | | 53438 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | | 80909 | | 83539 |

FOG Public Fund Account

Friends of Grasslands Public Fund Accounts 31 December 2017

Income & Expenditure

| | 2017 | | 2016 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--|------|
| Income | | | |
| Donations | 1,765 | | 880 |
| Total Income | 1,765 | | 880 |
| Less Expenses | | | |
| Supported Projects | 2,000 | | |
| Repayment of bank float to FOG GA | | | 10 |
| Sponsorship C.Robertson | 390 | | 390 |
| Total Expenses | 2,390 | | 400 |
| Net Income/Expenditure | -625 | | 480 |

Notes to accounts

1. The sponsorship for C. Robertson appears in the accounts for 2016 and 2017. This was because the 2016 accounts were recorded as a liability in the accounts. This year I have prepared the accounts on an income and expenditure basis.
2. There was a sum of \$340 which accrued to the Fund at 31 December but was not paid into the account. This has been rectified and has been paid to the Fund in January 2018.

Balance Sheet 31 December 2017

| | 2017 | | 2016 |
|--------------------------------------|------|--|------|
| Assets | | | |
| Bank Deposit | 290 | | 915 |
| Total Assets | 290 | | 915 |
| Liabilities | | | |
| Reimbursement for C. Robertson to GA | | | 390 |
| Return of Excess transfer from GA | | | 35 |
| | | | 425 |
| Funds at start of year | | | 10 |
| Current year surplus | | | 480 |
| Public Fund equity | 290 | | 490 |
| Total Liabilities | 290 | | 915 |

Appendix D - FOG AGM Minutes 2017

Friends of Grasslands 2017 Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 21 March 2017

Lena Karmel Lodge, 26 Barry Drive, Acton ACT

Meeting opened 18:08. Kim Pullen chaired the meeting.

Papers provided to the meeting were Agenda 2017, Draft Minutes 2016 and a collation of Annual Reports 2016.

1. Attendance and apologies

Present: Janet Russell, Sarah Sharp, Andy Russell, Kim Pullen, Leon Pietsch, Kay Pietsch, Barbara Payne, Michael Bedingfield, Philip Selmes (representing ACT Parks), Geoff Robertson, John Fitz Gerald, Ann Milligan, Andrew Zelnik.

Apologies: Naarilla Hirsch, Margaret Ning, Richard Bomford, Bernadette O'Leary, Paul Archer, Kat Ng, Ross Dennis, Rosemary Blemings, Jamie Pittock, Stephen Horn.

2. Minutes of 2016 AGM

Minutes approved. Moved Sarah Sharp, seconded Andrew Zelnik

3. Matters arising - nil

4. President's Report

Ann Milligan and Kim Pullen have shared the role of Acting President through the year and Kim drew attention to a few of the points written in their brief Annual Report tabled:-

- 2016 was a year of "business as usual" for FOG
- Committee - 3 important members will step down at this AGM: Ann Milligan, Leon Pietsch and Naarilla Hirsch
- Referred all present to the collated Reports for details of the range of FOG business, but stressed two very satisfying aspects - important grassy-system rehabilitation work continued at a number of sites, communications via news and bulletins continued at a highly effective level.
- All involved were thanked for their valued efforts.

Report accepted - moved Andrew Zelnik and Andy Russell.

Andrew Zelnik and Kim Pullen raised a motion acknowledging Ann Milligan's key roles in coordinating Presidential, Committee and Communications matters through the year. Meeting agreed, and further thanked both Ann and Kim for carrying FOG through the year as rotating Vice Presidents.

5. Treasurer's Report

Leon Pietsch spoke to the complete set of figures tabled and acknowledged on FOG's behalf the audit service by Pauline Hoare as part of her continuing support of community groups.

Uncommitted funds at end of the year totalled \$23,543.

Public Fund is now in full operation, both for income and expenditure. Pleasing to see the increased level of donations from members now that this instrument is in place.

Report accepted - moved Leon Pietsch, seconded Kim Pullen

Meeting expressed hearty appreciation to Leon for operating and upgrading the FOG accounts during his tenure as Treasurer.

6. Other Reports

For noting

Meeting expressed special thanks to Naarilla Hirsch for her long and distinguished term coordinating FOG advocacy team.

John Fitz Gerald thanked for his work as Secretary.

Final comment concerned on-ground work where those heavily involved at Old Cooma Common and other sites were thanked by the meeting. It was noted positively that this work involves interactions with several other groups in Landcare sphere - notably this year Green Army and Conservation Volunteers Australia.

7. Annual Elections

Andy Russell agreed to act as Returning Officer

- a) President. Geoff Robertson was nominated by Andrew Zelnik and Janet Russell - declared elected.
- b) Vice Presidents. Kim Pullen was nominated by Ann Milligan and Andrew Zelnik. Declared elected, leaving the second VP position vacant.
- c) Secretary. John Fitz Gerald was nominated by Ann Milligan and Andrew Zelnik. Declared elected.
- d) Treasurer. No nominations received. Position declared vacant.
- e) Committee. A group of names was put forward and nominated by Janet Russell and Leon Pietsch. Some of these were not present but had notified their willingness to be nominated. Returning Officer thanked all for nominating and declared the following elected:- Kat Ng, Ross Dennis, Margaret Ning, Sarah Sharp, Andrew Zelnik, Barbara Payne and Paul Archer.
(Committee details to be sent to Public Officer for submission as FOG Annual Return)

8. Public Officer.

Andy Russell stated willingness to be appointed again as Public Officer.

9. Other motions with notice - none received

Meeting closed: 18:58

A brief discussion led by new president followed, and included some suggestions by Philip Selmes about possibilities for attracting new volunteers and members to ensure that FOG's work involving the community can continue into the future.