



# News of Friends of Grasslands

Supporting native grassy ecosystems

ISSN 1832-6315

May–June 2014

## FOG dates to note

### The Poplars, near Queanbeyan

**3 May:** An interesting weeding experience is on offer at the biodiverse Poplars grassland site, on Saturday 3 May. We hope to see you there! More details p. 2. Registration is essential for this weeding workparty, with: [john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au](mailto:john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au).

**Stirling Park, Yarralumla ACT: four workparties in May and June.** More details p. 2.

**Register for these with** [jamie.pittock@fog.org.au](mailto:jamie.pittock@fog.org.au).

**14 May:** On Wednesday 14 May, 9.30 am – 1 pm, there will be a weeding workparty at Stirling Park to continue to restore habitat for the threatened species Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosia leptorrhynchoidea*.

**31 May:** A Saturday morning excursion to Stirling Park, 9.30 am – 1 pm, to carry on clearing vegetation invading the habitat of a big population of Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosia leptorrhynchoidea*.

**18 June:** Another Wednesday morning excursion to Stirling Park, 9.30 am – 1 pm, to continue improving the habitat of this site's population of Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosia leptorrhynchoidea*.

**29 June:** This is a Sunday morning workparty to Stirling Park, 9.30 am – 1 pm, to continue restoration of Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosia leptorrhynchoidea* habitat.



A patch of restored grassland at the Poplars: Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosia leptorrhynchoidea* and Hoary Sunray *Leucochrysum albicans* in the foreground, with Blue Devil *Eryngium ovinum* (foreground and centre), in front of Lemon Beauty-heads *Calocephalus citreus*. Photo: Barbara Payne.

## Membership matters

FOG welcomes new member Julie Beckman of Macgregor, ACT.

Membership of Friends of Grasslands Inc. costs \$20 per (calendar) year (individuals, families, not-for-profit organisations), and \$5 per year (students, concessions) or \$50 per year (corporate).

Payment can be made by EFT to BSB 633 000, A/c 124770835, adding your name in the reference/description; or by posting a cheque to PO Box 440, Jamison Centre ACT 2614.

A red mark on this newsletter means you will need to renew to go on getting newsletters and other notices.

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## Coming events and dates to note

### Poplars Grassland: so many species!

Saturday 3 May 09:00–12:00

John Fitz Gerald

Be sure to register, soon, with John Fitz Gerald (email [john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au](mailto:john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au)) to join the FOG weeding party at this well-known and high-value grassland site, east of Lanyon Drive in Jerrabomberra near Queanbeyan NSW. Just look at the beautiful species growing there! (Photo)

We encourage all FOG members, especially those with some experience in woody weed control, to join in and help make this a major contribution in FOG's 20th year. Thick weeds are a big issue in parts of the Poplars, to such an extent that FOG is considering running a special activity alongside Queanbeyan Landcare to continue the battle (see News of FOG, January–February 2014).

By registering well ahead of Saturday 3 May (via email), you will (a) find out the street details of the meeting place; and (b) help ensure there are enough refreshments provided for all the volunteers and enough tools to do the job. John Fitz Gerald will answer your queries, register you, give you the address, and discuss possible sharing of transport.

Please dress for the conditions of the day and be prepared for some moderate physical work involving cutting stems and daubing with herbicide.

FOG was first involved with this site 19 years ago, our first year of existence. Tom Baker and Queanbeyan Landcare, with the landowner's agreement, have since been successfully attacking the weeds and achieving a good diversity of grassland species, showing what we can aim for.



Where the Poplars grassland site has been partially restored, Lemon Beauty-heads *Calocephalus citreus*, Hoary Sunray *Leucochrysum albicans* and Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides* abound. Photo: Barbara Payne.

### Workparties at Stirling Park, May–June

Jamie Pittock

Four workparties are scheduled for May and June at Stirling Park, Yarralumla ACT, on days and dates that we hope will suit many enthusiastic bush-weeders.

We are continuing to clear invasive plants from the habitat of a big population of Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides*, a threatened species listed in ACT, NSW, Victoria and by the Commonwealth.

Come to one, two, three or all four outings, 9.30 am – 1 pm:  
**Wednesday 14 May 14, Saturday 31 May,**  
**Wednesday 18 June, Sunday 29 June.**

We will meet on the fire management track at the northern end of Stirling Park. As usual, please bring drinking water, and wear sun protection and solid footwear. When you register ([jamie.pittock@fog.org.au](mailto:jamie.pittock@fog.org.au)), you will be told how to find the right place.

### World Environment Day dinner

Saturday 31 May, 7 pm

The World Environment Day dinner, arranged by the Conservation Council ACT Region, will be at the Arboretum on Saturday 31 May 7 pm, with champagne, canapés and a three-course meal by Ginger Catering.

If you would like to join the FOG table at the dinner, please say so when booking (\$95.00 per person) at (shortened link): <http://bit.ly/1njLly0>.

The invitation says: '[Enjoy] a delicious gourmet meal while calming strings play in the background. ... The inspirational guest speaker will be David Lindenmayer, a highly-awarded Professor of Ecology at the Australian National University who [is] a passionate advocate for landscape ecology and conservation science to be taken seriously.'

## News roundup

### Workparties at Hall Cemetery 8 March and 12 April

John Fitz Gerald

On the two Saturday mornings 8 March and 12 April, two small but enthusiastic teams set to work in the woodlands at Hall Cemetery, at the north-west edge of ACT, near Hall.

Large woody weeds have been almost eliminated here by years of FOG work, so the focus has switched to spraying exotic grasses and leafy weeds. We targeted *Phalaris Phalaris* sp., Tall Fescue, *Festuca arundinacea* Schreb., various Thistles, and Cleavers *Galium aparine*. We also suppressed some minor, but significant, incursions of St Johns Wort *Hypericum perforatum* and *Potentilla Potentilla recta*. A few small woody exotics such as Briar Rose *Rosa rubiginosa* also remain, but these are becoming harder and harder to find.

### Workparty at Stirling Park 30 March

Jamie Pittock

On 30 March the FOG volunteers moved onto the northern part of Stirling Park to remove woody weeds from among dense populations of Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides*.

Great progress was made clearing a large area. We trialled 'frilling' — poisoning in situ — on weed trees to avoid the issue of having to remove the weed biomass later. We also collected a lot of scrap metal for removal.

Future work parties will concentrate on this part of Stirling Park.

### South East Local Land Services Open

<http://southeastlocalandservices.com.au/Welcome>

South East Local Land Services Open is an online facility where landholders and the community, including FOG members, can ask questions about land services, discuss topics of interest and give feedback on draft plans and other initiatives. We are invited to register, to be part of the conversation and help shape SE Local Land Services.

Local Land Services is a new NSW Government initiative, combining former Catchment Management Authorities and advisory services from the NSW Dept of Primary Industries, and managed by local people.



Margaret Ning and Kat Ng, both of whom are hard-working members of the FOG committee, spraying weeds amongst expanding patches of Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides* in woodland alongside Hall Cemetery. Photo: John Fitz Gerald.

### For sale! 'Top Block', Brandy Marys

A long-time member of FOG needs to sell his very large bush block urgently. The block is state forest Permanent Crown Lease, in Tumbarumba Shire, high enough to have snow every year, with 600-year-old gum trees, grassland, peatland, and creeks feeding the Tumut River. No livestock. Mostly newly fenced in 2005. There is permission for a house to be built on the block. See: <http://bit.ly/1nHXvgg> (shortened link to file on the web). Contact: [jim.kelton@skymesh.com.au](mailto:jim.kelton@skymesh.com.au)

### Job at ANPC

#### Expressions of interest due by c.o.b. 28 April

The Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. is seeking a motivated, organised person to work on major projects such as plant conservation workshops.

The job is based at the ANPC Head Office at the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra, but the right person may be able to work from home in NSW, ACT or Victoria. Funding is available for 6 months, and there is a possibility of extension if further funding is received.

The position description is at: <http://www.anpc.asn.au>



## News roundup, including Advocacy

### FOG Advocacy: at April 2014

*Naarilla Hirsch*

The Commonwealth government has announced establishment of a Threatened Species Commissioner and has put the terms of reference for this position out for public comment. In general, FOG supported the concept and general aims in the terms of reference document, and also the roles/responsibilities. However, it expressed concern about two issues. The first was the focus on species: endangered ecosystems (including threatened species habitat) have been excluded from the Commissioner's responsibilities. The second was the use of the term 'priority' national threatened species, because it was not clear to FOG how 'priority' species will be determined.

The Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications include a committee conducting an inquiry into environmental offsets, in particular into the history, appropriateness and effectiveness of the use of environmental offsets in federal environmental approvals in Australia. FOG's response was based on its offsets policy and on how environmental offsets have worked to date in the ACT and surrounding New South Wales. Particular issues raised included: offset measures in the ACT being agreed by the Commonwealth which FOG believes do not meet the intention of offsets; lack of any guarantee that some projects will achieve the desired outcomes of improving the condition and resilience of offset areas; offset programs not being in place before developments commence; insufficient information to determine whether offsets have resulted in no net loss in temperate grassy ecosystems and their dependent species; and whether or not offset legislation is both enforceable and enforced.

A wind farm proposal at Rye Park near Yass has been referred to the Commonwealth under the EPBC Act. The proposal has been sited to minimise impact on endangered Box-Gum Woodland and dependent species, and has adequate construction and ongoing mitigation measures in the referral. Further work is needed to identify the extent of Striped Legless Lizard *Delma impar* and Golden Sun Moth *Synemon plana* populations within the construction envelope, with FOG asking that, if the populations of these species are likely to be further impacted by the proposal, further micro-siting of infrastructure be considered to reduce this impact.

The National Capital Authority has released a draft Heritage Management Plan for Surveyors Hut [Scrivener's Hut] and Surveyors Park for public comment. FOG made several recommendations concerning this plan, including integrated management of the cultural and natural heritage of Surveyors Park and adjacent woodlands, with the lands being rezoned as open space under the National Capital Plan. Control of both herbaceous and woody weeds is needed, and only locally indigenous species should be planted at the site. The full set of interpretive signs needs to be upgraded.

The full text of FOG submissions appears on the FOG website.

### FOG AGM 2014

The FOG Annual General Meeting was held on 18 March. Reports presented at the meeting are included in this newsletter (pp. 15-21). The committee for 2014 is listed on p. 22.

### Camping at Scottsdale

The camping excursion to Scottsdale advertised in News of FOG March-April did not take place.

### Stonequarry Cemetery work, Taralga, NSW (see page 5)



Above: Stephen and Lou working on deciduous exotics and exposing *Vinca* beneath. Below: The team adding to a growing pile of weed cuttings; Broom awaiting attention. Photos Luke Wang.



## *News roundup, continued*

### **Environmental restoration at Stonequarry Cemetery, 21–23 February 2014**

*Margaret Ning and Rita Sofea*

Stonequarry Cemetery is 5 km from Taralga township, NSW, and is surrounded by farmland. Although much loved by locals there are few volunteers now to look after the site. Therefore, on Friday evening 21 February our team of volunteers gathered at Richlands homestead, mostly arriving in time to prepare dinner.

Our communally planned and prepared spaghetti bolognaise turned out to be a great success, with the group getting to know one another as well. That evening we first discussed expectations and fears for the weekend, then prepared a schedule for the next day, and finally played a light-hearted game which ended very nicely in a draw.

The team members, who included several from International Volunteers for Peace (IVP), came from China, Japan, Goulburn and Canberra: Stephen Horn, Margaret Ning, Luke Wang, Louisa Lu, Ayaka Suzuki, Rita Sofea, Mez Egg. Margaret and Ayaka have ChemCert certification; Ayaka also has chainsaw certification. Tools and chemicals were supplied by FOG or by Margaret.

At Saturday's 7.30 am breakfast-time some people went for a walk and others tackled breakfast and sandwich-making. Then we headed for Stonequarry Cemetery in a couple of vehicles, laden with a cut-lunch, tools, water and rubbish bags, all prepared to do battle. We had decided to concentrate on an area close to the access road and next to the main part of the cemetery so that we would make a visible impression.

Several of us focused on cutting and daubing an interminable thicket of Broom and isolated Blackberry canes, while the others sawed and daubed larger targets



Discussing the cemetery and possibility of unmarked graves.  
Photo: Luke Wang.



Margaret and Ayaka cutting and daubing. Photo: Luke Wang.



'Richlands', built in the 1840s, originally belonged to John and Elizabeth Macarthur. <http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/our-house-histories-australian-homes-13>. Photo: Luke Wang.

of Hawthorn and other exotic deciduous interlopers. We took 'before' and 'after' photos for morale-boosting as well as monitoring. Agnes from the IVP committee arrived and spent some time helping with the weeding as well as taking photos.

We arrived back at Richlands around 4.30 pm and later Stephen led a long walk down to the creek. Highlights were finding a very large Echidna, seeing lots of Kangaroos, and hearing a Platypus (we think) plunge into the water as we approached. Another successful communal meal was prepared with rice, stir-fried vegies, and eggs with garlic chives. Later we had an interesting informal discussion and planned a timetable for the next day, which we hoped to stick to.

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## News roundup, continued

### *Environmental restoration at Stonequarry Cemetery, 21–23 February, continued*

Sunday began like Saturday. We made significant progress weeding in the morning, also filling four chaff bags with rubbish from the site and piling up the green waste for council to remove. This left our small portion of the site in greatly improved condition.

At mid-morning we had a discussion on the cultural heritage of the site. We looked for graves and identified and photographed three possible sites with unusual piles of rocks. We recognise that we need to research cultural practices connected with burials. After lunch we visited the museum in Taralga hoping to discover something about the cemetery's history and operational layout. Enthusiastic members of Taralga Historical Society showed us maps of cemetery plots, and took our photo to put in the local newspaper.

Over both days we photographed and listed native plants that we saw, but an attempt to compile a systematic species list of the whole site was unsuccessful because of recent grazing by cattle and because flowering had finished by this late in summer. We did find a black Swamp Wallaby *Wallabia bicolor* with baby in pouch, which continued eating while we admired them. Many birds were sighted including black cockatoos and a Brown Treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus*.

We experimentally sprayed two plots over the weekend: at one we applied Brushoff to the first metre or two of a Blackberry thicket, and at the other we sprayed Glyphosate to a discrete area of *Vinca* which was devoid



In front of Taralga museum, *left-right*, Luke, Stephen, Louisa, Margaret, Rita, Ayaka. (Photo taken for the local newspaper.)

of any native plants at all. These will be monitored in the future. Our weeding has exposed a carpet of *Vinca* in some places, and it will be interesting to see if it appreciates all the additional sunlight it will get after our weekend.

The project was made possible by the accommodation at Richlands homestead at nominal cost, and a grant from the Australian Government Department of Social Services (previously Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs), which paid for petrol.

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## Valuable plant identification resources available via the ANBG

*Janet Russell*

Brendan Lepschi gave the March talk for the Plant Science Group\* of the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG), which I attended. The talk was titled 'An Update on the ACT Plant Census'.

The ACT Plant Census is only updated when there is a significant increase in the number of new taxa to be recorded. All plants are recorded, whether they are native or not. Version 3 is currently on the website and Brendan advised that version 4 was not far away.

The census of vascular plants can be found at: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/cpbr/ACT-census-2012/index.html>.

Information on that page explains the census table headings and there is also a series of statistics about the census. You can select to view the vascular plants by family or by genus. Once you have the census open there is a link from the species name in the last column to APNI (Australian Plant Name Index) which shows the scientific usage of the plant names over time. If a photograph of the species is available, you can click on the camera icon on the APNI entry and it will take you to the photograph.

The census can be an extremely valuable resource and if you find something unusual out in the field it is

worth checking to see if and when it was last recorded.

The ANBG has a free plant identification service available to members of the public for non-commercial purposes, and information regarding this service can be found here: <http://www.cpbr.gov.au/cpbr/plant-enquiry-service/index.html>.

\*The Plant Science Group, established in June 2013, acts as an umbrella for the Friends' more technical, scientific and research-focused volunteer activities, and is open only to the Friends of the ANBG.

## News roundup, continued

### Visit to Bundidgerry: October 2013

Andrew Zelnik

On a warm sunny clear Sunday in mid-October last year a 12-strong party from FOG joined 22 members of the Yass Area Network of Landcare Groups (YANLG) in a visit to Bundidgerry, a 160 ha working property to the east of Murrumbateman, NSW. Jacqui Stol coordinated this visit and first brought the property to our attention via Margaret Ning. Jacqui is Secretary of the YANLG and Chair of Murrumbateman Landcare Group (MLG) and is also with the Landscape and Community Ecology Research Group at CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences.

#### Background

The property has been owned and managed by Isabel Jirasek and her husband Simon Dixon since 1998. They have transformed Bundidgerry into a productive conservation-oriented property focused on breeding Angus cattle and producing native seed. It has a mixture of woodland and open pasture, a stream and small dams.

The focus of our visit was to explore and identify plant species in an 80 ha area of remnant native vegetation in the eastern part of the property. This block is a recent 'discovery', never having been surveyed. It has escaped both heavy continuous grazing and use of fertiliser, unlike most native grassy woodland and forest areas in this part of the sheep-wheat belt. Its current condition is due largely to extensive feral animal, weed and grazing control work by the current owners in the early years, and their ongoing efforts to maintain and improve its biodiversity values whilst using it as an agricultural production resource. Although lacking a tree overstorey it has sub-shrubs, forbs, grasses (*Poa* and *Themeda* dominated) and a midstorey shrub layer. A bird walk on this block in early 2013 noted abundant native birdlife and sighted the very rare and threatened Hooded Robin *Melanodryas cucullata*.



Explore and identify! The group in action. Photo: Andrew Zelnik.



View from the top. The group of FOG and YANLG members had lunch at the top of the native vegetation remnant, with views across the property and its neighbours. Photo: Andrew Zelnik.

Through a Landcare Linking Biodiversity project MLG has a 10-year grazing management agreement with Isabel and Simon to graze according to CSIRO Category 1a guidelines in return for stewardship payments. This requires use of grazing as a biodiversity management tool in High Conservation Value grassland/grassy woodland. This management regime requires short duration pulse grazing in autumn months to reduce bulk, only if native perennial grass swards are very dense. This is done when grasses are generally more palatable to stock, earlier rather than later in this phase. Alternatives to grazing include burning or slashing/mowing.

#### The visit

After a briefing by Jacqui, Isabel and Simon about the site and plans for the day, we set off. First we walked, first through a green and well grazed paddock of mainly introduced pasture. The scattered tree species present suggested that this would originally have been Box-Gum Woodland. Ahead on the steep-looking slopes was the fenced off native vegetation remnant we were to explore.

As soon as we entered this area we noticed the change to vegetation dominated by native species with hardly a bare patch of ground or exotic species in sight. This appeared to be characteristic of the whole site. The vegetation ID team sprang into action led by Dave Mallinson, Sue McIntyre, Sarah Sharp and John Fitz Gerald. John was also chief scribe for the plant list. Many of the local Landcare Group members had a good knowledge of the local flora from their own properties, and they were keen to learn more from the ID team and to interact with FOG members.

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## News roundup, continued

### Visit to Bundidgerry, October 2013, continued

We made a diagonal traverse, from open woodland on the lower part of the slope, through low density shrubland as we climbed further, and finally into open grassland where the slope steepened to the top. We stopped for a welcome lunch break, enjoying the splendid vista over this part of Bundidgerry and its neighbouring properties in the distance.

On the way, we had first encountered dense swards of Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra*, and then were delighted to find several Slender Sun Orchids *Thelymitra pauciflora*. After that we saw Hoary Guineaflower *Hibbertia obtusifolia*, Pale Sundew *Drosera peltata*, Tall Sundew *Drosera auriculata*, Twining Fringe Lily *Thysanotus patersonii*, Grass Triggerplant *Stylidium graminifolium*, Creamy Candles *Stackhousia monogyna*, and a patch of Yam Daisies *Microseris lanceolata*. All the above indicate the presence of high quality vegetation. During the day we found six other orchid species, including a *Diuris* sp., a Greenhood *Pterostylis* sp., Tiny Sun Orchid *Thelymitra carnea*, and Wax-lipped Orchid *Glossodia major*, a species commonly found in sclerophyll forest and woodland.

Other finds included Early Nancy Wurmbea *Wurmbea dioica*, Native Oxalis *Oxalis perennans*, Golden Weathergrass *Hypoxis hygrometrica*, a Bear's Ear *Cymbonotus* sp., a Bluebell *Wahlenbergia* sp., Common Everlasting *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, Scaly Buttons *Leptorhynchus squamatus*, male Many-flowered Matrush *Lomandra multiflora* in flower, *Juncus* spp., and in the drier areas Woodrush *Luzula densiflora*. Other native grasses included a Wire Grass *Aristida* sp., Nine-awned Grass *Enneapogon nigricans*, and Red-anthered Wallaby Grass *Rytidosperma pallidum*. Trees and other shrubs included Silver Wattle *Acacia dealbata*, *Bossiaea* spp., *Dillwynia* spp., Australian Indigo *Indigofera australis*, Low Bushpea *Pultenaea subspicata*, and dry sclerophyll forest inhabitant Pale Wedge Pea *Gompholobium huegelii*.

On our return downhill, 13 native and 8 exotic species were added to the plant list. Among the additional natives were Black (or Green) Wattle *Acacia decurrens*, Showy Violet *Viola betonicifolia*, Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides*, a maidenhair fern *Adiantum* sp., Snowgrass *Poa sieberiana*, and Wattle Mat-rush *Lomandra filiformis*. In all, we recorded 87 native and 22 exotic plant species, though we may have missed some eucalypts while our collective gaze was fixed on the ground and shrub cover! The species list we compiled is on the FOG website (<http://www.fog.org.au/Reports/Bundidgerry%20plant%20list%202013.xlsx>). We hope it will make a useful contribution to the management planning of this native remnant.

During debriefing on the day's observations, Sue McIntyre noted the presence of Red Box *Eucalyptus polyanthemos* on the upper slopes and concluded that the structural and compositional elements observed point to the remnant vegetation on the upper slopes being Dry Sclerophyll Tablelands Forest (albeit with a depleted tree layer) grading into what was probably Box-Gum Woodland in the lower slope and valley areas. Jacqui pointed out that the high quality of the site, uncommon in the area, is indicated by the presence of the maidenhair fern, yam daisy, violet, *Stackhousia*, *Stylidium*, the wide range of lilies and orchids (which often are the first species knocked out by grazing and fertilisers), and the outstanding abundance of *Poa* and *Themeda*. She also noted that the small shrub *Calytrix tetragona* is rarely seen in this area and may be on its easternmost limit.

Jacqui did a great job of coordinating our visit and we thank her (and Margaret Ning) for bringing it our attention. Our thanks also go to the owners, Isabel and Simon, who were great hosts. They indicated FOG would be welcome again. We certainly had an enjoyable time and would look forward to another visit.



Top to bottom: Slender Sun Orchid *Thelymitra pauciflora*; Early Nancy Wurmbea *Wurmbea dioica*, beginning to fade; Showy Violet *Viola betonicifolia*; Yam Daisy *Microseris lanceolata*.  
Photos: Andrew Zelnik.



## News from other groups

### **Aboriginal Heritage Walk at the Pinnacle, Belconnen, ACT Sunday 27 April, 10 am – 2 pm**

A unique opportunity to see the Pinnacle Nature Reserve through the eyes of traditional owners. Meet at the Dungowan St entrance, Hawker. Details: <http://www.fotpin.org.au/calendar.html>

### **Lake Burley Griffin celebration at Jerrabomberra Wetlands, ACT Tuesday 29 April, 1–4.30 pm**

On this 50th anniversary of the filling of the lake, Friends of Jerrabomberra Wetlands will hold a talk on the history of the wetlands, a bird walk and a wetlands walk. Dairy Flat Road, Fyshwick, ACT. Details: [friendsofjerrawetlands@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofjerrawetlands@gmail.com)

### **The Pinnacle Past and Present: the Pinnacle, Belconnen, ACT Sunday 4 May, 9–11 am**

Parks & Conservation Service ranger Craig Wainwright will lead a walk that looks at the historical land use and present-day management of the reserve. Meet at the Dungowan St entrance, Hawker. Details: <http://www.fotpin.org.au/calendar.html>

### **Friends of Mt Majura, ACT ‘The Trouble with Offsets’**

An article of interest in relation to restoring native ecosystems. See: <http://majura.org/2014/03/16/the-trouble-with-offsets-from-background-briefing-on-radio-national/>

### **Land for Wildlife program**

Assessment, advice and workshops for landholders who want to manage for sustainability and connectivity. For Palerang Shire, NSW, contact: Molonglo Catchment Group, via [coordinator@molonglocatchment.org.au](mailto:coordinator@molonglocatchment.org.au) or phone 02 6299 2119.

*Abstracts for ‘Celebrating our history, growing our future’, the National Landcare Conference, due Sunday 4 May, 11.59 pm EST*  
The conference will be in Melbourne, Victoria, September 17–19. Details: <http://www.landcareonline.com.au/nationalconference>

### **One Stop Shop for Environmental Approvals, and Expert Q&A: Wednesday 7 May, 1–3 pm**

Finkel Lecture Theatre, John Curtin School of Medical Research, ANU, ACT. A panel will discuss the Commonwealth Government’s new One-Stop-Shop for streamlining environmental approvals under the EPBC Act. Environmental Institute of Australia & New Zealand members and students \$25.00, Non-EIANZ members \$50.00. Book at: <http://www.eianz.org/eventsplus/category/australian-capital-territory>

### **‘Growing matters ... growing Friends and growing Gardens’, Conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens ‘Early bird’ ends Friday 9 May**

The conference will be at the Gold Coast, Queensland, August 8–10. Details: [http://www.friendsanbg.org.au/AFBG\\_Conference\\_2014](http://www.friendsanbg.org.au/AFBG_Conference_2014)

### **Native seed production guides by Greening Australia**

New additions, and previous guides, for free download. See: <http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/resources/seed-production-fact-sheets>

### **Atlas of Living Australia ACT and Southern Tablelands Weedspotter web portal**

A place to record weeds, their location, density and any control activities, online or via phone apps. More information: <http://root.ala.org.au/bdrs-core/act-esdd/home.htm> or [anna.vandugteren@act.gov.au](mailto:anna.vandugteren@act.gov.au) or [LyntonBondIldbond@tpg.com.au](mailto:LyntonBondIldbond@tpg.com.au)

### **Discover Wildlife. Art and Science Canberra, ACT, May 14–18,**

A multidisciplinary celebration of art, science and conservation of Australian wildlife. Speakers, presentations, workshops, tours and a showcase of original art. Many of the events and activities are free. Details: [www.csiro.au/wildlife2014](http://www.csiro.au/wildlife2014)

### **‘Affective Habitus: New environmental histories of botany, zoology and emotions’, Conference of the Association for the Study of Literature, Environment and Culture — Australia & New Zealand June 19–21**

The conference will be at the Australian National University, Canberra, ACT. Details: <http://hrc.anu.edu.au/affectivehabitus>

### **Radio Landcare, ACT**

2XX FM 98.3 Tuesdays 9–10 am, and  
QBN FM 96.7 Sundays 8–9 am.

### **Hydroseeding native grasses**

Greening Australia and ACT NOWaste are trialling hydroseeding a mixture of native grasses into the soil capping former landfill, with some success. More information: <http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/community/capital-region?state=5>

### **Grass is greener website Capital Region**

A website by Greening Australia and ACTEW Water, for sharing stories about successful land management and issues overcome. The aim is to improve results across the region. See: [www.grassisgreener.org.au](http://www.grassisgreener.org.au)

## Articles

### A Tasmanian grassland: the Vale of Belvoir

Naarilla Hirsch

In February I went to Tasmania for a holiday. On the way from Queenstown to Devonport I stopped at a lookout alongside the road to view the distant Cradle Mountain. Signs here explained that the valley below was the Vale of Belvoir, the largest intact example of montane grassland left in Tasmania. It added information about the significance of grasslands and management of the grasslands in the Vale. Driving down the hill, I discovered a sea of yellow on both sides of the road, so of course pulled up to have a look. Here is some of what I saw there, and some other information about this important and biodiverse reserve.

The hillside around the lookout was Buttongrass grassland, dominated by *Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*, which is actually in the Cyperaceae rather than the Poaceae family. I'd already seen some of this community at Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair, so didn't go down into it (particularly as it is full of Tiger Snakes, one of which I'd already seen close up — luckily Tasmanian Tiger Snakes aren't aggressive). The only flowers I noticed along the track through the Buttongrass were Common Snowgiant *Gentian diemnesis* and Central Lemon Boronia *Boronia citriodora*.

The real surprise was the valley below. The sea of yellow was mostly Orange Everlasting *Xerochrysum subundulatum* — the Vale is known for its late summer displays of this species. There were several other daisy flowers scattered amongst the Orange Everlasting: Yam Daisy *Microseris lanceolata*, Common Billy Buttons *Craspedia glauca*, Showy Copperwire-daisy *Podolepis jaceoides*, and, tucked down in the hollows, what I think was the rare Grassland Paperdaisy (or Hoary Sunray) *Leucochrysum albicans* subsp. *albicans* var. *tricolor*. As well as more Snowgiantians, I saw Narrowleaf Triggerplant *Stylidium graminifolium* (Narrowleaf Triggerplant is the common name popular in Tasmania), Mountain Pinkberry *Leptecophylla juniperina*, and a delightful little Carpet Frilly Heath *Pentachondra pumila*.

I was unable to identify the dominant tussock grass, which was quite short. One feature that was different from the grasslands in and around the ACT, although I had noticed it elsewhere in Tasmania, was the mass of lichens growing amongst the grasses.

The Vale of Belvoir is a large open limestone valley located about 15 km NNW of Cradle Mountain. It is an exceptionally rich place botanically, supporting one of the most extensive areas of montane grassland in Tasmania, including considerable areas of rare communities of great



Buttongrass *Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*, Cradle Mountain, Tasmania. Photo: Naarilla Hirsch.



Lichen, Dove Canyon, Tasmania. Photo: Naarilla Hirsch.

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## Articles, continued

### *A Tasmanian grassland: the Vale of Belvoir, continued*

conservation value. It is also a 'hotspot' for a number of rare and threatened species.

Three of the main grassy communities in the valley are rare: Highland Poa grassland, Highland sedgy grassland, and Subalpine *Diplarrena latifolia* rushland. Large areas of Buttongrass vegetation are also present on the valley sides. Rare and endangered plant species present include the Grassland Paperdaisy *Leucochrysum albicans* subsp. *albicans* var. *tricolor*, Alpine Candles *Stackhousia pulvinaris*, Matted Lignum *Muehlenbeckia axillaris*, Alpine Violet *Viola cunninghamii*, Tadgells Leek Orchid *Prasophyllum tadgellianum*, Mountain Knawel *Scleranthus brockiei* and Greygreen Cottonleaf *Argyrotegium poliochlorum*.

As well, the Vale of Belvoir is home to perhaps the biggest population of the vulnerable Ptunarra Butterfly *Oreixenica ptunarra*. These rather unassuming orange-brown butterflies are endemic to Tasmania, and live only in Poa tussock grassland. They fly for only three weeks each year, in March, on warm sunny still days, and they're not very good flyers. Other rare wildlife includes Tasmanian Devils, Eastern and Spotted-tailed Quolls, and Ground Parrots.

Prior to European settlement, it is believed, the grassy vegetation was maintained through 'fire-stick farming' (burning) by Indigenous people, combined with grazing by native herbivores — Wombats, Wallabies and Pademelons. These types of disturbance maintain spaces between *Poa* and *Diplarrena* tussocks, providing habitat for the many herbs that give the grasslands their high levels of diversity.

Since European settlement, disturbance by native herbivore populations has been reduced although the introduction of cattle grazing during summer months may have replaced that; cattle have been summer-grazed at 'the Vale' from about the 1850s. The Charleston family took over the grazing leases through the 1960s and continued the general grazing practices, including mosaic burning of the grasslands. The Tasmanian Land Conservancy purchased the grazing property in the centre of the valley from the Charleston family, but grazing is continuing because of its apparent beneficial effects on the floral communities. Research monitoring the impact of cattle grazing is also ongoing, to ensure that any changes occurring over multiple decades can be appropriately managed.

My only regret on this unexpected stop was that, after a protracted time looking at the beautiful roadside display, I didn't have time to explore the track leading into the reserve itself.



Orange Everlasting *Xerochrysum subundulatum*, Belvoir Vale, Tasmania. Photo: Naarilla Hirsch.



Carpet Frilly Heath *Pentachondra pumila*, Belvoir Vale, Tasmania. Photo: Naarilla Hirsch.

#### References:

- [http://www.apstas.com/Vale\\_of\\_Belvoir.html](http://www.apstas.com/Vale_of_Belvoir.html)
- <http://www.bushblitz.org.au/documents/supplement-VoB-2010-untagged.pdf>
- <http://www.tasland.org.au/documents/Newsletter21.pdf>

## Articles, continued

### The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (NSW) Inc.

Jane Gye

The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (NSW) Inc. (AABR) has been around since 1986. The association came about because of concern for best management practices of degraded bushland (a broad term covering all environments) across Australia. It is an organisation for all those interested in the ecological management of Australia's natural environment.

This Association is the main non-government body working to advance bush regeneration in Australia. We have accomplished much in promoting sound ecological management and the bush-regeneration industry. AABR encourages natural resource management by qualified and skilled people and advocates the study and practice of ecological regeneration.

Membership is now open to all people with an interest in conservation of Australia's natural environment.

AABR presents talks, seminars and field trips, and manages a website ([www.aabr.org.au](http://www.aabr.org.au)) with information about bush regeneration, news and current events and a help page. It operates three email list servers for the exchange of information and news: Bush Regeneration; Bushcare; and the Volunteer Coordinators' Network.

We provide advice to state and federal government regarding ecological restoration, and we publish regular newsletters and organise information displays at events such as environmental fairs and conferences.

AABR also publishes a contractors and consultants list, and it offers the Bushjobs service, advertising jobs through the AABR web site.

#### Accreditation

AABR offers accreditation to practitioners who have experience and knowledge of working in Australian ecosystems. This is especially significant for those employing bush regenerators: an AABR-accredited practitioner has a high standard of skills and experience. Accreditation is also valuable for those seeking employment in the expanding field of ecological restoration because AABR is recognised by most organisations engaged in land management.

Last year AABR made some changes that will allow for other areas of accreditation in the future. Currently there is a proposal to have an accreditation system for ecological reconstruction (emphasis on planting where natural regeneration is not possible).

To launch the changes, AABR held a one-day seminar at Sydney Olympic Park in November with a packed attendance of over 200 people. The seminar featured

environmental success stories from across New South Wales and south-east Queensland, including restoration of endangered ecological communities. As well as eight 'speed talks' on a range of restoration cases up and down the east coast, the program featured four outstanding cases.

What struck even the most time-worn regenerators were the multiple examples of ecological communities starting to function again after restoration treatments; seeing natural regeneration processes kicking in again, and fauna starting to use the sites again as habitat and foraging areas. This, and the inspiring efforts of other practitioners and managers, is what keeps us doing this work.



AABR's 16-page newsletter December 2013.  
Image courtesy of Jane Gye.

#### AABR's six DOs of ecological restoration

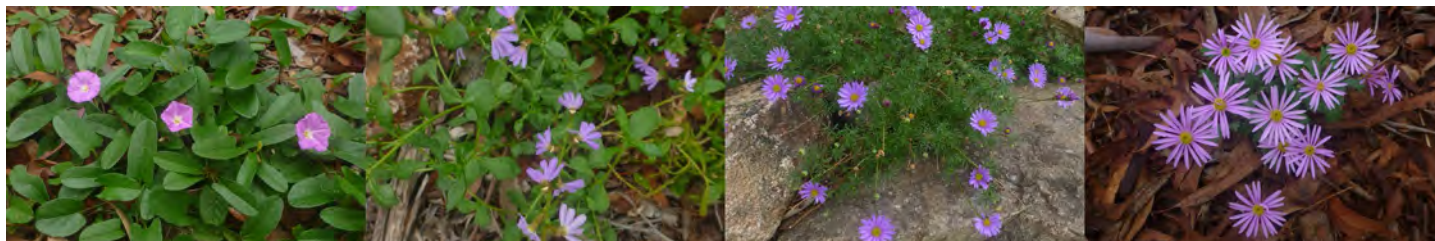
1. Address the threats and causes of degradation.
2. Identify clear project goals.
3. Carry out a skilled site assessment prior to deciding which restoration approaches to use.
4. Design and carry out sound monitoring.
5. Ensure rigorous follow-up to achieve site recovery.
6. Include all stakeholders.



## Cultivation Corner

### The healing flush of green

Janet Russell



*Convolvulus angustissimus*

*Scaevola* sp.

*Brachyscome multifida*

Strawberry Mousse,  
*Brachyscome formosa x angustifolia*

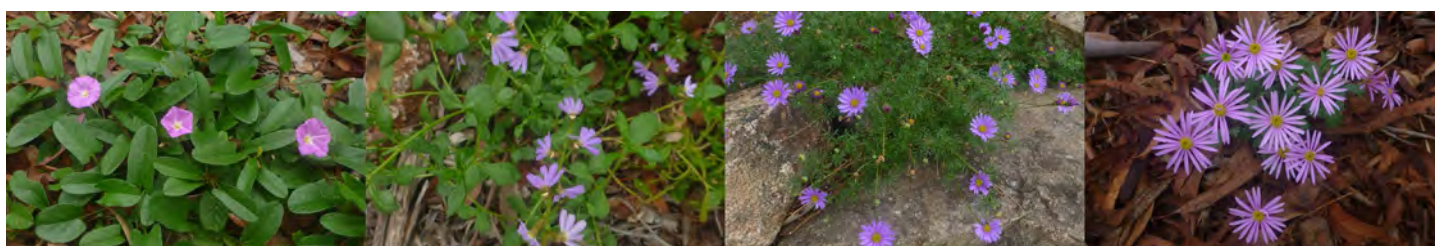
I did not have the heart to write about our grassy woodland garden in the last newsletter. Our westerly facing garden frizzled in the heat and the array of plants on the edge of the drain also suffered from the reflected heat off the kerb and road. Watering was a waste of time. The water ran off without touching the soil and in some cases burnt the foliage. The perennials had all but disappeared underground just leaving remnant brown dried vegetation. The short-lived perennials such as the Golden Everlasting and Hoary Sunray daisies died with no hope of resurrection. We were not game to put out the seedlings that we had earlier removed and potted up for transplanting so I nursed them in their pots over the hot summer.

After the 83 mm of rain we had in February, the garden gradually came to life bringing splashes of colour that made it look more cheerful. The Rock Daisy *Brachyscome multifida* responded well, where there was some protection from the sun. One surprise was that the *Brachyscome* hybrid cultivar, *B. formosa* x *B. angustifolia* sold as Strawberry Mousse, which we had divided and planted in spring as very small specimens, reappeared on the road-edge. We have lost track of which plants are the Pilliga Daisy (*B. formosa*), and which ones the cultivar. The Pilliga Daisy takes its name from the Pilliga Scrub (also called Pilliga Forest). It is a plant of the NSW western slopes and Central Tablelands, the southern end of its range being the Boorowa district, so I am told by the NSW Herbarium. I have never seen it growing in its native habitat.

The other plant that also survived was the Fan Flower *Scaevola* spp. We cannot speak for their genetic heritage because over the years we have grown a number of cultivars as well as a number of species including *Scaevola albida*. The latter does extremely well in our garden. The cultivars do not usually last more than one season. The plants we put in the front garden in spring were volunteers that had been potted for a month or so before planting. They did not grow much during the big dry but they are growing now and I saw the first flower this week (March).

The *Convolvulus angustissimus* is doing very well. After my article in the March newsletter about *Xerochrysum bracteatum*, I see foreign genes everywhere. This *Convolvulus* is a cultivar that has dark green waxy leaves quite unlike *Convolvulus angustissimus* in the field. It had thirteen flowers at one stage and is a very attractive plant. *Glycine tabacina* is another plant that has helped the garden to look more refreshed and in whose genetic heritage I have much more confidence. We have a couple of specimens, the oldest being nearly a metre in diameter. I have observed them, before putting on a flush of green in February when all around them are struggling. All these hardy plants together with the plants that have been held over during the summer will renew the garden for another year, helping keep us motivated — until the next big dry.

Photos: Janet Russell



## The Australian Wood Duck *Chenonetta jubata*, a duck that likes grassy areas

Michael Bedingfield

Ducks are generally found on or near water, but the Australian Wood Ducks' feeding habits take them away from water. They eat aquatic plants by dabbling in shallow water, and insects occasionally. But mostly they eat grass and other terrestrial herbs, and they will fly up to several kilometres away from water to graze.

Their habitat varies, but is mainly grassy areas that are lightly timbered. This includes grassy woodlands and grasslands, farm paddocks and pastures, or town parks. These can be on the margins of rivers, swamps, lakes or near farm dams, or coastal inlets or bays. When not feeding they will return to the safety of their home camp, which is usually close to water. When alarmed the birds will take to the water to avoid predators. They walk well on land and also perch on logs or branches. They are gregarious, spending most of their time in a flock, but in pairs or families during the breeding season.

Australian Wood Ducks are distributed throughout most of eastern Australia, including Tasmania, but are most common in the better-watered grassy regions of the south-eastern tablelands and slopes. They are also found in Western Australia, but are rare in the drier central parts of the continent and the far north.

As the time for mating approaches, a couple will seek out a suitable tree hollow in a mature eucalypt to make their nest. This could be in a woodland or open forest, but also a town park or paddock, and may be some distance from water. The nest is lined with down and both parents incubate the eggs, the drake often standing guard when the female is sitting. Soon after the ducklings hatch, the mother flies to the ground and encourages the babies to follow. Their first venture into the world is to leap from the tree hollow. Sometimes this is from a great height, and they flutter their tiny wings as best they can as they plummet to the ground. Surprisingly, they usually land without injury. The parents then lead them on the hazardous journey to the nearest body of water. The newborn are clothed in waterproof down, can swim on water with the adults, and soon they are grazing too. They grow quickly and are mature enough to fly after about 50 days.

This bird's scientific name is *Chenonetta jubata*, and it is also known as the Maned Duck and sometimes the Maned Goose. The male (top photo) has a coffee-brown coloured head and neck with a small mane of black feathers. The rest of his body is grey or mottled grey with some black on the back and belly. The female (lower photo) has a brown-grey head with white stripes above and below the eyes. The rest of her body is similar to the male but more speckled, and with a white tummy. Juveniles' plumage is similar to that of the adult females. The voice of the female is a drawn out 'gnow'. The male's call is shorter and of a higher tone. These birds are



the only surviving species of the genus *Chenonetta*. The flightless Finsch's Duck *C. finschi*, of NZ, is extinct. The Wood Duck of North America is known as *Aix sponsa*, has very colourful plumage, and is closely related to the Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*.

Australian Wood Ducks are a familiar sight in our region and can be seen grazing in parks, reserves or paddocks, or in spring nervously crossing a road with their young family. They have benefited from European settlement and the changes to the landscape for agriculture and townships, such as the creation of dams and the use of irrigation. When foraging they sometimes damage crops such as wheat or improved pastures. My photographs (above) were taken at the picnic area at Pine Island Reserve, ACT, where the ducks come to graze.

Finally, I would like to ask: How much wood would a Wood Duck duck if a Wood Duck just ducked wood? This is an interesting question.\*

My references have been: *A Field guide to Australian Birds* by Peter Slater (1970), *Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds* with numerous authors (1976), and these web sites: <http://australianmuseum.net.au> [www.birdsinbackyards.net](http://www.birdsinbackyards.net) <http://fourthcrossingwildlife.com> [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

*\*Send your creative grassland-focused answers to [newsletter@fog.org.au](mailto:newsletter@fog.org.au) for possible inclusion in the next newsletter!*



## *Annual General Meeting 18 March 2014: reports presented*

### **President's Report**

*Sarah Sharp*

Firstly I would like to thank all the committee members and others who have helped and guided me in my first year as President. As can be seen by the reports following, many people have made the job much easier. I gratefully acknowledge all their support and hard work.

As usual, FOG members were extremely busy in 2013. The advocacy group has put in submissions, attended one-off and ongoing meetings related to a variety of issues, including the Murrumbidgee to Googong Pipeline, Majura Parkway development, National Airport projects and National Capital Authority concerns. However, there was a considerable decrease in the number of submissions prepared in 2013 (from 33 in 2012 to 19 in 2013). This decrease is in part the result of the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment, which has reduced the number of single development proposals in the area, and resulted in more clarity in what will be developed and what will be retained in the conservation estate. Special thanks are due to Naarilla Hirsch for her continued extensive efforts to maintain the high profile of FOG as an advocate for the environment. Naarilla's efforts and achievements are not only appreciated by the FOG committee but also by the Conservation Council, who are cc'd in to all our submissions and rely on Naarilla's weekly web-checks to ensure they are aware of all issues that are publicised.

FOG members organised workparties at five sites in 2013. These included 16 workparties on national land: at Stirling Park, Scrivener's Hut (opposite Parliament House) and Yarramundi Reach, admirably guided by Jamie Pittock who also managed a grant for weed control at Stirling Park and encouraged many local residents to join FOG and the workparties.

John Fitz Gerald took over from Janet and Andy Russell facilitating workparties at Hall Cemetery, and Linda Spinaze again organised the annual monitoring event at 'Scottsdale' Bush Heritage property near Bredbo. There were no workparties at Old Cooma Common in 2013.

In addition FOG members have organised and participated in site visits and attended and participated in a forum held in Canberra and later in the year in Melbourne sponsored in part by the Myer Foundation and by Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C). We have provided input into several Myer products on grasslands and grassland management to be completed in 2014; staffed stalls at several fairs; helped with revegetation events held by Greening Australia; assisted with the publication of a brochure on Grassland Earless Dragon; provided input into several Conservation Council publications and participated in events and forums they have held; participated in the Molonglo Catchment Group's Black Mountain Bioblitz in November; and been in contact with groups and individuals over concerns and issues. In all, a truly remarkable team effort for a small group of volunteers.

FOG has active partnerships with a number of groups. FOG members participate in the Conservation Council Biodiversity Working Group; Bush on the Boundary (Gungahlin and Molonglo); the board of K2C; the Bush Heritage Trust (with the monitoring program for African Lovegrass at Scottsdale); Greening Australia (in various ways, including facilitating revegetation trials of multiple herbs at Stirling Park and Yarramundi Reach); the National Capital Authority; and the ACT Catchment Groups. These links are very important to enable better and stronger communication and outcomes.

Our secretary, Kris Nash, has handled, filed and dealt with over 250 pieces of communication in the year.

The FOG newsletter remains a major form of communication with our members and others. In addition to the copies sent to members our website statistics reveal that the newsletters were viewed between 500 and 1000 times. Communication remains an issue that we are striving to improve, and small changes have already been incorporated into the website. More to come in 2014.

Membership remains very steady, with over 200 members. Our members are the ones that give us the mandate to do what we do, and we do rely on this to ensure we are on track. Your support is appreciated. I would be happy to have feedback from any of you on any issues related to FOG's activities, or concerns you may have.

In 2013 a key achievement was the rezoning of Yarramundi Reach as 'open space', which precludes development on this land. However, we failed to achieve the same protection for Stirling Park, which remains a potential site for a new Prime Minister's Lodge. A further win, we believe, for the environment was the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment, which has provided better surety for protection of the conservation estate in Gungahlin. FOG members participated in the consultation process with the Conservation Council and Canberra Ornithologists Group in particular.

Concerns remain in the application of offsets, and whether they do result in at least a neutral outcome rather than continuous loss of grassy ecosystems. We are currently grappling with the Nature Conservation Bill in partnership with the Conservation Council and other umbrella groups. The original submission was due in December 2013 but, in conjunction with the Conservation Council, we requested an extension. Although there were considerable problems with this we have now (in 2014) achieved a good result, where the issues are to be dealt with in a

## *Annual General Meeting 18 March 2014: reports, continued*

round-table between stakeholders and members of each political party. The outcomes in terms of the effectiveness of the new Nature Conservation Act are yet to be seen.

Due to constitutional changes that were approved at a special meeting in July we now have our first FOG 'lifer'. Geoff Robertson was awarded Honorary Life Membership at that meeting, acknowledging his considerable and extensive input into FOG and grassland issues for well over a decade. His achievements were presented in an article in the September–October 2013 newsletter. I am sure all members join me in congratulating Geoff and thanking him for his on-going support of FOG.

In September John Fitz Gerald was awarded the ACT Government's Quiet Achievers Award. This award recognised the extensive work that he has undertaken with several environmental groups: not just FOG but also Greening Australia, Friends of The Pinnacle and STEP. I have been personally very grateful for John's sound advice and support after taking over presidency from him in March 2013. His award was well deserved.

I wish also to acknowledge the work of four people who are standing down or back from particular roles in FOG. John Buckley, our quiet and reliable recorder of committee-meeting minutes, is resigning from the committee to pursue other interests. Many thanks, John, and it was great to have you as part of the team. Stephen Horn has been Treasurer of FOG for three years but is officially standing down as Treasurer at the AGM. John Fitz Gerald wishes to stand down as Vice-President. Isobel Crawford handed over the role of editor of the newsletter prior to the March–April 2014 edition. Thank you all for the great jobs you have done over the past few years. I am pleased that Stephen, Isobel and John are remaining on the committee.

### **Secretary's Report**

*Kris Nash*

During 2013 as previously, the FOG secretary's role was shared between several people, with Janet Russell collecting and distributing posted mail, John Buckley taking responsibility for committee meeting minutes, and myself generally receiving, disseminating and storing electronic mail. The sharing of responsibilities continues to enable a simplified approach to the secretarial duties.

The main duties of the communications secretary relate to the receipt of communications (mostly via email) and the subsequent filing into appropriate places or dissemination to the relevant party. Details of all communications received and the corresponding action (including the file location) are kept and published each month. The monthly records are stored in the common Dropbox folder and are available to committee members. The actual communications are stored in appropriate folders on the secretary's email server (email correspondence), on a hard drive which is regularly backed up (PDF items for long term storage), as hard copies in an organised folder, or in temporary files deleted once the reference to the record has ceased, as per the record disposals policy.

Communications generally consist of emails or letters:

- outgoing from FOG to various parties including politicians, contractors, government agencies and other organisations;
- incoming from various parties to FOG requesting information or support;
- correspondence to/from members and ongoing projects; and
- newsletters, fliers and other printed matter.

Communications relating to specific FOG roles such as Advocacy and Financial Matters are kept by relevant subcommittees.

Approximately 255 pieces of communication were handled by the secretaries between January and December 2013, an average of about 21 pieces per month. This includes postal mail collected and distributed by Janet Russell or Margaret Ning (in lieu) but not communications held by other committee members relating to specific roles, such as advocacy or accounts.

The main task for 2014 will be to archive the electronic mail by discovering the most appropriate and efficient way to convert gmail messages for storage on a pen drive (or similar). I look forward to the challenge.

### **Treasurer's Report**

*Stephen Horn & Leon Pietsch*

This presents FOG's annual accounts for 2013 on an accrual basis. Accrual accounting takes the cash accounts and makes adjustments to remove some of the distortions that make analysis of the underlying data difficult. This is most evident in the separate treatment of grant-related transactions. Typically grants are received in one year but only fully expended in subsequent years. Handled on a cash basis this would mean a large surplus is followed by deficits in later years. On an accrual basis, grant income is carried forward to the year in which it is spent, resulting in no net contribution to cash balance. This also applies to subscription income, with only current year subscriptions credited and advance subscriptions held over to the year to which they apply. Where known, end-of-year liabilities or credits outstanding are booked (included in the year to which they refer, either by invoice or anticipated transfer, or a ledger adjustment).



## *Annual General Meeting 18 March 2014: reports, continued*

Taking interest earned on term deposits into account, FOG again made a small surplus in 2013.

FOG keeps two sets of accounts, General and Publication, for which separate bank accounts are maintained. Consolidated accounts can be produced which add the two accounts together. In this presentation, they have been kept separate for ease of understanding. The separation is motivated by the multi-year grants towards FOG publication activity, and separate management of production and sales, compared to incidental sales and transactions that accompany the main operation.

**General account:** In 2013 FOG had income of \$5512, expenses of \$4940, together with interest earned on term deposit less depreciation on fixed assets producing a surplus of \$905, increasing FOG resources (net assets) by this amount. At the end of 2013 FOG had assets of \$45,301 and liabilities of \$21,126, leaving net assets (members' funds) of \$24,175.

The main sources of income are: membership fees and donations (\$4870), income from the projects (\$1305), other income (\$120) and interest (\$589). Expenditure is attributed in equal measure to activity consumables (\$1192) and the newsletter and administrative cost (\$3366), depreciation of assets (\$302), and membership of groups (\$215). A project payment of a little over \$1000 from the investment fund had been allocated in 2013, but not yet processed. Taking this into account the result would have been close to balance.

FOG's assets in the General account comprise bank accounts (\$29,524), merchandise stocks (t-shirts and FOG cards, \$867), and equipment (\$678). FOG's liabilities arise largely from grants that have been received but not spent.

**Accounting for grants:** There is a special table which accounts for grants. This

shows unspent grants carried over to 2013, new grants received, additional income associated with grants, expenditure against grants, income derived from grants, and unspent grants carried over to 2014. Only the NCA grant with a 2013 top-up, and sitting fees from ACTEW, carry through to 2014 (\$1508 and \$375 respectively). The rollover funds are treated as liabilities. Administrative expense component of grants is recognised in the reports as the line 'Income from projects' which amounted to \$1305 in all.

**Merchandise:** Merchandise refers to goods (t-shirts and FOG cards) acquired by FOG for selling at a later date. These may be sold at a profit, or to cover costs, or given away. The purchase of such goods results in switching assets between cash and merchandise. As the goods are sold, the profit (or loss) on sales (sales less purchase price of goods sold and other expenses) is shown as income. Correspondingly, merchandise stocks (in the balance sheet) are reduced.

**Depreciation of equipment:** Equipment purchased for use over time (e.g. FOG's presentation display) is treated as a switch between cash assets (bank account) and equipment assets. Assuming that the equipment will provide five years of service, one fifth of the value of the assets is recorded as an expense (depreciation) in each year and the value of the asset is reduced in the balance sheet accordingly.

**Publication account:** The publication account shows income of \$3289, and expenses slightly higher at \$3481. Income consists of income on publication sales (\$1663) and interest (\$1626). Income on publication sales is calculated as sales, less the cost of publications sold. (For FOG publications such as *Grassland Flora* the cost of publications sold includes printing costs but not other publication costs such as payment of authors.) Expenses covered an

author payment under the 'Woodland Flora' publication grant (\$2914) and publication stock storage (\$567). Publications total assets at the end of the year were \$67,380, comprising cash assets of \$58,769 (of which \$43,139 is held as a term deposit) and publication stocks (\$7916). The assets include unspent grant funds of \$10,439 for *Grassland Flora* and \$38,618 for 'Woodland Flora', and publications stocks of \$7916. The remaining uncommitted assets equal \$10,407, compared to \$6593 at the end of 2012.

### **Membership**

*Kim Pullen*

As at 31 December 2013, FOG membership stood at 214, of whom 206 were paying members and eight were complimentary members. One member, Geoff Robertson, was awarded Honorary Life Membership during the year.

FOG is a Canberra-based organisation, and the majority of our 2013 members (127, or 59%) resided in the ACT; 72 (34%) lived in NSW; 10 (5%) in Victoria; 2 (1%) in Tasmania; and there was a single member in South Australia.

Membership payments for 2014 fell due on 1 January, and 117 members are already paid up for the year. In addition, there are five complimentary members, one Honorary Life Member (see above), and John Fitz Gerald has become a Voluntary Life Member.

What is 'complimentary' membership? FOG decided some years ago that all members over the age of 80 would be provided complimentary membership, and in addition there are times that FOG awards a free membership for a period, usually one year, for work done. For example, two students initiated a project to monitor Button Wrinklewort at Stirling Park, and provided and presented a detailed scientific report on the work. For this they were given a free membership.

## *Annual General Meeting 18 March 2014: reports, continued*

### **Advocacy**

*Naarilla Hirsch*

In 2013, the Advocacy Group has made 19 submissions on a range of conservation issues and proposals. In the ACT, these include submissions on the draft ACT trails strategy, several development proposals in the Majura and Jerrabomberra valleys, and input to the 2014–15 budget process. In NSW these mostly related to Travelling Stock Reserves and wind farm proposals. An area of concern is the continuing proposals for diplomatic missions and a new Prime Minister's residence impacting on grasslands in central Canberra, such as Stirling Park.

A major piece of work undertaken early in 2013 was the FOG input to the Biodiversity Working Group deliberations and its separate submission on the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment. This strategic approach to development in Gungahlin has resulted in a more considered and, I believe, better outcome for conservation in this area, as well as precluding comment on a series of small piecemeal development proposals in Gungahlin through the last year and over the next few.

Conservation of grassy ecosystems on national lands managed by the National Capital Authority (NCA) was an ongoing advocacy focus. FOG successfully advocated for the NCA to rezone the Yarramundi Reach grasslands to 'open space' under the National Capital Plan. FOG holds ongoing concerns for Stirling Park and Attunga Point because of potential future use of areas for new embassies or a new Prime Minister's Lodge. The Scrivener's Hut site has not been rezoned but our understanding is that this land is not intended to be developed.

Another on-going concern for the Advocacy Group is whether or not offsets are delivering the outcomes they are meant to. In most cases it is

too early to say if outcomes are being delivered. This is an area that we will be monitoring into the future.

A significant role of the Advocacy Group is networking with other environmental and community groups. Advocacy Group members attend meetings of groups such as the Gungahlin and the Molonglo Bush on the Boundary, the Conservation Council's Biodiversity Working Group, K2C, and the Parkcare coordinators' meetings. We work closely with the Conservation Council on issues such as the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment and the ACT's Nature Conservation bill. During the year Advocacy Group members have attended a number of different presentations and community consultation meetings concerning conservation matters. We have met with Canberra Airport Group and attended regular meetings of the Murrumbidgee to Googong (M2G) pipeline Environmental Reference Group. Via one of these we were able to arrange a visit to the M2G offset site at Williamsdale last spring.

### **Activities Program**

*John Fitz Gerald*

Major activities are reported elsewhere in these pages. In addition, FOG held trips to the Valley Ponds in Gungahlin, to Capertee Valley, to Bundidgerry near Murrumbateman, to Nerriga, and to Poplars grasslands in Jerrabomberra. FOG also participated in the K2C activity in the region as part of a Myer Grassland Forum informing a team of visitors from Victoria; then representatives travelled to Melbourne for a second round of discussions and visits. Community activities assisted by FOG during the year included the ACT Heritage Festival (two grasslands walks under the auspices of the Conservation Council), Environment Fairs at University of Canberra and Watson, and Bioblitz (CSIRO and partners). Major thanks to all who kept our busy program rolling throughout the year.

### **FOG Website**

*Richard Bomford*

The FOG website had about 17,500 visitors in 2013, excluding a similar number of visits from robots (search engine indexers). Ninety per cent of the visitors stayed for less than 30 seconds, so I think we can say they were not interested. The highest number of visitors came from the USA, but the greatest volume of downloads was by Australian visitors. Only 20% of visits came from search engines such as Google: the bulk came from direct addresses, i.e. visitors who already had a FOG web address. The most popular pages were 'Grasslands' and 'Grasses of NSW', followed by a number of the newsletters which were each viewed between 500 and 1000 times.

New pages added to the website were mostly advocacy submissions, followed by the year's newsletters. The calendar page was also updated regularly. The FOG committee had a look at the website during the year and suggested some improvements, including adding separate pages for several FOG activities.

The financial cost of the website remains minimal: less than \$10 a year for domain registration through OnlyDomains; and under \$15 a year for hosting through HostBig. Both services have worked well. The FOG email addresses are free and work extremely well, courtesy of Gmail.

### **Newsletter**

*Isobel Crawford*

Six issues of the newsletter were produced, the first five by Isobel Crawford and the sixth by Ann Milligan, a relatively new member of FOG. Many thanks to all of those who have contributed material and ideas.

### **e-Bulletin**

*Tony Lawson*

The FOG e-Bulletin is a complement to the bi-monthly newsletter. It



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reminds members about FOG activities that occur some time after the distribution of the newsletter, and advises of new events.

The e-Bulletin also advertises non-FOG events. The editor welcomes information on such events.

The e-Bulletin is distributed more widely to other organisations and to government agencies than the newsletter, to encourage an interest in FOG and to keep them informed of FOG's activities.

### Sales

*Sarah Sharp*

**Grassland Flora** and **Grassy Ecosystem Management Kit:** 215 copies of *Grassland Flora* were sold in 2013. Sales have dropped from previous years, but remain constant. At the end of the financial year 1381 books remained.

Sales of the *Grassy Ecosystem Management Kit* have dried up, and remaining copies will be given away, excluding direct postage and binder costs.

Income generated in 2013 from the book sales (sales less liabilities and book costs) was \$1270.40.

**'Woodland Flora':** Progress was made on the woodland flora book in 2013, but unfortunately we failed to complete it during the year. It will definitely be published this year, as part of FOG's 20th anniversary. Funding is healthy to cover all costs, including printing.

**T-shirts:** Only one sale in 2013. Because of high demand for smalls and mediums an extra 10 T-shirts were bought. There are 27 remaining.

### NCA projects

*Jamie Pittock*

In 2013 FOG expanded its work to conserve grassy ecosystems on national lands managed by the National Capital Authority (NCA)

in central Canberra. Our 2009 partnership agreement with the NCA was renewed, reiterating our organisations' commitments to conserving the Scrivener's Hut, Stirling Park and Yarramundi Reach grasslands. FOG's work for these sites has involved both on-ground work and advocacy.

**On-ground:** The number of workparties increased from 12 in 2012 to 16 in 2013 following the commencement of mid-monthly events in Stirling Park and increased support from residents of Yarralumla. FOG supporters contributed over 1000 hours in volunteer work in 2013, for a total of 3860 hours since 2009. Around 1200 cubic metres of woody weeds were cut, adding to a total of over 2900 cubic metres since 2009. The NCA provides FOG with \$6000 per year for workparty tools and other supplies. FOG's work was boosted by significant additional funding and support for weed control and reintroduction of wildflower species at Yarramundi Reach through the support of the ACT and Federal Governments' environmental programs, as well as from Greening Australia. In particular, an ACT Environment Grant of \$17,282 in 2013-14 is supporting contract weed spraying and revegetation.

Large areas of Stirling Park were weeded in 2013, including the southern half, as well as the first repeat weeding of parts of the eastern part of the Park that were first treated from 2009 onwards. Significant regeneration of groundcover species is evident where dense woody weeds have been removed. FOG's work has dovetailed with the NCA's program of patch burning, weed spraying, and the felling of over 200 blue gums, Cedar Wattle *Acacia elata*, and pines. Contract spraying has focused on African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula*, Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus*, Chilean Needle Grass *Nassella neesiana* and St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*.

At Yarramundi Reach two workparties focused on extensive weed spraying and replanting of grasses and forbs.

Significant progress has been made in weeding at Scrivener's Hut. The 23 February 2014 workparty was FOG's 50th since 2009, and completed the first cut-over of woody weeds at Scrivener's Hut.

Restoration of the three sites is now considerably advanced thanks to the support of so many FOG volunteers.

**Advocacy:** As outlined in the Advocacy report, FOG continues efforts to protect the three sites against proposed developments and for their dedication for nature conservation. In July 2013 Yarramundi Reach was rezoned as open space, adding additional protection. Further protection is required for Stirling Park in 2014, where there are a number of development proposals.

### Hall Cemetery

*Janet Russell*

Andy Russell and John Fitz Gerald between them managed the on-ground work this year. There were four officially convened working bees.

The main activities focused on removal of woody weed regrowth in the woodland area and on managing some of the entrenched weeds such as St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*, Fumitory *Fumaria* sp., Cleavers *Galium aparine* and Common Vetch *Vicia* sp., and the garden escape *Potentilla recta*. It was rather disappointing to find over 100 stems of the Sweet Briar *Rosa rubiginosa* emerging out of patches of grassland.

The new weed species recorded were Bridal Creeper *Asparagus asparagoides* and the exotic bulbous plants *Freesia* and Snowdrops *Galanthus* sp. As was mentioned in one Hall Cemetery report in the FOG newsletter, the Bridal Creeper, a Weed of National Significance, was quite localised and hopefully is now eradicated.

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On a more positive note, work has continued to progress on clearing the area beside the entrance gates to the cemetery in preparation for an informal garden showing off some of the representative species of the grassy woodland.

We recorded some new native species in the woodland this year including *Desmodium varians* and a poor-looking specimen of *Indigofera australis* that had survived the kangaroo grazing and which transformed itself on flowering. Fluke Bog-sedge *Schoenus apogon* was another addition to the list. There was one additional species identified in the cemetery, Bear's Ears *Cymbonotus* sp. Some of the Australian Blackthorns that FOG planted around the woodland have flowered well this summer and, hopefully, set seed.

As always, a lot of effort goes into managing the site and overall 77 person hours of general maintenance was done this year. FOG extends its grateful thanks to those involved.

### Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve (OCCGR)

*Margaret Ning & David Eddy*

It has been a quiet year for FOG's involvement at OCCGR. The project received a setback early in the year when the unspent money from the 2006 Environmental Trust grant had to be returned by Council because it was so long since the grant had been awarded, and the project was not yet complete. This resulted from delays with receiving formal approval from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) for the management committee's plan to use grazing to help manage the reserve, and accordingly grant expenditure on fencing and livestock water sources was delayed pending OEH approval. In this state of uncertainty, working bees were not held on the Common in 2013. FOG decided to send a letter to the Environmental Trust, with Council's blessing, explaining

the circumstances leading up to the return of unspent monies from the grant, but no response has yet been received. The letter also informed the Trust that the management committee intends to proceed with securing formal approval from OEH to use livestock on the reserve and then secure funding to implement the plan. We have also had correspondence and discussions during the past year with key OEH staff, who have indicated their in-principle support for the plan and suggested a way forward to allow this to happen. The next step is to resubmit our earlier section 91 Licence application, to use livestock to help manage the reserve, including a weed management plan and strategic grazing plan.

Fortunately in 2012 FOG had applied for and won another grant for work on OCCGR, this time from the NSW Department of Crown Lands to help manage weeds on Crown Lands. Specifically we planned to spend the money (\$4000) on controlling African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula* (ALG) and St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* (SJW). Because FOG currently has very healthy supplies of herbicide (thanks to the generosity of Cooma-Monaro Shire Council), it was possible to spend all the \$4000 on contractors, and it was split 50:50 on the ALG and the SJW. This work has been carried out over December 2013 and January 2014, hopefully at the optimal time for a really good result.

### Scottsdale Monitoring

*Linda Spinaze*

We enjoyed another fine day of monitoring on the Bush Heritage flagship property 'Scottsdale', near Bredbo, on 16 October 2013. This project was started in 2008, and FOG has continued to conduct yearly grassland monitoring to assess the impact of differing regimes on the growth and abundance of African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula* (ALG) and native species.

This year we had 10 enthusiastic volunteers to assist with running out lines, taking photos, and filling out the monitoring sheets. We broke up into three groups: one to monitor the original sites where cattle are grazed at various intensities, and two groups to monitor the newer sites where we are assessing the change in relative dominance of native grasses and ALG where there is no domestic stock grazing pressure.

During our lunch break we enjoyed a spontaneous inspection of Sue's wonderful nursery, and marvelled at the way she casually says that she puts in the seeds and 'up they come'! That certainly doesn't happen in my garden!

There may be a change in the monitoring next year because there are no longer any cattle being grazed on Scottsdale, partly because it is not convenient to the farmer any more, but also because ALG is very poor fodder, especially during winter. However, I presume that there is still value in the results even after grazing has ceased. I will leave it up to Sarah and other FOG members to decide whether we continue to monitor these sites for the full 10 years.

My thanks to everyone who contributed to the day, especially Sarah who takes home all the monitoring sheets and photographs, and makes sense of our measurements. We hope to see you again next year.

### Conservation Council (CC) Biodiversity Working Group

*Sarah Sharp*

Priority concerns addressed in 2013 included:

- Nature Conservation Bill: while submissions were due in December 2013 a request was sent in by FOG and other CC member groups to request an extension to deal with the complexity of the Bill. It was agreed to do a joint CC umbrella group response. Ongoing in 2014.



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- North Gungahlin Strategic Environmental Assessment: generally considered OK, but concern by Canberra Ornithologists Group about the small buffer (100 metres) given to protect Superb Parrot *Polytelis swainsonii* nesting trees in Throsby.
- CC offsets workshop and policy development: Draft Biodiversity Offsets Paper available at <http://conservationcouncil.org.au/publications/925/>
- Molonglo River Corridor Draft Statutory Plan of Management: concerns about implementation of planning process.
- Integrated Nature Conservation Agency.

In addition, these other issues were raised but not addressed:

- lack of implementation of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment's recommendations for Canberra Nature Park. Follow up required to determine level of implementation.
- lack of follow-up on Eastern Broadacre Study.
- TAMSD planting list: inappropriate species on the list. It needs updating.

### Bush on the Boundary (BoB)

Terms of Reference and Working Methods for BoB were drafted in mid 2013. The BoB operates primarily as an information-sharing forum with minimal formality but with strict confidentiality where requested by members. It is an 'enabling' group that allows member organisations and / or individuals to draw on a range of perspectives and pursue their projects and interests in a more collaborative and integrated way. Subject to confidentiality, individual members take issues raised back to their groups for consideration.

### BoB Molonglo

*Sarah Sharp*

BoB Molonglo comprises representatives from Conservation Council, Molonglo Catchment Group, Land and Development Agency (LDA), FOG, Rural Landholders Association, TAMS Parks and Conservation Service (PCS), Canberra Ornithologists Group, Greening Australia, ANU Fenner Group.

During 2013 BoB Molonglo:

- discussed recommendations for species lists for Molonglo, including non-invasive introduced species and natives of local habitat and species planting guide for residents;
- provided input into *Living on the Urban Edge* and *Managing the Urban Edge* (Conservation Council documents);
- was provided with regular updates on, and discussed, development issues (LDA) and planning and progress reports on operations (TAMS PCS). There is a full-time ranger undertaking on-ground management and an ecologist implementing management and monitoring and establishing research sites.

### BoB Gungahlin

*Tony Lawson*

The BoB Gungahlin group met at two-monthly intervals.

### Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park (STEP)

**A partner organisation of FOG**

*Andy Russell*

STEP has made good progress in continuing our understorey plantings at Forest 20 at the National Arboretum Canberra. We now have close to 80 different species planted in plots and the intention is that these

are planted in association with tree species where they would be found under natural conditions. These vary from larger shrubs such as *Grevillea*, *Leptospermum*, *Cassinia* and *Acacia* to grasses and other herbaceous plants. The Australian Native Plants Society is in the process of supplying STEP through a generous donation towards the purchase of understorey plants.

STEP held its AGM in mid-December. Margaret Bourke was elected President, David Shorthouse continues as Vice-President, and new committee members are Ross Dalton and Judy Smith. We have a new webmaster and our website has had a major upgrade: <http://www.step.asn.au>. We invite you to take a look. Max Bourke has taken on the role of newsletter editor, and produced an edition in mid-December. Further issues are planned for March, June and October. Distribution will be by email wherever possible.

Although STEP has been in existence for 10 years it remains an organisation with a small membership base and I would like to encourage individual FOG members to join STEP. I am aware that some FOG members are already members of STEP.

A current project is to plan and construct an outdoor Education space on Forest 20, as indicated in the Master Plan. Planning began in 2012 and early on-ground work has begun this year. A concept design was prepared by Amalie Shawcross during her work with the Arboretum as part of the ACT Government's Graduate Program. This program, which will demonstrate our partnership with the Arboretum, is partly funded from the ACT Government's Environment Grant Program.

STEP is planning a bush foods garden in the vicinity of our Education space with advice from members of the local Indigenous community.

## *Contacts for FOG groups and projects*

### **General inquiries**

Contact [info@fog.org.au](mailto:info@fog.org.au) or Sarah Sharp (0402 576 412) or Janet Russell (02 6251 8949).

**Activities** organises FOG field trips, talks, workshops, on-ground work, support to other groups, property visits and FOG's calendar. *Inquiries:* [activities@fog.org.au](mailto:activities@fog.org.au)

**Advocacy** prepares submissions and advocates on grassy ecosystem issues. It holds occasional meetings and workshops. *Inquiries:* [advocacy@fog.org.au](mailto:advocacy@fog.org.au)

**Committee & correspondence.** The committee organises, coordinates and monitors FOG activities. Members: Sarah Sharp (President), Kris Nash (Secretary), Leon Pietsch (Treasurer), Isobel Crawford, John Fitz Gerald, Naarilla Hirsch, Stephen Horn, Tony Lawson, Ann Milligan (newsletter), Katherina Ng, Margaret Ning, Kim Pullen, Rainer Rehwinkel, Andrew Zelnik. Public Officer: Andy Russell.

*Inquiries or correspondence:* [committee2@fog.org.au](mailto:committee2@fog.org.au)  
*Postal address:* PO Box 440, Jamison Centre ACT 2614.

**Communication** produces FOG e-Bulletin.  
*Inquiries:* [ebulletin@fog.org.au](mailto:ebulletin@fog.org.au)

**Financial matters**, excluding membership,  
*contact:* [treasurer@fog.org.au](mailto:treasurer@fog.org.au)

**Grassland flora and other sales.** FOG sells and distributes the book *Grassland Flora*, other books, cards and T-shirts. *Inquiries:* [booksales@fog.org.au](mailto:booksales@fog.org.au)

**Grassland monitoring.** FOG holds monitoring days at the Bush Heritage property 'Scottsdale' near Bredbo, NSW.  
*Inquiries:* [linda.spinaze@fog.org.au](mailto:linda.spinaze@fog.org.au)

**Hall Cemetery.** FOG with ACT Government holds regular working bees to protect leek orchids and generally restore Hall Cemetery. *Inquiries:* [john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au](mailto:john.fitzgerald@fog.org.au)

**Media spokesperson:** Sarah Sharp (0402 576 412).

**Membership.** New members are welcome. We have two new membership categories: \$20 per year for not-for-profit organisations, and a new 'voluntary life membership' category. Membership forms are at the website. *For inquiries, or to help with newsletter dispatch, contact:* [membership@fog.org.au](mailto:membership@fog.org.au)

**National land.** FOG, with the National Capital Authority, holds regular working bees at Yarramundi Reach (grasslands) and Stirling Park (woodlands), ACT.  
*Inquiries:* [jamie.pittock@fog.org.au](mailto:jamie.pittock@fog.org.au)

**Newsletter.** *News of Friends of Grasslands* is dispatched on the fourth Tuesday of February, April, June, August, October, December. Please send photos and articles about FOG or related grassland activities before the third Tuesday of those months to editor Ann Milligan at: [newsletter@fog.org.au](mailto:newsletter@fog.org.au)

**Old Cooma Common.** FOG, with Cooma-Monaro Shire Council, holds working bees twice yearly at the Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve.  
*Inquiries:* [margaret.ning@fog.org.au](mailto:margaret.ning@fog.org.au)

**Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park (STEP).** STEP is a regional botanic garden and recovery centre at the National Arboretum Canberra. STEP showcases local ecosystems, especially native grasses and forbs.  
*Inquiries:* [secretary@step.asn.au](mailto:secretary@step.asn.au), or The Secretary, STEP Inc., PO Box 440, Jamison Centre ACT 2614.

**Website, [www.fog.org.au](http://www.fog.org.au)** The website holds information about FOG and grasslands, back issues of the newsletter, and program details.  
*Inquiries:* [webmanager@fog.org.au](mailto:webmanager@fog.org.au)

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