



Friends of  
Grasslands

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

## FRIENDS OF GRASSLANDS (FOG)

*supporting native grassy ecosystems*

Prepared for the 2026 FOG Annual General Meeting, Wednesday, 18 March 2026

Conservation Council Offices, Lena Karmel Lodge, Barry Drive, Acton, ACT

All requirements of subsection 73(1) of the *ACT Associations Incorporation Act 1991* are met in this Annual Report of Friends of Grasslands Inc. for the financial year 2025. Specifically, the presentation of statement to members requires that “At each annual general meeting of an incorporated association the following documents must be presented by the committee for the consideration of the meeting:

- (a) the required statement of the association’s accounts for the most recently ended financial year of the association;
- (b) a copy of the reviewer’s or auditor’s report to the association in relation to the association’s accounts for that financial year;
- (c) a report signed by 2 members of the committee stating—
  - (i) the name of each member of the committee of the association during the most recently ended financial year of the association and, if different, at the date of the report; and
  - (ii) the principal activities of the association during the most recently ended financial year and any significant change in the nature of those activities that occurred during that financial year; and
  - (iii) the net profit or loss of the association for the most recently ended financial year.”



Jamie Pittock, President 2025



Emily Sutcliffe, Secretary 2025

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Friends of Grasslands (FOG) acknowledges and celebrates First Nations Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the grassy ecosystems that we strive to conserve. We respect their Elders past and present. We appreciate that grassy ecosystems are cultural landscapes. We commit to collaborating with Traditional Custodians to manage grassy ecosystems to support traditional and ongoing social, economic, cultural and spiritual values.

This report was compiled and edited by Emily Sutcliffe, Secretary of FOG 2025, from contributions provided by active members of FOG. I am grateful to Andrew Zelnik for his photos and assistance with presentation and to Ann Milligan for her thorough editing and support. Thanks also to Richard Bomford for his website assistance and to Helen Sims for the template and words she provided in previous annual reports, much of which is used here. The report goes only a short way towards describing just how much commitment of time and energy is freely given in any year to the support of native grassy ecosystems. **To all volunteers, THANK YOU!!**

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**Front Cover Image:**

A mature Yellow Box tree (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) at ACT Parks & Conservation Service land, Kowen ACT, during a FOG visit to that grassy woodland in October 2024. Photo: Andrew Zelnik

**Back Cover Images:**

**Top** – A FOG work party in "our" Natural Temperate Grassland patch at Budjan Galindji Nature Reserve, Franklin ACT, in March 2025. Photo: Andrew Zelnik

**Bottom** – Inspecting a grassland and Snowgum Woodland patch during a FOG visit to one Mulloon Creek Natural Farm, Mulloon Institute, Mulloon NSW, in June 2025. Photo: Andrew Zelnik

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# Friends of Grasslands Vision and Rationale

The Friends of Grasslands Inc. vision, together with clarified goals and the rationale behind the vision, have remained unchanged since January 2022.

*Healthy, biodiverse and connected remnant native grassy ecosystems continue to support life on Earth*

## **FOG will achieve this vision by:**

- Acting to halt the decline of native grassy ecosystems and their biodiversity and achieve the maximum level of recovery possible;
- Promoting and facilitating protection of the biodiversity of grassy ecosystems within and across the landscape;
- Recognising the need for community stewardship of these ecosystems, thereby continuing the cultural care provided by the Aboriginal peoples for millennia;
- Respecting the views and knowledge of all stakeholders and working with them to achieve our vision;
- Facilitating implementation of best practice management and encouraging development of methods to improve conservation through hands-on application, research, education, strategic planning and monitoring;
- Advocating for effective environmental laws, enforcement mechanisms, planning and management to underpin protection and conservation of native grassy ecosystems.

## **Rationale:**

- Native ecosystems and their biodiversity have intrinsic value.
- Resilient native ecosystems are vital to our physical well-being through the provision of ecosystem services.
- Human connections and interaction with nature and biodiversity are vital to our mental well-being.
- The cultural traditions of Aboriginal peoples underpin our unique native habitats and guide the principles and implementation of sustainable and conservative use of our grassy ecosystems within the broader landscape.
- Biodiversity cannot be sustained in isolated remnants.

## Membership Report – *Ann Milligan*

FOG gained 16 new members during 2025, bringing the total membership to 190, one more than at the end of 2024. During the year a few members resigned, or didn't renew, or moved away for work or family reasons, so by December FOG had 8 members in Victoria, 2 in SA, 1 in WA, 1 in Tasmania, 115 in ACT and 63 in NSW. Of these, 12 were not-for-profit groups, and 7 held corporate memberships.

## FOG Committee and FOG Roles in 2025

There are many others, unnamed in this report, who also contribute to fieldwork and working parties, and who attend events that FOG holds.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Members</b>
President	Jamie Pittock
Vice presidents	Julia Raine, Matt Whitting
Secretary	Emily Sutcliffe
Treasurer	David Johnson
Committee members	Paul Cheeseman, Matt Kent, Jeanette Mill, Matt Mullaney, Margaret Ning, Rainer Rehwinkel, Sarah Sharp, Helen Sims
Participating observers on committee	Ann Milligan
Membership (sub-committee)	Ann Milligan (coordinator), Margaret Ning, Sarah Sharp
Storage unit	Sarah Sharp(contact), Margaret Ning, Geoff Robertson, Ann Milligan
Post box	Julian Raine, Margaret Ning, Ross Dalton (STEP))
Public officer	Matt Whitting
Health and Safety	Jamie Pittock
Record management	Sarah Sharpe, Helen Sims
Governance issues	Matt Whitting, Helen Sims
ACNC reporting	Helen Sims
Dropbox management	John Fitz Gerald (changes), (Sarah Sharpe host)
FOG email administrator	Richard Bomford
Auditor	Pauline Hore
Banking:	David Johnson, Margaret Ning, Sarah Sharpe, Paul Cheeseman
Supported & Strategic projects	Andrew Zelnik, Matt Kent, FOG committee
Book sales	Paul Cheesman, Sarah Sharp
Advocacy group	Matt Whitting (coordinator), Michael Mulvaney, Jamie Pittock, John Fitz Gerald, Rainer Rehwinkle, Geoff Robertson, Julia Raine, Trevor Preston, Alice Hathorn, Sarah Sharpe
Newsletter group	Paul Archer (editor, publisher), Libby Keen, Margaret Ning, Fay Wareham, Ann Milligan.
Events and notices bulletin & Special bulletins	Eleanor Galvin, Margaret Ning
Facebook administrators	Rainer Rehwinkel + Trevor Preston, Julia Raine, Sarah Hnatiuk, Geoff Robertson
Website	Richard Bomford (management), Julia Raine, Ann Milligan (review)
General inquiries line	Margaret Ning
Field trips	Margaret Ning (coordinator), Andrew Zelnik
Annual mid-winter event	Margaret Ning, Ann Milligan, Fay Wareham
Vegwatch monitoring	John Fitz Gerald
On ground project coordinators	Margaret Ning, Matt Kent, John Fitz Gerald, Sarah Sharp, Jamie Pittock, Linda Spinaze.
Representing FOG in other organisations	John Fitzgerald, Matt Whitting, Jamie Pittock, Michael Mulvaney, Sarah Sharp, Rainer Rehwinkle, Helen Sims, Julia Raine, Margaret Ning, Matt Kent, Naarilla Hirsch, Andrew Zelnick

## President's Report – *Jamie Pittock*

In 2025, Friends of Grasslands sustained a strong, diverse program dedicated to the protection, restoration, and promotion of native grassy ecosystems across the ACT and southeastern NSW. Throughout the year, our volunteers, members, and advocates worked across multiple reserves, contributed to ecological research and monitoring, engaged communities through excursions and public events, and played a vocal role in land-use and environmental policy debates. We are a dynamic organisation delivering practical conservation work for grassy ecosystems while responding to significant environmental pressures and policy challenges.

FOG maintained a sustained presence in consultations and decision-making processes across the ACT, NSW, and the federal sphere. Work on the draft ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2026–2036 illustrates the sophistication of this engagement; FOG contributed hundreds of volunteer hours responding to formal and informal requests from government, providing evidence-based feedback, and offering proactive recommendations to improve the protection of grassy ecosystems. The organisation also intervened repeatedly on planning matters affecting endangered ecological communities and species, including the Grassland Earless Dragon and the Golden Sun Moth. The airport Northern Road is a bittersweet case where an unnecessary and ecologically devastating development proceeded. However, our persistent advocacy helped secure improved environmental conditions and new research funding. Advocacy has a very high workload. I particularly thank Advocacy Committee convenor Matt Whitting and expert contributor Sarah Sharp for their work in 2025.

FOG's volunteers again contributed substantial hours to on-ground conservation work across a range of reserves and restoration sites in 2025, including Budjan Galindji, Gurubung Dhaura, Yarramundi Reach, Blue Gum Point, Hall Cemetery, Top Hut Travelling Stock Reserve, Scottsdale, and the Ginninderry "scrape" restoration area. Many of these sites show long-term improvement attributable directly to FOG's stewardship. Productive collaboration with agencies has been essential to get better environmental outcomes, and we thank the National Capital Authority, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, South East Local Land Services, and Bush Heritage.

FOG undertook fifteen community activities in 2025, including field trips, monitoring demonstrations, guided walks, and collaborative events with landcare and conservation groups. Our bi-monthly newsletter continues to serve as a respected educational resource, providing high-quality information on plants, animals, ecological management, and advocacy. Engagement through Facebook, e-bulletins, and regular appearances on Radio Landcare further extended FOG's reach. Our membership grew to 190, reflecting public interest and the visibility generated through FOG's activities.

On the governance and project-management front, FOG's Committee oversaw our compliance with regulatory requirements. The committee and volunteers delivered progress on legacy grant acquittals and supported new strategic projects that channel funds into targeted, long-term conservation initiatives. Mapping ACT grassy ecosystem remnants and developing a management plan for Gundry Travelling Stock Reserve are examples of the systematic and strategic approaches to conservation that FOG is investing in.

Friends of Grasslands is a highly effective and increasingly influential conservation organisation. Our work in advocacy, restoration, education, governance, and community engagement, reflects an organisation that is crucial for the conservation of native grassy ecosystems.

## Financial Report – *David Johnson*

Consistent with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 as Treasurer, David Johnson will present financial reports for 2025 as below and the Audit Report from Pauline Hore at FOG's 2026 AGM.

### General Account

The General Account had a balance of \$95,629 at the end of 2025, down from \$104,996 at the end of 2024. This represents a net loss of \$9,367 for 2025, following an income of \$10,264 in 2024. Several factors combined to give this fall in income, the main one being a fall in the amount of the Blue Gum Point (BGP) grant received in 2025 (\$16,102 – it was \$28,887 in 2024, and an increase in expenditure on the previous BGP grant project (\$32,650 spent in 2025–up from \$26,706 in 2024).

Income from memberships grew in 2025 (\$6,870 – up from \$5,490 in 2024).

Book sales fell slightly in 2025 (\$5,979–from \$7,016 in 2024) but remained higher than publication and storage costs (\$5,743).

### Gift Fund

The balance of the Gift Fund fell by \$5,002 during 2025, somewhat more than it fell in 2024 (\$1,834). A small increase in donations (\$7,830 – up from \$7,400) did not make up for an increase in expenditure (\$12,832 - up from \$9,234). The increase in expenditure was mainly due to costs related to several new funded projects initiated during the year. The two largest expenditures were for the grassland mapping project (\$4,290), and the Gundry TSR management plan (\$6,864). The 2025 end of year balance for the Gift Fund was \$28,459.

### Other assets

On 31 December 2025, FOG also held \$31,271 in Term Deposits, and \$4,158 in book stocks.

**Friends of Grasslands General Account y.e. 31 December 2025**  
**Balance Sheet**

	2025	2024
<b>Assets</b>		
General Account	95,629	104,996
<b>Investments</b>		
Term Deposit 2502	10,643	10,259
Term Deposit 2504	7,851	7,554
Term Deposit 2505	12,778	12,199
Consolidated Term deposits	31,271	30,011
<b>Value of stock b.f. 1 Jan 25</b>		
<b>Publications</b>		
Stock Woodland Flora	1,676	1,307
Stock Grassland Flora	1,375	1,953
Stock bought	6,065	7,455
	<u>9,116</u>	<u>10,715</u>
Less cost of books sold/unaccounted etc	4,958	7,676
Value of stock c.f. 31 Dec 25	<u>4,158</u>	<u>3,039</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u><u>131,058</u></u>	<u><u>138,046</u></u>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Grants</b>		
NCA	7,934	9,854
ACT Govt Hall Cemetery	276	276
ACT Govt Blue Gum Point	14,584	28,887
<b>Total Grants</b>	22,794	39,017
FOG Equity 31 Dec 2025	108,264	99,029
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u><u>131,058</u></u>	<u><u>138,046</u></u>

**FRIENDS OF GRASSLANDS INC. INCOME**  
**Consolidated General & Publication Acc**

		2025	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Membership		6,870.00	
<b>Sales</b>			
Publications	Woodland	3,554.00	
	Grassland	2,425.00	5,979.00
Sales of other pubs		434.20	
Costs of WF and GF		(6,065.29)	
Post/Handling charges-Pubs		(112.38)	
Cost of storage		-	(5,743.47)
<b>Other income</b>			
Donations for Gift Fund		1,600.00	
Sales, services & other income		3,845.00	5,445.00
<b>Grants</b>			
NCA		6,000.00	
ACT Gov YGDR		-	
ACT Gov HC		-	
ACT Gov BGP		16,102.00	22,102.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>			<b>34,652.53</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>From Current Grant Funds</b>			
<b>NCA</b>			
Contractor exp		7,920.00	
Gen exp - J. Pittock		-	
FOG Admin costs		-	7,920.00
<b>Blue Gum Point</b>			
Contractor Exp		30,405.15	
FOG Admin		2,245.00	32,650.15
<b>Administration</b>			
Storage- Lock-up		1,584.00	
Insurance		615.00	
PO Box rental		148.50	
DropBox fee		184.67	
Audit		150.00	
Other		-	2,682.17
<b>On-ground exp</b>			
On-ground Cons & R&M		-	
<b>Other expenses</b>			
Supported projects		-	
Support/member other organisati		204.00	
Printing		31.50	
Costs of meetings/workshops		-	
Travel - general		-	
Purchase of consumables		180.41	
Postage newsletter & pubs		-	
Admin fees NCA		-	
Other cash expenditure		351.66	767.57
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>			<b>44,019.89</b>
<b>Net Income/(Expense)</b>			<b>(9,367.36)</b>

Friends of Grasslands Gift Fund Accounts y.e. 31 December 2025  
Income & Expenditure

	2025	2024
<b>Income</b>		
Donations		
Supported Projects		
Top Hut TSR	1,000	1,000
Hall Cemetery		
Other	6,830	6,400.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>7,830</b>	<b>7,400</b>
<b>Less Expenses</b>		
Supported Projects	1,500	4,500
Top Hut TSR		832
Hall Cemetery		1,084
FP-NatMapR		
FP-Mapping	4,290	
FP-TSRs	6,864	
Other	177.95	2,818
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>12,832</b>	<b>9,234</b>
<b>Net Income/(Expenses)</b>	<b>(5,002)</b>	<b>(1,834)</b>

Friends of Grasslands Gift Fund Accounts y.e. 31 December 2025  
Balance Sheet

	2025	2024
<b>Assets</b>		
Public Fund Bank Account	28,459	30,148
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>28,459</b>	<b>30,148</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Top Hut TSR	3,702	2,702
Hall Cemetery	416	416
FP-NatMapR	5,000	
FP-Mapping	210	
FP-TSRs	8,136	
Balance funds carried forward	10,994	27,030
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>28,459</b>	<b>30,148</b>

# Audit Opinion for Friends of Grasslands Inc Financial Report for year ended 31 December 2025

## To the Members of the Friends of Grasslands Incorporated

### Scope

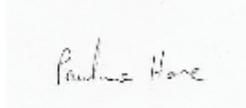
I have audited the financial report of Friends of Grasslands Incorporated as set out in the Consolidated General and Publications Accounts Financial Reports for the year ended 31 December 2025 and the Gift Fund Account as of 31 December 2025. The Friends of Grasslands Incorporated committee is responsible for the financial reports. I have conducted an independent audit of the financial report 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 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 of 31 December 2025 and the results of its operations for the year ended 31 December 2025.



Pauline Hore JP(ACT); CPA  
20 Ross Smith Cres  
Scullin ACT 2614  
22 February 2026

## Advocacy Report – Matt Whitting

If any FOG member wants to see or discuss any submission or letter, or any aspect of this report, feel free to email me (Matt) at [advocacy@fog.org.au](mailto:advocacy@fog.org.au). All FOG's submissions in response to open invitations to comment are accessible on our website (<https://www.fog.org.au/advocacy.htm>). We do not publish correspondence because it is considered private between the sender and responder. During 2025, some submissions and letters were submitted jointly with other entities, easing the advocacy workload.

**Throughout 2025**, FOG advocated for the better protection and management of Natural Temperate Grasslands (NTG) and Box Gum Woodlands (BGW).

The advocacy group met and agreed on our responsibilities and priorities in March 2025. We then stayed in contact, including when attending meetings with developers, and at particular forums or meetings:

- quarterly Biodiversity Conservation Forum<sup>1</sup> which “brings together community and government to share, consult and collaborate on protecting and enhancing” nature;
- monthly Biodiversity Working Group (BWG) convened by the Conservation Council ACT Region (**Council**).<sup>2</sup>

This report is arranged: geographically, ACT, NSW and matters national, followed by short reports on two special cases: Lawson North Grasslands, and The Northern Road.

### **Engagement at the ACT level, including on the next ACT Nature Conservation Strategy**

FOG's 2026 AGM is being held during an open public comment period. The ACT Government has invited comment on the *draft ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2026–2036* (**next Strategy**). However, to confirm, FOG has been advocating about the content of the next Strategy for over two years. It was September 2024 when the ACT Government's Nature Conservation Policy Team (**NCP Team**) first openly asked a targeted group of stakeholders, including FOG, for feedback on ‘update one’.

In 2025, FOG members have been very generous, thank you(!), contributing hundreds of hours of help and advice that relate to and will influence the next Strategy:

- direct to the NCP Team, responding to that Team's formal and informal requests – this includes feedback prepared after updates two and three were shared with FOG in December 2024 and July 2025, respectively,
- indirectly, by providing advice to ACT ministers and officials in the City and Environment Directorate (CED) – each of these office holders shapes the vision and will be responsible for implementing the actions in the next Strategy, and
- independently, as FOG has worked pro-actively to gather evidence and build our case for improvements to grassy ecosystem conservation in the ACT.

In all this time, the Biodiversity Network proposal driven by Sarah Sharp has been *central* to FOG's advocacy. FOG has consistently sought better, more-coordinated management across tenures, and the permanent protection of grassy ecosystem remnants outside the ACT's protected area system.

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<sup>1</sup> In the November meeting, this forum was reconstituted and is now the Nature Conservation Forum. See: [www.act.gov.au/directorates-and-agencies/city-and-environment-directorate/nature-conservation-forum](http://www.act.gov.au/directorates-and-agencies/city-and-environment-directorate/nature-conservation-forum)

<sup>2</sup> The Council's BWG is described on this page: <https://conservationcouncil.org.au/get-involved/>

A major body of work in 2025 has seen FOG (Sarah Sharp) identify and map intact natural temperate grassland areas we consider should be included in a biodiversity network. That work feeds advocacy that is ongoing.

In 2025, FOG commented on plans for specific areas and species:

- ACT Emergency Services Agency's *Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (v5)*,
- reforms needed to the *Public Unleased Land Act 2013 (ACT)*,
- Draft ACT Controlled Native Species Management Plan – Eastern Grey Kangaroo,
- nomination documents proposing to list each of three invertebrate species in the Endangered category of the ACT Threatened Native Species List,
- the removal of the 'Future Urban Area' overlay over Bluett's Block and Coombs Peninsula,
- landscape plans for the Drake Brockman Drive road reserve.

FOG commented on proposals for rezoning and/or development in the ACT that threaten:

- NTG – the proposal to rezone for and then construct the Evolution Business Park east of HMAS Harman in Jerrabomberra,
- BGW on a 16-hectare development in Bruce – FOG provided advice on additional measures to mitigate impacts and promote connectivity,
- Golden Sun Moth (GSM) habitat and mature aged trees vital for Superb Parrots and Gang-gang Cockatoos – the draft Environmental Impact Statement for Light Rail to Woden,
- BGW connectivity – a draft Environment Impact Statement, and then a referral under the EPBC Act, for the realignment of a high voltage transmission line in West Belconnen,
- GSM habitat – the Yass Valley Shire has been asked to rezone an offset site on the NSW side of the border in West Belconnen (it is an offset for the future extension of Ginninderra Drive) – the new zoning would permit the construction and operation of an electricity sub-station which FOG says is incompatible with the offset site's dedication to GSM conservation.

### **Engagement on vegetation clearing and other matters in NSW**

In April 2025, FOG responded to three separate invitations from the NSW Natural Resources Commission concerning options for improving the regulation and incentives that affect outcomes for high conservation value ecosystems on rural land managed privately in NSW. In July 2025, NSW Local Land Services invited comment on the NSW Clearing Code; again, FOG responded.

At the heart of each of FOG's four submissions lies serious concern about the NSW Government's failure to protect grassy ecosystems. NSW has not even acted to list Natural Temperate Grassland as a threatened ecological community. In a previous annual report Sarah Sharp explained she has nominated this community for listing at the NSW level. FOG is still waiting for action.

FOG commented on Yass Valley Shire's *draft Cemeteries Management Plan and Masterplan*, and on a private developer's proposal to construct and operate Monaro Rock Quarry Project at Royalla in NSW. If approved, this damaging proposal will result in the loss of 23 hectares of critically endangered Box Gum Woodlands, and an additional 55 hectares of grassy forest habitat for threatened bird species.

### **Engagement on matters national**

During 2025, several invitations for comment at the national level were directly relevant to the protection and management of grassy ecosystems:

- reforms to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* that passed the Australian Parliament in November 2025,
- a paper discussing the implementation of *Australia's Strategy for Nature*,

- discussion papers on draft ‘methods’ by which land managers will be able to protect and restore nature for profit under the *Nature Repair Act 2023*.

It is not easy for regulators to simultaneously restrict damaging activities and require positive land management actions; however, that is precisely what is needed when it comes to conserving grassy ecosystems. FOG took opportunities to recommend high-level adjustments to regulatory, economic and other incentives as a way of promoting the better conservation of grassy ecosystems.

FOG also commented on the *Draft National Recovery Plan for the Golden Sun Moth*.

### **The Lawson North Grasslands Case**

The ACT Government’s 2017 NTG Action Plan recognises Lawson North as one of the last remaining large relatively intact patches of NTG in the ACT.<sup>3</sup> It also commits to “Conserve all remaining areas of NTG in the ACT that are in moderate to high ecological condition.”<sup>4</sup>

Today, the Lawson North grasslands, which includes species such as the Striped Legless Lizard, are under an existential threat. Throughout 2025, FOG members met with and wrote to Defence Housing Australia (DHA) pointing out simple steps DHA could take to improve its land management practices. Unfortunately, FOG sees no evidence DHA has taken any of the steps needed to manage weed spread or the increase in biomass. Letters to responsible ministers are given evasive responses. Our advocacy on this case is ongoing.

### **The Northern Road Case**

For more than a decade, FOG actively opposed the proposal by Canberra Airport Group (CAG) to construct and operate ‘the Northern Road’ around the north-east corner of Canberra Airport. The proposal received a green light on 29 May 2020. Then, on 1 September 2022, a Threatened Species Scientific Committee document showed the *Canberra* Grassland Earless Dragon (**Dragon**) is genetically distinct from other earless dragon species found between Bathurst and Melbourne. On 23 September 2022, citing this new information, FOG asked the then Federal Environment Minister to suspend the approval for the road.

Fast forward to 8 January 2025. On that date, FOG wrote to the same Minister reiterating the dire state of the three known populations of the Dragon. We highlighted CAG’s failure to provide new or acceptable options to avoid the proposal’s impacts to the Dragon’s Airport population. On 17 January 2025, FOG, a Dragon, and the Conservation Council protested ([Photo 1](#)).

After no further communication from DCCEEW, on 20 Feb 2025 FOG received a tip-off that CAG had begun bulldozing FOG and the Conservation Council organised a snap protest on the lawns north of the DCCEEW head office on Monday 24 Feb 2025.

FOG’s advocacy did not prevent this road. However, we consider our advocacy was instrumental in the following decisions (and thus should benefit Dragons and their NTG habitat into the future):

- the ACT Government’s decision to allocate \$4.5 million to support implementation of its new Action Plan for the Dragon<sup>5</sup>,

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/2545968/natural-temperate-grassland-action-plan-2017.pdf](https://www.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/2545968/natural-temperate-grassland-action-plan-2017.pdf) pp. 128–129

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/2545968/natural-temperate-grassland-action-plan-2017.pdf](https://www.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/2545968/natural-temperate-grassland-action-plan-2017.pdf), p. 124

<sup>5</sup> **Action Plan:** [https://www.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/2848016/grassland-earless-dragon-action-plan-2025-2035.pdf](https://www.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2848016/grassland-earless-dragon-action-plan-2025-2035.pdf); **Announcement:** <https://www.act.gov.au/our-canberra/latest-news/2025/may/funding-boost-to-save-grassland-earless-dragon>

- the Federal Environment Minister’s delegate attaching additional conditions to CAG’s approval, requiring CAG to (a) improve its design for the road, and (b) compensate for its damage by rehabilitating NTG on the Airport, and contributing \$1 million toward research that will test the efficacy of under-road passageways that will link vital areas of Dragon habitat,
- the decision of the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment to investigate the Northern Road Case. When this report is tabled in the Legislative Assembly, FOG hopes it will shine a light on CAG’s decision to proceed with, and the Australian Government’s failure to prevent, this unnecessary road.

Although not directly related to the Northern Road Case, it is relevant to note here that in 2025 FOG has asked the Federal Environment Minister to list ‘critical habitat’ on the Critical Habitat Register maintained under the EPBC Act, and we wrote to the Victorian Environment Minister urging him to support the adoption of a draft recovery plan for all four species of grassland earless dragon.



*Photo 1. Representatives of FOG and the Conservation Council ACT Region protest with a Dragon at the north-east end of ‘the Northern Road’ (17 January 2025). Photo: Hedda M.*

# Communication Report

## News of Friends of Grasslands – *Paul Archer*

The bi-monthly *News of Friends of Grasslands* is FOG's principal communication medium. This report applies to the six newsletters covering the 2025 calendar year.

Since 1994 its articles have related how FOG and other agencies, groups and individuals support grassy ecosystems through on-ground work, research and advocacy. The January–February 2026 issue (distributed by email on 6 January 2026) was the 178<sup>th</sup> in the series. All issues are freely available and searchable on the FOG website.

As in previous years, articles, drawings, and photographs imparted well-researched information relevant to grassy ecosystems and respectful of First Nations' traditional land management practices. FOG's continuing advocacy was outlined, and submissions summarised. Regular articles covering the plants, insects and animals of grasslands and grassy woodlands added interest and variety while news items and reports of FOG's on-ground work and field visits kept members up to date and informed.

In mid-2024 FOG started emailing the newsletter to members instead of printing and mailing them. Printed copies now are mailed only to the few members who do not have email access.

Thank you to everybody involved: the editorial team (proofreading, editing and distribution); photographers and artists, and of course the writers themselves who consistently come up with such interesting, informative and high-quality material.

## Events and Notices (aka 'eBulletin') – *Margaret Ning, Eleanor Galvin*

FOG's Events and Notices are emailed out irregularly between FOG's bi-monthly newsletters, to give updates and reminders about FOG's and other relevant groups' upcoming events and activities. The information is provided by the various organisers. In 2025 nine Events and Notices were issued, to everyone on the FOG address list, including non-members and members who have said they don't want them.

## Special Bulletins – *Margaret Ning, Eleanor Galvin*

In 2025 one Special Bulletin was distributed by email, giving information about the FOG AGM: that is, Notice of Meeting, draft agenda and nomination form for the committee.

## Facebook – *Rainer Rehwinkel*

The following are the metrics supplied by Meta on the FOG Facebook page for 2026, providing us a view of how we are engaging with our Facebook audience. This report compares our 2026 figures with last year's when these are available. Note that Facebook seems to publish their statistics differently each year making it difficult to directly compare year to year on all items. Nevertheless, the figures below are sufficient to show how FOG's Facebook page is reaching its audience. As in

previous years, Facebook puts out performance reports for the FOG Facebook page on 28-day and 90-day intervals. This year's performance is summarised below:

### **Performance breakdowns**

**In 2026**, the FOG Facebook page had 1161 followers (compared with 1136 followers in 2025); this is an increase of 25 on last year's figure.

In 2025, in the last 28 days prior to 9 March, our page had 3098 engagements (post hits, likes, comments, etc., an increase of 2805 over last year), and 46 items of published content (an increase of 30 over last year).

**In 2026**, in the last 28 days prior to 26 February, our page had 2044 views, with 44 interactions, which is up 109.5% from the previous 28 days.

### **Age and gender**

Facebook supplies information about the age and gender breakdowns of our followers. Of the total, a greater proportion are women than men (with actual percentages not available). Age groups are as follows: 18–24 yo: 2.8%, 25–34 yo: 12.8%, 35–44 yo: 19.3%, 44–54 yo: 21.7%, 55–64 yo: 18.6% and 65+yo: 24.8%.

Facebook further breaks our engagement down by countries. Once again it is not surprising that 97.9% are in Australia. Followers are in other countries, including the USA (0.7%), United Kingdom (0.4%), Indonesia (0.3%), Vietnam (0.2%) and Cambodia (0.1%).

### **Regional breakdowns**

And finally, there's a breakdown by cities and towns:

- Canberra (70.2%)
- Sydney (11.4%)
- Melbourne (7.6%)
- Queanbeyan (2.4%)
- Brisbane (2%) and
- Adelaide (1.5%)

This report of the Facebook page's performance to the AGM shows returned values that provide a rich means of understanding how our Facebook page is faring, and thus, how we are engaging with the community via this medium.

## **Website – *Richard Bomford***

2025 was another smooth year for the FOG website. Most of the work involved keeping the calendar, newsletters, and advocacy pages up to date. The statistics package on the server computers recorded about 260,000 visits (up from 210,000 in 2024) and 130 GB in downloads (up from 100 GB). Those numbers probably include automated 'visits' from web crawlers – programs including those that update the databases held by Google and other search engines – so they aren't the number of what we might refer to as 'visitors'. But probably the year-on-year figures have some bearing on whether the site is getting more or less visited.

In December 2025, the brochure 'Grasses: Habits and Habitats' was the most popular download (545 times, c.f. 375 times the previous December), followed by 'Grasses of NSW' (419 downloads), 'How can I get help for grasslands?' (324 downloads in the month) and the information page 'What is

a grassland? (262). The numbers jump around quite a lot month to month, but the favourite pages seem to be pretty much perennial.

The FOG calendar was downloaded 172 times in December 2025, and the Advocacy page 173 times, much the same as the previous year.

The [fog.org.au](http://fog.org.au) domain is registered with OnlyDomains; the website is hosted by HostMetro in the USA (at no extra charge as part of a multiple hosting package); and FOG email services are provided faultlessly and free of charge by Google. In total, the current arrangement costs about \$20 a year.

## Book Sales – Paul Cheeseman

Thanks to Sarah Sharp for her professional running of book sales for FOG over many years. I hope I can match her achievements.

Thanks also to the many members who conducted book sales at the many public events and workshops which FOG attends.

Our sales for 2025 were (2024 sales in parentheses).

- Woodland flora: 188 (246)
- Grassland flora: 129 (356)
- Molonglo Field Guide: 8 (3)
- Ngunnawal Plant Use: 6 (0)

Financial data are covered in the Treasurer's report and are not detailed here.

Some minor discrepancies between actual and expected holdings were found in the stocktake conducted in January 2025.

- +6 Woodland Flora (1<sup>st</sup> Edition)
- +4 Woodland Flora (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)
- -8 Grassland Flora
- +1 Molonglo Valley Field Guide

During 2025 we decided to discontinue sales of the *Molonglo Valley Field Guide* and *Ngunnawal Plant Use*, respectively. We are unable to obtain these books at wholesale prices and so we cannot offer discounted prices to members.

We also decided to discontinue the selling of *Restoring Disturbed Landscapes* and *Linking Australia's Landscapes*. This was because of low sales.

## Events and Activities – Margaret Ning

We conducted or participated in 15 group activities in 2025, 12 of which were in the local region (that is, including Queanbeyan, Bywong, Wamboin and Carwoola) and three farther away in NSW (Shoalhaven area and Mulloon). There was good attendance at most of the activities. One activity was cancelled because of the weather, but others went ahead in spite of drizzle.

**January** – Theodore grassland and axe grooves. One of my favourite grassland pockets, with highlights *Digitaria brownii*, *Laxmannia gracilis* and *Fimbristylis dichotoma*. We saw nearly 20 species of native grasses.

**February** – Shoalhaven camping weekend visiting two properties. We added a few species to the species lists of both properties, and were very well looked after by the property owners, who provided hospitality and tucker. It was a memorable weekend.

**March** – Murrumbateman Village visit was cancelled because of around 20mm of rain overnight.

**April** – Crace Grassland, where the Button Wrinklewort is expanding its presence.

**May** – a visit to two sites in the Queanbeyan area, led by Tom Baker and Bill Willis: first, a wander in Queanbeyan Nature Reserve (NR), and then a walk alongside Queanbeyan River.

**June** – very popular visit to Mulloon Institute home farm, to survey an area to determine if it was Natural Temperate Grassland (NTG). Answer: yes it is!

**July** – no activity.

**August** – the winter slide afternoon at St Mark's in Barton was even more popular than last year's (at Mugga Mugga). The topic was 'Lessons for restoration of grassy ecosystems' and we heard presentations by Ben Serafin and James Cornwell from NSW Local Land Services, and Dr Ken Hodgkinson (an ex-CSIRO FOG member), and from Lori Gould (Environmental Restoration Design and Planning) and Kate Boyd (ACT Natural Resource Management).

**September** – another popular activity: FOG's first visit for many years to the Poplars Grassland Reserve near Jerrabomberra.

**October** – two forest walks north of Canberra: with Carwoola Landcare, in Stony Creek NR; and with Friends of Wamboin Crown Reserve, around the Wamboin Crown Reserve.

**November** – a search for Perunga grasshoppers on Hill Reserve, Ngunnawal. We found occasional patches of grassland and occasional Perunga grasshoppers.

- Mulloon Institute home farm: a follow-up survey that added over 20 species to the species list for the grassland area we visited in June.

- participated in a grassland workshop in Bywong/Wamboin area run by South East Local Land Services and Upper Shoalhaven Landcare, including a visit to the interesting Schofield's Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR).

- Poplars Grassland Reserve revisited to spray St John's Wort (SJW).

- a Golden Sun Moth (GSM) monitoring demonstration at Budjan Galindji by the ACT Government's GSM monitoring team.

- volunteer SJW spraying at Gungaharra Nature Reserve.

**December** – no activity.

### **Scoping visits**

On occasion, visits are made to sites/properties to scope future FOG activities, and/or to compile species lists while there. In 2025 Andrew Zelnik and/or I, sometimes accompanied by other explorers, made visits to:

- a Shannons Flat property and Berlang Swamp (February);
- Murrumbateman Village Grassy Woodland and Murrumbateman Cemetery (March);
- Button Wrinklewort area Crace Grasslands NR (April);

- Adaminaby Cemetery TSR and Cemetery (August);
- Stony Creek NR Carwoola, Schofields TSR, Turallo NR (October); and
- a Kangaroo Valley property to help with plant ID (December).

Thank you to those who raised ideas for activities, and/or subsequently led them on the day.

**All suggestions for future activities will be gratefully received.**

## FOG@2XX – Andrew Zelnik

Between January and December, Margaret Ning and Andrew Zelnik continued their regular bimonthly guest appearances on local community radio 2XX 98.3FM's Radio Landcare program. This one-hour program broadcast on Tuesday morning each week is hosted by Queanbeyan Landcare member Tom Baker, and FOG member Margaret Piper. It provides a summary of 'What's On' in the local ACT and surrounding NSW Landcare/catchment management community and conducts interviews with a wide variety of guests including on-ground volunteers, coordinators, businesses, government and academics. During the hour, Margaret and Andrew: (a) address questions and issues principally regarding articles and news items published in the latest FOG Newsletter; (b) publicise FOG's activities calendar, such as upcoming field trips and on-ground work parties; and (c) alert listeners to current key FOG-related advocacy and events, indicating how they can obtain more information and participate – which is often a matter of directing them to the relevant webpages of the Conservation Council ACT Region and FOG.

## On-Ground Work and Projects

### Budjan Galindji (Franklin) Grasslands Nature Reserve – Margaret Ning

The official Ministerial opening of Budjan Galindji Grasslands Nature Reserve by Environment Minister Suzanne Orr occurred on Wednesday November 12th. Changes include new pathways, some fencing and signage, and a stunning revegetated area. A highlight of the morning was the historic aerial photos of the site, going back decades, brought along by our Ranger, Alex.

In 2025, 20 FOG work parties were held in the 1.5 ha pocket of grassland in the south-east corner of Budjan Galindji Nature Reserve (corner of Well Station Drive and Flemington Rd). Eighteen different volunteers attended the work parties, with an average of 7.5 volunteers each time.

Weirdly, during the year we discovered two 'native' grasses NOT from the local area: Spreading Panic Grass (*Paspalidium distans*) and Gilgai Grass (*Walwhalleya subxerophila*).

Our management strategy over 2025 did not change from the previous years. We generally spray or micro-weed our major targets, and include some serious seedhead removal at appropriate times, mainly of Paspalum and St John's Wort (SJW). We also pursued Onion Grass (*Romulea rosea*) with a vengeance when it was obvious.

The ephemeral wetland in the NW corner of 'greater Budjan' was accessible during 2025 for the first time since the three La Niñas of recent years; and the northern woodland area of Budjan is looking pretty good after some consistent attention from the rangers.

Our SJW investigative plots continue to be intriguing. We gave up on stripping the SJW flowers, as the plants clearly benefited, and we treated that plot with Grazon instead. We also believe that mowing simulation (cutting the plants to a height of 15 cm) offers no control at all; nor does pulling plants out, even when the ground is relatively soft and moist. The best defence against SJW is spraying with Starane, Brushoff and Glyphosate, and as a result of using the former carefully we continue to have many healthy, pretty patches of Slender Tick-Trefoil (*Grona varians*) and Variable Glycine (*Glycine tabacina*).

A big thank you to the regular volunteers for their ongoing efforts throughout the year. We also thank Ranger Alex, whose team mowed our site a couple of times during the year, and who always responded to our requests and queries.

The site is looking quite magnificent currently (February 2026), although it is in need of another mow – see image. We took the opportunity to have a couple of very sociable coffees during the year, and look forward to doing more of that in 2026. These are excellent opportunities to share ideas in a more convivial environment.

What a difference a year makes! Last year's image is inset into this year's. Our pocket is covered by Kangaroo Grass and Tall Stipa, and in the middle background the resurrected spoil site now has no soil mound and is covered by a beautiful sward of Corkscrew Grass.

We meet on the first and fourth Wednesdays of every month.



FOG's 'patch' in the SE corner of Budjan Galindji in 2025. Inset: the same view in 2024. Photos: Andrew Zelnik.

## Bush on the Boundary (BoB) West Belconnen – *John Fitz Gerald*

The BoB committee met monthly in 2025, continuing a schedule of formal meetings alternating with presentations, general discussion or field visits. Once again matters considered were in both the Conservation Corridor and the suburban areas. The first stage of the new school in Strathnairn was built. Ginninderry has well advanced planning work to duplicate Drake-Brockman Drive at the edge of Higgins and Holt.

## Ginninderry Conservation Trust ‘scrape’ monitoring – *John Fitz Gerald*

The new scrape area sown in June 2024 continued to develop with native plants flowering and seeding. Unfortunately weed growth was much higher than ideal and required active management; FOG volunteers helped a little with that. In October–November the new scrape was monitored for the first time by Ginninderry Conservation Trust staff assisted by five FOG volunteers, involving over 30 hours of volunteer effort. Records were made about both detailed cover and abundance character on 2 plots and transect lines across the whole scrape. Almost all of the species sown as seed have established well. *Themeda* has been one exception, but this is normal behaviour. Results of last the 2025 monitoring can be found at <https://www.ginninderry.org/publications> in the report titled: Natural Temperate Grassland and Pink-tailed Worm-lizard Restoration Works October 2025.

## Hall Cemetery – *John Fitz Gerald*

FOG ran 4 scheduled work events in the woodland around the Cemetery during 2025, plus one extra event, for a total of 112 hours of effort by volunteers. The high-quality areas around the grassy woodland, resulting from years of our volunteer work, expanded a little due to continued efforts though this was slowed by the dry months at the end of the year. FOG continues to discuss the area's management with the Office of Nature Conservation, including requesting an ecological burn of part of the woodland where exotic grasses have come to dominate. Canberra Cemeteries announced it was reviewing an earlier decision to close the site to new burials.

## National Lands – *Jamie Pittock and John Fitz Gerald*

FOG undertook 14 work parties with 334 volunteer hours on national land sites in 2025 at Yarramundi Reach grassland and Gurubung Dhaura (Stirling Park) grassy woodland, as well as the adjoining area of ACT managed land at Blue Gum Point. FOG has now undertaken 188 work parties on national lands since 2009. FOG's environmental care agreement (partnership) with the National Capital Authority (NCA) was renewed for 2025-2028. Further the NCA adopted a new “Ecological Management Plan for National Capital Authority Conservation Areas 2025 – 2035”, maintaining their proud tradition of having professional management plans for conservation of its lands for over 15 years. The new plan drew on a decade long conservation strategy for these sites commissioned by FOG.

Conservation work at Gurubung Dhaura (Stirling Park) focussed on weed control, rubbish removal, maintaining past plantings and supporting NCA work to revegetate the western portion of the park. Particular thanks are due to Graeme Hirth's weekly weed control efforts. FOG received a FY26 ACT Environment Grant of \$16,102 for our 6<sup>th</sup> year of work to restore Blue Gum Point. This paid for contractors to complete the first cut over of woody weeds and weed spraying, and for FOG volunteers to revegetate cleared areas. Pleasingly, City Services have now commenced weed control on their land at Blue Gum Point.

Conservation work at Yarramundi Reach included our collaboration with the NCA and their contractors to trial use of Ryecorn to begin rehabilitation of two areas which were heavily infested by tall African Lovegrass. A large part of weed control across the site was done by FOG volunteers, mainly in areas that had ecological burns in 2024. We look forward to outcomes from an ACT NRM research program that is examining new methods of bringing natives back into weedy areas, again in the most recently burned zone.

### ‘Scottsdale’ Monitoring – *Linda Spinaze*

In perfect weather, six FOG members joined the Scottsdale ecologist, Justin McCann, and manager Kim Jarvis, to monitor various plots on Scottsdale. This year we welcomed 2 new members to the team – Jono Forrest and Vera – joining the "old hands" Margaret Ning, Andrew Zelnik and Lisa Bradley.

We were so impressed that Scottsdale no longer has huge paddocks full of enormous lovegrass clumps. We certainly did see a lot of lovegrass, but tussocks were all small and did not dominate the landscape.

The six of us formed 2 teams, and accompanied Justin and Kim in Scottsdale vehicles to various parts of the eastern reserve. We managed to find the appropriate posts that indicate the survey areas, and conducted vegetative monitoring in those patches. We had to ID all the species that we could see, and then estimate abundance of that species in the area. That task was not really particularly easy when many of the smaller plants could be hidden under the taller grasses.

A sandwich lunch provided by Bush Heritage (thank you!) was enjoyed, looking over the shallow valley to the purple hills to the west.

Thank you to the volunteers who provided excellent ID skills and enthusiasm, and to Justin and Kim who welcomed us so warmly. We are looking forward to a similar experience in 2026.

### Top Hut Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) – *Margaret Ning*

Top Hut TSR, between Cooma and Adaminaby, is a 15 ha high conservation-value grassland on which FOG had a five-year lease until the end of June 2025. Since then we have been looking after the site but with no formal lease arrangement. In 2025, FOG held eight work parties at Top Hut, volunteers numbered from three to eight, with an average of 5.25 per work party.

At Top Hut, we have tried to work on both sides of the TSR equally, to ensure consistent quality in the vegetation over time. However, throughout most of 2025 we focused on the non-fireshed side of the reserve in order to stay on top of the flushes of Thistles and Dandelions that followed the eco-burn there in late 2024. In addition to that, we are battling two small populations of Broom, two populations of *Lepidium campestre* (a new weed which is really quite frightening), and a handful of small SJW and Cinquefoil (*Potentilla recta*) patches within the reserve. However, we are essentially in control of all important weeds, although our punishment of Dandelions in the drainage lines is yet to be completed!

Annoyingly, in 2025, we lost ‘weeding’ time to fencing repairs and wet weather. We hope the animal incursions leading to the fence repairs are a thing of the past, so we can get on with some more effective work parties with respect to the weeds, which are our primary targets! We continue to enjoy Top Hut’s biodiversity, and Andrew Zelnik documents what happens there, on Canberra Nature Map.

Another frustration in 2025 has been the ferocious wind that greeted us on most visits. The Sudden Stratospheric Warming (SSW) events over Antarctica last year, which weakened the polar vortex, affected Top Hut even more than they did Canberra, and in December the wind was the worst ever!! We estimated continual gusts of 40 kph, but we hope that is past its worst now.

We also made another couple of opportunistic sightings of Monaro Grassland Earless Dragon (MGED) in 2025, which we hope will provide extra data for the NSW Government's MGED records. In mid-December I visited the TSR at the same time as some members of the NSW MGED team who were trialing a sniffer dog on site. I am pleased to say I witnessed a successful detection by the dog!

Thank you to our volunteers and generous donors, and to John and Narelle, and Paul, who give us a place to stay prior to many of our work parties.

We love to welcome visitors to this site, especially in peak spring/summer, and/or to join our work parties. It is actually possible to do both!



*Paul and Emily at our first fencing repair where sheep were getting through under the fence as the creek dried up. Photo: Andrew Zelnik.*

## Supported Projects Sub-Committee Report – Matt Kent

This report presents updates on FOG's supported projects grants activities in 2025 related to project acquittals of the former Grassy Ecosystem Grants program, and on Supported Strategic Projects Program activities undertaken in 2024 and 2025.

### Background

Recapping from the previous Annual Report, in the first half of 2024 the FOG Committee agreed to suspend the functioning of FOG Supported Projects (FSP) Subcommittee, coordinated at the time by Andrew Zelnik. This primarily operated the annual Grassy Ecosystem Grants program mostly using funds from the FOG Gift Fund and, where appropriate, occasionally from the Publications Account.

The purpose of this suspension was twofold. First, to permit clearing of the backlog of grants acquittal administration for Grassy Ecosystem Grants projects awarded to the end of 2023. Second, to undertake review of the FSP grants policy and processes in light of the FOG Committee's current priorities with a view to more targeted strategic use of funds for projects in the ACT and local NSW region – for example, arising from the FOG–Conservation Council ACT Region 'Biodiversity Network for the ACT' initiative and FOG's May 2024 'Conserving grasslands of the South Eastern Highlands (SEH) of NSW' workshop.

To these ends in 2024 a sub-group was formed to assist Andrew with some of the acquittal work and to conduct a review of the FSP policy and processes. In September 2024, following the review, the Committee resolved to undertake a 2-year trial of fewer supported grants (no more than four) with a

broader range of funding available to be used through commissioned projects to strategically address native grassy ecosystem conservation measures in the ACT and NSW SEH Bioregion. In November 2024 a follow-up sub-group meeting was held to further map out general principles and discuss an already sizable list of project proposals tabled to that date. This has resulted in the development of the Supported Strategic Projects Program initiative which now supersedes the activities of the former FSP Subcommittee. Draft guidelines for its operation, developed in 2025, are summarised below.

### **Draft Guidelines for Supported Strategic Projects**

The key elements are:

- To run a trial program for two years covering 2025 and 2026 financial (i.e. calendar) years.
- The objective, consistent with FOG's objects as identified in rule 2 of its Constitution, being to continue with a grants program for conservation of grassy biota, employing a strategic focus and being less resource-intensive than the previous FSP program.
- The role of a Supported Strategic Projects ad hoc sub-committee, being to meet, as required, and to identify and recommend to the FOG Committee for approval, projects to receive funding primarily from the FOG Gift Fund, but at times from the General Account, depending on the project.
- Principles to be followed by the Supported Strategic Program sub-committee.
- Roles of the Supported Strategic Projects Program Co-ordinator and the Treasurer

### **Legacy Grassy Ecosystem Grants Project Acquittals – *Andrew Zelnik***

In November 2025 an invoice of \$1500 for payment was received from Murray Local Land Services for their seed production area grant project awarded in 2022. It was paid from the Gift Fund. This was the last outstanding grant payment liability for grants awarded in the period to the end of 2023.

The gradual whittling down of the backlog of outstanding acquittals has continued. Articles for six grant projects were published in the FOG newsletter in 2025. In some cases, particularly for grants projects of a research nature, that provided an opportunity to include additional information. For example, information about any related flow-on research and outputs (e.g. scientific journal papers) and what some of the grantees have gone on to do in their careers. Of the 19 outstanding project acquittals at the beginning of 2024 there are now only six (6) remaining. The intention is to wrap these up by the end of third quarter of 2026 calendar year or sooner. Given the elapsed time, one or two may have to be written off.

With the assistance of Richard Bomford, the FSP Grants webpage on FOG's website has been further updated to provide a legacy record of the Grassy Ecosystem Grants process and the full list of the 29 projects supported in the period 2017–2023 (including links to related articles published in the FOG newsletter). More updates will be made from time to time, mainly to the list of supported projects as more grant project newsletter articles are published. Apart from serving as another public record of FOG's many and varied activities and achievements, this webpage may also serve as a useful guide and checklist: (a) for anyone considering approaching FOG with an unsolicited grant project proposal, or possibly for some types of grant projects FOG may wish to commission; and (b) for other similar organisations with an existing grants program or looking to commence one.

### **Supported Strategic Projects 2024 & 2025 – *Matt Kent***

To date the following two FOG Supported Strategic Projects have been funded

#### **Mapping Grassy Ecosystem Conservation Areas in the ACT**

**Description:** Engagement of Ginninderra Catchment Group (GCG) to create a digital map of ACT lowland (<800m) grassy ecosystem ecological values not currently protected under the ACT Reserve system. This was a collaborative exercise involving the expertise of GCG's Bruno Ferronato (GIS and mapping) and FOG (ACT habitats and ecological communities). The maps overlay site boundaries with land tenure and land manager information to clearly identify responsibility for protection and ongoing management. Mapping categories include urban nature reserves and offsets, other ACT Government Parks and Conservation managed lands including Travelling Stock Reserves, urban unleased land (e.g. urban open space, road and powerline easements, walkways), other Territory managed or agistment lands (e.g. horse paddocks, ACT Historic Places, cemeteries), leased urban and peri-urban rural land, and Commonwealth and other non-ACT Territory.

**Aim:** Assist with advocacy to government bodies, community, and politicians for better protection and conservation management of identified priority native grassland and grassy woodland sites outside the formal ACT Reserve system.

<b>Year Commenced:</b>	2024
<b>FOG Project Lead:</b>	Sarah Sharp assisted by Matt Mullaney
<b>Funding Source:</b>	Gift Fund
<b>Budget:</b>	\$4,500
<b>Expenditure in 2025:</b>	\$4,125 (GCG) + \$165 (ArcGIS licence) = \$4,290
<b>Total Expenditure to Date:</b>	\$4,290
<b>Status:</b>	Completed

### **Management Plan and Associated Strategic Works for Gundry Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR), Goulburn NSW**

**Description:** The 88.5 hectare Gundry TSR, south of Goulburn, is managed by South East Local Land Services (SE LLS). It is regarded as one of the best remaining examples of the Commonwealth EPBC Act-listed Critically Endangered Natural Temperate Grassland of the South Eastern Highlands Ecological Community (NTG SEH CEEC) in the Goulburn region.

Apart from including the largest and most intact example of NTG SEH CEEC north of Canberra, it contains threatened species such as Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*), the northernmost population of Button Wrinklewort (*Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides*), Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans* var. *tricolor*), and Key's Matchstick Grasshopper (*Keyacris scurra*). This project was originally conceived to be in two stages. Stage 1 is the development of a new practical on-ground focused management plan with buy-in from relevant key stakeholders and the implementation of key strategic on-ground work (e.g. by contractors) that volunteer groups like FOG can't do or are better off not taking on. Stage 2, not part of the current supported project, would involve assisting SE LLS with searching for suitable funding opportunities.

Stage 1 commenced with initial liaison between FOG, SE LLS, NSW Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), and Goulburn Field Naturalists (GFN). Following a further on-site meeting Environmental Restoration Design & Planning (ERDP), led by Lori Gould, was engaged to prepare a management plan in consultation with FOG, SE LLS, and NSW DCCEEW. The key contact at SE LLS is Ben Serafin (Regional TSR Lead) and at NSW DCCEEW is Rob Armstrong (Senior Threatened Species Officer).

The plan will identify priority actions including targeted weed control (African Lovegrass, Serrated Tussock, Chilean Needlegrass, St John's Wort and Sifton-bush), management of woody regeneration, limited control of particular invasive native plants (e.g. *Kunzea parvifolia*), infrastructure improvements where required, and interpretive signage.

**Aim:** To provide a practical management plan, with SE LLS and NSW DCCEEW buy-in, that can be readily applied to improve much needed conservation management of Gundry TSR. This could then be used to assist SE LLS when applying for the additional funding necessary for ongoing conservation management of this TSR. It also provides a management plan template or model which can similarly be used by the LLS for funding and implementing biodiversity conservation management of other high conservation value TSRs in the NSW SEH Bioregion

<b>Year Commenced:</b>	2025
<b>FOG Project Lead:</b>	Rainer Rehwinkel assisted by Jamie Pittock, Margaret Ning, Andrew Zelnik and Trevor Preston (FOG / GFN)
<b>Funding Source:</b>	Gift Fund
<b>Budget:</b>	\$15,000 (Management Plan – \$8,500 as per ERDP quote, Strategic works – \$6,500)
<b>Expenditure in 2025:</b>	\$6,864 (ERDP – Milestone 1 Draft Management Plan)
<b>Total Expenditure to Date:</b>	\$6,864
<b>Status:</b>	Ongoing – immediate next steps are to finalise the management plan in early 2026 and commence implementation.



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