



WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY

True Spring Newsletter

Volume 46/six

Nov/Dec 2016

Warringal Conservation Society is a local, not-for-profit, community organisation caring for the environment in Banyule.

Formed in 1970, the Society is an active and productive steward of Banyule's environmental heritage.

Join us!!

Warringal Conservation Society is not just a local environment group: it is stimulating, fun and companionable and takes an active role in the wider community.

Single \$15,
Family \$20
Pension/student/
unemployed \$10
Life \$150

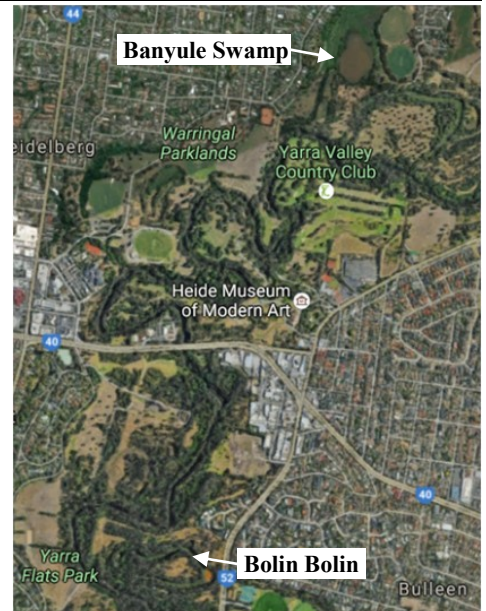
Articles and photographs for the newsletter are welcome. We may edit for legal, space or other reasons. Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Warringal Conservation Society.

Newsletter printed courtesy of Jenny Macklin MP.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Yaro Yaro River Of Mist

Danielle Mallia will speak about a Cultural / Heritage walk in Heidelberg along the Yarra linking the Bolin Bolin billabong with Warringal Wetlands.



DECEMBER MEETING

Members' Night

Members' Night then Christmas supper. WCS members Penny Grose, Dianne Williamson and James Deane will show photos and give brief talks. *No need to bring a plate as supper will be provided courtesy of Foodworks Ivanhoe East.*

**Meetings on first Thursday of the month*
from 7.30 pm at the Old Shire Offices,
60 Beverley Road.**

(*no meeting in January)

**Enter from Buckingham Drive near the Banyule Theatre and
Greening Australia. Melways map 32:D3. All Welcome**

AT A GLANCE

November

Thursday 3rd: General Meeting - Yaro Yaro River Of Mist

Sunday 13th: End of year bus trip (See news and Events)

December

Thursday 1st: General Meeting - Members' night and Christmas supper

News & Events

WCS President John D'Aloia awarded Honorary Life Membership

Long-serving President John D'Aloia received Honorary WCS Life Membership and a framed photograph of Banyule Swamp in recognition for his contribution to the Society.



WCS Vice-President Anthea Fleming had the following to say:

“I have been on the Warringal Conservation Society committee since about 1979 or thereabouts. That's over 35 years. I have had personal experience of all our Presidents with the exception of Doug Western, whose tenure was rather brief. Keith Holywell, Reg Johnson (who always said he was only an Acting President), Jane Westman, and Vic Marks. They were all remarkable people, dedicated to the cause of conservation and the environment in general, and in Banyule and the Yarra Valley in particular.

Our current President John D'Aloia has been a member for over 20 years. He succeeded Vic Marks as President in November 2000. He too has been an inspiring leader of the Society and has worthily represented our Society in meetings (formal and informal) with Banyule Council and with Banyule Council's staff. He has also represented us with other conservation bodies such as the Friends of Banyule and among State and Federal Departments and Members of Parliament. His daytime work with

Laid Victoria means that his understanding of the complex rules and regulations is first-rate. He has remained undaunted through gathering threats to our beloved parks – particularly from the Freeway lobby. I am sure that others, like me, find it hard to express our respect and admiration.

John has served on the Banyule Environmental Advisory Committee (usually known as BEAC) for several terms since its inception in 1996, and was its Chairman from 2011. He has regularly taken part in our working bees for planting, weeding and maintenance in the parks, particularly at Banyule Flats..

Our Society nominated him successfully for the 2013 Jagajaga Australia Day Community Award. Under his leadership, in 2011 WCS established our WCS Wildlife and Conservation Biology Prize, for the best first-year Student of Latrobe University's Bachelor of Science (Wildlife and Conservation Biology).

Recently, he and his family have undergone personal trials which prevented him from taking part in the society's activities for some time. We are very glad to see him again after his leave of absence and all members will welcome him back. To mark the occasion, we wish to make a presentation to John, as a small reminder of our beautiful surroundings here in Banyule, and as a memento of our sincere thanks for the years of love and effort which he has given the Society.

It is now my great pleasure to present John, on behalf of the Committee and Membership of Warringal Conservation Society, with the Certificate of Honorary Life Membership of our Society, and with a framed photograph of Banyule Flats, taken by Leanne Cole.”

Who we are and how to contact us

Warringal Conservation Society Inc

PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084

Email: warringal3084@gmail.com

Web: www.warringal.org.au

www.facebook.com/WarringalConservationSociety

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Vice President: Anthea Fleming

Treasurer: Daphne Hards

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Newsletter

Editors: James Deane & Gianna Romano

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Compilation & Mailing: Margaret Pollock, Heather Smith, Don Stokes

Planting Coordinator: Heather Smith

Committee: John D'Aloia, Anthea Fleming, Celia Smith, Daphne Hards, Dianne Williamson, Penny Grose, Doug McNaughton, James Deane.

News & Events cont.

End of Year Excursion - Harbury Reserve

Date: November Sunday 13

Approximate times: 9am – 5pm

Location: Harbury Reserve [near Gembrook in the Dandenong Ranges]

One of our guest speakers, Ben Cullin, spoke about this 21.5 hectare property which Trust for Nature received as a donation in 1977. It is only open to the public annually and he has agreed to take WCS members in on a special visit. The property is steeply sloping with dry forest on the slopes and lush fern gullies. Three permanent creeks flow through the property and provide an important sanctuary for species in an area which has been radically altered by subdivision and urbanisation. It will be the usual process of meeting at the Old Shire Offices in the morning, travelling by bus to location, activities/talks/eating/drinking before returning later in the afternoon. Seats on the bus are limited and may already be gone by the time you receive this newsletter. Email Heather (elephantstamp@optusnet.com.au) for enquiries.

Planting Reports - Tawny Pond Sept 11th and Banyule Native Gardens Oct 9th.

We had good turnouts at our regular spots for the last two plantings of the year. Thanks to Meg and Eliza from the Banyule Bush Crew for supporting our work in 2016.



Banyule Native Gardens

Frogs in Warringal Parklands

With lots of rain falling in September and October the local frogs have been very vocal lately. Eastern Banjo Frog or Pobblebonk have been calling in Banyule Wetland, and Common Froglet and Striped Marsh Frog in Tawny Pond; but nothing like the powerful chorus after dark at the Beverley Road Wetland, at Melway 32 C4. Frogs are difficult to find but they all have distinctive calls so can be identified on a sound recording. Completing a regular survey for Melbourne Water's Frog Census, I recently used their new app, found on Google with *Frog Census App*. There are only 6-7 species of frogs I am likely to see, or rather hear as they are mainly nocturnal, at Beverley Road Wetland, or in the ponds behind the playground and underneath the pines. You can see these species at <https://frogs.org.au/frogs/ofVic/Melbourne>, and listen to their calls. On Sunday Oct 16th 2016, a blustery, wet night, I was thrilled to hear 5 frog species, the most I have heard simultaneously at Beverley Road since April 2014. These were Common Froglet, Pobblebonk, Striped Marsh Frog, Sothern Brown Tree Frog and Peron's Tree Frog. All these frogs wait out the dry buried in the mud and emerge when they sense enough water for a breeding cycle. So on rainy days be happy for frogs.

Daphne Hards



Tawny Pond



Peron's Tree Frog



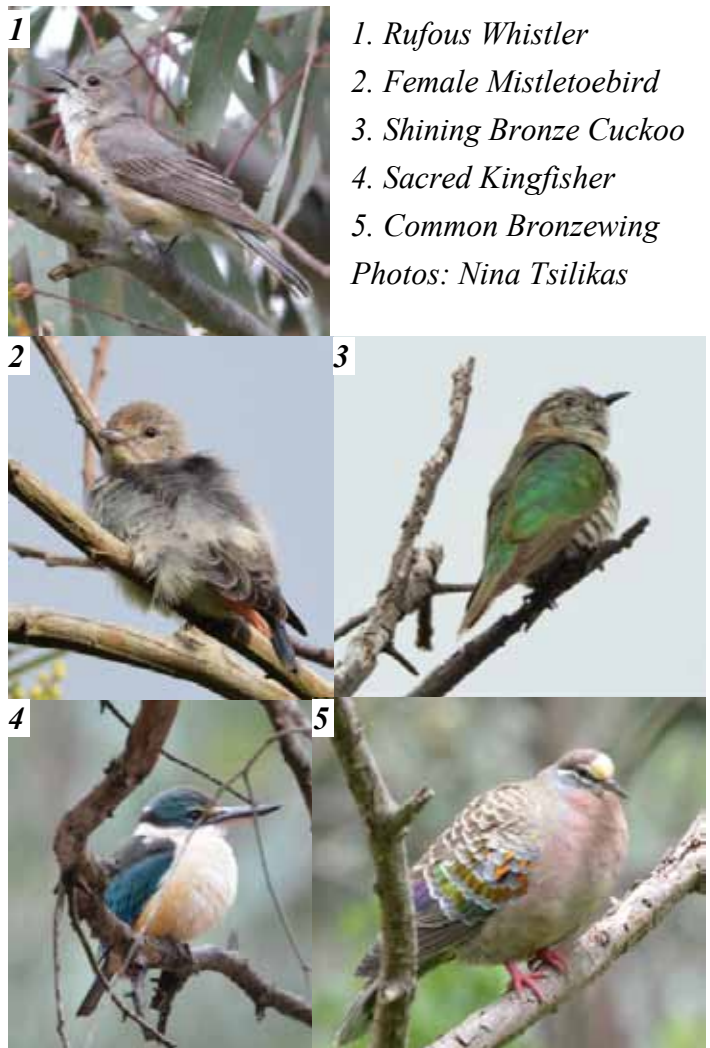
Striped Marsh Frog

News & Events cont.

Breakfast with the Birds

On Sunday 23rd October, despite 40mm of rain falling over the previous two days, 60 brave souls gathered at 7.30am at Banyule Flats for the annual Birdlife Australia's Breakfast with the Birds. The rain held off for two hours and we had a remarkably good survey of Banyule Flats and Warringal Parklands, small groups going in different directions. My group saw a Tawny Frogmouth on the nest with a nestling snuggled on each side. Ducks were splashing about on flooded grassland. Eastern Spinebill were feeding on mistletoe near the windmill along with a female Mistletoebird. And along the river trail we were thrilled to see a Sacred Kingfisher and a Rufous Fantail. The latter are a summer migrant to the S-E from northern Australia, and pass through Banyule regularly during the third week in October. So they were on time and didn't disappoint. 66 bird species were seen in total, and everyone enjoyed the breakfast put on by Banyule City Council. See beautiful photos taken by Nina Tsilikas on the day.

Daphne Hards



1. Rufous Whistler
2. Female Mistletoebird
3. Shining Bronze Cuckoo
4. Sacred Kingfisher
5. Common Bronzewing
Photos: Nina Tsilikas

WCS/Banyule Theatre Fundraising Initiative

WCS will trial a bulk purchase of tickets for the April 'charity' night dress rehearsal for the Banyule Theatre's production. Banyule Theatre makes blocks of dress rehearsal tickets available to charities and community organisations at a discounted rate so they can be used for fundraising. Details are still to be confirmed but the cost will be modest. We will gauge the level interest at our November General meeting and work out how many tickets to get. Email warringal3084@gmail.com to indicate your interest.

Annual Report of the Committee

As Vice-President of the Society I am pleased to present this report on behalf of President John D'Aloia and the Committee of Management.

WCS Member Activities

Of course the Society isn't just hard work. We've enjoyed many activities together. We have enjoyed each other's company and a chance to chat about environmental matters at our shared February and July dinners, and at suppers after our monthly meetings. Our 2015 annual end-of year outing, courtesy of the Banyule Bush Crew, took place in November to Edithvale-Seafood Wetlands Discovery Centre and the Waterways Estate.

Our first event for 2016 was in February, with a Banyule Flats Night Walk led by George Paras and the BCC Bush Crew. We celebrated World Environment Day in May with a late afternoon walk at Banyule Flats, inviting the Bush Crew and members of other Friends groups to join with us to watch the wildlife at sunset. Many members also participated in the annual 'Breakfast with the Birds' event, and we hosted a walk in September at Banyule Flats for Banyule U3A.

Wildlife and environmental protection

We wrote to NSW and Federal ministers for the environment and to Cessnock City Council

Annual Report of the Committee cont.

expressing concern for the Regent Honeyeater and local zoning. We wrote to several ministers and organisations expressing our concerns about proposed oil drilling in the Great Australian Bight. We also wrote to Jaala Pulford, Minister for Agriculture and again to Anthony Carbines requesting the cancellation of the duck shooting season for 2016. Letters sent to Lisa Neville, Member for Bellarine and Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, and to Premier Daniel Andrews supported the proposed Moolap Wetlands Park on the site of the Cheetham salt fields.

To support The Wilderness Society's habitat destruction campaign we wrote to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and to Greg Hunt, Minister for the Environment, requesting federal and state cooperation to halt land clearing. We have made submissions to several local and state public consultations including: Review of the native vegetation permitted clearing regulations; the Statewide Assessment of Public Land; the proposed Yarra River Protection Act; and the Banyule Public Open Space Plan.

On matters closer to home, objections were lodged with the Heritage Council regarding Banyule House development and with the Banyule Council regarding Simpson Barracks potential residential development. We've had discussions with Banyule Council staff and correspondence Melbourne Water regarding re-filling the Banyule Billabong with water.

Members have participated in many community consultation events and provided comment on: Banyule's Open Public Space Strategy; Banyule's Safe Travel Plan; transport plans for the Hurstbridge rail duplication and Rosanna Station; the sealed bike path in Warringal Parklands; and the Ivanhoe Learning Hub. Don Stokes has represented us on the Truck Curfew Community Reference Group. We joined the People's Climate March alliance in November and several members marched behind the WCS banner. Members also participated in a Climate Change Q & A seminar and the Council's Change Makers workshop.

The Committee and members of the Society wrote many 'letters to the Editor' which were published in the *Heidelberg Leader*, *The Royalauto* and *The Age* to provide a balanced discussion on the NE Link freeway. These letters promoted the importance of habitat corridors, the conservation value of the wetlands, and the community value of open space for passive recreation. The Friends of

Banyule have also been outspoken in the need to protect Banyule Flats and we appreciate their support on this issue.

WCS Operations

We congratulate Julia Casaretto as this year's winner of the Warringal Conservation Society Prize, provided to a student in La Trobe University's Bachelor of Science (Wildlife and Conservation Biology).

To promote the Society Anthea Fleming set up an informative before and after of Banyule Flats pictorial display at Ivanhoe Library. There have been two newspaper articles with photos in the *Heidelberg Leader* focused on Banyule Flats and the work of WCS and Friends of Banyule. We have been able to print some additional membership brochures using some spare funds from an earlier Bendigo Bank grant.

WCS has auspiced two Banyule Council Grants over the past two years. We congratulate Danielle Mallia on her 'River of Mists' project and Leanne Cole who has now published a photographic record of Banyule Flats.

We applied for several grants and were successful with three applications this year. We thank Melbourne Water for providing us with funds of \$550 from Melbourne Water's Health Incentives Program; this money was used to subsidise insurance and administrative costs. We are grateful to the Bendigo Bank for their [Heidelberg and East Ivanhoe Community Bank Grant](#) of almost \$2,000 [for the design and printing of 5,000 guided walking maps of Banyule Flats. An adaptation of a map designed by Anthea Fleming will highlight entrances to the reserve and significant features of the wetlands area.](#) [We have also received from Banyule Council](#) a \$5,000 grant for: Interpretative Signage in Banyule Flats Reserve which will cover the costs of design, construction and installation of three signs.

Foodworks Ivanhoe East have continued to generously support the Society by contributing a proportion of customer payments in a point system which has allowed us to obtain goods for suppers, and fundraising hampers.

Habitat Restoration

Maintenance and planting bees were carried out in the cooler months from April to September – at the Tawny Pond and at the base of the Eucalyptus Studeynsis adjacent to the Somerset Drive Carpark, at the Northern end of the Western Habitat Link in Banyule Flats, at the Native Gardens and in

Annual Report of the Committee cont.

Warrigal Parklands. Members of the public were invited to join us on Australia Day when we worked at the Grotty Pond and on National Tree Planting day when we worked in the Native Gardens. We also supported Darebin Creek Grassland Friend's Group and the Friends of Wilson Reserve at their working bees. None of this would be possible without our very dedicated team of volunteers of all ages, led by Heather Smith, and the splendid staff of the Banyule Bushland Management team.

Speakers

This year we have enjoyed a variety of excellent speakers on topics. Education is an important role of the Society and we are very grateful to all our speakers and to all those who helped contact them. Pat Bingham talked to us about Wings and feathers, and we heard about the Montmorency sugar glider project from Jane Oldfield. Rebecca McIntosh spoke about her work with Australian fur seals and the problems caused by marine debris. We learned about Mytle Rust and its impact in Australia in a talk presented by Elizabeth McMinchton, and the issues faced in the Tarkine from members of the Tarkine Association Victoria. Ben Cullen spoke about the work of the Port Phillip and Westernport Trust for Nature. Charlie Davie and Heather Smith provided information on the Council's Community Leaders in Sustainability course and Frank Udovicic gave a presentation on the new VicFlora website. Penny Grose presented the movie *Bag it: is your life too plastic?* and challenged us to think about our own responsibilities in this regard. Mark Femby spoke to us about Feral animal control and Robert Bender provided a follow-up talk on the Earthwatch Otways Koala Project. We also heard of interesting travels and projects from members James Deane, Daphne Hards and Anthea Fleming on our Members' night.

Appreciation

We must thank the following people and organisations who have assisted our Society. Banyule Council and its officers, including John Milkins and Fleur Anderson, who have provided information and support in our environmental activities, and the BCC Bush Crew who have supported the Sunday morning planting and weeding activities.

Jenny Macklin and her office staff have assisted us to publish our Newsletter. Cr Tom Melican and Cr. Craig Langdon have provided assistance and ongoing support. We thank Lene Jakobsen for crafting our beautiful WGS mugs for speakers' gifts

We've had the pleasure of working with many Friends and environmental groups again this year including the Friends of Banyule, the Riverlands Protection Society, the Friends of Wilson Reserve, Darebin Parklands Association, the Coalition against Duck Shooting, the Victorian National Parks Association, and Environment Victoria.

We also thank all our members for their continuing support. You attend our monthly general meetings, participate in WCS and community plantings, support us in our public activities, and support the Society's campaigns through letters, subscriptions and generous donations. In particular, Heather Smith does an admirable job keeping our membership database up to date, providing an active and interesting Facebook page, and organizing the planting and working bees and the annual end of year outing. Denise Fernando successfully coordinated our Banyule Council grant application, and Don Stokes keeps us up to date with Rosanna Road matters. Our heartfelt thanks to James Deane and Gianna Romano, to contributors, and to the volunteers who staple, fold and post the Newsletter. Other members regularly attend Council meetings and speak on environmental matters; we extend our appreciation to you all.

The Committee has worked enthusiastically throughout the year as evidenced by the activities noted in this report. I thank Daphne Hards for her work as Treasurer, James Deane for the Newsletter and for working on the Website, Celia for her liaison with animal advocate groups and for meeting promotion, and Dianne Williamson for her work as Secretary, completing all the required documentation and keeping us organized. We have missed John D'Aloia for much of the year while he has taken some personal leave, but he has continued to guide the work of the Committee.

On behalf of the Committee

Anthea Fleming, Vice-President

6 October, 2016

WCS Financial Statement and Audit

S. E. OBLIUBEK
Chartered Accountant

93 New Road
Oak Park 3046

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.

Scope

I have audited the attached Statement of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 30th June 2016 of the Warringal Conservation Society Inc.

The Society's Committee is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial reports and the information contained therein and has determined that the accounting policies used are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members.

I have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Society. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to the needs of the members.

The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act. I disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

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

Qualification

As is common for organizations of this type, it is not practicable for the Committee to maintain an effective system of internal control over subscriptions, meetings income, donations and other fund-raising activities until their initial entry in the accounting records. Accordingly, my audit in relation to these items was limited to amounts recorded.

Qualified audit opinion

In my opinion, (except for the effects of such adjustments, if any, as might have been determined to be necessary had the limitation discussed in the qualification paragraph not existed) the financial report presents fairly the results of its operations for the year ended 30th June 2016.

S. E. Oblubek
S. E. OBLIUBEK
Chartered Accountant
Auditor

8th September 2016

WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC. STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS for the year ended 30th June 2016

	2016 \$	2015 \$
Receipts		
Subscriptions		
Life membership	300.00	150.00
Annual subscriptions	720.00	365.00
Four year	288.00	250.00
Donations	543.25	583.00
Sales of publications (Arthur's Calendars)	1.00	120.00
Bank Interest	300.00	240.27
Grant-Melbourne Water (Insurance and Prorogues)	580.00	1100.00
Bendigo Bank Community Grant	0	1800.00
East Werribee Foodbank Photo Refund	800.00	1500.00
Banyule Council Grant - Leanne Cole Auspice	0	4200.00
Banyule Council Grant - Danielle Mallia Auspice	5202.00	6.00
	<u>8785.21</u>	<u>10291.27</u>
Payments		
Newsletter costs	431.88	375.96
Meeting expenses (includes Digital Projector)	544.95	1700.00
COO Office Rent	543.00	550.00
Insurance Premium	867.45	800.00
Administration Expenses	952.92	305.00
Library acquisitions	0	25.00
WCS Prize - Latrobe University	250.00	250.00
Melba Lane - Leanne Cole	0	940.00
Subscriptions		
Australian Conservation Foundation	65.00	65.00
Wilderness Society	60.00	
Environment Victoria	65.00	
Victorian National Parks Association	65.00	345.00
Donations		
Climate Council	90.00	90.00
Coalition Against Duck Shooting	0	100.00
Wilderness Society	60.00	100.00
Victorian National Parks Association	0	20.00
Griffith Australia	0	90.00
Montenap Group	10.00	110.00
Postage, stationery, sundries	100.00	3.80
Leanne Cole's Project	675.00	
Danielle Mallia's Project	430.00	
	<u>5000.21</u>	<u>5571.56</u>
Surplus/Deficit for year	3435.00	4819.69
Balance brought forward	18108.90	11290.21
Balance carried forward	<u>18543.90</u>	<u>16109.90</u>
The balance carried forward -		
Bendigo Bank	8217.84	4808.01
Club Cheque account	11488.40	11301.89
Term deposit	1856.00	18109.90
Bank Balance Sub Total	104	100.00
Less Unpresented Cheque	100	41.18
Bank Balance	<u>19846.99</u>	
Leanne Cole Grant Monies in auspice	2476.00	3351.00
Danielle Mallia's Monies in auspice	4822.00	

WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC. BALANCE SHEET as of 30th June 2016

	2016			2015		
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Current Assets						
Cash		8217.54			4808.01	
Investments		11469.45			11301.89	
Debtors		0			0	
Publication Stock		160.00			200.00	
Total Current Assets		<u>19846.99</u>			<u>16309.90</u>	
Non-current Assets						
Digital Projector	1320.80			1320.80		
Less depreciation 2nd year	-528.00	792.80		-264.00	1056.80	
PA Amplifier	40.00			40.00		
Less depreciation 2nd year	-16.00	24.00		-8.00	32.00	
Total Non-current Assets		<u>816.80</u>			<u>1088.80</u>	
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>20663.79</u>			<u>17398.70</u>	
Current Liabilities						
Creditors						
Unpresented cheques	104	100.00				
	109	41.18				
Auspiced Grant - L. Cole		2476.00			3351.00	
Auspiced Grant - D. Mallia		4822.00				
Total Current Liabilities		<u>7439.19</u>			<u>3351.00</u>	
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>7439.19</u>			<u>3351.00</u>	
NET ASSETS		<u>13224.60</u>			<u>14047.70</u>	

S. E. Oblubek

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES - October 6, 2016

The meeting was held at the Old Shire Offices, Beverley Road Heidelberg. The Notice of the Meeting and a call for Committee member nominations were distributed to members with the September/October 2016 Newsletter.

Meeting opened: 7.35 pm.

Present: John D'Aloia (President), Anthea Fleming (Vice-President), Daphne Hards (Treasurer), Dianne Williamson (Secretary), James Deane (Committee member) and 15 financial full members **Apologies:** Celia Smith (Committee member)

BUSINESS

- 1 Confirmation of Minutes of previous meetings.** Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting were confirmed.
Moved: John D'Aloia Seconded: Heather Smith Motion carried.
- 2 Annual Report of the Committee.** Anthea Fleming presented a detailed report on WCS activities for 2015/2016. The report was accepted. Moved: Irene Kearsey Seconded: Margaret Pollock Motion carried.
- 3 Financial statements.** Treasurer Daphne Hards presented the 2015/2016 financial statements as audited by Stan Oblubek. The financial report was accepted. Moved: Lene Jacobsen Seconded: John D'Aloia Motion carried. Stan Oblubek was re-appointed as WCS auditor for the year 2015/16
- 4 Election of the Committee.** The Secretary declared all Committee positions vacant and nominated Heather Smith as the Returning Officer for the election of positions. Appropriately completed and signed nomination forms were checked by the Returning Officer. As there were no contested positions the Returning Officer declared the following appointments for the year 2016/2017 without an election:

President	John D'Aloia
Vice-President	Anthea Fleming
Treasurer	Daphne Hards
Secretary	Dianne Williamson
Committee	James Deane, Penny Grose, Doug McNaughton & Celia Smith
- 5 Annual subscription.** The Committee proposed a small increase in subscriptions from 1 July 2017 because of reduced income and increasing costs:
Single: from \$15 to \$20. Concession: from \$10 to \$15. Family: from \$20 to \$25. Life: from \$150 to \$200.
There is no additional joining fee. Any new memberships and renewals for the 2016/2017 financial year will remain at the current amounts. Moved: Daphne Hards Seconded: Heather Smith Motion carried.

Meeting closed: 8.00 pm

September Speaker - Frank Udovicic - Online Flora of Victoria

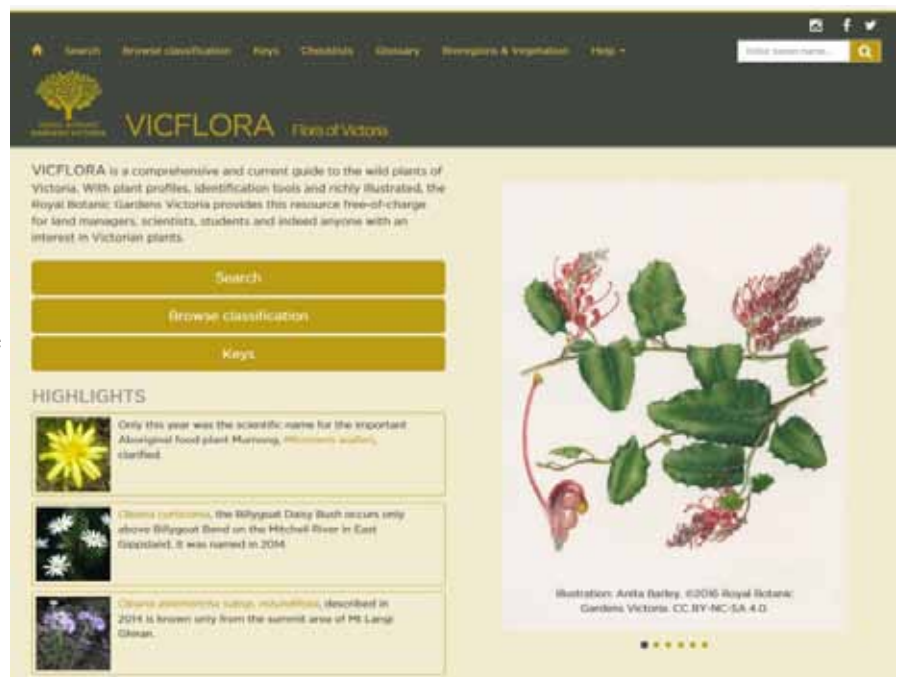
Dr Frank Udovicic from the Botanic Gardens gave us a preview of the new online version of the Flora of Victoria one week prior to its official launch.

The Flora of Victoria has previously been published as a rather cumbersome multi-volume hardcopy version. Producing an online version has been a huge undertaking. Old descriptions in hardcopy format had to be converted to electronic text and updated to reflect current plant classification schemes. Old images had to be digitised and new images sourced. New descriptions have been written for hundreds of new plants species described since the old hardcopy version was published in the 1990s. Keys for plant identification have been updated and refined.

There are several ways to use the new Online Flora of Victoria (VicFlora). It can be searched using keywords and names. There are regional checklists and classes of plants can be browsed. Keys allow

plant identification using a sequence of questions about features. A glossary details the technical terms used to describe features of plants.

VicFlora can be accessed free at:
<https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/>



October Speaker - Sapphire McMullan-Fisher - Fabulous Fungi

Dr Sapphire McMullan-Fisher is a fungal ecologist and spoke about the diversity of fungi, their importance in ecosystems, and the often overlooked ways they feature in our lives.

Fungi usually make up huge part of the biomass in ecosystems but are not always obvious because they are mostly microscopic and under the ground. Mushrooms, toadstools and brackets on trees are fruiting bodies used to disperse spores and only represent a small part of a fungus.

Fungi make a living in many different ways. There are decomposers, parasites, and carnivores that capture and eat microscopic worms (nematodes) using a contracting loop. Many fungi exist in partnership with other organisms. Lichen are fungi that harbour photosynthetic algae. Fungi are found in the gut flora of herbivores and assist with the digestion of plant material. Plants often have mycorrhizal fungi associated with their roots that assist with nutrient uptake. Some plants, (eg certain orchids) have completely given up on photosynthesis

and rely completely on a fungal partner for nutrition. Endophytes are non-pathogenic fungi that live inside plants and can have beneficial properties such as excluding potentially pathogenic fungi.

Fungi are an important food source for beetles and marsupials. Fungi feature heavily in human food production: beer/wine, bread, cheese and chocolate. Important antibiotics such as penicillin are derived from fungi. Fungi are also plant pathogens that flourish in the monocultures we create in modern agriculture.

The diversity and distribution of fungi is not as well documented as other organisms so they are difficult to manage and conserve. Sapphire recommended avoiding the indiscriminate use of fungicide because they are not selective. Overuse of mulch can also favour a narrow range decomposers.

Fungimap (<http://fungimap.org.au>) is a citizen science project that aims to fill in gaps in our knowledge of fungi. Details and photos of interesting fungi can be submitted to this website

Nature Notes

October 2016

Dianne Williamson reported King Parrots in her White Cedar.

Doug McNaughton reported seeing 2 King Parrots at Salt Creek, and 12 Cattle Egrets on Fannings Bend.

Anthea Fleming's Report - "On Tuesday 6th September, we had a photo-shoot with the Heidelberg Leader for some welcome publicity in the local paper. We were able to show the photographer a young Ringtail Possum, newly independent and looking very unhappy about it, with no nest or hollow to take refuge in. The girls from the BCC Bush Crew provided a nest-box in the gum-tree that afternoon, but we don't know if he took up the offer.



I turned on the bedside light at 3.00 am recently and a large European Wasp buzzed into it, probably a queen waking up after the winter. Fortunately I was able to capture it under a glass. I had no wish for it to found a colony in our house. And on 1st October, our daughter's

Honey-bees swarmed - she was able single-handed to collect them, queen and all, from the eaves of her roof and transfer them to a new hive. This seems very early in the year for a bee-swarm.

At Wilson Reserve I saw Common Bronzewing (2 pairs), a Crimson Rosella, a pair of Red-rumped Parrots, and Red-browed Finches. I was there to collect some Bailey's Billabong water for a microscope session at the FNCV. It was alive with tiny organisms - very healthy, said Max Campbell the expert..

Today, 6 October, 20 Cattle Egrets with the horses, and several were in yellow breeding plumage - plus 20 White Ibis. At Banyule Flats the Euc. studleyensis has been under attack by caterpillars again, and the Gate Tree at the western end of the Billabong has been damaged in a wind storm - a big branch is hanging up in it. Don't loiter underneath it!"

Nature Notes



*Photos:
Anthea Fleming*

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