



## **Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. (ANPC)**

### **President's Report To the Annual General meeting, 12 November 2018**

This is the 27th year of the ANPC and it is pleasing to see that we continue to maintain our role as Australia's key plant conservation organisation.

The ANPC has again been involved in submissions to government either through participation in workshops or commenting on proposed legislative changes or guidelines. For example, the ANPC undertook joint submissions with the Invasive Species Council on the recent Senate Inquiry into the impacts of feral deer, pigs and goats in Australia and the Inspector General of Biosecurity's Review of environmental biosecurity risk management in Australia. The ANPC has also been an active participant in the environmental biosecurity review through participation at several meetings and roundtables by Bob Makinson and myself. In June 2018 the Office of Environmental Biosecurity was announced and sits within the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

The ANPC continues to maintain its strong involvement in promoting awareness of the Myrtle Rust threat to Australia's biota, and advocating for action on it. This has been a focus of activity by Bob Makinson since 2010. We are the only organisation, government or non-government, to have rolled out a national awareness program of workshops, collaborating with many agencies. In a non-ANPC capacity, and drawing on a network of specialists in which ANPC has played a central coordinating role, Bob recently completed a review of the environmental impacts of Myrtle Rust and a draft action plan for addressing it.

The Myrtle Rust case exemplifies the growing threat to our native biota from exotic plant pathogens. A recent Senate Inquiry, and two major Commonwealth reports, are slowly influencing Australia's biosecurity system towards an increased and long-overdue focus on environmental biosecurity. ANPC is among the few plant-oriented NGOs to have been closely engaged in this process, and it needs to become one of our core areas of advocacy. At present our 'workforce' in this area is very small – members motivated to become involved in it should contact us.

The Australian community continues to demonstrate strong interest and support for plant conservation. To meet these expectations the ANPC is playing a key role in facilitating and communicating plant conservation initiatives and information across Australia. This is reflected in the ongoing participation of land managers, government departments, industry, the volunteer conservation movement and the broader community in ANPC workshops and conferences as well as the requests we receive from other organisations and government agencies to participate in and comment on various flora conservation initiatives. This year we also collaborated with the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) on the 2018 Albert Morris Award for an outstanding Ecological Restoration Project. The Award was presented to the Murray

Riverina Travelling Stock Reserves project at the Gala Dinner at SERA's conference in September.

While I continue to be greatly impressed by the dedication and breadth of knowledge of ANPC members, we still face many significant challenges. We need to ensure that we continue to effectively promote the inherent value and cultural significance of our unique and wonderful flora to the broader Australian community and remain true to our core business of facilitating Australian plant conservation, threatened species recovery, ecological restoration and remnant vegetation management.

### **2018 ANPC Conference APCC12**

The ANPC's flagship event is the biannual Australasian Plant Conservation Conference and our 12<sup>th</sup> conference will be held in Canberra in 11-15<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

This conference will bring together a diverse range of participants including botanists, geneticists, ecologists, practitioners, land managers, and on-ground plant conservation managers from around Australia to review and highlight plant conservation achievements and challenges. The theme for the conference is "*Moving House – A new age for plant translocation and restoration*". Together we will explore and discuss recent advances and latest scientific findings for successful threatened plant translocations and restoration across Australia. Species translocations have been an important conservation approach for more than two decades to save threatened species from extinction. With no foreseeable reduction in threats from climate change, urban and agricultural expansion and intensification, and invasive pests and diseases, plant translocations and restoration will continue to be an important component of plant conservation into the future.

Environmental change including through climate-induced events such as drought and fire as well as ongoing habitat loss and degradation continue to challenge our plant species. Halting and reversing species decline is a significant global challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the next few decades being pivotal to success. With Australia being home to more than 21,000 known plant species the conservation challenges are large but not insurmountable. New genomic approaches are beginning to unlock the genetic past of our plants offering opportunities to understand their capacity to respond to change in the future. The use of remote sensing and drone technology continues to expand the ecological frontier allowing us to better understand our ecological systems and processes. Artificial intelligence and machine learning applications are also growing rapidly and provide considerable promise in better species management such as the remote detection and identification of species in real time. These new technologies will not, however, replace the passion for our flora which is essential if we are to ensure that we leave a vibrant floral legacy for future Australia's to love and enjoy as much as we do.

I would like to thank all the conference sponsors and the conference organising committee: Josh McGregor, Damien Wrigley, David Coates, Lucy Commander, Chantelle Doyle, Nicki Taws, Jasmyn Lynch, Jo Lynch and Martin Driver for their huge effort in helping me coordinate the conference. Particular mentions go to Jo Lynch, Robert Hawes and Chris Ikin in the ANPC office as well as the other ANPC volunteers, and Josh McGregor from CANBR who have all worked tirelessly to ensure that the conference runs smoothly.

## Workshops, Projects and Outreach

One of our major projects in the last year has been to review and update the ANPC Translocation Guidelines in association with the National Environmental Science Programme's Threatened Species Recovery (TSR) Hub. The Steering Committee included Bob Makinson, Dave Coates, Cathy Offord, Maria Matthes and myself with the Project Manager being Dr Lucy Commander. Through Lucy's excellent guidance and oversight the third edition of the ANPC's *Guidelines for the Translocation of Threatened Plants in Australia* will be launched by the Threatened Species Commissioner Dr Sally Box on 11<sup>th</sup> November at the ANPC Conference Welcome Reception. Lucy's dedication to this project has been immense and she has consulted with a more than 30 experts from across Australia to ensure that the Guidelines are underpinned by the latest scientific findings. There are also 23 new case studies with colour photographs illustrating translocation techniques with many of these case studies also being published this year in the APC. This edition of the Guidelines will be essential reading for all those involved in translocation projects both in Australia and elsewhere. Many thanks go to Lucy, Dave, Cathy, Bob and Maria for the successful completion of this project as well as to the authors and experts who willingly gave their time to this project.

ANPC Project Manager, Martin Driver has continued to deliver workshops despite taking extended leave and restricted opportunities this year due to the effects of the current drought. A '*Plant Identification and Use*' Workshop was held at Mutawintji National Park with Western Broken Hill Junior Landcare in September, supported by the NSW Environmental Trust and Western Local Land Services. Meetings and site inspections were held in August with the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils regarding the NSW Environmental Trust funded Hunter Corridors Project and a Direct Seeding Workshop will be held there in late November. More of these workshops are planned for 2019. These workshops have been a great opportunity to directly provide private land managers with information on how to improve biodiversity management on their properties. Martin has also participated in the multi-agency '*Wild Orchids*' project meetings in the Murray catchment and provided project support.

Funding was received for Stage 2 of the Bringing Back the Banksias project from the Norman Wettenhall Foundation for continuation of the ANPC's networking and communications role between researchers and practitioners. It has enabled further *Banksia marginata* collections to be taken from relict populations or trees from Kangaroo Island, North East Victoria, Southern NSW, Upper Murrumbidgee and New England for analysis in conjunction with The Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney '*Restore and Renew*' project. Genetic analysis is still to be completed and cross referenced with sub-samples from the previously completed Victorian projects. Once analysis is completed, a workshop to communicate findings and implications is planned for 2019.

In late 2016 Australian seed collectors, growers/sellers/suppliers, purchasers/distributors and other interested parties participated in an ANPC survey on the status of the Australian native seed industry. The project team was Nola Hancock (Department of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University), Paul Gibson-Roy (Greening Australia), Martin Driver (ANPC) and myself. The survey aimed to gauge the structure and capacity of the native seed sector to meet current and future demand, and to gather feedback on issues being experienced within the sector. The initial survey results were disseminated at the Australian Native Seed Industry Review workshop at the ANPC's 2016 conference in Melbourne. Following this event we received a large number of requests to re-open the survey and it was extended to

April 2017. Survey results have been collated and interpreted over the last year with the final report to be launched in early 2019. Thanks to Nola, Paul and Martin for their efforts to helping to understand this critical part of plant restoration. The survey results presented at the 2016 workshop are available on the ANPC website.

Over the past 12 months, the ANPC has collaborated with the Orchid Conservation Program at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) on two projects. The '*Saving the Threatened Audas Spider-orchid (Caladenia audasii) from extinction*' project funded by DELWP in 2017 has resulted in seed collection and propagation of seedlings, hand pollination of wild plants, pollinator baiting and the construction of an exclusion fence to protect newly discovered plants from grazing kangaroos and rabbits. This project is due to finish in June 2020 with the re-introduction of 200 plants. This year DELWP also funded a similar project '*Saving the Brilliant Sun Orchid (Thelymitra mackibbinii) from extinction*'. This project will undertake pollinator surveys as well as the construction of two exclusion fences and signage. Community volunteers will undertake surveys and reintroductions of 600 propagated seedlings.

Our outreach efforts continue to expand through social media with the regular sharing of news and events in plant conservation via Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn with Instagram recently added. Our monthly email newsletter *ANPC News* continues to reach at least 630 subscribers. A new look ANPC website has been developed and we plan to launch this early in 2019 once content from the existing website has been copied across and the Eway payment gateway has been established.

Our bulletin, *Australasian Plant Conservation*, has continued to publish high-quality articles relevant to a broad range of plant conservation practitioners and managers, under the editorship this year of Heidi Zimmer and more recently our new assistant editors Nathan Emery and Selga Harrington. We sincerely thank Heidi, Nathan and Selga for their efforts over the past year in ensuring that APC continues to be a quality and well-respected publication communicating Australasian plant conservation issues. And I'd also like to thank Paul Adam for his oversight and guidance during our transition to a new editor and Siobhan Duffy for her design work on each edition.

## **Staffing**

Many thanks to our Business Manager Jo Lynch, who continues to work well beyond the call of duty for the ANPC. Her dedication, advice and support make my role and the work of the Committee much more effective, and ensures that the ANPC continues to function as a highly respected conservation organisation. Also sincere thanks to our office volunteers this year – Chris Ikin, Robert Hawes, Karen Khoo and Eleanor Gates-Stuart who have helped enormously with various tasks including graphic design, social media, ANPC News and financial processing. Carly Westbye resigned from her position as Office Administrator in March after five years and I thank Carly for her hard work during that time including her willingness to undertake additional tasks including many graphic design projects and assisting with the editing of APC.

I am grateful to Committee members for their tremendous support over the year. All of the Committee members have significant commitments outside the ANPC and it is often challenging to devote the time required to be active committee members. The involvement in the committee by all members is a clear demonstration of their dedication to the ANPC and its goals in improving plant conservation. I would like to thank ANPC Committee member Michelle Haby who is leaving the committee this year and I sincerely thank her for her time and support over the last four years.

I would especially like to thank Chris Ikin who took over as Treasurer last year. His experience and assistance in this role, as well as additional volunteering in the office, has been a huge asset to the ANPC over the last year. This includes many hours helping to finalise the implementation of Xero in the office and fine tuning the auditing process and merchant banking facilities. Bob Makinson has been a tower of support this year, especially during fund raising activities and his long term dedication to ANPC and wise counsel have been highly valued.

### **Funding**

As you will be aware 2018 was a financially challenging year for us but thanks to the dedication of the committee and the members we were able to exceed our fundraising target of \$20,000 by 30 June 2018. This was a tremendous result and highlights the dedication of our members to ensuring that the ANPC continues to advocate and educate for Australasian plant conservation. Our financial situation will be reported on in detail separately at the AGM but some of our keys sources of income this year have included:

- Threatened Species Recovery Hub for the Review of the ANPC's Translocation Guidelines.
- NSW Environmental Trust's Lead Environmental Community Groups grant for website development, social media and Plant ID workshops.
- Normal Wettenhall Foundation biodiversity conservation grant for Stage 2 of the *Bring Back the Banksias Project* – coordination, communication and workshop.
- Western Local Land Services for a Plant ID workshop.
- Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils for a Direct Seeding Workshop.
- Biodiversity On-ground Action 2018 - Community & Volunteer Action Grant (Victoria) for \$44,440.20 for "Saving the Brilliant Sun Orchid (*Thelymitra mackibbinii*) from extinction".
- SA Murray Darling Basin NRM Volunteer Small Grants with Eastern Hills and Murray Plains Catchment Group to contribute to SA Threatened Plants Translocation Workshop.
- Many donations as a result of our emergency fundraising drive earlier this year.

I would like to thank Jo Lynch and Martin Driver for their efforts in seeking projects and grants – while not every application is successful, we rely heavily on their efforts to continue to seek funding to support our key activities.

### **The coming year**

Many projects are already in the planning stage for the coming year. These include:

- Initial planning for the 13<sup>th</sup> Australasian Plant Conservation Conference in 2020.
- Launch of the National Seed Supply Survey.
- Promulgating the new Translocation Guidelines including through Plant Translocation workshops in South Australia and Western Australia and seeking additional funding for further translocation workshops.
- Seeking funding to revise the ANPC's Germplasm Guidelines.
- Completing Stage 2 of the Bring Back the Banksias project.
- Undertaking the two orchid projects with RBGV.
- Coordinating more seed collection and plant ID workshops.
- Finalising the new website.
- Investigating the potential for an ANPC Forum in 2019.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as President over the last 3 years. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with all of you and for an organisation that does so much for plant conservation in Australia. I see an ongoing and important future for the ANPC as it continues to play a key role in plant conservation across Australia and the region more broadly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Linda Broadhurst". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end.

Linda Broadhurst  
President  
Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc.