



Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. (ANPC)

President's Report To the Annual General meeting, 20 November 2019

I am very proud to say that 2019, our 28th year, has been a highly successful year for the ANPC and our role as Australia's key plant conservation organisation. Over the first half of the year, we successfully negotiated funding with the NSW Environmental Trust for our new Healthy Seeds Project which commenced in September and will run for 18 months. This project aims to deliver an evidence-based Roadmap to secure a reliable, genetically-appropriate, native seed supply in NSW for restoration. We will also be undertaking a long overdue update of the Florabank Guidelines for best practice native seed collection and use as well as an audit and investigation into past and current Seed Production Areas (SPAs). A consortium of partners from across the native seed and ecological restoration sectors has been established to oversee the project including Greening Australia, CSIRO, Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators, the Australian Seed Bank Partnership, and the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia.

We are also extremely excited to announce that we were awarded an Ian Potter Foundation Environment and Conservation grant to review and update the ANPC's Germplasm Guidelines over the next two years. Through this grant we will be able to comprehensively update one of our flagship publication '*Plant Germplasm Conservation in Australia - strategies and guidelines for developing, managing and utilising ex situ collections*'. These guidelines remain the definitive Australian standard for native seed and regenerative plant material collection, storage and use following publication in 2009. Since that time, seed biology research has progressed significantly and to ensure that the latest information is passed onto practitioners and land managers, we will bring together leading experts in seed biology research and practice from across Australia to review and rewrite the Guidelines. By continuing to incorporate updated scientific knowledge in our publications we are ensuring that Australia's seed sector has the necessary skills and knowledge. We will establish a steering committee and employ a project manager to co-ordinate the revision, with a specialised two-day consultation workshop with germplasm experts. We will also develop new training materials which will be delivered at four stakeholder workshops across Australia. For those unable to attend these events, online training and innovative video content will be produced to widely promote and promulgate the new Guidelines and its content.

The ANPC has again been involved in submissions to government either through participation in workshops or commenting on proposed legislative changes or guidelines. On 12 July, we commented on and endorsed a Submission to the draft National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement submitted by the Invasive Species Council, along with many other environmental organisations, which was a follow up to our 2017 submission. 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. The ANPC is among the few plant-oriented NGOs to have been closely engaged in this environmental biosecurity process at the national level, and it needs to become one of our core areas of advocacy.

The ANPC made a submission on 30 September on the Priority List of exotic environmental pests and diseases recently issued by The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture. This is a significant step in the slow process of building greater awareness and capacity for Australia's environmental biosecurity. The public comment period for the list has now closed, but the list remains available pending its finalisation. The ANPC is looking to bring members concerned about environmental biosecurity issues into closer contact with each other, to give us greater capacity on this side of our work. If you are interested in networking on this, please email the office with subject line 'Enviro biosecurity'.

The ANPC continues to maintain its strong involvement in promoting awareness of the plant pathogen Myrtle Rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*) threat to Australia's biota, and advocating for action. This has been a focus of activity by our Vice-President 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. This year, we published the new updated Global Host List for Myrtle Rust on our website, by Julia Soewarto and co-authors. The new Global Host List shows that the host range now stands at 480 nominate species (524 taxa when subspecies are counted separately, as they are in Australian conservation practice). This host range, and the rapid geographic spread of one strain of the pathogen, demonstrate that Myrtle Rust disease is now a major threatening process for the Myrtaceae family on a global scale.

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.

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 APCC12 Conference

The ANPC's flagship event is the biannual Australasian Plant Conservation Conference and our 12th conference was held in Canberra on 11-15th November 2018.

This conference brought 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 was "*Moving House – A new age for plant translocation and restoration*". Together we

explored and discussed 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.

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, Jasmyyn Lynch, Jo Lynch and Martin Driver for their huge effort in helping me coordinate the conference. Particular mentions go to Robert Hawes and Chris Ikin in the ANPC office as well as other ANPC volunteers, and Josh McGregor from CANBR who all worked tirelessly to ensure that the conference ran smoothly.

Workshops, Projects and Outreach

One of our major achievements in 2018 was the publication of the 3rd edition of the ANPC's '*Guidelines for Translocation of Threatened Plants in Australia*', in association with the Threatened Species Recovery (TSR) Hub and the ACT Government, and launched by the Threatened Species Commissioner Dr Sally Box at the APCC12 Conference. This new edition of the Guidelines is essential reading for all those involved in translocation projects both in Australia and elsewhere. Many thanks go to Lucy Commander, Dave Coates, Cathy Offord, Bob Makinson and Maria Matthes for the successful completion of this project as well as to the authors and experts who willingly gave their time to this important project.

During 2019 we have been widely distributing and promoting the new Guidelines, including through three short videos that are available on our website at https://www.anpc.asn.au/translocation_guidelines_review/, to keep Australia at the cutting edge of this important technique used in the fight against plant extinctions. In addition, twenty-six threatened plant translocation case studies were published on our website at <https://www.anpc.asn.au/translocation-case-studies/>.

Through support from the Threatened Species Recovery Hub, the Western Australian and South Australian governments, and the University of Adelaide, we have held two Threatened Plant Translocation Workshops this year in Perth and Adelaide. A total of 24 speakers presented to 108 participants representing volunteer groups, universities, landcare groups, government departments, local councils, NGOs, consultancies and a winemaking company. Material in the new Translocation Guidelines was presented, as well as local translocation case studies, followed by lively panel discussions. Thank you to our sponsors and all those who presented at the workshops. Selected presentations are available on the ANPC website here <https://www.anpc.asn.au/wa-threatened-plant-translocation-workshop/> and here <https://www.anpc.asn.au/sa-threatened-plant-translocation-workshop/>.

The ANPC collaborated with the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (AABR) to co-host the Seeds for the Future Forum held in Sydney on 8 October 2019. This one-day forum brought together people from the bush regeneration, revegetation, nursery and landscape architecture sectors to set the scene for future collaborations, and introduce the Healthy Seeds project and an outline of the National Native Seed Survey findings. It included in-depth discussion and practical case studies for optimising the conservation of remnants, through identifying the

issues and suggesting solutions for improved seed supply across the Greater Sydney area. One of the outcomes of the forum is a 'Communique from the NSW restoration industry' which calls upon State and Federal governments to direct incentive funding to biodiversity restoration and the infrastructure required to support it.

We are currently collaborating with the Australian Seed Bank Partnership on planning the Australasian Seed Science Conference to be held in Canberra 5-9 April 2020. The Call for Abstracts is now open until 5 January 2020. The conference will be covering the following themes:

- Seed biology and evolutionary ecology – Unlocking the challenges of germination, dormancy and seed ecology in a changing world.
- Seed sourcing and end-use – Considering genetic diversity, restoration and translocations as well as sector specific approaches to seed conservation and use.
- Seed and gene bank management – The ins and outs of managing *ex situ* seed banks and gene banks and the methods for maximising seed quality and longevity.
- Seeds in culture and society – Sharing stories and learning about cultural seed use, including collaborations between traditional use and *ex situ* seed banks and gene banks.

ANPC Project Manager, Martin Driver has continued to implement the ANPC's networking and communications role between researchers and practitioners for Stage 2 of the Bringing Back the Banksias project from the Norman Wettenhall Foundation. 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 2020. This year he has presented at three workshops for this project. Due to the effects of the current drought and limited funding, no plant ID or seed collection workshops have been held this year.

Between October 2016 and April 2017 the ANPC undertook a survey of the Australian native seed sector, which reported dwindling seed supplies and a decline in expertise and training. Initial survey results were disseminated at a workshop held at the APCC11 2016 conference in Melbourne. Survey results have been collated and interpreted over the last two years with the final report to be published in early 2020. The project team is Nola Hancock (Department of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University), Paul Gibson-Roy (Kalbar Resources), Martin Driver and myself. Thanks to Nola, Paul and Martin for their continued efforts to helping to understand this critical and complex part of plant restoration. The survey results presented at the 2016 workshop are available on the ANPC website <https://www.anpc.asn.au/seed-survey-and-workshop/>.

Over the past 12 months, the ANPC has continued its collaboration 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, plant surveys and pollinator baiting, and the construction of an exclusion fence to protect newly discovered plants from grazing kangaroos and rabbits. This project will finish in June 2020 with the re-introduction of 200 plants. In 2018 DELWP also funded a similar project 'Saving the

Brilliant Sun Orchid (Thelymitra mackibbinii) from extinction. This project has been undertaking plant and pollinator surveys as well as the construction of two exclusion fences and signage. Community volunteers have been assisting with the surveys and will reintroduce 600 propagated seedlings in Winter 2021.

Our outreach efforts continue to expand through social media with the regular sharing of news and events in plant conservation via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Our monthly email newsletter *ANPC News* continues to reach at least 630 subscribers. A new look ANPC website was launched in early 2019 which has significantly improved our information delivery and online shopping procedures and membership form. A big thank you to Heidi Zimmer for assisting us with this transition.

Our quarterly bulletin, *Australasian Plant Conservation (APC)*, 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 assistant editors Nathan Emery and Selga Harrington. This year, there have been two editions on the Translocation of Threatened plants, papers from the 12th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference and a focus on the NSW Saving our Species program. 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. Thank you also to the many authors who have contributed to these editions this year.

Staffing

In June, Dr Lucy Commander completed her employment as Project Manager for the review, publication and promulgation of the third edition of the ANPC's *Guidelines for the Translocation of Threatened Plants in Australia*. I would like to thank Lucy for her excellent work. Lucy's dedication to this project was immense. She consulted with more than 30 experts from across Australia to ensure that the Guidelines were underpinned by the latest scientific findings. However, I am very glad to say that Lucy has not left us just yet, as she has now been employed as the Project Manager for the Florabank Guidelines review under the Healthy Seeds project and has hit the ground running after starting in September.

In July, Martin Driver was further employed as the Healthy Seeds Project Manager where he will coordinate and manage the Healthy Seeds project, and oversee the SPA audit and Investigation Reports, Florabank Guidelines update and development of the roadmap. He will also coordinate consultation and liaison with stakeholders, consortium members, other reference groups, experts (scientists and practitioners) and community representatives from a range of organisations.

Many thanks to our Business Manager Jo Lynch, who continues to work above and 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 and Robert Hawes, who have helped enormously with various administrative and financial tasks.

I am grateful to all the 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 especially like to thank Chris Ikin, Kate Brown, Maria Matthes, Selga Harrington and Kylie Moritz who are leaving the committee this year, as well as Bob Makinson who is stepping down as Vice President but re-standing as an Ordinary Member, and I sincerely thank them for their time and support over the last four years of my President-ship. I too am resigning this year as my term is up and I am extremely thankful to have had the opportunity to work with a group of people that are so passionate and dedicated to Australian Plant Conservation.

Funding

Our financial situation will be reported on in detail separately at the AGM but some of our key sources of income this year have included:

- NSW Environmental Trust Healthy Seeds project.
- Ian Potter Foundation Environment and Conservation grant for the review of the Germplasm Guidelines.
- Threatened Species Recovery Hub, Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board and the Environment Institute at the University of Adelaide for two plant translocation workshops.
- Normal Wettenhall Foundation biodiversity conservation grant for Stage 2 of the *Bring Back the Banksias Project* – coordination, communication and workshop.
- Biodiversity On-ground Action 2017 - Community & Volunteer Action Grant (Victoria) for “Saving the threatened Audas Spider-orchid (*Caladenia audasii*) from extinction”.
- Biodiversity On-ground Action 2018 - Community & Volunteer Action Grant (Victoria) for “Saving the Brilliant Sun Orchid (*Thelymitra mackibbinii*) from extinction”.
- Memberships and donations.

I would like to thank Jo Lynch and Martin Driver, as well as committee members, 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

2020 will be a busy year for the ANPC undertaking the following activities:

- Implementing the Healthy Seeds Project including producing the Roadmap and Florabank Guidelines.
- Reviewing and revising our Germplasm Guidelines.
- Planning and holding the 13th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference.
- Launching the National Seed Supply Survey Report.
- Seeking additional funding for further translocation workshops. The ANPC is available to run workshops based on the new Translocation Guidelines anywhere in Australia. Registration fees depend on the amount of funding available (either from an institution or a successful grant application) to cover such expenses as catering, venue hire and ANPC staff time and travel. Please contact the ANPC for further information and request a quote, or to collaborate on a grant application.
- Completing Stage 2 of the Bring Back the Banksias project.
- Continuing the two orchid projects with RBGV.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as President over the last 4 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.