



Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. (ANPC)

**President's Report
To the Annual General meeting, 29 November 2017**

This is the 26th year of the ANPC and it is pleasing to see that we continue to maintain our role as Australia's key plant conservation organisation.

Involvement in submissions to government either through participation in workshops or commenting on proposed legislative changes or guidelines highlight areas where the ANPC has been active this year. For example, this year the ANPC undertook joint submissions with the Invasive Species Council - on the *Review of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity Draft Report* and the *Review of the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement*. We also provided comments on the *Draft Conservator Guidelines for Translocation of Flora and Fauna in the ACT*.

I have also attended several environmental biosecurity stakeholder meetings organised by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for relevant stakeholders to discuss environmental biosecurity matters and share ideas, with the focus on better engagement and collaboration on key environmental biosecurity issues, such as Myrtle rust and other plant pathogens.

This year we assisted the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) with the revision and production of the 2nd edition of the *National Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration in Australia* and which will be launched in Canberra tomorrow at Parliament House.

There continues to be a high level of community interest and support for plant conservation and the ANPC continues to enhance its capacity to play a key role in facilitating and communicating plant conservation initiatives throughout 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, and the requests we get from other organisations and government 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 effectively promote the increased recognition among the broader Australian community of the inherent value and cultural significance of the flora. We also need to ensure that we remain focussed on our core business of facilitating the conservation of a unique flora, the recovery of threatened species, ecological restoration and the management of remnant vegetation.

2016 ANPC Conference APCC11

The ANPC's 11th national conference, the 11th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference, was successfully held in Melbourne in November 2016.

The conference brought together a diverse range of participants including botanists, ecologists, 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 "*New Approaches to Plant Conservation Challenges in the Modern World*". Together we explored existing approaches to plant conservation across Australia, highlighting significant achievements and evaluating the effectiveness of our current approaches. The conference also provided an important opportunity to explore the major challenges Australian plants will be facing in the next few decades, and to identify new directions and approaches that will be required if we are to continue to conserve our unique floral heritage.

Changing climates and ongoing extensive habitat degradation continue to challenge many plant species. Being at the leading edge of this change, we will be held to account by future generations of Australians should we not do everything possible to arrest and reverse species decline. Developing the logistical and technological capacity to ensure that we have sufficient high quality seed for species restoration and understanding how to best use mutualistic organisms will undoubtedly improve our capacity to recover and conserve plant species. Perhaps a more significant challenge is how to reconnect Australians with our many wonderful and unique plants, and developing conservation approaches that maximise the benefits for people and plants are required to do this successfully. By exploring the frontiers of Australian plant conservation through new and emerging ideas we will begin developing adaptive approaches to conservation that will be necessary to respond to future challenges.

I would like to thank all the conference sponsors and the conference organising committee: John Morgan, Ben Zeeman, Susan Hoebee, Trevor Edwards, Susanna Venn, David Cantrill, Paul Gibson-Roy, David Coates, Jo Lynch, Martin Driver and Karina Salmon for their huge effort in coordinating the conference, along with the team of La Trobe University student volunteers. In particular, Jo Lynch and Carly Westbye in the ANPC office worked tirelessly to ensure that the conference ran smoothly.

Workshops, Projects and Outreach

One of our major projects in the last year has been the Review of the ANPC Translocation Guidelines in association with the National Environmental Science Programme's Threatened Species Recovery (TSR) Hub. In May, Dr Lucy Commander was appointed Project Manager of this revision. The ANPC, in association with the TSR Hub, Royal Botanic Garden Sydney and NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, ran two translocation events in Sydney. On 1 August, 90 people gathered at the RBG's Maiden Theatre for the Threatened Plants Translocation Information Day, demonstrating a huge interest in plant translocation. Sebastian Lang, from the Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner opened the series of invited presentations from local and national experts, including several ANPC committee members. Audio recordings of the presentations are now available with the Powerpoint slides on the ANPC website. On the following two days, an invitation-only workshop was held with 30 specialists to commence the process of updating the Translocation Guidelines. The ideas and suggestions generated at the workshop were incorporated into the draft of the third edition. Currently, workshop attendees are revising the content, which will be edited

by the Project Manager and the ANPC Translocation Guidelines steering committee early in the new year. In addition to the Guidelines, translocation case studies will be published next year in APC and on the ANPC website. A pro-forma for these case studies is currently being developed, and a number of authors have been approached to submit their projects. Thanks to the ANPC Steering Committee, Dave Coates, Cathy Offord, Bob Makinson and Maria Matthes.

ANPC Project Manager, Martin Driver has delivered many workshops over the past year including a Plant Identification workshop at Booligal Wetlands, which included presenting at a one day Rangelands Forum, supported by the NSW Environmental Trust, and a Sandhill Pine Woodland Walk at Oolambeyan National Park supported by Riverina LLS, Landcare and Greening Australia. A Native Pasture Management Workshop was supported by Corowa District Landcare, and a Plant Identification workshop was held in the Western LLS region at Mount Hope. More of these workshops are planned for next year. These workshops have been a great opportunity to provide private land managers with information on how to improve biodiversity management on their properties.

Two workshops were held for the Bring Back the Banksias project in collaboration with Trust for Nature Victoria and North East CMA, as well as Glenelg Hopkins CMA and the Victorian Volcanic Plains Friends of the Forgotten Woodlands. Funding has recently been received for Stage 2 of this project from the Norman Wettenhall Foundation for continuation of the ANPC's networking and communications role between researchers and practitioners, and a future workshop to communicate findings and implications is planned for 2018.

In August Martin participated as an ANPC partner representative in developing and attending the Albert Morris Award and Regeneration Project field trips and associated plant ID workshops held in Broken Hill 22-24 August, in conjunction with the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (AABR). More information on this event will soon be provided in an edition of APC.

Martin also participated in the NSW State Landcare Conference / LLS Forum in Albury, 25-27 October 2017 and was involved in several workshops over the 3 days with good networking opportunities. He presented an ANPC promotional poster which Carly had prepared and distributed ANPC brochures and membership forms. It is likely that this will result in at least 3 ANPC workshops in 2018 (subject to LLS funding) and the opportunity to further develop at least 5 others with LLS/ Landcare partners.

In late 2016 Australian seed collectors, growers/sellers/suppliers, purchasers/distributors and other interested parties were invited to participate in a survey organised by the ANPC on the status of the Australian native seed industry. The aim of the survey was to gauge the structure and capacity of the native seed industry to meet current and future demand, and to gather feedback on issues experienced within the industry. The initial survey results were disseminated at the Australian Native Seed Industry Review workshop. Due to high demand, the survey was extended to April 2017 and the results are currently being collated with funding provided by Greening Australia and will soon be disseminated. Thanks to Dr. Nola Hancock (Department of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University), Dr Paul Gibson-Roy (Greening Australia) and Martin Driver (ANPC) for developing and analysing the survey.

The Australian Native Seed Industry Review workshop was held on 18 November 2016 at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria as part of the APCC11 conference. This 'Call to Action' Workshop drew on both Dr Paul Gibson-Roy's plenary conference review of the American native seed industry and the industry-wide on-line survey mentioned above, to identify the key issues, gaps and opportunities in the Australian native seed industry. The workshop identified what are some of the key issues and gaps in the Australian national and regional seed supply chains and how we fare against learnings from the American scene. This has helped to identify and prioritise some critical elements that need to be addressed and identify opportunities, actions and key players to assist in creating a true native seed supply industry. The results of the workshop are available on the ANPC website.

Over the past 12 months, the ANPC has coordinated the final year of our subcontract of the Orchid Conservation Program to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV). This has involved one final project to conserve the endangered Melblom's Spider-orchid (*Caladenia hastate*). Seed was collected from two sites at Portland Aluminium/Point Danger and Wilkin Flora and Fauna Reserve. Mycorrhiza was isolated from both sites and 200 plants propagated. The pollinator data collected from this project has now been published. A total of 446 plants have been introduced to two sites, doubling the number of plants of this species in the wild. All of the individual projects in this Program are now complete, with the Program now run through the RBGV.

More broadly our outreach efforts continue to expand through a range of social media with the regular sharing of news and events in plant conservation via Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and LinkedIn. The email newsletter ANPC News continues to be sent out monthly and currently reaches 626 subscribers. The ANPC website is currently being redeveloped into a new, more user-friendly platform which will enable us to install many new features that will streamline office management and membership services. The new Kids Page has been further developed with additional activities to encourage the interest of young people in plants and plant conservation.

The ANPC office received new computers this year, thanks to the Australian National Botanic Gardens and the Department of Environment and Energy. This has enabled the introduction of a new financial system (Xero) which has significantly improved office procedures and replaced the outdated MYOB software. It has also enabled the purchase of graphic design software (InDesign) for the development of educational and promotional material.

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 of Paul Adam. On behalf of the Committee and all members I would like to sincerely thank Paul for his significant effort in ensuring that APC continues to be a quality and well respected publication for the communication of plant conservation issues in Australia. And I'd also like to thank Carly Westbye and Siobhan Duffy for all their work on each edition.

Staffing

Many thanks to our office staff Jo Lynch and Carly Westbye, who continue to work well beyond the call of duty for the ANPC. Their dedication and the quality of their work make my job and the work of the Committee so much more effective, and ensures that the ANPC continues to function as a highly respected conservation organisation. Also thanks to our office volunteers this year – Jenny Michelle, Lily Berry and Lyndsay Bassett who have greatly helped Jo and Carly with various tasks including website, social media, ANPC News and database activities.

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 as active committee members. The involvement in the committee by all Committee 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 members Doug Bickerton and Anne Cochrane who are leaving the committee this year and I sincerely thank them for their time and support over the last six years.

I would especially like to thank Merryl Bradley who is resigning as Treasurer this year after four years. Her experience and assistance in this role, as well as additional volunteering in the office, has been a huge asset to the ANPC over this time. This includes many hours helping with the transition to Xero over the last 18 months. We wish her all the best for the future and look forward to still seeing her occasionally at ANPC events.

Funding

Our financial situation will be reported on in detail separately at the AGM but we continue to broaden our sources of income including from:

- 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 and Plant ID workshops.
- Normal Wettenhall Foundation biodiversity conservation grant for Stage 2 of the *Bring Back the Banksias Project* – coordination, communication and workshop.
- Greening Australia for *Sandhill Woodland Communities* field day.
- Riverina Local Land Services for one day Plant ID workshops.
- Western Local Land Services for a Plant ID workshop.
- Biodiversity On-ground Action grant from the Victorian government for Saving the threatened Audas Spider-orchid (*Caladenia audasii*) from extinction.
- Two large confidential donations, one of which is going towards the website upgrade.

I would particularly like to thank Jo Lynch and Martin Driver for the great efforts they have put in with these successful projects and grant applications, and acknowledge their efforts with other unsuccessful grant applications such as the Threatened Species Recovery Fund, Australia-China Council, ACT Environment Grants and the NSW Environmental Trust.

The coming year

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

- Coordination of the 12th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference in Canberra 12-16 November 2018.
- Finalising the review of the ANPC's Translocation Guidelines and production of the 3rd edition of the Guidelines.
- Undertaking a Plant Translocation workshop in Canberra either before or after the conference, in conjunction with the launch of the new Guidelines.
- Seeking additional funding for the publication of the 3rd edition of the Guidelines as well as additional workshops.

- Undertaking Stage 2 of the Bring Back the Banksias project.
- Undertaking our new project Saving the threatened Audas Spider-orchid (*Caladenia audasi*) from extinction with RBGV.
- Coordinating more seed collection and plant ID workshops.
- Completing the introduction of the new website platform and online membership database.
- Investigating the potential for an ANPC Forum in 2019.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first term as President and look forward to my second term over the next 2 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 important future for the ANPC playing a key role in plant conservation across Australia and the region more broadly.

Linda Broadhurst
President
Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc.
29 November 2017