

Are you involved in any volunteer activities?

Recent progress with my thesis has granted me the luxury of volunteering at the ANPC office. Prior to this, my research was intensive in terms of working hours and time-based experiments. I am looking forward to more voluntary opportunities soon after my submission as my experience with the ANPC has been very rewarding.

How has the ANPC benefited you?

The ANPC has provided me with increased knowledge of Australian plants and the effort it takes to sustain and rehabilitate native vegetation. I also have a lot more appreciation for the work done by non-profit organisations, and the effort that goes into community outreach and fund-sourcing. Being involved with conservation work has definitely given me a lot of insight into what I can do for my own country (Malaysia). We are very behind in environmental and conservation work

compared to Australia, with Greenpeace Malaysia only established in 2014. Given the opportunity, I would love to learn more about how developed countries such as Australia implement their conservation strategies. My learning experience with the ANPC will be useful when volunteering for organisations that protect and sustain the tropical rainforests and native flora of Malaysia.

What are your future plans?

I have thoroughly enjoyed the logic of science and nitty-gritty laboratory work over the past few years. However having said that, I am inclined to take a few months break from science to instead develop my interest in photography, language learning, working for non-profit organisations, and website design. I also have plans to stay in Australia after graduation, and so will be looking for job opportunities either related to my areas of interest or to the skills I have developed during my PhD.

Projects in focus

Bring Back the Banksias

Martin Driver, ANPC Project Manager

Throughout south-western NSW and across Victoria, Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) has mostly disappeared from the landscape over most agricultural areas. This loss of the original plant populations has occurred due to grazing by domestic and feral animals, direct damage from rabbits, destruction of rabbit warrens, and wildfire.

The ANPC has joined forces with an extensive network of agencies, groups and individuals concerned about the conservation of Silver Banksia in these areas, and a collective of projects and groups has been forged under the title of 'Bring Back the Banksias'. The aim is to bring people together to identify known sites and populations of Silver Banksia, and participate in developing a network of seed production areas for future revegetation projects. Three workshops have been held to date in Hamilton, Bendigo and Lake Bolac with over ninety participants and a huge response from others wanting to be involved in the project as it evolves.

The ANPC has brought these interests together with a view to avoid duplication, assist with communications and networking, and seek information on the latest science in conservation efforts for Banksias. It is hoped

that addressing funding, research and extension in a more coordinated way will ultimately bring about a sustainable conservation outcome for the species and its habitats over a wider area than the current fragmented approach.

Initially the geographic scope of the project will cover the Mallee/ Wimmera, Central, North Central, Goulburn Broken, and North East Victorian CMA regions (including the Victorian Volcanic Plains program in Glenelg Hopkins CMA) and the Murray Local Land Services region in NSW. It may expand to other regions at a later date subject to interest and resourcing. Initially it is intended to cover the tree form of Silver Banksia only.

Initial objectives of the project group are to:

- Establish some resourcing to service the initial process, required workshops and network communications costs etc.
- Initiate data collection to map and collate known past and current Silver Banksia populations.
- Procure funding to initiate a genetics project.
- Co-ordinate a genetic audit of the Silver Banksia population range to inform restoration strategies.

Projects in focus (cont.)

Longer term and concurrent objectives are to:

- Maintain email communications with all interested parties and support networking opportunities.
- Identify and collate ecological and management issues and barriers for Silver Banksia restoration projects – establish needs and required support.
- Establish process and funding for seed collection and Seed Production Areas (SPAs) for future restoration.
- Establish support process and funding for a network of Silver Banksia remnant enhancement and restorations sites.

Funding support is in the very early stages of development and future awareness and support of program ideas are in discussion. Anyone who is interested in the conservation of Silver Banksia who would like to support or join in these efforts should make contact with Martin Driver, ANPC Project Manager, on phone 0400170957 or email at projects@anpc.asn.au. Look out for future project updates at anpc.asn.au/banksias



Participants at the Bendigo Bring Back the Banksias workshop. Photo: Martin Driver

Book reviews

A Guide to Southern Temperate Seagrasses

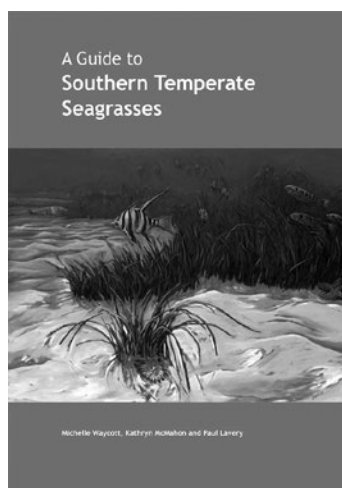
by Michelle Waycott, Kathryn McMahon
and Paul Lavery

CSIRO Publishing, 2014

112 pages with colour photographs and line art
Paperback, ISBN: 9781486300150

I have treated this highly informative book as a guide, with the intention of the writers that it be used primarily by non-botanists to identify non-algal plants that are found along the beach or caught in hooks while fishing or just swimming or wandering about in southern temperate coastal regions, covered on page 26.

The book is also an important contribution to greater knowledge of the value of these plants as stabilizers and habitat for other organisms. It is timely, as generally the shallow coastal zone has been seriously degraded, with sea grasses amongst the first to be lost.



The section arrangement covering Habitats, Ecology, Taxonomy Fauna, Reproduction and Evolution are written to inform the non-scientist of the complexity of this plant group. These pages are brief and informative.

The term “complex” for *Posidonia*, *Zostera* and *Halophila* is probably appropriate given that various botanists have for some time flagged uncertainty when it comes to naming these plants.

References are not used, but a bibliography is given for further reading.

The families Ruppiales (*Ruppia* spp.) and Potamogetonaceae (*Lepilaena* spp.) have received limited treatment on the

basis that they do not fit into this guide.

One small point. This small book will be used in the field and the page numbers are very small, making its use in the field difficult for some.

Geoff Sainty, Sainty and Associates