



Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. (ANPC)

**President's Report
To the Annual General meeting, 12 November 2014.**

This is the 23rd year of the ANPC and it is pleasing to see that we continue to maintain our role as Australia's key plant conservation organisation. Submissions to the Threatened Species Commissioner's Draft Terms of Reference and the Senate inquiry into Environmental Biosecurity highlight two key areas where the ANPC has been active this year. The submissions were coordinated by ANPC Committee members Maria Matthes (Threatened Species Commissioner) and Bob Makinson (Biosecurity) and I thank them and a number of other committee members for their efforts in finalising these documents. Following on from the Biosecurity submission Bob Makinson has been asked to participate in the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee's inquiry into environmental biosecurity. We have also recently entered into a partnership with the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia (SERA) for the development of a set of National Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration and Rehabilitation.

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 sustained level of membership in the ANPC, 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.

This year we also completed our new Strategic Plan, which was a priority action at our conference in 2012. The Plan will be circulated to all members prior to the AGM. This is a very important and timely document and I encourage all members to familiarise themselves with what we hope to achieve over the next 5 years. The Plan outlines our priorities, objectives and strategies for 2014–2019, and more specifically Strategic Actions for July 2014 – June 2015. I would particularly like to thank Zoe Knapp, Bob Makinson and Merryl Bradley for preparing the Strategic Plan and all those who provided comments during its drafting.

Importantly this year the ANPC completed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Director of National Parks for the provision of facilities and co-operative arrangements through the Australian National Botanic Gardens. We have a long history of working with the Botanic Gardens and very much appreciate their support in providing facilities to the ANPC.

While I continue to be greatly impressed by the dedication and breadth of knowledge of ANPC members, we still face 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.

2014 Conference APCC10

The 10th national conference of the Australian Network for Plant Conservation (now rebadged as the 10th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference), will be held in Hobart next week. This year's conference theme is '*Sustaining Plant Diversity – Adapting to a Changing World*'. In 1993 the ANPC held its first national conference in Hobart, with the theme "*Cultivating Conservation*", and we very much look forward to celebrating this return to Hobart 21 years later.

This conference will bring together a diverse range of participants including botanists, ecologists, land managers, and on-ground plant conservation managers from around Australia and New Zealand to review and highlight plant conservation achievements and challenges. The conference will also provide a forum to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of existing approaches, consider current major issues and identify new directions for the coming decades. The sub-themes for this conference 1) Securing Biodiversity, 2) Partnerships for Biodiversity, 3) Prioritising Actions, 4) Animals in Plant Conservation and 5) Engagement and Communication in the Modern World reflect the many directions and advances in plant conservation in Australia and its surrounds. Perhaps more importantly they reflect the need for participation of a broad range of professional and community groups if realistic on ground advances are going to be made to prevent the extinction of species and conservation of our flora.

I would like to thank the conference organising committee: Lorraine Perrins, Jo Lynch, Mark Fountain, Nick Fountain-Jones, Jennie Whinam, James Wood, Natalie Tapsen, Louise Gilfedder, Zoe Knapp and Arin Dean for their huge effort in coordinating the conference. In particular Lorraine Perrins, and Jo Lynch and Carly Westbye in the ANPC office, have worked tirelessly to ensure that the conference will run smoothly and have dealt with the numerous details and issues that have arisen since preparation began more than a year ago.

Workshops, Projects and Outreach

This year ANPC Project Manager, Tricia Hogbin, delivered two very successful workshops in the Hunter Valley. The first was on plant identification for flora of the Hunter Valley in April and the second was on seed collection, storage and use for native vegetation restoration, also in April. The latter workshop was supported by the Hunter Local Land Services and was the third based on ANPC's Plant Germplasm Conservation Guidelines. The workshop was attended by a range of stakeholders in plant conservation, with 28 participants and six presenters.

Tricia Hogbin also completed a project with the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust contributing to development of the '*Restore and Renew NSW*' project which aims to provide an easily accessible source of evolutionary, functional and environmental data directly relevant to the restoration of the NSW flora. ANPC's role was to (i) Identify a list of 200-300 plant species considered 'most useful' in restoration projects across NSW. (ii) Collate sources of information used to guide decision making regarding the provenance and fitness of plant material and (iii) identify stakeholders in restoration across NSW.

In late 2013 the ANPC was invited to submit a proposal to the Wimmera CMA for coordination of the Wimmera Orchid Conservation Project in Horsham Victoria. This program implements a range of orchid conservation activities including translocation, pest and animal control, *ex-situ* conservation of orchid seed and associated mycorrhizal fungi, propagation, monitoring, and threat abatement. We were very excited to be involved with this project and subsequently the ANPC took on the role as project manager with Noushka Reiter employed by the ANPC as the research scientist to implement the project, and Tricia Hogbin to oversee the project as Project Manager. Unfortunately in May this year we were informed that the facility where Noushka had been carrying out the orchid project work would not be available from the end of this year. We are now in the process of finalising an agreement with the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (RBG Melb) to take on the project and they have kindly revamped facilities to house the work. RBG Melb will take over managing the project but ANPC will continue to have close involvement with many aspects of the work. We wish Noushka all the very best with her new position at RBG Melb and she has enthusiastically expressed a strong interest to maintain close links with ANPC.

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 ANPC News email newsletter is now undergoing a revamp and will soon resume emailing once a month to currently over 760 subscribers.

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 Huw Morgan. On behalf of the Committee and all members I would like to sincerely thank Huw 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.

Staffing

While we have consolidated our office staff with our Business Manager Jo Lynch and Office Administrator Carly Westby, we have unfortunately lost Tricia Hogbin as our Project Manager. Tricia has been an outstanding project manager with ANPC and has made a huge contribution not only in terms of workshops and coordinating projects but also through her knowledge brokering, education and communication skills. On behalf of the ANPC I wish Tricia all the very best in her future endeavours.

Tricia will be sadly missed but on a more positive note, I am very pleased to announce that her replacement Martin Driver has an accomplished record in project management and outreach and I am confident he will also do a great job for ANPC. Martin has spent the last thirty years working on private and community vegetation management, enhancement and restoration projects, mostly in NSW and has worked with a wide range of land managers from private landholders, Local Government, State Authorities, and corporate infrastructure companies.

I would like to especially thank Merryl Bradley for the many roles she still plays in supporting the ANPC. While retiring as Business Manager in June last year, Merryl has not only taken on the position of Treasurer but also continues to work as a volunteer in the office.

Movement of the ANPC Head Office was undertaken in June with assistance from the ANBG. The new office is located at the eastern end of the Crosbie Morrison Building at the ANBG, with an improved public profile.

I am again grateful to Committee members for their tremendous support over the year. They all have significant commitments outside the ANPC and it is sometimes challenging to devote the time that they do in maintaining active participation as a committee member. 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 also thank Bob Makinson, Helena Mills and Natalie Tapson for agreeing to join the ANPC Committee out of session in February this year.

Funding

Our financial situation will be reported on in detail separately at the AGM but we continue to broaden our sources of income with this year producing a reasonable surplus, comparable to last year and an improvement on the previous year where there was a relatively small surplus.

This year we have been successful with a significant number of grants:

- Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority Capacity Building Program 2013/14
- Department of Environment Grants to Voluntary Environment, Sustainability and Heritage Organisations (GVESH) for 2013/14
- NSW Environmental Trust's Lead Environmental Community Groups grant for 2013/14
- NSW Environmental Trust's Restoration and Rehabilitation Community Grants program for 2013/14 for '*Capacity building in provenance issues for restoration*'
- Restore and Renew NSW with RBG Sydney
- Translocation plan for *Persoonia pauciflora*
- Design of recovery actions (augmentation, translocation) for *Asterolasia buxifolia*
- Eleven orchid conservation projects. Most of these will be subcontracted to RBG Melb in 2015
- Crowdfunding for the Orchid Conservation Program's new laboratory materials and equipment at RBG Melb.

I would particularly like to thank Jo Lynch and Tricia Hogbin for the great efforts they have put in with these successful grant applications and acknowledge their efforts with 6 other unsuccessful applications.

The coming year

A number of workshops and projects are already in the planning stage by Martin for next year. These include:

- Six provenance issues workshops with Local Lands Services (LLS) in NSW funded through the Environment Trust (Restoration & Rehabilitation)
- Investigating the options and liaising with Greening Australia Victoria for funding and delivery of a similar series of provenance issues workshops in regional Victoria
- Collaborating with GA (Capital Region) on the development of an Environment Trust R&R joint partnership project submission for White Cypress Pine rehabilitation in the western Riverina
- Coordinating the delivery of a workshop to investigate the needs, options and funding for a series of seed production areas (SPAs) for *Banksia marginata* in northern Victoria
- Investigating the opportunity for coastal rainforest species ID workshops.

We also hope to soon finalise the ANPC Prospectus to seek new funding and sponsorship opportunities from relevant companies and organisations.

Finally there is our 10th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference to be held in Hobart next week. This is the ANPC's primary event for this year. I very much look forward to meeting many of you and I see this conference as a unique opportunity to bring together members and those interested in plant conservation from across Australia and New Zealand.

David Coates
President
Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc.
5 November 2014