



WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC.

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2003

A busy and successful year

2003 has been a particularly busy and very successful year for the Society. The Council has worked hard on many projects to preserve our unique Australian wildlife in all its forms and has made numerous submissions to all levels of government to achieve added protection. Our efforts to increase the protection for the Great Barrier Reef and other Marine Parks have been very relevant to the success of our quest to save and protect our wildlife.

National President honoured

The National President, Patrick W Medway, was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2003 New Year's Honours List for service to conservation and the environment through environment education, the preservation of wildlife and nature, particularly the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia.



National President, Patrick Medway AM, with the Society's oldest member, Mrs Margaret Deas, and Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of New South Wales

94th Annual General Meeting and Annual Luncheon

An active team of Councillors was elected to office on 18 February 2003. The Minister for the Environment, The Hon Bob Debus MP, was our Guest Speaker before

a large audience of 168 members and friends in the Parliamentary Dining Room, Macquarie Street, Sydney.



Dick Mason (Vice President) thanking The Hon Bob Debus MP for his address to our Society.

Serventy Conservation Award

The 2002 Award was presented to John and Cecily Fenton of Hamilton, Victoria, by the President of Honour, Dr Vincent Serventy AM, at the annual Luncheon. Both the Fenton's spoke with passion of their love of the land and their special relationship with Australian wildlife and its preservation. Over a 40 year period they have reformed local farming practices to make them more environmentally friendly, with 80,000 trees being planted on their property at Lanark.



Dr Vincent Serventy AM (President of Honour) presents Cicely and John Fenton with the Serventy Conservation Award for 2002

President of Honour reports

Dr Vincent Serventy AM is still very active in our wildlife preservation programs. He is in constant touch with the media, mainly through Letters to the Editor and has many of his letters published on wildlife and conservation issues. A message from Vin:

“The older I get, the busier I get. My sister Lucy, the oldest member of our Society, died at the age of ninety eight after a life dedicated to conservation. I intend to do the same, hopefully for as long.

In this message I wish to remind the Society’s members of one urgent need – a United Nations Bill of Environmental Rights, that is being sponsored by our Society. We will then work towards the development of Regional Parks, the concept we sponsored for Australia. The first Regional Park, formed in England in 1872, places a conservation umbrella over where people live, work and play with no change in ownership; only preventing any change which will destroy its biodiversity.”

We congratulate Vin on his continuing commitment to the work of the Society.



Carol and Vincent Serventy pose in front of their portrait painted by Anne Cape, which was an entrant in the 2002 Archibald Prize

Strategic Planning Day held on the Society’s Foundation Day

A special Strategic Planning Day was held on 11 May 2003 in the Taronga Centre at the Taronga Zoological Gardens, Mosman, to organise and plan for the future work of the Society. The Director of Taronga Zoo arranged for us to be briefed on what the Zoo is doing for wildlife research, especially for the rare and threatened species. A light lunch and an inspection followed where Councillors looked at the Zoo’s latest exhibits such as the Environmental Farmhouse display. The Council of the Society schedules the Strategic Planning Day on 11 May as it marks the foundation of the Society in 1909. Foundation Day is commemorated each year with a special meeting to ensure the long term success of the Society.

Wildlife research grants

Among the numerous grants awarded during 2003, two special wildlife research grants were awarded. The first was to Al Glenn, a PhD student at the University of Sydney who is currently studying the effects of fox predation on native quoll. There is an urgent need to learn more about the status and long term survival of native quoll and this research work is part of a wider research program to protect the species from predation by foxes and wild dogs.

The second award was made to Vanessa Morrissey, a senior student at the University of New South Wales. Vanessa is studying the effects of roadkill of native animals in the Royal National Park, Sutherland. Vanessa’s work is part of a wider program to study the deaths of native wildlife on state road systems that is being conducted by Dr Daniel Ramp of UNSW.



Clive Williams (Vice President), Vanessa Morrissey, Suzanne Medway (Executive Director) and Ralph Campbell (Treasurer)

Wildlife Animal Expo 2003

The Society again staged a major display at the 2003 Wildlife Animal Expo at Rosehill Gardens, attracting large crowds of visitors interested in all aspects of wildlife and animal management. We invited Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services to join us with an animated public display featuring live animals, which always attracts great interest. The stories behind the injured animals have strong appeal to the public and assists in our public education program for wildlife preservation.

If anyone would like to help with this public display in 2004, please contact the National Office and register your interest.

Raptor Seminar with Birds Australia

We sponsored the Birds Australia Raptor Seminar, held during April 2003 at the Macquarie University Graduate School of Management. The seminar was booked out, with an overflow audience keen to learn more about the plight of raptors and their wellbeing. Experts outlined the research being carried out on owls, eagles, hawks and kestrels, and everyone enjoyed the delightful photographs of the birds involved.

NSW Pest Animal Control Council

I meet quarterly as the representative on the NSW State Pest Animal Control Council to look at ways and means to minimise the disastrous effects of feral animals on our livestock and wildlife across New South Wales. This is an important, ongoing Committee funded by the NSW Department of Agriculture, where valuable contacts are made for wildlife preservation issues.

Saving Towra Beach

Important work continues to save the Towra Point Nature Reserve beach area from serious erosion. Following up the development of the Plan of Management and the funding by the Minister for the beach nourishment work for Towra Beach, the Steering Committee met and prepared the vital EIS report in 2003. This report was formally adopted and advertised for public comment in September 2003 and the proponent, NSW Waterways, will report back early in 2004.

Hopefully, formal approval will soon be given to commence the re-nourishment work on the beach. This habitat is vital for the long term survival of migratory wading birds, which are all protected under the international RAMSAR, CAMBA and JAMBA agreements. Our Society continues to play an important role in sponsoring the Friends Group, and in providing publicity and volunteers to carry out the regular restoration and weed removal work on the Towra Reserve. More volunteers are always very welcome and are invited to assist.



NPWS and volunteers constructed a seawall to protect the Towra Lagoon

Australian Wildlife magazine

We successfully launched our new coloured cover magazine *Australian Wildlife* in 2003 and it was widely acclaimed by all members and the wider community. Our Editor, Suzanne, works tirelessly to gather articles and photographs for each edition and has raised the standards high in reporting on the Society's conservation work across Australia. More articles are always welcome to assist in making the magazine interesting and worthwhile.

Society publications

We reprinted and upgraded our Society's smaller handout brochures in 2003 to appeal to a wider and more sophisticated audience. They have been well received and are readily available to give out to schools and the general public at any time. Please call the Office for copies. Our Society's History continues to be widely distributed and we recently sold some 40 copies through a conservation bookshop outlet, which all helps spread the conservation message

Conferences and wildlife seminars

Councillors attended and contributed to a number of important wildlife meetings throughout the year. We actively initiated and sponsored some of these conferences:

- Australian College of Education - St George Chapter address - 12 March
- RSPCA Scientific conference, Canberra - 25 March
- Australasian Regional Association of Zoology and Aquaria conference, Adelaide - 7 April
- Australian Scout Cub camp seminar on wildlife - 19 April
- Woolaware Bay Shorebird Lagoon Steering Committee - 16 May
- Austroad Workshop, Stamford Hotel, Sydney - 23 May
- Raptor Seminar at Macquarie University - 12 April
- New Caledonia Environment visit - 15 June
- Entomology Society - 50 Anniversary Dinner - 28 June
- GEKO Environment Annual meeting, Currumbin - 10 September
- Nature Conservation Council Annual General Meeting - 29 October
- Australian Koala Conference, Brisbane, Queensland - October
- Reduction of Road Kill Seminar, Sydney - 18 November
- 3rd Wildlife Management Congress, Christchurch - 8 December



Patrick Medway (National President), Dr Vin Serventy (President of Honour), Dr Clive Williams (Vice President), and Councillors Dr Mike Augee and John Clarke at the NCC AGM

Wildlife Management Congress

By far the most significant wildlife conference ever attended by our Society was the 3rd Wildlife Management Congress in Christchurch in December 2003. Over 980 delegates assembled to discuss and present papers on an extremely wide range of wildlife issues. Some 350 Australians from government departments, universities, private and commercial institutions attended and were involved in finding solutions to the many contentious issues of wildlife management. It was a particularly rewarding congress and we made our mark by presenting and handing out hundreds of leaflets on the work of the Society.

Reduction of Roadkill Seminar

We staged this special Seminar in the Maiden Theatre, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney on Tuesday 18 November 2003 after much planning and research. We joined with the Linnaean Society to promote this special event and their members also attended and participated. The NSW Minister for the Environment, The Hon Bob Debus MP, kindly sent a special message to us commending our work in trying to reduce the roadkill of native animals through this new strategy. We will be forwarding a copy of the final report to the Minister and seeking his advice on what more we can do to help reduce this tragic loss of wildlife.

New website a great success

Our new WPSA website is proving to be a great success, with an increased number of hits per month. Public enquiries can be accessed from the website, with many frequently asked questions being answered from this information site. It is possible to purchase Society souvenirs and to enroll in the Society through this new medium. Many schools can access wildlife information for projects from this source. Our site can be viewed at <http://www.wpsa.org.au> at any time.



Environmental education

Our National Office continues to receive and answer hundreds of routine wildlife calls each week. The Office distributes project material to school children and the general public every day throughout the year. Our reputation as a reliable source of wildlife information means that we are often called upon to supply additional information on current wildlife management issues, ie Quoll Advisory Research Committee, Towra Point migratory wading bird enquiries, etc.



Members of the Society planting trees on National Tree Day, Sunday 27 July 2003

Financial Report - summary

Current accounts - the Society's Councillors continue to exercise effective control over our finances and reviewed and adjusted the investment portfolio during the year after the decline in interest rates. Our old investments were not performing as well as we had hoped. Using expert financial advice from the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (our Bankers), we were able to realign our investments to take advantage of rising interest rates and now look forward to strong growth in our investment portfolio.

Donations, bequests and gifts - during the year we received a very generous bequest of \$47,565.20 through our advertising with the Solicitor's Pro-Bono publication. Our dedicated members continue to make donations to fund the work of the Society.

Future projections

We are now embarked on a very positive course of action to promote and market the Society and its vital work for Australian wildlife. Membership is vital for our long term success and it is important that all existing members continue to encourage family and friends to join the Society. Membership leaflets are freely available from the National Office.

I am extremely grateful for the wonderful support received from all our elected Councillors. They work tirelessly behind the scenes to make the Society function. I extend my sincere appreciation to the volunteers, especially Suzanne, who assists me and runs the National Office and the various projects and activities on behalf of the Society.

My sincere thanks to everyone concerned!

Patrick W Medway AM
NATIONAL PRESIDENT