

# WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

(ACN 134 808 790)

## WPSA PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014

### A year in review

Mid 2014 the Board held a Strategic Planning Session. A priority to emerge from this was the need to find a permanent National Headquarters for the Society to work from, thus allowing Suzanne and Patrick Medway to recover the space in their own home that they have generously provided to the Society over fifteen years. Several possibilities are being considered, and the Board will remain focused on this proposal in the coming year.



(President David Murray with Robert Stokes MP Minister for the Environment and Vice President Ken Mason at a community forum at Hurstville on 19 May 2014)

A major interest as always has been environmental education, and we have continued our membership of the Australian Association for Environmental Education this year. Furthermore I have been elected to their NSW Council, to improve liaison. We have again awarded ten scholarships worth \$1,000 each to University students, as detailed below. A second recipient was also selected for the UTS Wildlife Science Ecology Research Scholarship, worth \$5,000.

As with all charities, we are very aware of the necessity to carefully husband our income stream and this is always a major focus for the Directors of the Board of the Society. As we receive no government funding and rely entirely on our own membership fees and return on investments to carry out our wildlife conservation work, seeking more support through sponsorship or partnerships will be an ongoing necessity for all our board members.

We identified that the future of the Society lies with a new generation of young Australians who have a passion for wildlife conservation.

Our research indicated that young people who study wildlife conservation at university develop a keen and abiding interest in the subject which can last a lifetime. You too can make a donation to the Wildlife Science Ecology Research Scholarship at any time. Donations are fully tax deductible under our registration as a DGR status Item 1 on the table in section 30-15 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

### On a personal note

As incoming President I welcome the opportunity to present to the Board two campaigns that I thought worthy of our support. First, the Cliefden Limestone caves in southern NSW are threatened with destruction by the proposed Needle's Gap Dam. The Board has agreed that we will support the Linnaean Society of NSW in their efforts to protect the Caves. Apart from their scientific importance as a source of fossil, these caves provide an extremely important habitat for bats.

Secondly, we are supporting the proposal from the Macarthur Branch of the National Parks Association to preserve a section of the Bargo River Gorge by having it declared a National Park. This area is under threat from cliff-top development, and represents a vital corridor for wildlife moving between the Blue Mountains National Park and the coast.



Members at the last AGM

## 2014 – University Student Grants Scheme

The Australian Wildlife Society was delighted to announce the winners of the ten grants of \$1,000 each to honors or postgraduate students conducting research that will contribute to the conservation of Australian wildlife. The winners for 2014 are:

**Amy Northover**, School of Veterinary and Life Sciences at Murdoch University.

Project: The ecology of parasite transmission in fauna translocations.

**Freda Nicholson**, La Trobe University.

Project: Do juvenile hormone analog insecticides disrupt amphibian lifecycles?

**Kimberly McCallum**, University of Adelaide.

Project: Influence of the spatial arrangement of plants in revegetated systems to gene flow, natural regeneration and long-term viability.

**Rebecca Peisley**, Charles Sturt University.

Project: Ecosystem services provided by birds in agricultural landscapes.

**William Geary**, Deakin University.

Project: Carnivores in flames: Predator ecology in a fire-prone landscape.

**Jaimie Cleeland**, University of Tasmania and the Australian Antarctic Division.

Project: Macquarie Island albatrosses: Assessing the environmental and anthropogenic influences on population and demographic status and trends.

**Mark Wong**, The Australian National University.

Project: Fine-scale geographic variation in a newly described Australian funnel-web spider (*Atrax sutherlandi*).

**Yaara Aharon-Rotman**, School of Life & Environmental Sciences, Deakin University.

Project: Migratory shorebird populations are under threat and thus of particular conservation concern.

**Blanche D'Anastasi**, James Cook University.

Project: The conservation status of Western Australian true sea snakes: Are species disappearing before they have been discovered?

**Jonas Bylemans**, University of Canberra.

Project: Spawning site identification of Macquarie perch (*Macquaria australasica*, C. 1830) using environmental DNA.

## Wildlife Science Ecology Research Scholarship

The 2014 Australian Wildlife Society (AWS) Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship has been awarded to UTS School of the Environment PhD candidate Sofietje Voerman. Given the nature of her project, the scholarship will provide essential extra funding for experimental design and specialised equipment.

“My research focuses on the native marine seaweed *Caulerpa filiformis*, which has become very well adapted and is spreading. The problem with this species is that it is highly chemically defended and structurally very different to other important coastal seaweeds so it has the potential to have wide-ranging effects on the high biodiversity of marine organisms that call these habitats home.” Sofietje said.



(Vice President Dr Clive Williams and Awardee Sofie Voerum)

## Wildlife conservation projects

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia has developed a diverse range of conservation projects and responsibilities in our mission to preserve Australia's unique wildlife, and this is evident in the breadth of our achievements over the last year. We deal with and support a broad spectrum of environmental issues, supporting and/or delivering various wildlife conservation projects and operating in a number of different, and sometimes difficult and isolated, locations across Australia. Some of our wildlife conservation projects focus on preserving a single species, while others deal with national problems on a continental or global scale – such as feral animals or climate change. Our volunteers work in locations all around Australia, from remote areas in the central desert to the capital cities – and all showing a tremendous dedication and commitment to preserving and protecting Australia's fauna and flora for the next generation of young Australians.

## 2014 Conservation Group Grants

The Board of Directors carefully considers all requests for grants from other wildlife conservation groups and places a special emphasis on native wildlife research, conservation and the preservation of wildlife habitat. The Society makes regular contact with wildlife caring groups across Australia to find out how they are faring, what their main projects are and how we can be of assistance to them in preserving native wildlife and its vital habitat. We lobby organisations and government bodies on their behalf and make donations to assist them in their special wildlife conservation projects.

## Wildlife rescue calls

We continue to receive numerous and wide-ranging distress calls for help from members of the public about sick, injured and stranded wildlife. We note with some concern that the Victorian government has been asked to remove the bare-faced or common wombat from the list of protected native species, which will allow some local farmers to destroy wombats on their property. We are fortunate to have the support of the various national wildlife rescue services that do such valuable and selfless work to help rescue, save and rehabilitate our native wildlife. We are constantly reminded of the necessity of our organisation to stay vigilant and to continue to protect and preserve our native wildlife from attack and abuse. Recently we became embroiled in a disastrous situation where loggers clearing land were covering over wombat burrows in contravention of their conditions to clear the site. After extensive litigation the matter was resolved but we remain on guard against further breaches of the conditions in their permission to log the site.

## Financial Report summary

The Society's Directors and the Finance and Investment Committee continue to exercise tight and effective control over our finances and review and adjust the investment portfolio as required during the year. The investment funds of the Society have continued to grow with the return on our investments now above average for the year. The Committee made a recommendation that the Society's investments be pooled to create a single investment portfolio to maximise the income. We also rely on our Bequest Program to provide much needed funds to expand our wildlife conservation program across Australia and commend this program to all members and their families to consider the benefits to the work of the Society.

## Australian Wildlife magazine

Our coloured Australian wildlife magazine is the flagship of the Society and has proved to be extremely popular amongst all of our members.



Our fortnightly email wildlife newsletter has also proven to be very popular with our members across Australia and we encourage them to forward the Newsletter on to their family, friends and associates to help spread the wildlife conservation word.

## Donations, bequests and gifts

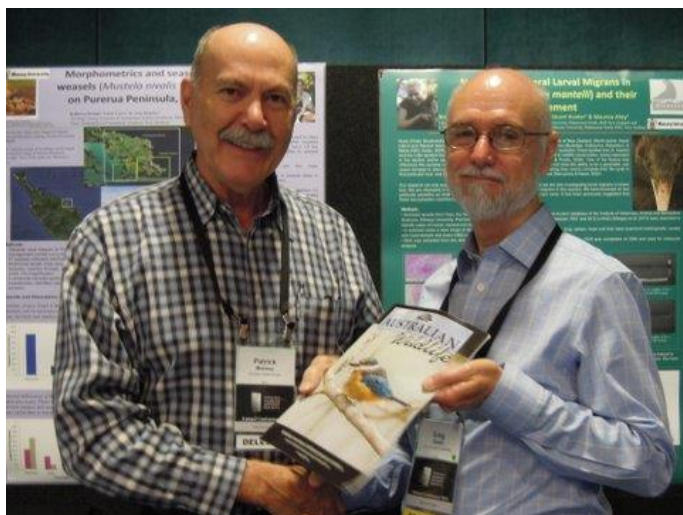
During the year we continued with our bequest program to encourage donors to support our wildlife conservation work across Australia through the website and through general publicity. We are very grateful to all our members for considering using the bequest program to help the Society with its long-term planning. Please contact the National Office for more details on the Bequest Program and on how to join the Friends of the Society and make a regular monthly donation to support our national wildlife conservation programs.

### Conferences and wildlife research seminars

The Society's directors attended and contributed to a number of important wildlife conferences and meetings throughout the year. We actively initiated and sponsored many of these conferences and participated in others. WPSA is an active member of the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales. Our Society's CEO is a representative on the NSW State Pest Animal Control Council and an appointed member of the NSW Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel. He provides expert advice and assistance on wildlife conservation matters and keeps the Society abreast of environmental and conservation developments by government officials.



(Historic Wilson's Farmhouse cottage in Rockdale Wetlands)



(Patrick Medway presenting the President of AWMS, Dr Greg Baxter, with a copy of our magazine)

### A special thank you to all our members

May I wish every member of the Society a happy, healthy and prosperous 2015 and thank you all most sincerely for your tremendous support and continued dedication and commitment in helping the Society to preserve and protect our native wildlife for future generations of young Australians.

David Murray PhD  
PRESIDENT  
31 December 2014

### Proposal for Wilson's Farmhouse at Rockdale

The Society has been in consultation with the Rockdale City Council to lease the historic Wilson's Farmhouse Cottage at 310 West Botany Street Rockdale for use as a local Environmental Education Centre for schools in the St George area. The historic cottage was constructed in 1855 and is made of local sandstone and measures 7 metres by 7 metres. With some modifications and restoration work it could be made suitable as a base for an environmental education teacher and staff to work up programs in the Rockdale Wetland Corridor, which stretches from the Cooks River system to the Georges River system. Donations for this special project are very welcome and will be faithfully applied.