

# President's

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022



### A Year in Review

The past year has been challenging, with COVID-19 taking a toll on the economy again in 2022, and floods impacting Queensland and New South Wales. The Society was fortunate to be able to continue protecting Australia's precious wildlife during these challenging times. Director Ken Mason retired after ten years on the Board of Directors, Dr Hayley Stannard took on the role of Treasurer, and we welcomed a new Project Officer, Kate Schmahl, to the team.

With great sadness, one of our lifetime members and 2022 Roll of Honour recipients, Dr Clive Williams OAM, passed away on 4 September 2022. He was ninety years old. Clive joined the Society in 1986 and served on the Board of Directors for over thirty years. Clive significantly contributed to our major wildlife conservation projects, including Towra Point Nature Reserve rehabilitation and restoration work for migratory wading birds, Rockdale Wetland Corridor restoration, and National Tree Day programs. Clive played a substantial role in judging the Society's annual awards. We honour Clive's dedication and contribution to wildlife conservation.

One of the highlights of the year was presenting our four annual awards – the **Serventy Conservation Award, Community Wildlife Conservation Award, Wildlife Rehabilitation Award, and Youth Conservation Award**. We are aware of the wonderful work conducted by wildlife conservation organisations and volunteers. We know that many organisations and thousands of volunteers are working tirelessly to save Australia's threatened wildlife and the habitats in which they live. We are proud to acknowledge and

reward these individuals and wildlife conservation groups and encourage them to continue their wildlife conservation work on behalf of the community.

The Society established a Roll of Honour to highlight past luminaries who have made a significant contribution to the longevity and success of the Australian Wildlife Society and who are respected in the wider conservation field for their contribution to the preservation of Australian wildlife. The luminaries added to the Roll of Honour were: Mr Ken Mason, Dr Clive Williams OAM, Mrs Suzanne Medway AM, and Dr Richard Mason.

Another highlight was the awarding of our ten University Research Grants offered to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities. This year, the Society increased the value of its annual University Research Grants. The Australian Wildlife Society's University Research Grants commenced in 2005 with ten \$1,000 grants awarded to honours and postgraduate students for research projects of direct relevance to the conservation of Australian wildlife – flora or fauna. In 2016, the grants were increased to ten \$1,500 grants. This year, the grant amount doubled to ten \$3,000 grants awarded to honours and postgraduate students at Australian universities – totalling \$30,000 each year. We also awarded three special scholarships at the University of Technology Sydney, the University of New South Wales, and the University of Newcastle. The Society is proud to support the next generation of young Australians and their research on conserving Australia's biodiversity for future generations.



**Our Mission:** Australian Wildlife Society, founded in 1909, is a national not-for-profit wildlife conservation organisation. We are dedicated to protecting Australian wildlife (flora and fauna) through national environmental education, public awareness, advocacy, hands-on wildlife conservation work, and community involvement. To fulfil part of our mission, we introduced the University Research Grants Scheme in 2005. Since its inception, we have awarded over 175 grants to very worthy recipients. In the future, we plan to steadily increase the dollar amount of the grants subject to further donations, which are always welcome.



## Australian Wildlife Magazine

The magazine has a proud record and history and has proved extremely popular amongst all our members. The magazine's readership has spread across Australia and internationally, carrying a strong message of environmental education, wildlife conservation issues, and the preservation of native wildlife. We invite members to distribute copies to family and friends and invite them to become members.



### E-newsletter

Our monthly e-newsletter, *Wildlife Wisdom*, has also proven extremely popular with our members. The content and quality of the newsletters have developed overtime. It continues to feature the vital work of the Society and news from our members. We encourage members to forward *Wildlife Wisdom* to their family, friends, and networks to help spread the important message of wildlife conservation across Australia.

### Website

Our 2022 wildlife of the year was also featured – Australia's amphibians. Changes to the structure and layout will be an ongoing process as we continue to update our website to make it more user-friendly.

### Social Media

We are active on five social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube). We aim to keep our followers up to date with important actions of the Society and the collective work being promoted nationally. We reached fourteen thousand followers on Instagram. Our followers continue to grow each month, and we thank you for your support.

### Membership

As of 31 December 2022, we had 595 members in total. We had 120 Individual Members, 13 Family Members, 46 Concession Members, 12 Corporate Members, 33 E-Mag Members, 14 Associate Members, 24 Life Members, 20 Complimentary Members, and 313 Student Members. Please consider becoming a member of the Society to help protect Australia's native wildlife and natural habitats. Student membership is free.

## Wildlife Science Ecology Research Scholarships

The **University Technology Sydney Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to UTS School of Life Sciences PhD student, Mitchell Brennan, for his research on 'Aquarium bred and released seahorses as a conservation method for the endangered White's Seahorse, *Hippocampus whitei*.'

The **University of New South Wales Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to NSW Centre for Ecosystem Science PhD student, Brendan Alting, for his research on 'Multi-species dynamics in a mixed-use coastal ecosystem-understanding how eutherian, marsupial, and reptilian predators interact.'

The **University of Newcastle Wildlife Ecology Research Scholarship** was awarded to UON School of Environmental and Life Sciences PhD Candidate, Louise Williams, for her research on 'The movement, foraging ecology, and health of migratory shorebirds in the Hunter and Port Stephens estuaries.'

## Conservation Group Grants

The Society carefully considers all requests for grants from conservation groups that emphasise wildlife and habitat preservation.

This year, we were fortunate to be able to offer four Conservation Group Grants:

### Mornington Peninsula Koala

Funds assisted Mornington Peninsula Koala Conservation Landcare Group in maintaining and increasing available habitat for Mornington Peninsula's koalas through tree planting and raising community awareness and education, particularly around road safety.

### Adelaide and Hills Koala Rescue

Funds assisted Adelaide and Hills Koala Rescue in purchasing Makita fans and battery packs to keep koalas cool whilst in rehabilitation care.

### Native Bee Conservation

Funds assisted Dr Kit Prendergast with her research on native bee hotels, and publishing a scientific paper and educational booklet on native bee conservation.

### Camden Wombats Landcare

Funds assisted Camden Wombats Landcare in purchasing new wildlife cameras and moxidectin for mange treatment of wombats living in Camden, New South Wales.

## Wildlife Photographic Competition

The annual judges' prize of \$1,000 was won by George Madani for their photograph of an eastern pygmy possum (*Cercartetus nanus*). Eastern pygmy possums are tiny and appropriately whiskered for one primary purpose – raiding native inflorescences to get at that ambrosial sugary goodness!



Eastern pygmy possum (*Cercartetus nanus*). Image: George Madani.



Helmeted honeyeater (*Lichenostomus melanops cassidix*). Image: Kynan Tang.

The annual people's choice prize of \$500 was won by Kynan Tang for their photograph of a helmeted honeyeater (*Lichenostomus melanops cassidix*). Acting as the bird emblem for Victoria, the beautiful, helmeted honeyeater is Critically Endangered, with fewer than two hundred individuals remaining in the wild.

## Annual General Meeting and President's Luncheon

The 113th Annual General Meeting of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Limited, trading as the Australian Wildlife Society, was held on Wednesday, 2 March 2022, at Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, Sydney, New South Wales, and attended by an enthusiastic group of supporters. The National Office Manager, Megan Fabian, welcomed the guests and introduced the Chief Executive Officer, Patrick Medway AM, who proposed a toast to 113 years of wildlife conservation by the Society. Patrick introduced our guest speaker for 2022, Dr Jodi Rowley, the Curator of Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Biology at the Australian Museum, who spoke about her research on Australia's amphibians. The Society was pleased to announce the winners of its prestigious awards for 2021 during the luncheon proceedings.



AGM Attendees: L to R: Roz Holme OAM, Kev Holme, Dr Robin Crisman, Philip Sansom, Brian Scarsbrick AM, Dr Julie Old, Ken Mason, Maureen Christie, Dr Clive Williams OAM, and Patrick Medway AM.



L to R: President Dr Julie Old presenting Director Ken Mason with his Roll of Honour Certificate.



Guest speaker, Dr Jodi Rowley, gave a presentation on Australia's amphibians.



L to R: President Dr Julie Old, Ken Mason, Suzanne Medway AM, Dr Clive Williams OAM, Patrick Medway AM.

## Wildlife Conservation Awards

The winner of the **Serventy Conservation Award** was Maureen Christie of Carpenter Rocks, South Australia. Maureen has devoted herself to wildlife conservation work for more than twenty-seven years. Her accomplishments include initiating a plan to trap feral cats at known roost sites of the Critically Endangered, orange-bellied parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*), being active in shorebird counts in south-east South Australia, helping to establish the Friends of Shorebirds SE, and she has been the Secretary/Treasurer of the Friends of Shorebirds SE since its inception. Maureen has coordinated regular monitoring of shorebird nesting sites and educated the public on the importance of keeping dogs on a leash, which led to the first successful hatching and fledging of the Vulnerable little tern (*Sterna albigifrons*). She has also shaped South Australia's fisheries policy to protect its shorebirds.



L to R: Maureen Christie, Dr Julie Old, and Patrick Medway AM.

The winner of the **Community Wildlife Conservation Award** was the Wombat Protection Society of Australia, Tomerong, New South Wales. This group has operated for more than twenty years to protect wombats. Through its regular workshops and seminars, it educates schools, communities, and wildlife groups on the conservation and care of wombats. It has partnered with several universities to support research into wombats and their conservation. One of its significant achievements has been developing the burrow flap method to treat wombats with mange. Wombat Protection Society of Australia provides burrow flaps to interested groups and constantly researches the best ways to treat mange. Its education programs encourage people to coexist with wombats and not view them as pests.



L to R: Shirley Lack, Dr Julie Old, and Patrick Medway AM.

The winner of the **Wildlife Rehabilitation Award** was Wildlife Rescue Australia, Woolgoolga, New South Wales. Wildlife Rescue Australia is an Australia-wide, specialist volunteer organisation dedicated to rescuing native animals – Australia's first truly national twenty-four hours a day, seven-days-a-week wildlife rescue phone service. Wildlife Rescue Australia operates an emergency twenty-four-hour call centre staffed by home-based phone coordinators trained to assist in all aspects of animal rescues. Wildlife Rescue Australia has a considerable impact on the rehabilitation of native wildlife. The dedication of its founders can be seen in the technological development and the enormous volunteer hours that have been put into creating an easy-to-use efficient wildlife rescue system. Winning the Wildlife Rehabilitation Award will help promote this innovative and nationally coordinated wildlife rescue service that saves the lives of thousands of vulnerable native species in need of assistance.

The winner of the **Youth Conservation Award** was Nabilah Chowdhury of Ashfield, New South Wales. Nabilah works tirelessly for a sustainable future for the next generation while participating in other extra-curricular activities. Nabilah is part of Taronga's Youth at the Zoo program. She was the School Strike 4 Climate organiser in Sydney and is part of the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme. Her most significant personal achievement was stopping Samsung from funding the Adani coal mine and acting as the host of the Sydney school strike in May 2021, where over 10,000 people were in attendance.



L to R: Brian Scarsbrick AM, Coral Johnson, Dianne Ward, Dr Julie Old, and Patrick Medway AM.



L to R: Nabilah Chowdhury, Dr Julie Old, Dr Robin Crisman, and Patrick Medway AM.

## University Research Grants Scheme

The Australian Wildlife Society's University Research Grants are offered to honours or postgraduate students at Australian universities. Grants are available for research projects of direct relevance to the conservation of Australian wildlife (flora or fauna). Each year, ten grants of \$3,000 are awarded. The winners for 2022 were:



**Adam Yaney-Keller**  
School of Biological Sciences,  
Monash University

**Project Title:** Disentangling the long-term effects of marine debris on Australian fur seals.



**Javiera Olivares-Rojas**  
School of Biological Sciences,  
Monash University

**Project Title:** What is required to recover Australian threatened ecosystems?



**Claire Butler**  
Institute of Marine and Antarctic  
Studies, University of Tasmania

**Project Title:** Comparative effects of ocean warming on kelp-herbivore interactions on Australian temperate reefs.



**Jessica Keem**  
School of Ecosystem and Forest  
Sciences, University of Melbourne

**Project Title:** Refuges are vital for the survival and persistence of fauna in the wake of disturbance events.



**Elise Oakman**  
School of Life and Environmental  
Sciences, University of Sydney

**Project Title:** Does restoration return insect pollinators to our endangered ecosystems?



**Nicholas MacDonald**  
School of Life and Environmental  
Sciences, Deakin University

**Project Title:** Investigation of the immune response of the Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*) to cancer and altered environmental conditions.



**Erica Fonseca**  
School of Biological Sciences,  
Queensland University of Technology

**Project Title:** Social-ecological drivers and outcomes of conservation in private lands.



**Nicole Lynch**  
School of Life and Environmental  
Sciences, University of Sydney

**Project Title:** Spot the quoll: Tactical use of olfactory information to improve detection and conservation of a rare, native carnivore.



**Jaclyn Harris**  
School of Biological Sciences,  
Monash University

**Project Title:** Fire and Reptiles: An investigation into threatening processes and potential management solutions.



**Shawn Scott**  
UniSA STEM, University of  
South Australia

**Project Title:** Post-fire population recovery and chytrid occurrence in frogs of the Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia.

## Key Projects

### Platypus Alliance

We continued our efforts on a national scale to protect semi-aquatic air-breathing species, such as the platypus. We wrote several letters advocating that platypus be listed as a threatened species under Australia's environmental legislation, opera house nets be removed from circulation, educational signs be installed along waterways where platypus are present, and additional funding be allocated to research and monitoring platypus populations. Unfortunately, platypus and rakali are still reported trapped in opera house nets.

### Snip Rings for Wildlife

The Society continued its efforts to educate the community about the negative impact of ring-shaped items on native wildlife and the actions they can implement to help prevent wildlife from falling victim to the risk of entanglement and death. The Society also commented on the *Inquiry into Plastic Pollution in Australia's Oceans and Waterways*, with our focus being action on plastic ring-shaped items, such as plastic rings and dome-shaped plastic lids. The Society is committed to raising awareness and advocating to protect native wildlife from the threat of plastic ring-shaped items as part of its SnipRingsforWildlife campaign.

### Australian Wildlife Week

Australian Wildlife Week is celebrated across the country during the first week of October to encourage a positive relationship between humanity and nature. We hope to raise awareness of wildlife conservation issues across Australia and inspire all Australians to explore and develop a deeper understanding of these issues, gain the necessary skills to make informed decisions, and implement wildlife conservation action. This year, we hosted an Art Display, Online Webinar, and Video Competition to celebrate Australian Wildlife Week. A recording of the webinar is available on our website and YouTube channel.

### Colouring-in Competition

The Australian Wildlife Society colouring-in competition is designed to inspire the younger generation to learn about Australia's native wildlife via visual art and creativity. We hope the experience allows participants to explore and develop a deeper understanding of environmental and wildlife-related issues. This year, we received 168 entries. All entries were stunning. Narrowing them down to three winners in each state and territory was tough. Thank you to Dr Jai Green-Barber for drawing our beautiful 2022 Wildlife of the Year – Australia's amphibians.

### Aussie Ark Visit

As part of our support for conserving the broad-toothed rat (*Mastacomys fuscus*), the Society made a trip to the Australian Reptile Park and Aussie Ark to see the broad-toothed rat conservation project first-hand. We were welcomed by Tim Faulkner, Director, Owner, and General Manager. Then, we were taken on a tour of the Aussie Ark facilities by Hayley Shute, Curator and Conservation Manager, and Jo Runciman, the new Director of Partnerships and Sponsorship. We were taken behind the scenes, where we saw several conservation projects. We were excited to see the broad-toothed rat enclosures where the board-toothed rats are set to be temporarily housed before being released to a newly created wetland sanctuary at Aussie Ark.

### Webinars, Conferences, and Presentations

The Society strives for continuous improvement and works to develop and improve its impact on wildlife conservation outcomes. The Society attended and contributed to several important wildlife conservation conferences, webinars, and meetings. We participated in the annual conference held by the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales and discussed important wildlife conservation issues with key stakeholders in the field. We attended a special online seminar hosted by the Invasive Species Council, which addressed the impacts of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park, and the actions that must be implemented to help protect native species and fragile habitats. We attended the Australasian Wildlife Management Society Conference with various topics and speakers. We also participated in the Australian Conservation Foundation's 2021 State of the Environment Report briefing, to name a few.

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## Donations, Bequests, and Gifts

We continued with our bequest program during the year to encourage donors to support our wildlife conservation work across Australia. We are incredibly grateful to all our members for considering using the bequest program to help the Society with its long-term planning. Do not hesitate to contact the National Office for more details on the bequest program and how to join 'Friends of the Australian Wildlife Society' to make a regular monthly donation to support our national wildlife conservation efforts and programs. We are a tax-deductible gift recipient registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission. Our public fund is listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1 of subsection 30-55[1] of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

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## Financial Report Summary

The Society's Directors, Finance and Investment Committee, and the Public Fund Committee continue to exercise tight and effective control over the Society's finances, reviewing and adjusting the investment portfolio as required throughout the year.

## A Special Thank You to all Members

This will mark our 114th anniversary. We thank you all most sincerely for your tremendous support and continued dedication and commitment to helping the Society preserve and protect Australia's native wildlife and natural ecosystems for future generations. I wish every member of the Society a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2023.

**Dr Julie Old**  
**PRESIDENT**  
**31 December 2022**