



VICTORIAN
NATIONAL PARKS
ASSOCIATION
70 years protecting nature

ANNUAL REPORT

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PHOTO: ROB VALENTIC

This magnificent adult female Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*) was spotted near a creek on Melbourne's northern fringe. This year, with your support, we've made exciting achievements for grasslands and the species they support.

The Victorian National Parks Association acknowledges the many First Peoples of the area now known as Victoria, honours their continuing connection to, and caring for, Country, and supports Traditional Owner joint-management of parks and public land for conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

Our office is located on traditional land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respect to Elders past, present and future.

Front cover: One of the Wellsford Big Trees towers over members of the VNPA team. Photo: Jon Tjhia.

Back cover: Off the coast of Port Campbell, forests of *Macrocystis* Kelp can be found. Photo: Nicole Mertens, VNPA.

Authorised by Matt Ruchel, Executive Director,
Victorian National Parks Association. September 2022.
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70 years protecting nature together

In 2022, we're celebrating 70 years of protecting nature together, as the Victorian National Parks Association. Thank you for being part of the journey.

Seventy years ago when the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) was formed, Victoria only had 13 national parks, covering a little over 100,000 hectares, and no formal national parks legislation.

Today, we have 45 national parks, 26 state parks, 13 marine national parks, 11 marine sanctuaries and numerous other parks and reserves protected under the *National Parks Act 1975*.

And it was members of the VNPA community that helped achieve this.

Our community has come together to protect Victoria's favourite places like Wilsons Prom and the Twelve Apostles. And ensured that cattle are no longer destroying the fragile waterways and high plains of the Alpine National Park.

We've also played an important role in providing opportunities for our community to enjoy, learn about, and protect nature through our activities and citizen science programs.

Thanks to our community of supporters, Victoria had the world's first system of marine national parks and sanctuaries. We have new and enlarged parks right across the state and 100,000 hectares of River Red Gum national parks in northern Victoria that protect more than 300 endangered plants and animals.

This history of success gives us the strength to continue our vital work protecting parks and nature – together.

HANDS OFF PARKS! Our community has come together to protect some of Victoria's favourite places, including Wilsons Promontory National Park.



PHOTO: DAVID NEILSON



President's Report

Bruce McGregor

Since 1952, the Victorian National Parks Association has been a strong force in the conservation of Victoria's natural heritage. Together with our community of committed supporters, we've paved the way for protecting nature by helping establish the National Parks Act, and pushed for the creation of new national parks to protect our unique plants, animals on land and in water, in perpetuity.

There continue to be enormous challenges to fulfil our goals, given the many threats to nature and the ambiguities of our political and economic systems. Over our 70-year history, we've defended and protected parks and nature, and increased resourcing for management of our national parks system. This success has been possible thanks to; our strong supportive community of members, donors and partners, our advocacy campaigns that engage the wider Victorian community, and our activities and citizen science programs that encourage our community to actively enjoy and protect nature.

This year we celebrate our 70th anniversary – and acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of past members, supporters and allies. Without their support, we'd have very few national parks and no marine parks. Yet there is still much to do to meet international benchmarks of protecting at least 30% of all ecosystems on land and 30% of the marine environment.

Our Council continues to focus on growing our vital work to make Victoria a place with a diverse and healthy natural environment protected, respected and enjoyed by all. This work is only possible with continued generosity and involvement from our members and supporters.

Yet the challenges keep coming, in increasing number and threat. In many ways, the government behaves as if it is the responsibility of community organisations like ours to protect nature in Victoria, rather than their legislated duty as written in their own policy documents. While the months of lockdown during the pandemic reinforced people's need for nature, unfortunately, the importance of looking after nature was not reflected in improved funding in the State Budget.

Despite these challenges there has been progress over the past year in gaining commitments for new parks, protecting Western Port Bay and in protection for big trees. As usual, we have tackled a huge array of other conservation issues and campaigns, summarised in the Executive Director's report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Executive Director Matt Ruchel and our hardworking staff for their commitment and efforts on behalf of all members and supporters.

In the past year, staff and volunteers have continued to navigate the restrictions forced on us by the pandemic, as well as some wild weather. Our citizen science programs NatureWatch and ReefWatch continued work in the field, despite these challenges.

Countless meetings, discussions and engagement with other community groups are key to our work, and we've adapted to holding many meetings and events online.

I thank all our volunteer Council and committee members for their commitment and hard work to support and drive the direction of the VNPA. In the past year, the Council and committees have updated our strategic plan, financial planning, community engagement and conservation policies. This process identified initiatives key to supporting our vision, leading Council to endorse investment for more staff and resources to deliver them.

I'd also like to thank Ann Birrell, who retired from Council in May. Ann has contributed her expertise to Council and as convenor of our governance committee for an impressive 11 years. We thank her for her work in this challenging role.

It's been an honour to serve as President for the last four years, and I'm thankful for the passionate community of donors, members and volunteers supporting us. Your trust, encouragement and generous financial investment are incredibly important to protecting and defending nature in Victoria. Our community has achieved so much over the past 70 years, and its thanks to you that we'll continue to protect nature together for future generations.



The Year in Review

Executive Director, Matt Ruchel

It's a great pleasure to once again have the opportunity to thank the VNPA community for your support and generosity, and to report on the achievements we have made together this past financial year.

Together we've achieved real progress on the health and protection of Victoria's natural heritage – and your unwavering support has made it all possible. These successes are yours to celebrate:

Commitment for new national parks in the central west!

With your support, campaigners Shannon Hurley, Jordan Crook, Ben Lawrence and I continued to pressure the Andrews Government to legislate the three new central west national parks announced last June.

More than a year after the state government finally committed to creating the much-needed new parks,

little has changed. In fact, some of the very forests deemed worthy of protection are being logged!

Thanks to your support, we've spent the year highlighting the issues with new coupes and salvage logging in these promised national parks. This included a population study of Greater Gliders in the Wombat Forest. Our team recorded an unexpected forty Greater Gliders, four Koalas and even a Powerful Owl! Armed with this evidence, we've ramped up our work with the media, community groups and others to stop this destructive logging and get the parks legislated, as soon as possible.

It is your support that has sustained our momentum to secure this commitment for wildlife, nature and communities.

These parks still need to be formally legislated – we'll be in touch to let you know our next steps for this campaign, to ensure we get the best outcome for the forests and threatened wildlife in the central west and beyond!

Thanks to your support, this year we've made some great achievements – including protecting Ajax Road Grassland.



Big Trees vs. the logging industry

Last year, with your help, the campaign to end native forest logging in Victoria grew and caught the outraged attention of the public. As 2021 came to a close, the damning allegations about VicForests' involvement in stalking, intimidating and harming community activists came to light. At the same time, the government announced a funding package to support workers trying to leave the industry early – surely an indication that the current 2030 deadline is too far away for workers, the industry, and our forests.

This year, we've continued our advocacy to bring forward the phase-out of native forest logging in line with economic and ecological evidence that protecting native forests is better for wildlife, the planet, and regional jobs. This included the release of our *Big Trees of the Wellsford Forest* report, which brought together experts and a huge volume of data to analyse the threats to big old trees in Victoria. And on March 2nd, two of the Wellsford Big Trees were listed on the National Trust's National Register of Significant Trees!

Holding government to account and promoting institutional reforms

Threats to natural areas also come from inadequate policies and legislation. Thanks to your support, this financial year Phil Ingamells (who retired in December 2021) and I have promoted reform of laws and institutions, to reduce threats and protect ecosystem integrity.

In December, the Legislative Council's Environment and Planning Committee released their Ecosystem Decline Inquiry findings. With the support of the VNPA community, we made a comprehensive submission (as did many within our community). The final report included a total of 74 recommendations, 21 of which were largely recommendations we made! Thanks to your support, we'll hold government accountable and press for these to be acted upon.

Yarra Ranges National Park thrown under the mountain bike

Your support empowered our team to conduct a comprehensive defence of the National Parks Act to highlight the flawed proposal to build a mountain bike highway through critically endangered habitat in the Yarra Ranges National Park.

Student intern and Youth Team volunteer, Consuelo, surveys a rock pool at Salmon Rocks in Cape Conran.



The beautiful Cool Temperate Rainforest of Yarra Ranges National Park, with its ancient Myrtle Beech, tree ferns and pristine waters, should be protected for all.

With your backing, our team were able to fully understand all the potential threats the project may pose to the national park and those plants and animals that depend upon it. You made it possible for us to analyse the project's lengthy Environmental Effects Statement; prepare two separate submissions to the Independent Advisory Committee; engage legal representation and independent expert witnesses; attend the hearings; and explain this complex issue to our supporters and the broader community.

We now await a decision from the Victorian Planning Minister as to the fate of the Yarra Ranges National Park and the integrity of the National Parks Act.

Western Port Woodlands

The much-loved Western Port Woodlands are the Bass Coast region's largest remnant of native bushland, and they are still under threat from industrial sand mining. Together with local group Save Western Port Woodlands, we prepared a detailed report that proves the Woodlands are home to rare and threatened native wildlife, like Southern Brown Bandicoots, Powerful Owls, rare orchids, reptiles, and fungi.

Your support meant we could respond to the government's disappointing draft Distinctive Areas and Landscapes (DAL) policy and encourage our community to likewise make submissions. We await the next version of the DAL, which we hope will recognise and value the importance of the Woodlands.

Guarding our grasslands

We have been hosting Adrian Marshall, the Facilitator for the Grassy Plains Network for more than 12 months – and this partnership is reaping rewards!

In a victory as rare as the Spiny Riceflower, the Grassy Plains Network saved the endangered Ajax Road Grassland from destruction! The Grassy Plains Network won their Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) case against the private developer proposing to erase and subdivide one of Melbourne's last surviving critically endangered grasslands.

We're proud to be working with the Grassy Plains Network to protect one of our most threatened ecosystems from complete destruction.



PHOTO: NICOLE MERTENS, VNPA

The popularity of ReefWatch's Sea Slug Census continues to grow across the generations.

Feral horse management

Since well before 1974 when VNPA published Dick Johnson's remarkable book *The Alps at the Crossroads*, we have fought for a substantial Alpine National Park, fought to have licensed cattle grazing removed from the park, and more recently campaigned to have management of the high country – and the rest of Victoria's parks system – properly resourced with both expertise and funds.

In late 2021, our work resulted in Parks Victoria's 'Protection of the Alpine National Park: Feral Horse Action Plan', which sets up a decade-long management program that has the capacity to reverse the declines in alpine ecosystems brought about by the expanding feral horse population. A similar program is also being undertaken in Barmah National Park.

Getting out into nature

We have again offered many ways for the community to get involved with our work through citizen science programs and activities on land and along our coasts. We also offered webinars and online resources for the community to engage with nature from home during the coronavirus pandemic.

Bushwalking and Activities Program

The bushwalking and activities program has been part of VNPA since our early days. It has been coordinated entirely by a volunteer committee. The program has brought people together over many years and created a connected community of nature lovers. A huge thank you to the many volunteers who have taken up roles over the past 70 years through the committee and as volunteer leaders.

While it was not possible to deliver the activities program over the past year, Caitlin Griffith is leading on refreshing this long-standing and valuable program.

NatureWatch

Led by Sera Blair and Rachel Nalliah, with assistance from Kristen Agosta, our Life After Fire citizen science project continues to monitor post-fire wildlife survival on public and private land. Using wildlife cameras, audio recorders, spotlighting and scat surveys we have recorded a range of wildlife persisting in areas recovering from fire across 32 research sites in national parks, state forests, and private properties. We have supported habitat recovery through the distribution of nest boxes and indigenous plants, and by trialling the use of a 'bandicoot bungalow' to quickly provide safe nesting sites for endangered Southern Brown Bandicoots.

We also rose to the challenge of carrying out wildlife monitoring in Bunyip State Park in Spring 2021. This completed our 10th year of the 'Caught on Camera' monitoring project in the park.

Wild Families

During the pandemic, our community has recognised the incredible benefit of having natural spaces and wildlife on our doorstep. A program highlight was the coming together of families to learn about marine life and to participate as citizen scientists through the Sea Slug Census at Point Lonsdale over summer. Our activity sheets have continued to inspire families to discover and learn about the nature around them.

ReefWatch

The Great Victorian Fish Count and Sea Slug Census continue to engage hundreds of marine lovers across the state in marine citizen science, under the careful stewardship of Kade Mills and Nicole Mertens. Our Marine Life of Victoria project continues to document marine biodiversity through photographic data. To date, over 20,000 images of 1,200 species have been contributed by 130 people. These records contribute to conservation science at the highest level.

The team is also tackling an invasive pest seaweed species called *Undaria pinnatifida* – known to many as wakame.

Special event: Trees to Seas at Cape Conran

This joint event between NatureWatch, ReefWatch and Youth Team volunteers at Marlo, Cape Conran, and Beware Reef was a glorious five days of setting wildlife cameras, spotlighting walks, sea slugs hunts and sharing a diverse range of skills and knowledge. The Youth Team

was developed by Elizabeth Morison, who worked with us thanks to the Anne Kantor Fellowship for Young Women Environmentalists. We look forward to engaging with young people to support our work to protect nature and parks into the future.

Western Port Win!

Thanks to a strong partnership with other environment groups and the local community, in 2021 we successfully campaigned for the Andrews Government to prohibit the unacceptable environmental effects of a gas terminal in Western Port Bay. It is your fantastic support that ensured this win.

This year we've been calling on the government to secure permanent protections for Western Port Bay and prioritise a whole-of-bay management approach led by Traditional Owners and the community, to support marine ecosystems and the local environment. We'll keep you posted on ways that you can advocate to safeguard Western Port Bay and other protections for Victoria's marine and coastal ecosystems.

Celebrating our marine parks!

In 2022, we're also celebrating 20 years since the establishment of Victoria's first marine protected areas – a world-first in marine conservation! Victoria's marine reserve network was created to protect representative samples of Victoria's marine biodiversity and maintain ecological processes for the long term. We continue to advocate for better funding to manage these special places.

Sea slug *Ercolania margaritae*, can be found in shallow waters at the Sorrento back beach.



PHOTO: NICOLE MERTENS, VNPA

Protecting parks and nature

Your support also allows us to scrutinise and provide input into park management plans, support improved control of feral species, and advocate for increased parks funding and better management of our unique natural areas right across the state – and a host of other activities!

And behind the scenes...

Our dedicated team works hard behind the scenes to keep VNPA running. Between committee meetings, liaising with politicians and stakeholders, and keeping our community up to date about our work, I am very proud of what we have achieved over the last year, especially with the challenges of continuing to work from home.

Jessie Borrelle took on the role of Digital Engagement and Communications Manager in October 2021 and worked with Communications Coordinator Meg Sobey to keep our voice loud and clear, growing and deepening our community connections. Jacob L'Huillier Lunt joined us in June to support our digital communications and campaigns. Thanks also to those in our community who have generously contributed their words and images for *Park Watch*.

Heath Rickard, Finance and Operations Manager, works extremely hard to manage everything from tech to finance. Thanks also to Simon O'Connor and Carol Chin who filled in for Heath while he took long service leave. Many thanks and farewell to administrative team members Charlotte Kandelaars and Emily Cork (who both finished in September 2021). Lucy Permezel (welcomed to the team in October 2021), has done an excellent job coordinating membership and processing generous donations from our supporters.

Our philanthropy team, Emily Clough and Amelia Easdale, have stewarded fantastic relationships in the VNPA community that ensure we have the financial backing that powers our campaigns.

My appreciation goes to our President Bruce McGregor, the Council and committee members and volunteers for their continued dedication to nature in Victoria.

And finally, I thank all within the VNPA community for sharing and supporting our vision of Victoria as a place with a diverse and healthy natural environment protected, respected and enjoyed by all. As we celebrate our 70th anniversary this year, we hope you count these many wins as your own personal achievements – that's precisely what they are. It's our honour to share with you this progress your investment makes possible.

With your support, we're calling on government to secure permanent protections for Western Port Bay and prioritise a whole-of-bay management approach to safeguard the bay for us all – including Phillip Island's iconic Little Penguins.



PHOTO: JAMES WHITE

Financial Report

Abridged Audited Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2022.

Statement by the Council of the Victorian National Parks Association

The Council declare that:

- The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 1 to 17 of the full Auditor's Report*, are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and:
 - comply with Australian Accounting Standards Simplified Disclosure Standard; and
 - give a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2022 and of the financial performance for the year ended 30 June 2022.
- In the Council's opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Council.

Marilyne Crestias (Treasurer) & Dr Bruce McGregor (President) dated 8th September 2022.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022		
REVENUE	2022	2021
Operating Activities	\$	\$
Appeals and Donations	1,341,471	1,600,992
Bequests	235,340	70,000
Grants & Sponsorship	509,927	338,254
Membership Fees	79,090	84,537
Publication sales, events, outdoor activities	7,643	17,899
Interest and investment distributions	27,181	24,999
Other Government Grants (Covid)	0	224,750
Total Income	2,200,652	2,361,431
EXPENDITURE		
Employment expenses	1,534,828	1,285,947
Campaigns, Projects, Activities & Education expenses	273,351	213,390
Office & Administration expenses	127,353	105,061
Printing/Publications/Online expenses	80,906	112,342
Occupancy & Insurance expenses	50,791	37,893
Depreciation & Amortization expense	85,322	79,031
Other expenses	7,165	3,133
Total Expenses	2,159,716	1,836,797
CURRENT YEAR SURPLUS FROM OPERATIONS	40,936	524,634
Net gain (loss) on revaluation of other financial assets	(36,902)	29,157
Realised gain (loss) on disposal of other financial assets	(9,950)	0
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	(5,916)	553,791

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2022		
ASSETS	2022	2021
Current	\$	\$
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,713,590	1,716,353
Trade & Other Receivables	111,235	55,499
Inventories	0	422
Other financial assets	401,396	432,468
Other assets	6,769	7,529
Total Current Assets	2,232,990	2,212,271
Non-Current		
Other financial assets	31,884	31,884
Property, plant & equipment	45,324	35,491
Right-of-use-assets	145,945	231,466
Total Non-Current Assets	223,153	298,841
TOTAL ASSETS	2,456,143	2,511,112
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities	786,904	798,932
Non-Current Liabilities	113,861	150,886
TOTAL LIABILITIES	900,765	949,818
NET ASSETS	1,555,378	1,561,294
Funded by:		
Accumulated Surplus	521,750	544,269
Reserves **	1,033,628	1,017,025
TOTAL EQUITY	1,555,378	1,561,294

*The full Independent Auditor's Report will be tabled at the Annual General Meeting as part of the Audited Financial Statements and the full text of the Report will be available at vnpa.org.au

** The Reserve Policy is designed to assist with future variability in income and act as a means to strengthen the long-term future of the Victorian National Parks Association.

Thank you to our supporters

Our work protecting Victoria's natural places is only possible thanks to the generous support of our wonderful donors and philanthropic supporters. We would especially like to acknowledge the following generous supporters:

The Arnold Foundation	Landcare Australia
The Australia Institute	Loftus-Hills Fund, a charitable fund
The Caroline Durré Fund, sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation	account of the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
The Coalition (Solutions)	Malcolm Shore
Diversicon Environmental Foundation	Melliodora Fund, sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation
Dominic & Anne Gallace Family Fund, sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation	Meta Lazarus Fund, sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation
EC Curwen-Walker Charitable Trust	Ros & Elsie Garnet Memorial Fund, sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation
Fairer Futures Fund, sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation	Ross Trust
Gras Foundation Trust	S.T.A.F. – Allan Sisson and Vera McMahon Donation
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust	Victorian Government
Isaacson Davis Foundation	WIRES
JRA Support Fund, sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation	

Australian Diving Instruction
Aquamarine Australia
Belfast Coastal Reserve Action Group
Birdlife Australia
Bunurong Coast Education
Coastcare Victoria
Cross Diving
Daktari Surf and Dive
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Dive2U
Dive and Dive
Dive La Trobe
Diveline
Eco Connect – Holistic Environmental Solutions
Environment East Gippsland
Environmental Justice Australia
Environment Victoria

Far East Victoria Landcare
Friends of Barwon Bluff
Friends of Beware Reef
Friends of Bunyip State Park
Friends of Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary
Friends of Harmers Haven
Friends of Leadbeater's Possum
Friends of Mushroom Reef Marine Sanctuary
Friends of Point Addis
Friends of the Earth
Gippsland Environment Group
Goongerah Environment Centre Office (GECO)
Grassy Plains Network
Grow West
Hindmarsh Landcare Network
Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association
Invasive Species Council
Jawbone Sanctuary Marine Care Group

Marine Care Point Cooke
Marine Care Ricketts Point
Melbourne Mermaids
Mornington Peninsula Scuba Dive Club
Museums Victoria
National Parks Australia Council
Ocean Adventures
Ocean Divers
Parks Victoria
Phillip Island Conservation Society
Port Phillip EcoCentre
Redmap Australia
Save Westernport
Save Western Port Woodlands
Scuba Culture
Scuba Scouts
SEAL Diving Services
Sea All Dolphin Swims
Simple Dive

Thank you to our partners

We are grateful to have the opportunity to collaborate with many other groups to advocate for nature and deliver our community engagement programs. Our key project partners are listed below:

Southern Dandenongs Community Landcare
Southern Brown Bandicoot Recovery Group
Spider Crab Alliance
The University of Technology Sydney
Victorian Deer Control Community Network
Victorian Environment Friends Network
Victorian Sub Aqua Group
WaterMaarq
Wellsford Forest Conservation Alliance
Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council
Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation
The Wilderness Society (Victoria)
Wildlife of the Central Highlands (WOTCH)
Wombat Forestcare



Special events like 'Trees to Seas at Cape Conran' and initiatives like the Youth Team are only possible thanks to the generosity of our philanthropic supporters, volunteers and program partners.

Thank you to our volunteers

Many thanks to the hundreds of dedicated volunteers who work with us to achieve so much for nature in Victoria. We would especially like to thank those listed below:

Bushwalking & Activities Program:

Terese Dalman (Convenor), Fred Gerardson, Deborah Henry, Darren McClelland.

Council Committees: the following volunteers (other than Councillors and staff) make a valuable contribution to committees: Russell Costello, Vimi Desai, Evelyn Feller, Mike Forster, Maelor Himbury, John Kotsiaris, Bernie Mace, Steve Platt, John Renowden, Isolde Scherrer, Charles Street, Wilson Swan.

Excursions: Larysa Kucan (Convenor).

Grassy Plains Network: Andrew Booth, Bonnie Gelman, Ken Griffiths, Maelor Himbury, Yvonne Ingeme, Stuart McCallum, Paula McGlashan, Peter McGrath, Graham Moore, Megan O'Shea, Frances Overmars, Deb Reynolds, Lynlee Tozer, David Tsardakis, Reto Zollinger.

NatureWatch: Thank you to the amazing volunteers who have helped us develop projects and lead our research teams in the field: Maxine Andrews, Alby Adams, Wendy Adams, Kristen Agosta, Kathleen Alexander, Kimberley Bannister, Hugh Bartley, Luke Bonifacio, Hagan Brightman, Scott Campbell-Smith, David Cole, Kay Cole, Margaret Donald, Caroline Durre, Michael Feller, Evelyn Feller, Michael Foster, Linden Gillbank, Penny Gray, Jasper Hails, Margie Hall, John Hasler, John Hermans, Robyn Hermans, Robert Hillman, Ben Hobbs-Gordon, Nick Hutcheson, John Ireland, Emily Jarvis, Michael Loo, Mick Loughlan, Allan Milne, April Newton, David Nicholls, Jill Redwood, Maria Sandoval Romero, Jason Seiler, Alison Soutar, Kim Summer, Robyn Tarrant, Tania Taylor, Prue Thwaites, Gregor Theinschnack, Mardi Trease, Jeffrey Triplett, Ian Vaskess, Miguel Shingu Vazquez, Lisa Williams, Vic Wilms, Ann Williamson, Joan Zwar.

Office Assistant: Colin Wong.

Pro bono financial advice:

Katherine Isbrandt, About Retirement.

Publications & Photography:

Holly Baird, Karen Barwise, Jeremy Bishop, Josh Bowell, Jack Breedon, Kim Bremner, Ed Dunens, Steve Dunn, Geoff Durham, John Eichler, Peter Fuller, Stephan Goodall, Liz Harper, Heidi Harron, PT Hirschfield, Michael Howes, Chris Hurwood, Milan Jelenko, Myra Kelly, Steven Kuitert, Edward Lee, Rebecca Lloyd, AJ Morton, Peter Mosse, Matt Nimbs, John Olden, Nick Olliff, Gayle Osborne, Jacqui Pocklington, Rachel Price, Katrina Richards, Sandy Scheltema, Ian Scholey, Nick Shaw, Paul Sorenson, Naomi Strong, David Tatnall, Corrine Telford, Sally Watson, Sandy Webb, Jill Wheeler, Julie Wighton and many other photographers and authors.

ReefWatch: Thankyou to the ReefWatch community for contributing their time, enthusiasm and data to the Sea Slug Census, Marine Life of Victoria, Great Victorian Fish Count, and Underwater Weeding projects in 2021-2022. Many thanks also to Bob Burn for his insights and expertise in identifying Victorian sea slugs.

Research and Campaign Assistants: Christine Bains, Louise Crisp, Evelyn Feller, Hayley Forster, Phil Ingamells, Conor Logan, Steve Meacher, Blake Nisbit, Robert Pergl, Wendy Radford and many others in the scientific and conservation community.

Student Interns: Consuelo Quevedo, Chelsi Old.

VNPA History: Don Garden

Youth Team: Sean Dempsey, Michael Loo, Melissa Makarewitsch, Luke Morton, Catherine Louise Prentice, Annie Preston, Consuelo Quevedo, Kelly Van.



Youth Team volunteers at Cape Conran: we're looking forward to engaging with young people to support our work to protect nature and parks into the future.

PHOTO: VNPA

Our People

We are governed by a Council of elected Members and several committees who volunteer their time. They work together with our staff, volunteers and partners to protect nature and national parks.

Council

Bruce McGregor, President
(Convenor Executive, Conservation & Campaigns, Finance, Governance, Marketing & Community Engagement)

David Nugent, Vice President
(Executive, Marketing & Community Engagement, Governance, Conservation & Campaigns)

Jan Hendrik Brueggemeier, Secretary
(Executive, Governance)

Marilyne Crestias, Treasurer
(Convenor Finance, Executive, Governance)

Lara Bickford (Convenor Marketing & Community Engagement, Executive)

Ann Birrell (Convenor Governance, Executive) until May 2022

Michael Feller
(Co-convenor Conservation & Campaigns)

Dianne Marshall
(Conservation & Campaigns)

Gerard McPhee
(Co-convenor Conservation & Campaigns, Governance)

Askin Morrison (seconded Aug 2022)

Rosemary Race

Doug Robinson (Conservation & Campaigns)

Paul Strickland

Note: Committee memberships in brackets

Staff

Matt Ruchel, Executive Director

Phil Ingamells, Parks Protection Campaigner (retired December 2021)

Shannon Hurley, Nature Conservation Campaigner

Jordan Crook, Nature Conservation Campaigner

John Kotsiaris, Nature Conservation Campaigner (until July 2021)

Ben Lawrence, Nature Conservation Campaigner (from April 2022)

Elizabeth Morison, Nature Conservation Officer (until June 2022)

Jessie Borrelle, Digital Campaigner (to Sept 2021),
Digital Engagement & Communications Manager (from Sept 2021)

Meg Sobey, Publications and Online Coordinator

Jacob L'Huillier Lunt, Digital Campaign Producer (from June 2022)

Adrian Marshall, Facilitator Grassy Plains Network

Caitlin Griffith, Manager Community Learning and Engagement
(long service leave May 2021 – April 2022)

Sera Blair, NatureWatch Coordinator / Acting Manager Community Learning and Engagement (May 2021 – April 2022)

Rachel Nalliah, NatureWatch Project Officer

Kristen Agosta, NatureWatch Project Officer (casual)

Kade Mills, ReefWatch Coordinator

Nicole Mertens, Conservation Project Officer

Emily Clough, Fundraising Manager

Amelia Easdale, Supporter Development

Heath Rickard, Finance & Operations Manager
(long service leave Oct 2021 – April 2022)

Simon O'Connor, Acting Finance & Operations Manager
(Sept 2021 – Feb 2022)

Carol Chin, Acting Finance & Operations Manager (Jan – May 2022)

Emily Cork, Administrative Officer (until Sept 2021)

Charlotte Kandelaars, Administrative Officer (until Sept 2021)

Lucy Permezel, Office Coordinator (from Oct 2021)



Southern Fanworm (*Sabellastarte australiensis*): a native species of fanworm seen at Salmon Rocks, Cape Conran, during the 'Trees to Seas' Youth Engagement trip in March 2022.

PHOTO: NICOLE MERTENS, VNPA

