



BWAG participants enjoy Sorrento's coastal environment.

Photo: Russell Bowey

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The VNPA Council and its committees have turned in an extraordinary year. Senior fundraising consultant Mavis Rennie joined Council in November, and communicator and journalist Andrew Dodd in May, bringing significant new expertise to Council. Several new people joined our committees as well.

The **Governance, Policy and Legal Committee's** work was dominated by updating the Constitution, and this task was fulfilled at a Special General Meeting in June. It is now looking at an overhaul of the VNPA's By-Laws, policies and procedures before turning to our next Strategic Plan review.

The **Marketing and Membership Committee** has overseen the first steps in implementing our marketing plan, and updated membership brochures and request packs have been completed.

The **Finance and Operations Committee** has continued to scrutinise our current finances and strong budgetary processes. In a challenging economic environment, the VNPA continues to grow, overall expenditure increasing by 23% in 2009-2010. However, there was an end of year deficit which was below expectations. With plans in place for the coming year, we hope to outperform



Fred Gerardson
President

in this area. In all other areas, budgets were met.

I want to emphasise how important your support from donations, regular giving, appeals and bequests is in building our capacity to protect Victoria's natural heritage. I thank each person who donates, and assure you that the environment is getting maximum value from your contributions.

BWAG ran an extensive and interesting program, though access to some areas was restricted following the fires. Excursions meanwhile enjoyed a great year, with full buses for many trips, and the Annual Picnic at Point Nepean drew record numbers.

Council set up a **Community Education and Engagement Working Group** this year to review our education activities. Some 60 members came to a workshop in June and contributed their thoughts and expertise. We plan a follow-up session to further inform the final Education Strategy.

The **Conservation and Campaigns Committee** ramped up under the leadership of new VNPA Vice President Russell Costello. Expanded volunteer input, plus staff support, saw a well-researched Stirling Link plan developed, timely reactions on the Bastion Point (Mallacoota) proposal and Brown Mountain logging case, and a solid start on revamping our Forests Policy, as well as ongoing support for our other conservation programs.

The first stage of our fourth Nature Conservation Review, the Marine component, was released, with work continuing on the Terrestrial and Riparian components. The Committee contributed to the completion of the excellent Small Parks project, our response to the VEAC Remnant Native Vegetation study, and our Bushfire Commission responses, among many other matters. Thanks to the VNPA, government is more aware than ever of the many issues facing our natural environment!

I conclude by thanking our staff and members who help make the VNPA run so well and be so effective, contribute to our publications, and respond to our requests for financial support or letters to our lawmakers.

Your input is our major strength!

COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Fred Gerardson (President) – Elected 2006
- Libby Smith (Vice President) – Elected 2006
- Russell Costello (Vice President) – Elected 2009
- Charles Street (Secretary) – Elected 2006
- Russell Falvey (Treasurer) – Elected 2006
- Ann Buik – Elected 2007
- Kyle Matheson – Elected 2008

- Maelor Himbury – Elected 2009 (Friends Network representative)
- Linda Parlane – Elected 2007
- John Renowden – Elected 2006
- Mavis Rennie – Seconded December 2009
- Andrew Dodd – Seconded May 2010

Retiring Councillors

- Andrew Freadman – Councillor 2005-2009, Convenor – Governance, Policy & Legal Committee
- Karen Medica – Councillor 2008-2009, Governance, Policy & Legal Committee member

VNPA ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Conserving a natural Victoria

The VNPA bases its conservation work on the best available science, thoughtful policy solutions, persistence and a passion for protecting and appreciating nature. The following is a snapshot of our work over 2009-10.

In major highlights, we celebrated the creation of new red gum parks (almost 100,000 ha), the addition of the Quarantine Station to Point Nepean National Park, and an additional 44,000 ha of old-growth forest reserves in East Gippsland.

Protecting our seas and shores

Over the last two years we have undertaken an extensive scientific review of marine conservation priorities for Victoria. The resulting report identifies 20 priority areas for protection and analyses gaps in our existing marine protected area system. We seek commitments for at least an additional 20% of Victoria's marine areas to be made marine national parks, plus new marine legislation, plans and programs.

Protecting special places

Victoria has almost three million hectares of national parks and conservation reserves, the result in part of the VNPA's sustained efforts over the past 58 years. But there is still more to do.

Red Gum & River Rescue Project: We are working to ensure that the new red gum parks have the water they need to survive and flourish. We also continued to focus on reform of the Crown Land water frontage licensing system.

Grasslands: The State Government has committed to establishing 14,000 ha of new native grassland reserves as an offset for clearing grassland in the Melbourne urban growth area. We are working to reduce clearing and ensure the new reserves are delivered.

Matt Ruchel Executive Director



Central Victoria – Small Parks: Working with local groups, we completed a detailed assessment of public land in Central Victoria and identified 20 priority areas worthy of better protection and management.

Mt Stirling: Volunteers on the VNPA Conservation Committee began a campaign to make Mt Stirling a national park connected to the larger Alpine National Park.

Park protection & management

Bushfires: The VNPA made numerous submissions to the Bushfires Royal Commission and cross-examined key people on the complex issue of control burning. We are now following up on the Commission's recommendations.

Park management: Our work on park planning and management is focusing on the inadequate Alpine National Park planning process and on getting commitments for additional funding for the ecological management of parks.

Reconnecting Victoria

To be successful in protecting nature we need to work across the landscape.

Victoria Naturally Alliance: The VNPA continues to lead this coalition of nine leading environment groups, with a major focus on the State Government's White Paper on land and biodiversity, and major ecological restoration projects.

Saving VEAC: We questioned proposals to merge/abolish the Victorian Coastal Council and Victorian Environmental Assessment Council, and collected over 2400 signatures from the public and support from 20 environment groups, calling on Premier

John Brumby to support and expand VEAC.

Nature Conservation Review: Our major ten-year scientific Nature Conservation Review is on-going. We completed the marine component, produced a draft report on freshwater-dependent ecosystems, and are finalising reports on terrestrial ecosystems.

Engaging the community

The **Reef Watch** program continued, and is developing a new project to monitor both invasive and threatened marine species. Our **NatureWatch** program saw over 150 people participating in biodiversity monitoring, and we plan to expand monitoring in 2010-11.

Planting activities: Grow West, Project Hindmarsh and other tree plantings attracted hundreds of members and supporters, helping build biodiversity in a practical, hands-on way.

Building our capacity

Fundraising and Marketing: We identified key funding streams as growth areas. Membership remains steady and VNPA events have been very well attended.

Communications: Our new *Nature's Voice* newsletter is available printed and by email, the latter now having over 4500 subscribers. *Park Watch* continues as an informative and interesting journal. Website hits have grown by more than 50% from 2008-09. We built our profile in other media, and are publishing an updated edition of the guidebook *Life on the Rocky Shores*.

Thank you!

We would like to thank our members, supporters and volunteers for your generous and loyal support of the VNPA through the year. With this support, the VNPA has made significant progress on long-running conservation projects. None of this would have been possible without your help.

EMPLOYEES

- **Executive Director:** Matt Ruchel
- **Philanthropy Executive:** Anne-Maree Wheeler
- **Fundraising & Marketing Manager:** Emily Clough
- **Direct Marketing Officer:** Mari Ericksen until September 2009, Maxine Hawkins
- **Finance and Operations Manager:** Sue Hayman-Fox until January 2010, Shanti Fowler
- **Administration & Membership Officer:** Amy Dyer
- **Administration Assistants:** Charlotte Kandelaars, Irina De Loche
- **Conservation & Campaigns Manager:** Megan Clinton

- **Marine & Coastal Project Officer:** Paige Shaw until June 2010, Simon Branigan
- **Communications Advisor:** Michaela Farrington
- **NatureWatch /Community Projects Coordinator:** Caitlin Griffith
- **Park Protection Project Officer:** Phil Ingamells
- **Red Gum and River Rescue Project Coordinator:** Nick Roberts
- **Reef Watch Coordinator:** Wendy Roberts
- **Park Watch/Nature's Voice Editor and Publications Officer:** Michael Howes
- **Victoria Naturally Alliance Project Leader:** Karen Alexander

- **Victoria Naturally Alliance Community Engagement Project Officer:** Yasmin Kelsall
- **Victoria Naturally Alliance Project Officer:** Carrie Deutsch
- **Joint Media Officer (shared with other environment groups):** Sacha Myers until February 2010, Louise Matthiesson

Hosted Network

- **Victorian Environment Friends Network Committee:** Maelor Himbury, Sue Wright, Margaret Boyd, Neil Duncan.

BUSHWALKING & ACTIVITIES GROUP

Our hard-working BWAG leaders contributed over 260 walks and other activities, including social events, training sessions, conservation weekends and bike trips to the 2009-10 programs. Seven new leaders and three new mentors were approved. We encouraged leaders to promote VNPA campaigns on their trips.

Highlights included hikes through Mt Field NP (Tas), NZ's South Island and the Great Ocean Walk (Victoria).

More leaders conducted Walk, Talk & Gawks, family-friendly walks and activities with Friends groups. There were over 80 public transport activities.

Social night topics covered the Hattah Lakes Storytelling Project, the Kokoda Track, Mt Kilimanjaro, Qatar, Southern France, the Trans-Siberian Railway and the Mont Blanc circuit.

A new Under 35s subcommittee is working with the VNPA office to develop



BWAG walkers take in much-loved Wilsons Promontory National Park. Photo: Russell Bowey

marketing strategies to attract more young members. We also held a special workshop to progress the group's Strategic Plan.

Training

BWAG leaders participated in training sessions for navigation, beginners' overnight hiking, first aid, bike maintenance and 'Cooking in the Bush'. We were active as well in Bushwalking Search and Rescue training weekends and in searches.

Conservation

BWAG was involved in post-bushfire recovery works led by Parks Victoria and DSE, with tree planting and track clearing at Yarra Ranges NP, Bunyip SP, and Watsons Creek Biolink (Kinglake NP).

We also participated in the Regent Honeyeater, Grow West and Project Hindmarsh tree plantings, and VNPA's NatureWatch monitoring.

Financial

BWAG contributed \$11,700 to VNPA, down from the previous year's \$13,000 due to lower participant numbers and more trip cancellations. Outstanding trip reports have also affected the total trip fees received. The committee is working to improve publicity to increase participant numbers and reduce trip cancellations.

– **Lisa Sulinski, Convenor**

EXCURSIONS GROUP

The Excursions Group, led by its Committee and a team of other volunteers, conducted 11 day trips in 2009-10. Participants enjoyed walks, picnics, photography, farmers' markets and the company of other conservationists. Most of the McKenzie's 57-seater coaches were fully booked, often with a waiting list.

We had day trips to the Red Hill rail trail and Boneo Market, Lerderderg Gorge, Portsea, the Otway Fly, Walhalla, Daylesford, Marysville and many other places of interest. In September 2009 we ran a popular eight-day excursion to Katoomba and the Blue Mountains.

As a result of all these trips, we raised \$16,000, donating it to the VNPA for conservation work.

Many thanks to our trip leaders, Committee members and other volunteers.

– **William Keatley, Convenor**

VOLUNTEERS & COMMITTEE CONVENORS

The great strength of the VNPA is its members, and in particular those who volunteer. We acknowledge all of your efforts and extend particular thanks to the following people.

This is by no means a comprehensive list. Through the VNPA, over 1200 active volunteers are involved in many activities.

The VNPA would like to extend special thanks to all its volunteers. Your support is invaluable – thank you!

Volunteers

Administration assistants: Sandra Cutts, Colette Findlay, Margaret Hattersley, Len Lock, Raimonne McCutchan, Jill Casey, Graham Trigg, Shawkat Khan (Holmesglen TAFE)

Education Kit coordinator: Jill Casey

Grow West project: Bernie Fox, Judy Douglas, Bob Reid, John Stirling

Project Hindmarsh: Bernie Fox, John Stirling

Library: Beryl Haile

Marine and Coastal research: Adam Edmonds, Sylvia Buchanan, Beryl Haile, Tom Lang, Blair Patullo, Tania Rajapakse

Marketing research and advice: Libby Smith,



Helpers of all ages get involved with the annual Grow West tree planting day. Photo: Helena Lindorff

Motive Market Research

NatureWatch office work: Carolyn Edwards, Tim Finger

Park Watch and Nature's Voice mailout team:

Murray Bird, Rita Bonvicin, Dorothy Carlton, Pat Cooper, Betna Dryden, Brian Groom, Jo Groom, Margaret Hattersley, Peter Human, John Hutchinson, Joan Jillett, Kelvin Kellett, Keith Lloyd, Ian McDonald, Sheina Nicholls, Joan Phillips, Barbara Prouse, Lorraine Ratcliffe, Wally Thies, Graham Trigg, Tom Wallace, Pat Witt

Point Nepean: Chris Smyth

Publications: John Hutchinson, Euan Moore

Victoria Naturally Alliance: Tim Von Carate, Ann & Bruce McGregor, Libby Smith, Ben Carr, Jim Radford, Andrew Bennett, Lea Scherl, Euan Moore, Geoff Park, Chris Forster, Ruth Beilin, Andrew Bradey

Volunteer Committee Convenors

Bushwalking & Activities Group: Lisa Sulinski

Caring For Nature Day: Reg Elder

Conservation & Campaigns: Russell Costello

Executive: Fred Gerardson

Excursions: William Keatley, Larysa Kucan

Finance: Russell Falvey

Governance, Policy and Legal: Fred Gerardson

Membership, Marketing & Communications: Libby Smith

Community Education & Engagement Working Group: Ann Buik, Linda Parlane



FINANCIAL REPORT

Abridged Audited Special Purpose Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2010

Statement by Members of the Council

The members of the Council have determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and in our opinion the abridged special purpose financial report set out in this report presents a true and fair view of the financial position of VNPA as at 30 June 2010 and its performance for the year ended on that date.

At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that the VNPA will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Council and is signed for and on behalf of the Council by:

Russell Falvey, Treasurer
Matt Ruchel, Executive Director

Dated this 26th day of August 2010

Note

Independent Audit Report

As in previous years, the auditors have issued a qualified audit opinion on the annual financial statements on the basis that it is not feasible for organisations such as VNPA to implement accounting controls over all cash collections from donations prior to their initial processing in the accounting records.

The full Independent Auditors Report will be tabled at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting as part of the Audited Financial Statements, and the full text of the Report will be available at www.vnpa.org.au

Income Statement for the year ended 30 June 2010

REVENUE	2010	2009
Operating Activities	\$	\$
Appeals, Donations & Bequests	812,696	624,698
Grants & Sponsorships	476,376	410,703
Membership Fees	105,938	120,570
Other Income	196,889	137,805
Total Income	1,591,899	1,293,777
EXPENDITURE		
Employment Expenses	914,304	739,341
Campaigns, Projects, Activities & Education	324,765	248,538
Office & Administration	132,911	112,032
Printing/Publications/Web	149,597	101,300
Other Expenses	97,832	91,319
Total Expenses	1,619,409	1,292,531
OPERATING (DEFICIT) SURPLUS	(27,510)	1,246

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2010

ASSETS	2010	2009
Current	\$	\$
Cash/Receivables/Inventory	1,544,347	1,696,514
Total Current Assets	1,544,347	1,696,514
Non-Current		
Fixed Assets at Written Down Value	39,274	57,931
TOTAL ASSETS	1,583,621	1,754,445
LIABILITIES		
Current	878,508	974,407
TOTAL LIABILITIES	878,508	974,407
NET ASSETS	705,113	780,038
Funded by: Association Funds	705,113	780,038
TOTAL ASSOCIATION FUNDS	705,113	780,038

VNPA – Activities Accounts for year ended 30 June 2010

The operating accounts for the Bushwalking and Excursions Groups have not been consolidated into the general accounts above and are reported separately as follows:

	2010	2009
BUSHWALKING & ACTIVITIES GROUP	\$	\$
Opening Bank Account Balance	2,626	3,316
Income	10,219	14,365
Expenditure	(949)	(2,054)
Funds Contributed to VNPA	(11,700)	(13,000)
Closing Bank Account Balance	196	2,626
EXCURSIONS GROUP		
Opening Bank Account Balance	9,516	22,584
Income	55,875	59,120
Expenditure	(48,370)	(42,189)
Funds Contributed to VNPA	(16,000)	(30,000)
Closing Bank Account Balance	1,021	9,516

SUPPORTERS & DONORS

The VNPA acknowledges and thanks the following key supporters and donors.

- Albert George and Nancy Caroline Youngman Trust, administered by Equity Trustees
- Anonymous donors
- ANZ Staff Foundation
- The Arnold Foundation
- Australian Government Envirofund
- Australian Government's Caring for our Country
- Australian Environment Grantmakers Network
- Birds Australia
- Coast Action/Coastcare
- Coastcare Victoria Community Grants – a joint program delivered in partnership between the

- Australian Government's Caring for our Country and the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Coast Action/Coastcare program
- Curlew Foundation
- Conservation Council of South Australia
- The Dara Foundation
- Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO)
- Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
- The Ian Potter Foundation
- John T Reid Charitable Trusts
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
- Museum Victoria
- Melliodora Fund, a subfund of the Melbourne Community Foundation

- The Myer Foundation
- The Norman Wettenhall Foundation
- Parks Victoria
- The Poola Foundation: Tom Kantor Fund
- Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
- RACV
- Reichstein Foundation
- The R.E. Ross Trust
- Treepot
- Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development
- Victorian Department of Sustainability & Environment