



**FRIENDS OF NATIVE WILDLIFE INC.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
28TH FEBRUARY 2017
PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Another enjoyable and successful year.

2016 witnessed the Friends of Native Wildlife's second year of incorporation.

2016 also saw the celebration of 20 years in Bayside surveying and studying local wildlife, supporting habitat and carrying out community engagement within the local community.

I wish to publicly thank our committee for their ongoing commitment to the group, their tireless dedication to sharing wildlife with whoever will listen and partake in our well planned activities.

Thank you to all of you for stepping in for me during my absence in November last year. The abilities of all has seen a seamless set of activities continue during that time.

Paul has been Vice-President for the last 2 years and has consolidated and continued to enhance our web page, and Facebook.

Anne as Secretary for the last 2 years has also been an important part of our publicity with Paul and at times we do not know who has done what as together, they are an excellent partnership. Anne keeps us all on our toes when it comes to organising our reports, incorporation and other matters required to run a successful group.

Denis has been Treasurer for the last 2 years and uses his previous experience to apply for grants with a good success rate. From April Denis has been supervising water bowl volunteers.

Sally has been Facebook Editor for the last 2 years and has increased the interest and interaction greatly as well as providing interesting comments on wildlife observations.

Adam has been our Bat Box Monitor and endoscope instructor for the last 2 years as well as supporter of all our activities.

Geoffrey has continued supervision of bat box construction over the last 2 years, generated interest amongst participants of all our activities, including ideas for fundraising and general support. His jams and fresh figs at last year's AGM were a great hit.

I also wish to thank Lewis Hiller who has been a supportive general member for the last 2 years, filing a number of very interesting articles for the Banksia Bulletin and attending activities whenever possible to help with the workload.

Thank you to the many members who are supporting us at various activities. We hope they and many more might enjoy offering help at individual activities when and as they are available. The 30 bat box owners from Brighton to Beaumaris and each suburb in between are contributing by caring for bat boxes on their properties. We hope their interest provokes discussion with their friends and acquaintances to further extend understanding of our local wildlife.

Monthly activities encompassing surveying and community engagement continued, including a decade of frog surveys for Melbourne Frogwatch.

Our committee have joined in with the Elster Creek Waterwatch programme that monitors water quality at the St Kilda St section of the creek. Water bugs are identified, often with magnifying glasses and are indicative of water quality too. After an initial water bug event at Elster Creek, FoNW plan to encourage adults and children to Pobblebonk Park and the Tulip St pond to see what species of waterbugs can be found during this year. We can guarantee you will all end up with heads down and backsides up as you pore over the fascinating creatures. Identifying is quite an addictive activity.

We are experiencing more frequent local wildlife reports put up on our Facebook page which are shared with other community groups to help promote immediate observation opportunities and further learning in identification. I encourage you to all put up interesting wildlife findings or observations to share and discuss.

Our waterbowls have a few new volunteers to support the ongoing work of regular walkers along the coastal paths who keep the shallow wildlife water bowls filled. These are ephemeral bowls, some drying out quite rapidly during hot days, but the deeper ones are a haven for small birds to bathe after extremely hot weather.

The year culminated in the Summer By The Sea event held during the summer school holidays, supported by Bayside City Council and organised by the Port Philip CoastCare programme. Thirty people attended a stroll from the clifftop, looking out over the Bay and learning about aboriginal activity thousands of years ago, moving to the sandy shores below to hear about microbats amongst the treescape, followed by a walk uphill and out along the rocky groin around the Sandringham yacht club to watch for rakali. As time ran out for a full explanation about our local rakali, we hope many will return for our next rakali only event on 7th April when sunset is a lot earlier and we will have some time for all to learn about these furred swimming mammals.

Bronzewing pigeons can be cryptic, preferring to watch us rather than be watched. Walks around heathlands are not always successful at sighting the elusive pigeon, so we plan to increase people's awareness of our local native pigeon this year in the hope of more consistent reports. At the same time we will continue to plant out areas to enhance their diminished food supply of grass seeds and tree pod seeds.

February

We started the year with a Rakali Watch in February, where we showed those who attended how and where to look for Rakali.

Later in the month our AGM guest speaker, Tania Ireton discussed but a small portion of our local birds and answered many, many questions. Her photos were a wonder to behold as well.

March

We ran yet another popular and successful microbat evening at Landcox Park in March.

April

A pleasant morning bird walk at Ricketts point was enjoyed by those who attended.

Long Hollow was once again an excellent location for viewing microbats, as the Gould's Wattled Bats swooped near everyone.

Waterbowls are now overseen by Denis, relieving Elizabeth of one of her many roles.

June

Pobblebonk Park improvement of frog habitat. The day event was very successful with energetic volunteers helping to clean out a section of overgrown reeds with many children infill planting around the pond.

Geoffrey and Elizabeth attended a Melbourne Water workshop to learn how to test water quality and identify water invertebrate.

Most committee members now have Working with Children cards, although we always insist that parents attend where children are under 12 years of age.

July

Our 20th birthday! We celebrated with a morning bird walk at Rickett's Point, with Ian and Elizabeth the only original members able to attend. Val LaMay, an ex-committee member for many years who moved to the country, attended and presented FoNW with a birthday present in the form of a voucher from the Victorian Indigenous Nurseries situated at Yarra Bend. Thank you Val!

August

This month we held our first Water Bugs jointly with Friends of Elster Creek, who kindly helped us to learn how to find and identify them.

Denis attended Council meetings to encourage wildlife input in the Rickett's Pt signage and set up a Committee Photo for our web page to personalise our group. Anne set up PayPal to make it easy for members to join up throughout the year. Sally is working on a Safety Development paper after she attended a Coastcare seminar with Elizabeth and Geoffrey.

September

Our mistletoe survey in Sandringham confirmed the health of both trees and

mistletoe and by implication, the wildlife that relies on the mistletoe.

Our Wild in Bayside indoor twice yearly talk on some aspect of wildlife was held with a good turnout including a number of children who remained entranced as Richard Akers from Melbourne Water gave an entertaining and informative talk all about our local frogs, with excellent photos and a couple of live frogs to support the evening.

An earlier grant application sent in by Denis resulted in a most helpful grant from Bayside Community Hub to help us continue community engagement and upkeep of our equipment. Thank you, Bayside Community Hub.

Adam is setting up a bat box inventory from our original details for our bat box monitoring which he carries out with his young son, Daniel, and Elizabeth and Geoffrey.

We have struck up a very happy association with the 1st/14th sea scout group of Brighton. Geoffrey spent time with the group demonstrating the making of our bat boxes which the sea scout committee took on to prepare 10 boxes. The under 10 year old girls and boys finished off with safety glasses and small hammers for Father's Day. The evening was preceded by a presentation from Elizabeth and fathers then helped their children complete the bat boxes and quite a number of mothers listened in. 40 children and their parents are now very aware of local microbats and their importance in nature. The ten boxes have been donated to our group and they are going to be the first ones that the Council is going to put up in parkland and heathland areas designated by FoNW.

A few weeks later we aimed to take the group out to Dendy Park to use the Walkabout bat detectors but a violent storm kept us indoors. Not to be outdone by the weather Geoffrey and Elizabeth demonstrated the echolocation and endoscopes indoors in a most suitable venue. This year we will arrange a special night for the sea scouts in the park after dark so they can hear real microbats.

October

A microbat evening at Long Hollow was planned, but had to be abandoned due to a thunderstorm and strong winds.

November

The weather was perfect for this month's microbat evening at Cheltenham Park. The bats were a little slow to make an appearance, but eventually everyone managed to see bats against the sky.

I've decided not to nominate for the position of President this year to allow me more time to spend helping analyse a backlog of microbat calls and continue behind the scenes organisation. We are sharing roles amongst other members to continue our group of Friends of Native Wildlife as a well organised volunteer group, who put in many, many hours to further understand and support habitat for the survival of our urban native wildlife.