



Friends of
Grasslands



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Prepared for the FOG Annual General Meeting, Wednesday, 20 March, 2024
at the Conservation Council ACT & Region Offices
Lena Karmel Lodge, Barry Drive, Acton, ACT



supporting native grassy ecosystems



All requirements of subsection 73(1) of the ACT *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* are met in this Annual Report of Friends of Grasslands Inc for the financial year 2023. Specifically, the presentation of statement to members requires that “At each annual general meeting of an incorporated association the following documents must be presented by the committee for the consideration of the meeting:

- (a) the required statement of the association’s accounts for the most recently ended financial year of the association;
- (b) a copy of the reviewer’s or auditor’s report to the association in relation to the association’s accounts for that financial year;
- (c) a report signed by 2 members of the committee stating—
 - (i) the name of each member of the committee of the association during the most recently ended financial year of the association and, if different, at the date of the report; and
 - (ii) the principal activities of the association during the most recently ended financial year and any significant change in the nature of those activities that occurred during that financial year; and
 - (iii) the net profit or loss of the association for the most recently ended financial year.”



Jamie Pittock, President 2023



Helen Sims, Secretary 2023

This report was compiled by Helen Sims, Secretary of FOG 2023, from contributions provided by active members of FOG. I am grateful to Andrew Zelnik for the front and back cover collages and to Andrew and others as acknowledged for their photos. Thanks also to Richard Bomford for his website assistance. The report goes only a short way towards informing just how much commitment of time and energy is freely given in any year to the support of native grassy ecosystems. **To all volunteers, THANK YOU!!**

Friends of Grasslands (FOG) acknowledges and celebrates First Nations Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the grassy ecosystems that we strive to conserve. We respect their elders past and present. We appreciate that grassy ecosystems are cultural landscapes. We commit to collaborating with Traditional Custodians to manage grassy ecosystems to support traditional and ongoing social, economic, cultural and spiritual values.

Front Cover Images: Background – (Top) Native grassland with flowering Button Wrinklewort, Crace Grasslands NR, ACT; (Bottom) Roadside native grassland, just beyond Namadgi NP/NSW border.

Foreground—a small sample of the native flora and fauna mostly seen during 2023 activities and work parties in the ACT and NSW
Common names L-R starting from the top:

Row 1- Button Wrinklewort, Hill Daisy, Tall Bluebell Pair

Row 2- Nodding Chocolate Lily, Praying Mantis, Lemon Beauty-heads

Row 3- Scarlet Robin(male), Creeping Bossiaea, Tufted Blue Lily (white form)

Row 4- Bauer's Grevillea, Small Wax-lip Orchid, Musky Caps orchid, Tough Scurf-pea

Row 5- Large-spotted Sun Orchid, Rosy Hyacinth Orchid, Common Elbow Orchid, Pink-tailed Worm-lizard (pair).

Back Cover Images:

Top – Flowering Grass Trigger plants and other native wildflowers in firebreak for ecological burn, Top Hut TSR, NSW

Bottom—Flowering Leafy Bossiaea in grassy woodland, Namadgi NP, ACT

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Friends of Grasslands Vision and Rationale

The Friends of Grasslands Inc vision, together with clarified goals and the rationale behind the vision, have remained unchanged since January 2022.

*Healthy, biodiverse and connected remnant native grassy ecosystems
continue to support life on Earth*

FOG will achieve this vision by:

- Acting to halt the decline of native grassy ecosystems and their biodiversity and achieve the maximum level of recovery possible
- Promoting and facilitating protection of the biodiversity of grassy ecosystems within and across the landscape
- Recognising the need for community stewardship of these ecosystems, thereby continuing the cultural care provided by the Aboriginal peoples for millennia
- Respecting the views and knowledge of all stakeholders and working with them to achieve our vision
- Facilitating implementation of best practice management and encouraging development of methods to improve conservation through hands-on application, research, education, strategic planning and monitoring
- Advocating for effective environmental laws, enforcement mechanisms, planning and management to underpin protection and conservation of native grassy ecosystems.

Rationale:

- Native ecosystems and their biodiversity have intrinsic value.
- Resilient native ecosystems are vital to our physical well-being through the provision of ecosystem services.
- Human connections and interaction with nature and biodiversity are vital to our mental well-being.
- The cultural traditions of Aboriginal peoples underpin our unique native habitats and guide the principles and implementation of sustainable and conservative use of our grassy ecosystems within the broader landscape.
- Biodiversity cannot be sustained in isolated remnants.

Membership

At the end of 2023 FOG had 198 members, a decrease from 2022. Most FOG members are individuals or families - landowners and managers, environmental science professionals, land and park carers, conservationists and naturalists. There were also six corporate entities and 12 not-for-profit organisations with FOG membership.

Heather Sweet, Coordinator

FOG Committee and FOG Roles in 2023

An * in the table below represents members who, though not committee members, assume roles and responsibilities that aid in the achievement of FOG's objectives. There are many others, unnamed in this report, who also contribute to fieldwork, working parties and who attend events that FOG holds.

President	Jamie Pittock
Vice Presidents	Sarah Sharp, Hugh Coppell
Secretary	Helen Sims
Treasurer	David Johnson
Committee members	Margaret Ning, Trevor Preston, Julia Raine, Rainer Rehwinkel, Heather Sweet, Fay Wareham, Matt Whitting
Public Fund Management Committee	Andrew Zelnik* (coordinator), Kim Pullen*, Janet Russell*
Advocacy team	Sarah Sharp and Hugh Coppell (coordinators), John Fitz Gerald*, Alice Hathorn*, Michael Mulvaney*, Jamie Pittock, Trevor Preston, Julia Raine, Rainer Rehwinkel, Geoff Robertson, Matt Whitting
Supported Projects team	Andrew Zelnik* (coordinator), Alice Hathorn*, Ken Hodgkinson*, David Johnson
Events & activities coordinators	Eleanor Galvin*, Kath McGuirk* (NSW publicity) Margaret Ning
On-ground project coordinators	John Fitz Gerald*, Margaret Ning, Jamie Pittock, Linda Spinaze*
Communication team	Newsletter – Paul Archer*, Libby Keen*, Margaret Ning, Sue Ross*, Sarah Sharp replaced by Fay Wareham (distribution) e-Bulletins and Special Bulletins – Margaret Ning (coordinator) and Eleanor Galvin* (editing, publishing) Facebook access – Rainer Rehwinkel, Julia Raine, Trevor Preston info@fog.org.au – Janet Russell* Presentations and displays – Geoff Robertson*
Website manager	Richard Bomford*
Dropbox	John Fitz Gerald*
Governance sub-committee; ACNC contact	Helen Sims, Matt Whitting
Membership	Margaret Ning, Heather Sweet (coordinator)
Book sales	Sarah Sharp
Representing FOG in other organisations	Hugh Coppell, John Fitz Gerald*, Alice Hathorn*, Margaret Ning, Jamie Pittock, Rainer Rehwinkel, Sarah Sharp, Helen Sims, Andrew Zelnik*
Public Officer	Andy Russell*

President's report - Jamie Pittock

Last year I wrote that “seldom has FOG’s mission for the conservation of grassy ecosystems, the most endangered ecological communities in Australia, been more tested.”

Again in 2023, a fourth year of rainfall across the growing season saw grasslands flourish but at the cost of significant weed infestations. Further, governments continue to consider proposed developments that would whittle away limited remaining areas of high-quality grassy ecosystems. The egregious proposal by Canberra Airport Group to build a road around the north end of the airport that will bisect and likely kill off a key population of the critically endangered Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon is still before the Federal Government. While the development area for Defence Housing Australia’s dreadful residential development at Lawson North has been reduced, the remaining proposal would still have unacceptable impacts. Further, there has been little progress in conserving native grasslands in New South Wales.

Yet, 2023 also saw signs of hope. In May 2023, I was delighted by collaboration of the ACT Government’s City Services and Environment directorates to undertake an ecological burn on urban park land at Blue Gum Point. This timely intervention reduced biomass and rejuvenated a significant grassland and its population of the endangered Button Wrinklewort. The burn highlights how our agencies can successfully undertake conservation across government silos.

There are emerging opportunities at the federal and state scales. The Federal Parliament has adopted a Nature Repair Act that authorises the establishment of a market for biodiversity conservation credits. If well structured, this market may channel resources to conserve grassy ecosystems on privately managed lands, including leased lands.

The Biodiversity Network developed by the Conservation Council’s Biodiversity Working Group aims to ensure conservation areas across all tenures are appropriately managed and quarantined from development and disturbance, to include sites outside the reserve system. The proposal was launched in February 2023, with the three major arms - to ensure areas of conservation value are mapped; that the conservation areas are quarantined from development, ideally, through legislative protection; and that they are managed primarily for ecological values. These include the proposal to introduce some form of voluntary conservation management agreement on leased land with assistance provided to lessees to manage areas. Over the year there has been considerable collaborative work led by FOG and the Conservation Council’s Biodiversity Working Group to promote and implement this proposal. Significant work has begun to look at how it can be implemented, and considerable support for this proposal has been provided by the ACT Government and many of the conservation community, including introduction of government programs that will improve connectivity and recognising ecological values on urban open space land. A mapping project is underway to map all remnants of native woodland and grassland to ensure tree planting is carried out in appropriate locations. This can be extended to include a more comprehensive coverage of conservation sites, the first stage of implementing the Network. A stakeholder group has been established to consider options to introduce legislative means for protection on leased and unleased land. These will be considered in 2024, alongside improving on-ground management across tenure.

Following a change of government in New South Wales in 2023, a damning review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act offers the prospect of major reforms that may help better conserve grassy ecosystems. And in the Alps, the NSW Government has commenced the long overdue cull of feral horses that are wrecking alpine grassland communities.

Generous donations by FOG members in 2023 have provided key resources that will be applied to advance conservation of grassy ecosystems. In particular, we are working with government and community

stakeholders in the NSW South-East Highlands Bioregion to take stock of grassy ecosystem programs, identify lessons learnt, and opportunities to provide further incentives for conservation across land tenures.

FOG will focus on opportunities to strategically advocate for these kinds of enhanced, proactive grassy ecosystem programs in 2024.

FOG's on-ground work has continued to demonstrate best practices in grasslands conservation at Top Hut travelling stock reserve near Adaminaby, Hall Cemetery, Budjan Galindji Reserve in Franklin, Blue Gum Point and Gurubung Dhaura (Stirling Park) in Yarralumla, and Yarramundi Reach Grasslands. We thank the ACT Government for financial support for on-ground conservation activities at Blue Gum Point through the ACT Environment Grants.

FOG continued our diverse and vital range of activities to promote the conservation of grassy ecosystems, including our work on education, field trips, on-ground projects, grants and advocacy. Our newsletter continues to be a source of excellent information and inspiration for all people concerned for conservation of grassy ecosystems.

Our organisation has been blessed with an excellent Committee whose members have applied their diverse skills and interests to enhance FOG's work. I particularly thank Matt Whitting and Helen Sims for their exhaustive efforts to revise FOG's constitution and governance procedures to meet new ACT and Commonwealth regulatory requirements. A number of other volunteers have led key on-ground conservation, excursions, website and newsletter production that have contributed greatly to FOG's success.

I encourage any FOG member interested in doing a little more to join the committee or to take on one of the other modest but enjoyable activities that make FOG so vibrant and effective. Please call me if you would like to discuss options to help more (m. 0407 265 131). Please enhance your support for FOG in 2024 with membership, participation in events, labour and donations for the conservation of grassy ecosystems.

Jamie Pittock, President



Jamie and Julia receiving National Trust (ACT Branch) 2022 Heritage Award at Gurubung Dhaura (Stirling Park) Yarralumla ACT, April 2023. Photo – Andrew Zelnik

Financial reports – *David Johnson*

Consistent with the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* as Treasurer, David Johnson will present financial reports for 2023 as below and the Audit Report from Pauline Hore at FOG's 2024 AGM –

Treasurer's Report to Committee on Annual Accounts 31 December 2023

General Account

The General Account had a balance of \$92,081 at the end of 2023, up from \$67,577 at the end of 2022. This represents a net income of \$17,569 for 2023, helped considerably by lower costs than the previous year when higher contracting expenses contributed to a net loss of \$12,892. This also means we are carrying a greater amount of unspent grant money (\$30,837, including \$26,706 allocated to Blue Gum Point) than at the end of the previous year (\$8,934). We can expect to add another \$6,000 from the National Capital Authority soon, which will make it \$36,837 of unspent grant money.

Total book sales for 2023 (\$8,074) were higher than for the previous year (\$5,804).

Public fund

The Public Fund received \$23,062 in donations this year, which contributed to an end of year balance of \$31,982. During 2023, \$3,441 was spent on FOG projects. This is less than for 2022 (\$9,837), but that year's expenditure included \$7,425 paid to an advocacy contractor. The balance of funds carried forward for 2024 projects is \$27,948.

This will be the last report under the name of Public Fund. This bank account has been renamed Gift Fund following an out of session decision by the FOG committee in January 2024. The name was changed to align better with recent changes to the government's rules for organisations operating as deductible gift recipients (DGRs).

David Johnson, Treasurer



Visit to urban park Brazel Street, Higgins ACT, February 2023. Photo - Andrew Zelnik

Friends of Grasslands General Account y.e. 31 December 2023
Balance Sheet

	2023	2022
Assets		
General Account	92,081	67,577
Investments		
Term Deposit 2502	9,709	9,688
Term Deposit 2504	7,123	7,087
Term Deposit 2505	11,645	11,389
Consolidated Term deposits	28,477	28,164
Value of stock b.f. 1 Jan 23		
Publications		
Stock Woodland Flora	9,810	860
Stock Grassland Flora	10,650	1,287
Stock bought	6,935	6,271
Excess Grassland books (over print?)	900	
	<u>28,295</u>	<u>8,419</u>
Less cost of books sold/unaccounted e	8,074	5,804
Value of stock c.f. 31 Dec 23	<u>20,221</u>	<u>2,615</u>
Total Assets	<u>140,780</u>	<u>98,356</u>
Liabilities		
Grants		
NCA	3,854	563
ACT Govt Hall Cemetery	276	276
ACT Govt Blue Gum Point	26706.68	8,095
Total Grants	30,837	8,934
FOG Equity 31 Dec 2023	109,943	89,422
Total Liabilities	<u>140,780</u>	<u>98,356</u>

Friends of Grasslands Public Fund Accounts y.e. 31 December 2023
Income & Expenditure

	2023	2022
Income		
Donations Supported Projects		-
Top Hut TSR	2,250	2,224
Hall Cemetery		-
Suspense A/c TSR Rates		-
Other	20,812	15,986
Total Income	23,062	18,210
Less Expenses		
Supported Projects	1,500	1,500
Top Hut TSR	1,941	304
Hall Cemetery		-
Advocacy contractor		7,425
Other grants		608
Total Expenses	3,441	9,837
Net Income/(Expenses)	19,621	8,373

Friends of Grasslands Public Fund Accounts y.e. 31 December 2023
Balance Sheet

	2023	2022
Assets		
Public Fund Bank Account	31,982	12,361
Total Assets	31,982	12,361
Liabilities		
Top Hut TSR	2,534	2,224
Hall Cemetery	1,500	1,500
TSR Rates paid by GA		-
Balance funds carried forward	27,948	8,637
Total Liabilities	31,982	12,361

FRIENDS OF GRASSLANDS INC. INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2023
Consolidated General & Publication Accounts

	2023		2022	
INCOME				
Membership		5,440.00		4,810.00
Sales				
Publications Woodland	(95.62)		4,386.00	
Grassland	1,235.00	1,139.38	2,853.00	7,239.00
Sales of other pubs	-		303.00	
Costs of WF & GF pubs	(6,934.62)		(6,271.12)	
Post/Handling charges-Pubs	108.50			
Cost of Storage	-	(6,826.12)	-324.00	(6,292.12)
Other income				
Donations for Public Fund	-			
Sales, services & other income	3,282.44	3,282.44	6,320.00	6,320.00
Grants				
NCA	6,000.00		6,000.00	
ACT Gov YGDR	-			
ACT Gov HC	-			
ACT Gov BGP	29,185.00	35,185.00	22,627.00	28,627.00
TOTAL INCOME		38,220.70		40,703.88
EXPENDITURE				
From Current Grant Funds				
NCA				
Contractor exp	2,408.97		2,964.76	
Other	-		4,556.05	
FOG Admin allowance	300.00	2,708.97	600.00	8,120.81
Blue Gum Point				
Contractor Exp	8,516.64		37,149.42	
Other	-		1,092.50	
FOG Admin allowance	2,057.00	10,573.64	2,700.00	40,941.92
ACT Gov Franklin Grasslands				
FOG admin - balance	-		-	
ACT Gov HC				
Contractor Exp	-		200.00	
Other	-		-	200
Administration				
Project Officer payment	-			
Storage- Lock-up	1,320.00		648.00	
Insurance	605.00		436.76	
PO Box rental	114.50		108.00	
Other, eg Hire Mugga Mugga	-	2,039.50	140.90	1,333.66
On-ground exp				
YGDR	-			
On-ground Cons & R&M	-	-	(24.30)	(24.30)
Other expenses				
Supported projects	3,000.00		3,000.00	
Support/member other organisa	290.00		340.00	
Printing	1,207.75		2,286.60	
Costs of meetings/working bees,	35.51			
Travel - general	-			
Purchase of consumables	90.00			
Postage newsletter & pubs	493.34		441.68	
FOG Admin NCA/BGP	-		(3,350.00)	
Other cash expenses	212.00	5,328.60	305.70	3,023.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		20,650.71		53,596.07
NET INCOME/(EXPENSES)		17,569.99		(12,892.19)

Audit Opinion for Friends of Grasslands Inc Financial Report for year ended 31 December 2023

To the Members of the Friends of Grasslands Incorporated

Scope

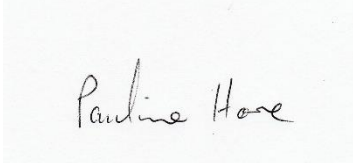
I have audited the financial report of Friends of Grasslands Incorporated as set out in the Consolidated General and Publications Accounts Financial Reports of the year ended 31 December 2023 and the Public Fund Accounts as of 31 December 2023. The Friends of Grasslands Incorporated committee is responsible for the financial reports. I have conducted an independent audit of the financial report to express an opinion on it to the members.

The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Audit Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free of material misstatement. My procedures included examination of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial reports and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with Accounting Standards, other mandatory professional reporting requirements and the requirements of Friends of Grasslands Incorporated to present a view which is consistent with my understanding of the association's financial position and the results of its operations.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion the financial report presents fairly in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards, other mandatory professional reporting requirements and the requirements of Friends of Grasslands Incorporated, the financial position of Friends of Grasslands Incorporated as of 31 December 2023 and the results of its operations for the year ended 31 December 2023.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pauline Hore".

Pauline Hore JP(ACT); BEc; CPA
20 Ross Smith Cres
Scullin ACT 2614
13 February 2024

Advocacy – Hugh Coppell /Sarah Sharp

The FOG advocacy team has been very productive in 2023. The group made a total of 30 submissions this year, including two joint submissions with other ACT environmental groups. Members of the advocacy group also represented FOG at numerous stakeholder meetings, engaging with the ACT government and other community groups. The advocacy group also welcomed Matt Whitting, who brings a wealth of knowledge about Commonwealth environmental matters.

Key advocacy matters are summarised below. Copies of all FOG's submissions are available on the website.

Responses to consultations

ACT Territory Plan and District Strategies

Following on from our advocacy work in 2022 regarding the Planning Bill, FOG made numerous representations regarding the Draft Territory Plan and District Strategies. These include our own detailed submission, a joint submission with the Conservation Council, and a submission to the *Inquiry into the Territory Plan and other associated documents*. Additionally, Sarah Sharp appeared before the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services to represent grassy ecosystems across the ACT. I would like to acknowledge Sarah Sharp's commitment to this matter, given the time and complexities involved.

ACT Budget 2023-24

FOG made a submission to the 2023-24 ACT budget process, calling for funding to protect grassy ecosystems across all tenures. Specifically, we requested an increase to the size and scope of biodiversity monitoring teams, additional support for threatened species conservation, and a stable support base for environmental NGOs and volunteers. This submission was in line with our ongoing work on the Biodiversity Network.

ACT Urban Open Spaces Land Management Plan

The draft of the Urban Open Space Land Management Plan released by TCCS was an issue that required considerable attention. It was the view of the advocacy group that the plan, in its current form, lacked suitable attention to environmental matters and was not capable of guiding decision-making within the Urban Open Space estate. Our submission included 22 recommendations, primarily concerned with weed management, mowing, fire management, and identification of areas of environmental significance (including opportunities for restoration).

Namadgi National Park Plan of Management Review

The Parks and Conservation Service has begun trialling a new method of management plan writing. Beginning with the Namadgi Plan of Management, there has been a shift towards a 'value-centred' approach. As part of this process, FOG was asked to identify the three 'most important, significant, unique and irreplaceable' values within Namadgi National Park. We are hopeful our response - biodiversity, natural landforms and landscape and First Nations connection to Country - will be incorporated throughout the new plan.

Draft National Recovery Plan for Four Grassland Earless Dragons (*Tympanocryptis spp.*) of Southeast Australia

It was good to see that the federal government is interested in the recovery of the four critically endangered Grassland Earless Dragon species. However, FOG viewed the incorporation of all species under one plan as inappropriate for management practice, given their distinct geographic locations and associated threats. Our

submission also called for greater resources to aid recovery and increased transparency of reporting to stakeholders and the community.

Nature Repair Market Bill

The Nature Repair Market Bill was another ‘big ticket’ item for FOG in 2023. While the intent of the bill was agreeable to FOG, our submission did not support the bill in the form it was presented in. It was the view that the bill lacked a comprehensive policy framework, minimum standards for land management, and protection of project areas in perpetuity. While the bill was later passed by the Senate, our additional concern regarding offsetting was allayed by the removal of provisions allowing the market to be used to offset environmentally destructive actions.

Agriculture, Land and Emissions Discussion Paper

A key concern for FOG with this discussion paper was the over-emphasis on carbon credits, which may come at expense to biodiversity. There was also a strong emphasis on reforestation, which should not be viewed as the only means for restoring landscapes. Our submission emphasised the importance of implementing landscape-scale, ecologically-informed management.

Inquiry into fostering and promoting the significance of Australia’s National Capital

FOG, alongside the Conservation Council, made three recommendations for the inquiry to consider. These were primarily concerned with protecting, promoting, and enhancing the biodiversity values of the bush capital. In this submission, the idea of designating an area encompassing Black Mountain, Gurubung Dhaura, and other important sites as a ‘National Botanic Precinct’ was floated. This precinct would allow for increased protection of National Lands, with management to be a collaboration between the NCA and the ACT Government.

Proactive Advocacy

Lawson development

FOG continues to maintain an interest in the protection of biodiversity values in the Lawson area. The protection of North Lawson grasslands from inappropriate development remains our foremost proactive advocacy project, with support from the Conservation Council and Ginninderra Catchment Group. We are currently awaiting the release of the Environmental Impact Statement. Additionally, we have provided feedback into the Lawson 2A Mixed-Use site plans and continued to advocate for improvements to the planting practices employed by TCCS. The topic of planted sleeper weeds, discussed further below, has reared its head a number of times in the Lawson area, as has the inappropriate planting of trees and shrubs within grassland areas. The FOG advocacy team would like to thank Rainer Rehwinkel for his dedication to advocating for the grassy ecosystems of Lawson.

Airport Northern Road

The Airport Northern Road project, which threatens the survival of the critically-endangered Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon, has also been at the top of the FOG advocacy team’s agenda for many years. Despite the clear implications of this project, there is still an ongoing threat that development may occur soon. FOG has prepared numerous documents outlining our concerns, as have the Conservation Council (including blog posts on how to take individual action to save the Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon). Additionally, both FOG and the Conservation Council have spoken publicly about this issue, including Andrew Zelnik and Margaret Ning’s presentation to 2XX in November. Thanks are due to Jamie Pittock, Matt Whitting, Geoff Robertson, Michael Mulvaney, and many others for their work on this issue.

Biodiversity Network

Almost all the matters on which FOG undertakes advocacy actions share a common root: a poor understanding at the government level of the legislative requirement to protect and manage all remnants of critically-endangered communities as well as other important areas across the landscape. The Biodiversity Network is our attempt to address this gap. The project, which has been spearheaded by Sarah Sharp and launched in February 2023, aims to develop a framework to assist with the identification, protection, enhancement, and restoration of lands across all tenures in the ACT that hold biodiversity values. Advocacy to establish the Biodiversity Network has been undertaken throughout 2023, in the form of presentations to stakeholders, discussions with government, and the establishment of a working group. The Biodiversity Network has been largely well-received by government, who are in the process of defining these areas spatially and have incorporated these concepts into numerous strategic documents and on-ground projects.

Invasive weeds

The issue of invasive weeds remains high on FOG's agenda. Their presence in grassy ecosystems cannot be refuted, especially given the amount of rainfall received in the ACT region within the last three years. While there are some issues that require a nuanced response, there are others where simple changes can produce substantial results. An example of the latter is the issue of sleeper weeds, species which can escape from gardens and amenity plantings into natural areas. With support from Canberra Nature Map, FOG has advocated for the removal of some of these species from the planting lists issued by the government. Through our Supported Grants Program, FOG has also supported the creation and release of the weed manual developed by Vera Kurz, which provides advice on the identification and control of invasive weeds to environmental volunteers in the ACT and forms a guide for advocacy regarding priority weed control.

Participation on working groups in the ACT

FOG continues to maintain an active presence on a number of working groups in the ACT. These include the Conservation Council's Biodiversity Working Group, and the ACT Government's Invasive Plants Working Group. FOG is also a member of the Biodiversity Conservation Forum, which is co-chaired by the ACT Government, Conservation Council, and Landcare ACT. In each of these working groups, FOG representatives advocate for greater protection and management of grassy ecosystems through collaborative initiatives.

In addition, the Advocacy Group and other FOG members have made numerous formal and informal representations on behalf of FOG to politicians, government, the community and other stakeholders.



Q&A session around site diorama during tour of Ginninderry conservation corridor & residential area, Strathnairn ACT, April 2023 – Photo - Andrew Zelnik

Communication –

News of Friends of Grasslands – *Paul Archer*

The bi-monthly 'News of Friends of Grasslands' is FOG's principal communication medium. Since 1994 its articles have related how FOG and other agencies, groups and individuals support grassy ecosystems through on-ground work, research and advocacy. The January – February 2024 issue was the 166th in the series. All issues are freely available and searchable on the FOG website.

As in previous years, articles, drawings, and photographs imparted well-researched information relevant to grassy ecosystems and respectful of First Nations' traditional land management practices. FOG's continuing advocacy was outlined, and submissions summarised. Regular articles covering the plants, insects and animals of grasslands and grassy woodlands added interest and variety while news items and reports of FOG's on-ground work and field visits kept members up to date and informed.

Early in 2024 the FOG committee reviewed how the newsletter is distributed, following questions raised at the end of 2023. The decision has been made to go electronic based on –

- Environmental considerations (printed paper newsletters)
- Saving on postal costs for printed newsletters (now \$1.50 per copy, plus the printing costs) and
- Saving in volunteer labour to send it out.

We hope that you will understand the need for this decision and enjoy receiving the electronic version (which will be in full colour) and print it yourselves if required.

If you think your internet may be too challenged by the new arrangement, please be assured that none of the newsletters dispatched over the last twelve months has exceeded 2.5Mb in size. If you don't have an email address or would prefer a posted paper copy for any other reason, please contact Margaret (margaret.ning@fog.org.au) with details.

Events and Notices - *Margaret Ning, Eleanor Galvin*

Our *Events and Notices* is now a regular update on upcoming events and other notices that we are aware of. The text is prepared from information provided by event organisers and other sources and emailed out about once a month to everyone on the FOG email mailing list, including non-members. In 2022 there were ten issues.

Special Releases - *Margaret Ning, Eleanor Galvin*

In 2022 five *Special Releases* were distributed. Topics in these were: our AGM, a special appeal for donations, advertising for a FOG project officer, notice of funerals for Dave Mallison and Don Wood and seeking submissions for North Lawson grasslands.

Facebook report - *Rainer Rehwinkel*

A brief explanation is that Facebook activity fluctuates from month to month depending on how many items are published and this affects all the other data. Identifying trends may be some time away. At this stage it is easier to note comparisons with the previous reporting period, as provided by Meta, than with the same time for the last year. What is collected continues to change, with metrics supplied by Meta on the FOG Facebook pages now providing considerably richer data relative to last year's. For example, we can now see the number of items of published content in relation to the number of people who are viewing those pages. Facebook now also supplies information about the age and gender breakdowns of our followers, reports on engagement with our Facebook by countries and records followers according to their location in cities and

towns around Australia, so we may get a better sense of the extent of our potential influence. We have now also learned that our Facebook page had 10 other Facebook Groups following at the beginning of 2024.

As in 2023 Facebook posts performance reports for the FOG Facebook page on 28-day and 90-day intervals. This report is based on the latter and includes a warning that the following is basically for the data nerds amongst us!

For the 90 days November 2022-February 2023, we had a reach of 4.4K post hits, with 2.1K engagements. In 2023 we had 761 engagements.

In a similar period in this last year, our page had a reach of 1.4K (+27% over the previous 90 days), 29 items of published content (-36%), and a total of 854 engagements (-25%). In the last 90 days, we had 31 (+48%) nett followers. So, in spite of the fact that fewer published items were picked up by more people but didn't excite enough interest to explore further, we still had more followers at the end of the November-February period than we had for the August-November period. What will the next period bring?

In 2024, the FOG Facebook page had 1032 followers (compared with 916 followers in 2023); this is an increase of 119 on last year's figure. In terms of age and gender breakdowns, 66% are women and 34% are men.

Age groups are: 18–24-year-olds: 4%, 25–34-year-olds: 14%, 35–44-year-olds: 18% and 45–54-year-olds: 23.5%. Facebook does not break age groups above 54-year-olds, but assuming the remainder is 55 plus, that leaves 36.5% in that age bracket. Draw your own conclusions both about what age-groups are attracted to native grassy ecosystems and how Facebook perceives behaviours and interests of those older than 54.

Facebook further breaks down our engagement by countries. It is not surprising that 98% (1,000 followers) are in Australia. Followers in other countries include the USA (1%, 6 followers), Cambodia (0%, 2 followers), Nigeria (0%, 2) and UK (0%, 2).

And finally, there's a breakdown by cities and towns:

- Canberra (48% - 507 followers)
- Sydney (8% - 79)
- Melbourne (4% - 41)
- Queanbeyan (1% - 15)
- Brisbane (1% -10)
- Yass (1% -10)
- Adelaide (1% - 9)
- Wollongong (1% - 8)
- Bungendore (1% - 7) and
- Goulburn (1% - 6)

Hopefully, this report provides a bit of a peek into how we are engaging with our Facebook audience, and indeed, who they are.

Email, phone and press inquiries: Info line – *Janet Russell*

FOG has several email addresses through which it receives various inquiries, but most come through info@fog.org.au. It receives several notices weekly of upcoming events, news reports and inquiries. Incoming information on events and news items is passed on appropriately, while inquiries are answered. Some members whose names are well known are often contacted to answer inquiries.

Website - Richard Bomford

2023 was another smooth year for the FOG website. Most work involved keeping the calendar, newsletters, and advocacy pages up to date. The statistics package on the server computers recorded about 120,000 visits and 80 GB in downloads. Those numbers probably include automated 'visits' from web crawlers – programs including those that update the databases held by Google and other search engines – so they aren't the number of what we might refer to as 'visitors'. But probably the year-on-year figures have some bearing on whether the site is getting more or less visited. On that basis, the number of visitors is staying about the same, year-on-year.

Apart from the home page, the information page *What is a grassland?* was the most popular page on the site (about 3% of visits), followed by *Grasses of NSW* (2%), the Supported Projects page (1% to 4% - varies), and the *Grasses: Habits and Habitats* brochure, the calendar, the resources page *How can I get help for grasslands*, and the advocacy page (around 1% each).

The fog.org.au domain is registered with OnlyDomains (due for renewal in 2024), the website is hosted by HostMetro in the USA, and FOG email services are provided faultlessly and free of charge by Google.

Note from Committee: Progress has been made during the year by our website review team which looked at the hosting, layout and content of the FOG website. The committee agreed to continue to have the fog.org.au domain registered with OnlyDomains and are grateful for Richard Bomford's continuing contribution to website management.

Book sales - Sarah Sharp

In 2023, sales continued steadily, with 248 *Woodland Flora* and 222 *Grassland Flora* books sold or given away. The majority are sold to book shops and other retail outlets and through the Local Landcare Services, which results in a wide distribution of the information, and a much smaller number to individuals at events or through on-line orders.

Order forms for all these books are available on the FOG website.



Busily botanising during visit to private property at Krawaree NSW, January 2023. Photo – Andrew Zelnik

Events and Activities – *Margaret Ning*

FOG-initiated activities

FOG's activities in 2023 generally proceeded as advertised, with minimal disruption due to weather. At least one activity was held every month. We visited 16 places, which included eight that were out of town. Attendance at activities continued to be relatively low, and I am not sure that we can continue to blame COVID for that. Activities included:

January	Harts Rd grassland and forest, Krawarree - members' property
February	Higgins grassland, Brazel St - looked after by FOG members
March	Bats at Wandiyali, Googong, with Michael Pennay, NSW DCCEEW
April	Vehicular tour of Ginninderry Conservation Corridor
May	Tinderry property being managed for conservation, led by the property owner - interesting forest and grassy veg, and great views (more visits planned)
June	Majors Creek - member's property - species list prepared Tree ID at Majura by Budjan Galindji work party attendees - led by Rainer Rehwinkel
July	Tuggeranong Homestead visit: history, vegetation, and replete with Devonshire tea - 25 people
August	Mugga Mugga 'Lifting the Fog' winter presentations - nearly 40 people
September	Nerriga area spring roadside crawl to three floristic sites
October	Young area - early season sights - Dananbilla NR, Quamby Rd TSR, and Monteagle Cemetery Annual FOG monitoring at Ginninderry Conservation Trust's scrape and sow site Three days in Armidale area - national parks, a private property, several roadside spots - highlights Austral Toad Flax, several falls, Little Llangothlin Lake, & more
November	Part of Mulligans Flat NR, Little Mulligans grassland and woodland areas - looking good! Tinderry revisit - same spots, species list done this time, adding to ANPS list
December	Visit to ACT Government's Bonshaw seed production area (SPA)

In addition to these activities, Andrew Zelnik and I also made a handful of visits to prospective locations for future FOG activities, and often compiled a species list while there.

Thank you to those who raised the idea for activities, and/or subsequently led them on the day.

Talks, Presentations and Representations

FOG welcomes opportunities to work with other groups on matters and topics of mutual interest, including giving talks and staffing public displays. These are all useful for our educational aim of spreading an understanding of grassy ecosystems and building networks. Dozens of representations occur each year in the course of consultation and meetings with government agencies. These frequently overlap with FOG's advocacy role. Reports about on-ground works and projects also show how FOG activities connected with other groups during the year. A few examples of talks and presentations made during the year that may not have been covered elsewhere in this annual report were - by Andrew Zelnik and Margaret Ning to the Australian Native Plant Society Canberra on the Top Hut experience as well as to their Wednesday Walkers group at Budjan Galindji, by Rainer Rehwinkel to the Conservation Council and Geoff Robertson conducted a zoom presentation to the Grassy Plains Network and a heritage walk at Mugga Mugga.

On-ground work and projects

Budjan Galindji (Franklin) Grasslands Nature Reserve– *Margaret Ning*

In 2023, 19 FOG work parties were held in the 1.5ha pocket of grassland in the south-east corner of Budjan Galindji Nature Reserve (BGNR). This is the part of the nature reserve where Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard populations remain healthy, and grassland forbs are still prominent. Twenty different volunteers joined us, at an average of 6.5 volunteers each time. We also helped with some weeding at the seed production area.

We had fewer new plant discoveries throughout 2023, and only Narrow Plantain and Creeping Bossiaea were added to our species list. We monitored the four new lily species from 2022, and all showed up again except for the Fringe Lily. Our site has benefitted from the mows it received in 2023 and we were rewarded by a Golden Sun Moth and a Striped Legless Lizard sighting during our work parties.

Our management strategy over 2023 has not changed from the previous years and has included some serious seedhead removal during the early months of the year; spraying exotic grasses later in the season; raking and removing slash; whipper snipping; and some hand pulling of St Johns Wort and exotic cudweed. We also spread two bales of Kangaroo Grass hay in an attempt to clean up the fence line. On a good day, after a work party, we can measure our success by the number of bags of weeds we take away from the site.

Another strategy is to mark special species to enhance our management. We mark patches where special species have been found, or a minimum of three native forbs have been seen. The markers alert and slow down sprayers and ACT Parks and Conservation mowing. We also mark where bad weeds (Chilean Needlegrass or African Lovegrass) have been sprayed. Serrated Tussock spraying continues as a matter of course.

Our much-appreciated rangers joined us for work parties, undertook many mows, did some seeding and planting, sharpened our tools, and helped with herbicide, etc. The mowing does have some temporary casualties, as Blue Devil, in particular, is also growing strongly at the same time as we are trying to minimise the seed set of annual exotic grasses. For the past year the mowing has taken precedence! However, early 2023 saw possibly as many as 1000 Blue Devils flowering in our pocket, and they were even visible from 30 metres away on Flemington Road.

A 5-hectare ecological burn closer to the centre of the nature reserve, north of our pocket, occurred in March. Although the Phalaris is coming back relentlessly, some nice surprises are occasionally seen there. Some seeded Chocolate Lily have also flowered elsewhere in the reserve. We hosted a variety of visitors in 2023, including from the Australian Native Plant Society Canberra Wednesday Walkers group, the Environmental Volunteers Conference, and some corporate volunteers.

Thank you to our dedicated BGNR volunteer group for their indefatigable efforts throughout the year. We would love to welcome new recruits in 2024, to share our focus on plant ID and trying new managerial methods to see what else we can do in future. We meet on the first and fourth Wednesdays of every month.



Photo of Blue Devil full plant by Andrew Zelnik; inset flowerhead by Trevor Preston

Bush on the Boundary West Belconnen – John Fitz Gerald

The suburbs of Strathnairn and Macnamara (early stages) are both well established. The Conservation Corridor separating the homes and streets from the Murrumbidgee River, managed by the Ginninderry Conservation Trust, continues to see more opportunity for public access. The BoB group met monthly in 2023, continuing a schedule of formal meetings alternating with general discussion or field visits. Once again matters raised were issues from both the Conservation Corridor and the suburban areas. The Corridor Management Plan is being revised. The development of Riverside Park including a Visitors' Pavilion on degraded land near the river bank is in advanced planning stages. Sensitively designed public access tracks will fan out from this centre which is intended to inform and educate the community about local heritage matters, principally to do with indigenous culture and natural environment.

Ginninderry Conservation Trust 'scrape' monitoring – John Fitz Gerald

Since 2020, FOG has worked with the Ginninderry Conservation Trust (GCT) on assessing this grassland revegetation project. The task involves monitoring 2 scrape plots and an external control plot, plus 10 transects across the scrape. This year FOG assisted staff and volunteers from GCT on 23 October and 02 November. Analysis of results and report updating is under way. The grassland continues to mature with reasonable diversity and good open-tussock structure, but invasive species are always needing to be managed. Planning is underway to create a second scrape nearby, and it could be installed in 2024. It will also be monitored.

Hall Cemetery - John Fitz Gerald

FOG ran 4 scheduled work events in the woodland around the Cemetery during 2023, a total of 65 hours of effort. The challenge continues to be controlling a significant area, thickly vegetated in places, with just this level of input, but some high-quality areas around the grassy woodland are the result of years of our volunteer effort. FOG continues to discuss management problems (including a new management agreement due soon) and future options with Canberra Memorial Parks and Conservation Research staff.



FOG work party with some of their weed haul from the woodland at Hall Cemetery ACT, March 2023. Photo – Andrew Zelnik

National Lands – Jamie Pittock and John Fitz Gerald

FOG leads volunteer efforts to conserve the high conservation value grassy ecosystems on national lands under an environmental care agreement (commenced in 2009) with the National Capital Authority. Our work is focused on conserving the 23-hectare [Yarramundi Reach grasslands](#) and the 52-hectare [Gurubung Dhaura \(Stirling Park\)](#) grassy woodlands (and associated lands) in the ACT. In addition, FOG leads conservation of the 8-hectare [Blue Gum Point](#) urban park land contiguous to Gurubung Dhaura.

In 2023, FOG held 11 work parties on these lands attended by 113 volunteers contributing 373 hours of volunteer work. In addition, the co-ordinators have been involved in discussing management, site visiting with NCA friends and their contractor, mapping the weeds that they haven't got around to controlling and working with fire teams. Since 2009, FOG has held 176 work parties attended by 2,118 volunteers contributing 8,428 hours of volunteer work.

Conservation at Yarramundi Reach remains challenging as extensive build-up of grass biomass has constrained access for weed control. Control burning has been limited by weather and resources, and opportunities to coordinate burning with weed control have been missed.

More progress in controlling weeds and maintaining restoration plantings is evident at Gurubung Dhaura. Further NCA investment in restoration plantings is planned for 2024. Work at Blue Gum Point will benefit from a FY24 ACT Environment Grant of \$29,185. Wet weather has delayed major woody weed control, that is now scheduled for early 2024. A FOG-proposed and ACT Government-managed control burn at Blue Gum Point in May 2023 has rejuvenated wildflower populations at this site.

In 2024, FOG plans to prepare a decade long plan for government agencies to invest in full restoration of these high conservation sites.

Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve – *Margaret Ning*

While we did not have a FOG presence at Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve in 2023, we were pleased to hear from Melinda Kent, Secretary - Cooma Landcare, that in late 2023 “Thanks to funding organised by Upper Snowy Landcare Network the signage and fencing at the reserve recently received a much needed upgrade. The sturdy metal fencing gives the reserve entrance a sense of importance and significance. The signage tells the story of Old Cooma Common Grassland Reserve from grazing days till the resurrection of the grassland by local members of FOG and highlights the importance of this threatened ecological community.”

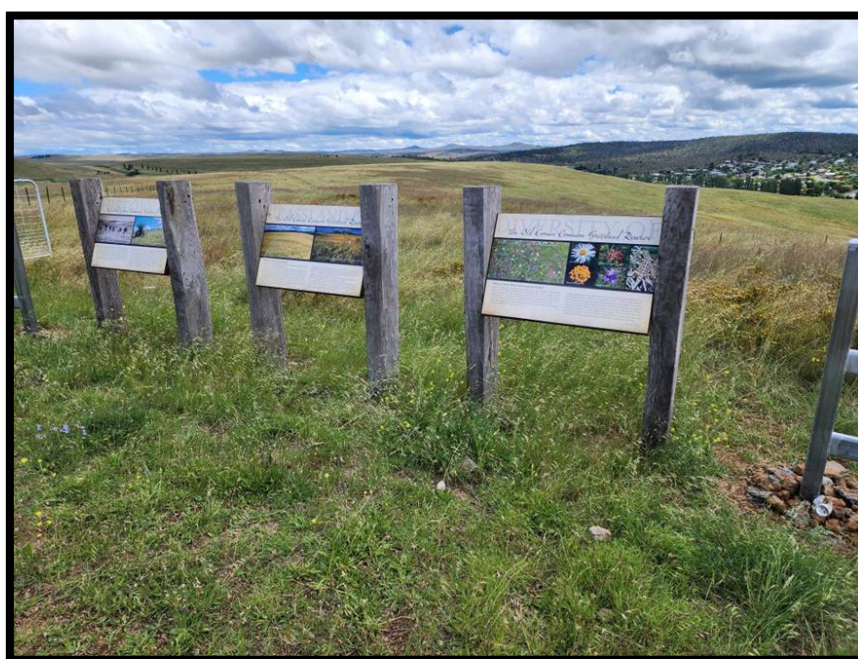


Photo by Melinda Kent, Secretary - Cooma Landcare

‘Scottsdale’ Monitoring – *Linda Spinaze*

At the beginning of the day (9 November 2023) we wondered whether this was such a good idea. The weather forecast had included showers in the Bredbo region, although only two days previously those showers were promising only 1mm of rain. But by Thursday morning they had grown to 15mm. However, we decided to push on because organising another date within a reasonable timeframe at this time of the year was too hard. So seven FOG volunteers gathered at Scottsdale, near Bredbo, at the earlier hour of 9.00am, and (as planned) we had finished our coffees and briefings from the experienced Scottsdale botanists, and were in the high-vehicles, heading for our sites, at 9.35am.

While we enjoyed our coffee, we learnt that we would be performing a new monitoring technique from senior Bush Heritage botanist, David Tierny, and Scottsdale botanical expert Kim Jarvis. The aim is now to monitor the condition and response of the vegetation to Bush Heritage’s (BHA) land management. Specific methods have been developed by BHA senior ecologists and comprise commonly used methods to document the structure and composition of the vegetation at ground, mid-storey, and canopy levels. Different components are repeated at different intervals, e.g. ground layer measurements are done frequently whereas the canopy measurements only need to be repeated every 5 years.

At the first site we shared the monitoring and learning. It took a full 2 ½ hours to cover all the monitoring criteria that was needed. That left us just enough time to set up the next two sites, and then retreat to the woolshed for an excellent lunch, which Bush Heritage kindly provided.

After lunch, we split into our 2 groups again, and managed to complete a further three sites. The monitoring was more complicated than previously, with more parameters needing to be assessed, so it took a much longer time than I expected. It was 5.00pm as we headed back to the woolshed, feeling pleased with ourselves with a job well done.

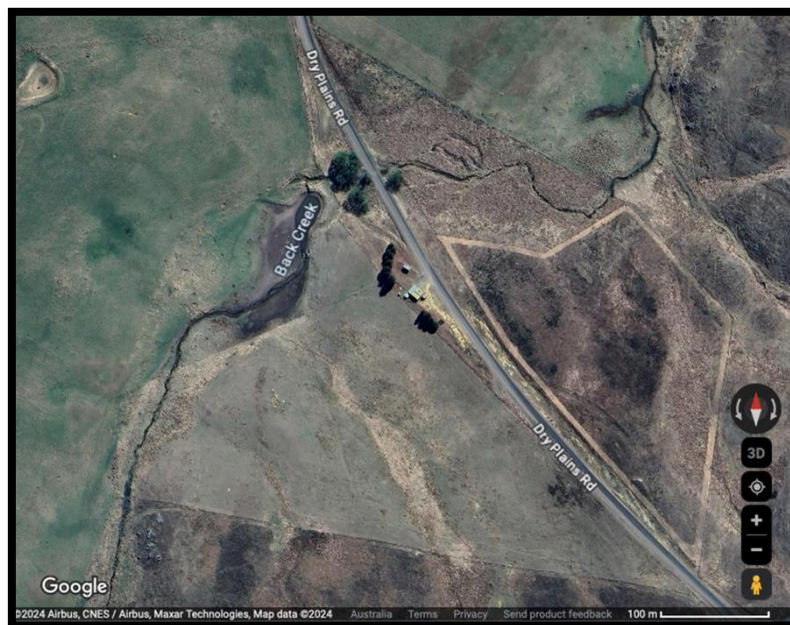
Fortunately for us, apart from some slight sprinkles, the rain held off, and as we returned to Canberra, we admired the high scudding clouds in the late afternoon light.

Attendees were Margaret Ning, Andrew Zelnik, Elane Guarricino, Paul Jennings, Margaret Strong, Jenny Horsfield and me, Linda Spinaze.

Top Hut Travelling Stock Reserve – Margaret Ning

Top Hut Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR), between Cooma and Adaminaby, is a 15-hectare high-conservation grassland on which FOG has had a five-year lease since July 2020.

In 2023, FOG held seven work parties at Top Hut (January, March, May, September, November and two in December). Since the ecological burn in August 2022 to reduce the excessive biomass in the southern paddock and enhance the Monaro Grassland Earless Dragon habitat, the biomass had built up again (pesky La Niñas!), and a 12-day sheep grazing event was arranged for the site from 17 to 29 April. It resulted in very satisfactory biomass reduction, although it had thickened up again significantly by the end of 2023. In September the perimeter of the northern paddock was mowed in preparation for an ecological burn to be done there, but unfortunately the right conditions never eventuated. The mown perimeter of the northern paddock has been preserved on Google Maps (see image below).



In 2023 we continued to spray our priority weeds (Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), Cats Ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), Salsify (*Tragopogon dubius*), Smooth Hawksbeard (*Crepis capillaris*), Yorkshire Fog Grass (*Holcus lanatus*), Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) with occasional small patches of St Johns Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), Sulphur Cinquefoil (*Potentilla recta*) and Broom when encountered. Other work party tasks included hand pulling and bagging some weeds where it was more effective than spraying.

Donations through the FOG public fund for Top Hut were used to pay for two days' spraying by a bush regen sprayer in 2023, and we hope to do a lot more of that in 2024.

In spring/summer 2023 the site was again an amazing wash of yellow, as Billy Button (*Craspedia variabilis*), Australian Buttercup (*Ranunculus lappaceus*), Yam Daisy (*Microseris lanceolata*), Small Snake Orchid (*Diuris subalpina*) and two Leptorhynchos species (*L. squamatus*) and (*L. elongatus*) all took their turns to light it up.

Some monitoring was done during the year, although mostly we are still trying to get a feel for what is happening on the site, and when the timing is best to target things. Andrew GPSed wombat burrows during the year, and over 40 were recorded for the southern paddock. At least they are more visible these days, and no longer a hazard to volunteers' ankles, etc. And right at the end of the year, Emily was rewarded with a Monaro Grassland Earless Dragon sighting.



Monaro Grassland Earless Dragon. Photo - Emily Sutcliffe

A huge thank you goes to all our volunteers, 13 different FOG members, three of whom were able to attend all seven work parties in 2023, to our bush regen sprayer; and finally, to the generous donors to the FOG public fund who nominated Top Hut to receive their donation.

We would love to welcome you to our site, whether to see it at its peak in spring/summer, or to join in our work parties. It is actually possible to do both!

FOG Supported Projects Sub-Committee report - *Andrew Zelnik*

In 2023 the FOG Supported Projects (FSP) Sub-Committee conducted its seventh annual round of Grassy Ecosystem Grants (GEG), as before, offering grants of \$500 to \$1,500 each to promote FOG's objectives and priorities in relation to the understanding, conservation, and management of native grassy ecosystems. This year, yet again aided by further widening of our external advertising net, we were pleased to receive seven applications for grants totalling \$9,843 (six for \$1,500, one for \$843). As in previous years, this was well in excess of our \$5,000 annual budget maximum. They involved a mix of on-ground projects, education, and research - five from Victoria (mostly via the Landcare network), one from NSW, and one from Queensland. Again, these applications appeared to be solely from external advertising i.e. none from internal advertising to the regular FOG mailing list.

This year the decision-making process was a bit trickier as there was considerable variation in individual assessor rankings which required quite a bit of follow up with applicants to resolve. This, along with my own health issues in the latter half of 2023, delayed our final recommendations to FOG's Committee. Ultimately the Committee approved our recommendation of grant offers (\$1,500 each) to four applicants with all to be funded from the Public Fund. Of the four successful applicants three have accepted our formal offers and one declined after they reviewed their work priorities and resourcing. Details of the awarded grant projects will be provided in the FOG newsletter.

Under the FSP policy applications for FSP grants can also be made on an ad hoc basis at any time in the calendar year. One such application was submitted by Friends of Tuggeranong Hill ParkCare Group after the advertised GEG round closing date and was successful. It was \$1500 to assist with the graphic design and online publication of the ACT Weeds Manual targeted at new and experienced ACT environmental volunteers – see FOG newsletter Jan-Feb 2024 issue. Committee approved funding of this from the FOG Publications Account. Thanks go to Sarah Sharp for alerting us and her associated assistance.

At financial year end there were only three grant projects remaining to be acquitted - one from 2021 and two from 2022. In 2023 FOG paid out \$4,500 to grantees – \$1,500 (for 2022) from the Public Fund and \$3,000 (\$1,500 each for 2019 and 2023) from the Publications Account. At year end the current liability for grant payments, all to come from the Public Fund, was \$6,000 comprising \$4,500 for the three 2023 grants and \$1,500 for a 2022 grant. Grants information can be accessed via the Grants webpage <http://www.fog.org.au/supportedprojects.htm>.

Finally, thank you to the following people: my FSP Sub-committee colleagues, Ken Hodgkinson, Alice Hathorn and David Johnson, for again providing assistance with assessing the formal round of 2023 applications; Helen Sims for her liaison and presentation of FSP progress reports at Committee meetings; Paul Archer and the rest of the newsletter team for supporting and publishing FSP updates and grant related articles and news items; and to our members and other donors for their generous donations to the Public Fund which form the core of these grants.



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