

# Annual Report 2021 / 2022



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*Biolinks Alliance is proud to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the places where we live and work. We recognise the enduring relationship they have with their lands and water, and we pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging.*

# Our story

Biolinks Alliance was formed in 2010 by Central Victorian community conservation groups who recognised that halting environmental and species decline would require large-scale landscape restoration. This scale of work would require coordinated effort and knowledge as well as innovative approaches. Twelve years on, we build connections

through our Local to Landscape method, develop education and resources, and host symposiums to support a network of 20 member Landcare and environment groups, representing over 2000+ landholders, working between the Grampians across to the Australian Alps, and from the Dividing Ranges to the Murray River.



## Our vision

Our vision for change is presented in our “Passage to the Future” document that sets out our 2019-2022 goal and the six objectives that are key for building landscape-level conservation.



## Our mission

To support, coordinate and amplify community efforts to repair regional ecosystems at a landscape scale.



## Knowledge and Networking

To enable community conservation groups, First Nations groups and landholders to readily access and share up-to-date information about effective ecological restoration practice



## Brokering

To broker support from diverse sources, including urban dwellers, to enable rural land stewards and First Nations Peoples to undertake biodiversity conservation



## Landscape Projects

To refine, apply and review our unique “Local to Landscape” conservation planning process and to fund and deliver at least two pilot projects using this process



## Partnerships

Develop at least six partnerships between member groups and other not-for-profit environmental organisations, universities and government agencies, including two partnerships with First Nations Groups



## Advocacy

To establish Biolinks Alliance as a recognised and respected advocate on behalf of its member networks, regarding environmental management and ecological restoration policy and resourcing



## Organisational Capacity

To be an effective and efficient network organisation undertaking best practices in governance, communications, human resources, First Nations People engagement and adaptive management



## Message from the Chair

### Welcome to the 2021-2022 Annual Report of the Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance.

I joined the Alliance board in early 2021 and took on the role of Chair at last year's AGM. Although I was already familiar with the work of the Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance through my longstanding involvement with Connecting Country, an Alliance Member organisation, joining the Board and taking on the role of Chair has been a great opportunity for me to deepen my understanding of the work of the Alliance and the value of its role.

Having volunteered and worked for conservation organisations both large and small, it is clear to me that the Alliance occupies an important Goldilocks position – not too small or local to develop and implement a vision for landscape restoration at scale, but not so big either that we lose sight of the importance of local efforts and on the ground projects.

As mentioned in our director Sophie's report, a significant milestone this year was securing substantial three year support from the Potter Foundation. This support together with the much appreciated support from other trusts and foundations and donors means that it will assist us to grow our capacity and impact. We look forward to continuing the collaboration with all of our supporters, and thank each of them for investing in our vision.

As you will see from this Annual Report, the past year has been a busy one, with the hard work of the staff team in planning and developing a range of on the ground projects very evident. The Board and I thank Sophie and the staff team for all of their hard work.

Thank you to my fellow Board members who not only attend diligently to making sure Biolinks is a well run and financially sustainable organisation, but also enthusiastically contribute to discussion and debate about the organisation's strategy and purpose. Penny Algar stepped down from the Board during the course of the year – thanks to Penny for her service on the Biolinks board over several years.

The year ahead promises to be an exciting one for the Alliance. Our staff team and the range of activities continues to grow, and we look forward to broadening and deepening our engagement with and support for Alliance members and communities across Central Victoria who share our "together we can" vision for ecosystem repair and restoration across the region.



## Executive Director's report

**It's been a year of expanding our reach and capabilities - most exciting times. We appointed our first full time ecologist, Chris Pocknee, a recent PhD graduate from University of Queensland. We are super excited to have Chris's animal ecology expertise in the team.**

Our flagship network and knowledge sharing event, our Symposium was a hybrid online and in person event. This year's topic explored how to improve the hydrological function of landscapes, something that has been lost in many places. It attracted excellent speakers and discussion, providing a real contribution to agenda setting and know how for process conservation.

Our pilot Landscape projects continued to take shape and gather momentum, demonstrating new approaches to ecological restoration, building partnerships and empowering interested community members to learn and take action. With the Heathcote community we expanded the Large Old Tree program and had a breakthrough with the Spring Plains Watershed Repair Project with the development of a partnership agreement with Parks Victoria and securing the myriad of project works approvals the innovative restoration methods require us to have. The Greenhill to Black Hill biolink went from planning to doing, with the undertaking of hydrological and floodplain rehabilitation for a stretch of Snipes Creek.

Raising the funding required to do our work continues to be a whole of organisation effort. We continue to rely on philanthropy, with Australia lagging on the policy and government investment for collaborative large landscape conservation. This year was the first year of the Alliance having substantial funding to develop our core organisational capacity, with funding from the Ian Potter Foundation, The Ross Trust and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust for the Alliance's development in play. We are extremely grateful to these organisations for being prepared to fund core organisational capacity and backing our approach of scaling-up ecosystem restoration from the bottom up. This funding, along with the ongoing all important support of our treasured private donors, has enabled us this year to implement more efficient project accounting systems and a more sophisticated stakeholder database system. Both will greatly enhance our future operations.

None of this would be possible without our talented and dedicated staff, Board members and contractors who we work closely with. They constantly go over and beyond their specific jobs and their pay rates and do so with ample generosity of spirit and good humour. There is no doubt that the demands on staff and the Board in a growing not for profit organisation are very substantial. I extend my deepest thanks to them all for making the past year the success it has been.



## Our Approach

The Biolinks Alliance's Local to Landscape planning approach brings together members of a community, including landholders, Landcare and community conservation groups, other non-government and government organisations, to agree on the priority actions needed to tackle the community's large-scale landscape issues, creating a 'conservation investment prospectus'.

Through this collaborative approach, Biolinks Alliance draws on the latest science, experience, skills and

shared learning to develop partnerships and an inclusive plan for the future. The Local to Landscape approach supports each plan with innovative pilot programs, online science based resources, education, and consultancy that helps build capacity for volunteers and community groups, empowering them to take ownership and lead large-scale landscape restoration

*Below: Our pilot projects include the broader community in local ecosystem restoration efforts. Kyneton Primary School children at a planting day at Snipes Creek. Photo Andrew Craig.*

*Biolinks Alliance has a unique role as a partnership and capacity building organisation that ensures that the significant momentum there is for community-driven conservation on public and private land in central Victoria is supported, coordinated and amplified*

*Sophie Bickford - Executive Director Biolinks, Alliance*





# Knowledge and Networking

## 2021 Biolinks Alliance Symposium: Leaky Landscapes

Project manager: Sasha Dobson

Climate proofing our environment is essential to helping biodiversity adapt to climate change, but how to do this is a key question. This year's Symposium we explored the concepts and practices of 'functional approaches' to restoring landscapes, specifically in relation to making soils and landscapes hold water better so that it is more available for both nature and farming – making both more resilient to more extreme climate events.

The program looked at practical approaches to improving soil health and techniques for fixing desertified landscapes, with online talks from 13 expert speakers including the doyen of landscape functional analysis, David Tongway as well as Prof. David Eldridge, Dr Jon Fawcett and Prof. David Watson. The virtual component of the Symposium was attended by 95 people.

The online symposium was followed by a successful field day where over 70 people joined us to visit a trial forest repair project undertaken by Parks Victoria at Pilchers Bridge and Holy Goat, an exemplary farm and cheese making business that combines nature conservation, improvement of soil health and production to amazing effect.

The Symposium shifted over 65% of participant's thinking on what type of actions we should be focusing our conversation efforts on with comments like 'Managing leaky landscapes must be a priority' and 'We need to be braver and think harder, like David Tongway says revegetation should not be the first step'. Others (53%) took from it practices that could be applied with effect in their area including ecological thinning, in-stream rehabilitation techniques like leaky weirs and the use of brush mounds to slow the movement of water.

The talks from the events are now accessible on our online Knowledge Hub – we continue to share them through our newsletters, and they have received over 500 views since the event.

*"The symposium has given me an impetus to act on the ideas, knowing that it is being trialed and used elsewhere"*

*Symposium attendee*

*Below: Jon Fawcett, Hydrogeologist, speaking at Pilchers Bridge on the Leaky Landscape Field Day held in April this year.*





# Landscape Project

## Heathcote Local to Landscape

Project Managers: Cameron O'Mara and Paul Foreman

The goal of this project is to bring together the local community to foster large scale landscape restoration actions within the Heathcote area.

We have seen significant milestones over the last 12 months with the accumulation of inspired local landholders coalescing into a new Steering Committee that will help focus and guide the progress of landscape and conservation management in Heathcote. With a locally-driven Committee, we will ensure that any projects align with the priorities of local community members.

One significant goal in the region is the conservation of large old trees, an icon for the landscape as well as crucial habitat and food source for many at-risk species such as the Swift Parrot and arboreal species like the Brush-Tailed Phascogale. Many landholders are proud of these trees on their property and are enthusiastic to hear about the animals that rely on them. We have applied for funding to implement actions around large old trees on private property, such as fencing, revegetation, and wildlife monitoring as the next stage of this work. We also attended Heathcote primary School in June to inspire the next generation about the importance of these trees. The students got involved by drawing pastel portraits of a large old tree on their school grounds, and we also measured the trees and found them to be over 250 years old!

The Heathcote Large Old Trees field day was held in May of 2022. This day was structured as a walk and talk workshop around a property in Redesdale along the Campaspe River. Twenty six locals gathered for the event to learn from Biolinks Alliance's Ecologist Paul Foreman how to manage the landscape to support these trees, and the benefits that they can bring to local wildlife.

### Key Achievements in 2021/22 Financial Year

- Development of a Steering Committee for the Heathcote Local to Landscape Project
- Educational Program on Large Old Trees delivered to Heathcote Primary school
- Large Old Trees field day presented to locals in Redesdale

*Below clockwise: Large old tree workshop participants at stone jug creek discussing waterway health and red gum recruitment. Photo: Ellie McKenna. Students at Heathcote Primary enjoying the art of illustrating Large Old Trees as well as the science of calculating the trees age. Photos: Sasha Dobson*





## Heathcote Local to Landscape

### Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project

Project Manager: Cameron O'Mara

The 'Spring Plains Watershed Repair' project is a landscape-scale restoration pilot project that targets a local hotspot for threatened woodland birds like the Swift Parrot in the Heathcote area, and aims to repair landscape health and build resilience to climate change by scaling-up measures like ecological thinning that help make the landscape more absorbent and productive again.

We have made significant progress at Spring Plains in the past 12 months. We have worked hard to secure funding and meet all criteria for required approvals. In order for us to proceed with the projects, approvals were required through the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Parks Victoria, Goulburn Murray Water, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Taungurung Land and Water Council and City of Greater Bendigo. Now that all the applications are coming to a close, Biolinks are well placed to enable other organisations or community groups to develop and apply for their own project and can act as advisors on how to navigate the process effectively. Through developing these partnerships we hope to enable more ecological restoration projects such as this one across Central Victoria. With the decline in species we are currently witnessing, drastic action needs to occur as soon as possible to buffer against worsening climate conditions and shrinking habitat availability.

In order to demonstrate and understand the impact of this project we have designed a thorough ecological outcomes monitoring program. Receiving the Volunteer Innovation fund of \$50,000 through Parks Victoria has allowed us to significantly expand the monitoring program to engage the local community for participation in ecological studies, allowing us to increase monitoring to include: reptile surveys, pollinator surveys, spotlighting surveys, baited camera trapping, kangaroo population surveys, kangaroo grazing pressure surveys, kangaroo highway camera trapping and bird assemblage baseline surveys. This monitoring is critical for building the case for the wider adoption of

the management practice in this project. Presently there are vast amounts of spending on the management of threatened species and management of invasive species but little is focused on restoring ecological function to degraded habitat.

Working with CDM Smith environmental and water experts, we also completed the soils baseline surveys at the site which will be conducted again in the years after works are completed. Their crew conducted a wide range of tests to determine everything from how porous the soil is to soil chemistry and structure.

#### Key Achievements in 2021/22 Financial Year

- \$50,000 Volunteer Innovation Fund granted to Biolinks Alliance, to support monitoring and citizen science activities
- Approvals from 90% of all relevant authorities granted for ecological restoration works at Spring Plains
- Ecological monitoring framework designed

*Next page clockwise: CDM Smith conducting soil water infiltration test, the rate that the water in the talsma tube drops indicated how well the soil drains. The last living Large Old Grey box E. microcarpa, in Spring Plains NCR granting us a window into the area's past set against a background of dysfunctional forest. Photos: Cameron O'Mara*





# Landscape Project

## Local to Landscape Greenhill to Black Hill Biolink

Project Manager: Kara Finlay

The Greenhill to Black Hill project is a collaborative endeavor to protect, restore and reconnect the woodland and river ecosystems between Greenhill and Black Hill in the Kyneton region on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country, for a healthy and sustainable future for both people and nature.

The Biolink continues to expand in every direction through active projects involving fundraising, on-ground works, further expansion and knowledge sharing. We now have 24 properties involved, spanning over 3000 hectares and a wait list of interested landholders wanting to be involved.

### Greenhill to Black Hill Conservation Values

- 1 **Springs and Soaks** Supporting Bibron's Toadlet and the Growling Grass Frog
- 2 **Large Old Trees** Supporting Koalas and Phascogales
- 3 **Rivers and Creeks** Platypus and riparian health
- 4 **Grasslands** Supporting Legless Lizard and wildflowers
- 5 **Cultural Vitality** Strengthening partnerships with Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung clans, inclusive of whole community
- 6 **Visionary Land Management** Ecological farming and regenerative agriculture

### Key Achievements in 2021/22 Financial Year

- 24 private properties involved in the Greenhill to Black Hill Biolink with increased awareness and interest in the project by landholders
- Snipes Creek Pilot Project plan developed, and restoration works commenced
- Biolinks Alliance granted funding through the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Landcare grants enabling consultation on Springs and Soaks by Wetland Ecologist Damien Cook
- Community engaged to support the program through the gifting of exceptional works of art for the Treasures of this Land fund raising project
- Engagement with Kyneton Primary School to increase awareness of the conservation values of the region and inclusion in the legacy time capsule project





## Local to Landscape Greenhill to Black Hill Biolink

### Snipes Creek Pilot Project

Project Manager: Kara Finlay

Increasing the health of rivers and creeks so that once again platypus are sighted in the Campaspe River is one of the priority conservation values identified by landholders. Biolinks Alliance was awarded funds from the Environmental Protection Agency to restore the health of Snipes Creek and the river system.

A restoration plan was developed in consultation with a field of experts in engineering, water ecology and biodiversity, encompassing river system hydrology works and aquatic and terrestrial plantings.

In early 2022 the rehabilitation project began in earnest with woody and noxious weed management, along with the implementation of rock chutes creating a leaky weir system. This system will slow water flow in the creek, helping to restore natural processes. This is the first of the on-ground works scheduled for 2022.

*Below clockwise: First site meeting at Snipes Creek, and expert assistance with the monitoring of aquatic invertebrates. Installation of a rock chute creating a leaky weir at Snipes Creek. Reviewing Snipes Creek before restoration works commence. Photos: Kara Finlay*





## Local to Landscape Greenhill to Black Hill Biolink

### Springs and Soaks

Project Manager: Kara Finlay

Springs and Soaks are another of the priority conservation targets of the Project and they have been found on every property surveyed within the Greenhill to Black Hill Biolink.

Through the Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Landcare grant we were able to invite revered wetland ecologist Damien Cook from the Wetland Revival Trust to visit, assess and provide detailed reports for three springs and soaks sites within the Biolink to help us understand how best to preserve and enhance them. A live online event hosting a conversation between Damien and Biolinks Alliance's Ecologist Paul Foreman was held for the community and public. This event was well received and attended, helping to raise the conservation literacy around the importance of Springs and Soaks in the environment.



*Above: A Latham's Snipe found at the Campaspe river by Wetland Ecologist Damien Cook. Campaspe River Photo: Sam Slicer*





# Landscape Project



## Glideways in the Melbourne Ark - Kangaroo Creek Local to Landscape

Project Managers: Kara Finlay & Chris Pocknee

Glideways in the Melbourne Ark, an icon species and landscape approach to conserve gliding possum species in the wild, is bringing the knowledge, support and funding to local conservation efforts to maximise their impact and to build a comprehensive conservation strategy for gliding possums.

This year we continued to focus on the Kangaroo Creek pilot restoration project, improving habitat of an important climate refuge for Greater Gliders. The violent storms of June 2021 badly affected the Macedon area, causing many of the larger den trees they rely on to fall. In response we prioritised the installation of nest boxes for Greater Gliders as well as for smaller resident possums, so as to ensure their numbers remain high to help alleviate the predatory pressures of Powerful Owls on young Greater Gliders.

Also, this year we held a successful crowdfunding fundraising campaign for the Kangaroo Creek habitat repair work, raising \$29,500 that will greatly assist us to continue to expand habitat works along the creek line.

Another significant outcome this year was the development of a partnership to deliver the planned protection works along Kangaroo Creek with the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA). Alignment with their Healthy Coliban project is enabling the CMA to fund the fencing and revegetation of watercourses in the project area. Chris Pocknee, our

new ecologist, is designing a monitoring program for the project to ensure we can take the lessons from this project to others being developed through Glideways in the Melbourne Ark.

### Key Achievements in 2021/22 Financial Year

- Installation of nest boxes in Kangaroo Creek for Greater Gliders and smaller possums
- Crowd funding of \$29,500 to support future on-ground works and nest boxes
- Partnership with North Central CMA funding fencing and revegetation works along watercourses
- The development and implementation of a monitoring program

*Below: Installation of nest boxes at Kangaroo Creek. A Greater Glider  
Photos: Matt Wright*

*Next page clockwise: Local landholders making nest boxes for smaller possums along the Kangaroo Creek. Installation day at Kangaroo Creek. Tree climbers installing Greater Glider nest boxes in forest that lost many large old trees and hollows in the June 2021 storms, along Kangaroo Creek. Photos Kara Finlay*







# Our Alliance

## Biolinks Alliance member groups

Biolinks Alliance now has an impressive line-up of 20 member groups, spread across central Victoria from the Grampians to Benalla and from Mt Macedon to the Murray. Our members include 8 Landcare Networks representing more than 92 local Landcare groups; 8 Conservation Management Networks made up of

well over 70 member organisations; and two regional community conservation organisations. We estimate the combined membership to be, conservatively, more than 2000 landholders and local volunteer conservation practitioners.

- 1 Project Platypus** is a community-based Landcare Network made up of 11 landcare groups working in the Upper Wimmera Catchment. Their revegetation, habitat protection, invasive plant and animal control and community engagement events are building the Grampians to Pyrenees Biolink.
- 2 The Loddon Plains Landcare Network (LPLN)** supports more than 17 groups and 300 land managers, who are together responsible for about 300,000 ha of private land; as well as groups working on public land management with Parks Victoria and DELWP. LPLN is developing a landscape scale connectivity project, GOANNA, built on biolink projects and raising community awareness about the importance of biodiversity in an agricultural landscape.
- 3** Six local Landcare Groups and the Mid-Loddon Conservation Management Network combine to make the **Mid-Loddon Landcare Network**. Covering an area of over 95,000ha, the network is creating linkages from the central Victorian Box-Ironbark Forest across to the Loddon River. In Box-Ironbark country around Shelbourne they undertake habitat restoration and conservation works on farms, as well as on public land. They are leading the Save our Bush Stone Curlews Project.
- 4 Upper Campaspe Landcare Network** supports 16 landcare groups in the Kyneton region. Their member groups are working together to protect, restore and link habitat for the precious wildlife in the region.
- 5 Moorabool Landcare Network** supports and resources 12 landcare groups and 5 Friends groups across the Shire of Moorabool. They are building biolinks to connect the Wombat Forest with the Brisbane Ranges.
- 6 South West Goulburn Landcare Network** is an alliance between 8 Landcare Groups operating in the catchments running from the Great Dividing Range to the Goulburn River near Seymour. Their works include building the Piper Biolink.
- 7 The Upper Goulburn Landcare Network** supports 18 member groups. Their varied projects include community wildlife monitoring, schools programs, farm planning, co-ordinated fox control and post-Black Saturday habitat rehabilitation.
- 8 Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network** supports the Newham and District Landcare Group, Deep Creek Landcare Group, and the Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group - working with the many new, absentee, small-acreage landholders in the region.
- 9 Kara Kara Conservation Management Network (CMN)** comprises local Landcare, conservation and environment groups, State Government agencies and interested local community members. Kara Kara is dedicated to protecting and enhancing habitat through the creation and maintenance of well-managed biolinks across 2000 km<sup>2</sup> of Victoria's western goldfields; between St Arnaud and Moonambel, and from Morrl Morrl to the Avoca River.
- 10 Connecting Country** is a community-based organisation that operates at a landscape scale to increase, enhance and restore biodiversity across the Mount Alexander Shire and surrounds in Central Victoria. It works to support the 30 local landcare and Friends groups in the district.
- 11 Whroo Goldfields Conservation Management Network** works on the reserves and private land within the Box-Ironbark region of the Goulburn Broken catchment. They operate a coordinated fox control program in the area surrounding Puckapunyal Army Base and have installed over 1000 nest boxes for Phascogales and Sugar Gliders.

## Biolinks Alliance member groups (cont.)

- 12 **The Strathbogie Ranges Conservation Management Network** partners with any group working on biodiversity conservation in the Strathbogie Ranges, including landcare, conservation and environment groups, landholders, and Government Agencies. The Network tackles all sorts of conservation, biodiversity and land management issues, but is focusing on the most threatened ecosystems in the Ranges, including precious wetlands (spring, soaks & bogs), rocky outcrops and high conservation value forests.
- 13 **Wedderburn Conservation Management Network**, made up of individuals and both public and private land managers, promotes profitable, productive, and sustainable human enterprises while conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Wedderburn area. Projects include Mallee Fowl protection, weed control and Grassy Woodlands revegetation.
- 14 **Ballarat Environment Network** is an umbrella organisation for the many environment and conservation-focused groups in the Ballarat region. They manage 50 public reserves covering over 800 hectares for their biodiversity and conservation values, mostly in partnership with local groups.
- 15 **Jacksons Creek EcoNetwork** links 12 Landcare, friends groups and volunteers who care for the environment along Jacksons Creek and its tributaries, including Riddells Creek, from Keilor, through Sunbury and Riddells Creek, to Mt Macedon.
- 16 **Federation of Environment and Horticulture for Macedon Ranges** acts as an umbrella group for Environmental and Horticultural groups to meet and plan projects and events that benefit the environment, and passive enjoyment of the Macedon Ranges
- 17 **Wombat Forestcare** is a community group dedicated to protecting and enhancing the natural ecosystems of the Wombat Forest and surrounding areas, which support many unique and threatened species. Their activities have a strong focus on community involvement, education and wildlife surveys.
- 18 **Bendigo and District Environment Council** are determined environmental advocates. They have worked extensively with the City of Greater Bendigo on a range of policies and planning schemes, and have maintained a constant public profile.
- 19 Established in 2022 from the Heathcote Local to Landscape project **Heathcote Local to Landscape Steering Committee** is establishing how it best organises and works to lead greater ecosystem repair in the Heathcote region.
- 20 The **Greenhill to Black Hill community** comprises of landholders aiming to preserve and improve the landscape for threatened species in the Kyneton region. They advocate strongly for the health of the Campaspe River, visionary land management and ecological connectivity for species like the Brush-Tailed Phascogale and Koala, once common in the region.



## Our People

Our organisation is made up of passionate people with a desire to help restore the Central Victorian Landscape. With extensive conservation and business experience our people are the foundation for effecting change.

## Our Board



### Sophie Bickford - Executive Director

Dr Sophie Bickford is a conservation ecologist deeply motivated to apply her expertise to real world ecological-social problems. After completing her PhD at The University of Adelaide, Sophie spent 7 years researching distribution patterns of biodiversity at the CSIRO Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research. She was appointed a Lecturer in Biogeography at Monash University in 2007. Sophie worked for Carbon Planet Pty Ltd as their Chief Scientist, developing methodologies for conserving ecological-services using climate (carbon) and biodiversity markets. She has been Executive Director of Biolinks Alliance since 2010.



### Brendan Sydes - Chair

Brendan is an environmental lawyer with a background in not-for-profit management, policy advocacy and law reform. He was a principal lawyer and CEO at Environmental Justice Australia from 2005 to 2020. Brendan currently works as a Biodiversity Policy Adviser to the Australian Conservation Foundation and as a legal and policy consultant. He is a Senior Honorary Fellow of the University of Melbourne Law School where he teaches environmental law. Brendan is President of the Committee of Management of Connecting Country, a local landscape restoration program active across Mount Alexander Shire, and a member of the Research and Conservation Committee of Birdlife Australia.



### Jennifer Rolland - Vice Chair

With a PhD in Immunology and a long career in biomedical science research and education, Jennifer values scientific-based knowledge and well-structured research programs to inform optimal strategies for the protection of our natural areas and wildlife. She regularly volunteers for several environment restoration and monitoring projects around the country. With her partner, she enjoys and manages a Trust for Nature-covenanted bush property in Western Victoria.



### Peter Evans - Secretary

Peter is an experienced business manager, consultant and non-executive director working to build sustainably successful organisations. Peter trained as an electronic engineer and holds an MBA and Master of Leadership from Deakin University. He is the Principal of Tunaungana Consulting, Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia and Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

## Our People

### Our Board (cont.)



#### Pat Scanlon - Treasurer

Pat is a qualified chartered accountant who has over 20 years international and Australian experience in financial accounting, reporting, internal controls and professional services. His experience ranges from not for profit organisations, small and medium sized organisations and large organisations both in the public and private sectors. Pat currently works as a senior manager for a consultancy in Melbourne CBD.



#### Gayle Osborne - Member

Gayle is a founding member of Wombat Forestcare Inc., a group established in 2006 for the protection of the environmental values of the Wombat Forest. She is the convenor of Wombat Forestcare, which was instrumental in lobbying the state government for a Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) investigation into a number of state forests in the Wombat and Mt Cole areas.



#### Brian Walters AM SC - Member

Brian is a former barrister and practiced as a silk from 2001-2021. In 1981 he co-founded Wild, Australia's wilderness adventure magazine, and served as a director for 25 years. He was a board member of Liberty Victoria for over ten years, serving as president from 2004-2006. He has worked with many environment groups and in 2017 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia 'for significant service to conservation through environmental protection law, and to human rights advocacy'.

## Our Staff

Through our years of experience our Staff bring many skills in ecological design and principles in conservation, relationship building, project management, facilitation, business development, financial management and systems development. As a small not-for-profit, each valued team member goes above and beyond to build capacity, strengthen relationships, and help Biolinks Alliance achieve its vision.

- Sophie Bickford - Executive Director
- Paul Foreman - Ecologist and Conservation Strategy
- Sasha Dobson - Programs and Operations Manager
- Ellie McKenna - Relationships Manager
- Chris Pocknee - Landscape and Biodiversity Conservation Ecologist
- Cameron O'Mara - Heathcote Local to Landscape Facilitator
- Kara Finlay - Project Coordinator
- Sarah Smith - Administration Officer
- Wanda Millicer - Bookkeeper

*Find out more about our team at [www.biolinksalliance.org.au/our-team](http://www.biolinksalliance.org.au/our-team)*



# Thank You

We couldn't do what we do without the generous support of our donors, including the philanthropic trusts, sponsors, private donors, ambassadors and volunteers who support us financially, talking with people about our work, and by lending a hand. Thank you for helping us so that we could achieve environmental actions that made a difference this year!

## Philanthropic trusts



## Donors

Gayle Osborne • Bill & Carol Holsworth • Brian Snape • The Alf & Meg Steele Fund  
Rana & Alan Fund, TAP Fund • Lindy Shelmerdine • The Isaacson-Davis Fund • Pool of Dreams  
Waterdragon Endowment • The Brian D Newman Foundation for the Environment • Julia Reed & Leon Metzeling  
Penelope & Hilary Roberts • Quercus Fund • Daniel Young • Di Pearton • Denis Gibson & Jeff Appleton  
Jennifer Rolland • Australian Communities Foundation • Lincoln Kern • Mark Frisby • Brian Walters  
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Shirley Saywell • Peter Lockyer • Greer Allen • Thelma G Rosier • John Pyle • Sally A Smith • Lucy Jones  
John Carruthers • Val La May • Helen Lawrence • Benjamin Yap • Ian Darnton-Hill

## Ambassadors

Brian Snape & Doug Humann

## Partners



*"Governments will never ever be able to fund every cause that needs funding. It has to be a community responsibility as well. And, I think everyone has a role to play in giving. However big or small, it doesn't matter. You can't do everything, you can't do nothing, but you can do something. I feel through supporting Biolinks Alliance I can actually make a bigger difference to something that I really care about".*

*Wendy Taylor, Donor*



# Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present the attached CVBA financial report for the financial year ended 30 June 2022

The financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform

## Financial summary for 2021/22

The CVBA reported a surplus of \$69k for the 2021/22 financial year (2020/21-surplus of \$58k), with income of \$552k being offset by expenditure of \$483k.

The main source of income for CVBA came from donations and grants. Other income of \$7.6k was also received.

Income from donations totalled \$127k which included major donations from the Brian D Newman Foundation for the Environment, Brian Snape, Gayle Osborne, the Australian Communities Foundation, Hilary Roberts, Lindy Shelmerdine, The Water Dragon Endowment-Community Impact Foundation and the Issacson Davis Foundation.

Grant income was \$418k comprised of The Ian Potter Foundation \$195k, RE Ross Trust \$100k, Helen Macpherson Trust \$50k, DELWP \$25k, Alf Meg and Steel Fund \$15k, La Trobe University \$23k, Macedon Ranges Shire Council \$10k.

Act 2012 (the Act). This report has been prepared by me in my capacity as a qualified professional accountant. The Board has determined that the Alliance is not a reporting entity.

Major items of expenditure were as follows:

- Salaries and wages (incl. superannuation) of \$302k
- Project Expenses \$75k
- Contractor Expenses of \$73k
- Consulting and Accounting of \$9k
- Fundraising Expenses of \$8k
- Advertising and Marketing of \$7k
- Software & IT of \$5k

Closing funds at 30 June 2022 were \$551k (2021: \$464k) and net assets (total assets less liabilities) totalled \$568k (2021: \$466k).

However, it should be noted that as of 30 June 2022 there was \$324k to be spent in future years on current projects.

At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

*Patrick J. Scanlon*

Pat Scanlon, CA Treasurer



# Profit and Loss

Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance Inc.  
For the year ended 30 June 2022

Account	30 Jun 2022	30 Jun 2021
<b>Trading Income</b>		
Donations	126,990	99,262
Grant Income	417,800	73,300
Interest Income	360	399
Other Revenue	0	150,000
Other Income	7,344	2,579
Cash flow boost	0	26,644
<b>Total Trading Income</b>	<b>552,494</b>	<b>352,184</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Advertising & Marketing	6,552	2,297
Bank Fees	71	24
Catering	2,187	2,034
Consulting & Accounting	8,648	3,970
Contractors - Other	73,365	101,052
Depreciation	2,117	1,635
Donation Expenses	20	6
Employee Entitlements	8,782	2,732
Events	565	2,155
Fundraising Expenses	7,827	2,633
Gifts	35	0
Insurance	1,030	573
Meals & Entertainment	349	32
Motor Vehicle Expenses	140	56
Office Expenses	1,446	24
Postage & Mail	144	158
Printing & Stationery	2,487	535
Project expense	60,285	3,514
Software & IT	4,982	3,505
Staff Amenities	69	0
Staff Mileage	1,842	0
Superannuation	26,678	14,382
Tea Towels For Resale	1,050	0
Training	0	340
Travel - National	1,972	613
Venue & equipment hire	132	0
Wages and Salaries	266,779	151,609
Workcover	3,563	1,129
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>483,118</b>	<b>295,009</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>69,376</b>	<b>57,175</b>



# Balance Sheet

Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance Inc.  
As at 30 June 2022

Account	30 Jun 2022	30 Jun 2021
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Bank</b>		
Expense Account	1,654	1,581
Main Account	100,730	157,685
Savings Account	449,113	304,764
<b>Total Bank</b>	<b>551,498</b>	<b>464,030</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Accounts Receivable	0	2,149
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,149</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Computer Equipment	7,502	3,269
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Computer Equipment	(5,386)	(3,269)
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Office Equipment	(1,500)	(1,500)
Office Equipment	1,500	1,500
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>2,117</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>553,614</b>	<b>466,179</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable	5,791	5,684
PAYG Withholdings Payable	15,327	13,612
Provision for Annual Leave	10,687	3,547
Provision for Leave in Lieu	1,339	968
Superannuation Payable	7,454	0
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>40,599</b>	<b>23,811</b>
<b>Non-current Liabilities</b>		
Provision for Long Service Leave	3,421	2,150
<b>Total Non-current Liabilities</b>	<b>3,421</b>	<b>2,150</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>44,020</b>	<b>25,961</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>509,594</b>	<b>440,218</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Current Year Earnings	69,376	57,175
Retained Earnings	440,218	383,044
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>509,594</b>	<b>440,218</b>



# Independent Auditor's Report

To the members of Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance inc.  
for the year ended 30th June, 2022

## Scope

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of CENTRAL VICTORIAN BIOLINKS ALLIANCE INC., which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June, 2022, the Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the Board's assertion statement.

## Scope

The Board of CENTRAL VICTORIAN BIOLINKS ALLIANCE INC. are responsible for the preparation of the financial report and have determined that the entity is not a reporting entity and that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members.

The Board's responsibility also includes such internal controls as the Board determines are necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Board's responsibility also includes assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable matters relating to going concern, and using the going concern basis for accounting unless the Board intends to liquidate the entity or to cease operations or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error.

In making those risk assessments the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Board's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Board's internal controls.

An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.



## Independent Auditor's Report (cont.)

To the members of Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance inc.  
for the year ended 30th June, 2022

### Qualifications

It is not practical for the entity to maintain an effective system of internal control over Donations and Fund Raising income until their entry in the accounting records. Accordingly my audit in relation to these cash receipts was limited to amounts recorded. Recognition of income in accordance with Note 1(f) is dependent upon a review of the contracts which may relate to the awarding of grants and donations. As it is impracticable for me to review such contracts my audit relies on representations of the Board as to the timing of the recognition of revenue in accordance with this policy

### Audit Opinion

In our opinion, subject to the qualifications noted above, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of CENTRAL VICTORIAN BIOLINKS ALLIANCE INC. as at 30 June 2022, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012.

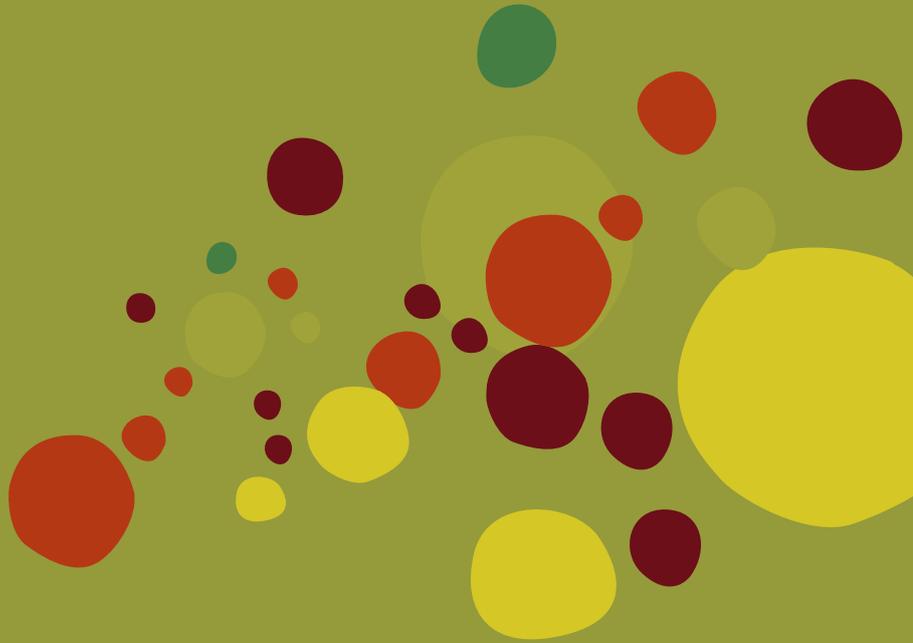
### Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist CENTRAL VICTORIAN BIOLINKS ALLIANCE INC. to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Dated at Lower Plenty: 18 November, 2022

FRED GERARDSON  
Chartered Accountant  
Registered Company Auditor  
Partner

Colville Williams & Co. Pty Ltd  
99 Main Road  
Lower Plenty VIC 3093



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