



**The
Norman
Wettenhall
Foundation**

**THE FIFTH
ANNUAL
REPORT
2001**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2001



In this, the Norman Wettenhall Foundation's fifth year, it is heartening to report that a number of our projects are demonstrating they are making a significant contribution to enhancing the living natural environment.

One of the projects that the Foundation has supported from its outset, the Regent Honeyeater project co-ordinated by Ray Thomas, has won an award for Outstanding Service to the Environment from the United Nations Association of Australia. The trustees consider this project as a model for engaging the resources of a community to achieve a clear environmental goal – in this case restoring habitat across a regional landscape so as a locally endangered species, the Regent Honeyeater, once more gains the ability to move through its territory to breed, feed and survive.

For the trustees, community capacity building is becoming an increasingly important criterion in assessing whether or not a project aimed at saving or restoring habitat will have a long term, positive outcome. There would seem little point in planting tens of thousands of trees and shrubs without putting in place some form of ongoing custodianship of the new landscape. Ray Thomas has secured the Regent Honeyeater's future by enthusing local landholders and over a thousand community volunteers in an ongoing commitment that to date has led to over 150,000 seedlings being planted on farms and roadsides from the Strathbogie ranges to the Goulburn River.

We also support, in particular, those projects that are innovative, add to our knowledge and understanding, and make a long term difference to the status of species of the environment. Another of our longer term projects has involved undertaking flora and fauna assessments of travelling stock routes in southern New South Wales. We have now funded five of these assessments and discovered that the stock route reserves act as rich repositories of native vegetation and wildlife within a region that is down to less than five percent of its remnant vegetation cover. There are encouraging signs that the assessments will help ensure the travelling stock routes are retained, rather than sold off, which at one stage seemed a distinct possibility.

One of our new projects in the last financial year involved a grant to produce a Red Tailed Black Cockatoo Education Kit. The Foundation believes it has a role to play in aiding publication and widespread dissemination of environmental research

and education projects. All too often, it would seem, funds are not available for gathering the conclusions of an important research project together into a publicly accessible package.

Making knowledge accessible was the rationale for funding Birds Australia's live web broadcast filming the nest sites and breeding of a number of endangered species. Another funded project has used more traditional techniques for making information accessible: the James Willis Botanic Archival project now has only three of the original 147 boxes to process.

During the year, the Foundation welcomed a new trustee, Geoff Park, who has extensive hands-on environmental experience, a commitment to innovation and community building – all backed by sound scientific knowledge. Geoff lives in central Victoria and is the Bushcare/ Biodiversity Manager with the North Central Catchment Management Authority.

Since its establishment in 1996 the Norman Wettenhall Foundation has distributed \$238,730. For the financial year 2000/2001, the Foundation made grants of \$46,500 with a commitment of a further \$20,000 to upcoming programs. Total assets continue to grow and were \$1,828,138 as of 30 June, 2001.

Projects funded in the past financial year are summarised in this report, along with updates on the progress of previously monitored projects. The Foundation now requests feedback on a project's progress as a condition of funding.

Donations to help us achieve even more are always gratefully received. All donations to the Norman Wettenhall Foundation are tax deductible.



Gib Wettenhall
Chairman
Norman Wettenhall Foundation

REPORT ON DISTRIBUTIONS

BY THE NORMAN WETTENHALL FOUNDATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2001

BIRDS AUSTRALIA

RED TAILED BLACK COCKATOO EDUCATION KIT, MR. MICHAEL FENDLEY

A grant of \$10,000 was paid towards the Red Tailed Black Cockatoo project to encourage investigation of a threatened species, its status, biology and conservation; to introduce and involve students in the recovery-plan process; and to apply students' theoretical knowledge to practical conservation problems. The kit is a course of study whereby evidence is critically examined and options and interpretations explored. The kit proved to be very popular, but rather than just printing more copies, the Foundation supported the development of a web page to allow a much large number of potential users. (<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/rtbcd/index.html>)

GREENING AUSTRALIA TO UNDERTAKE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS OF THE GUNDAGAI AND NARRANDERA TRAVELLING STOCK RESERVES, Ms. BINDI VANZELLA

A grant of \$13,000 was paid in total to Gundagai and Narrandera Land Protection Board so as to enable an environmental assessment to be undertaken.

BIRDS AUSTRALIA LIVE WEB BROADCAST, Ms. SUSIE GRANT

A grant of \$10,000 was paid to fund the purchase and set up of camera equipment to use for the duration of the Endangered Species Campaign. The website will be set up to include live streaming of the nest site during daylight hours, interactive information on endangered species including audio clips, e-commerce facility for donations, links to Birds Australia site highlighting its major projects and quiz/question/registration mechanism to gather data.

MOLLYULLAH TATONG TREE AND LAND PROTECTION GROUP INC.

FOR THE REGENT HONEYEATER PROJECT, Mr. RAY THOMAS

A grant of \$8,000 was paid towards work being undertaken by Mr. Ray Thomas as co-ordinator for the Regent Honeyeater project. Mr. Thomas is working to restore habitat and to this end has co-ordinated the planting of 28,000 seedlings (now meaning a total of 100,000 by 30 June 2001) on farms and roadside with the assistance of volunteers.

PROGRESS REPORT

ON PROJECTS PREVIOUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE FOUNDATION

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE ARCHIVES PROJECT,

MELBOURNE, VIC – JAMES WILLIS BOTANIC ARCHIVAL PROJECT

The Austehc archivist, Fay Anderson, now only has three of the 147 boxes to process. The system is using an upgraded Austehc Heritage Documentation Management System (HDMS) that allows automated production of a variety of print and electronic guides or finding aids. After the database is complete a draft form will be released to enable extensive proofing and checking. At this point a report on the multimedia potential will be produced.

BIRDS AUSTRALIA, MELBOURNE, VIC

‘BIRDS ON FARMS’ PROJECT

The Birds on Farms survey has been designed to explore the link between farm management, sustainable farming and a healthy bird community. The funds were used to produce a summary booklet to be circulated throughout the farming community. Additional publicity has been received through articles produced in other publications, including *Community Link* magazine (an initiative of the National Australia Bank).

BIRDS AUSTRALIA, MELBOURNE, VIC

‘WINGSPAN’ PROJECT

Since Foundation support of this project, a part-time advertising co-ordinator has been appointed and advertising revenue has increased by 76%. In September 1999 a membership survey confirmed the popularity of (and satisfaction with) the magazine. Birds Australia membership continues to grow at a steady pace, with *Wingspan* the first point of contact for many new members. Most recently the publication won an award for ‘Best Specialist Periodical’ category with the Whitley Book Awards 2000.

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY, QLD

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

‘CONSERVATION PRIORITIES FOR THE WHITE BELLIED SEA EAGLE’ PROJECT

Significant advances have been made with this project since last year, the most significant being able to determine that there is sufficient variation in a sub-set of the samples to warrant additional work. A final analysis should be available shortly.

