



WAMA 2018 AGM CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2018 has been a year of intense activity for WAMA. The WAMA volunteer force has delivered much and can be extremely proud of their achievements.

Highlights of the 2018 include:

- A Melbourne Girls College Site visit and their involvement in WAMA programs.
- Two very successful Nature Play days.
- The WAMA connection with Greening Australia, Jallukar Landcare and the Australian Plant Society – Grampians through the native grasslands seed bank project goes from strength to strength.
- A very successful Open Garden at Grannes and hosting a field visit to Grannes for the Victorian chapter of the Australian Plant Society,
- A highly successful “Where Art Meets Nature” exhibition at Lucy McEachern’s Gallery at Wingeel.
- WAMA representation at the Pomonal Flower show.
- Working bees on site to eradicate weeds and prepare for the preliminary clearing for the vermin proof fence.

The website has been re-designed and is continually being enhanced. The WAMA database now stands at over 5000 supporters.

The WAMA presence at the Hall’s Gap Tourist hub is now fully operational and information centre staff are promoting WAMA and selling WAMA Merchandise.

The 2019 WAMA – Australian Geographic Society calendar, now our 4th calendar, is much sought after and excellently positions the WAMA brand.

Sadly, we acknowledge the passing of one of WAMA’s key engagement team members, Cheryl Stacpool. Cheryl’s commitment and energy to the local profiling of WAMA is greatly missed.

In September, our first major fundraising event was hosted by Allan and Maria Myers at their property in Dunkeld. The event was a great success, expanding the WAMA network and resulting in significant philanthropic support.

The Board secured tacit support from all regional Local Government Authorities, but would have wished to see this support more dynamic and pro-active.

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) have endorsed the project, confirming a regional economic development cost benefit ratio of 3.7 and extremely positive social, community and cultural impacts. However, the requested funding of \$10M has not been forthcoming from the State Government



Advice from Regional Development Victoria, is that the \$10M requested represents too large amount to be supported within their normal RDV budgetary processes, requiring either an election promise or Ministerial Directive. Despite our networking and lobbying, Government financial support has not been forthcoming.

We will continue in pursuit of our vision, re-shaping and phasing our approach such that we not only meet the objectives and desires of our donors and volunteer force, but also obtain the required Government financial support.

The new strategy will be co-created, the Board will survey all members, donors, volunteers and sponsors, to enable them to express their wishes, capture suggestions, and define expectations. This process is expected to take 3 months.

In the interim, we will continue with the successful Education out-reach program, continue with the erection of the VPF, enhance signage at the site, and build on the very successful activities of 2018.

In closing, I wish to thank all our donors for their support, recognise the hard work and commitment of the volunteer workforce, and look forward to the future success and the further development of WAMA in 2019!

Thank you all.

Greg Lewin AM