

WAMA FOUNDATION : CHAIRMAN 2019 STATEMENT

The last 12 months have seen a seismic shift in the WAMA strategy. The failure to secure State Government support in 2018 dictated that the Board fundamentally review the way forward for WAMA.

This resulted, in late 2018, the adoption of the WAMA21 strategy. This strategy focuses on regionalization, maximising WAMA's impact "on the ground", and the design and development of a \$6 million facility; the funding of which has been underwritten by the Board. The WAMA21 strategy aspires to fully operationalize the WAMA vision by 2021.

Guided by the WAMA21 Aims and Objectives, 2019 has been a year of great progress. The erection of the predator-proof fence has commenced, a bore has been successfully sunk, and architectural and landscape contracts are in place for the design of the precinct. A design consultation team, comprising Directors Ayseha Burdett, Mike Stevens and Jacky Healy together with Glenn Holland, Jill Burness, Anthea Nicholls and Glenda Lewin is working through all the details with the architect and landscape planners. The concept design is anticipated to be available early in 2020. SED consultants are re-evaluating the WAMA Business case to reflect the WAMA21 Strategy.

David Pratt is in place as the WAMA Site Manager and Christina Manolas has joined us as Communications Manager.

Working with the Jallukar Landcare, the CMA and Greening Australia, a 2 hectare site has been identified at the WAMA site where we will grow indigenous native grasslands with seed collected by volunteers from all these organisations. This group under the auspices of Jallukar Landcare were recently award the State Environmental Award for their project started only 2.5 years ago.

The Education outreach program has recently received a grant from Northern Grampians Shire Council and WAMA will match this funding for a project named the "Biggest Science Experiment" to be co-ordinated with schools within the Shire in 2020. Over the past 2 years on the WAMA site, we have hosted school groups, nature play days, Boards including, the Local Catchment Management Authority, and regional Landcare groups. A strong "Sense of Community" is being established.

A very successful 'Art Meets Nature' exhibition, curated by Merle Hathaway, was held from August to November at the Sofitel in Melbourne.

Throughout 2019, highly successful awareness and fund raising events have been held. A "Soiree" evening was held @ 'Grannes,' our home in the Region. This event focussed on networking into the local community. Through the generosity and support of Maria and Allan Myers, the second annual major fundraiser was held at their home in Dunkeld. This was a very successful event, which reinforced the importance of connection and ownership of the project.

At this event, Board Director, Mike Stevens, launched the \$500,000 donation challenge – where all donations, received prior to 30th June 2020, will be matched dollar for dollar. All donors will be recognised in perpetuity as “Founding Donors” of the WAMA precinct.

The WAMA21 Aims and Objectives for 2020 will be posted on the WAMA website in January 2020.

WAMA21 is happening, thanks, to the believers – local and national and even international. Our volunteers with their passion and resilience to persevere, to keep attending those working bees, to introduce new members to our database, to create Art exhibitions on WAMA’s behalf. WAMA21 represents “Community connection at its best” .

Thank you for your support.

Greg Lewin AM
Chairman
WAMA Foundation Pty Ltd.