



*fostering research into
the biology and cultivation
of the Australian flora*

Newsletter

No. 8

New Series

July 2008

April Council Meeting

At its April 2008 meeting the Council welcomed a new councillor, Dr Paddy Lightfoot, who is well known to members of the Australian Plants Society. He is perhaps best known as a foundation director of the Hunter Wetlands Centre Australia (HWCA). A full introduction to Paddy can be found later in this Newsletter.

As always, the main activity of the April meeting was the shortlisting of preliminary research proposals for grants. Thirty applications were received this year, possibly the highest ever. They covered projects in relation to climate change, on endangered species, on pests of Australian plants, on plant community management, on pollination and the control of flowering, and on the propagation and cultivation of native plants. Proposals addressed an unusually wide range of plants, ranging from seaweeds to conifers and as usual, a large number of grasses, herbs, shrubs and trees. Only with much difficulty was it possible to reduce the proposals to a short list of ten. The chief investigators of the short-listed proposals have been asked for full applications. Of these ten, only approximately five will be able to be funded, given our current financial position.

Those proposals approved by the Research Committee, but unable to be funded will be listed on the website in our 'Projects Seeking Sponsorship' section in December.

The full final reports, as well as nearly all previous final reports and publications arising from them, can be accessed on the Foundation's website at <http://www.aff.org.au>.

New reports

Three new final reports have recently been added to the website:

Adam Marchant, Andrew Perkins, George Orel, Gillian Towler: Exploring the horticultural potential of native Australian flowering shrubs in the *Solanum brownii* group. [Summary](#) and [Final report](#)

Jodi N. Price, Nathan Wong and John W. Morgan: The potential for recovery of herbaceous vegetation after release from a long history of sheep grazing in a species-rich woodland. [Summary](#) and [Final report](#)

Melanie Conomikes, Cassandra McLean and Gregory Moore: *Epacris impressa* Labill.: Inoculation of cuttings with ericoid mycorrhizal fungus and DNA fingerprinting of floral races. [Summary](#) and [Final report](#)

Dr Paddy Lightfoot

Dr Paddy Lightfoot was welcomed as a new councillor at the April 2008 meeting.

After graduated in Medicine from Sydney University at the end of 1962, Paddy worked at Royal Newcastle Hospital for 2 years and then in England (hospital and general practice) for two years. He entered general practice in Charlestown, Newcastle in 1967 and stayed in the same practice for 38 years. He retired from full time practice two years ago, but still fills in as a locum during school holidays and sickness in the old practice.

Paddy joined the Society for Growing Australian Plants (now Australian Plants Society) in 1975. He has served on the committee of the Newcastle Group since 1976, including six years as Secretary. In 1992 he was elected a Life Member of the Australian Plants Society NSW Region for his work in promoting Australian native plants in the Newcastle area.



Paddy has been involved with the Hunter Wetlands Centre (HWCA) since its inception in 1985 – when he attended a public meeting to float the idea of a wetlands education facility. When the convenor, Professor Max Maddock, realised he was from SGAP he co-opted him onto the interim Landscape Committee. Paddy soon was elected a Foundation Director of the new public not for profit company, and currently is the only such director still on the board. As convenor of the Site Management Committee, one of Paddy's missions was to ensure that only Australian natives were used in the transformation of the 45 hectares of former rugby fields and swampland into a native sanctuary. Now, after many years' work on landscaping and the planting of about 60,000 trees and shrubs, Paddy can look with great satisfaction at the magnificent wetland centre and Ramsar site of international importance he helped to create.

Since 1990 Paddy has headed a registered Landcare Group, which meets every Thursday – The Thursday Mob – who work around the HWCA site. In 1999 Paddy was awarded a trophy for being runner-up as ABC Gardener of the Year for his work in getting the community involved in planting and maintaining the HWCA gardens. Paddy was awarded the Newcastle Medal, in 2006, for service to the City and Community of Newcastle. Paddy co-compiled with Geoff Rigby the SGAP publication 'Australian Trees and Large Shrubs Suitable for Planting in the Lower Hunter.'

Paddy has been married to Caryl, who he calls 'my long suffering wife', for 43 years. They have three children. Their older boy, David, is a very active member of the APS, being leader of the Isopogon and Petrophile Study Group. Stephen, their younger boy, is a NSW Councillor on the Council of the Australian Conservation Foundation. Their daughter, Joanna, is a school teacher and is very environmentally aware.

Scientific publications from research supported by the Foundation

Abstracts of four publications based on work funded by the Foundation have recently been added to the website. Details of these are:

Candida L. Briggs and E. Charles Morris. *Seed-coat dormancy in Grevillea linearifolia: little change in permeability to an apoplastic tracer after treatment with smoke and heat*. An abstract can be found [here](#). It appeared in the Annals of Botany (2008) **101**: 623–632

David H. Duncan, Adreinne B. Nicotra and Saul A. Cunningham. *High self-pollen transfer and low fruit set in buzz-pollinated Dianella revoluta (Phormiaceae)*. An abstract can be found [here](#). It appeared in the Australian Journal of Botany (2004) **52**: 185-193

David H. Duncan, Adrienne B. Nicotra, Jeff T. Wood and Saul A. Cunningham. *Plant isolation reduces outcross pollen receipt in a partially self-compatible herb*. An abstract can be found [here](#). It appeared in the Journal of Ecology (2004) **92**: 977–98

TM Llorens, DJ Ayre and RJ Whelan. *Evidence for ancient genetic subdivision among recently fragmented populations of the endangered shrub Grevillea caleyi (Proteaceae)*. An abstract can be found [here](#). It appeared in Heredity (2004) **92**: 519–526

ANPC Conference

Dr Peter Goodwin, The Foundation's President, was a speaker at the Australian Network for Plant Conservation's 7th National Conference at Mulgoa NSW in April 2008, the theme of the conference being '*Our Declining Flora – Tackling the Threats*'. Peter's topic of course was the Australian Flora Foundation. Here is the abstract of his talk:

We have good news and we have bad news! The good news is that the Australian Flora Foundation is an organisation which provides research grants, and whose objectives are very similar to those of the Australian Network for Plant Conservation. Our stated objective is to 'Foster research into the biology and cultivation of Australian plants'. We have four categories of special interest:

- 1) Conservation of Australian plant diversity, particularly where there are threats from climatic change*
- 2) Plant species with potential for cultivation*
- 3) Cultivation of Australian plants*
- 4) Rare and endangered plants: all applications must indicate how the research relates to the management plan for the species*

The bad news is that the Foundation's resources are very limited: we typically give out about four grants per year, each of \$6,000 to \$12,000 per year for a maximum of two years. Hence we try to fund projects where there is considerable leverage – laboratory or field expenses for PhD students, operating support for work by Botanic Gardens, or seed projects which if successful may obtain major support from other funding organisations.

We are at this conference not so much as to encourage you to apply for grants – although you are welcome to do so, but to invite you to join the Foundation. We are in need of ordinary members, and of members with ‘conservation’ credentials who can spare the time, to join the Council of the Foundation.

Application forms: http://www.aff.org.au/AFF2_Membership_Form.htm

Peter illustrated his talk with the results of two of the Foundation's grants – 'Genetic diversity and plant propagation in the rare rainforest tree, *Ryparosa kurrangii*' by Bruce L. Webber & Ian E. Woodrow, School of Botany, University of Melbourne; and 'Pollination and fruit production of *Dianella revoluta* in fragmented vegetation' by David Duncan, School of Botany and Zoology, ANU.

Thanks to donors

Without the generous support of donors and benefactors the Foundation would not be able to carry out its research objectives. Donations of \$2 and over are tax-deductible.

The Council would like to sincerely thank the following people and organizations who have recently made donations to the Research Fund:

Australian Plants Society Newcastle Group NSW; Mr W. E. Reed; Dr A. Wheeler; Australian Plants Society Kadina SA; SGAP Mackay Branch Qld; Mrs Diana Snape; Australian Plants Society Sutherland Group NSW; Dr Peter Goodwin; Mr Ian Cox; Mr Frank Gleason; Mr Ross Smyth-Kirk; Mr Roger Elliot; Dr G.C. Kirby; Dr Paddy Lightfoot; Dr Peter McGee; Mr Phillip Esdale; Dr Jenny Jobling; Mrs Hazel Demster; Australian Plants Society Wangaratta Branch Vic; Dr Robert Vickery; Mr Abe Segal; Dr Geoffrey Long; Dr Margaret Johnston; Mr Philip Cameron; Mr P. Urbonas, Tess Heighes; Margaret Esson; Prof. H Clifford; Prof. Acram Taji; Mr Gordon Rowland; Shirley Pipitone; Mrs E. King; Judith Smith; Mr J. Scown; Olive Pink Botanic Garden Alice Springs; Alan and Jan Hall; Dr Greg Unwin.

The Australian Flora Foundation is a not-for-profit organization with the sole objective of fostering scientific research into Australia's flora.

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