



EUROA ARBORETUM ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

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SHIRLEY SAYWELL

Committee President



It is no surprise that the Arboretum has become a winning Euroa asset – and those of us who remember the site as a “sheep paddock” back in the 80’s can be rightly proud of the transformation. It takes a mountain of energy and goodwill to create such a welcoming and inspiring space, and we applaud all those who have contributed. The Arboretum is now a vibrant example of landscape renewal. Visiting this space shows what is possible when we invest in good people and good knowledge. The inclusion of a “welcome circle” serves to remind us that this can also be a place of corroboree (ngarrgi) and celebration; a place to re-connect with nature and take time to be still in the landscape.

The Arboretum team is extraordinary and Cath’s guidance and commitment keeps us on track. After so many years, the vision to be a place of learning, rehabilitation and inspiration, is everywhere. The wildflowers, the chain of ponds, the birdlife, the signage, the reminders of bush-kinder adventures, the care of the volunteers and staff – that is what makes “the Arb”.

Leadership and loyalty have been ongoing. We are still grateful to Sally Mann, for her early vision and energy. Sally’s prototype Seed Production Areas continue as “intensive” seed gathering sites and her plans for at-scale land rehabilitation are at the core of our purpose.

I am always grateful of those on the committee (new and old) who have stayed the course. We applaud and respect the indigenous guardians for their care, their endurance and their generosity. We are all slowly learning the power of “healing country”. The Arboretum philosophy is grounded in principles based on land stewardship and “bringing back the bush”.

We uphold the First Nations interests in respect to culture and country and we acknowledge the work of those who have gone before us. We welcome the introduction of Treaty (in Victoria). This is a chance for us all to move forward together.

CATHY OLIVE

Development Manager



When asked during a tour, *'what was more important at the Arb - conservation or people?'* the answer was obvious after a moment's reflection. It's both. The Arb, and Grassy Woodlands across the landscape for that matter, don't exist without people, caring, tending and thriving together. People need healthy Country, Country needs people to care for it - something our Traditional Owners have known for millennia. We are blessed to have so many people love our patch of grassy woodland, and it's never looked better.

It's easy to feel climate and environmental grief mixed with anxiety for the future. The evidence keeps mounting that our planet is suffering, and in turn, those of us who are watching suffer too. We have chosen to celebrate seeds this year - in art, song, workshops, seed orchard construction and harvest. Those precious little seeds bring such hope in these times. If we can nurture our seeds, there is hope to heal some of our landscape if we turn our grief into care and action.

It has been a big year. Our daisy boxes are brimming with colour and daisy diversity. There are three new irrigated intensive seed orchards at the Arboretum full of peas. We have 12 hectares of shrub planting at Avenel on Goulburn Valley Water land - promising approximately 140kg of extra seed per year! This is a big step towards bolstering wild collection and eventually replacing wild harvest for many species within our catchment.

As care takers of seed, we regard our obligation to seed seriously (where it goes, and for what purpose) and are proud to walk together with our Traditional Owners, ensuring an honourable harvest.

Thank you to all of our staff, volunteers and partners this year in embracing the joy of seed and sharing seeds in education.

ROSE YOUNG

*Commercial Manager &
Committee Treasurer*



Euroa Arboretum activities yielded an overall operating loss of \$39k in the 2024-25 FY as compared to an operational surplus of \$114k the previous year - noting that 2023-24 FY was the first time stock valuations were recognised in financial reporting.

Total income was down by \$20k this year (\$701k to \$680k). Income from goods and services provided was up 10% to 551k. Seedbank and Education-Community were the only streams to generate net earnings post overhead allocations. Both streams had stronger grant assistance relative to other streams. Public donations remained steady at \$12k.

Our Nursery stream experienced a slower start for order pickups in response to the continued dry conditions through Summer, Autumn and Winter. The seasonal conditions have also been reflected in reduced Bush Crew activity and demand for direct seed demand.

Grant income had also fallen by \$58k as compared to the prior FY. Grant income totalled \$212k in the 2024-25 FY comprising of 2023-24 FY quarantined grants released and \$176k of new grants won. A total of \$105k will be quarantined for next FY to complete funded projects, as a good portion relate to works scheduled for Spring.

Although work continues to become more self-reliant in smoothing out and generating incomes, government and philanthropic funding remains of great assistance in achieving our overall purpose.

Demand for our ethically harvested seed and interest in our Nursery's conservation species is strong and increasing. Nursery received a \$12k investment in a new retail pod and irrigation drainage works this year. Scheduled renewal works also commenced on our on-site seed production areas (\$60k). The expenditure adds capacity for improved community engagement and paves way to meet the anticipated increase in seed demand. It will also help lay foundations for future cost efficiencies and to take pressure off-wild seed harvest where we can.

In 2025-26 FY we look to build on the momentum in developments across the seed sector and continue to build on our relationships with key partners to deliver on prioritised projects and initiatives.

BRONTE HAINES

*Grassy Groundcover Restoration
Coordinator*



The grasslands continue to bloom with increasing diversity despite little rain. This year we experimentally planted thousands of tiny chocolate and bulbine lilies using the soil aerator. We also sowed over 1ha of additional pea species. We continue to see some popping up in places we have never seen them before.

This year saw the publication of a landmark document for the Arb: **"Burning for Landscape Health at Euroa Arboretum"** This publication details the history of fire use at the Arb and tells the story of how we have walked together with Taungurung on this journey. It is both a special and practical document as has received praise from all over the country. Available on our website. The special fire moment of this year was finally having the right conditions to conduct a trial burn of Cumbungi around the dam. It is regenerating beautifully.

Wildflower Mondays continues! What a joy it has been each month to meet and do with grassland enthusiasts. It has been simply divine to have help and share skills in grassy groundcover restoration. If you would like to put your hands in the soil at the Arb we meet at 9.30 -12.30pm on the first Monday of the month.



JEMMA NORMAN

Nursery Manager



What do you get when you mix 75,000 plants and a whole lot of heart and passion? One incredible year at the Nursery!

This season, we didn't just grow plants — we grew connections, communities, and a whole lot of smiles.

Here's a peek at our leafy highlights:

- In just one day, our volunteer dream team pricked out 7,000 seedlings — faster than you can say “photosynthesis”!
- 75,000 plants propagated — that's enough to start a small woodland!
- 1,269 plants provided to 8 local schools — including Euroa, Longwood, Beveridge, and more. Future green thumbs, here we come!
- 5 local councils were provided with 5,739 plants — spreading native beauty far and wide.
- 22,402 plants supported grant-funded revegetation projects — nature says thank you!
- 65 private landholders planted 9,326 plants — restoring land, one plant ,at a time.
- Our plants even got planted at the National Arboretum in Canberra — talk about going the distance!
- Over \$50,000 in retail sales — that's 11,000+ happy plants finding homes.





We propagated 160 native species, including:

- 35 trees 🌳
- 67 understory 🌿
- 32 wildflowers 🌸
- 12 ground covers 🌱
- 14 grasses 🌾

Sustainability Wins

We recycled 1,200 kg of broken tube stock and trays — because growing green means staying green.

👏 Going Viral (In a Good Way!)

We launched our social media campaign with a twist — costumes! From koalas to fairies, our posts reached 24.7K views, bringing native plants to a whole new audience.

Reflection

What began as a season drier than a cactus in the desert — with slow germination and sluggish sales — blossomed into a blooming success! Against the odds, our plants perked up, our shelves cleared out, and smiles sprouted everywhere. Turns out, a little grit and a lot of greenery go a long way.

EMILY TROUP

Seedbank Manager



MIM ZIMMERMANN

*Bush Crew & Seed Production Area
Coordinator*



This year we supplied 208 kgs of seed to nurseries and revegetation projects across the region. This is by far the highest amount of seed sold in the years that the Arboretum has managed the seedbank. This quantity is strong evidence of the appetite for ecosystem restoration in our region – from government, not-for-profits and private landholders alike.

A poor seed season saw us bring in less than half of the sale quantity into the bank in the same time period, at 89 kgs. We contended with the double-edged sword of a dry spring followed by storms in early summer, which knocked much of the seed off the plants.

As the demand from seed continues to grow, and wild plant populations face increasing pressure from fragmentation and climate stressors, we need to seriously consider how to maintain the supply of seed to revegetation projects. We have collaborated with our Traditional Owner partners to release an ethics statement outlining our approach to sourcing and supplying this precious resource.





We have also invested heavily in our Seed Production Areas (SPAs). Our SPAs are an essential part of our strategy to continue supplying bulk volumes of genetically healthy and climate-adapted seed. This year we commenced stage one of a new large-scale SPA in Avenel. We also refreshed our current Intensive Seed Production Areas (ISPAs), and Daisy Boxes at the Euroa Arboretum.

- Supported by the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Trust (NRCT), the Avenel SPA saw the planting of over 4,500 shrubs across five key species widely used in landscape-scale restoration: *Acacia montana*, *Acacia flexifolia*, *Acacia acinacea*, *Acacia pycnantha*, and *Indigofera australis*. Each species was represented by a diverse genetic mix collected from across the catchment, with a target of at least 50 individuals from 15 provenances per species.
- Meanwhile, our Intensive Seed Production Areas (ISPAs) and Daisy Boxes at Euroa Arboretum were refreshed with a selection of high-value, hard-to-collect species such as our pea species (*Daviesia* sp., *Dillwynia* sp., *Pultenaea* sp.), as well as a suite of daisies and wildflowers.

We are very proud of everything our staff have achieved with limited resources, and are grateful for the support of our funding partners and incredible volunteers. As long as we maintain our strong ethical stance, and continue to focus on our sustainability as an organisation, we have a very exciting future to look forward to.

Emily Troup and Miriam Zimmerman

CHARLOTTE LANGMAN

Volunteers, Education and
Community Engagement



The year started with a bang as the first working day back in January, volunteers and staff all contributed to pricking out over 7,000 seedlings into individual tube stock. To put that into perspective, that's 10% of our total plant production last year. A real tribute to our dedicated volunteers and staff!

Volunteer numbers continue to grow, proving what an interesting and welcoming space it is here.

Euroa Kinder comes out one full day per week which speaks in volumes of what a valuable education space The Arb. really is and just how important connection to nature is for children. Avenel and Benalla kinder also joined us this year and were really enthused about the space and the positive effect it had on their children. They both plan to come back!



The focus this year for community engagement has been the value of local native seed. I visited Longwood Primary School and Euroa Secondary college in March with a tool kit full of interesting and beautiful seed and seed pods for the students to engage with and incorporate in their art projects. We discussed different seed dispersal and germination techniques and sowed some Kangaroo grass. Students marvelled at the way the seed corkscrewed its way into the potting mix once wet.



The Orbweavers joined us for Songs for Seed on 13th September at The North Eastern Hotel. What a beautiful night it was of ecologically-inspired storytelling and music precluded by a talk on valuing the landscapes and plants that provide the seed that we so rely upon for revegetation.

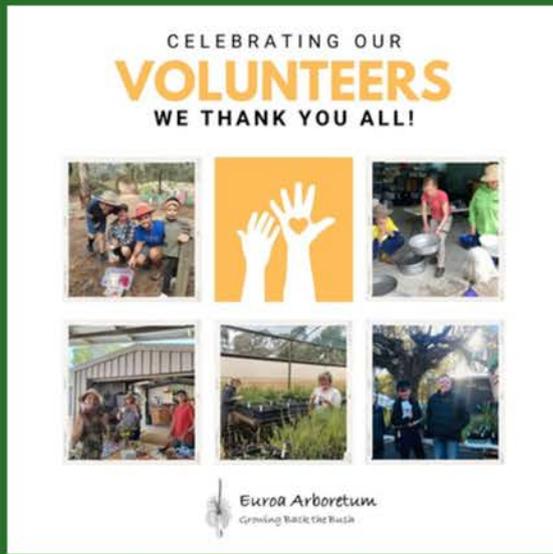
Partnering with Sheila gallery, The Arb. opened the SEED exhibition on 7th October, showcasing local artists impressions of local native seed and celebrating its beauty.

Work included submissions by volunteers, staff and our artist in resident at The Arb. this year, painter Anthea Kemp.

Last but not least, our annual Winter Solstice bonfire and lantern parade was held once more. Children and adults made lanterns, shared damper and stories by the fire and this year we were treated to a light show on the dam as sparklers and kindling lit up the sculpture cradling a hand-woven giant seed pod on the purpose-built pontoon.



MEET OUR TEAM & VOLUNTEERS









STAFF

Cathy Olive

Development Manager

Rose Young

Commercial Manager

Bronte Haines

Grassy Groundcover Restoration
Coordinator

Jemma Norman

Nursery Manager

Emily Troup

Seedbank Manager

Mim Zimmermann

Bush Crew & Seed Production Area
Coordinator

Charlotte Langman

Volunteers, Education and
Community Engagement

Vikki Lane

Accounts and Administration



Carolena Helderman

Seed Processing Coordinator,
Marketing & Communications
Coordinator

Fearghus Wallis

Assistant Nursery Manager

Joe Farrell

Maintenance Support
and Bush Crew

Phil Hawkey

Maintenance

Nelly Watson

Bush Crew

Steph Brophy

Bush Crew

Jason Schneider

Bush Crew



COMMITTEE

Shirley Saywell

President

Frank Pierce

Vice President

Janet Fogarty

Committee Member

Libby Woodhouse

Committee Member

Janet Hagen

Committee Member

Trent Howard

Committee Member

Kathy Clark Orsanic

Committee Member

Fearghus Wallis

Committee Member

Linda Tracey

Committee Member

Jethro Melane

Committee Member

DONATIONS

\$11,681

Website Donations

\$620

Event Donations



We are a Registered Charity with
Deductible Gift Recipient status.

2000

Volunteer hours for Nursey and Grounds

488

Volunteer hours for Seedbank

Valued at around \$100k for the love of the Arb and its people

THIS YEAR:

264

people attended events & workshops

1186

Newsletter subscribers

3494

Followers on Social Media

PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Celebrating the relationships that enhance our mission



Taungurung Land & Waters Council
Natural Resources Conservation Trust
Goulburn Valley Water
Goulburn Broken CMA
Longwood Plains CMN
Strathbogie Ranges Conservation
Friends of the Sevens
The Gladys
Honeysuckle Creek
Strathbogie Shire Council
Shepparton Shire
Melbourne Zoo
DELWP

“

Our partners bring a wealth of resources, expertise, and creativity that enrich our programs and initiatives.

By fostering these relationships, we are able to create impactful experiences for our visitors and volunteers alike.

”

GET IN TOUCH

Donate

euroarboretum.com.au/donate

Volunteer

euroarboretum.com.au/volunteer

Image credits:

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EUROA
ARBORETUM

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Euroa Arboretum
Growing Back the Bush

