

Annual Report

2023 / 2024



Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Message from Chair | 2 |
| Message from Executive Director | 2 |
| Our Impact | 3 |
| Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project | 4 |
| Glideways in Central Victoria | 5 |
| Mobilising People to Take Action for Nature | 6 |
| Our Large Network of Partners | 7 |
| Our Network Members | 8 |
| Our Board | 9 |
| Our Staff | 10 |
| Our Supporters | 11 |
| Treasurer's Report | 12 |
| Financial Reports | 12 |
| Audit Report | 13 |

Biolinks Alliance is proud to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the places where we live and work. We recognise and respect the enduring relationship they have with their lands and water, and we pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.

Front cover image: Purple Beard Orchid. Image credit: Cameron O'Mara, Biolinks Alliance Project Facilitator

This page image: Shot from above our Biolinks Alliance office on Taungurung Country. Image credit: Cameron O'Mara, Biolinks Alliance Project Facilitator

A special thank you to Lindy Shelmerdine, David Moffat and Lady Marigold Southey for generously gifting us the use of office, events and storage space at their Tooborac property.

Biolinks Alliance is the only organisation that brings people together to restore and protect public and private lands across Central Victoria. We do this through building ecological knowledge and mobilising people to take urgent action for meaningful change. Our team uses the latest science and goes beyond current practice in our catalytic pilot projects, sharing scientific learnings. We are determined we can still change the future for our wildlife and lands from tragedy to restoration - if together, we act now.

To learn more: biolinksalliance.org.au 

Message from Chair

The past year has been another successful one for Biolinks Alliance, despite ongoing dire funding challenges in the sector.

Sophie and the wonderful Biolinks Alliance staff, and our large networks of environmental groups and volunteers, have continued to demonstrate the impact of our brand of community driven ecological restoration in Central Victoria.

A special highlight this year was the completion of the on-ground works at our landmark Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project near Heathcote, on Taungurung Country, in September 2023. Our unique combination of ecological interventions and methods were completed just before heavy rains arrived, providing ample demonstration of how these works can hydrate and restore ecological function to the heavily damaged Box-Ironbark forests of Central Victoria.

Monitoring and evaluation of this project is now underway, with a strong emphasis on Citizen Science to support the collection of data and involve even more people. There has been a huge amount of interest in the project from other environmental groups, government agencies and many individuals seeking inspiration and knowledge for their own ecological restoration initiatives.

A special thank you to the many donors who have backed our vision for this project, not only the works at the site but also for what the project can demonstrate is possible elsewhere. As always, we could not achieve what we have with this project, or in our other work, without this generous support.

We are also making headway with many other projects with partnerships core to their success. As we look to the new year, we are excited to embark on a large-scale biolink repair project with Melbourne Water and Network Member Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network, as well as Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group, that eventually looks to go from Melbourne all the way to Echuca. Our

collaborative Glideways in Central Victoria initiative continues to build, and ultimately looks to restore and reconnect glider habitat from the Grampians to Euroa, also through partnerships with some of our Network Members and other environmental organisations.

As mentioned above, the year has not been without funding challenges. With the lack of State and Federal Government funding at the scale and duration needed to support the work we do, and the funding that is available increasingly being directed to market based approaches, new sources of support are needed to enable the collaborative, community driven ecological restoration that is core to our vision.

At Biolinks Alliance, we have the expertise, leadership, networks and partnerships, as well as projects to have wide-scale impact. Financial sustainability to back our cutting-edge work will be a key focus for the Board and the organisation in the following year. I want to thank my fellow board members for their work this year and express my gratitude to Sophie and our Treasurer Pat Scanlon for steering us through financially challenging times.



Brendan Sydes
Chair



Message from Executive Director

Biolinks Alliance's focus to restore ecological function and climate proof our lands over large landscape scales has never been more critical than right now as we experience the perils of a hotter, drier and more variable climate.

Over the past 12-months, our expert team has continued to be deeply committed to driving locally-led and collaborative approaches to restoring and protecting our natural world. It's only through landholders and farmers, government, Traditional Owners, the private sector and other environmental organisations working together will we achieve the transformational changes required to build climate resilience and live sustainably in this land.

Our ecological repair projects are demonstrating solutions and enabling others, so change for our environment happens at the speed and scale required.

This includes our Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project on Taungurung Country that is demonstrating how to build climate resilience in a Box-Ironbark Forest (a critical habitat for so many mammals, birds and reptiles) and our Glideways in Central Victoria initiative, encompassing 10 collaborative projects with our Network Members and other environmental organisations to protect habitat for gliders and vulnerable Brush-tailed Phascogales.

Nature can not be the forgotten cause as the world heats and refuges for our wildlife shrink. That's why we host cutting-edge events with expert presenters that empower and enable people across Central Victoria and beyond with the knowledge and tools needed. This is true of our Monthly Webinar Series that we launched this year.

We have experienced an increased recognition of the unique role of our organisation this year and with this comes great opportunities. As we look towards 2025, we are excited to be working with Melbourne Water and Network Member Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network, as well as Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group on a large-scale biolink repair project.

Measuring how effective our collaborative approach is, and the impact that working together brings, is something we see as critical. This year we applied a new evaluation framework that we have developed, to better qualify and quantify mid-term (4 year) outcomes and impact of our Local to Landscape pilot repair projects. Partnership

evaluation is something we will continue to refine and undertake to improve how we work and build the case for greater support for these new 21st Century approaches to nature repair.

Funding remains incredibly short though in our sector. As always, we are extremely thankful to our donors, supporters and volunteers, including our dedicated board, who make our work possible. It is through their generosity we remain steadfast that together we can get on and do what is required to change the future for our Central Victorian creatures and lands from loss to their return.



Dr Sophie Bickford
Executive Director



Our Impact

With the climate change and biodiversity crisis upon us, we did not waste a moment in 2023-2024 to help protect and restore nature.



496

Volunteers

Doing Citizen Science, supporting our events and amplifying our operations

615

Registrations

For knowledge sharing events that we hosted, diving into the science behind our work to restore ecosystems

3

Innovative Pilot Initiatives

Underway based on cutting-edge science that targets ecological issues specific to Central Victoria, with learnings to be shared

20

High-quality Events

Hosted or presented at to challenge conventions, and educate and mobilise people to take action for nature

4325

Subscribers & Followers (approx.)

Creating awareness with more people about our work and how to get involved through our e-communications and social media

10

Nature Repair Projects

We're leading, contributing to or partnering on to help restore ecological function to our lands



Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project

On-ground works at our landmark Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project were completed in September 2023. We are already witnessing positive changes - less flash flooding, improved wildlife habitat and more ecological productivity.

Designed by our ecologists, the unique combination of ecological repair techniques and methodologies used in the pilot project in the Spring Plains Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR), on Taungurung Country, aim to show how to build climate resilience and restore hydrology, soil health and biodiversity to a Box-Ironbark forest.

By creating awareness through our e-communications, social media, webinars, site visits and articles in sector publications much interest has been generated in this pilot project with key stakeholders. This includes with government, environmental organisations, academic

institutions and the private sector who are keen to understand the science involved, the practical delivery and the hopeful outcomes for nature.

Continued monitoring of this pilot project looks to provide more evidence and learnings. Citizen Science is a backbone to these monitoring activities, increasing community involvement in our work with 575 hours by these volunteers in the past year. Monitoring of reptiles, kangaroos, invertebrates, small mammals (i.e. through spotlighting and nest-boxes) and birds have all been a focus.

Opposite: Swift Parrot. Spring Plains NCR is an important migratory stopover for critically endangered Swift Parrots. This pilot project aims to increase productivity of the forest, ensuring more regular and abundant flowering in the trees that Swift Parrots and many other species rely on for sustenance. Image credit: Brendan Sydes, Biolinks Alliance Board Chair

A unique combination of ecological repair techniques.



70kms (approx.) of contour ripping with a Yeomans style plough to improve soil water infiltration.



21 ponds along Peters Gully creekline to catch water in high rainfall periods, slowing down water flow for gully hydration.



More than 76 hectares of forest re-aging by reducing unnaturally dense regrowth and retaining all logs for soil health, hydrology and habitat.



Direct seeding of native grasses in contour rip lines to improve soil biology and understorey health. Riparian planting continues also near the ponds.



Only 17% of Box-Ironbark forests remain. These critical habitats urgently require intervention to withstand the challenges of climate change.

Our landmark pilot project offers a beacon of hope, demonstrating how to cost-effectively at scale and speed restore hydrological function to these forests using simple but strategic interventions - so they can withstand a more variable, hotter and drier climate.

Glideways in Central Victoria

Our Glideways in Central Victoria initiative provides people with the know-how to protect gliders in their local region. We are collaborating with several of our Network Members and other environmental organisations from the Grampians to Euroa on 10 projects that extend across private and public lands.

Glideways in Central Victoria

The plight of gliders, from the cat-sized Greater Glider to the miniscule Feathertail Glider, capture the hearts and minds of people across our region. By looking after the needs of gliders, we are also helping other species such as Koalas, vulnerable Brush-tailed Phascogales and critically endangered Swift Parrots.

Through the Glideways in Central Victoria initiative, we are collating and sharing current knowledge that looks at:

- Where are gliders and what are their habitat needs?
- What is the most effective way to protect and reconnect glider habitat?
- How do people access credible resources to help guide their efforts?

Gliders need to roam over large areas of suitable forest habitat, with many old, hollow-bearing trees. Acute habitat loss due to land clearing, timber harvesting and fire, and habitat fragmentation by the development of roads, buildings and towns, is a devastating problem. As our region gets busier and more populated - these gliders, once abundant, continue to decline.

Opposite: Krefft's Glider seen while spotlighting Image credit: Dr. Chris Pocknee, Biolinks Alliance Ecologist

Collaborative projects backed by our expertise

Kangaroo Creek

We continue to partner with Malmsbury District Landcare on this long running Greater Glider project, involving property habitat assessments, spotlighting surveys, camera trapping and identification of suitable nest box installation sites in the past 12 months.

Seymour Biolinks for Gliders

In collaboration with Seymour Urban Landcare, Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative and BEAM Mitchell Environment Group, this project has involved spotlighting surveys around Seymour and monitoring of nest boxes installed up to 10 years ago, confirming the presence of threatened Squirrel Gliders in the area.

Murchison Gap Greater Glider Biolink

Partnering with BEAM Mitchell Environment Group, we are aiming to better understand the distribution, and improve the connectivity of Greater Glider populations around the Tallarook and Mount Disappointment forests. This project is across tenure, including state forest and surrounding private land.

Squirrel Gliders in the Northern Grampians

Collaborating with Project Platypus and the local community, we are surveying across public and private land to detect threatened Squirrel Gliders. This will guide future works to improve the connectivity of remnant habitat patches between Dadswells Bridge and Stawell.

Glideways in Central Victoria 10 Year Priorities

In 2023, Biolinks Alliance teamed up with environmental groups, including many of our Network Members, and Macedon Ranges Shire Council to develop objectives for the next decade.

1. An increased capacity of community groups across Central Victoria to undertake projects protecting gliders and phascogales, with groups working collaboratively within 2 years.
2. An improved understanding of glider and phascogale distribution and threats throughout Central Victoria within 2 years.
3. Substantial glider protection, habitat enhancement and restoration projects to be funded and underway within 5 years. Restoration programs to be significantly scaled up.
4. A measurable increase in the connectivity and quality of known glider habitat across Central Victoria, leading to increases in glider occupancy within 10 years. This means gliders are seen in areas where they weren't 10 years earlier. Gliders are able to move between patches to escape wildfire, interbreed and seek alternative food resources.



Mobilising People to Take Action for Nature

Sharing our expertise, the latest thinking and practical ways to restore ecological function to our lands empowers people to take action for nature across Central Victoria.

Our cutting-edge events enable landholders and communities to protect their lands through simple but effective ecological practices, and offer a chance to learn about science-backed initiatives in our region and further afield.

2024 Monthly Webinar series

A highly-popular initiative, our Monthly Webinar Series was launched in March 2024. This webinar series explores topics that challenge conventions on ecological issues facing Central Victoria and beyond. Recordings are available on our website.

Secrets Of The Wombat Forest (March 2024)

Meet the people in the know when it comes to the plethora of precious wildlife, including Greater Gliders, Brush-tailed Phascogales, Barking Owls and Mountain Skink (all of which are threatened with extinction) that call Wombat Forest home.

Glideways In Central Victoria (April 2024)

Learn more about Gliders (many of which are threatened) and our Glideways in Central Victoria initiative aimed at protecting them.

Climate Proofing Our Forests From The Ground Up (May 2024)

Deep dive into the story so far of our cutting-edge Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project that is demonstrating how to restore ecological function to a Box-Ironbark forest.

Rewilding Central Victoria (June 2024)

Special guest presenter, Annette Rypalski, Biodiversity Director at Odonata Foundation, provides insights into what it takes to 'rewild' Central Victoria and move towards a nature-positive future for our region.

Heathcote Local to Landscape Community Celebration

Biolinks Alliance supporters and community members gathered in April 2024 to celebrate the community-driven and created Heathcote Local to Landscape initiative with a tour of our Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project.

The Heathcote Local to Landscape initiative looks to restore and reconnect the forests, woodlands and waterways in the local region. Our Heathcote Community Day offered a vital opportunity for local community members to gather around the initiative and build momentum to drive it forward.

A Walk and Talk tour through our Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project offered inspiration for what can be achieved with scientifically-backed and innovative interventions.

Heathcote area private property monitoring

A critical part of our work to restore ecological function across our lands is working with landholders to reconnect habitat and monitor wildlife on their properties. This includes the installation of nest boxes and helping landholders monitor camera traps to detect wildlife - including vulnerable Brush-tailed Phascogales.

Revegetation with indigenous species, ecological thinning and fencing around important features like Large Old Trees are all part of the habitat improvements on local properties.

Sharing our expertise at key sector events

We actively participate at key sector events - sharing our knowledge and expertise to help empower as many people as possible to learn and take action for our environment.

One of these events includes the 2024 Victorian Landcare Forum in May 2024, where our Executive Director, Dr. Sophie Bickford spoke as part of a panel discussing Water in the Landscape.

Collaboration and the functional repair of landscapes were strong themes throughout the forum, and are approaches we have long advocated are essential to ensuring local stewardship actions add up to bigger picture results.

Large Old Trees Pilot Project

Our Large Old Tree Pilot Project (part of our broader Heathcote Local to Landscape initiative) continues to focus on community outreach - raising awareness around the value of and ways to protect Large Old Trees.

Over the past year, we have done this through our communication materials that educate and encourage people to map Large Old Trees using our online tool, delivering on-ground protection works, and hosting a photography workshop with Alison Pouliot to teach participants how to capture their beauty through photography.

Now in its fifth year, we are encouraged to see that our pilot project has inspired related projects with other community environment groups, who are either our Network Members or partners in the region.

"This was really fantastic: a perfect balance of informative and accessible, as well as being really inspiring."

Attendee at our Climate Proofing Our Forests From The Ground Up Webinar



Opposite: Cameron O'Mara, Biolinks Alliance Project Facilitator, and Dr. Chris Pocknee, Biolinks Alliance Ecologist, led a Walk and Talk through our Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project at our Heathcote Local to Landscape Community Celebration. Image credit: Dr. Sophie Bickford, Biolinks Alliance Executive Director

Our Partners

In this critical decade for our environment, it will take all of us to repair and protect our natural world. Goal alignment, sharing knowledge and expertise, and coordination across administrative boundaries and at larger scales gives us a fighting chance.

Our focus is restoring ecological function to private and public lands, and all tenures, across Central Victoria, while recognising and working with the farmers and townships that live in these lands too. This means finding ways for everyone to contribute. Sharing our expertise, as well as our deep knowledge of our local region, whilst meaningfully collaborating and learning from Traditional Owners, other environmental organisations, governments and educational institutes, is vital to meet the dire challenges we all face.

Partnering with large NGOs

Biolinks Alliance continues to be a delivery partner of Birdlife Australia's 2020 Temperate Woodland Bird Conservation Action Plan, which sets out a strategic framework to address key threats to woodland birds.

The Temperate Woodland Bird Conservation Action Plan lists priority actions for over 50 woodland-dependent bird species, identified as threatened or declining, across temperate woodland landscapes in South Eastern Australia. It identifies ten interventions to minimise threats to woodland birds, prevent further species' declines and increase their population size and resilience.

Biolinks Alliance is a member of the plan's steering committee as well as participating in priority action working groups. Our Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project is focused on building the health and resilience of a hotspot of one of the plan's flagship species, the critically endangered Swift Parrot.

Partnering with Traditional Owners and Universities

The Yam Paddock Project explores the role of cultural fire in Aboriginal food production, which in time will increase the opportunities for the use of fire as an ecological management tool of precious and highly endangered native grasslands.

This project, lead by La Trobe University Centre for the Study of the Inland and Research Centre for Future Landscapes, and Dja Dja Wurrung, looks at how and where food plants were used in Victoria by Aboriginal people historically, as well as how fire can be used to manage their stocks.

The project aims to consolidate existing anthropological, historical, horticultural and Aboriginal knowledge about particular Aboriginal plant foods used in South Eastern Australia.

Biolinks Alliance provided a liaison role between the women's group and private landholders, mentored PhD students and participated in the project's steering committee.

This project was made possible through funding from the Sallis Foundation and HMS Trust.

Partnering with Governments and Environmental Groups

Around one million feral deer are causing havoc across our Victorian lands. A Community Deer Forum held in June 2024 at Malmsbury Town Hall offered people in the region a chance to learn from experts and other landholders about tackling the emerging impacts of feral deer around their homes, farms and nature reserves.

We partnered with the Victorian Deer Control Community Network, Malmsbury District Landcare and the Victorian Government to deliver this event. With over 80 registrants, it offered a chance to hear from a diverse range of practitioners and stakeholders on the damage feral deer cause in the region, their legal status, what is currently being done to deal with this threat and what more can be done.

Our Large Network of Partners

Government

City of Greater Bendigo
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
Macedon Ranges Shire Council
Melbourne Water
North Central Catchment Management Authority
Parks Victoria

Philanthropic Trusts and Foundations

Alf and Meg Steel Fund
Brian D Newman Foundation for the Environment
Isaacson-Davis Foundation
Ross Trust
Sidney Myer Fund
TAP Fund
The Capricorn Foundation
The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
The Ian Potter Foundation

Educational institutions

La Trobe University
Seymour College

Environmental and Professional Organisations

BEAM
Birdlife Australia
Buloke Northern Grampians Landcare
Cassinia Environmental
Great Eastern Ranges
Greenhill to Black Hill Alliance
Heathcote Area Nature Group
Hughes Creek Landcare
Inhaus Design
Malmsbury Landcare
Landcare Victoria
Trust for Nature
Victorian Deer Control Community Network
WIRES
WWF Australia

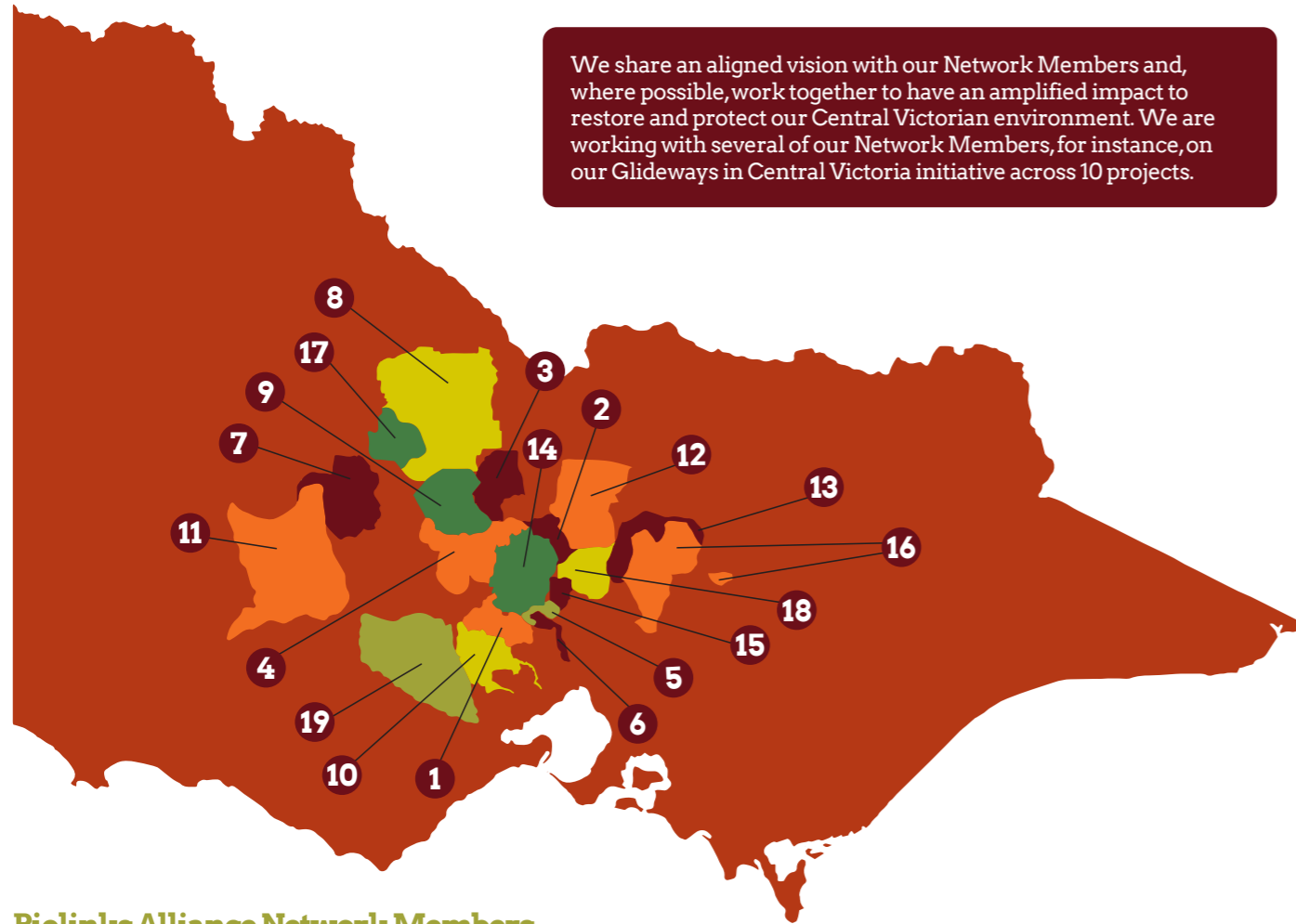


Opposite: This page image: Native Flying Duck Orchid.
Image credit: Cameron O'Mara, Biolinks Alliance Project Facilitator

Our Network Members

With 19 Network Members (environmental groups and network organisations) that extend from the Grampians across to the Australian Alps, and from the Dividing Ranges to the Murray River - together, we can help climate proof and restore ecological function across even more lands.

We share an aligned vision with our Network Members and, where possible, work together to have an amplified impact to restore and protect our Central Victorian environment. We are working with several of our Network Members, for instance, on our Glideways in Central Victoria initiative across 10 projects.



Biolinks Alliance Network Members

Our Network Members extend from the Grampians across to the Australian Alps, and from the Dividing Ranges to the Murray River.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Ballarat Environment Network | 8 Loddon Plains Landcare Network | 15 Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network |
| 2 BEAM Mitchell Environment Group | 9 Mid-Loddon Sub Catchment Management Network | 16 Upper Goulburn Landcare Network |
| 3 Bendigo and Districts Environment Council | 10 Moorabool Landcare Network | 17 Wedderburn Conservation Management Network |
| 4 Connecting Country | 11 Project Platypus | 18 Whroo Goldfields Conservation Management Network |
| 5 Federation of Environment and Horticulture Macedon Ranges | 12 South West Goulburn Landcare Network | 19 Wombat Forestcare |
| 6 Jacksons Creek EcoNetwork | 13 Strathbogie Ranges Conservation | |
| 7 Kara Kara Conservation Management Network | 14 Upper Campaspe Landcare Network | |

Opposite: Brush-tailed Phascogales are considered a vulnerable species. We are working to protect them as part of our Glideways in Central Victoria initiative in collaboration with several of our Network Members. Image credit: Dr. Chris Pocknee, Biolinks Alliance Ecologist



Our team

Board



Brendan Sydes - Chair

Brendan is an environmental lawyer with a background in not-for-profit management, policy advocacy and law reform. He was a principal lawyer and CEO at Environmental Justice Australia from 2005 to 2020. Brendan currently works as National Biodiversity Policy Adviser to the Australian Conservation Foundation. He is a Senior Honorary Fellow of the University of Melbourne Law School where he teaches environmental law. Brendan is President of the Committee of Management of Connecting Country, and a member of the Research and Conservation Committee of Birdlife Australia.



Peter Evans - Secretary

Peter is an experienced business manager, consultant and nonexecutive director working to build sustainably successful organisations. Peter joined Biolinks as Secretary in 2019 to contribute to Central Victoria achieving balance between its natural environment and human use. Peter trained as an electronic engineer and holds an MBA and Master of Leadership from Deakin University. He is the Principal of Tunaungana Consulting, Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia and Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Pat Scanlon - Treasurer

Pat is a qualified chartered accountant who has over 20 years international and Australian experience in financial accounting, reporting, internal controls and professional services. His experience ranges from not for-profit organisations, small and medium sized organisations and large organisations both in the public and private sectors. Pat currently works as a senior manager for a consultancy in Melbourne CBD.



Jennifer Rolland - Vice Chair

With a PhD in Immunology and a long career in biomedical science research and education, Jennifer values scientific-based knowledge and well-structured research programs to inform optimal strategies for the protection of our natural areas and wildlife. She regularly volunteers for several environment restoration and monitoring projects around the country. With her partner, she enjoys and manages a Trust for Nature-covenanted bush property in Western Victoria.



Brian Walters AM SC - Member

Brian Walters is a former barrister. He practised as a silk from 2001-2021. In 1981, he co-founded Wild, Australia's wilderness adventure magazine, and served as a director for 25 years. He was a board member of Liberty Victoria for over ten years, serving as president from 2004-2006. He has worked with many environmental groups. In 2017 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia 'for significant service to conservation through environmental protection law, and to human rights advocacy'. He is now a writer.

Opposite: Red Box leaf in the rain
Image credit: Cameron O'Mara, Biolinks Alliance Project Facilitator

Our team

Staff



Dr Sophie Bickford
Executive Director

Sophie is a conservation ecologist deeply motivated to apply her expertise to real world ecological-social problems. After completing her PhD at The University of Adelaide, Sophie spent 7 years researching distribution patterns of biodiversity at the CSIRO Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research. She was appointed a Lecturer in Biogeography at Monash University in 2007. Sophie worked for Carbon Planet as their Chief Scientist, developing methodologies for conserving ecological-services using climate (carbon) and biodiversity markets. As Executive Director of Biolinks Alliance since 2010, she relishes the challenge of growing an emerging organisation to implement large-scale and tenure blind conservation in Victoria.



Dr Paul Foreman
Ecologist and Conservation Strategy

Paul is an ecologist and botanist with over 30 years of experience in a range of technical, strategic and management roles across Victoria and Australia. Paul has worked in State and Local Government, as well as Trust for Nature and Bush Heritage Australia, and established his own consulting business in 2009. He recently completed his PhD, researching the role of Aboriginal burning in grasslands and was the inaugural Chair for Biolinks Alliance.



Chris Pocknee
Landscape and Biodiversity Conservation Ecologist

Chris is an ecologist with a passion for understanding the threats facing native fauna and ecosystems, and how we can address these issues. Chris completed his Master of Science at the University of Melbourne in 2017 before undertaking an internship with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy in NSW. Chris completed his PhD in 2022 at the University of Queensland, where he studied the impacts of fire and feral cats on the endangered northern bettong.



Ellie McKenna
Relations Manager

Ellie joined the Biolinks Alliance team in 2019, after volunteering with the organisation. With a background in administration, customer relations and events, Ellie focuses on developing mutually beneficial supporter relationships that are driven to deliver on the ground impact for our environment. Throughout her career, Ellie has been involved in a variety of projects from grassroots to corporate and international events. Growing up on a farm in the Macedon Ranges, she holds a deep connection to the Central Victorian landscape and its communities.



Sasha Dobson
Programs Manager

With ten years experience in agencies and production houses, Sasha's career has ranged across operations, team leadership and project management. Her experience working for and alongside some of Australia's best creatives has provided her with exemplary business efficiency, process and management skills. Sasha has delivered awardwinning projects for top tier clients both across Australia and internationally.



Wanda Millicer
Bookkeeper

Wanda has been part of the Biolinks Alliance team for close to 4 years - bringing her 20 year experience as a bookkeeper and BAS Agent, and a keen eye for detail and engaging manner. Wanda has volunteered with numerous Landcare and Friends groups in Central Victoria, and has a deep passion for conservation and sustainability.



Georgia Gross
Senior Communications Manager

Georgia has a background in journalism and more than 15 years marketing communications experience in a multitude of sectors, including sustainability-focused enterprises, government and large not-for-profits both across Australia and the Asia Pacific. With a commitment to delivering tangible and sustainable results and a focus on developing sound stakeholder relationships, Georgia believes in the vital importance of creating strategic and compelling communications and content that supports, involves and mobilises people to act.



Cameron O'Mara
Heathcote Local to Landscape Facilitator

Having worked professionally in bushland management for six years, Cameron is now applying the knowledge and skills gained in this field to larger scale landscape restoration projects. Managing environmental projects across the Mornington Peninsula Shire and City of Monash has allowed Cameron to see the broader picture of how ecological restoration should look. Bringing an interest in environmental anthropology through study at Deakin University, Cameron understands the values people hold can help us see how we all relate to our natural environment.



Sarah Smith
Network Member and Operations Manager

With over 20 years working for not-for-profits and start-up businesses, Sarah brings extensive experience in operations, customer service and project management. Sarah is passionate about regenerating landscapes and has studied Conservation and Eco-system Management. Utilising her background in strategy, stakeholder engagement and systems development, she is focused on empowering and enabling collaboration with our Network Members.



"The walking tour was well planned to showcase a range of different interventions and the knowledge and passion of staff was captivating and informative..."

Attendee at the Walk and Talk tour of our Spring Plains Watershed Repair Pilot Project as part of our Heathcote Local to Landscape Community Celebration

Our Supporters

Thank you to everyone who generously supported us financially, as well as those who volunteered your time and resources this year. Without you, our work is not possible to urgently climate proof our lands. We are resolute we can still change the future for our Central Victorian creatures and landscapes from tragedy to restoration - if together, we act now.

Donors and Foundations

Jennifer Anderson • Jeffrey Appleton
Christine Baines • Anda Banikos
John Barkla & Alison Street
Sophie Bickford • Joni Bunn
Sally Burdziejko • Liz Butler
The Capricorn Foundation • Sally Carr
Tanya Castleman • Bill Cook
Isaacson-Davis Foundation • Lynn Evans
Fitzgerald Frisby Landscape Architecture
TAP Fund • Mandy Gange
Emma Gee • Thelma Gill Rosier
Meredith Gould • Georgia Gross
Tim Gross • Anthony Hyde
Chris Johnston • Marigold Joyner

Chris Joyner • Matthew Luttick
Leon McEncroe • Bruce McInnes
Ellie McKenna • Leon Metzeling & Julia Reed
Sidney Myer Fund
Brian D Newman Foundation for the Environment
Kristian Nikolaidis • Gayle Osborne
Penelope & Hilary Roberts • Greg Ralton
Jennifer Rolland • Dave Sag
Miranda Sampson • Helen Scott
Barbara Semler • Carolynne Shandley
Megan Sharkie • Liz Spillane
Alf and Meg Steel • Jye Tebble
John van Tiggelen • Deborah Whithear
Jenny Widdows • Rob Youl

Ambassadors

Brian Snape

In Kind Supporters

Lindy Shelmerdine • Annette Rypalski
Bertram Lobert • Biolinks Alliance Board
Chris Joyner • David Moffat

Gayle Osborne • John Walter
Kathy Holowko • Lady Marigold Southey
Tania Nally • Trevor Speirs

“Without a doubt a very generous donation from the Sidney Myer Fund, championed by Lindy Shelmerdine, was critical to our success this year.

Lindy, along with David Moffat and Lady Marigold Southey, also generously gifted us the use of office, events and storage space at their Tooborac property. This has given our Biolinks Alliance team a crucial place to come together to strategise, collaborate and bond.

It is committed individuals doing what they can do that is leading and is fundamental to the change we so desperately need for nature.”

Dr Sophie Bickford, Biolinks Alliance Executive Director

Opposite: Large Old Paddock Trees provide habitat and food sources for threatened birds, mammals and reptiles, and are vital landscape connectors. Image credit: Georgia Gross, Biolinks Alliance Senior Communications Manager



Treasurer's Report

Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance (CVBA) Treasurer's report – year ended 30 June 2024

I am pleased to present the attached CVBA financial report for the financial year ended 30 June 2024

The financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (the Act). This report has been prepared by me in my capacity as a qualified professional accountant. The Board has determined that the Alliance is not a reporting entity.

Financial summary for 2023/24

The CVBA reported a deficit of \$43,875 for the 2023/24 financial year (2022/23–deficit of \$76,219), with income of \$547,218 being offset by expenditure of \$591,093.

The main source of income for CVBA came from donations and grants. Fee income, interest income and other income totalling \$22k was also received.

Income from donations totalled \$304k which included a substantial donation of \$155k from the Sidney Myer fund. The unwavering support from Biolinks Alliance's dedicated and generous donors remains the cornerstone of our financial stability. This funding empowers Biolinks Alliance to have a significant continuing impact. The full listing of donors is stated in the annual report.

Grant income was \$222k comprising grants received from The Ian Potter Foundation \$150k, DELWEP \$33k, The Capricorn Foundation \$30k The Foundation for Regional Renewal \$7k and, WIRES \$2k.

Major items of expenditure were as follows

- Wages and Salaries of \$331k
- Project Expenses and Project Equipment of \$121k
- Superannuation of \$36k
- Contractor Expenses of \$34k
- Depreciation of \$16k
- Workcover of \$7k
- Accounting Fees of \$7k
- Advertising and Marketing of \$6k
- Volunteer Expenses \$6k
- Software and IT \$6k
- Motor Vehicle Expenses \$6k

Closing funds at 30 June 2024 were \$428k (2023: \$442k) and net assets (total assets less liabilities) totalled \$389k (2023: \$433k)

At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due

Patrick J. Scanlon

Pat Scanlon FCA
November 2024

Balance Sheet

Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance Inc. As at 30 June 2024

| Account | 30 Jun 2024 | 30 Jun 2023 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Assets | | |
| Bank | | |
| Expense Account | 1,297 | 3,033 |
| Main Account | 88,817 | 123,605 |
| Public Fund Account | 338,309 | 315,357 |
| Total Bank | 428,423 | 441,995 |
| Current Assets | | |
| Accounts Receivable | 5,566 | 3,645 |
| Prepayments | 1,770 | 1,449 |
| Total Current Assets | 7,336 | 5,094 |
| Fixed Assets | | |
| Computer Equipment | 7,502 | 7,502 |
| Motor Vehicle | 44,922 | 44,922 |
| Plant & Equipment | 3,568 | 0 |
| Less Accumulated Depreciation of Plant & Equipment | (892) | 0 |
| Less Accumulated Depreciation on Computer Equipment | (7,502) | (7,502) |
| Less Accumulated Depreciation on Motor Vehicle | (16,222) | (1,248) |
| Total Fixed Assets | 31,376 | 43,674 |
| Total Assets | 467,135 | 490,763 |
| Liabilities | | |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Accounts Payable | 9,554 | 27,386 |
| PAYG Withholdings Payable | 5,000 | 6,700 |
| Prepaid Grant | 44,000 | 0 |
| Provision for Annual Leave | 9,604 | 14,315 |
| Provision for Leave in Lieu | 1,339 | 1,339 |
| Superannuation Payable | 2,662 | 3,345 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 72,159 | 53,085 |
| Non-current Liabilities | | |
| Provision for Long Service Leave | 5,816 | 4,643 |
| Total Non-current Liabilities | 5,816 | 4,643 |
| Total Liabilities | 77,975 | 57,728 |
| Net Assets | 389,160 | 433,035 |
| Equity | | |
| Current Year Earnings | (43,875) | (76,219) |
| Retained Earnings | 433,035 | 509,254 |
| Total Equity | 389,160 | 433,035 |

Profit and Loss

Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance Inc.
For the year ended 30 June 2024

| Account | 2024 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Trading Income | | |
| Donations | 303,645 | 160,075 |
| Fee income | 4,570 | 9,999 |
| Grant Income | 222,025 | 492,034 |
| Interest Income | 3,578 | 3,366 |
| Other Income | 13,400 | 51,762 |
| Total Trading Income | 547,218 | 717,236 |
| Operating Expenses | | |
| Accounting Fees | 7,030 | 9,833 |
| Advertising & Marketing | 6,217 | 10,691 |
| Auditing Expenses | 3,190 | 2,200 |
| Bank Fees | 183 | 159 |
| Catering | 2,820 | 5,902 |
| Consulting & Accounting | 0 | 27 |
| Contractors - Other | 34,076 | 70,996 |
| Depreciation | 15,866 | 3,365 |
| Donation Expenses | 1,346 | 974 |
| Employee Entitlements | (3,538) | 4,850 |
| Events | 2,210 | 3,213 |
| Freight & Courier | 15 | 155 |
| Fundraising Expenses | 381 | 4,898 |
| General Expenses | 0 | 325 |
| Gifts | 256 | 291 |
| Insurance | 1,450 | 1,030 |
| Less Services Aust Reimbursements | 0 | (14,624) |
| Low value equipment | 383 | 25,230 |
| Meals & Entertainment | 41 | 344 |
| Motor Vehicle Expenses | 5,584 | 233 |
| Office Expenses | 1,657 | 3,109 |
| Postage & Mail | 233 | 153 |
| Printing & Stationery | 728 | 583 |
| Project Equipment | 733 | 3,134 |
| Project expense | 120,096 | 152,365 |
| Repairs and Maintenance | 318 | 0 |
| Software & IT | 5,648 | 6,287 |
| Staff Amenities | 70 | 310 |
| Staff Mileage | 1,153 | 11,849 |
| Superannuation | 36,067 | 42,388 |
| Telephone & Internet | 1,668 | 1,423 |
| Training | 278 | 3,924 |
| Travel & Accommodation | 1,222 | 2,184 |
| Venue & equipment hire | 88 | 11,151 |
| Volunteer Expenses | 5,900 | 0 |
| Wages - GOV PPL | 0 | 14,624 |
| Wages and Salaries | 330,508 | 403,700 |
| Workcover | 7,216 | 6,179 |
| Total Operating Expenses | 591,093 | 793,455 |
| Net (Deficit)/Surplus | (43,875) | (76,219) |

Audit Report

Independent auditor's report to the members of Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance Inc.
For the year ended 30th June, 2024

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of CENTRAL VICTORIAN BIOLINKS ALLIANCE INC, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory information and the responsible person's declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of CENTRAL VICTORIAN BIOLINKS ALLIANCE INC has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act)*, including:

- giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
- complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the registered entity in accordance with ACNC Act and ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Information Other than the Financial Report and Auditor's Report Thereon

The committee members are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the registered entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024 but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information; we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the registered entity's financial reporting responsibilities under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee members of CENTRAL VICTORIAN BIOLINKS ALLIANCE INC are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the ACNC Act and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the registered entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but it is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

Audit Report

Cont.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- a. identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- b. Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.
- c. Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- d. Conclude on the appropriateness of the committees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.

- e. Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



McBain McMartin & Co



Simon Aukstin
Partner

SIGNED this 13th day of November 2024

Mc Bain Mc Martin & Co
Chartered Accountants
Audit & Assurance Services

Po Box 82 Balwyn
Level 1, 123 Whitehorse Road,
Victoria, Australia 3103

ABN 26 028 714 960

Get Involved

Join us to cultivate resilient lands across
Central Victoria and beyond

Subscribe. 

Volunteer. 

Donate. 



Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance Inc. ABN: 54 216 785 599 Trading as Biolinks Alliance
PO Box 162 Kyneton VIC 3444 | T: 0422 227 471 | E: info@biolinksalliance.org.au www.biolinksalliance.org.au

Follow Us   