

# FAME

SAVING OUR ENDANGERED FLORA & FAUNA



## On The Brink

Issue

# 02

2017

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## From the CEO

### The importance of creating awareness ...

FAME aims to give a voice to endangered species that could otherwise vanish with little fanfare. If the current rate of extinction continues in Australia, our youth may eventually look at species like the Tasmanian Devil and Western Quoll in the same light they look at the dinosaurs or our very own Tasmanian Tiger – as mere skeletons and pictures from a time gone by. As we believe we are caretakers of this planet for the next generation, we, as part of this role, are responsible for creating awareness of the plight of Australia's flora and fauna, particularly among the younger generation.

We therefore were delighted when a Leader of the East Hills Girls Brigade in NSW (pictured) contacted us. She was enquiring about the possibility of gaining information in relation to Australia's endangered species in order to teach her cadets about the range of Australia's flora and fauna. We were thrilled to assist and prepared a number of information packs and goodies to send, which the girls were excited to receive and investigate.

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**We, as caretakers of this planet, are responsible for creating awareness of the plight of Australia's flora and fauna, particularly among the younger generation.**



The Girls Brigade is only a small, yet important example of the interest in conservation amongst our youth. I received a lovely letter from 12-year-old Emma who wrote to us about her passion for animal conservation and asking what she could do to help out. She explained that she donated her money to Devil Ark on a recent visit to the Australian Reptile Park and purchased items that contributed part profits back to the Park.

These examples are but a few of the continual correspondence we receive.

The FAME Board recently approved funding of two new projects in 2017/2018 to sit alongside the Western Quoll/Brush-tailed Possum reintroduction, Optimising the Felixer, and our continued ongoing support of Devil Ark.

The first, a small creative project, will delve into Australia's most at risk flora and fauna by creating imagery that promotes the unique beauty and fragility, but most of all urgency of their plight. This will be coupled with facts and information on each species to stimulate awareness of conservation through educating the general public. In line with FAME's strategic plan, the visual

project will be an important tool in raising awareness in support of all the valuable work that both has been done, and still needs to be done, within conservation. More on this wonderful visual project is available on page 5.

The second, overviewed on page 4, is a project that sees FAME partnering with the Australian Government on a two-year project to determine whether detector dogs are more effective in dealing with the feral cat problem than current methods. Centred around habitats in WA where Numbats roam in unfenced reserves, the project also has the potential to benefit other threatened fauna including Woylies, Chuditch, western Ring-tailed Possums and Mallee Fowl. We are very excited to share these projects with you.

Finally, as the fiscal year comes to an end, we cannot thank you enough for your ongoing financial support of the work we do. The Board chooses projects consciously and we continually assess business processes to remain operationally agile ensuring your donor dollar is used wisely and for maximum impact.

Tracy McNamara

**PS: THANK YOU to you all for the positive words (we were quite overwhelmed) in your letters and emails about the last edition of 'On The Brink'. We have taken your comments on board and hope we have adequately addressed issues you highlighted. Please feel free to let us know any other improvements you would like to see.**

## About FAME

FAME is an independent, non-profit organisation based in South Australia but operating across the country. Donations to FAME are tax deductible under relevant Australian legislation.

The FAME Newsletter is published by the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species Ltd.

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the content within this newsletter. We apologise for any omissions or errors that may have occurred.



Welbourn O'Brien

Welbourn O'Brien is proudly associated with FAME as we work together toward sustainable biological diversity.

Follow us on social media



## Update: Western Quoll (Idnya) and Brush-tailed Possum (Virda)

**Idnya and Virda are the Adnyamathanha names for the Western Quoll and Brush-tailed Possum.**

In late March, Quoll trappings were undertaken with very positive results. 4% capture rate up from 2.8% in November 2016, therefore there is no evidence of population decline over the summer.

The March trap monitoring showed a 46% increase in the number of individual Quolls captured since November 2016 up from 24 to 35 animals. The individual capture rate was 4%, up from 2.8% in November and higher than is typical for similar Quoll monitoring across populations in Western Australia.

This does not indicate an increase in the population as the breeding season finished prior to the November trapping. However, the most likely explanation is that food is harder to find with individuals covering more ground and more likely to overcome their caution to investigate the baits. The mobility of the new recruits to the population is also likely to be higher as they would have been much younger in November, with many still likely to be returning to their birth dens.

The project now sits at a critical point. Although the quolls and possums have been reintroduced, and by all accounts

numbers are steady, for long-term success, the numbers need to continue to grow.

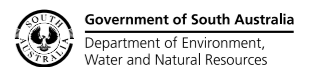
In 2017/18 we will enter the most important part of the project – sustaining the numbers in the wild, which relies on continued feral cat management and ongoing maintenance over the next few years to ensure the best possible chance of their longevity.

### Program Partners

The Idnya and Virda reintroduction is a partnership between the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species (FAME) and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR).

Western Australia's Department of Parks and Wildlife donated the Idnya from their conservation parks. Australian Wildlife Conservancy donated the Virda from their sanctuary at Yookamurra in the Murraylands.

The project would not have come to fruition if it were not for the many donors, land managers and partners of Bounceback for their support and generosity. For this we say thank you.



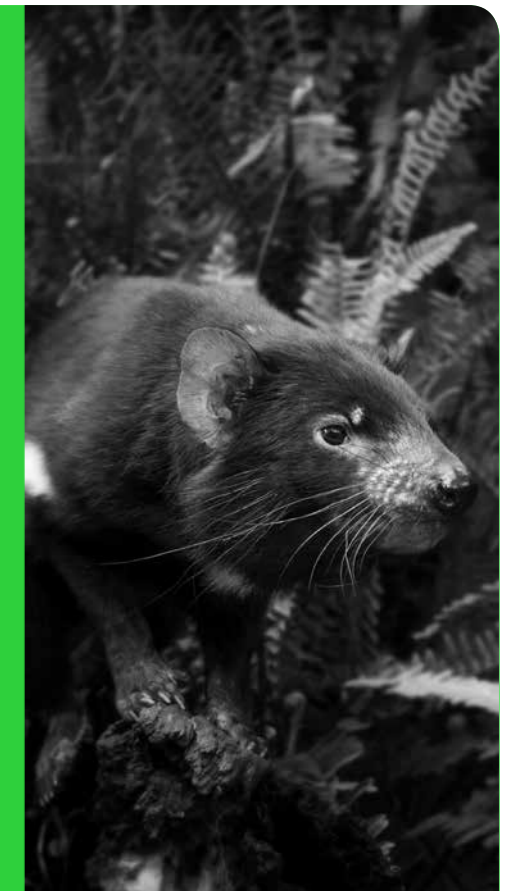
## Update: Devil Ark

Some of our longer-term members will recall that FAME was instrumental in helping establish Devil Ark, an organisation based on the vision of the Director of Australian Reptile Park (ARP), John Weigel to save the Tasmanian Devil. Our partners in providing seed funding in 2011 included ARP and the Zoo Aquarium Association (ZAA).

It is a matter of great pride to be involved in such a critical project. In summary, high in the hills of the Barrington Tops in NSW Devil Ark is working to save the Tasmanian Devil on mainland Australia. The iconic Tasmanian marsupial is at serious risk of extinction from the highly contagious devil facial tumour disease (DFTD).

Devil Ark's ambitious breeding program might be the key to its survival. Located at an altitude of 1,350 metres in the Barrington Tops, Devil Ark provides the perfect breeding environment for Devils. The Tasmanian-like vegetation and cool, wet and snowy conditions ensure the Devils feel right at home! They first arrived in 2011 and, since then, five successful breeding seasons have resulted in 150 genetically diverse Devils now in Devil Ark care.

Most recently, FAME supported the Devil Ark crowdfunding project by donating \$10,000. The momentum clearly bore fruit as Devil Ark raised its target of \$375,000 with minutes to spare. Again, thank you to our wonderful members and other supporters.



## Protecting the last remaining wild populations of Numbats

Numbats surely are gorgeous iconic creatures – about 40 centimetres long, including the bushy tail, less than one kilo in weight, a striped pelt, a very fine, pointed muzzle and a sticky tongue that vacuums up perhaps 20,000 termites a day. And, gorgeous or not, like so many natural species in Australia, Numbats are at risk of extinction and again, it's feral cats that pose the existential threat.

FAME is very pleased to announce to all its members and other supporters that it is jointly funding and partnering with the Australian Government on a two-year project to determine whether detector dogs are more effective in dealing with the feral cat problem than current methods.

The Project will be centred on habitats in WA where Numbats roam in unfenced reserves. Importantly, there may be some significant side benefits to the Project as the Numbats' habitat is also home to other threatened fauna including Brush-tailed Bettongs, Western Quolls and Malleefowl.

This Project aligns perfectly with FAME's priorities because it brings partly under our umbrella, not only the Numbat population in areas of WA, but also several other, threatened, species.

A single program with a potential outcome that benefits four priority species in the Federal Government's Threatened Species Strategy is a wonderful involvement for our organisation.

What will man's best friend do? The Project has several parts including:

- Identifying dogs trained to detect feral cats specifically in the Numbats' habitat;
- Objectively measuring the effectiveness of the trained dogs in detecting feral cats; and
- Refining the project as it proceeds to optimise the dogs' effectiveness.

The dogs are not there to tackle feral cats directly; indeed, they will be trained not to do so. Their task will be solely to ensure the handler can identify that a feral cat is nearby or that there is a lot of feral cat activity in an area.

FAME knows that some people become upset at the prospect of a cat being killed but as we constantly remind people, the nexus between a domestic pet and a feral killer is about the same as that of a pet Chihuahua and a wolf. Feral cats are ferocious and efficient killers and they must kill in order to survive. Therefore, unless they are brought under control, the threat to Australian species will remain.

So, if the detector dog project works, what outcomes should we expect?

There are quite a few potential outcomes including a reduced number of feral cats in the Numbats' habitat; greater

understanding of the feral cat population in those areas; an understanding of the value of detector dogs in this critically important endeavour and; of course, Numbats having a better chance of survival.

The project will be overseen by the WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. The overarching goal is simple enough: reduce the pressure on Numbats posed by feral cats. Whether this is achieved will be assessed through continual monitoring undertaken by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions that includes tracking Numbats with radio collars and remote camera surveillance, among other things.

Entities involved or consulted as part of this project include:

- The Australian Government and the Threatened Species Commissioner
- The WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- The Numbat Task Force

Our Board of Directors believes our members and supporters will be very excited and pleased to be a part of this interesting and important project. At the very least, the project will help increase awareness among the general population of the plight of the Numbat and the need never to cease looking for ways to protect threatened species in their own habitats.

We look forward to providing updates as the project evolves.



Woma Python

## Creating awareness for our endangered species

There are many ways to assist the survival of endangered species. You can donate, encourage others to donate, spread the word or volunteer, among other things. At FAME, we're constantly surprised at how the passion to support what we do spurs innovative and interesting ways to promote the plight of our endangered flora and fauna. Enter Sarah Ash.

Sarah, a Principal from gh\_creative on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, is now armed with a small grant from FAME to undertake a year-long project in which she will visit various Australian zoos and photograph and video up to 20 endangered species of flora and fauna.

As Sarah puts it: "Our photographs and videos will capture the beauty and fragility of these species and we will make public access to them easily available. Our aim is to promote greater awareness among the general public of these species' fight for continued existence and, by so doing, to enhance the prospect of stopping any additional extinctions."

Each visual pictorial will have detailed information about the status quo of the species to assist educate the public.

We are delighted to support an innovative way to extend the reach of the organisation's messages. In particular, the availability on social media of high quality edited videos will be very valuable in expanding and informing Australian's of our work.

Sarah's intention is to also apply use of her work onto other platforms – for example, for use in schools, in tourism promotion and within government departments.

## Setting the record straight – Southern Cassowary

Sometimes we make mistakes. In the first Issue of 'On the Brink' in 2017 we produced an endangered species profile on the Southern Cassowary. It has been brought to our attention some of our information was out of date. We stated that there was a population size of approximately 1000, with this number declining. This information was verified from various sources, but what we overlooked was the research undertaken by Dr David Wescott in a 2015 census that puts the population at around 4400.

Graham Harrington, a member of FAME's community wrote to us stating,

"The only other comprehensive census was conducted by Francis Crome, published in 1988 and arrived at a similar estimate. All the other published assessments of a decline in the population were not substantiated by data e.g. Kofron & Chapman, 2006, extrapolated data on death rates to a decline in the population without data on reproductive success. It seems that there has been no substantial change in the population over the last 25 years which leads to the conclusion that the forest is "full" of Cassowaries."

This is fabulous news.

Luke Jackson from the Australian Quoll Conservancy also confirmed our printed population numbers were incorrect and supported the census study of Dr Wescott.

Despite the numbers, the Southern Cassowary still remains classified on the EPBC as endangered.

Thanks to Graham and Luke for advising us of the error. At the time of print, we believed our sources were correct and we apologise for our error.

Tracy McNamara

# Species Profile: Canberra Spider Orchid

http://www.snh.com.au/environments/wild-orchids-broom-caneberraspider-orchid-20101101-13580q.html  
 http://www.environment.gov.au/.../data/assets/pdf\_file/0007/76484/Canberra\_Spider\_Orchid\_Factsheet.pdf

FAME is dedicated to saving our unique native flora as well as our fauna, such as protecting the Spiny Daisy that was previously thought to be extinct. Part of our goal is to raise awareness about endangered species, not just those that we provide philanthropic support directly to the projects, but beyond the scope of the projects as well. This issue we are profiling the critically endangered, **Canberra Spider Orchid**.

According to the ACT Government fact sheet, the Canberra Spider Orchid grows amongst native grasses and low shrubs in open woodland in alpine regions between 645 and 745 metres above sea level. The plant rarely grows over 9cm tall, has a single flower 2cm in diameter that is greenish with reddish-crimson lines and patterns. The plant grows from an underground tuber and flowers in late autumn usually after heavy rains. However, the plant doesn't always flower annually and can remain dormant for years at a time.

## Conservation Status

The Canberra Spider Orchid was listed on EPBC Act List of Threatened Flora in 1995 and recognised as critically endangered. There are currently three known locations where orchids can be found; Mount Majura, Mount Ainslie and the Majura Valley and all are within the Canberra National Park or immediate surrounds.

## Ecological Importance

Orchids in general play an important role in ecosystems and often support unique fauna species that have evolved a symbiotic relationship with a single species of orchid. The fact we know comparatively little about the Canberra Spider Orchid is reason enough to put every effort into its survival.

## Conservation Plan

After the species was recognised as critically endangered, the ACT Government implemented a five-year recovery plan to discover more about the orchids and to protect and maintain their habitat.

As all populations of the Canberra Spider Orchid known to the ACT Government are either in the Canberra National Park or on Defence Department land, this makes the task of monitoring and protecting them substantially easier. Current conservation plans restrict access to the sites where the Spider Orchid is found which gives researchers the freedom to erect cages around flowing plants and study them without interference.

A yearly monitoring program takes place between September and October at all known Spider Orchid sites. The results of the monitoring can sometimes be inconclusive because of the nature of the Spider Orchid and the fact they can go years without flowering.

This makes accurate population estimates difficult to ascertain, however, over the five-year recovery plan from 2010 to 2015 there appeared to be an increase in flowers found at each site. Flowers were also found growing in areas where they previously had not been recorded.

If you know any other interesting Canberra Spider Orchid facts or recent developments please share them with us on our Facebook page or email us on fame@fame.org.au

## Where there's a Will, anything is possible

It seems always a slightly uncomfortable request by charities: 'Remember us in your Will'. It's a reminder of our mortality and something many of us would rather face later in life. But FAME today is a more robust, active and effective organisation precisely because a far-sighted, generous Sydney lady did just that – she remembered animals and their welfare in her Will.

Winifred Violet Scott died on Christmas Day in 1985 and today, 32 years later, some threatened Australian species have a chance at survival because Winifred opted in her Will to favour the welfare of animals and wildlife and the promotion of kindness to animals.

This wonderful lady was one of a family of five. She never married and lived with her mother and sister all her life. She was, according to Mr John Poole, Miss Scott's Solicitor who prepared her Will, a "person of very simple needs ... who lived a simple and seemingly ordinary life."

Mr Poole administers her estate and according to him: "I well remember her coming to my office when I was quite a young solicitor when she gave me instructions to prepare a Will declaring that 'I want to leave my money to animals and wildlife'."

Since 1985, Winifred's wishes have been carried out to the letter and, as result, FAME is one of those organisations that has been able to allocate funds to vital species protection programs. The Trust has played a vital monetary role in the reintroduction of the Western Quoll and Brush-tailed Possum after 50 years of extinction from the Flinders Ranges in South Australia.

It would certainly be true, if Winifred were alive today, she would be heartened and gratified to see her generosity and vision at work.

"By any judgement, Winifred has left a legacy which, because of her far-sightedness, will endure for a very long time," stated FAME CEO, Tracy McNamara.

Winifred left her entire estate for a single cause – the welfare and protection of animals. To an extent, this might be seen as easy because she had no children or family.

"However, even when small amounts are left to charity in a Will, the impact can be huge," said Tracy.

"To use a well-worn phrase – from little things, big things grow – the University of Queensland Fryer Memorial Library had its genesis in a £5.5.0 (or \$11) donation in 1926. For many years, the collection fitted easily into a bookcase; today the Library features more than 100,000 publications and manuscripts."

"The case for philanthropy is persuasive. Far-sighted donations and bequests have filled libraries, conquered illnesses, established hospitals and specialist clinics, inoculated millions, created jobs, housed the homeless, fed orphans, filled art galleries, sustained museums and, even, built the Parkes Radio Telescope.

And, with FAME, you can add 'saved some natural Australian species from extinction' – what a legacy," added Tracy.

Thank you Winifred for your far-sightedness and single-mindedness.

The Editor would like to thank and acknowledge the assistance Mr John L Poole in developing this tribute.



## Award

We are pleased to announce APAC Insider Magazine has recognised the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species as the Best Animal Conservation Organisation in the Australian Enterprise Awards for 2017.

We are proud as an organisation to be recognised in such a way. However the award is not just recognition of FAME's achievements but is acknowledgement and a direct result of the hard work and passion of all those organisations that work with us to ensure the longevity and survival of our precious flora and fauna.

Of course underpinning this work is the dedication, loyalty and ongoing belief every single one of our donors, partners and wider stakeholders have in our organisation. Their ongoing philanthropic support makes what we do a reality.

Thank you – this award is for us all.



## Thank you to our donors who have supported FAME

The projects we undertake could not be possible without the philanthropic support of all our individual and organisational donors. Our work never ends with many species still under pressure and some facing extinction.

FAME's commitment to confront this reality has no boundaries and with the support of all our generous donors and community, slowly, together, we are making a difference.

For this we say THANK YOU.

To make a donation, or give to an individual project, visit fame.org.au, or detach and complete this form and return back to us in the supplied envelope.

## Donation Form

Yes, I would like to assist FAME to continue their work in making a difference to the survival of endangered Australian species.

\$100  \$50  \$250 or \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please direct my support to the following:

Projects presented and chosen by the FAME Board that best advance FAME's vision.

Title  Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Dr / Other

First Name  Surname

Street Address

Suburb  State  Postcode

Home Telephone  Work Telephone

Mobile  Email

## Payment Method

Cheque/money order enclosed and made payable to 'FAME Ltd'.

Credit Card

Please debit my  Mastercard  Visa

Card Number

Expiry Date  /  CCV

Name  Signature

Or Donate online at [www.fame.org.au/donate](http://www.fame.org.au/donate) to choose your particular project of choice.

I prefer that this donation remains anonymous.

Please send me a FAME bookmark.

Please send me information about how to help FAME's endangered species work through my will.

\*All donations over \$2 are tax deductible and we will send you a tax receipt.

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fame.org.au

## Monthly Giving

Unfortunately, FAME's work is never done and never will be. Indeed, despite our successes to date, the list of endangered species in Australia continues to lengthen.

FAME's projects are carefully chosen so that our precious funds are put to work in the most effective way possible. We do not gamble with the financial support of our members and donors because we know when we choose wisely we can have the greatest impact on endangered Australian flora and fauna.

When you give monthly, you become an important part of FAME's ongoing commitment to stop any further extinction and allow the Foundation to allocate foreseeable income to support worthwhile projects that will save endangered wildlife from extinction.

Most of all, you have the satisfaction of knowing that your support will help increase FAME's ability to seek out and support projects that will save endangered flora and fauna from extinction.

For this, we say thank you.

## Automatic Monthly Donation Request Form

\$25<sub>p/m</sub>  \$50<sub>p/m</sub>  \$100<sub>p/m</sub> or \$ \_\_\_\_\_ p/m

Please deduct the above amount from my credit card account every month, commencing: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Title  Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Dr / Other

First Name  Surname

Street Address

Suburb  State  Postcode

Home Telephone  Work Telephone

Mobile  Email

### Credit Card Authority

Please debit monthly my  Mastercard  Visa

Card Number

Expiry Date  /  CCV

Name  Signature

Please complete and return to FAME in the envelope provided.

\*Please note that we will contact you prior to the expiry date on your card in order to update this information.

\*All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

\*A summary of your donations will be sent at the end of each financial year for your records.

SAVING OUR ENDANGERED FLORA & FAUNA

Thank you  
for your  
support!

### Mission

FAME is the only organisation dedicated to helping Australian species most at risk of extinction. FAME seeks to fund on-ground conservation outcomes with a focus on seed-funding and innovation.

### Vision

Our vision is to prevent any further extinction of Australian flora and fauna.

### Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Country

The Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species (FAME) acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

### Core Values

- Commit to conservation and environmental issues.
- Embrace open transparency at all times.
- Display strong, clear corporate governance.
- Maintain inclusiveness with all stakeholders and donors.
- Respect the culture of Indigenous Australians.