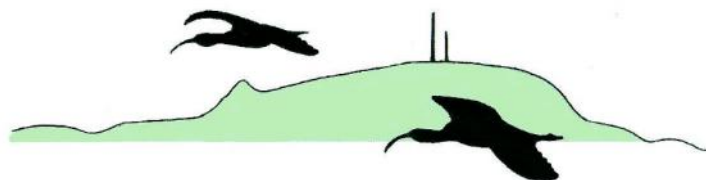


## ORANGE FIELD NATURALIST AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc



NEWSLETTER MARCH 2022

### NEXT MEETING

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30 pm.

**By Zoom**

#### **Mt. Canobolas: Origins, history, and physical volcanology.**

Associate Professor Derek Wyman  
School of Geosciences  
The University of Sydney

### EXCURSION

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March, 9.00 am.

**Exploring the Volcanic Features of Mt Canobolas.**

**Details below**

No Committee Meeting

**Next Meeting – 10<sup>th</sup> March 7.30 pm, by Zoom.**

#### **Mt. Canobolas: Origins, history, and physical volcanology.**

Speaker - Associate Professor Derek Wyman, School of Geosciences, The University of Sydney.

Zoom details will be sent to all members and others on OFNCS's mailing list.

Mt Canobolas is part of a chain of volcanic activity in Eastern Australia. In NSW, the ages of eruptions range from about 50 million years down to about 12 million at Canobolas. The source of magmatism appears to be a mantle plume, although not one the size of the Hawaii plume. Three main episodes are recognized. First came large outpourings of basaltic lava at ~ 11.7 million years ago. These extended over a comparatively wide area to as far as Bathurst. More evolved (higher silica) magmas produced small intrusions around 11.4 million years ago, followed by more basaltic material at 11 million years ago.

Mount Canobolas itself is built up from numerous volcanic flows and smaller amounts of pyroclastic fragmental material that erupted explosively. Some of the magmas also ascended upward within the volcano to form intrusive bodies at shallow depths. These intrusions often metamorphosed the surrounding flows and were associated with local faulting and fracturing as magma chambers emptied and refilled with magma from greater depths.

Derek's main fields of interest are Igneous Rocks, Mineral Deposits, and their interrelationships with large-scale tectonic and geodynamic processes through time. He leads a group of students on an excursion to Mt Canobolas annually, so is quite an authority on the volcano.



*Volcanic dyke along Towac Way, Mt Canobolas. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.*

### **Next Excursion – Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March.**

**Exploring the Volcanic Features of Mt Canobolas.** The excursion will be to Mt Canobolas to look at a number of different features of its volcanic history.

**Meet at 9.00am at Orange High School Bus Bay.** The excursion will be for 3-4 hours so bring morning tea. It will involve some walking, possibly over rough ground, so please wear sturdy shoes and long pants. A jumper might be

a good idea if the weather is cool. If the weather is stormy or wet the excursion will not go ahead.

You will be responsible for the Covid safety of yourself and others who come along. Please do not attend if feeling sick or if you have been a close contact in the week beforehand. If you carpool it is up to the driver and passengers to agree on travelling together and whether masks need to be worn.

### **Annual General Meeting Report** **Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> February, 7.30 pm.**

Meeting by Zoom gave the opportunity for members to join from wherever they were. They linked in, not just from Orange, but from Bathurst, Casino, a caravan in Lithgow and even Queensland.

#### **President's Report**

Geoff Selwood spoke to his 2021 President's Report:

*'The Field Naturalists have again been through another tough year with Covid 19. It is very difficult to guide an organisation past the potholes and over the speed humps when not physically speaking to the members or the executive face to face and observing to see if you are all on the same wavelength or not.*

*During the past 12 months the newsletter has been produced by Rosemary and her band of people who contribute each month. An example of this was the August 2021 edition of 13 pages with a Copperhead Snake on the front page to Aboriginal artefacts found on Mt Canobolas. The newsletter has been able to keep members informed of what is happening in the world of conservation in our area. Jenny Pratten has also kept members and the wider public informed through Facebook. I would like to take opportunity to thank Rosemary, Jenny and Dick Medd, Jenny Pratten, Nigel Hobden, and all of the fantastic people who contribute each month. The Society has made submissions on a range of issues from objecting to the Draft NPWS Cycling Policy and the raising of the Wyangala Dam wall to ones on other water issues, mining proposals and local developments.*

*During the latter part of 2021 Steve Woodhall retired from NPWS and then became a member of OFNCS which was wonderful to have a person with his knowledge of the area to join us.*

*Gaanha-bula Mt Canobolas .... yes, the previous Orange City Council were able to push ahead with their request to the State*

*Government to have the development escalated to a state significant development between the local government election and the newly elected council taking up the reins. Naturally this has caused a stir and members of the OFNCS and CCA are continuing to collect information and are busy asking questions about the short comings of the documents, the data used, and the councils work to ruin a fantastic natural area for a minority group.*

*Where do I see OFNCS going in the next 12 months?*

- *First of all, assist CCA to stop the mountain bike tracks from going ahead in the Mt Canobolas Reserve.*
- *I hope our monthly meetings and excursions are able to be conducted face to face. I do not think this will happen in the near future and we will try to use Zoom for talks.*
- *Keep up the great work of enticing new members which then enables the organisation to keep powering ahead.*
- *Ensure that our meetings/talks and excursions are of great interest to our members.*

*I would like to thank everyone for their assistance over the past 12 months and let us keep going ahead.'*

**Treasurer** Dick Medd noted that OFNCS funds remained stable with income matching expenditure over the 12 months. It was pleasing to see that membership had risen to 60 people.

A vote of thanks was also made to Rosemary Stapleton, for the newsletter and keeping members up to date during the year.

Most members of the committee were happy to continue in their positions and were nominated, seconded, and elected unopposed. Nick King stood down from the committee after 13 years. Thanks, Nick, for your knowledge and the contribution you have made. Peter Toedter was welcomed back onto the committee.

The election results were:

- President: Geoff Selwood
- Vice-President: Nigel Hobden
- Secretary: Rosemary Stapleton
- Treasurer: Richard Medd
- Assistant Treasurer: Jenny Medd
- Newsletter Editor: Rosemary Stapleton

- Public Officer: Nigel Hobden
- Publicity: Jenny Pratten
- General Committee Members: Helmut Berndt, Alison Ford, and Peter Toedter
- Website Administrator: Helmut Berndt
- Central West Environment Council (CWEC) Representatives: Membership of CWEC entitles OFNCS to have two representatives. Rosemary Stapleton and Nigel Hobden were elected unopposed.

Once the AGM formalities were over Nigel facilitated a presentation of recent photographs submitted by members. They showed the diversity of nature and landscapes that members have an interest in, from birds to orchids, fungi, insects, and landscapes.

Cilla, Jenny Medd, and John Zimmer, spoke to their photos taken around Orange. We wondered how John Hansen could capture such great photos of bird behaviour. Steve Woodhall showed us images from camera traps in Killonbutta Reserve that he had set up when NPWS Ranger.



*White-winged Choughs caught on camera in 2018 at Killonbutta. Photo Steve Woodhall.*

Col Bower contributed orchid photos of newly defined species as well as some local species whose names had changed recently. There was a 'Wow' after we flew over Ploughman's Wetland courtesy of Neil Jones's new drone. Murray and Vicki shared images from Mt Gambier and threatened species from other countries kept at Mogo Zoo. Rosemary and Cath had a variety of all things such as mallee landscapes, artefacts, orchids, and insects. The show ended with Nigel's stunning shots of his drive up the Darling River and on into Queensland. A fitting end were his night starscapes from Barry. Thanks to all contributors. If you missed it take a look at the photos on the OFNCS website.



*Racing across the Queensland outback. Photo Nigel Hobden.*

**Last Excursion: Picnic and spotlighting at Federal Falls Picnic Area, Mt Canobolas SCA, 13<sup>th</sup> February.**

*Report by Jenny Medd & Nigel Hobden; photos as acknowledged in captions.*

Blessed with a fine, clear, and relatively still evening, our group of 12 participants, led by Nigel, enjoyed their assorted meals and various wonderfully relaxed and lengthy chats before the business end of the evening kicked off. Our group included two very new members, Penny & Tony, as well as Sandra and Glen's daughter. Unfortunately, our local ranger, Jack Fry was unable to join us.



*Helena Griffiths, Sandra Chrystall and John Zimmer being shown photos by Nigel Hobden of his recent outback trip. Photo Jenny Medd.*

As usual the welcoming committee of local roos arrived to inspect us, although this year it was only what appeared to be one family group who came close by; many others were seen or heard in the surrounding bush after dark. Microbats were also quite active before nightfall, although few were observed after we set off with the spotlights.



*One of the picnic's welcoming committee.  
Photo Tony Caine.*

After Nigel ran through the spotlighting protocols, we broke into two groups to work the tracks at either end of the campground. Later the groups combined at the gate to wander down the road towards Towac. Ultimately, we didn't get to cover a huge area over the time spent looking (upwards of an hour and a half), though we did ensure everyone had the chance for a good look when animals were spotted - especially at the Greater Gliders!



*The two Greater Gliders seen near Federal Falls Picnic Area. Photo Nigel Hobden.*

The best sightings were in the two larger trees close by the campground gate and then in the bush on the opposite side of the road. All within a range of less than 100 metres.

The final tally included: 4 Ringtail Possums, 4 Brushtail Possums, lots of stars blinking through the canopies and best of all, a pair of Greater Gliders. No-one managed to spot a Planarian Worm, though at least one Leopard Slug was observed, as well as a Tawny Frogmouth and a Scorpion. A Southern Boobook was heard quite distinctly but not sighted. The International Space Station was also noted, tracking NW to SE at 8.56 pm for 7 minutes.

Most sincere thanks go to Nigel who led the excursion. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening, ending (with no complaints!) much later than the proposed 9pm finish. It was suggested that such outings should be held, even informally, more often, perhaps regularly, to contribute more fully to our knowledge of the nightlife on the Mountain.

### **OFNCS Committee News**

The committee met before the AGM. A key decision was to fund an Arboreal mammal survey in Mt Canobolas SCA if it could not be funded by NPWS. The aim of the survey is to create a baseline with a view to establish regular monitoring for threatened species such as the Greater Glider.

OFNCS submitted an objection to the Wilpinjong Coal Pty Ltd Exploration Licence Application No: 6415. The proposed exploration area was between the village of Wollar and Goulburn River National Park. A detailed submission was also made about the draft Central West Orana Regional Plan 2041. While the OFNCS submission welcomed the objective focusing on the environment many of the other objectives encouraged significant growth and development that would result in damage to and deterioration of the environment.

OFNCS monthly talks will return to face-to-face meetings as soon as possible. The option of also providing talks by Zoom will be tried. This will also allow us to hear from expert speakers who are unable to travel to Orange, such as Derek Wyman for the March talk.

### **Mt Canobolas Update**

*Text by Rosemary Stapleton.*

On a recent walk along the Nature Trail, I was surprised to see how dry the landscape was. Many trees and shrubs were dropping leaves, and mosses were dry and shrivelled. However, the recovery from the fire, which was just over 4 years ago, was evident everywhere. The shrubs are re-establishing on the rocky slopes where the soil hasn't eroded. The acacia and eucalypt regrowth is so dense in some places it is impossible to walk through.

It has been pleasing to see NPWS contractors conducting weed spraying. The redevelopment of the Summit will commence on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March. The summit road will be closed for several months. Please check NPWS alerts and look at the electronic signboards.

## **Canobolas Conservation Alliance Update**

*Report by Jenny Medd.*



The CCA responded to the NPWS Mountain Biking Strategy documents with a very lengthy submission, in late January. As usual, it remains to be seen just how much influence such submissions will have on the final strategy.

We have continued to monitor the progress of the Mt Canobolas Mountain Bike Trails Project on the NSW Government's Planning Portal and persisted with requests for access to documents from Orange City Council (OCC). Although the latter has now set up a dedicated web-page: <https://www.orange.nsw.gov.au/mt-canobolas-mountain-bike-trail-project/>, it is sadly still lacking in up-to-date material, with OCC's Communications Officer unable to advise when documents will be loaded; the most recent is from July 2021. Earlier this month the NSW Government's Planning Secretary issued Orange City Council with the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs), which guides the Environmental Impact Statement that OCC must now produce. All pertinent documents can be downloaded from:

<https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/mount-canobolas-mountain-bike-trails>

A CCA update was presented at the recent Central West Environment Council meeting. Members continue to join ECCO on their stand at the Farmers Markets to promote the CCA, while others keep up orchid searches in the SCA. Results of these and other sightings are now being recorded on Bionet. Planning for future strategies and activities continues.

A volunteer to take on the task of webmaster is still needed; not a hugely onerous task at this point in time, however, anyone who could help would be welcomed.

### **Central West Environment Council (CWEC)**

*Report by Rosemary Stapleton, OFNCS representative to CWEC.*

A CWEC meeting and AGM was held on 6<sup>th</sup> February, with nine environment groups joining by Zoom. This year is CWEC's 30<sup>th</sup> year.

Despite wishing to step down Cilla was re-elected as President. The other members of the executive will also continue with Bev Smiles, as

Vice President, Nick King as Secretary and Cathy Merchant as Treasurer.

Group reports highlighted the usual issues of climate change, mining, water, and inappropriate developments.

There was concern from Bathurst that new requirements for solar farms were making it harder for projects outside of the Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) to get off the ground. People from Mudgee were concerned that while renewable energy generation was positive the corridors to get power from solar/wind farms to the coast was destroying remnant woodland habitat. This was especially so if the powerlines were along road easements.

A representative from Rylstone reported that cracking and sink holes had appeared at Mt Airlie. Efforts to remediate them were unsuccessful. These cracks and sink holes were due to 'mini-wall' mining which has resulted in five times more subsidence than expected. The same problems are likely to happen at The Drip. Groups were encouraged to write objecting to the coal mining exploration licence application at Wilpinjong Mine.

Recent changes in how Water NSW is run have meant that the proposed upgrade/heightening to Gin Gin Weir is now being considered as the Macquarie Water Security Project. A new business case will be developed from scratch and will consider other options. For the Wyangala Dam wall raising project a search of government documents has found that the Commonwealth funding timelines had not been met by NSW. The implications of this are unknown. Concerns were expressed about the recent granting of floodplain harvesting licences and the large amounts of water involved.

### **Interesting Links and Resources**

**Voices of the Capertee Valley** from Jenny Medd. <https://youtu.be/esGb3STZ9-g>

**Platypus Toolkit.** Haidee Edwards passed on this link to a toolkit to help spot, record and enjoy Platypus in the wild.

<https://www.acf.org.au/platy-project-toolkit>

### **New Bird Hides at Gum Swamp Forbes**

*Text and photos Rosemary Stapleton.*

For some birders Gum Swamp at Forbes is a regular stop when heading south along the Newell Highway or if just wanting a day out to

check out the ducks and waterbirds. The area has had a major upgrade with 3 or 4 two story bird hides (below) being built, a new track and some sculptures added. These are in addition to the fabulous goanna sculpture. Access is now from the road to the west of the swamp.



Forbes Shire Council has also placed some wonderful metal sculptures (below) in the lakeside park on Sir Francis Forbes Drive to the north of the road from Orange.



### Dates for your Diary

**2022 Cowra Woodland Bird Surveys,**  
Dates for 2022 are 23/24 April; 23/24 July;  
15/16 October. Julian Reid is now the contact at  
**0405 922 505** or [julian.reid@anu.edu.au](mailto:julian.reid@anu.edu.au)

**Postponed AGAIN to 21-22 June 2022 –**  
**Listening to the Lachlan Conference, Forbes.**  
Details [here](#).

**Clean Up Australia Day – Sunday March 6.**  
The clean-up in Orange will be from the skate park, down Rifle Range creek to the junction of Blackman's Swamp Creek and up the creek towards Elephant Park. Meet at the old netball courts at 9.30am opposite Orange Infants School. Bags and gloves will be provided but bring a rake and wear sturdy shoes.

### Sightings around Orange

If you see anything interesting, please email [orangefieldnats@gmail.com](mailto:orangefieldnats@gmail.com) or post it on Facebook.

### 'Things with Wings'

**Little Eagle** spotted at Huntley on February 3  
by Brian Williams.

**Diamond Firetails** are back in Cilla's garden at Summer Hill Creek.

**Red-Browed Finches** were seen feeding on grass seeds near the entrance to Spring Creek on 10<sup>th</sup> February by Kerrie McGann. Black Swans were in the water as well as a couple of very noisy Mallards and lots of Eurasian Coots.

And Coots were the subject of photos for Peter Bilenkij at Lake Canobolas. You don't often see their feet which have flattened lobes on their toes.



*A quizzical Coot showing the structure of its feet. Photo Peter Bilenkij.*

**Glossy Black Cockatoos** – the annual Save Our Species Glossy Black surveys were done in February in the Pilliga, Goonoo Forest, and Goobang National Park. I hope you enjoy John Hansen's report sent with the newsletter as well as marvel at the fabulous photos that John and Jake took at a bore dam in the Pilliga.

Even though volunteers were not able to join the Goobang surveys this year Catherine and Rosemary Stapleton were asked to monitor a possible nest site they had noticed a few weeks earlier. The pair were again at the hollow, so it looks as if this is a confirmed nest. Four Glossies came into the site and surprisingly drank from puddles in the track rather than heading to a dam outside the park.

**Nankeen Night Herons** – a juvenile was flushed at Ploughman's Wetlands. More exciting was spotting up to a hundred along

Jemalong Creek just east of Jemalong Weir. Both juveniles and adults were present.

**Breeding Magpie Geese at Gum Swamp, Forbes.** After a tip off from Murray and Vicki who had seen the geese a few weeks ago Catherine and Rosemary called in at Gum Swamp on the way back from Jemalong. As we walked to a new bird hide an adult goose led eight goslings across the track (below). There were eleven other geese in the dry grassy area, and they were reaching up and stripping grass seed heads.



**Insects** – the summer has been a stunning one for insects, some beautiful, others intriguing and some like March Flies just annoying. Col Bower summed it up well ..... *‘This year has been marvellous in that the cooler moist conditions have allowed the populations of many insects to recover. It is nice to see so many about, I actually enjoy being annoyed by them (March Flies) because it means the environment is healthy. A pity that climate change will inexorably reassert itself and drag things down again.’*

While searching for orchids at Clandulla, Col took some photos of native bee pollinators (*Exoneura* sp.) on *Goodenia bellidifolia* flowers (below).



**Bogong Moth** – Hai Wu found this moth (below), identified as a Bogong Moth, inside a door frame at his home. Hai said he knew it could be turned into powder to consume but learnt Aboriginals had roasted the moths and

mashed them to make "Moth meat". [Agrotis infusa \(butterflyhouse.com.au\)](http://butterflyhouse.com.au).



Hai was lucky to see the moth as its numbers have declined so much it has been added to the Red Data List by the ICUN. See <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-12-09/bogong-moth-grey-headed-flying-fox-endangered/100687642> And they are a species found on Mt Canobolas.

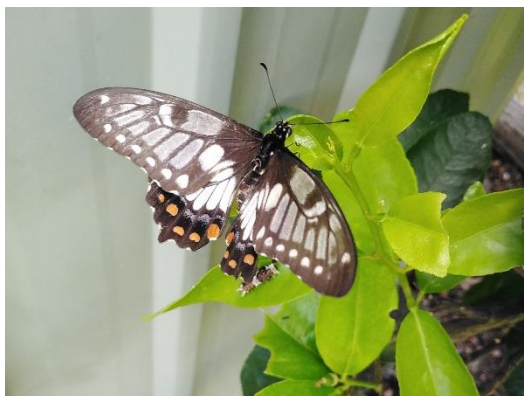
Courtesy of Murray Fletcher, Andrew Mitchell from the Australian Museum, commented ‘this dark moth on Acacia is a lasiocampid, I suspect *Genduara punctigera*’. The photograph below was taken near Pine View in Mt Canobolas SCA by Rosemary Stapleton.



On the same walk through regrowth Catherine Stapleton was joined by a small beetle that Murray again helped identify. On seeing the photo Chris Reid, also from the Australian Museum, replied saying ‘it’s a chrysomeline chrysomelid – *Calomela bartoni*, mostly found on silver wattle in high country’.



John Zimmer took the photograph below of a quite large butterfly, *Papilio anactus*, (Dingy Swallowtail), settling on a lemon tree at Clifton Grove on 17 February 2022.



### **Creature of the Month**

**Pacific Koel, *Eudynamys orientalis*.** Also known as Eastern or Australian Koel, Cooee or Rainbird.

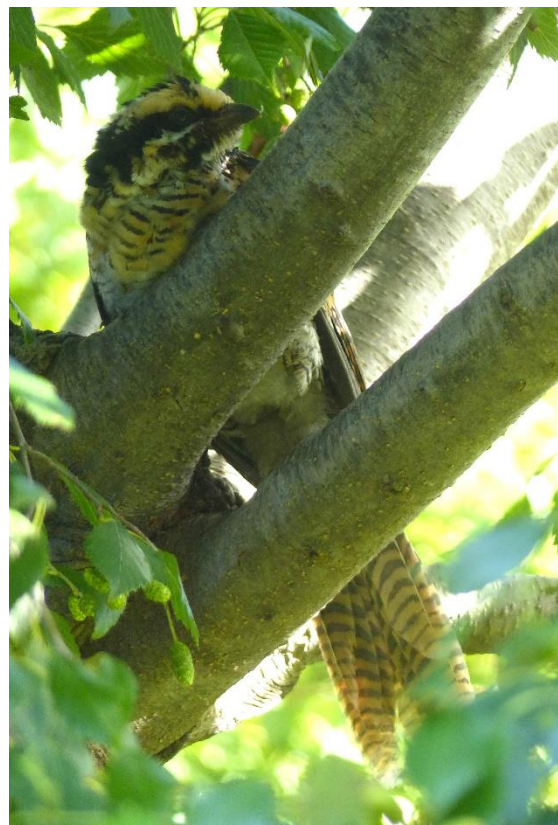
*Text by Rosemary Stapleton with story and photo by Murray Fletcher and Vicki Glover.*

The Koel is Creature of the Month as several members have reported sightings, from their gardens, of a juvenile being fed by Red Wattlebirds. Murray and Vicki found one in their garden.

Murray said: ‘For years Orange residents have heard the distinctive call of the Eastern Koel ringing out during our warmer months, sometimes very early in the morning. On the 3rd of January this year, we had a male in our backyard and the Common Blackbirds and Red Wattlebirds were outraged. They harassed it from tree to tree until it flew away. The Koel seems to have had the last laugh though. On 14th February, a single, slightly raspy call repeated over and over for most of the day attracted our attention. Eventually we tracked it down and it was a juvenile Koel high in an evergreen alder. It was being fed by a Red Wattlebird. We managed to find a gap in the vegetation to take a photo. This is the first time we have seen a juvenile in Orange and it is great to see that they have been breeding here this year.’

A friend of Murray’s a few streets away also reported seeing a juvenile being fed by a Red Wattlebird. Then on 26<sup>th</sup> February Alison Ford, who lives near Lilac Park in south Orange reported exactly the same thing in her garden. Alison commented it was the first time in 33

years although she had often heard them in Sampson Street. I wonder if these sightings were of the same juvenile and attending Red Wattlebird?



Koels are a large cuckoo with the male giving the well-known cooee koel call. It is far carrying and often made into the night. After breeding it is quiet. The male is glossy blue black with a whitish bill and red eye. The female is very different with a black crown and nape and chocolate brown wings and upper body with cream spots. The tail is brown with cream stripes while the chest is cream with dark stripes.

They prefer habitat just like where they have been found in Orange – leafy fruiting trees on the fringes of streets and parks but more naturally on the edges of rainforests and woodlands.

Koels winter in Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and move to north and eastern Australia to breed in August to May. One egg is laid in the nest of host species that build large open nests such as Magpie-larks, large honeyeaters, or Figbirds.

Species details from Pizzey and Knight, *The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition.





*Enjoying the picnic before spotlighting at Federal Falls Picnic Area. Photos - above Nigel Hobden and below Jenny Medd .*



**Please note Annual Subscriptions are now due. Thanks to those who have already paid.**

To join please send your cheque or money order made out to "OFNCS" to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr Dick Medd, OFNCS, PO Box 369 Orange NSW 2800.

EFT payments to: BSB 802 129: Account 100014678: O F N & Cons Soc Inc.

Please be sure to identify payments with your name and send confirmation to [orangefieldnats@gmail.com](mailto:orangefieldnats@gmail.com)

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*Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, including the people of the Wiradjuri Nation, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.*

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