

## Conservation officer AGM report 2023

ANOS conservation grant was awarded to ANOS-Geelong to repair the fences and replace the gates on the protective enclosure for the *Caladenia* species 'Inverleigh' a moderately large, variably coloured long tailed spider orchid that is known from a single site at Inverleigh. In the early 2000's the population was less than 20 plants, with less than 5 flowering. The enclosure has been instrumental in increasing the number of orchids to around 200 plants, with 50+ plants usually flowering in good years, with natural pollination occurring and recruitment of new seedlings. *Caladenia* species 'Inverleigh' plants have been extending the area where they are found within the enclosure and are now extending beyond the enclosure. Approximately twenty other species of orchid are found in the enclosure which are also benefitting from the reduced grazing pressure. The only maintenance of the enclosure has been the removal of and repair of damage from trees that have fallen on the fence and repairing breaks in the rabbit proofing, usually caused by echidnas. The purpose of this grant application is to replace and modify the current Mallee gates, repair two broken fence posts (damaged by falling trees) and install a pedestrian gate (plus posts) for personnel access to the site, as the mallee gates are unwieldy and difficult to open – especially for those unfamiliar with the design. Clearing of fallen trees and branches and trimming some vegetation is also needed to allow the mallee gates to be opened when required. All gates will require to be rabbit and hare proof. The money has been received and work plans are beginning with ANOS-Geelong, Parks Vic and the Friends of Inverleigh group. An article will be submitted to the *Orchadian* within the year.

Due to the low response to the ANOS Inc conservation grant (ANOS-Geelong was the only applicant) we need to consider if we repeat this next year and how to get more uptake. There is still \$1700 in the conservation fund. This could be problematic as a lot of conservation work is becoming more academic / privatised. Alternatively, do we consider donating to one of the running conservation projects each year?

I am still continuing to attempt to find more information on the orchid conservation activities throughout Australia so that ANOS Inc can help were possible. If anyone wants attention drawn to their project, please contact me. The idea in the future is to have a small article on a project in each *Orchadian*. I guarantee the location of the project will not be disclosed for the protection of the orchids. As such I attended the first opening tours of the Cranbourne Botanical Gardens Orchid Conservation Project Tour on the 16th September 2023. This is the largest orchid rescue program of it's kind in the world. At present there are 180 orchid species that are part of the program in association with many other agencies. Most of these have seed and their symbiotic fungi stored. Currently 70 species are under cultivation, with approximately 1300 seedlings being transplanted to pots every day. There are 1600 *Caladenia rosella* ready for planting out, 200 *Caladenia amoena* as well as 1600 *Diuris tricolor*. The success of this program is remarkable. An article on this has been submitted to the *Orchadian*.

Several reports were made about suspicious eBay orchid sales. As part of an article placed in the *Orchadian* ANOS members were reminded of some measure that can be taken when using the internet. Please ensure you have turned off any GPS co-ordinates on your phones or cameras, ensuring your photos when posted do not have co-ordinates attached. Don't post the location of the site online and be careful who you tell the location to.

If you think you have seen ads for wild orchids on eBay or other online selling sites, you should advise the selling platform, police and local Park Rangers. One eBay seller has been reported to the Australian compliance team.

ANOS Inc encourages our member to continue to enjoy the amazing range of Native orchids found in Australia whilst trying to save these captivatingly beautiful plants.

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