

ANOS Illawarra President's Report for FY 2024/2025

The last 12 months seems to have flown by. We began with our AGM in July 2024 which saw the executive and committee remain largely unchanged. I thank the members who accepted each of these positions for their ongoing effort in keeping our society running.

The discontinuation of several local orchid clubs over the last few years continues to prompt discussion at committee about gaining new members. While our society continues to remain financial, we are eager to grow our membership to ensure its future. It is my hope to create a lasting community where our shared interests, knowledge and the camaraderie of our current members can be shared, preserved, and passed on.

As a promotional exercise, we had plans to sell plants and advertise at a local market ahead of our shows however, the costs of such an undertaking were deemed prohibitive. I would consider our regular meeting attendance on par with, if not slightly better than pre-covid years, and we have been fortunate over the last year to have acquired a handful of new regulars. Engaging with younger generations continues to pose a challenge.

Late last year we learned of the passing of one of our newer members Peter Grant, who, along with wife Lynn had attended monthly meetings regularly over the previous year or two.

We sadly also lost long-standing member Graham Slater. Graham had held the position of treasurer for a number of years and had also, at one time, been president. I'm told he was instrumental in our society's incorporation under ANOS from its previous form, The Wollongong and District Native Orchid Society.

At our monthly meetings throughout the year we enjoyed talks and demonstrations from several members and guests. Thanks to Irene, Barry, Russell, Bruce and Anton for sharing your adventures and wisdom with us. Special thanks also goes to our visiting speakers Erik Lielkajis, Michael Harrison, and Jean Dunn for sharing with us their time, knowledge and continued support.

I also wish to thank Orchids On Newbold, Down Under Native Orchids and Woolf Orchid Culture for the quality seedlings they supplied to us for raffle prizes and sales table plants for our shows. Thanks also to Western Orchids for the excellent flasks we purchased for demonstrations at our meetings. The closure of The Orchid Pot Company in 2024 was unfortunate news as they had been the sole pot supplier for our club for many years. Finding an ongoing source for pots of a similar quality is proving to be a challenge.

We had one major field trip to private property at upper Kangaroo Valley, joined by members of the Australian Plant Society Illawarra group. An enjoyable time was had by all and some interesting plants were observed. A follow up trip is planned for Spring to investigate what other plants may be present. Additional field trips will be planned if conditions in our local region are favourable.

We were fortunate to have good weather for our shows and both were great successes. We had full benches and generated enough income for the following year's activities.

After much committee deliberation, the Alan Stephenson Memorial award for orchid imagery was unveiled for our October Sarcanthinae Show. The award is named in honour of our previous president, who as many would know, was an avid nature photographer. The show category is intended to add some variety to the benches and promote inclusion of orchid enthusiasts who aren't necessarily growers. It was great to see a full table of entries in the section, and this president was

honoured to receive the first name plaque on the trophy. I look forward to seeing our members creativity in this section in the years to come.

Daniel Rajaratnam

President, ANOS Illawarra