



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

SOWING THE SEEDS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Returning healthy, sustainable indigenous ecosystems to the Victorian landscape

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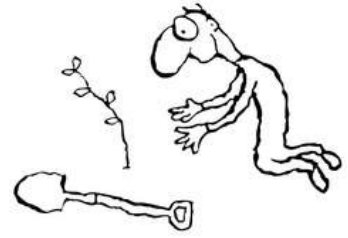
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1. ABOUT TreeProject

WHO WE ARE

- Victorian based environmental ACNC registered not-for-profit carrying tax deductible and deductible gift recipient status.
- Major environmental contributor restoring biodiversity through the sustainable restoration of Victorian countryside and threatened eco-systems.
- Network of over 2500 people including donors, sponsors, members, growers, volunteers and landholders.
- A focused community organisation that has propagated and distributed in excess of 2 million indigenous seedlings, without counting the shrubs, forbs and grasses - for restoration projects by landholders, major water authorities, government agencies and numerous shire councils.
- Developer of unique online web based seedling database – detailing unique seedling imaging at 4 different stages of growth to 6 months. In collaboration with community contribution.
- Recognised environmental contributor through receipt of government and community awards.

WHAT WE DO

- Train volunteers to propagate indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses.
- Support landholders to repair degraded land by providing 'at cost' seedlings and indigenous plants.
- Link city and country people to work together to tackle erosion, improve soil and water quality, and restore ecosystems.
- Provide training and support for anyone in the community growing indigenous seedlings.
- Develop skills and knowledge – building capacity in the community – for propagating Indigenous seedlings.
- Foster community engagement through practical, achievable and enduring environmental projects.
- Provide special project support through The TreeProject Nursery.
- Raise awareness of the importance of revegetation.

1989
Environmental concerns sparked conversation between two friends who shared belief that planting trees was a practical way to restore health to the Victorian land
TreeProject's first planting in the Yarra Bend.

1990
The Free Tree Scheme (now the Re-Tree Scheme) was set up to organise city volunteers to grow trees for country landholders; a program that continues today, linking urban and rural communities.

1994
TreeProject became a registered not-for-profit (charitable) organisation and has grown to become a major contributor to the sustainable restoration of Victorian landscape



2020
To date propagation and distribution of in excess of 2 million indigenous seedlings



WHAT WE BELIEVE

VISION

The re-vegetation of Victoria's indigenous forests and the restoration of damaged landscapes and ecosystems vital for healthy climate, healthy soil and healthy waterways.

Fostering increased rural and urban community awareness and engagement in these restoration projects by supporting capacity in the propagation and distribution of healthy indigenous seedlings.

MISSION

Growing and distributing healthy seedlings to return healthy, sustainable ecosystems to the Victorian landscape through the planting of indigenous flora species.

Provide opportunities and volunteers to support the many landholders, Landcare groups and concerned individuals conducting these re-vegetation projects.

Provide effective educational tools and support for the community to propagate healthy indigenous seedlings at affordable prices for re-vegetation and restoration projects.

FOCUS

Continued improvement of organisational governance, policy development, operational efficiency and communications channels to become:

The trusted provider of propagation of indigenous seedling practices in Victoria

The trusted provider of information on the propagation of indigenous seedling and best practice conservation education.

Continued development of sustainable relationships with sponsors, patrons and other relevant and affiliated groups.

PROUDLY PROPAGATED & PLANTED
in excess of
2 million indigenous seedlings



2. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure and pride that I can report that TreeProject honoured all of its seedling orders for the 2020 Autumn and Spring season. A remarkable achievement in a very challenging year with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2019/2020, we experienced a number of changes on both the Committee and Operations front.

We farewelled De Grebner who had been Manager of TreeProject for 15 years. De was the anchor who guided TreeProject through many challenges. De provided many years of sterling service and we wish her well as we continue with our core mission.

This role was temporarily filled by Stephen Northey, who has subsequently resigned. Our volunteers, Annie Robertson, Frances Watson and Stephen Watson and John McRae did a sterling job of ensuring we were still able to successfully fulfil our commitments to landholders. John McRae went on to fulfil the Acting Manager role.

In addition we acknowledge, Louise Harvey, our Nursery Manager, who has once again run the nursery and co-ordinated the Ribbons of Green growing and planting with resolute capability and proficiency. Louise continues to produce the "tricky to grow" seedlings and took on a co-ordination role for the Ribbons of Green project through Covid.



TreeProject farewells Lyn Grocke as President.

After 10 years as President, Lynette Grocke resigned from the committee. Lyn has been involved with TreeProject since 1991, when she became a volunteer grower after being inspired by her cousin who was also a grower. This led to Lyn's participation in working bees assembling growers kits in the back yard of the home of Frances and Stephen Watson.

In 1993, Lyn became a Committee Member and then the Depot Manager in Kensington. This is where the kit assembling and distribution now takes place.

It is with heartfelt thanks and gratitude that TreeProject says goodbye to Lyn as President and a Committee Member, and welcomes her continuing contribution as Volunteer Depot Manager.



VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued.

After Lyn's resignation, Kurt van Wijck took over as President but has since unfortunately had to resign due to circumstances involving the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kurt joined TreeProject as a grower and co-ordinator in 1999. He was instrumental in TreeProject's involvement with the Ribbons of Green project in the Yarra Valley.

TreeProject is still involved with this project and it is with sincere thanks to Kurt for this branch of TreeProject's work. Kurt also volunteered in our office administration and the Committee.

Kurt's passion for corporate fundraising is a welcome and vital contribution, thank you Kurt.

TreeProject has also said goodbye to, Stephen Watson, who has been a phenomenal contributor to TreeProject for more than 30 years. We particularly thank Stephen for his extensive and valued contribution, not only to the administering and managing fields, but for extensively and effectively contributing to the success of TreeProject. Thank you Stephen.

During the year TreeProject welcomed John McRae as Secretary and Stephanie Menere as Treasurer, thank you for volunteering to bring your skills and experience to our Committee. Post the reporting date we have welcomed Marion Cincotta, Manager and Sally Schroeder, Communications. I look forward to continuing to work with you in 2020/21.

We recognise the dedication, time and effort of all of our Volunteers, Members and Committee Members.

In addition we acknowledge with thanks and gratitude the generosity of each and every sponsor and donor. Through your valuable support TreeProject is able to continue restoring urgently needed indigenous vegetation and repairing Victoria's damaged ecosystems.

Jenny Chivers
Vice President



3. TREASURER'S REPORT

INCREASE IN TREE SALES

68%

INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP REVENUE

122%

INCREASE IN DONATIONS

167%

TREASURER'S REPORT continued.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

Financial Performance

The 2020 financial year has been a very positive one for TreeProject. We saw donations, memberships and tree sales all increase by significant amounts. The largest of those being donations which grew by 167%.

The overall performance for the year left TreeProject with a surplus of over \$95k and cash reserves of \$199k. This puts TreeProject in a very strong financial position to be able to increase our reach, increase the number of trees planted and invest in initiatives that will both future-proof and increase the efficiency of TreeProject's operations, all of which are high priorities for The Committee in the 2021 financial year.

Operating expenses reduced by \$20k, \$10k of which came from reduced employment expenses. We would expect with an increase in operational activities we will need to invest larger amounts in our employees in the years to come. The savings on employment expenses was a rare occurrence due to the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statement of Financial Performance

For the year ended 30 June 2020

Account	2020	2019
Income		
Donations and Grants	134,413	58,664
Membership Fees	9,033	4,055
Seedling Sales	35,891	21,192
Interest Income	1,355	1,816
Merchandise sales and other revenue	30	2,876
Total Income	180,722	88,604
Expenses		
Depreciation and Amortisation	229	2,738
Employee Costs	44,768	56,739
Insurance	1,718	1,439
Marketing and Promotion	1,023	2,991
Office Rent	7,243	8,381
Printing and Stationary	1,207	3,598
Seed and Seedling Costs	23,214	14,746
Utilities and Administration	3,919	4,506
Other Expenses	1,729	1,659
Total Expenses	85,050	96,796
Net Profit	95,672	(8,192)

TREASURER'S REPORT continued.

Net assets increased by \$95k from FY19 to FY20, a result which supports TreeProject's future operating capacity. Cost of the development of the new website have been capitalised with unused balance of the grant recorded as deferred income liability. All liabilities of TreeProject were paid by the due date and there are sufficient assets to cover future liabilities as and when they fall due.

Statement of Financial Position			
As at 30 June 2020			
	Account	30 Jun 2020	30 Jun 2019
Assets			
	Cash and Cash Equivalents	181,889	146,083
	Trade Receivables and Other Current Assets	17,568	0
	Fixed Assets	27,967	14,161
	GST and PAYG Withholding	0	1,089
Total Assets		227,424	161,333
Liabilities			
	Current Liabilities		
	Deferred Income	2,492	16,527
	Employee Benefits	(1,106)	8,740
	GST and PAYG Withholding	2,994	0
	Trade Payables	774	0
	Other Current Liabilities	8	9,476
	Total Current Liabilities	5,162	34,742
Total Liabilities		5,162	34,742
	Net Assets	222,262	126,590
Equity			
	Current Year Earnings	95,672	(8,192)
	Retained Earnings	126,590	134,782
Total Equity		222,262	126,590

Stephanie Menere
Treasurer

4. MANAGER'S REPORT

SEEDLINGS

TreeProject continued their core aim of growing indigenous seedlings to address revegetation, biodiversity, habitat and erosion.

Over 40,000 seedlings were grown under 2 schemes for planting out in 2020.

ReTree

Following the 30 year tradition, ReTree grows trees in city backyards that are planted out in the country. Landholders place their orders with TreeProject and the seedlings are germinated in city backyards, with assistance from volunteer growers, nursed through to Autumn or Spring, depending on which distribution has been elected, then planted back in the local areas.

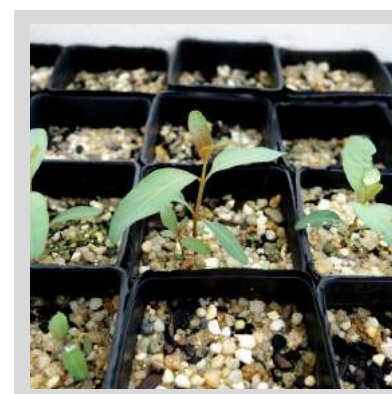
Ribbons of Green

Seedlings are grown for the Yarra Ranges Council in line with their local revegetation needs. This program is in its 6th year and results from previous years are visible. When the covid lockdown occurred in March 2020, all of the seedlings were being maintained by home growers. The challenge came with the planting out days which were subject to multiple delays and confusing covid restrictions.

In the end, most seedlings were planted out and the excess were sold to interested parties at reduced prices.

Fortunately, we had late spring rains which allowed planting to be later than usual.

TreeProject thanks all our landholders and growers who make the core promise of TreeProject possible.



SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

- **Seymour Alternative Farming Expo** (information stand seeking new landholders)
- **Strategy Review** conducted in conjunction with RMIT (Planning Day in January 2020, followed by 6 week strategy planning session using zoom).



MANAGER'S REPORT continued.

OFFICE AND PROCESSES

TreeProject were already actively progressing to modernise and streamline internal systems and processes and this was further accelerated when covid hit and the office had to be closed.

The status is:

- The accounting system is now web based
- All office files are now “cloud” based and can be accessed remotely
- Emails have been set up by position (e.g. president@, etc) which allows for continuity with personnel changes.
- The membership and growing database is now called RED and is also “cloud” based
- The website is in the final stages of being moved to a modern WordPress platform

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications through the year have been limited to essential contact with the supporter base for important covid related updates, requests for volunteers and donations requests.

Other channels have been via Facebook and more recently, Instagram. Communications will be a focus area going forward.

VOLUNTEERS

TreeProject could not function without the extraordinary support and commitment of such a generous volunteer community. 8,000 hours were contributed by volunteers. We extend thanks to each and every volunteer who has assisted us over the year.

In particular, we would like to acknowledge our community of committed regular volunteers:

- Lyn Grocke and her dedicated group of depot volunteers continued to wash tubes and prepare the seedling kits for distribution to growers.
- Annie Robertson was ever present in the office (until covid struck) and looked after the administration of the ReTree scheme. Annie carries with her many years of experience, valuable knowledge and practical expertise.
- Stephen Watson (Banking volunteer) spent many hours each week in the office. Stephen also contributed significantly to the strategy sessions and was generous with his knowledge built over many years. Stephen has retired and he will be sorely missed.
- Peter Hooke, our highly valued Data Base Administrator, has spent a phenomenal amount of time and effort converting TreeProject's 30 year old office database into the RED app. This affords TreeProject the opportunity to progress with the functionality required to manage a growing database.
- Debbie Ho has maintained and managed TreeProject's Facebook page with a high level of professionalism.
- We also extend our thanks to the seedling growers and planters who ensure the seedlings finally become part of the revegetation effort.



MANAGER'S REPORT continued.

FUNDRAISING

After the unprecedented bushfires in January 2020, TreeProject was inundated with offers to help in some way. Covid and lockdown abruptly curtailed the interest and traction gained however we were able to improve our donation agreements whereby businesses become regular donors. In addition, donors responded to the end of tax year call out with a comparable amount to previous years.

FOCUS FOR 2020-21

TreeProject's focus for the coming year:

- Communications - remain in touch with all our stakeholders (members, growers, landholders, donors and volunteers)
- Streamlined Processes: – connecting the new website to the RED database application.
- Volunteer Engagement – empowering volunteers to contribute to TreeProject

John McRae

Acting Manager March - June 2020



5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Members of TreeProject Management Committee 2019-2020

- Jenny Chivers (Vice President)
- Asger Sturup
- Frances Watson
- John McRae (Secretary/Acting Manager)
- Stephanie Menere (Treasurer)

We recognise with thanks the following Committee members who have retired during the financial year. Your time and keen input has been invaluable in the running of TreeProject.

- Lyn Grocke (President - Retired)
- Kurt Van Wijck (President - Retired)
- Fridrich Housa (Treasurer - Retired)
- Stephen Watson (Secretary - Retired)
- Susan Bond (Secretary - Retired)
- Harrison Orchard (Communications - Retired)
- Lizzie Lamb (Communications - Retired)

Post Reporting Period:

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome, Marion Cincotta, Manager and Sally Schroeder, Communications to the team.

Members of TreeProject Public Fund Committee 2019-2020

- Malcolm Ng
- Peter Whittle
- Kurt Van Wijck



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS continued.

MAJOR DONORS

FINANCIAL YEAR 2020

TreeProject acknowledges with gratitude and thanks all donors. Special mention to our top five leading supporters:

- The Lestari Foundation
- Positive Ideas Group - Australian Community Foundation
- The Hope Family Foundation
- Kenwill Pty Ltd
- Beacon lighting
- Karl Williams





6. CONTACT

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