Sowing The Seeds For a Sustainable Future

Returning healthy, sustainable & indigenous ecosystems to the Victorian landscape

TreeProject
ANNUAL
REPORT 2023





TreeProject acknowledges Australian Aboriginal and Islander peoples as the first inhabitants and traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Vision More indigenous plants to restore Victoria's healthy soil, waterways, and climate. Increased engagement of rural and urban communities in environmental restoration.

Mission · Growing, distributing and planting healthy indigenous seedlings to return healthy, sustainable ecosystems to the Victorian landscape. • Provide opportunities and volunteers to support landholders, land care groups and individuals conducting these revegetation projects. Provide effective educational tools and support for the community to propagate healthy indigenous seedlings for revegetation and restoration projects. Provide opportunities for businesses to invest in environmental restoration.

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. 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.



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Nobody can be spared

Emphasising the importance of inclusivity and collective responsibility for a sustainable planet.

Everyone has a role to play, and we can all make a difference. Uniting for a greener future.



Creativity makes happy people

This value stands for the joy and fulfilment to be found in striving towards a greener tomorrow together.

'Compost' happens

We won't back down and we won't give up in the face of adversity. Persistence and grit are what we believe in.

Annual Report

Smart People do smart things

Encouraging
sustainability, intelligence
and informed decisionmaking for a greener
future.

Show you care

Advocate for a greener future. This value encourages individuals to demonstrate their care for the environment through action.

Make the world a better place

Highlighting TreeProject's positive contribution to the environment by facilitating the growth and planting of seedlings, grasses and bushes across Victoria

No Waste

Demonstrates our commitment to maximising resource efficiency in a purposeful and sustainable way.

You've got this, we've got you

This value conveys
support and partnership
in the shared mission of
environmental
conservation. Positivity
because we believe in the
power of collective action
– together for a greener
planet.

Have Fun

This value proposition encourages an enjoyable and positive approach to environmental change. Have fun, love what you do and create a more sustainable planet.

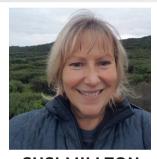
The TreeProject Team

Acknowledging

Members of TreeProject Public Fund Committee 2022/2023

Malcolm Ng | Peter Whittle | Kurt van Wijck

Staff and Committee members of TreeProject Management Committee 2022/2023



SUSI MILLTON Manager (Staff)



JESS MENERE Administration (Staff)



PETER HOOKE Data Base Analyst (Contractor)



LOUISE HARVEY Nursery Manager (Contractor) Outgoing



Revegetation Coordinator (Incoming)



JENNY CHIVERS Volunteers (Committee)



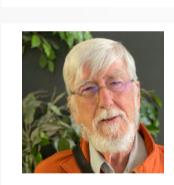
STEPHANIE MENERE President (Committee)



Vice President (Committee)



JOHN MCRAE Secretary (Committee)



ASGER STURUP Governance (Committee)





ALLWYN FERNANDES Volunteers (Committee)



Governance (Committee)



(Committee)





ROWAN OPAT Fundraising (Committee)



Treasurer



SUSAN ESSLEMONT Bookkeeper (Finance Volunteer)





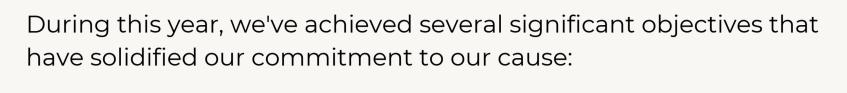
Message from the President

Over the past year, TreeProject has witnessed remarkable collaboration, dedication, and internal growth. Our committee, staff, and volunteers have joined forces to ensure that TreeProject sustains its longstanding legacy of environmental restoration and lays the foundations for a brighter and more expansive future.

In the last two years, we've seen steady increase in seedlings grown rather than focusing on significant growth. This choice reflects our understanding that it is not only our responsibility to focus on revegetation but also to ensure the well-being of all stakeholders and manage the resources invested. We want to do things well, for a long period of time rather than focus on short term results.









DEFINING OUR ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

We've established a set of values that guide our committee, staff, and volunteers. These values serve as our compass, ensuring that every action and decision aligns with our shared vision of creating a better world.



ENHANCING OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

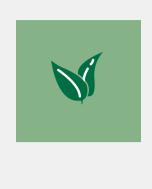
TreeProject's rapid growth in recent years has presented some operational challenges. What worked when we nurtured 60,000 seedlings needed review as we began cultivating over 140,000. Our team has strived to improve our methods, making the journey smoother for volunteers, staff, and landholders. In addition, we have commenced work on our new IT system, which will be launched shortly.



STREAMLINING VOLUNTEER COMMUNICATION

We understand the invaluable contributions of our volunteers. We've simplified our communication to honour their time and efforts, making it more effective and efficient for them to support our initiatives.







With growth comes an expanding network of wonderful supporters. We recognise our duty to ensure cohesive, collaborative, and supportive leadership. Challenges have arisen, but our promise to improve our leadership remains unwavering.



SETTING AUDACIOUS GOALS

The operational improvements have allowed the committee to shift its focus from operations to strategic planning. This year, we've set our sights on a remarkable goal: to grow one million seedlings annually by 2033. We are currently developing a plan that will lead us to success.

These achievements have paved the way for future growth, a growth that embodies the transformation of healthy seedlings into mature trees, shrubs, and grasses.

Every step we take and every milestone we reach is a collective endeavour. We owe our success to our dedicated staff, tireless volunteers, visionary landholders, and generous donors. We thank you from the depths of our hearts for your commitment to making the world a better place by sowing one seed at a time.

Together, we continue to nurture the beauty of our environment and create a sustainable legacy that future generations will cherish.

Stephanie Menere, President









Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers, supporters, members, committee, sponsors and incredible staff members. It has been a fast and fun year to date, so many achievements and sincere gratitude from myself to all of you.

At TreeProject we create communities of good and noble humans all working towards a better environment. It is such an honour to be part of a number of the teams working on all the different parts that make TreeProject whole. Firstly, thank you to our **365 growers** who sowed, talked to and perhaps sang or played music to **140,000 seedlings**, the outcome of which was amazing and all the Landholders praise your efforts and results. As we all know there is a combined effort from getting the seedlings to your backyard and then from your backyard out into the country and we thank you for your energy, efforts and enthusiasm, it has proven to be a logistical challenge at times but so worthwhile.

A huge **thank you to all our coordinators,** we couldn't have done it without you. We appreciate you, the calls you make, the advice you give and the care you take. Thank you to each one of you.

The seedlings are all in the ground thanks to family, friends, volunteers, and many, many individuals from businesses around Melbourne and beyond. I'd also like to acknowledge our **volunteer planting supervisors** who ensure the safety of the volunteer planters while teaching them how to plant natives in the ground. A huge thank you to Jenny, John, Patricia and Lara for your patience and organisation. Everyone on site enjoyed a delicious Landholder-made lunch topped off by seeing the impact they had a hand in at the end of the day.

The **Ribbons of Green** program which aims to help landholders restore habitat in the Yarra Ranges area is led by Council's Biodiversity Extension Officer, Tim Brown. Tim has been fundamental in incorporating TreeProject into their very successful program, we look forward to another great year with Council.





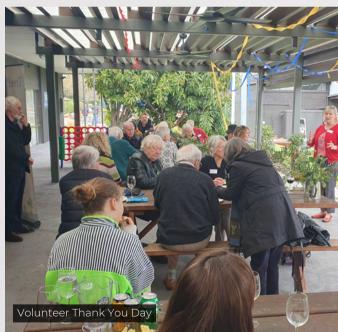














Walking with and talking through the vision of the Landholders is truly inspiring, then working with our team to make their vision come to life is an honour. TreeProject's aim to revegetate, and create a sustainable change for landholders at an affordable cost has always been the priority, noting the cost of seedlings has not increased for several years. The Committee of Management has maintained this price to make it accessible for everyone.

We had a record number of planting days – with a record number of corporate planting groups and individuals this season, we continue to bring the city to the country. From signing up to attend a planting day with TreeProject for the first time or returning to seeing the faces of people who ventured to the country for the first time and the appreciation of the landholders is exhilarating. It makes the challenges all worthwhile.

Thank you to the Committee of Management who make TreeProject a wonderful place to work. Thank you to Stephanie my mentor and go-to person, thank you for always being there and providing guidance and encouragement, Tom for your continued inspiration for working with the Landcare groups, John our IT guru and the master of minutes your unwavering support is to be commended, Sally you have lifted the standard of communication for TreeProject, you have done it with impeccable skill, thank you. Thank you to Jenny our planting supervisor, trainer, grower and coordinator – wow thank you for being amazing. Graeme, our policy/governance advisor thanks for being enthusiastic about the compliance. Nick for keeping us solid on our finances and always being the word of truth. Rowan our chief ideologist, your passion is wonderful, keep the ideas flowing. Thank you to Asger who was on the original planting day in Melbourne with Dr Maggie McLeod, thank you for sharing your coordination and growing skills. Allwyn thank you for the committee experience you bring to the table.





















Behind the scenes Jessica has gone from strength to strength in supporting planting days, training, communicating, coordinating, sharing information and helping me to deliver TreeProject's vision. Thank you, Jess. Thank you to Peter, travelling around Australia has been enviable to watch during weekly zooms, Peter has worked tirelessly with myself and staff to ensure the back-of-house systems are operational. We welcome Maraka as our **Revegetation Coordinator**, she has joined TreeProject during the very busy planting season and seed ordering phase. We say goodbye to Louise our nursery manager, good luck in your new endeavours Lou.

Thank you to all our wonderful seed packers who attend Ross House each week to pack the beautiful seeds into tiny envelopes in anticipation for sowing. Susan our accounts volunteer, thank you for all the work you put in each week for TreeProject, you are a very talented and supportive person, we all thank you wholeheartedly. Thank you to Debbie who keeps our Facebook followers interested and updated, thank you for the help with the Volunteer Thank You Day.

In the field a **special thanks to our trainers**, who take their own time to teach and show our volunteer growers how to successfully germinate a vast variety of indigenous seeds. Their passion and patience are obvious with the quality of seedlings we produce.

The **Depot** continues to be a valuable part of the system with volunteers who keep it ticking like clockwork. From kit preparation to washing tubes and facilitating distribution, this location continues to fulfil its role in our regime. A huge thank you to Viki for coordinating the depot days, your enthusiasm and ability to get the job done shines through those dirty tubes. A big thank you to Lyn for feeding all the hungry workers, we appreciate the trek you do each week.



















Committee Member Rowan Opat We have started **investigating more sustainable alternatives** to 1. Polystyrene boxes 2. Plastic seedling pots & 3. Tree guards. Some of the alternatives include compostable seedling pots. This change would significantly change TreeProject depot systems. The current system is an intricate system that requires careful design and trialling to make change.

Downsizing the office this year has had its challenges. With the last few years showing remote work is both practical and productive, the big office space proved to be unnecessary. Shifting to a shared space and using larger rooms for seed packing and other activities has proven to be a better use of the location while providing a savings to our bottom line.

As I reflect back on this last season, I can now see how much we are improving our systems and way of communicating, we are reaching Landholders and growers far and wide, are venturing into a **Victorian Carbon Farming pilot project in Central Victoria**, dedicating funds to **upgrading our IT system** all the while keeping our program the same....volunteers growing seedlings in their backyards for landholders in regional Victoria. Together we are an incredible organisation of dedicated people.

What lies ahead is a forecast of El Niño, which typically means:

- Reduced rainfall
- Warmer temperatures
- Shift in temperature extremes
- Increased frost risk, we will all need to take extra care next season with our seedlings.

We all thank all our volunteers for the past season and look forward to staying connected moving forward into next season.

Susi Millton, Manager





For the 2022-23 growing season, in line with the increase in seedling orders, the Fairfield Nursery became a very busy hub for grower and co-ordinator pickups and drop-offs of backup and excess seedlings and supplies. The number of seedlings at any one time in the nursery ranged from 2,400 up to an all-time high (for about a week) of 8,577.

The introduction of **listing Bioregions on landholder orders and seed packets for the 2022-23 season** has been invaluable for the nursery. This information along with each species' unique batch number allows **TreeProject to track the seedlings** to ensure that indigenous seedlings are being grown for the order and in case of seedling failure allows identification of possible seed viability or perhaps some other issue.

For 2022-2023, the 3rd most visited page on TreeProject's website and the location where people spent the most time was the **web seedling database**. The web seedling database has images of the seed for each species and seedling growth at 4 different stages over 6 months. This resource is unique and has images that do not exist anywhere in the one place (as far as is known) on the internet. Slowly and steadily over the years, volunteer photographers (Alan and Andrew) have been adding to this unique collection of photos. A streamlined process was introduced this year whereby the volunteer photographers were able to upload their seedling photos and have them checked by the nursery before they are then uploaded to the web seedling database. There are still some gaps in the photos of some species, but the gaps are becoming a lot smaller.

To address the need to expand the number of seedlings that are winter germinated and to provide much needed early Spring sown seedlings as backup, a cohort of growers – **Alison, Karin and Jo** have put their hands up to **assist the nursery** in germinating these seedlings. Their invaluable contribution means that TreeProject Nursery is able to provide for landholders who wish to order some winter germinating species and provides backup to growers for some species that may be slow to germinate.

Lastly, a huge **thank you to all those volunteers who have worked tirelessly to make the 2022-23 season happen** – your continuing commitment and dedication to TreeProject's vision is truly remarkable.

Louise Harvey, Nursery Manager



Seedling stock fluctuation at the nursery











Photo credits: Alan Collard Above Left: Ozthamnus ferrugineus (Tree everlasting) at 2 months. Above Middle: Eucalyptus baxteri (Brown stringybark) at 6 months. Above Right: Atriplex semibaccata (Climbing saltbush) at 4 months.













Left: Calytrix tetragona (Common fringe myrtle) at 4 months.

Middle (Diplarrena moraea (Butterfly flag) at 6 months.

Right: Pultenaea pendunculata (Matted bush pea) at 6 months.

Left: Calytrix tetragona (Common fringe myrtle) at germination.

Middle: Eucalyptus Obliqua (Messmate stringybark) at germination.

Right: Acacia rubida (Red stem wattle) at germination.



Left: Banksia marginata (Silver banksia) at 2 months.

Middle: Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood) at 2 months.

Right: Eucalyptus baxteri (Brown stringybark) at 4 months.





TreeProject is now operating almost fully in the "the cloud". Staff, committee and supporters can access information and work remotely. The office in Ross House, Melbourne has now been slimmed down to a shared office with just a single PC and a phone.

Over the last year, the primary effort has been put into bringing our ageing 25yo Access office system into a modern web based environment. After much deliberation, the committee approved the IT Systems Uplift Recommendations in April this year and Phase 1 development is underway with our technology partner, Revium. Phase 1 is a Grower Portal that will allow growers to record their seedling growth numbers each month. The Grower Portal will operate on a PC, tablet or mobile phone and will allow photos to be uploaded. This will allow coordinators to keep track of their group and provide a documented (quality assurance) handover to landholders.

As a result of a grant from One Tree Planted, TreeProject has extended its operations and now tracks seedling growth from propagation through to planting and then monitors progress for several years. TreeProject is now part of the Victorian Carbon Farming Project Pilot and will assist landholders to obtain carbon farming grants to assist with revegetation costs. The seedlings planted will be monitored for 10 years under this program.

As well as the Grower Portal development, there are many other technology related tasks that are required to keep the operation running smoothly, e.g. web updates, web security, development tools, phone systems, email, SMS, operational reports, support for communications and new laptops.

For the future, the plan is to implement further role based portals for volunteers, landholders, members, sponsors and donors.

A big thank you to **Peter Hooke** (Database Administrator) and **Marja Bouman** (Business Analyst) for their help in specifying and testing the Grower Portal. **David Hack** has continued to assist with the website and **Nick Bridgman** has stepped in to upload new photos from volunteer photographer **Alan Collard** to the Web Seedling Database.

There is plenty of work to do so we are happy to welcome new helpers to the IT team.

John McRae, Secretary and IT Team Leader



CLOUD BASED & REMOTE WORK



IT SYSTEMS UPGRADE
GROWER PORTAL LAUNCH



SEEDLING GROWTH TRACKING VIC CARBON FARMING PROJECT



IT MAINTENANCE & ADDITIONAL PORTAL INSTALLATIONS

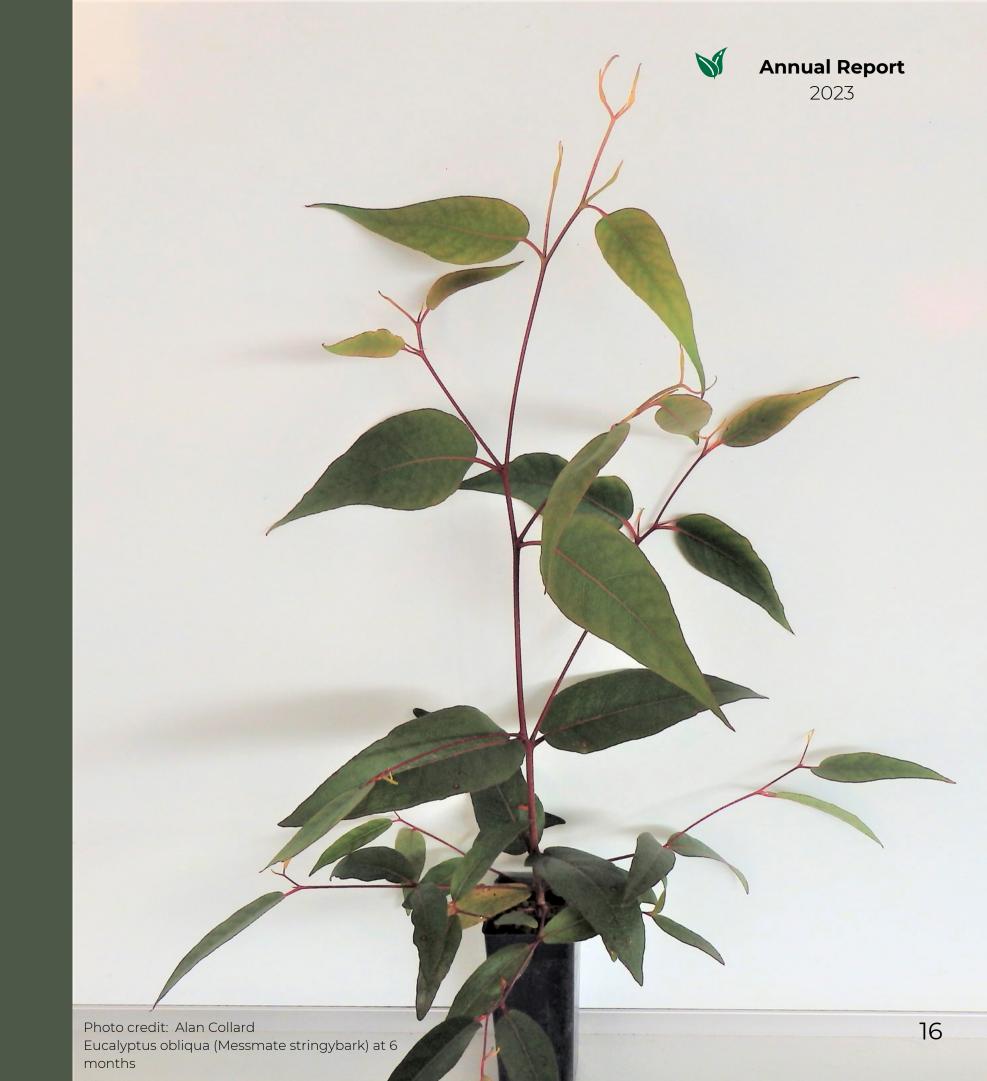


VOLUNTEER CALL OUT & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

✓ Governance

Talk of strategies, policies and procedures probably isn't most people's cup of tea, but it is essential if the Committee is to lead TreeProject in the way the members want and the authorities require. As TreeProject grows, thereby expanding our capacity to deliver more plants to more landowners, we will need to ensure the Committee's approach to governing meets our future needs. We have reviewed existing policies and procedures and are addressing some gaps. We also recognise that a dialogue is needed among the Committee, staff and volunteers on our guiding principles so we can agree on what TreeProject stands for and how we will work together.

Graeme Hamilton - Committee, Governance



V Communications

It is with great pleasure that we present the Communications Annual Report for the 2023 Financial Year, highlighting the accomplishments and outcomes achieved by the TreeProject Communications team.

Strategically focused on fostering urban and rural connections, amplifying brand awareness, increasing organic reach and nurturing an engaged volunteering community, the team's dedication and creativity have translated into valuable metrics, resulting in enhanced visibility and impactful interactions across multiple channels.

Contributions by **Debbie Ho** and **Rachel Smith** in the realm of Social Media, **Nic Bridgman's** expertise in Newsletter (The Leaflet), Electronic Direct Mail Campaigns and Website Content Management, and our talented Interviewers/Blog writers **Fran Ng, Amy Hillier** and **Debbie Ho** - our team has dedicated itself to delivering professional communication throughout the year. Thanks to **Gina Hogg** for her assistance in preparing this report.

A massive thanks to the incredibly talented team of Communications volunteers - your skills and expertise add a lot of value and elevate the TreeProject brand.

Sally Schroeder Committee - Communications



Channels engaged



Facebook



Instagram



LinkedIn



All Channels reflected Organic Growth

[no paid advertising or sponsored ad spend]

Target Audience - Volunteer Growers, Volunteer Planters, Landholders, Landcare Groups, Sponsors, Corporate Groups & broader environmentally aware community

Implementation

Email campaigns, Monthly e-newsletter publications (The Leaflet), Blogs and interviews, Google & Social Media Analytics, Survey - grower survey prepared and facilitated by Debbie Ho, Social Media Management and auto-scheduling, targeted campaigns.

Campaign Success

Our Earth Day sponsorship campaign, which centred around sponsoring a planting day, proved highly successful. We saw an overwhelmingly positive response from our community, resulting in a significant increase in contributions.



- 157 new Facebook Page likes
- 181 new Facebook followers
- Facebook reach increased 22%
- Facebook page/profile visits down 27.3%



Top Post - Dec 8 2022- Facebook post reached 4,869 accounts with 90 engagements



- 111 new Instagram followers
- Instagram reach increased 10.8%
- 21.3% increase in profile visits

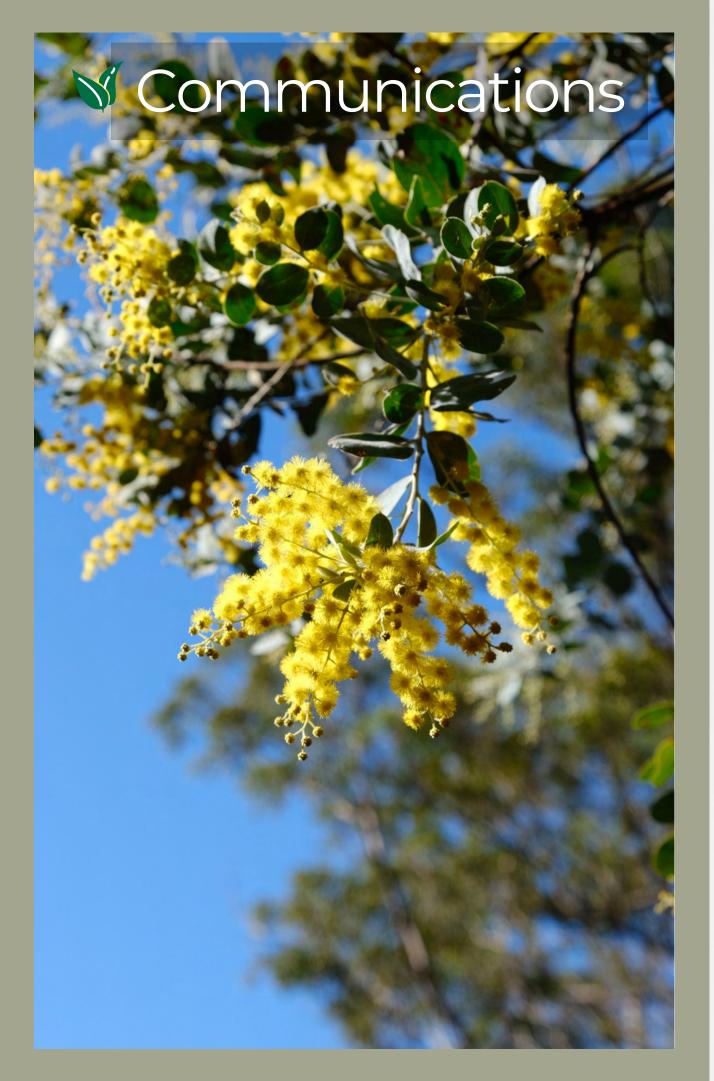


Top Post - 9th November 22 - Instagram reel - reached 2,181 accounts and had 34 engagements



Our efforts throughout the year have been consistent, with close to 50 new followers in our LinkedIn following, further establishing our strong online presence and connecting with a growing community of professionals.







We've recently added the blogs and articles page to our website, featuring topical subjects and interviews with key individuals. Thanks to Fran, Amy, Debbie and our guest content writers for your input.



Ten editions of The Leaflet, our monthly community update, were published during the reporting period. The Leaflet is well received amongst the community receiving an estimated 47.29% open rate (not profit industry standard according to Mailerlite 2023 published 14 Feb 2023 is 42.43%).





Acknowledgment

Thank you to each and every one in our giving community.

We are deeply grateful for the incredible support and generosity received from our community of contributors and sponsors. Your collective efforts have made a profound impact on our mission to protect and restore our planet's natural beauty and resources. Thanks to you, we are able to drive positive environmental change and make a significant difference to our land. Donations increased by 9.2% totalling \$205k.

Our heartfelt gratitude to those who share our commitment to sow the seeds for a sustainable future for generations to come. Your contributions, no matter the size, are invaluable and serve as a testament to the power of unity and compassion in the fight against environmental challenges.

We acknowledge with thanks our major donor, Elk for their valued support.





Significant donors

Fancy Plants Australia Mandy Hellam (Praeclarus Group Limited) RedRock Natural Therapies

Eco247

Marion McKinnon

Peter Williams

TippingPoint Australia

Align.Build PTY LTD

Stones of the Yarra Valley

Peter Lemon

GenWest

Penelope Grose

QB Dent Free

Davies Design & Construction

Mark Collard

Chris Dodds

Matthew Hampton

Jo Foley

Bruce Moonie

Joshua Guthrie

Susanna Mason

Graeme & Lindsay Hamilton



One Tree Planted Aledal Foundation **ACF Impact Fund** Cowen Family Foundation **UK Online Giving Foundation**



Thanks to our Pro Bono Lawyers **Arnold Bloch Leibler** who review contracts and policies.

Melbourne Council

Thanks to Melbourne Council for the invaluable support they have extended.









The sum of all donations less than \$100 (total of \$5,428) is greater than the biggest single donor (excluding corporate) in Financial Year 2023 (\$5,204) - highlighting every contribution, no matter what amount counts!

We acknowledge each and every personal and business donor who has so generously donated throughout the year.

Photo credit: Seph Minglis





TreeProject

Financial Position Summary



TreeProject financial position summary to be read in conjunction with accompanying Annual Financial Association Report **HERE**

TREEPROJECT INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

	Note*	2023 \$	2022 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash on hand	3	353,709	236,820
Accounts receivable and other debtors	4	63,941	78,705
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u></u>	417,650	315,525
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	5	7,124	15,583
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		7,124	15,583
TOTAL ASSETS	_	424,774	331,108
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable and other payables	6	17,811	10,803
Provisions	7	7,478	5,776
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		25,289	16,579
TOTAL LIABILITIES	H, <u>-</u>	25,289	16,579
NET ASSETS	_	399,485	314,529
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Retained earnings		399,485	314,529
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	_	399,485	314,529



TreeProject

Financial Position Summary



TreeProject financial position summary to be read in conjunction with accompanying Annual Financial Association Report **HERE**

TREEPROJECT INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Note*	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue		422,005	339,727
Other income		409	566
Consumables used		(75,440)	(101,504)
Employee benefits expense		(196,513)	(133,549)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		(9,370)	(15,696)
Other expenses		(56,135)	(60,680)
Profit before income tax	2	84,956	28,864
Income tax expense	_	1 64	
Profit for the year	_	84,956	28,864
Profit attributable to members of the entity	_	84,956	28,864



TreeProject

Financial Position Summary



TreeProject financial position summary to be read in conjunction with accompanying Annual Financial Association Report **HERE**

TREEPROJECT INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Retained Earnings \$	Total
Balance at 1 July 2021	285,665	285,665
Comprehensive income		
Profit for the year	28,864	28,864
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to members of the		
association	28,864	28,864
Balance at 30 June 2022	314,529	314,529
Balance at 1 July 2022	314,529	314,529
Comprehensive income		
Profit for the year	84,956	84,956
Total comprehensive income for the		
year attributable to members of the		
association	84,956	84,956
Balance at 30 June 2023	399,485	399,485

