

**OFF**  
**AGM**  
**President's Address 2020**

This will be my last presidential address as I will be standing down this year. It's time for someone new to fill this position and refresh the role.

Before I leave though I would like to thank my fellow committee members. To a large degree the President's role is one of coordination as it is the committee members who manage the society. They are the ones who come up with the ideas and plan and carry out our activities. So, thanks to you all.

Most of the committee members are standing for re-election, but I would like to make a special thanks to those who are leaving: Peter Mahoney, Peter de Beuzeville and Anne Cale. I'm sure they will continue to be valuable members of the society.

A great thanks also to our Newsletter team including our editor, Adelina Cubelic. However, Adelina is finding it difficult help us with the Newsletter with her expanding family, so she would like to relinquish this role. Consequently we are looking for someone to fill this position. If you can help, please let us know.

Thank you to Sue Howard and Vicki Bolling for organising another successful OFF annual dinner, which I am sure we all enjoyed.

Thanks also to the Hospitality and Welcome group: Bev Watters, Sue de Beuzeville and Vicki Bolling. Bev and Sue are stepping down, so we are also looking for someone to help Vicki in this role.

And thanks those who led our field days and helped out at our various stalls, planting days, etc, helping to make our 65<sup>th</sup> year another great one as outlined by our diligent Secretary, Liz Cameron, who devotes much time to ensuring the smooth running of the society. Thanks Liz.

We also had another great year with our research recipients thanks to Rodger, Matt and Graham Fry, who researched and chose this year's grant recipients, funded by contributions to the President's fund.

I would like to extend and a special thanks to Shaun Keys-Byrne, who is leaving the district. He has been very helpful over the years in assisting with the development of much of our publicity material, eg, posters, calendars, cards, banner and flag, etc.

date. Oh, and thanks also to James Deli for his work in maintaining OFF's Facebook page, which attracts much attention online, some of which has recently been due to his and Peter Mahoney's work taking materials to South Coast groups trying to sustain wildlife affected by the recent wildfires.

For my last address I would like to briefly discuss our mission statement, which we created recently. The committee thought that it was worthwhile consolidating our aims into a short pithy statement. So, OFF is:

**Working to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment locally and globally**

We do this by following the society's objectives, which I would like to remind you of:

- To stimulate interest in Australian flora and fauna;
- To act to protect and foster an interest in the natural environment, particularly at the local level;
- To foster an understanding of the need to conserve the natural environment and resources; and
- To cooperate with other groups to achieve these objectives at local, state, national and international level

Now, I have tried to clarify the mission statement in detail and illustrate it with examples:

**Protect.** Dict: To defend from trouble, harm, etc.

This is the first level of ensuring our environment is cared for, at least make sure what we value does not disappear.

Examples:

- Campaigning against tree removal; this was the reason for OFF's creation
- Stopping bays from being turned into rubbish dumps, not always successfully unfortunately

**Preserve.** Dict: To keep safe from danger of harm; to protect from decay or dissolution.

This is the second level of care for the environment. Even though what we value may be protected, they can deteriorate. We must ensure that things don't go backwards.

Examples:

- Bushcare and encouraging councils to retain and expand the Bushcare program
- Encouraging the public to be aware of and valuing the natural environment

**Enhance.** Dict: To intensify or increase in quality, value, etc; improve, augment

This is our third level of environmental care. We can now build on the first two and advance our care of our environment and begin to ameliorate past damage.

Examples:

- In 1990s OFF obtained nearly \$400,000 to rehabilitate local bushland reserves
- OFF's recent planting and maintenance program at Boorea Reserve, Moore Reserve, lower Gannons Park, etc,

**Local.** Dict: Characteristic of or associated with a particular locality or area.

This is where our primary work is carried out. We work in our own area to ensure our local environment is suitable for both ourselves and other essential organisms.

Examples:

- Lime Kiln Bay project to educate locals in where their stormwater goes.
- Production of local brochures and calendars.
- Education through street stalls, LKB project

**Global.** Dict: Covering or relating to the whole world; comprehensive.

This is where we operate outside our local area, or our local efforts have an effect outside our locality.

Examples:

- Petitions on various issues outside our area, such as coal mining, logging, etc.
- Plastic and rubbish reduction, eg, balloons, helium, clean ups. Effect on rivers.
- Submissions on various issues, such as mining, fracking logging, over-development, dam raising, etc.
- Digital presence, through our web page, Facebook, etc.

To help us carry out this work we rely on donations, grants from local, state and federal governments, not to mention the hard work of volunteers and of course our members. And I thank them all.

So, just to reiterate, OFF has been

**Working to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment locally and globally since 1955.**

Events such as the recent catastrophic summer and its aftermath illustrate that societies like OFF are just as important as ever and I am sure that we will continue successfully into the future.

Thank you