

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Monday 4 December 2023**

### **Wetlands supporters praised for “exceptional” contributions**

Winton Wetlands management has praised the “exceptional levels” of support and contribution given by volunteers and supporters toward the success of its recent Wild Week public event.

Wild Week, held from 20-25 November, brought together organisations contributing to the success of the wetland restoration project, which has a growing national and international profile.

Many groups were represented at the public open day that was the culmination of the week-long event. These included: Turtles Australia, Environment Protection Authority Victoria, Birdlife Australia, Swamps Rivers and Ranges, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Middle Creek Fish Farm, Friends of Warby Ranges, and Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation.

In a letter to supporters sent this week, Interim CEO Dr Dennis O’Brien said each of them in their own way offered something special to the occasion.

“Collectively they provided a demonstration that wetland restoration can be a complex process with many dimensions to it, as well as being a process which is most successful when a wide range of resources, capabilities and perspectives can be brought to bear.”

Dr O’Brien said the success of the final day was all the more remarkable in the face of the wild weather experienced. Some planned events including a hot air balloon ride and an aerial seeding drone demonstration did not go ahead, while some other events needed to be modified.

But the energy and enthusiasm of participants remained strongly evident throughout the day, and had helped Winton Wetlands to finish its year on a high note, he said.

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“It’s capped off a year in which some important landmarks were reached, including the return of iconic growling grass frogs to the wetlands, the return of important species of native fish, new progress with revegetation, successful establishment of a revitalised education program including a growing emphasis on cultural education activities, and a steadily rising public profile for the Winton Wetlands both locally and overseas.”

On a more personal note, Dr O’Brien thanked outgoing CEO Sue Lebish for contributions she made during three years as CEO and before that five years as a member of the Committee of Management.

“Sue has decided to move on from Winton Wetlands after three years in the role, and five years prior to that on the CoM. We wish her all the best. Sue has made an invaluable contribution to the wetlands project during a challenging period, with special attention to financial dimensions which have required particularly close attention at times.”

Dr O’Brien said he would be serving as interim CEO into the new year, with current committee member Lindy Allen serving as interim chair. Further announcements would be made in the new year.

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A decorative graphic in the bottom left corner consisting of several concentric, curved blue lines that sweep upwards and to the right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

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