

Presidents Report

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network

Annual General Meeting 2023

Welcome to the 20th Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

I'm pleased to report that the network continues to go from strength to strength with membership lapping at the 1000-member mark.

The highlight for many will have been the Queenstown Conference late last year. This delivered an outstanding programme of presentations, workshops, field trips, awards and social activities. It was well supported and we received much favourable feedback from attendees. Hearty thanks are due to the amazing organising team of Alex Fergus, Jesse Bythell and Jo Smith. Following on from this, the network organised a very successful Queenstown Lakes District Restoration Pathways workshop, the findings of which will be circulated in due course. Planning is well underway for our next conference, to be held in Whangarei. Make sure you lock that early October 2024 date in your calendars.

The web team, led by Jesse Bythell, has continued to provide significant improvements to the website. Users may have noticed an additional feature on the species fact sheets that quickly determines which of our plant lists contain the species in question. Others may appreciate the new 'Wetland Plant Indicator Status Rating' derived from the revised national wetland plant list to assist councils in delineating and monitoring wetlands. Many of our factsheets now also link to the relevant Manaaki Whenua Online Interactive Keys.

The quantity and quality of fact sheets continues to improve and this is especially evident with our significantly expanded coverage of lichens. I thank those of you who have provided photos to plug gaps as we strive to ensure each fact sheet has a comprehensive set of accompanying images. There is ongoing work to improve the website, which we highlight from time to time with notices in *Trilepidea*.

Thank you to those of you who have written an item and/or provided photographs for our newsletter. Please keep them coming, and encourage others to do the same.

During the year we made a substantial submission regarding 'A redesigned NZ ETS Permanent Forest Category'. We highlighted and advocated for the important role our native flora should play in helping sequester carbon as part of the country's Emissions Trading Scheme.

Since the end of the financial year, we were pleased to support threatened plant research by awarding a David Given Threatened Plant Scholarship to Samiksha Patel, a Masters student at the University of Canterbury. Samiksha will carry out a conservation genomic study of threatened limestone populations of *Senecio matatini*.

The review of our 5-year Strategic Plan is almost complete and a revised plan will soon be available on the website. We've also taken a fresh look at the various roles that Council members fulfil to give effect to the strategic plan and have identified some new roles.

This year marks the network's 20th anniversary and we should all be proud of how far the network has come since the late John Sawyer rallied support for his grand idea. The presentation by Jesse Bythell following this meeting will reflect on those 20 years of NZPCN.

I have now completed 3 years as President and will not be seeking re-election. Throughout my term I've had great support from all the Council members, our Administrator, kaiawhina, and our two major sponsors. I have no doubt our new President will also enjoy that support.

Thank you for attending the AGM, for your plant conservation efforts around the country, and for your ongoing enthusiasm and support for the NZPCN.

John Barkla
President NZPCN
15 October 2023