

**MORNINGTON PENINSULA AND WESTERN PORT  
BIOSPHERE RESERVE FOUNDATION LTD**

ABN 15 107 484 408  
ACN 107 484 408

**2005-06  
Annual Report**

Foundation Office  
PO Box 261  
Hastings 3915

## **MORNINGTON PENINSULA AND WESTERN PORT BIOSPHERE RESERVE FOUNDATION LTD**

### **OUR VISION**

The Biosphere will be a place where people attain an enduring relationship with the natural world and contribute to the needs of society as a whole by showing the way to a more socially, environmentally and economically sustainable future.

### **OUR MISSION**

It is our mission to lead the community to engage in sustainable practice. We are committed to:

- Conserving and improving biological diversity;
- Building and sharing knowledge by facilitating, monitoring and utilising research;
- Fostering, encouraging and facilitating project partnerships;
- Engaging with, and providing education for, all elements of the Biosphere community

### **OUR VALUES**

We value:

- The intrinsic worth of biodiversity and natural ecosystems and acknowledge the need to protect and restore them;
- Sustainable outcomes, intergenerational, cultural, economic and political equity;
- Empowering people and fostering participation;
- Individuality and diversity of opinion across all ages;
- Co-operative networks and partnerships;
- Promotion of sustainable production and consumption, using appropriate demand management and environmentally sound technologies; and
- Open and transparent processes of accountability to the community.

## 2006 CHAIR'S REPORT

Our Biosphere Foundation has continued to develop and consolidate throughout the 2005-06 year. Membership grew by around 13%. Our Roundtables are blossoming with a variety of new projects initiated and underway. These range from eco-footprinting of Frankston households to the Bass Coast Sustainable Business Recognition Program, a recovery plan for the southern brown bandicoot across a large area of the Biosphere Reserve and Mornington Peninsula Roundtable's recent leadership in tackling the complex and long standing problems which make Watson Creek a significant source of pollution into Western Port. Roundtable activities are detailed later in this Annual Report.

A significant advance for the Foundation has been the development of the first cut of our *Living Strategy*. This has been distributed to members as a focus for discussion at the AGM. The *Living Strategy* approach is particularly suited to an organisation such as the Biosphere Foundation which has a large range of partners and alliances. Such collaborations are crucial to us achieving the goals of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Program, and our own more specific objectives. The *Living Strategy* identifies key strategic themes which are fleshed out with specific but flexible strategies that can be adapted as opportunities arise and circumstances change.

The Organisational Review conducted in late 2005 by consultant David Risstrom produced 71 recommendations towards improving the Foundation's operations. The Board accepted the vast majority of recommendations and many high priority aspects already have been implemented. This Review was a milestone in consolidating the Foundation and establishing clear paths forward. Our appreciation is due to Jack Krohn for leading the Review, and to Phil Westwood, Jim Kerin, Greg Walker and Anthony Hooper for the hard work they did as Working Group members.

The Board itself has developed a Governance Protocol during the year to guide its conduct and mode of operation. The Biosphere Foundation is a complex organisation, being a partnership between the State Government, five Local Government Authorities and six community Roundtables. The Protocol provides for a common understanding of how the Board will go about its business.

As everywhere, from the global to the local level, change is a constant factor nowadays and the Foundation is not exempt. Six new Directors joined the Board early in 2006 following a number of retirements at last year's AGM and the loss of two of our Council-nominated Directors following local government elections in November 2005. These changes to the Board are detailed in the 2006 Directors' Report circulated to members. I wish to recognise and thank the departing Directors for the enormous contributions they have made during the establishment of the Biosphere Reserve and development of the Foundation. In particular, I would like to thank Loretta Leslie who served as our Treasurer from inauguration until February this year.

For 2005-06, the Foundation introduced the MYOB computer accounting package and took over managing our own accounts. This has been another significant step in establishing an independent organisation. Previously, during our inaugural year of operations, the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) had kindly provided support and managed our finances through its accounts department. The detailed 2005-06 Financial Report and Audit have been distributed to members. The trading loss for the financial year is of concern. Largely, it reflects the transition from MPSC funding of the Executive Officer in the previous year to the current situation where the Foundation itself funds the position. Turning this trading loss into a surplus in the 2006-07 year is a high priority for the Executive and the Board.

As Chair, I have spoken on behalf of the Foundation in numerous fora and meetings throughout the year. I have made presentations to all our Council partners and appreciate their commitment to the Biosphere. I believe there is capacity for much greater collaboration to be developed. A key initiative we have been working to get off the ground is the development of Biosphere-wide sustainability indicators for local government. We are hopeful of getting support from the Victorian Government for this project under its Local Government Accord. The project's outcome would be a way of measuring our progress in achieving sustainability across our Biosphere. The MaB Program places a strong emphasis on monitoring and measuring sustainability in biosphere reserves.

A feature of the year has been developing relationships with key stakeholders and potential partners, such as the Port Phillip and Western Port CMA, Western Port Greenhouse Alliance, landcare networks and the Port of Hastings Corporation. I sit on the PoHC's Community Reference Group and the majority activity this year has been consultation on future development options for the Port, including the transport corridors. This obviously is important for Western Port's marine environment but also for surrounding land, vegetation and townships.

An issue that has occupied some time and discussion within Foundation circles over the past year has been whether a simpler, iconic name should either replace, or be added to, the Foundation's current lengthy name. The aim is to establish a specific identity (whereas 'Mornington Peninsula' and 'Western Port' are used by many other organisations) and to enable us to become an easily remembered household name. Debate is still open and members' opinions are welcome.

I feel confident in declaring that 2006-07 has been a year of solid progress. We face some significant challenges, such as development of Casey and Cardinia Roundtables, but I also perceive great opportunities. I urge all members to stick with the Foundation for an interesting ride – and encourage your friends and colleagues to join us.

Rob Gell  
Chair

## RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

The Research Committee met four times during 2005-06. Some significant milestones have been achieved and substantial work is underway on a number of fronts.

In 2005, the Research Committee proposed a priority research project to determine the status and develop a recovery plan for the Southern Brown Bandicoot (SBB) across the Biosphere Reserve. Following unsuccessful grant applications in 2005, the Research Committee was allocated \$5000 in the Foundation's 06-07 budget to initiate the SBB Project, specifically for co-ordination and mapping work and the investigation of further funding options.

This work has begun with the Committee recently sponsoring an initial SBB event that successfully brought together all parties interested in the SBB across the Biosphere Reserve. This information-sharing event energised a range of organisations and groups to work collaboratively in identifying SBB occurrence and habitat status and developing a co-ordinated recovery plan.

In addition, an application was submitted during 2006 to the Commonwealth Envirofund for specific SBB recovery work in the Pines Reserve in Frankston. This project is in collaboration with the Frankston Roundtable, local community groups, the City of Frankston and Parks Victoria, which manages the Pines Reserve. Happily, this project has now received a grant of nearly \$19,000 from the Envirofund which will enable significant work to begin in 2007. A separate application was made to WWF's Threatened Species Program for a project to secure populations in the Koo-Wee-Rup region. This project was in collaboration with Cardinia Shire, Cardinia Environment Coalition, Melbourne Water, Bayles Fauna Park and a number of private landholders. Unfortunately this application was unsuccessful but its preparation has led to stronger collaboration in the different areas and organisations in the Biosphere.

Other 2006 research work to determine current SBB distribution has included:

- a survey at the Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve by Chisholm students which identified signs of the species at previously unknown sites;
- a Melbourne University student project on the population viability and management actions, involving field work at sites across the region;
- Preliminary data collection and mapping initiated throughout Cardinia Shire yielding a number of surprising results. A paper documenting is planned for 2007. Community survey work that proved successful in Cardinia Shire will be extended to other parts of the Biosphere and west Gippsland.

A major Research Committee activity this year has been the drafting of a grant application procedure for research projects, to be co-ordinated with processes for handling grant applications across other areas of the Foundation's operations.

Other significant Committee activities in 2006 have included:

- Discussions regarding co-ordination of research activities with the Port Phillip and Western Port CMA;

- Application of the Landscape Species research techniques in the SBB Project;
- A research proposal by Prof. Markus Reuter to describe and quantify the full cycle of energy, water and recyclables in the Biosphere, towards providing a benchmark for measuring progress in sustainability
- Dialogue regarding potential collaboration with the Earthwatch Institute
- Development work underway on key areas of research interest for inclusion in the Biosphere Foundation's Research Strategy.

This year's expansion in research activities as outlined above is pleasing and promises a busy 2007 for the Research Committee.

Peter Woodgate  
Convenor

# ROUNDTABLE REPORTS

## BASS COAST ROUND TABLE

### OVERVIEW

The Round Table has provided an excellent opportunity for members to discuss current conservation and sustainability issues, and increase awareness about associated events occurring in the Bass Coast Shire.

The main outcomes from the Round Table are covered in the projects addressed in this report.

The effectiveness of the Round Table's operations is diminished through the lack of branding, and also brochures about the biosphere available from the Foundation.

### 1. MEETINGS

Seven meetings of the Bass Coast Round Table (BCRT) were held as follows:

- 19 August 2005
- 21 October 2005
- 22 November 2005
- 16 December 2005
- 17 February 2006
- 19 April 2006
- 16 June 2006

### 2. PROJECTS

The Round Table has addressed the following projects during the year.

- **Sustainable Business Recognition Program**

The 2005/2006 Business Environmental Sustainability Recognition Program is a pilot project being developed for wider application in the Biosphere Reserve. Partners include Envirofund, Phillip Island Landcare and Westernport Water.

The project involves a simple self-assessment by participating businesses in the Bass Coast Shire. A logo is awarded to those demonstrating environmentally sustaining practices covering:

- Energy use
- Recycling
- Water use
- Greenhouse emissions
- Business planning
- Pollution
- Community awareness.

This project is continuing in 2006/07

- **Western Port Seagrass Partnership**

This project is supported by the Round Table through its connections with the Sea Grass Partnership via Dr Tim Ealey. The project has been successful in engaging volunteers to assist in the re-establishment of seagrass and mangroves.

- **Phillip Island Nature Park – development of a visitor centre at the Nobbies**

Members of the Round Table have been in discussion with Phillip Island Nature Park (PINP) staff and consultants regarding presenting information on the biosphere in the PINP's exciting new marine centre at the Nobbies set to open in 2007. This offers the opportunity to increase exposure to the biosphere to up to 1 million visitors annually expected to the area. Further opportunities exist also in cooperating with the PINP in ecotourism accreditation, and data base development.

- **Waterline Project - developing sustainable communities**

Representatives of the BCRT have been involved with the Bass Coast Shire and local community groups to develop an application for funds from the Community Support Fund to assist in helping nine small sea change communities on the eastern side of Western Port to manage the impact of rapid population change. The project is called the Waterline project. It is based on achieving five strategic directions as follows, which support eleven sub-projects:

1. Build structures that facilitate community planning and decision making, and create a platform for a strong regional community voice.
2. Celebrate a sense of place by celebrating local culture.
3. Build connections & networks to enhance wellbeing, inclusiveness and social equity.
4. Increase number and diversity of people volunteering in community organizations and activities.
5. Build a knowledge base that increases the capacity of the community to manage change.

The project is currently being refined with relevant groups and agencies.

- **Options for marketing local farm produce through an environmental branding program.**

The purpose of the project is to develop or adopt a model for marketing produce. Initial focus is on establishing what type of program and criteria are suitable for the local area. This project will continue in 2006/07, and may include some market research and development of strategies for promotion. The lead partners are Bass Coast Landcare network and Bass Coast Shire.

David Jobe & Ian Weir  
Bass Coast Roundtable

## FRANKSTON ROUNDTABLE REPORT

If the last calendar year was about establishing our local credibility then this year has been about putting down roots.

### PLANNING

Critical to our work this year has been the question we asked ourselves as part of our local strategic planning process.

"How can the Frankston Roundtable contribute to the unique role of the Biosphere in the local community in the next 12 months, and what are our indicators of success?"

Following a workshop conducted by Bob Edgar in April, we adopted 7 strategic themes. These are

- Communication and Education
- Maintaining and Increasing our Knowledge Base
- Maintaining and Improving Biodiversity (the Southern Brown Bandicoot Project)
- Membership and Engagement
- Organisational and
- Sustainable Resource Use

### ACHIEVEMENTS

Key achievements of this year span a number of activities and a number of important milestones as listed below:

#### Communication and Education

- ✓ In partnership with the Westernport Greenhouse Alliance and Frankston City Council's Environment and Communications teams, we conducted our second major event on Climate Change. It was attended by approximately 330 people. The Roundtable extends its thanks to speakers Dr. Graeme Pearman, Dr. Ian McPhail and Mr. Don Kennedy. Our thanks are also extended to our Chair, Rob Gell, who moderated the evening and to Biosphere members who assisted on the night, especially Pat Bently, Heinz Reitmeier, Alison Kuitert, James Dooley, Rob Lindsay, Bob Edgar, Lisa Loulier, Libby Anthony and Dan Garlic.
- ✓ A number of positive press pieces were placed. Subjects covered were World Environment Day, Climate Change, the Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve and Southern Brown Bandicoots.
- ✓ Two supportive adjournment speeches by Cranbourne MP Jude Perera
- ✓ Exhibited at Pines Pride Day in partnership with Parks Victoria (Dave Hasnip) and the Friends of the Pines
- ✓ Exhibited at Frankston City Council's Visions for our Future event and David Suzuki's event
- ✓ Preparation of high quality bandicoot posters and display material by Sharron Willoughby and Terry Coates (RBG Cranbourne)
- ✓ Distribution of our minutes to directors and other Roundtable convenors
- ✓ Appointment of Alan Hood to oversee our web-based activities once the Foundation's website is established

### Maintaining & increasing our knowledge base

The Roundtable has identified a need to establish a library to accommodate reference material relative to sustainability and natural resource management and a Southern Brown Bandicoot database.

### Maintaining and improving biodiversity

Working in cooperation with the Foundation's Research Committee, much has been achieved by our bandicoot rescue group which has been chaired by Rhys Walkley. Dr. Dave Nichols (Chisholm Institute), Dr. Terry Coates (RBGC), Dave Hasnip & Tim Schneider (Parks Vic), Steve Llewellyn (FCC) & Nick Halley (Friends of the Pines), Hans Brunner & El Bruzzese have kept the torch alight regarding the integrity and intent of the Southern Brown Bandicoot research proposal. To their credit, they have fostered a network that now extends across four of the Biosphere municipalities. And in this regard, the support of Cardinia Shire Council's alternate director, Ian Stevenson & Frankston City Council's director, Libby Anthony has proven immensely helpful.

Key achievements attributable to the work of this committee and the Foundation's Research Committee are -:

- ✓ The addition of 120 ha to the Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve
- ✓ The conduct of a pest animal eradication program (Parks Vic)
- ✓ The mapping of vegetation in the Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve (Chisholm)
- ✓ On-going observations and mapping in Frankston, Casey and Cardinia
- ✓ The organisation of a regional seminar to bring together stakeholders from across the Biosphere region
- ✓ The successful application for a federal Natural Heritage Trust grant (\$18k) to undertake work in the Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve
- ✓ The authorship of a grant application (Threatened Species Network) to fund research and restoration work in Casey and Cardinia.
- ✓ The fostering of collaborative relationships with Melbourne Water, a number of community groups inclusive of the Cardinia Environment Coalition and private landowners.

### Membership and Engagement

- ✓ We have received the board's permission to begin the process of applying for the extension the Biosphere Reserve's boundary to stage two which will encompass all of Frankston. Whilst we are yet to receive Frankston City Council's endorsement of this proposal, we are confident that we will, and this exercise will add considerably to our membership base and its diversity.
- ✓ In the process of applying for grant funding we have engaged the Frankston North Community Project Steering Committee, Monterey Secondary College and Scout groups from Karingal and the Pines
- ✓ We again participated in the adjudication of the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula business awards. Local company, Australian Arrow, won the Sustainability Category and subsequently went on to win the Golden Banksia Award.

### Organisational

- ✓ Our strategic planning workshop in April has provided us with an operational framework and identified our priorities. Alternate director, Jeff Weir, contributed significantly to these deliberations and went on to draft a strategic statement for the Foundation.
- ✓ Our meeting venue remains the DPI premises in Frankston. We extend our thanks to El and Aline Bruzzese for their hospitality and look forward to working with the newly appointed director of the facility.
- ✓ I would like to again recognise the strong contribution and support of Frankston City Council and its CEO, Steve Gawler. Frankston's contribution to both the business of the board and our local activities has been outstanding.
- ✓ The Roundtable has welcomed Council's appointment of the Environment Manager, Libby Anthony, as its Director to the Biosphere board. Libby's experience with non government organisations has added significantly to our local skills base and that of the board. Libby (as did her predecessor Rachael Weaver) has participated fully in our meetings and events and has committed further in-kind resources to a number of projects. I would also like to thank Frankston's media wizard, Donna Mongan, for her input, advice but above all for her enthusiasm for our work.

### Sustainable Resource Use

The Roundtable was successful in its application to the Frankston City Council for a Strategic Community Grant to undertake the development of Frankston's eco footprint. This will include a survey involving a number of local secondary schools which will support our efforts to engage schools and educate children and parents in sustainable resource use.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is important to acknowledge a number of stalwarts who have made the Frankston Roundtable successful in running the operations of the organisation.

Thank you to Alison Kuitert, Convenor of the Frankston Roundtable for her tireless work, and the support she has given to the Roundtable's Director, Jim Kerin. Thank you to Heinz Reitmeier, our Treasurer for diligently maintaining our financial records.

And a special note of appreciation for MPs Greg Hunt and Jude Perera for championing our vision.

But above all, it is our Roundtable members and supporters who have delivered on the biosphere purposes who need to be thanked.

We look forward to an even bigger and better year in 2007 as we face up to the challenge of toeing the thin green line.

Jim Kerin  
Frankston Roundtable Director

## MORNINGTON PENINSULA ROUNDTABLE REPORT

### **The Committee**

Our Roundtable, and myself as Convenor, have been extremely fortunate to have had the support of a great committee this year, comprising Cecelia Witton as Treasurer, Robin Borger as Secretary, Rob McNaught as Director and committee members Carolyn Rose, Roger Richards, Peter Woodgate (Alternate Director) and Glenn Emkhe. They have helped me find my feet as Convenor, and supported me with patience and wisdom as I proceeded to "make it up as I go along".

The Committee has met over dinner at Mornington's Tanti Hotel on the first Tuesday each month, followed by our meeting. This has proved valuable in getting to know each other and building good relationships and the Committee's capacity.

Reluctantly, we have accepted the resignation of Treasurer Cecelia Witton, a role she has performed exceptionally well. However her wide-ranging community and work commitments means she has to let something go. Thank you Cecelia.

Thanks also to Robin Borger for his very efficient minute taking and for all the work he's done on our Roundtable's Action Plan and the members database.

I make a special mention of the assistance that Yvonne Reifenberg and Jillian Verhardt have given me. Although not official Committee members, their dedication to the Biosphere concept has kept us in regular communication, and they have both provided invaluable support and guidance. Thank you.

### **Activities**

One of the first tasks our 2006 Committee took on was the **Action Plan**. We have sorted into defined categories the original plan that Jan Oliver, Robin Borger, Kay MaKay and others worked on in 2005. We have ensured that our Roundtable objectives line up with the overall Foundation objectives and Yvonne Reifenberg has condensed the Action Plan into a shortened form. While this is a work in progress, it identifies specific goals, with clear links to actions and hopefully allowing for the many possible directions of the Biosphere Foundation's future development. Feedback and input is always welcome!

Activities we are/have been involved in include:

**Future of Food** – Film night at Red Hill School held Saturday 5 August 2006. 36 people attended and we raised \$360 which went to the Red Hill Consolidated School's environment group, MPRT and Lily Films.

**Watson Creek** – Community meetings in Somerville, boat trip to Yaringa Marine Park with Parks Victoria, and stakeholder meeting at Warneet.

The plan now is to seek funding through the Biosphere Foundation to support a project officer to co-ordinate issues pertaining to Watson Creek catchment. MPRT convenor will sit on the steering committee, with alternate rep. from

Biosphere to be found in 2007. Initial stakeholder support is secured and this looks to be a fantastic project for the whole Biosphere.

**Indigenous open gardens tour** – in association with SPIFFA and Trust for Nature – held on Saturday 21 October 2006. 10 local indigenous gardens were on display, and we had over 300 visitors.

**An Inconvenient Truth** – film night fundraiser at Rosebud Cinema. Thursday 9 November 2006,

**Volunteers Expo** – MPRT exhibit on Tuesday 14 November

**Southern Brown Bandicoot Recovery Project** – this will extend to Mornington Peninsula as the project develops. Malcolm Legg will be our guest speaker early in 2007. He has found three new populations of Southern Brown Bandicoot on the MP and wants our Roundtable involved.

**Fox Campaign** – following meeting with MP Shire's Natural Systems team and Jan Oliver to discuss fox campaign, information and training is planned for 2007. Biosphere members encouraged to get involved.

**Students for the Biosphere Zero Waste Conference** – working with the Sustainable Schools/Zero Waste group (CERES) to help with this event. Anyone interested in going to their meeting to plan this please contact Virginia.

**Grants** – we have submitted applications for a Small Equipment Grant and to the Community Water Fund under the National Water Initiative to implement water-saving initiatives at 9 peninsula *Sustainable Schools* following their water audits.

A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE BIOSPHERE – IN BODY OR SPIRIT – AND I LOOK FORWARD TO BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESSES IN 2007.

Virginia Richardson  
Convenor