



*Wahlenbergia
gloriosa*

Australian Native Plants Society Canberra Region Inc

Policy for major spends and donations (2023)

In 2016, our donations priorities were assessed to be: *support for research projects aligned to our objectives, *untied financial (or in-kind) support for aligned organisations, *small donations of Sale plants to community organisations/schools, and *donations of Society publications to schools/libraries, etc.

Donations experience since 2012

Our major Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) partners are the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) and the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT). In 2023, we signed a funded Grant, to do a three-year nature survey for ACT Environment.

Under the MoU of 2019–24, ANBG grants facilities for Council/Member meetings, plus facilities for training meetings, carpark/storage space for ANPSC Plant Sales. ANPSC makes a substantial donation to ANBG, enhances ANBG visitations via Society events, issues a Journal *inter alia* promoting ANBG, and provides expert advice.

Under the MoU of 2020, CIT grants propagation-space at Bruce Campus, in return for in-kind collaboration, particularly participation and learning for students. Either party can end the MoU on a month's notice.

Over 2012–22, our *other* 36 donations totalled more than \$90,000. Five donations matched or exceeded \$10,000.

Over 2012–22, our largest single “discretionary” expenditure has been F1 Solutions revamping our Plant Database, about \$30,000. Similarly, Giraffe's website/membership revamp was about \$24,000. Reprints of the Plant Book (see below) also incur sizeable spends, the last being 2,500 @ \$26,000 total, in 2021–22.

The Society has rebounded from the COVID–19 disruptions over 2020–22. Activities have recovered, memberships are holding. At date, Plant Sales run at about 5,000–6,000 items in the Spring. Considerably lower, than years bygone.

Excluding the ACT Grant, our 2022–23 Operating Income was about \$47,000. This was about \$5,000 more than Total Expenses. Our 2021–22 Income was about \$40,000, about \$17,000 less than Expenses. However, these Expenses do include the one-off Book Reprint, at \$26,000.

For the 2022–23 year, our biggest spends may be grouped into: Accounting and Banking about \$8,500, ANBG and Similar Donations \$7,000, Website/Database Hosting \$6,500, Miscellaneous Admin \$7,000. Journal Printing has fallen away to \$3500, as we principally go online. In 2021–22, the spend pattern was broadly similar.

Discussion of state of play

In its Constitution, the Society seeks to improve the horticulture and preservation/appreciation of Australian native plants. Over 50-plus years, it has maintained technical expertise in both aspects. Generations of Canberrans have found an informal avenue to gain knowledge of and pleasure in the flora, without a formal study commitment.

On the one hand, the Society has a strong ACT profile and influence, given its smallish membership and modest finances. On the other, it is ever reliant on a smallish circle of willing and able volunteers, to fill critical Council and technical (plant sale, promotion, propagation, database, website, etc) slots.

Maintaining traditional activities, yet innovating, is ever challenging. Income just keeps up with Expenses. We are not expanding. We are subject to broad trends. Australian flora and their cultivation used to be esoteric. Now there's the internet. Canberrans now have various avenues, to know and grow the native plants. As compared with the 1960s–1990s sweep of environmental activism, climate change is *the* topic of the 1990s–2020s, for younger generations.

Against this background, the Society reframes its donations policy. We are sublimating Donations into Major Spends. Meaning, “*substantial (at least \$1,000, not normally more than \$10,000 in one year) non-routine spends, one-off or ongoing, and designed to augment core activities, or fund newer activities that further the Society goals*”.

Major spends and donations policy

At present, the Society's three main earners are Plant Sale (Propagation Group), Memberships and Activities, and Plant Book or other Publications.

Gross (not net) income from Plant Sale was about \$23,000 in 2022–23, compared with about \$15,000 in 2021–22. Equivalent figures for Memberships are \$10,500 then \$8,500. For Plant Book, \$12,500 then \$16,500.

In effect, these activities are overlapping and mutually reinforcing categories. Plant Sale/Prop Group supports Memberships, Plant Book (other Publications) bolster Plant Sales and Memberships, the Website (including Plant Database) boosts Memberships and member activities, and so on.

Over 50 years of trial and adjustment, these activities have coalesced, as practical avenues, whereby the Society reaches out into the community. With ageing membership, and limited rotations in key Council and technical positions, upkeep and renewal of these activities is a challenge.

Therefore, our first priorities for Major Spend proposals for Council approval will be worthwhile capital or recurrent (including those for paid support) spends in and around these three (overlapping) categories:

**Plant Sale and Propagation Group*

**Memberships, Promotions and Activities*

**Website and Other Publications.*

Other priorities broadly reflect the traditional Donations stream:

**Support under an MoU for (also including financial Grants from) Aligned Research Projects*

**Untied Support to Aligned (non–MoU) Organisations*

**Community–Educational Donations of Plants/Publications.*

We may seek other Grants directly, mindful of their admin–finance loads. Overall, the benefits to Society should outweigh the costs. We commit to monitoring the Spends and Donations, with a full review by 2026.

Approved by Council, August 2023. This Policy is posted to ANPSC Website.