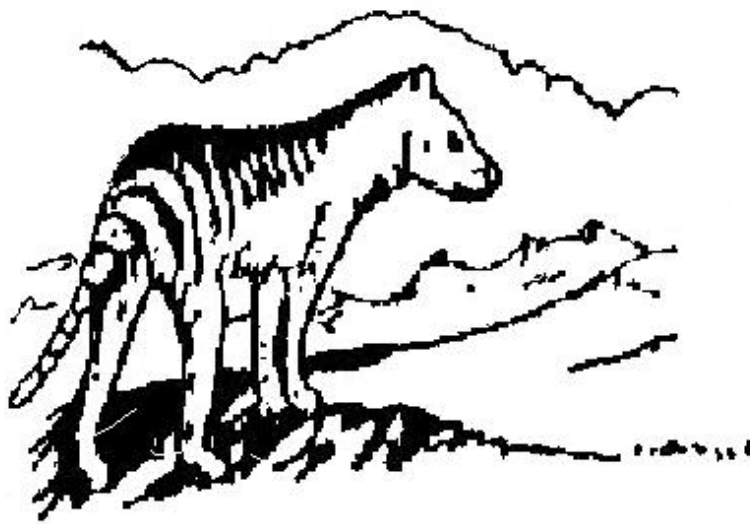


# THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

Issued to members of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club as a contribution to club activities.



The aim of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club is to encourage the study of all aspects of natural history and to support the conservation of our natural heritage

**Volume XLIII No 5**

**June/July 2010**

- Patron** : Mr Chris Tassell, AM
- President** : Mr N Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead, 6344 2277
- Vice President** : Ms E Montgomery, 6 Cleary Ave Young Town, 6344 3989  
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- Hon. Secretary** : Mr J Elliott, 64 Penquite Rd Newstead, 6344 9303
- Hon. Treasurer** : Ms K Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead, 6344 2277
- N'letter Co-ordinator** : Ms K. Manning
- Librarian** : Ms T McGlynn
- Committee** : G Cameron, L Mockridge, A Pegler, J Simmons,  
M Simmons, R Skabo

Meetings 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of month, Feb-Dec at Scotch-Oakburn College, Penquite Rd Newstead

## PROGRAM

### AUGUST

**Tuesday 3**                    **Special General Meeting & Members Night**

**Sunday 8**                    **Field Trip: Notley Fern Gorge**

**Saturday 21**                **Skemp Day: Planting on Skemp Creek**

### SEPTEMBER

**Tuesday 7**                    **Guest Speaker Jim Nelson - *Frogs***

**Saturday 11**                **Field Trip: Frogging at Exeter**

**Sunday 26**                    **Skemp Day**

### OCTOBER

**Tuesday 5**                    **AGM & Guest speaker Wendy Potts - *Tasmania's  
Newest Threatened Plants***

**Sunday 10**                    **Field Trip: Midlands Reserves**

**Friday 15 -  
Sunday 17**                    **Federation Weekend - hosted by King Island Field  
Naturalists Club**

**Saturday 23**                **Skemp Day: Water Monitoring**

### NOVEMBER

**Tuesday 2**                    **Guest Speaker: Erik Wapstra - *Tasmanian Skinks***

**Sunday 7**                    **Field Trip: Skinks on Ben Lomond**

**Saturday 20**                **Skemp Day (Please note change of date from original  
program)**

### DECEMBER

**Tuesday 7**                    **Member's Night**

**Saturday 11**                **Christmas at Skemps**

The July to December program can also be viewed at

<http://www.lfnc.org.au/meetings.htm>

## COMMITTEE/GENERAL MEETING

### *Skemp Report*

Revegetation on Skemp Creek continues. During the planting bee on 19/20 June, 125 trees were planted along the right hand side of the creek.

Work continues on the barn, the floor is almost complete, steps have been constructed at the side door, a new lock on the main door and a wood heater have been installed.

The guttering on one side of the Field Centre has come away. The plan is to repair it on the morning of 17 July when extra people are at the Centre, as extra hands will be needed to re-attach the gutter to the building.

John Simmons advised that he had contacted Gunns about the damage their trucks has done to the road on the property during the recent logging on the Mullinger property. Gunns will repair the road when the weather improves and until repairs have been undertaken, it is recommended that members do not travel past the creek crossing by car. John also reported that the telephone at the Field Centre is out of order following recent rain, he has contacted Telstra who will repair this as soon as possible.

### *Puggle*

**June** - Michael Clarke passed three gem stones around the room for members to identify. Lois Ralph correctly identified them as Rose, Amethyst and Citrine Quartz.

**July** - Lois Ralph asked members to describe the breeding group of Native Hens. The correct answer was that they are polyandrous ie several males mating with a single female. John Elliott's answer was nearest to correct.

### *Sightings*

**June** - Peter Warren reported Green Rosellas and Black Swans at Tamar Island; Noel Manning had seen a small raptor (Falcon) on an outing; Michael Clarke had seen Silvereyes and Yellow Wattlebirds; Marion Simmons has seen Black Currawong; Elizabeth Montgomery had seen Brushtail Possum at Quamby; Prue Warren had seen Eurasian Coots; Tom Treloggen had seen Eastern Spinebills and Crescent Honeyeaters in Mulgrave Street, and Bassian Thrush at Skemps and Mt Paris Dam; John Simmons had seen a Wedge-tailed Eagle at Skemps; Tina McGlynn had seen a family of three Wedge-tailed Eagles, Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Swallows which were overwintering near her home.

**July** - Margrit Korosi showed a picture of a blue fungus seen in Victoria. She may also have seen a bat recently. Lisa Cawthen said it was most likely a Gould's wattled bat as this species is crepuscular and does not hibernate. Margrit also reported seeing Green Rosellas feeding on a neighbour's crab apples. Peter Warren had seen Currawongs on Ben Lomond. Noel Manning had identified a Crescent Honeyeater in his garden. He had also seen a Wedge-tailed Eagle

feeding on roadkill on Targa Hill Road. Bob Montgomery had seen a flock of 50 Black Currawong at Quamby. Louise Skabo said she had seen Swift Parrots in Trevallyn. Alison Green reported that wattlebirds and a small parrot had been feeding in a Bluegum on Windmill Hill. Tom Treloggen had seen magpies. Judith Handlinger reported Black Cockatoos at Mt Pleasant. Peter Ralph said he had seen a large flock of Galahs at Legana. Sue Madden described a large stick insect at High St. Roy Skabo spoke about seeing an Echidna mating train in the Tom Gibson Reserve.

### ***Library Report***

Tina McGlynn tabled the newsletters and stated that *Created in Chaos*, the book on Tasmanian geology by Peter Manchester was available in our library. Neil Drury has donated some books to the Club. Tina also advised members on an e-Tamar report about sparrow droppings.

### ***General***

**Miss Imlach's land** will be auctioned on-site 17 July at 1.30 pm. Committee members are attending the auction and invited members to attend. A representative for the Club will bid on the property. The amount for the bid will be no more than Club members agreed on at the December meeting, plus any pledged donations.

**2011 Calendar:** members were reminded that landscape format images were required by the July general meeting.

**Review of Constitution:** members were reminded that the Special General Meeting is on Tuesday 3 August to vote on the revised Constitution. A copy of the final draft and note explaining the changes will be mailed to all members during July with a reminder of the meeting.

**Federation Meeting:** LFNC to host a get-together in January 2011 on Ben Lomond.

**New Members:** Anne and Barry Tolson's application for membership was approved at the recent Committee meeting. They were not at the meeting to collect their membership kit. We looking forward to them joining members at meetings and attending field trips.

## **GENERAL MEETING JUNE 1 - Members presentations**

Roy Skabo demonstrated the Club's new digital microscope using a sample of moss. The magnification enabled the viewer to see the sand or dirt between the minute leaves. Roy then presented a selection of fungi images from recent outings.

Peter Ralph talked about how he took his photo which won the photographic competition and showed images he ruled out. He also showed images of Fairy martin nests, a female blue ant and one of 237 dead foxes lined up along a fence at Tatura near Shepperton taken during a recent trip.

Peter Warren passed around fossil and geology specimens - a piece of Fulgurite (a hollow tube created by a lightning strike on sand) from Badger Head, opalised wood, rocks with fossils, quartz crystal with hematite through it, fossils of shells and seaweed from Cygnet.

John Simmons presented slides on the native fauna and insects, including the rare New Holland Mouse, which inhabited the area around the Bay of Fires when he first built his shack there. He stated that many had not returned since a neighbour moved in with a cat, even though he had been gone for some 20 years.

## **OUTING SKEMP DAY FUNGI SEARCH JUNE 6**

Members met today at Skemps to search for fungi on the Forest Track. The weather initially was cool but the sun was out so the day would soon warm. Under the canopy of trees on this track it was quite cold, but that did not deter us in our search and with such a variety found in a short space of time on entering the bush, the cold was soon forgotten. It was great to have Roy Skabo with us with his knowledge of fungi, pointing out and identify quiet a few of the Fungi-map target species during the morning.

We spent two hours looking about the area before reaching the track down to the Fern Gully which is usually only a short walk from the John Skemp Centre. From here we trekked through the bush over the rise and rejoined the Forest Track where it enters the grassy paddock and headed back for lunch. Following the break some members returned to an area of interest found during the morning, whilst other members checked out the hill up behind the John Skemp Centre for more fungi. We all agreed that it was a very successful day, with lots of photos taken and many of the fungi books borrowed from the Club's library to assist with the task of identifying the images.

Karen Manning

Many thanks to members who contributed to this list of fungi identified from the search

Aleurina ferruginea	Armillaria luteobubalina (T)
Calocera sp.	Clavaria miniata
Clavaria zollingeri	Clavaria sp.
Dermocybe austroveneta (T)	Galerina hypnorum
Heterotextus miltinis	Hygrocybe chromolimonea (T)
Hygrocybe lewellinae (T)	Hypholoma sublateritium
Laccaria sp.	Leotia lubrica (T)
Marasmius sp.	Melanophyllum haematospermum
Mucronella pendula (T)	Mycena sp.
Mycena cystidiosa	Mycena interrupta (T)
Podoserpula pusio (T)	Pseudohydnum gelatinosum (T)
Russula sp.	Ryvardenia camplya

Scleroderma sp.  
Tricholoma virgatum

Trametes sp.  
(T) = Fungimap target species

## **PLANTING ON SKEMP CREEK JUNE 19/20**

This was a lousy weekend weather wise. Arriving at Skemps with a laden trailer we were unable to manoeuvre it to a suitable position to unload due to wheel spin. Thank goodness for the Simmons and their 4 wheel drive Mitzi, problem solved, the trailer was moved and the 600 stakes purchased to secure the tree guards were unloaded.

We now find there is no firewood in the Centre, so off to the barn we go, slipping and sliding, the weight of the firewood helps with a bit of traction, but after a few trips the well worn muddy track is getting a bit hairy and even the Mitzi has trouble in one spot.

The trailer is then loaded with tree guards, weed mats and bags, plants, tools etc ready to head down to the planting site, but with all the jobs taking a little longer to perform this morning, it's now 1 pm, so we have a bite to eat and then head off to plant. We finished the small section of planting up-stream from the creek crossing, and then prepared for an early morning start below the crossing. Stakes, weed mats and tree guards were laid at each tree site and Noel started digging holes just to ensure he kept ahead of the planters the next day.

Sunday morning looked a little better, still very wet under foot, as there had been showers during the night. By lunchtime we had completed to the bridge at Bob's Bog and at the end of the afternoon we were about 20 plants short of the forested area of the East Walk.

Many thanks to the 12 members who assisted during this weekend with a special thanks to Peter Warren who drop sawed points on all 600 stakes which will make hammering them into the ground a lot easier. He obviously doesn't get bored easily.

## **A GUIDE TO FLOWERS AND PLANTS OF TASMANIA, 4th Edition**

Just a reminder that copies of the above Club guide is available to members, from John Simmons or Karen Manning for \$21.00 each, normal shop price is now \$29.95. They would make an ideal birthday gift or why not make an early start to your Christmas shopping.

## **GENERAL MEETING JULY 6 - SPEAKER LISA CAWTHEN - BATS**

At the general meeting on 6 July 2010, Lisa Cawthen spoke about bats, especially the eight species known to live in Tasmania. Based in the School of

Zoology, University of Tasmania, she studies these animals as the topic of her PhD thesis. In Lisa's excellent screen presentation her text was illustrated by many interesting photos.

All bats belong to Order Chiroptera. However, members of its two Sub Orders do not share a common ancestry. Megachiroptera, the fruit bats, are not Tasmanian residents. The occasional finding of a fruit bat in Tasmania probably is due to its powerful flight and a strong tail wind. Microchiroptera are small bats which feed mainly on insects. Bats of this group occur throughout Tasmania but they are more common in warmer eastern parts.

The eight Microchiroptera species recorded from Tasmania are listed here.

<i>Vespadelus darlingtoni</i>	Large forest bat
<i>Vespadelus regulus</i>	Southern forest bat
<i>Vespadelus vulturnus</i>	Little forest bat
<i>Nyctophilus geoffroyi</i>	Lesser long-eared bat
<i>Nyctophilus sherrini</i>	Tasmanian Long-eared bat
<i>Chalinolobus gouldii</i>	Gould's wattled bat
<i>Chalinolobus morio</i>	Chocolate wattled bat
<i>Falsistrellus tasmaniensis</i>	Eastern falsistrelle

*Nyctophilus sherrini* is endemic to Tasmania. The other species are shared with mainland Australia.

Bats are typically nocturnal although Gould's wattled bat also flies in twilight. During daytime bats sleep in places such as tree hollows, crevices, under bark or in buildings. In Victoria they sometimes use caves but not so in Tasmania. Perhaps our caves are too cold.

Although sleeping sites vary, large tree hollows are essential for breeding. A female can produce one or two young per year, usually in spring. Breeding females gather together in a "maternal hollow". Some species use the same hollow each year.

When born a young bat has its wing and tail membranes formed already but its body hair and teeth appear a bit later. At first a newborn attaches itself firmly to one of its mother's two nipples. Then she can carry it while flying. When juveniles are old enough to cling to a wall they form a creche inside the hollow while their mothers hunt elsewhere.

Wing and tail membranes consist of two layers of strong skin. A good capillary blood supply between these promotes quick healing if there is damage. Elongated fingers 2-5 support each wing membrane.

Insectivorous bats are good pest controllers. Also useful is dispersal of nutrients by way of their droppings. Bats use sonar to locate prey, i.e. a form of echo-location. In some species the tail membrane acts as a scoop to collect flying insects while others catch them directly by mouth. Although they

specialise with sonar these small bats are not blind. Some moths have evolved a means of sensing bats' signals and avoiding these. Long-eared bats can cease their sonar sounds and use eyesight to forage on the ground.

Threats to bats include predators, disease, human activities and, especially, loss of habitat. A bat population will not stay in an area which has no large tree hollows to be breeding shelters.

Because they are active at night bats avoid most daytime predators. However, mammals able to climb trees, eg. Spotted tail quoll, can eat young ones in a creche. A fungal disease is causing serious trouble in the USA. In spite of their agility in the air, bats can be hit by aeroplanes or cars and confused by wind turbines.

Many bat species hibernate in winter. Those who do so in houses, eg. In a roof cavity, risk being "unwelcome guests" and so removed. During hibernation body temperature is low. Flying insects, for food, are rarer in winter. If they can not raise the energy needed to search for a new shelter, those animals will die.

In Victoria some Field Naturalist Societies have provided wooden bat boxes as shelters for daytime sleeping or hibernation. These are checked regularly and useful information is gained.

As part of her work with Tasmanian bats Lisa Cawthen inserts a microchip between the shoulder blades of each specimen caught so that individuals can be identified in future. Traps using fishing line, or mist nets, do not harm the animals. However, there are few recaptures because the bats soon learn to avoid traps.

Sophisticated audio recording equipment is placed in forest areas to obtain information from the sounds made by bats. Each species has its own call pattern. The calls are recorded as time-frequency graphs.

Lisa is conducting night-time surveys throughout Tasmania, helped by about 160 volunteers. She wants to discover how bats use forest remnants and how best to adopt forestry practices in order to leave shelter for bats. She intends to produce a bat-identification book for Tasmania. Overall she is keen to persuade other people to monitor bats and their behaviour. The results of Lisa Cawthen's study should be very interesting indeed.

Alison Green

## **VALE - BILL STEPHENS**

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of our friend and longtime member, Bill Stephens. Over the years Bill has quietly contributed in many ways to the successful running of the Club, especially as Secretary for five years during the early 1980's when the Field Study Centre at Skemps was being built. Bill gave many hours of his time helping with the building until passing the large heavy bricks up to the bricklayer caused a hernia. He said nothing to members and quietly went into hospital to have it repaired.



Bill wrote lyrics appropriate to Field Nats. to several well-known songs for the Club choir which included Bill, to sing at the 50th Anniversary dinner in October 1998. He also wrote part of the text for the first edition of 'A Guide to the Flowers and Plants of Tasmania'.

On 7th December that year he was presented with an 'Older Achievers Award' for his contributions to meetings, especially for moving a vote of thanks to visiting speakers and for gently correcting and guiding members in correct meeting procedure.

The twinkle in the eye and the happy manner will always be remembered.

John Simmons

## **SKEMP DAY JULY 25 - PLANTING ON CREEK**

Five members made an unscheduled early start to the planting on the Saturday. With blue skies and no cloud, it was perfect weather to spend the time planting trees. We finished the western side of Skemp Creek before lunch and moved all our equipment back to the Middle Pond area. Following a quick lunch we started planting on the other side of the creek and completed the section between the Middle Pond and Bob's Bog.

On Sunday we started early, completing as far down from Bob's Bog as possible until all the trees suitable for the area had been planted. This was followed by the checking of trees that had been planted in May further up the creek. Many of these plants had not survived due to the dry weather at that time. These were replaced with either banksias or eucalypts which were more suited to the area. The planting was all finished by lunch, which left the afternoon free for members to relax.

Two members went looking for fungi after lunch, whilst others searched for the old homestead rubbish site which was thought to be in the tree line of the paddock. Peter Ralph had his metal detector, but all that was found was a near new pocket knife, bullet shells and some unidentified rusty metal, possibly from a can.

## **NORTHERN FUNGI GROUP**

Those who attended the Federation Weekend at Weldborough will know how interesting fungi can be. Early June Roy Skabo extended an invitation to people interested in fungi to participate in excursions and workshops where they could have fun, learn about this interesting organism and have something to do in winter when plants do not have flowers. The idea was to help the QVMAG build up a collection of fungi in its herbarium and to provide information on the fungi in Northern Tasmania. Eight people met on June 13 at Holwell Gorge and four people (probably due to the inclement weather) met at Inveresk and travelled to Hollybank Forest Reserve on July 11. Both days were most enjoyable and a large variety of fungi was found. Sunday 15 August has been set aside for another fungi field trip. If you are interested in attending please contact Roy on 63346787 for more information.

## **FEDERATION GET-TOGETHER 16—17 OCTOBER**

Carmen Holloway, President of the King Island Field Naturalists Club has confirmed that her Club will host the next Federation get-together on the weekend of 16/17 October and has provided the following information.

Travel options are Tasair via Devonport or Hobart (expensive) or cheaper option via Melbourne (Jetstar, Virgin etc then Rex to King Island ). Some billets will be available or you may organise your own accommodation online [www.kingisland.org.au](http://www.kingisland.org.au). More details with regards to the program, etc will be available later.

If you would like to receive further information regarding this get-together, please advise the Club's Secretary, John Elliott who will arrange for you to obtain the information if you are not receiving Club updates by email.

## **AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY MEETINGS**

LFNC members are welcome to attend APS meetings held on a Tuesday at Max Fry Hall, Gorge Road Trevallyn at 7.30 pm. The next meeting will be on:

August 17 - Guest speaker Will Fletcher - Bonsai with Native Plants

September 21 - To be advised

October 19 - Guest speaker Iona Mitchell - Gardens for Wildlife

## **FOX ERADICATION PROGRAM UPDATE from Craig Williams, DPIPWE**

During the past year, the Fox Eradication Program (FEP) has commenced Stage 2 operations with the implementation of a state-wide strategic fox baiting program that targets areas of identified 'core fox habitat'. Development of the baiting strategy was informed by recommendations from two recent independent reviews of the Program and consultation with experts in the field. Delivery of a strategic baiting program has been recommended as the best chance of achieving fox eradication.

While the specifics of the Tasmanian fox population remain an unknown (including the number of individuals, the age structure and the sex ratio), implementation of such a baiting strategy will provide the best chance of placing all foxes at risk. This is a requirement to achieving eradication. The strategic baiting program has commenced in the south of the State and will soon begin in the north-west (late October).

'Core fox habitat' is habitat that is highly suitable for foxes and is predominantly made up of agricultural areas and bushland. The decision to target core fox habitat is supported by the physical evidence collected to date (including 4 carcasses, 1 skull, 1 blood sample, 2 footprints and 56 fox positive scats), which has only been found in identified core fox habitat. The extent of the physical evidence has been expanded by the recent completion of the Carnivore Scat

Collection Survey which was conducted across the State from 2008 to 2010. Phase 1 and 2 yielded 18 fox DNA positive scats from over 5000 collected carnivore scats. The scats collected during Phase 3 are still being analysed.

The fox baiting program has been designed to maximise the risk to foxes while minimising the risk to native wildlife. The main way this is achieved is through the use of 1080 (sodium monofluoroacetate) poison. The use of 1080 is prejudiced by its historical context where broad-scale baiting programs were employed in the control of native herbivores. However, the acute sensitivity of foxes to 1080, in combination with the natural tolerance of many of our native wildlife, enables the use of extremely low doses of 1080 (3mg per bait) to ensure species selectivity. To further protect native wildlife, baits are meat based (less herbivore uptake), buried (5-10cm) to reduce exposure to wildlife and are widely separated (approximately 200m) to reduce multiple bait takes by any one animal. As a final measure, uneaten baits are removed after 14-28 days.

Following baiting in an area, post-baiting monitoring will be carried out by the FEP to identify foxes that may have survived baiting. Survivors will then be targeted with detection and removal operations. A key component of these operations will be the use of fox tracking dogs, which are currently in training. The dog teams have been undergoing training in Tasmania to ensure their efficiency in locating foxes while avoiding non-target scents within the Tasmanian landscape. It is hoped that the dogs will be ready for operations by the end of the year.

Eradication is the goal. The integration of strategies, tools and programs recommended by expert advice will improve the likelihood of achieving this goal. However, without community support success is not likely to be achieved.

How can you do your bit to help? Landowners can contribute by providing access to property for fox baiting, monitoring and investigation activities. Property access will be vital for the effectiveness of the strategic baiting program. All landowners in areas of recognised fox core habitat will, at some point in the coming years, be contacted requesting access permission. We encourage all members of the community to participate in this important program.

We also need a community that is vigilant and reports any fox sightings or possible fox activity through the 24 hour hotline 1300 369 688 (1300 FOX OUT). All reports are confidential and your information may be vital to the fox eradication effort. Should eradication not be achieved the result would be catastrophic for Tasmania. Only through a cooperative community effort will Tasmania again be fox free.

Further information can be obtained through the FEP website; [www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/fox](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/fox) or by contacting Craig Williams, Community Liaison Officer, on (03) 6336 4498 or email [Craig.Williams@dpiwwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:Craig.Williams@dpiwwe.tas.gov.au).

## **Additional Information**

### **Club Outings:**

1. All outings depart from Inveresk carpark (near Museum entrance) at 9 am unless otherwise specified. Internet site updated regularly to reflect short notice changes. Saturday all-day parking cost is \$3.00. Sunday parking free.
2. You need to provide your own food and drinks for the outing unless otherwise specified. Morning tea is normally provided by the bus company on bus outings.
3. When travelling by car in convoy, each driver is responsible to ensure that the vehicle behind is in sight immediately after passing each cross road or fork in the road.
4. When car pooling, petrol costs should be shared between all the passengers, including family of the driver, and based on other clubs the Committee suggested \$11 per 100 km. This is a guideline only.

**Name Tags:** Name tags are to be worn at meetings and on outings.

**Tea/Coffee:** A levy of 50c is currently charged for supper provided at meetings.

**Field Centre:** All members have access to the John Skemp Field Centre. Contact our booking manager, John Elliott on 6344 9303 regarding availability and keys.

**Field Centre Phone Number - 6399 3361**

**Postal Address:** PO Box 1072 Launceston 7250

**Internet site:** <http://www.lfnc.org.au>

**E.mail:** [secretary@lfnc.org.au](mailto:secretary@lfnc.org.au)