

# Ecoconnections Annual Report 2022

## Indigenous Connections



*Figure 1 Breathe, reflection on blue-green algae; by Juanita McLauchlan, Gamillaray woman, artist living in Wagga Wagga*

## Ecoconnections

### Annual Report 2021-22

#### Wake up the Snake!

#### Collective wisdom brings nature back to balance.

“The River is the essence of our whole being. When we are young, we are given a Jadinu (totem). This means we have a lifelong relationship with a non-human being. We must live in a relationship of love and ethics of care; they teach us how to be fully human. We must be brave and build this deep relationship with nature.”

Professor Anne Poelina, Paraphrased from TEDx Perth Salon, January 2021

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Figure 2 Spotted Handfish at Seahorse World Tasmania



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Financial statements are removed from the web version of this report. Please make contact if you require these.

## Founders Message

This year the Ecoconnections enterprise focused on a major development, 'Indigenous ecoconnect' as a new product of profound importance. It is kickstarted as a partnership with a most generous and joyful lady from the Martuwarra – Anne Poelina. There is also a personal story of soil biodiversity and carbon which has seen my family move from Wagga Wagga to Tasmania.

The world is thirsting for a new constitution for our relationship with nature. The annual report theme for this year, 'Indigenous Connections', opens a journey of discovery. Indigenous relationships with Country are a deep appreciation of 'knowing' the landscape. They are a constitution beyond the affairs of men as described in the core canon of western political philosophy. A common feature of ancient nomadic peoples are totems. They are a reason to dance, paint, sing, travel and to manage the landscape. They are a deep purpose of joy and harmony.

I invite you to listen to the work of Anne Poelina. Read her papers. Understand the journey of her people. Share in the joy and energy she gets from the River – Martuwarra – the Fitzroy. Captain Fitzroy skippered the 'Beagle' with Charles Darwin aboard. I am warmed by the idea that this River can help us discover a new marriage of science and social capital. The deep forces in the universe of forgiveness, regeneration, and renewal that we all enjoy.

Speaking of forgiveness. Personally, I ask your forgiveness for the holding pattern that Ecoconnections is in. I have limited executive capacity. We had a three-year sprint from 2019 to 2021 to set a platform and build a viable product. This is done. Often startups take on equity to scale. This could be a next step for us.

We are open to appropriate offers from suitable partners.

The path I am taking though, is allied to ecoconnections. AgriProve are an Australian company leading the global charge to decarbonise the atmosphere and recarbonise the soil. This involves data, remote sensing, and incentivising landholders. It is a highly purpose driven company providing technical and administrative capability to make it possible to fix global warming through soil carbon. There is a whole industry of technical services building with carbon credits as the valued product. I am AgriProve Operations Manager for Tasmania.

Tasmania is home for me, and it is great to be back amongst family and friends. Tasmania is also a neat, contained showcase for soil carbon. Soil carbon contains enormous biodiversity. Carbon credits provide an incentive for managing and building soil life. This is an important and large part of all life in the cosmos. Working with land managers in soil carbon is a springboard to a coalface understanding of how to be effective at managing biodiversity.

So. I hold onto the conviction that Ecoconnections is an important institution. We're raising funds for biodiversity research and development. We're managing knowledge of life. We're adding extra purpose to the lives of ecoconnected people. You are important to us and to the world. So, I ask that you find a fun fact about your species and share our story with a friend. We will have a quieter Christmas campaign this year because of work commitments. Rest assured however that nothing thrills me more than when the email comes through that an ecoconnection has been bought as a gift.

Duncan Farquhar

## Indigenous Ecoconnect

Ecoconnections provided funding to the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council to assist in making a film. This film is about the special life and ceremony of one of the last speakers of Andijin, a language of the peoples of the Martuwarra. This is a steppingstone for ecoconnected people to be aware of the Nyikina people and Wunan law for regional governance of this Country.

Contributing to this film will expand the views of ecoconnected people. It will give us a window into ancient ways of living in relationship with country. A species, a river, or a person means something because of its relationships. It is a great privilege for us to be involved.

IPBES (The Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) recognise that Indigenous people “are often better placed than scientists to provide detailed information on local biodiversity and environmental change and are important contributors to the governance of biodiversity from local to global levels.”<sup>1</sup> The peoples of the Martuwarra are amongst the oldest continuous cultures in the world.

Lachie Carracher is a renowned kayaking adventurer. Lachie is leading the film production with the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council. Australian Geographic young adventurer of the year in 2012 Lachie has met indigenous people on rivers all over the world as his adventures continue.



*Figure 3 Martuwarra, the Fitzroy River (Photo Lachie Carracher)*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ipbes.net/indigenous-local-knowledge>

## From Professor Anne Poelina Advisory Chair for 'Indigenous Ecoconnect'



is now laid out. It's an idea like a well-formed seed. While Duncan is at AgriProve it may have a dormancy. But soon there will be a spring, a monsoon and ecoconnections can be a cornerstone institution of a world 'living in harmony with nature'.

Anne Poelina

See ORCID Publications: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6461-7681>

Totems are fun. They are an imaginative way to see the world from a different perspective. To see relationships in the landscape and to feel life in harmony. Many Indigenous people celebrate totems as central social capital. Ecoconnections would love to see people, the world over, celebrating their local indigenous cultures through ecoconnections. We can work out together how this might best work in your Country.

For the Martuwarra thank you to those who ecoconnected to help us make a film. This special story will tell our story. It will be an insight into the wisdom of the oldest continuous culture on the planet. For this reason, it is a good R&D investment.

For over 20 years Duncan has held onto an idea about sharing the challenge of understanding nature, species by species, and as a whole. Within his means he is making it happen.

Duncan rang me after an ABC Radio interview and said "we are kindred spirits". This is true. I am pleased to support the vision. The concept

## Global Developments in Biodiversity

### COP 15 UN CBD

Ecoconnections is about giving a voice to and consciousness of each species as we endeavour to live in harmony. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity agreed to the vision of “Living in harmony with nature” in 2010 in Nagoya, Japan. Part 1 of the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biodiversity was hosted by Kunming, China in October 2021. This was significantly disrupted by the COVID19 pandemic. The main objective of the conference is to adopt the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, which is likely to involve a commitment to reserving 30% of the earth’s surface. Part 2 of this conference will be held in December 2022 in Montreal, Canada.

### COP26 UN CCC



*Figure 4 Stag in the Scottish Highlands*

The biggest global event for the year in environmental politics was the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention held in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021. For biodiversity this conference saw increased

recognition of the ‘solve both or solve neither’ view of climate and biodiversity as deeply interrelated issues. There is a renewed global impetus to make economics do what we need it to do. Glasgow was an important step forward in putting nature at the forefront of global progress.

### Are we getting there?

CO2 emissions continue to increase, rebounding strongly after the COVID19 Pandemic. Land clearing continues, urban development expands. Pollution is increasing, notably plastics. Invasive species continue to wreak havoc. Direct exploitation continues to pressure many species. We are not there yet.

This year I don’t have time to review the situation in detail as I did last year. I do, however, feel that there is a shift in momentum and will. [Terra Carta](#) is a notable framework for private enterprise change toward 2030. In Australia a tide of ‘teal’ independent candidates swept into the national parliament in May. We have been optimistic about announcements for biodiversity before. Let’s really turn this ship of extinctions around.

## How to ecoconnect

There are now 3 ways to ecoconnect and support our efforts to raise biodiversity R&D funds. These are Indigenous ecoconnect, Global ecoconnect and Ecoconnect choose. Plus, you can ecoconnect for free or you can pay in bulk for others to ecoconnect. I will go through these options in more detail.

### Global ecoconnect

This first of our Ecoconnections products connects a person to a species randomly selected from all named species on the planet. Random selection is a deliberate and important design element in these connections which can be an experimental design basis for future research. For yourself or as a special gift. It costs \$100US and can be completed [here](#).

### Indigenous ecoconnect

A more local connection Indigenous ecoconnect encourages people to connect to a species with an indigenous name. Those species that Indigenous people have named will tend to be larger and more observable than many of the species in Global ecoconnect. They provide an iconic connection to Country. So far we have partnered with one indigenous group from the Martuwarra. We are happy to add our recognition to indigenous totems granted or chosen elsewhere. Complete these connections [here](#)

### Ecoconnect choose

Ecoconnect choose allows any connection to a species to be recognised through us. It can be a special connection you have, a sporting mascot or a school class connection. This can be completed [here](#)

## Ecoconnect for free

If people can't afford to ecoconnect by any of the paid options, we offer an accessible option to ecoconnect for free. We undertake to find donors to pay for these connections. By signing up to ecoconnect for free people support our offering to potential larger donors. For this reason, free ecoconnections go on a waiting list until we find a donor. People can sign up for free [here](#).

### Ecoconnect in bulk

This is a place where larger donors who would like to support our efforts are able to contribute. These contributions often involve a discussion about the R&D project we are working on but not always. These contributions can be made [here](#)

### Use of funds

Ecoconnections uses funds to support investments in Research and Development. We list potential projects [here](#) and our publications are available [here](#).



## Juanita McLauchlan – Featured Artist

I met Juanita McLaughlan at South Wagga Wagga Polling Booth where I was campaigning for election to the local Council. We had a wide-ranging conversation including totems and her artwork. She kindly agreed to share some of her work through us. Three works were featured on our Christmas Social Media posts. These are reproduced here.

If you are a collector, I encourage you to seek her work out. It is unique, contemporary, and expressive. Find her here

[juanitamclauchlan.com](http://juanitamclauchlan.com)

Juanita says “I am a Gamilaraay woman living on Wiradjuri country in Wagga Wagga. The totem of my mob from near Tamworth is the Wedge Tailed Eagle - Maliyan. Totems are there to teach, learn and connect. So put down your phone, look and listen. Find a truth in the small connections. Our habits last 14 generations. Memories can spark suppressed memories that connect us to country. Connect, learn, talk to the old people.” Juanita is ecoconnected to *Fortiea striatula* (a European cyanobacteria). “If you look at microbes in water it is full of life”.

We feature an artist to encourage ecoconnected people to take time for art. We would especially like to see people express something of their species in art. If you do, I invite you to share it with [info@ecoconnect.me](mailto:info@ecoconnect.me) We would love to be able to add some extra purpose to your expression in dance, song, paint or poem.

### "Breathe"

#### Cover Image

This work takes us into the lives of the Murray Darling River system. The big circle is the eye of a fish. It connects us with the experience of creatures during a fish kill event.

Fish kills usually occur when there are low oxygen levels. The events of the 18/19 summer were because of low water levels and extreme heat. Sometimes cyanobacterial algae blooms can cause these deaths.

### "Family Gathering"

The silk threads stitching through this painting remind us of bloodlines and how they spread across the landscape. There are also small plants in the image providing nourishment.

This is a story of abundance and provision. It is also a story of harmony in families and harmony with other creatures in the landscape.

### "Found"

This artwork is about the journey of finding culture through our environment and connection through the land. Our totems guide us to the water hole, which is more than just refreshing but a source of knowledge. Without our native animals the land is like an empty vessel, creating a barren waste land, with the absence of native animals we are left with only the tracks scarring the dry earth to a vanishing waterhole.



*Figure 5 Family Gathering by Juanita McLauchlan*



Figure 6 Found by Juanita McLauchlan

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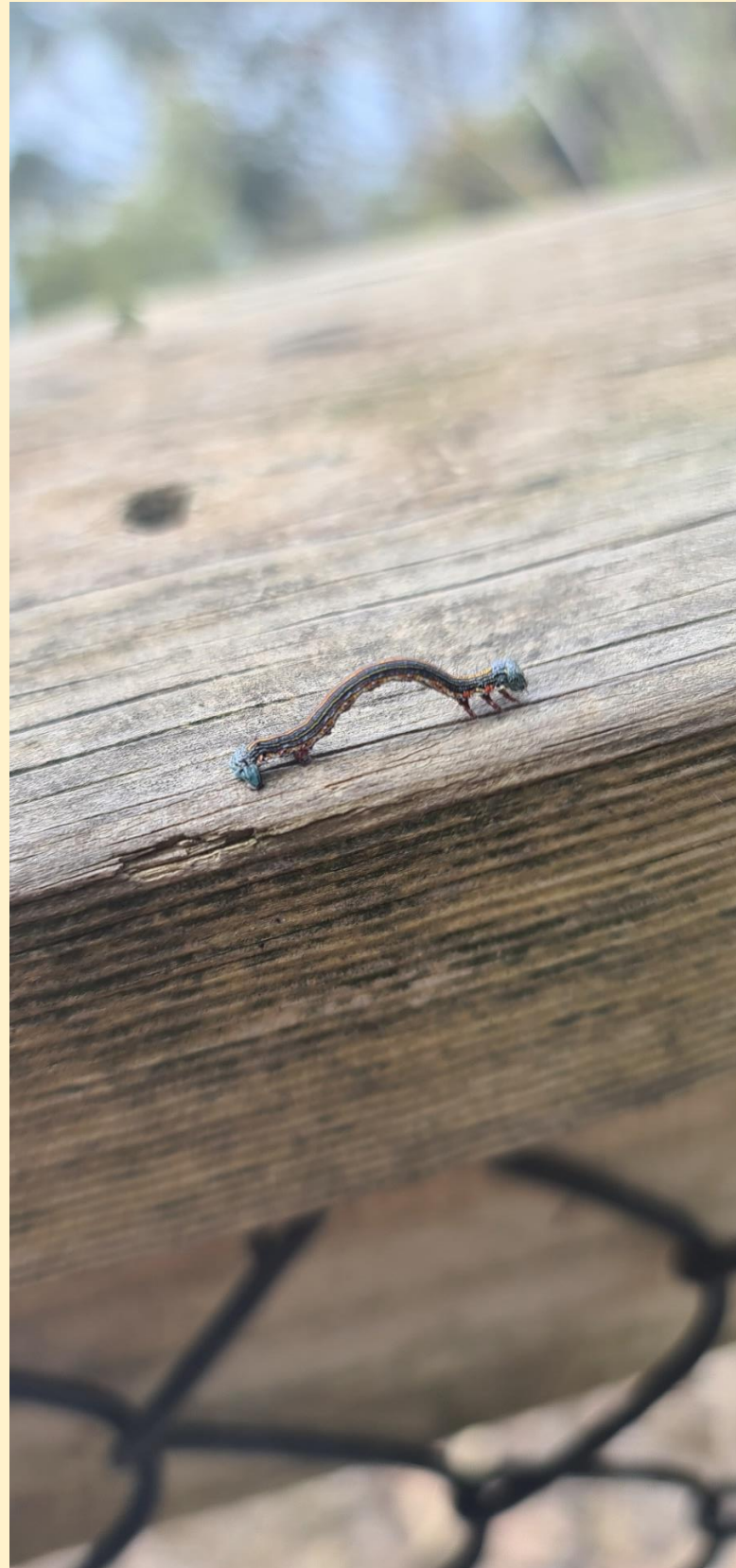
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*Figure 7 Getting there*