



# Potoroo Postings

Issue # 2021/4



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## CALENDAR

**NOTE: All volunteers undertaking field work with GPAG require a DBCA Dieback Green Card. See details on page 4.**

**Members will be emailed with more details on upcoming events and volunteering opportunities as dates etc firm up. Events will also be advertised on social media, community calendars etc.**

**January/February (exact dates to be confirmed):** Vegetation surveys at Two Peoples Bay. Volunteers will be needed so if you are interested ensure you have your Green Card! See page 4 for details

**January/February (exact dates to be confirmed):** Trapping surveys at Waychinicup National Park with DBCA. Volunteers will be needed to assist with the trapping. As this work is being done with DBCA a Green Card is not essential but is still recommended.

**January – April 2022:** GreenSkills Festival of Birds and Biodiversity showcasing the unique and beautiful bird fauna and biodiversity of the south coast of Western Australia <https://birdfestival.greenskills.org.au/>

**March 26, 2022, 9:00 am-12:00 pm:** City of Albany's Green Fair on the Square. Celebrate, share and learn about being green and sustainable

**Autumn (dates to be confirmed):** Servicing motion sensing cameras at Two Peoples Bay. Exact dates to be advised.

## Season's Greetings



Photo by Dick Walker/GPAG

Wishing all our wonderful members, supporters, volunteers and followers a very happy festive season and a safe and healthy year in 2022. Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group have had an amazing year in 2021 celebrating our 20th anniversary with a whole lot of awareness raising events as well as hands on projects through our State Natural Resource Management Program grants to help learn more about Gilbert's Potoroo and volunteering to assist DBCA with their work. Thank you all so much for your support over the past year(s). Lots more to look forward to in 2022... Take care everyone and stay safe over the festive season.

With very best wishes from the GPAG Team.



Contact us: Email: [mail@potoroo.org](mailto:mail@potoroo.org), Mail: PO Box 654, Albany, WA 6331

Visit us: [www.potoroo.org](http://www.potoroo.org)

Follow us:  @gilbertspotoroo  @GilbertsPotorooActionGroup

## FROM THE CHAIR

### Happy Birthday GPAG!!

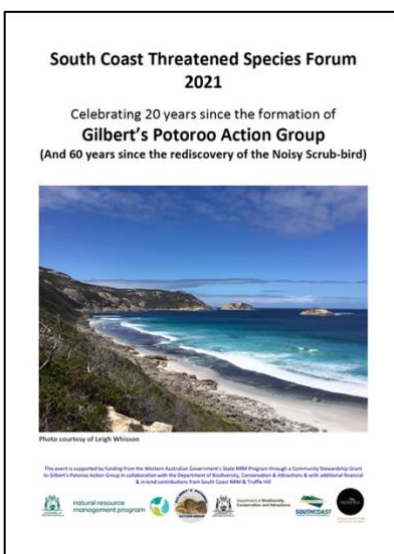
There has been an enormous amount of activity since the last newsletter, as you will see on the following pages. The South Coast Threatened Species Forum in early December, organised by Jackie Courtenay, was a highlight of the year – an outstanding success. Scientists and volunteers from around WA and interstate came together to present and discuss their work in the conservation of many endangered species over the course of a weekend and many useful inter-group contacts were made. I had the joy of a reunion with a former fellow postgraduate student I hadn't seen for more than forty years, and who now chairs the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot group. Participants also really enjoyed the dinner to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GPAG on the Saturday evening and the conservation-themed harbour cruise on the Sunday afternoon.

There is always a danger that single-species action groups like GPAG may lose sight of what else is happening in threatened species conservation. There is so much to do, and so much focus is needed on the task of preventing just one species going extinct, that we risk losing contact with other groups with similar aims. This is the benefit of such forums - we can learn from each other what works in fundraising, public awareness and volunteering programmes, and what doesn't. There is plenty of scope for cooperation and coordination if groups like ours take more interest in each other – something I want to pursue.

This was the second such forum that we have organised, and I really hope that we can repeat it in 2023 and that it will become a biennial fixture in the south coast threatened species community. The feedback we received from attendees indicated a strong desire for this. My thanks to the organising committee: Jackie, Leigh and Jen, for a superb effort.

And now we are 20 years old! Happy birthday GPAG.

Alan



Left: The programme cover for South Coast Threatened Species Forum 2021 Above Centre: Michaelmas Island Photo by Alan Needham. Above Right: Paul Wettin, Chair of the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot talking about “What Friends can do in a crisis” Photo by Elizabeth Needham

## UPDATE: WAYCHINICUP POTOROO SURVEY: DECEMBER 2021

By Tony Friend, DBCA Research Officer and Research Associate

The Gilbert's potoroo enclosure in Waychinicup National Park was completed in 2008 and potoroos first released there in March 2010, following an intensive baiting and trapping campaign to ensure that no foxes or cats remained inside. Funding of close to \$750,000, for the construction of an enclosure to support a new potoroo colony, was provided in 2006 by the WA State Government under a new scheme entitled the Biodiversity Conservation Initiative. The 8.2-km fence surrounds an area of 380 hectares of diverse vegetation, including an 80-hectare patch of the *Melaleuca striata* heathland on granite soils so favoured by potoroos at Two Peoples Bay.



The enclosure's 8.2 km floppy-top fence surrounds several vegetation associations on the lower slopes of Mount Manypeaks. The pink shade on the hillside is the *Melaleuca striata* vegetation favoured by potoroos at Two Peoples Bay. Photo by Tony Friend

The most important outcome of the enclosure project has been the establishment of a stable new population of Gilbert's potoroos, at a time when the species existed only at Two Peoples Bay and on Bald Island. The Waychinicup potoroos took on even more significance after the loss of the Two Peoples Bay population due to the catastrophic 2015 fire. In recent times, however, there has been concern about the impact of python predation at the Waychinicup site: approval was subsequently given for the removal of large pythons inside the fence to distant parts of the National Park. Another significant outcome has been the demonstration that potoroos can live in a range of vegetation types present in the enclosure.

A new monitoring round in the Waychinicup potoroo enclosure commenced in the week beginning 13<sup>th</sup> December. This round, requiring four weeks' trapping throughout the enclosure, will be the first systematic trapping there since March 2020. The first week's trapping was carried out by Tony Friend, assisted on different days by GPAG members Ken Bushell, David Wettenhall and Kathryn Greenop. Thirty cage traps on three traplines at the western end of the enclosure were set on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> and checked each morning for four days.

The trapping team needs to arrive at the first trapline at first light so that all animals are released as early in the day as possible. We met at 4 am each day to head out to the enclosure. The results of the week's exercise made these early starts worthwhile, with 12 individual potoroos recorded, comprising five males and seven females. Six were new animals, all bred and born on site and not previously trapped. An old male captured this week was first trapped as



A young potoroo decides whether to make a dash for it. Photo by Kathryn Greenop



David Wettenhall releases a potoroo with a transmitter and GPS taped to its tail to reveal its movements and use of vegetation associations in the enclosure. Photo: Tony Friend

a subadult in August 2012, so he is aged over 10 years, around the maximum age of any Gilbert's potoroo recorded in the wild so far!

One of the females was carrying a medium-sized pouch young, while another had evidence of recent weaning. A variety of other species was seen in traps during the week, including good numbers of quenda. A large male ringtail possum was an unusual capture, while reptiles caught included bobtails, a King's skink and a Rosenberg's monitor. Many thanks to Ken, David and Kathryn for their willing assistance.

## VOLUNTEERING

### **\*IMPORTANT REMINDER ABOUT VOLUNTEERING\***

#### **All volunteers require a DBCA Dieback Green Card**

Sorry to keep reiterating this but to comply with DBCA requirements, all volunteers working with GPAG on our various field projects are required to complete Dieback Green Card training. The training can be done at home and takes about an hour to complete. The card can then be either posted out or collected at the DBCA office in Albany. If you think that you might be interested in volunteering sometime in the future, even if you are not planning to immediately, it is a good idea to complete your training and get your Green Card as soon as possible so that you are able to participate at short notice when opportunities arise or you are available. Please email Jackie Courtenay on [communications@potoroo.org](mailto:communications@potoroo.org) if you want to undertake the training and she will email you the training materials.

#### **Feral predator monitoring**

The third field trip replacing batteries and SD cards in the cameras for feral predator monitoring at Two Peoples Bay was completed on December 15 with Abby Thomas and Mark Blythman from DBCA. For various reasons the field work unfortunately had to be organised at quite short notice so no GPAG volunteers were available to help out. One university student volunteer, Kathy Nikos, did however participate along with two rangers from the Southern Aboriginal Corporation, Brian Colbung and Jyrin Woods. As of next year, it is intended that camera servicing will be undertaken three times per year and it is hoped that the Zooniverse system for image analysis will be up and running in the next few months ready for volunteers all over the world to help with sorting through and analysing the images.

Thank you everyone for your hard work. The cameras for this project were funded by GPAG's Large State NRM Community Stewardship grant. The next service is expected in autumn and we will notify members by email to organise volunteers as soon as dates are confirmed with DBCA.

Photos right: Kathy Nikos (checked shirt), Brian Colbung (white hat) & Jyrin Woods (black hat) servicing the cameras & walking between sites. Photos by Abby Thomas.



## Vegetation Surveys at Two Peoples Bay

With so many events on (and the weather still not being co-operative) we were, unfortunately, again unable to complete the remaining Two Peoples Bay vegetation surveys during November or December. These have had to be delayed until early next year when hopefully we will get some good stretches of dry weather – and we will have some enthusiastic volunteers to help us complete the work quickly! If you are interested in helping out, please ensure you have completed your Dieback Green Card. If you have not yet done so and are keen to help with volunteering for GPAG please contact Jackie Courtenay as noted above.

## FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS

### Ongoing Fundraisers

#### Containers for Change

**GPAG Scheme ID: C10289767**

With Christmas just past and New Year fast approaching this is just a gentle reminder to all our members and supporters to consider donating the refund on the drinks containers from your celebrations to help Gilbert's Potoroo. Containers for Change are promoting a special Empties Day on Saturday January 29 to encourage donation of refunds from all the December and January public holidays but of course you can make your donations whenever suits you!

If you are keen to help, you can donate your refund by entering the GPAG Scheme ID (in red above!) at the drop off point.

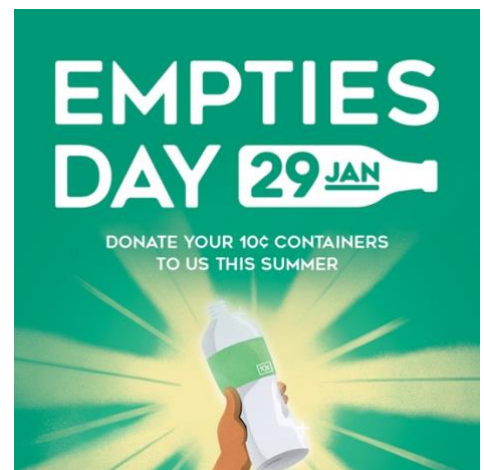
Thank you to everyone who has already donated, or is planning to do so – it is much appreciated. Since our last newsletter in late October generous supporters have donated \$48.30 in refunds (that's 483 drink containers!!).

You can find information on drop-off point locations and on what types of containers are accepted for refunds at <https://www.containersforchange.com.au/wa>. Thank you for any support you can give us and Gilbert's Potoroo.

### Awareness Raising: Recent Events

#### Perth Launch of *One Potoroo: A Story of Survival*: October 23

This second book launch of *One Potoroo* for interested people in Perth was held in the Carnaby Room at Moerlina School, Mt Claremont on Saturday October 23 from 2:30pm. It was attended by a small but very engaged group of 23 adults and children. Similar to the launch in Albany on October 2 the event involved a reading of the book, this time by GPAG Chair Alan Needham, followed by a talk by Dr Tony Friend, Research Associate at DBCA about his experiences of the catastrophic 2015



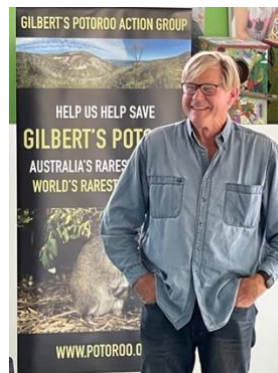
Alan Needham reading *One Potoroo*. Photo: Elizabeth Needham



Top: Tony Friend talking about the impact of the fire. Bottom: The “book stall” and part of the audience during Tony’s talk. Photos: Elizabeth Needham

Two Peoples Bay fire and its aftermath. The kids read along with the story, asked some questions and enthusiastically participated in the colouring in and “Find the Potoroo” activities while the adults continued chatting, had afternoon tea and between them bought 15 copies of the book as well as a number of tea-towels and cards.

Although attendance was smaller than hoped it was still a lovely event and the smaller group gave us more time to talk to people individually. Being held at the Moerlina School also enabled us to involve a community of people that we do not normally reach. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to make the event a success and to all who attended and purchased copies of the book.



Top: Tony Friend answering questions after his talk. Photo: Elizabeth Needham Bottom: Colouring in competition entry!! Photo: Jackie Courtenay

## South Coast Threatened Species Forum 2021: December 4 - 5

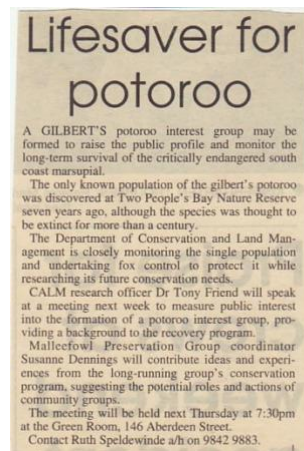
Our peak event for 2021, the South Coast Threatened Species Forum, was held at the Dog Rock Convention Centre on December 4-5 to celebrate both the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of GPAG at a public meeting in November 2001 and 60 years since the rediscovery of the Noisy Scrub-bird that led to the protection of Two Peoples Bay as a Nature Reserve and inadvertently to the protection of Gilbert’s Potoroo. In line with the celebration of 20 years of GPAG, the theme of the 1.5 day Forum was Volunteering in Conservation to showcase the many and varied ways that community members and volunteers can be and are involved in conservation work.



Vernice Gillies Welcoming attendees to her Country. Photo: Elizabeth Needham

The Forum began on Saturday morning with Menang Elder Vernice Gillies giving a beautiful Welcome to Country and talk about Indigenous conservation and the importance of reading Boodja (Country). It was then officially opened via video presentation by Dr Fiona Fraser, the Acting Threatened Species Commissioner.

The Forum itself was attended by nearly 70 people on both the Saturday and Sunday and 26 speakers presented their work. Most of the speakers attended in person but we also had six video presentations from people in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Esperance who were unable to make it to Albany for various reasons. Several of the video speakers did, however, make themselves



The advertisement from a local newspaper from November 2001 advertising the public meeting that led to the creation of GPAG.

available via Zoom to answer questions after we played the video of their presentation so the audience was still able to engage with them in person even though they were not physically in the room. The full program for the Forum, the book of Abstracts and videos of some of the talks will be posted on our website in the new year.



Above left: The first talk of the Forum to an almost full house - Ron Dorn, Chair of GPAG from 2002-2019, reminiscing about 20 years of GPAG Above centre: Lunch! Above right: The program included plenty of time for socialising and networking over food and/or hot drinks both before the start of the day's talks and during the various tea and lunch breaks. Photos: Leigh Whisson

The South Coast Threatened Species Forum was generously funded primarily by our State NRM Large Grant, with an additional cash contribution from South Coast NRM. This funding enabled us to keep the registration cost for the 1.5 days to a low \$25.

Saturday's Forum was followed by a truffle themed dinner held at the historic Albany Club to celebrate GPAG's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The meal was catered by Marian's Catering and the truffle ingredients were again generously donated by Truffle Hill in Manjimup. GPAG Secretary Jen Merritt created beautiful watercolours of threatened species from the Albany region to decorate the tables. Everyone was so relaxed that, other than Jen who took a photograph of the table settings, we all forgot to take any photos of the dinner! Thanks particularly to the Albany Club volunteers for all their help both organising the logistics of the dinner and helping us get the tables set up ready on Friday night so we didn't have to rush arranging tables on Saturday. Your help was much appreciated.



Far left: One of the tables set up ready for the dinner at the Albany Club. Left: Jen Merritt's threatened species watercolours that formed the centrepieces of the tables. Photos: Jen Merritt

The Forum itself concluded with lunch on Sunday but this was followed by a terrific afternoon cruise around Princess Royal Harbour and out to Michaelmas Island. Tony Friend gave two informal presentations during the cruise talking about the challenges of finding suitable locations for safe havens for Gilbert's Potoroo and, as we cruised past Michaelmas Island, explaining the different habitat types on the island, and which the Potoroos had preferred during their short stay there in 2016 following the catastrophic 2015 Two Peoples Bay fire. We were extremely lucky with the weather which, although it looked a bit threatening at times, allowed us to get out to Michaelmas Island and to enjoy a generally calm cruise.



Above Left: An Australian Sea Lion and New Zealand Fur Seal that we saw on Breaksea Island on our way to Michaelmas Island. The whole cruise was not about Potoroos! Above Right: The view out to Michaelmas Island with Mt Gardner, Two Peoples Bay, in the distance. Photos: Leigh Whisson

The cruise, including the afternoon tea which was catered by the Dog Rock Convention Centre, was generously funded by our WA State NRM Large Grant enabling us to keep the cost for the 53 attendees to a minimum. Thank you also to Paul Guest and Karina Hick from Albany Ocean Adventures for all your work delivering a fabulous cruise to round out the weekend's events.



Above left: Part of the group enjoying the cruise on the top deck. Right: Afternoon tea! Far Right: Tony Friend giving his first informal presentation to the group



## Felted sleeping baby Gilbert's Potoroo by Reena Lee Creations

We are very excited to be working with Reena Harwood of Reena Lee Creations who is designing and making amazing needle felted Gilbert's Potoroo sculptures for us to help with our awareness raising. This needle felted baby Gilbert's Potoroo was created as part of her "Sleeping Aussie Babies" series and we are looking forward to soon having needle felting kits as part of our merchandise that will enable people to have a go at creating one of these adorable baby Gilbert's Potoroo sculptures for themselves.

Check out Reena's amazing website to see all the other gorgeous work that she does

[www.reenaleecreations.com.au](http://www.reenaleecreations.com.au).

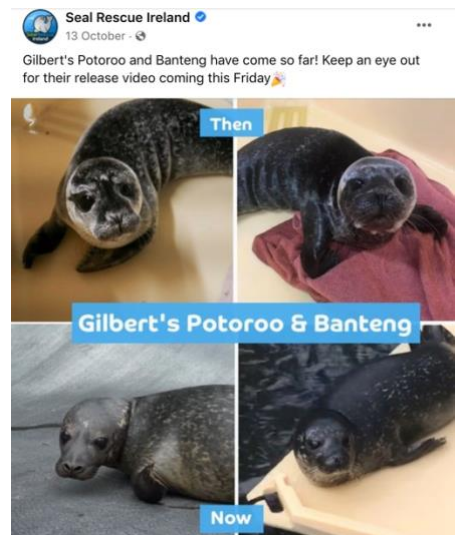


Above left and Centre: "Baby Gilbey" in the beautiful presentation box that she arrived in. Photos: Jen Merritt.  
Above Right: In the hand to show scale. Photo: Reena Harwood

## Gilbert's Potoroo, the rescued seal pup, released back to the wild

We were delighted to hear that on October 15, "Gilbert's Potoroo" the rescued seal pup who was being cared for and rehabilitated by Seal Rescue Ireland had grown up enough to be released back to the wild along with another of his rescued friends, Banteng! Thank you to Seal Rescue Ireland for the amazing work they do and for choosing to name their seals after endangered species this season which has helped raise awareness of Gilbert's Potoroo, the critically endangered marsupial, for a short time at least! Go well little one... ❤️

You can watch a video of the release of "Gilbert's Potoroo" at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/sealrescueireland/videos/455207532576097>



## MERCHANDISE



**WATERCOLOUR CARDS:** Quality hand-made cards featuring a picture of Gilbert's Potoroo from a watercolour by Jann van der Helder. Blank inside.  
\$4 each or 5 for \$16.

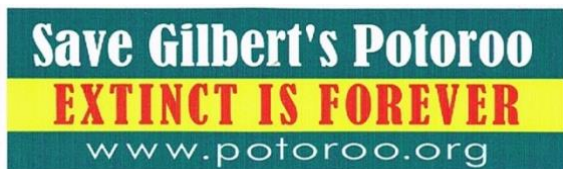


Printed by the Environmental Printing Company on 100% recycled paper using vegetable-based inks. Blank inside.  
\$5 each or 5 for \$20.

**JO HARRIS CARDS:** Quality cards featuring a painting of Gilbert's Potoroo by Jo Harris based on a photograph by Dick Walker.



**BLACK & WHITE CARDS:** Quality cards featuring a pen and ink drawing of a Gilbert's Potoroo by Jackie Courtenay from a photograph by Katrin Witt. Printed by the Environmental Printing Company on 100% recycled paper using vegetable-based inks. Blank inside.  
\$5 each or 5 for \$20.



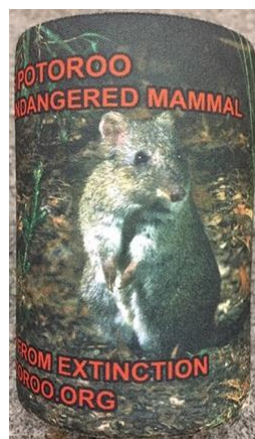
**BUMPER STICKERS** \$2.50



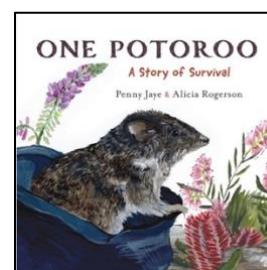
**POSTCARDS:** Featuring a photo of Gilbert's Potoroo by Dick Walker and information about the Potoroo on both the front and back  
\$1.00 each



**TEATOWELS:** Printed on 100% cotton with some key facts about Gilbert's Potoroo! Tea towel design by Sandy O'Doherty  
\$10 each or 3 for \$25

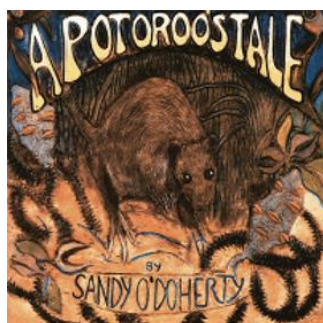


**STUBBY HOLDERS:** Designed by GPAG members featuring a photo of Gilbert's Potoroo by Dick Walker.  
\$10 each or 2 for \$15

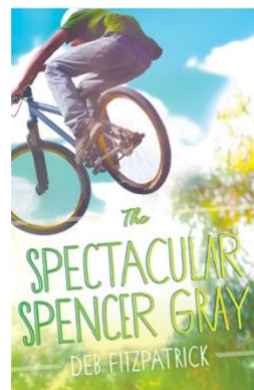


**ONE POTOROO: A STORY OF SURVIVAL:** A heart-warming story of disaster and rescue of one Potoroo

caught in the Two Peoples Bay fire by Penny Jaye, with beautiful illustrations by Alicia Rogerson. 35% of the sale price goes to Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group.  
\$25 each



**A POTOROO'S TALE:** A delightful book written and beautifully illustrated by Albany artist Sandy O'Doherty. All profits from the sale of the book will go to the Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group.  
\$15 each



**THE SPECTACULAR SPENCER GRAY:** The award winning adventure story by Deb Fitzpatrick featuring Gilbert's Potoroo and the return of Spencer Gray in a spectacular adventure. 30% of the sale price of the book will go to Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group.  
\$15 each

## MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

ABN 75 191 68 479 (Tax Invoice when paid)

Item	Cost/item	Quantity	Total Cost
Watercolour Card (ea)	\$4.00		
Watercolour Cards (5 pk)	\$16		
Jo Harris Card	\$5		
Jo Harris Cards (5 pk)	\$20		
B&W Potoroo Card	\$5		
B&W Potoroo Cards (5 pk)	\$20		
Postcards (ea)	\$1.00		
Bumper Stickers (ea)	\$2.50		
Teatowels (ea)	\$10.00		
Teatowels (3 pk)	\$25.00		
Stubby Holders (ea)	\$10.00		
Stubby Holders (2 pk)	\$15.00		
One Potoroo	\$25.00		
A Potoroos Tale	\$15.00		
Spectacular Spencer Gray	\$15		
		<b>Product total</b>	
		<b>Postage &amp; packing (&lt;500g)*</b>	\$10.00
		<b>Add a donation?</b>	
		<b>Total Cost</b>	

\* Within Australia. Postage for larger and overseas orders will need to be costed individually depending on weight and destination. You will be contacted by the Treasurer with a final quote for postage if your order weighs more than 500g or you need the items sent overseas.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Methods

**DIRECT DEPOSIT:** Bendigo Bank BSB: 633-000; Account Number: 164 347 999

Please include your surname and "Merchandise" in the Reference line and email order form to [treasurer@potoroo.org](mailto:treasurer@potoroo.org)

**CHEQUE:** Please make cheques payable to **Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc**

Send To:     The Treasurer  
                   Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc  
                   PO Box 654  
                   Albany, WA 6331

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of GILBERT'S POTOROO ACTION GROUP INC, fill out the form below and either pay your subscription by direct deposit and email the form to [treasurer@potoroo.org](mailto:treasurer@potoroo.org) or print out and return by mail with a cheque enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth if Under 15 Years \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Tax Invoice

**Subscription \$22 per year**

Includes GST

### Payment Methods

**DIRECT DEPOSIT:** Bendigo Bank; BSB: 633-000; Account Number: 164 347 999

Please include your surname and "Membership" in the Reference line.

**CHEQUE:** Please make cheques payable to **Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc**

Send To: The Treasurer  
Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc  
PO Box 654  
Albany, WA 6331

**Privacy Policy:** The information you have disclosed other than your name and contact details is restricted to committee members. No one outside the association is given access to your personal details without your permission.

OFFICIAL USE ONLY	Nominated By: _____	Receipt No _____
	Membership Accepted: YES/NO	Date Paid ____/____/____
		Register _____

## DONATIONS

As a Nationally Registered Environmental Organisation the Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc. offers tax deductible donation facilities. To claim **tax benefits**, your donation must be a **minimum of \$2** and made payable to the **GPAG Public Tax Deductible Donation Fund**. Tax deductible donations can also be made through our website [www.potoroo.org](http://www.potoroo.org).

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Methods

**DIRECT DEPOSIT:** Bendigo Bank; BSB: 633-000; Account Number: 178 804 555

Please include your surname and Donation in the Reference line and email this form to [treasurer@potoroo.org](mailto:treasurer@potoroo.org)

**CHEQUE:** Please make cheques payable to **Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc Public Tax Deductible Donation Fund**

Send To: The Treasurer  
Gilbert's Potoroo Action Group Inc  
PO Box 654  
Albany, WA 6331