



**Australian
Citizen Science
Association**

2015-2018 Strategic Plan Review

A reflection on ACSA's formal establishment & growth



A brief history of ACSA

The Australian Citizen Science Association (ACSA) is a member-based association with a vision to be 'A community that supports, informs and develops citizen science.'

The period of 2015-2018 was a critical time of establishment and growth for ACSA. Inspiring Australia committed seed funding for the new association to support the development and delivery of key frameworks to support this National citizen science community.

The ACSA Management Committee utilised feedback from the Inaugural Citizen Science Workshop and ongoing from the wider network to develop the Strategic Plan 2015-2018. This Plan set forward a roadmap for ACSA with a mission to 'advance citizen science through sharing of knowledge, collaboration, capacity building & advocacy for citizen science'. Five key goal areas were outlined for the Strategic Plan: Participation, Partnerships, Practice, Impact, and Platform.

This Strategic Plan Review for 2015-2018 aims to systematically report on the activities and outcomes delivered against the Plan during this critical three-year developmental phase. Through this process, we seek to celebrate shared successes, identify areas for improvement, and inform a new three year Strategic Plan for 2018-2021.

The reflections and learnings from this Review, and feedback from the ACSA Member and Network survey results (2018) will shape our plans for the next three years.

A network of committed citizen science advocates is what sparked the idea for a national network for citizen science, and continues to be what drives and shapes ACSA today. We hope you'll join us in celebrating this important foundational stage for ACSA and for the next phase of development.

Erin Roger, ACSA Chair on behalf of the 2019 ACSA Management Committee

VISION

A community that supports, informs and develops citizen science

MISSION

To advance citizen science through sharing of knowledge, collaboration, capacity building & advocacy for citizen science.

VALUES

• Inclusive • Inspiring • Empowering • Collaborative • Dynamic



**Australian
Citizen Science
Association**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018

GOALS

Participation	Partnerships	Practice	Impact	Platform
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Message "ACSA's Strategic Goals are to..."

Encourage broad and meaningful participation in citizen science	through facilitating inclusive and collaborative partnerships	and a community of best practice, knowledge and tools	to ensure the value and impact of citizen science and its outputs are realised	enabled by ACSA as an effective, trusted and well recognised organisation and hub for citizen science in Australia."
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Outcome

Individual & Community outcomes	Network outcomes	Capacity outcomes	Science & Education outcomes	Institutional outcomes
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Detail

Encourage & promote broad and meaningful participation of society in citizen science so people become partners in creating science & increasing science literacy.	Facilitate inclusive and collaborative relationships and networks with members and key community, science, education, government, and business partners, nationally and internationally, to deliver against common goals.	Support the development of tools, methods, infrastructure, and resources to strengthen the practice, use and study of citizen science.	Support & promote citizen science as an effective and innovative approach in undertaking and delivering research, and supporting science outcomes, including education and policy outcomes.	Establish ACSA as a well functioning hub and network for discussion, coordination, initiatives and advocacy, for members and to promote and deliver the goals of ACSA
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ACTIONS

Participation	Partnerships	Practice	Impact	Platform
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Year 1 (2015/16) Plan, Initiate *continued and built on by...*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop communication & promote outreach activities via website & social media, building profile and awareness Support national citizen science projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop membership framework & business model to grow a sustainable funding stream for ACSA Identify strategic partnerships & networks and grow interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop information management protocols and structures for information sharing Create online project database and portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a national conference Support and promote strategic citizen science activities/projects on local, regional and national scales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation Governance - AGM & MC & working groups Administration - host organisation & secretariat Website & branding Organisational plans
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Year 2 (2016/17) Build, Grow

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target key sectors to increase participation in citizen science Build awareness of citizen science through practitioner involvement in diverse fora 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow membership base & interaction Build external partnerships grow international collaborations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise citizen science activities, including awards Support the development of ACSA publications & reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and communicate broad impacts of citizen science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase internal participation Deliver citizen science advocacy at all levels e.g. champions Increase visibility of ACSA
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Year 3 (2017/18) Deliver, Evaluate

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing activities, including national conference Evaluation of activities, including identification of gaps. Review of plans, approach, strategy and improve as appropriate 				
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Review of Strategic Plan Delivery 2015-2016 (Year 1)

	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Partnerships</i>	<i>Practice</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Platform</i>
Year 1 Goals <i>Focusing Planning and Initiating</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop communication & promote outreach activities via website & social media, building profile and awareness Support national citizen science projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop membership framework & business model to grow a sustainable funding stream for ACSA Identify strategic partnerships & networks and grow interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop information management protocols and structures for information sharing Create online project database and portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a national conference Support and promote strategic citizen science activities/projects on local, regional and national scales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation Governance - AGM & MC & working groups Administration - host organisation & secretariat Website & branding Organisational plans
Year 1 Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnered with Gaia Resources to improve/refine ACSA website Developed a draft ACSA Communication Plan to engage with network Grew Facebook and Twitter social media platforms Formed a National Projects working group Supported the launch of the Australian BioBlitz Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commenced work on sustainable business model for ACSA including membership and conferences Signed an MoU with associations in the US (CSA) and Europe (ECSA) to foster international knowledge sharing and collaborations Initiated development of ACSA Regional Chapters to build network channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborated with Atlas of Living Australia to develop the concept for a national Citizen Science Project Finder Set up Basecamp system for Management Committee sharing and record keeping Trialled listserv for the ACSA community as a mechanism to share information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held Australia's first national citizen science conference with 198 delegates (July 2015) ACSA Establishment Committee members contributed to the Occasional Paper: Building Australia Through Citizen Science Supported the introduction of the Innovation in Citizen Science Eureka award Presented internationally on behalf of ACSA at the Citizen Science Association Conference and CSA board meeting in San Jose, CA, USA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Committee was elected and first AGM held (July 2015) Inspiring Australia committed ACSA seed funding to build and support network from 2015-18, including a 2 day/week Support Officer role to work with Management Committee coordinate development of the network Developed Constitution and became incorporated The Australian Museum was secured as the ACSA host for FY 2015-2018 and numerous administration processes were implemented Developed ACSA logos, style guide and templates Developed and launched 3 year ACSA Strategic Plan

Review of Strategic Plan Delivery 2016-2017 (Year 2)

	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Partnerships</i>	<i>Practice</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Platform</i>
Year 2 Goals <i>Focusing on Building and growing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target key sectors to increase participation in citizen science Build awareness of citizen science through practitioner involvement in diverse forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow membership base & interaction Build external partnerships grow international collaborations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise citizen science activities, including awards Support the development of ACSA publications & reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and communicate broad impacts of citizen science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase internal participation Deliver citizen science advocacy at all levels e.g. champions Increase visibility of ACSA
Year 2 Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalised and commenced implementation of ACSA Communication Plan to effectively connect with target audiences including Members and Chapters Actively supported interactive communications through social media channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a paid membership structure and benefits list to further support long-term financial sustainability Met delegates from South Korea and Canada to discuss global citizen science initiatives Formalised a simplified process for formation of Regional Chapters and Working Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided the ACSA definition of citizen science as 'public participation and collaboration in scientific research with the aim to increase scientific knowledge.' Distributed monthly newsletters to members and quarterly citizen science publication lists Established a collaboration with Atlas of Living Australia to develop a national Citizen Science Project Finder and to exchange global project information with SciStarter via an Application Programming Interface (API) Developed the Terms of Reference for ACSA Management Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented ACSA at multiple conferences, workshops, and award ceremonies across Australia Provided citizen science advocacy opportunities for Members - e.g. commenting on relevant draft state and national policy documents, strategies, briefings and other documents to help inform policy and procedure at local, national, government and corporate levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed and developed new ACSA website Employed a part-time ACSA coordinator Obtained Directors and Officers insurance for ACSA Management Committee members

Review of Strategic Plan Delivery 2017-2018 (Year 3)

	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Partnerships</i>	<i>Practice</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Platform</i>
Year 3 Goals <i>Focusing on Delivering and Evaluating</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of state of citizen science in Australia and advocate for sharing of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support MOU activities with ECSA & CSA Represent ACSA on various international organisation working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and grow Regional Chapters and Working Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of activities, including identification of gaps. Hold National Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of plans, approach, strategy and improve as appropriate Conduct a member survey
Year 3 Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established an Australian Data & Metadata Working Group driven by Peter Brenton of ALA Designed and distributed ACSA t-shirts – free for all members Launched a YouTube channel populated with over 50 presentations from the 2018 conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented on behalf of ACSA at the Citizen Science Association and European Citizen Science Association conferences Continued to undertake activities listed in the MoU between the CSA and ECSA, such as participating in international ethics, and data & metadata working groups, as well as Global Mosquito Alert Consortium, and other initiatives Attended the United Nations Science- Policy-Business Forum on the Environment to advocate for citizen science on a global scale, as well as helped form and continues to advise a new Citizen Science Global Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published an adaptation of the European Citizen Science Association’s “10 Principles of Citizen Science” as relevant to ACSA and its community Distributed monthly ACSA newsletters and quarterly citizen science publication lists Contributed to the Citizen Science Strategy for Queensland (Jan 2019) Launched the ACSA Seed Grants to support member development Launch of Regional Chapters in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, and Queensland Created the ACSA Discussion Group, an online discussion forum where Members can ask questions, post updates, exchange ideas etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held 2nd Australian Citizen Science Conference with 250+ delegates and over 125 talks, posters and workshops, with opening plenary by Dr Alan Finkel, Australia’s Chief Scientist Organised two citizen science information sessions in Canberra to advocate and promote the value of citizen science in Australia. Represented ACSA on various international organisation working groups, such as the Society for Conservation Biology Participatory and Citizen Science Working Group Provided briefing papers to Inspiring Australia and comments on national strategies and policies, including a submission to Australia’s Strategy for Nature 2018-2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarified the role of Australian Museum as host institution and drafted an MoU Developed and launched new ACSA website with improved navigation and member content, including the membership portal Planned member survey to understand membership drivers and priorities to shape strategy and member support Initiated the process for becoming a registered charity Dr. Geoff Garrett, former Chief Scientist of Queensland accepted role as ACSA Patron

PROPOSED INITIATIVES

PARTNERSHIPS

- ✓ **Partnerships & Sponsorship** – identify organisations and individuals who have common aims and seek/develop opportunities for engagement, collaboration, and contribution.
- ✓ **Membership** – develop wide membership base, with clear articulation of benefits and offer information and opportunities for people to contribute and engage – including working groups, volunteers etc.
- **Sustainable business model** – enact business model in Year 1 and review in year 3.
- ✓ **International** - continue to develop links with international “sister” organisations, (e.g. Europe & USA) and build upon information and ideas from other countries.

PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

The ACSA approach relies heavily on partnerships with both government and non-government agencies and this has been a notable focus of effort and success over the past three years. The Australian Museum provided extensive in-kind support for ACSA in its role as host organisation from 2015-2018, for which ACSA would like to express deep appreciation. In 2019, ACSA will be seeking another host institution for support in 2019-2022 financial years.

The Australian Government’s Inspiring Australia program has provided establishment funding to develop the core support framework for ACSA (2015-2018) which fostered the growth and development of this National citizen science association.

In December 2018, ACSA was successful in securing another three-year commitment from Inspiring Australia. This investment focuses on ACSA shifting to a sustainable funding model that can maintain sufficient resources to deliver against goals and meet expectations of members and partners. Over the next three years, ACSA will continue to seek advice on business models and sources of funding to achieve financial sustainability.

We have seen growing interest in citizen science, with the first National conference in 2015 hosting 198 delegates and the second conference in 2018 hosting more than 250 delegates and trending number one on Twitter in Australia. The conference represents one of the important financial streams for ACSA, along with our membership. Moving ahead, ACSA will need to focus on exploring other revenue and in-kind support alternatives to support core costs, staffing and investment in member services.

State Chapters continue to grow. Extensive work has been undertaken to facilitate the process of applications and ongoing work for State and Thematic Chapters. Chapter Chairs attend the monthly Management Committee meetings to directly connect and contribute feedback. On the international stage, ACSA has formal partnerships with both the Citizen Science Association and European Citizen Science Association. ACSA also provided input and support for the emerging citizen science communities in Asia and Africa.



PROPOSED INITIATIVES

PARTICIPATION

- ✓ **Communication** – development and implementation of a Communications Plan outlining goals and key messages, audiences, communication tools (e.g. website, social media, seminars).
- ✓ **National Project** – support the development of national citizen science projects by members that are securely based in a science question or raises science literacy or improves educational experiences and outcomes.
- **Focus area** – select a target audience to focus attention over a period, such as STEM education strategically aligning with government science/research/industry priorities, or diverse community targets (ageing, indigenous, migrant etc).
- ✓ **Outreach / Building awareness** – encourage practitioners to raise awareness of citizen science at various fora e.g. IUCN, Science Week etc.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – set in place early in ACSA development, a monitoring and evaluation framework against goals/outcomes to enable an articulation of ongoing value and success of ACSA.

PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

The first three years focused on foundational activities to build the engagement and communications structures that can support a National citizen science network. A Communications Plan was developed and implemented, with an intentional focus on developing strong internal (ACSA) communications channels, including structures for engaging with members, Chapters, working groups, Management Committee (MC), the ACSA host & Coordinator.

Supporting the development of best practice and high impact national citizen science projects was also identified as one of the participation delivery channels in the 2015-18 Plan. ACSA has provided advice and promotional pathways for projects such as BioBlitzes and Zika Mozzie Seeker, as well as contributing to the development of strategic frameworks such as the Queensland Citizen Science Strategy.

ACSA has not been in a position to deliver themed focus areas on an annual basis, but seeks to pursue this with member feedback for the future.

ACSA has worked to increase the range of people and organisations actively engaging via our growing national network, such as through organising public events in affiliation with both National conferences, providing Chapters with promotional materials for events, and steadily growing our social media following, with over 3,000 Facebook likes and 3,500 Twitter followers, and 1,300 newsletter subscribers.

A stronger focus on monitoring and evaluating outcomes will be core moving forward into the next plan.



PROPOSED INITIATIVES

PRACTICE

- ✓ **Resources** – facilitate the sharing of citizen science resources by creating platforms for networking, shared learning, information exchange, guides, publications, templates, reports etc. Development or commissioning of specific publications, reports etc.
- ✓ **Infrastructure** – development of a online project database and portal, embedded/linked to the ACSA website.
- ✓ **Recognition** – ongoing recognition of best practice and promotion of best practice to citizen science practitioner community.

PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the three years, ACSA worked to build platforms to grow and maintain support for a community of practice based on feedback from members and network partners. This included resources and tools in the form of: a new user-friendly website, systems for regular communications with members and five State Chapters, and an online members portal for Working Group communications. Usage and qualitative feedback on the members portal suggest this does not effectively support member needs and the MC will be seeking to explore alternative pathways, which will likely focus on engagement via Chapters.

We worked with Atlas of Living Australia to develop a national Citizen Science Project Finder and to exchange global project information with SciStarter via an Application Programming Interface (API). These initiatives have been featured through initiatives such as the [Guardian's People Powered](#) platform to connect citizens with science projects around Australia.

We understand that further development to enhance usability will increase the value of this tool for both those looking to join citizen science projects and practitioners seeking to understand the landscape and promote collaboration. Moving forward, we'll also be seeking to further support ongoing recognition of best practice citizen science programs.

We launched the Seed Grants in 2018 to support member interests and are committed to supporting investment back into our members. A members survey was designed in 2017/18 and distributed from July-October 2018 to understand the priorities of our members and network and shape how ACSA can best support these needs. Our next three years will have a strong focus on working with research partners to better understand the landscape and impacts of citizen science, and working with our network to both communicate this information and transform this research into best practice tools and approaches.



PROPOSED INITIATIVES

IMPACT

- ✓ **Conference & meetings** – organisation of a biennial national conference and facilitate development of regional and/or topic specific groups.
- ✓ **Citizen science projects** – support and promote strategic citizen science projects on local, regional and national scales, including connectivity between projects.
- **Impacts** – review and communicate broad impacts of citizen science. Ongoing identification of barriers to development and implementation of citizen science projects and implement strategies to mitigate barriers (e.g. funding, recognition of data, identify gaps in science data or decision making processes that citizen science can contribute to; address perceptions of citizen science data quality and recognition of scientific value of citizen science and citizen science generated data).

PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

ACSA is now a recognised voice for citizen science on a national scale. Two highly successful conferences have highlighted the current and growing role of citizen science in Australia, bringing together delegates from Australia and across the globe. The 2018 conference featured a range of speakers showcasing how citizen science can influence policy and society, including representatives from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), European Citizen Science Association, Federal Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science Community of Practice for the United States, and NASA.

ACSA has supported national and international citizen science collaborations with fellow Associations such as *Global Mosquito Alert*, which is the first global platform using citizen science techniques to tackle the monitoring of mosquito populations. Moving forward, we see ACSA's strategic role in supporting large-scale citizen science projects to be focused on progressing critical high-impact collaborations that can enhance participation and outcomes.

ACSA has provided briefing papers for policy makers, provided feedback on government citizen science grant rounds, supported the development of a White Paper on citizen science and contributed to the development of a state-wide Queensland Citizen Science Strategy. Further afield, our members have worked to progress global networks, such as the published paper on [Associations for Citizen Science: Regional Knowledge Global Collaboration](#).

We understand that there has been notable interest in school engagement with citizen science. School community and ACSA has had some involvement via discussions around STEM engagement, but greater future work could be focused in this sector. We will continue to explore opportunities via initiatives such as the STARportal to connect educators with exciting and meaningful STEM citizen science experiences for students.



PROPOSED INITIATIVES

PLATFORM

- ✓ **Incorporation** – finalise incorporation and associated ongoing administration and public officers.
- ✓ **Governance** – appoint ACSA Management Committee and public officers; Development of relevant organisational plans; Establish Working Groups responsible for delivery of initiatives and strategic actions.
- ✓ **Administration** – establish operations within a host organisation and establish a secretariat for ACSA.
- ✓ **Advocacy** – Management Committee to undertake advocacy and build a national network of citizen science champions informing at local, national, government and corporate levels and delivering support and engagement
- ✓ **Visibility** – increase visibility of ACSA and position the organisation as the go-to contact for citizen science.

PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Extensive effort has been put into development a robust governance framework for ACSA to provide strong support to continue growing a National community of practice for citizen science in Australia. Securing funding for a part-time National Coordinator to support the efficient functioning of core processes has been critical to success.

The ACSA Management Committee has been made up of 13 individuals over the past three years, contributing thousands of volunteer hours, as well as some in-kind support from members respective employers (eg travel costs, staff time commitments, event space etc).

Building a strong governance framework has been a key focus of this period of establishment and growth. This included:

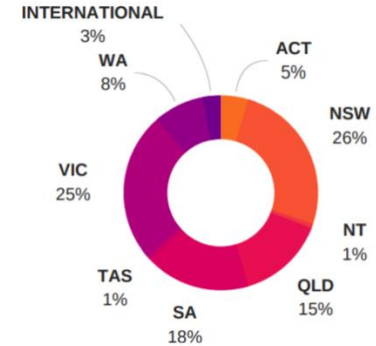
- Drafting and approving the ACSA constitution
- Becoming an incorporated association
- Developing the Terms of Reference for ACSA Management Committee members
- Established Protocols for the formation and operation of regional chapters and working groups
- Obtained Directors and Officers insurances for ACSA Management Committee Members

We have an effective and active Management Committee, secretariat and a network of State Chapters delivering against strategic goals and actions. With this strong framework in place, we look forward to working with members to strengthen our positive impact through advocacy and enhance visibility for the important contributions of citizen science over the coming years.





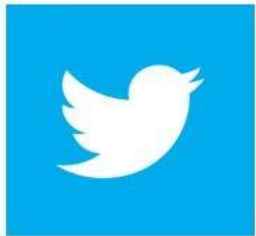
ACSA at a Glance 2015-2018



2 national conferences, bringing together 450 delegates

4 State Chapters & 1 active working group at 30 June 2018

258 financial members from Australia and the world



6,768 followers on social media



3 Seed Grants awarded to foster member and project development



1 Three year grant from Inspiring Australia for \$187,500 to establish and grow ACSA



ACSA is a voluntary network that depends on the valuable contributions of passionate individuals and organisations to fulfill our mission. The current Management Committee would like to express our sincere thank you for the extensive support contributed to the Australian Citizen Science Association through all of the many individuals and organisations who helped build a strong foundation for ACSA over this establishment period. Thank you also to our members for being part of ACSA.

National Coordinator (part-time)

Amy Slocombe

Management Committee Members 2015 - 2018 (in alphabetical order by last name)

Kylie Andrews (General Member 2016-18), Ellie Downing (Secretary 2016-18), Paul Flemons (ACSA Host Institution representative 2015-18), Libby Hepburn (General Member 2015-16), Jennifer Loder (General member 2017-18), Jess O'Donnell (General Member 2016), Jessie Oliver (General Member 2015-18), Philip Roetman (Chair 2015-16), Erin Roger (Secretary 2015-16, Chair 2016-18), Sunny Sanderson (Treasurer 2018), Carla Sbrocchi (Vice Chair 2015-16), Alexis Tindall (Treasurer 2016-18), Stephanie von Gavel (Treasurer 2015-16, Vice Chair 2016-18)

Host Institution

The Australian Museum's Centre for Citizen Science (AMCCS) was the organisational home for ACSA 2015-2018, with Paul Flemons as the Host Representative Committee Member.

Funders

ACSA was funded by a Commonwealth Government grant through the Inspiring Australia Program 2015-2018.

Supporters

EarthWatch Australia, Atlas of Living Australia, Gaia Resources and Queensland Water & Land Carers have provided extensive in-kind support for ACSA 2015-2018.



ACSA was conceived at the Inaugural Citizen Science Workshop in Brisbane on 6 May 2014, hosted by the Queensland Museum and organised by EarthWatch Australia. ACSA was then formally launched in July 2015 with elections for Management Committee positions at the first Annual General Meeting, as voted by attendees at the first national Australian Citizen Science Conference.

While these activities took place outside of the reporting period, they were the critical first step in ACSA's development. As we reflect on the first several years of ACSA's work, the current Management Committee wishes to acknowledge these efforts and contributors who helped to lead the first steps for making ACSA a reality.

An establishment committee was formed to continue leading key development tasks delivered through four working groups, including: 1) entity and governance, (2) charter and objectives, (3) funding and (4) communications. Thank you to Establishment Committee Member Leads: Chris Gillies, Libby Hepburn, John La Salle, Suzanne Miller, Michelle Neil, Jessie Oliver and Gretta Pecl.

The Establishment Committee helped to lead the foundational development of the concepts that supported the formal establishment of ACSA. This included support for Australia's first national citizen science conference (2015) and critical negotiations with funding bodies.

Thank you to the amazing ACSA network from the 2018/19 Management Committee!

