

Odatria

The electronic newsletter of the
Victorian Herpetological Society



Issue 23, January, 2023



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A Word from the President

As we draw closer to our first expo since the pandemic the committee have been working hard to make sure the 2023 expo is bigger and better than ever before. This year have had to overcome a number of different hurdles including the rising cost of EVERYTHING including:

- Venue hire
- Expo furniture
- Insurances
- Kid's entertainment

As always the committee have worked hard to keep costs as low as possible to ensure these events are affordable for everyone. This year we have once again got the support of a number of regular sponsors and have seen a number of new sponsors jump on board including a partnership with Petstock. It is the support of all our sponsors that help keep these events going. We are also super excited to have international YouTuber and conservationist "Dingo" join us this year at the Expo Dinner. We can't wait to meet him. If you haven't already check him out on YouTube and Instagram. Don't forget we still have limited tickets available for the [expo dinner](#) which can be purchased through Eventbrite and we would love to see you all at the [expo](#).

The poster features a central image of Dingo Dinkelman, a man with a beard, holding a large crocodile and a snake. He is wearing a black t-shirt with 'THE DINGO' logo. The background shows a natural outdoor setting with a river and trees. The text is arranged in a grid-like fashion with various colors (black, green, white) for emphasis.

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2023

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REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN EXPO DINNER
The Victorian Herpetological Society is honoured to present

Dingo Dinkelman
coming all the way from South Africa!

Conservationist & You Tuber

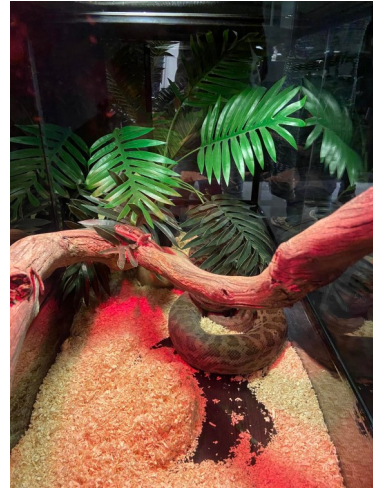
Friday March 10th | 6pm - Late
Grand Star Receptions | 499 Grieve Parade, Altona North

Members \$110 Non Members \$125
Dinner Included - Drinks at Bar Prices

info@vhs.com.au | www.vhs.com.au

* Single Membership limit of 2 tickets per member. Family Membership limit of 4 tickets per membership
(Please contact us if you have any queries)

Another challenge this year has been meeting/dinner venues. As most would know our normal venue the Anglers Tavern recently flooded. The flood damage was severe and meant we were on the hunt for a new venue. With the help of the Anglers Tavern we were able to secure a new meeting venue "The Victoria Hotel". The Anglers Tavern is hoping to reopen its doors in September 2023 so we will continue to hold meetings at "The Victoria Hotel" until then. Lastly I would like to thank all our members for their ongoing support and look forward to seeing everyone at the expo.






REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN EXPO



Adults \$15 (16 Plus) **Child \$5** (Under 16) **Family \$30** (2 Adults + 4 Kids) **Concession \$10** (VHS Members admitted free)

Saturday March 11th
9am-4pm | Expo Hall, Melbourne Showgrounds

info@vhs.com.au | www.vhs.com.au



December Meeting — Dr. David Kirshner

The December VHS Meeting was held at a different venue to normal as unfortunately, the Angler's Tavern was still under renovations as a result of the flooding events earlier in November. Therefore, for the first time, a meeting was held at the Victoria Hotel also in Yarraville. We would just like to thank the venue and the staff for accommodating such a large group of people for the night.

The meeting itself began with the announcement of the committee for next year whereby no changes were made, so the committee is as follows:

President — Adam Sapiano

Secretary — Kevin Welsh

Treasurer — Shane Brodie

Executive Committee — Grant Burling

Executive Committee — Brian Barnett OAM



We were very fortunate to have Dr. David Kirshner fly down once again to give a talk on the development and design of the Sydney Zoo's Reptile building. David's presentation took us through the process from start to finish and every detail in between. From the movement of the first animals including Hyenas and Chimpanzees to the zoo through to the intricate placement of lighting for reptile enclosures this talk had a bit of everything. Key takeaways included the angled design of some enclosures to avoid glare for visitor experience as well as designing the Reptile side of the building to flow into a Nocturnal House by utilising nocturnal Reptiles and Invertebrates.

We would just like to give a big thank you to David for coming down once again and providing an incredible presentation rich with various photographs, videos and drone footage of the whole process. We would also like to thank all those who attended, contributed in some way shape or form to the auction on the night and stuck around for a chat afterwards.





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Tales from the Red Centre

The Red Centre, a place of vast lands, extreme weather variation and plenty of reptiles and amphibians! The following will be an account from two separate trips into Central Australia partaken by different VHS members. Both trips were largely successful with many stable and harder to find Central Australian reptiles and amphibians photographed.



One of the trips went out in the first few weeks of November in which a member was a part of an educational field trip. This trip, although far less in quantity of species, still had quite a number of highlights including: a Stimson's Python (*Antaresia stimsoni*), a Woma Python (*Aspidites ramsayi*), multiple Sand-plain Geckos (*Lucasium stenodactylus*), an array of Burrowing Frog species and two Perenties (*Varanus giganteus*) including a sub-adult animal that climbed up a 5m rock face to it's place of residency.



The first trip went out in the last few weeks of October with some members driving from Melbourne through South Australia and up to Alice Springs, and others who met them there. This trip was very successful with 4 species of monitors including a large Perentie (*Varanus giganteus*), 2 species of Legless Lizard including a Western Hooded Scaly-foot (*Pygopus nigriceps*), lots of species of snake including a stunning Mulga Snake (*Pseudechis australis*) and Desert Banded Snake (*Simoselaps anomalus*) many species of skink including a young Night Skink (*Liopholis striata*) various frogs including the Centralian Tree Frog (*Litoria/Ranoidea gilleni*). Additionally, those who drove also managed to find the elusive Inland Taipan (*Oxyuranus microlepidotus*) in South Australia.



Of course, neither Red Centre trip was complete without a visit to see Rex at the Alice Springs Reptile Centre as well as giving the Alice Springs Desert Park a look. Both collections were very impressive and well maintained showing off a diversity of species found in and around Central Australia and the Northern Territory.



Alice Springs Reptile Centre: Western Blue Tongue (*Tiliqua occipitalis*), Giant Cave Gecko (*Pseudothecadactylus lindneri*).



Alice Springs Desert Park: Desert Death Adder (*Acanthophis pyrrhus*), Thorny Devil (*Moloch horridus*).

Keeper Highlight - Josh Fastuca

In each issue we will highlight a different Victorian keeper and their animals discussing their methods of keeping as well as any advice they would give to new keepers and more!



My story of getting into reptiles is very much a more modern one, my family had no interest in reptiles or wildlife for that matter. However, the most important thing, was that they were always supportive. I grew up watching Steve Irwin, Sir David Attenborough, Steve Backshall and Chris Humfrey on the TV rather than kids cartoons so wildlife was a passion from a young age. Although, I didn't discover the rabbit hole of private keeping until a family friend went on a holiday around Australia and needed someone to look after their Shingleback (*Tiliqua rugosa*), Eastern Blue Tongue Skink (*Tiliqua scincoides scincoides*) and two Murray River Short-neck Turtles (*Emydura macquarii*) and talked about this shop called *Victorian Reptiles* owned by Adam Sapiano. From that point on, I was hooked! Six years on and the collection has grown and changed from a single Blotched Blue Tongue Skink (*Tiliqua nigrolutea*) to an array of species.



Currently I have a mixture of animals inside & out. Inside I currently keep:

3.2.1 Murray Darling Carpet Pythons (*Morelia spilota metcalfei*)

1.1.0 Diamond Pythons (*Morelia spilota spilota*)

1.1.0 Bredl's Pythons (*Morelia bredli*)

1.1.8 Western Blue Tongue Skinks (*Tiliqua occipitalis*)

1.1.6 Centralian Blue Tongue Skink (*Tiliqua multifasciata*)

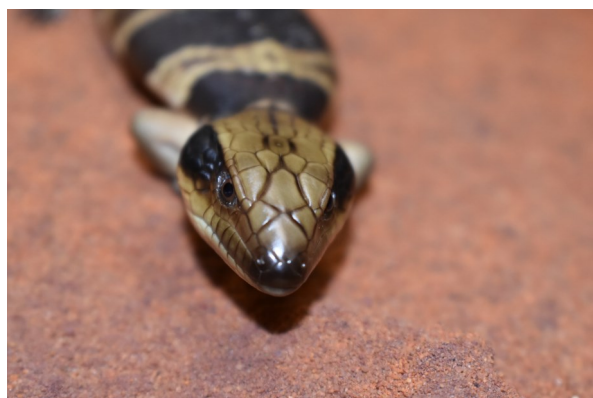


Out of the lizards I've kept, I have to say the most exciting and enjoyable have been the King Skinks (*Egernia kingii*). I house them outdoors in an aviary with a group of four which I can watch from the living room, and it is just incredible watching them do what they do every day.

My biggest piece of advice as someone who is fairly young in the hobby, is to listen and to read. Enjoy having conversations with those who have been in this wonderful world of reptiles for a while, really take in what they are saying and think on it. Get yourself some good old-fashioned books, even become a bit of an addict on the book front, it will only put you in good stead for owning and looking after some of our incredible native wildlife. Also, do yourself a favour and come to the VHS Expo and Meetings, become a member!

Outside I have 3 large 'lizard pits and aviaries' that are home to a decent number of Blotched blue tongues (*Tiliqua nigrolutea*), King Skink's (*Egernia kingii*) and Eastern Water Dragons (*Intellagama lesueurii lesueurii*).

My focus in captive breeding is just trying to achieve a genetically diverse population of Murray Darling Carpet Pythons (*Morelia spilota metcalfei*). These snakes, in my eyes, really do make for one of the best first pet snakes due to their relaxed nature and their manageable size of approximately 180cm – 200cm. I hope to achieve this genetic diversity by utilising various locality-based individuals held in private collections and bringing that together to broaden the overall gene pool within the captive population.

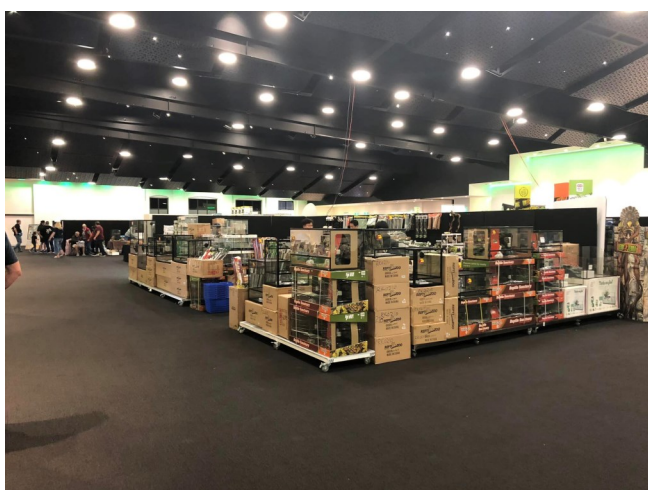


You can follow me and my critters on Instagram and Facebook under the name '[Josh's Aussie Reptiles](#)'.

Reptile and Amphibian Expo 2023

The annual Reptile and Amphibian Expo is back and better than ever! The weekend begins with the [Pre-Expo Dinner](#) which will be held at the Grand Star Receptions & Convention Centre in Altona North on Friday 10th of March and the guest speaker will be none other than Dingo Dinkelman. For those who may not be aware of who Dingo is, he is a South African YouTuber and conservationist. The [expo itself](#) will be held on the 11th of March at the Melbourne Showgrounds, doors will open at 9am and close at 4pm. There will be a whole host of different reptiles and amphibians available and on display as well as entertainment throughout the day including presentations from experts in their respective field of herpetoculture plus face painting and jumping castles for the kids. As always there will be an end of day auction which will be well worth sticking around for!

We would just like to once again thank our sponsorship team including Critta Cam, Black Snake Productions, Yarra Reptiles, Jurassic Jungle, Smart Herp, R & E Reptiles and Rodents, Minibeast Enterprises, Exo Terra Australia, Zoo Med Australia, Going Troppo Fish and Pets, Petcover and the Unusual Pet Vets.



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