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David Meagher (1956–2023)

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Described by a leading Australian botanist as ‘Australia’s most competent bryologist’, David Meagher’s broad knowledge of Australian bryophytes was extraordinary. He was well-respected by bryologists around the world for his MSc research on the leafy liverwort genus *Bazzania*, and his PhD thesis on the bryophytes of Lord Howe Island. In the last twenty years, David published over 60 papers, most with him as the single author but several in collaboration with other Australian bryologists. He described twelve new species of *Bazzania*, including nine in Australia, two in Papua New Guinea and one in New Zealand. With colleagues he named two new moss species and reported several range extensions and new records in the Australian Wet Tropics. David’s fieldwork on flora and fauna extended to Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Lord Howe Island, the Kermadec Islands in the South Pacific, and the mid-west of the USA.

Before his untimely death, David had plans to re-publish his 2003 Field Guide to Mosses and Allied Plants of southern Australia (with naturalist and photographer, the late Bruce Fuhrer), and was soon to complete a field guide to mosses of the Australian Wet Tropics.

David was very interested in the conservation of rare and threatened bryophyte species and he was very proud of his membership of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Bryophyte Specialist Group. One of his earlier bryological communications was a short note in the *Bryological Times* announcing that the liverwort *Pseudocephalozia paludicola* had been listed as protected under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act*—an act he helped draw when working at the Environmental Protection Agency Victoria—the first bryophyte to be listed in Australia. Currently, 55 species of bryophytes are listed in Victoria, largely through David’s efforts.

David’s classical background—he learned Latin and Greek at school—sparked his interest in the etymology of scientific names, resulting in two publications on the etymology of generic names of Australian mosses, liverworts and hornworts, as well as of snakes and freshwater fish.

He was generous with his help to other bryologists, and would happily volunteer to assist with student research, especially on collecting trips. He identified numerous bryophyte specimens for herbaria, collaborated widely with bryologists around the world, and was recognised for his extensive bryological knowledge.

David was very active and well known in the Australian and New Zealand bryological community. He participated in and helped organise many of the Australian Bryophyte Workshops and was the driving force behind the establishment of the Australian Bryological Network. The pandemic put a hold on the early activities of the Network and we were just in the middle of the preparation for the first Australian Bryophyte Workshop after the pandemic and the first one organised by the Network.

Bryology was not David’s first career. He began his scientific pursuits as a physicist specialising in architectural acoustics—highlights he often mentioned were working on Hamer Hall and the David Bowie concert at the Melbourne Cricket Ground—before undertaking a post-graduate degree in editing and publishing and moving into science publishing. He was a member of the Australian Fellowship of Writers and a lecturer in editing at The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Bryophytes became David’s passion under the mentorship of the late George Scott, and he later completed his MSc and PhD, both in bryology. He became a Fellow with the University of Melbourne, an Associate with the Research Centre of Applied Alpine Ecology at LaTrobe University. He was able to combine his love for bryophytes and editing when he held the positions of editor of first the *Australian Bryological Newsletter* and then the *Bryological Times*.

David's death is a great loss to the bryological community and to his friends and family. He is survived by his partner Janine and by his three adult children, Zoe, Andrew and Alexander.

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