

p r e f a c e

There have only been two serious attempts to botanically illustrate Australian orchids with colour drawings or paintings. Both of these are long out of print, even in their facsimile editions. I am referring to R.D. Fitzgerald's opus *Australian Orchids* originally published in the 1870s, and W.H. Nicholls' landmark *Orchids of Australia* published in the 1950s. Predictably, much of the nomenclature used back then is obsolete today. By today's standards, some of these illustrations are somewhat stylised, but they have been most useful in illustrating plants from specific localities, and in Fitzgerald's case, a number of type specimens. Unfortunately localities are only given in a minority of instances and some plates depict more than one taxon.

This series of volumes will present a cross section of different orchid genera and species from various parts of Australia. It will include many of the well-known and widespread taxa as well as many that are extremely rare, some of which have only been recently discovered and described. David Jones and Mark Clements, respected botanists from the National Herbarium in Canberra, have described many of these newer species in the *Orchadian*, in the period coinciding with my editorship. These included a full botanical description, accompanied by quality line drawings and, often, colour photographs. New species continue to be described in this journal, and it is a must for those who want to keep up-to-date with the latest in the taxonomy and nomenclature of Australian orchids. Details of this periodical and the cultivation of Australian orchids can be found at the Australasian Native Orchid Society's website at www.anos.org.au.

I vividly remember my first encounters with native orchids in the wild. As a child, my father took me for bushwalks, just up the road from my grandparents'

holiday house near Greenpoint on the Central Coast of New South Wales. He pointed out numerous epiphytic species to me, including *Cymbidium suave*, *Dendrobium speciosum* and what is now known as *Dockrillia linguiformis*, all growing naturally. However, it was finding a patch of the Flying Duck Orchid, *Caleana major* that really got me in. I could not believe this was a flower. I could not believe it was real, particularly after Dad showed me how the duck's head snapped shut once touched! I was hooked. We regularly revisited our special piece of bushland, and always turned up different species throughout the year. Later that day we also found a large colony of the King Greenhood, *Pterostylis baptistii*, which decades later is still growing happily on that hillside.

Many of our indigenous epiphytic and lithophytic orchids have become popular subjects in horticulture, both here and abroad. There has been much written on their cultivation requirements, with the genera *Bulbophyllum*, *Cymbidium*, *Dendrobium*, *Dockrillia* and *Sarcophilus* being the most popular and amenable to cultivation. Sadly, many of the showy-flowered, solitary, deciduous terrestrial species from the genera *Caladenia*, *Calochilus*, *Pterostylis* and *Thelymitra* have proved difficult or impossible to maintain in cultivation. Colony-forming species have proved to be the best performers in cultivation, with many multiplying in number annually. Some native orchid groups have tuber banks to disperse excess material, and concentrate on promoting specific colony-forming and vigorous members of the genera *Chiloglottis*, *Corybas* and *Pterostylis*.

It should be remembered that all orchid species are protected and should not be collected from the wild. Hopefully most of our species are secure in national parks and designated nature reserves, yet there are still