Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens

EUCALYPT

AAFBG Newsletter No 46 May 2016

As hosts of the 2016 AAFBG biennial Conference, from 29 April – 3 May, it is with great pleasure that the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens welcome delegates from all around Australia.

The theme, 'Regional Relevance: Botanic Environments and Their Survival in a Time of Global Warming', was chosen because it is a common issue that all Botanic Gardens will have to deal with in the near future. Well known speakers such as John Arnott and Professor Tim Entwisle will be presenting at the Conference and we also have an exciting group of motivational speakers to engage on a variety of topics. Forums dealing with issues that relate to the management of Friends' groups and opportunities for members to actively participate will be of particular interest.

The Geelong area is a fascinating part of Victoria. Although well known for its beaches, there is much more diversity to be enjoyed. Within the historic Geelong CBD we have arranged an excursion into the Arts precinct, featuring a tour of the architecturally amazing new Library and Heritage Centre. Another highlight will be a visit to the prestigious Geelong Art Gallery to view an exhibition of art works from members of our School of Botanical Art. The opportunity to discover the delights of guided walks in Geelong Botanic Gardens, including a guided evening Bat Watch is sure to delight.

For participants to really experience some of the best of the Greater Geelong region three outstanding bus tours have been arranged, showcasing the diversity of botanic environments and including visits to Colac and Melton Botanic Gardens. Each tour has incorporated sights and activities that are not available to the general public. Parks Victoria rangers will lead exploration in the amazing marine environment of the Bellarine. After travelling along the world renowned Great Ocean Road we will visit Alistair Watt's internationally acclaimed private collection of conifers and other plants in the temperate rainforests of the Otways. The uniqueness of the Western Volcanic Plains will include lunch hosted by the Karen refugees using produce from their vegetable garden, and a tour of the RAMSAR site at the Melbourne Water Treatment Plant will follow.

We are looking forward to welcoming Friends groups and others who will travel to Geelong for what has been planned to be an inspiring and educational conference. Meeting other Friends groups in an informal and stimulating environment makes attending AAFBG Conferences an enjoyable and memorable experience.

The Committee, Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens

Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens

Incorporation: AOO26805Z

Patron:
Dr Philip Moors

Office bearers
Acting President: Warwick Wright, ANBG
Sec/Public Officer: Elizabeth Gilfillan, Ballarat
Treasurer: Judy Fyfe, Geelong BG

General Committee
Geraldine Davis, AALBG, Pt Augusta
John Bentley, Melton BG
Susanna Keith, Geelong BG
Robert Wright, RBG Melbourne
John Zwar, AALBG Pt Augusta

Admin Officer
Lisa Tuck, PO Box 33253, Melbourne, 3004

Address
AAFBG, PO Box 33253, Melbourne, 3004
Email: info@friendsbotanicgardens.org
Telephone: (03) 5222 8787

Website
www.friendsbotanicgardens.org
Web Managers: Wordsworth Communicating
Email: info@WordsWorthcommunicating.com

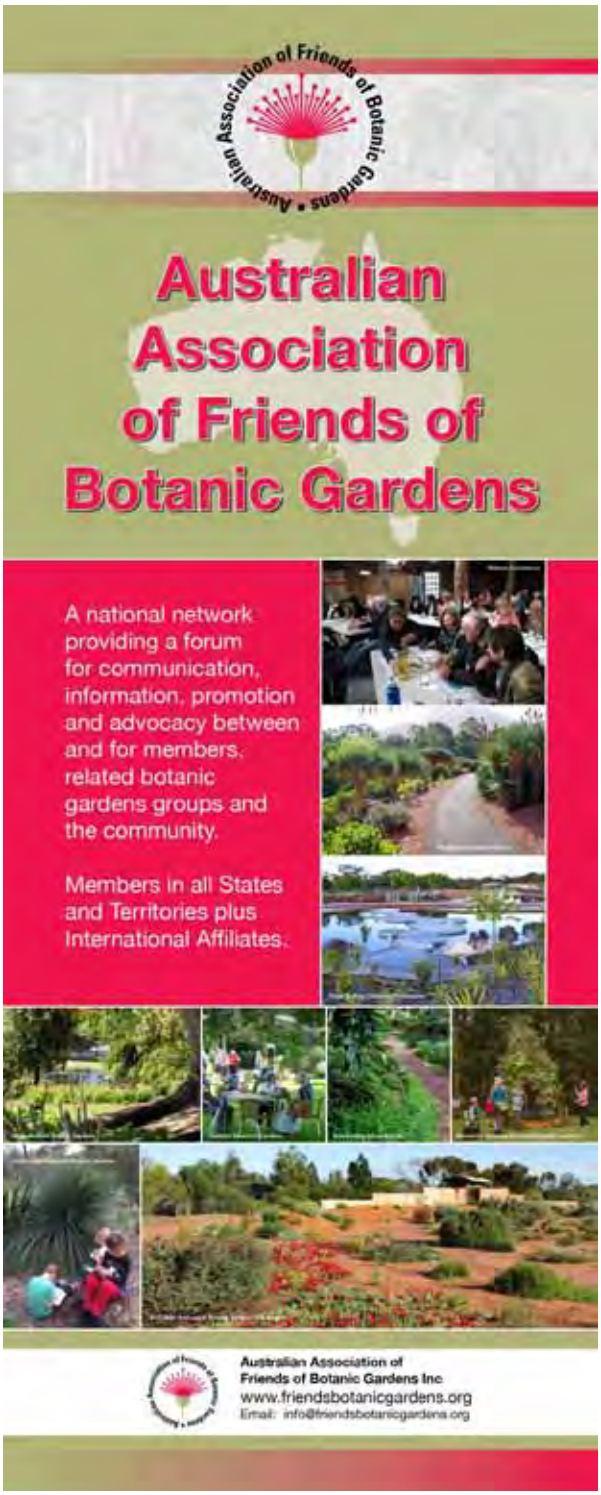
Membership
Annual Membership fees will be announced after the AGM at Geelong on Sunday 1 May.

Eucalypt is published twice a year in May and November.
Editor Anne Rawson
email: eucalyptar@gmail.com

We welcome your articles for inclusion and photographs and important calendar events. Closing dates are 30 March and 30 September approximately six weeks prior to publication.

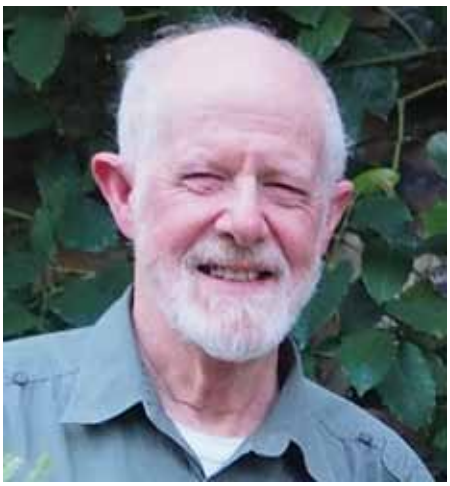
ISSN 1320-8578

Our new Banner!



From the Acting President

Warwick Wright



Up to the last year, I had used my role as Vice President to visit Friends groups in Australia and overseas with the aim of linking with the Association. This had been possible because my wife, Pat, had received many invitations to be a guest speaker and I could not let the chance go by to promote the Friends.

The resignation of Kate Heffernan, the elected President following the AAFBG Convention at the Gold Coast, left a significant void which I have tried to fill. Coming into the role of President in February 2016, it has been a challenge to change to become more administrative. However, thanks to the support of Committee and our Administrative Officer, that task has been made much easier and I thank all, especially Elizabeth Gilfillan, for their patience with me.

I welcome the appointment of Lisa Tuck this year as Administrative Officer, replacing the capable Ro Noone who goes to join her husband in the USA.

Thanks to the dedication and selflessness of the Association Committee, my part of the President's Report is thus a small one.

Highlights of the year have been:

- welcoming new member groups
- generous financial donations from Doctor Handbury
- proposed addition of Environmental Awareness and Environment Education to the aims of the Association
- continued outreach and development of general awareness of the environmental, educational and aesthetic benefits of Botanic Gardens
- the active role of so many volunteers who give of their invaluable time and abilities to make the aims of the Association possible.

On the down side, we have lost several long serving stalwarts for various reasons and give personal thanks for their contribution to the Association. As well, at this meeting we reluctantly say farewell to retiring members of the Committee who will all continue to work with their own Botanic Gardens in the many and varied roles of volunteers in those gardens. I too say farewell after 20 years.

Warwick Wright
Life Member of the Australian National Botanic Gardens

From the Past President

Kate Heffernan

Settling into the role as national President of Friends from August 2014 was only possible through the incredible support and invaluable experience of long serving members of the committee. The many achievements of the newly named Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens can be attributed to the commitment and enthusiasm of all who served on the committee.

Logistically, organising and confirming actions of a committee spread widely across several states is difficult. It takes the cooperation and confidence of all of the committee for actions, sometimes necessarily led by just a few committee members. With the increased volume of work resulting from greater membership numbers, it may be timely for the committee to consider meeting via teleconference, bi-monthly at minimum, to expedite decisions and actions. The levels of email correspondence can become onerous between meetings and some members realistically have other commitments.

I enjoyed being able to Chair a meeting in person in September 2015 at Geelong, and see first-hand the great conference venue and meet the hard working Geelong organisers. I was able to call in at a number of regional Botanic Gardens on the drive to and from Geelong: Ballarat, Albury, Melton, Wombat Hill, Wilson, Orange, Dubbo, Coffs Harbour, Tamworth and the Australian Garden Cranbourne. Following Alan's and my couple of months in Scotland and England, with numerous visits to Botanic Gardens, it was an all round exciting and inspiring year!

I was disappointed to resign from the role of President in January, before my full tenure was complete. The whole of AAFBG are indebted to Warwick Wright for stepping into the role and to Elizabeth Gilfillan for her untiring commitment to the Association before and through the transition.

Just some of what I believe were highlights of the 2014 – 2016 Committee, and many more can be seen on other reports. Firstly, the transition from AFBG to AAFBG and the ensuing changes to logos, newsletters and promotional materials; the immense volume of correspondence, reviews and exchange of ideas leading to the selection of an outstanding AAFBG identify; thanks to Elizabeth for setting the momentum and for all the committee for maintaining it! Other highlights include:

- Welcoming AAFBG Patron Dr Philip Moors – a wealth of experience helping guide the AAFBG.
- The ongoing commitment and generosity of Dr Geoffrey Hanbdury, who again donated significant funds to AAFBG.
- Gradual progress towards an application for Deductible Gift Recipient Status, initiated by the 2012–2014 committee with guidance provided by past Secretary Annie McGeachy's research.
- The work of Anne Rawson in editing and compiling the Newsletter – now aptly renamed *Eucalypt*. Fabulous.
- Amended Friends Information Kit – the completion of this has been important to new AAFBG members.

- The opportunities the AAFBG offer members for exchange of ideas. Examples are Maroochy who sought information of other Friends Facebook experiences and Brisbane for seeking guidance in setting up their Friends.
- Confirming the work done at BGCI Congress Dunedin and establishing overseas affiliate membership of RBG Edinburgh, Kirstenbosch South Africa and Thurston Botanic Gardens Suva.
- New AAFBG memberships including Brisbane Botanic Gardens and Sherwood Arboretum, and Dubbo Regional Botanic Gardens.
- AAFBG representation at the BGANZ Congress in Wollongong. Thanks to John Bentley presenting, and my apologies for withdrawing. Only the impending arrival of a grandson kept me away! The committee's decision to seek applications for a one-off small grant for projects which benefit their Gardens. I know there are many Gardens where a grant would be a great benefit.

New committee members were welcomed throughout the past two years and we also said goodbye to a couple of highly regarded people.

- Lorna Downey contributed her experience and expertise and has given AAFBG a legacy of a useful document on grant funding and sponsorship.
- It took some months to replace long-standing Treasurer KarleneTaylor who retired at the 2014 Conference. Judy Fyfe, treasurer from Geelong, took on the dual roles.
- Susanna Keith from Geelong and Robert Wright from Melbourne were also welcomed into the committee.
- Lisa Tuck has successfully stepped into the role of Administration Officer, made vacant with Rosemary Noone's move to New York. Two excellent professionals – how fortunate AAFBG are to have the benefit of each of their skill, hard work, commitment and friendship.
- Judith Trimble retired from AAFBG and Geelong Friends in June 2015, and has been greatly missed.

I look forward to hearing the new representatives for Friends after the Conference, having learned there are a number of the current committee who recently indicated they will not re-stand, and several others opting to retire early. To each of them I say thanks for your partnership and commitment to the ideals of AAFBG. Diversity of ideas and opinion has led to many sound outcomes for AAFBG. Together with the ongoing relationship forged between AAFBG and BGANZ the future for our Botanic Gardens can become even more secure into the future.

There have been a number of significant awards to individuals and to Botanic Gardens through this year. Our committee members John and Geraldine from Australian Aridlands are inspiring and the success of their Gardens in SA Ecotourism Awards this year is a well-earned acknowledgement for many years of selfless dedication. Congratulations to all award recipients, including national and local individual Australia Day Awards. It's inspiring to see recognition of dedication and hard work. Celebrate them all at the Conference. More information on award recipients is in Elizabeth's report.

Personal thanks to all, in particular Elizabeth for guidance, friendship and unwavering commitment to her responsibilities, and to Warwick for assuming his new role. I recall strongly and fondly some valuable words from Warwick spoken at a meeting where we were bogged down with administration and governance – 'remember it's about people and plants'.

Thank you,

Secretary's Report

Elizabeth Gilfillan

It has been a year of many changes. By now you will all be familiar with the AAFBG logo and fresh look *Eucalypt*. Production of the new promotional banner (see page 2) has been a most enjoyable task, providing many chats with Friends, and I would like to thank all those who have submitted images. The banner will be on display at the Conference, which is going to be very informative and a great opportunity to meet new Friends.

Goodbye and best wishes to Ro Noone who is now settled in New York for twelve months, with husband Ron and daughter Sarah. We welcome Lisa Tuck as the Administrative Officer who has made herself known to all and working hard, getting to know Friends and AAFBG very quickly.

It was very disappointing to lose Kate Heffernan as our President. I would like to thank Kate for her valued contribution and cheerful guidance; we miss her and wish Kate and Alan well in their new home and changed lifestyles. Warwick Wright has ably stepped up to the helm as President, leading with his warm inclusive nature we are most grateful to Warwick who is retiring at the AGM. We thank him for his contribution and friendship over the last outstanding 20 years.

Last year I discussed with Lorna Downey the possibilities of further grant funding initiatives that AAFBG may be able to investigate. Lorna is experienced in this area and has prepared a paper outlining the proposal, but unfortunately Lorna has also resigned as a committee member. She too will be missed but hopefully her proposal will be adopted by the incoming committee. We thank Lorna for her contribution over the last twelve months and wish her well.

Gift status and registration as an Environmental Organisation has not yet occurred, but we will discuss this at the AGM to decide if AAFBG needs to pursue this. AAFBG is currently registered as a Charitable Organisation. In the AGM Agenda you will be asked to approve two additions to the AAFBG Purposes: as an organisation which promotes environmental awareness; and supports environmental education. This will enable the AAFBG to further pursue its aims.

The third Handbury Gift donation of $10,000 is due in May and the last will be arrive in 2017. Sincere thanks to Dr Geoffrey Handbury for this generous contribution to AAFBG. Dr Handbury is a great supporter of botanical and environmental endeavours

It recently became evident that the Association should take out its own insurance cover. After some consultation it was decided to use one of the garden-oriented organisations, Garden Clubs Australia, which is underwritten by Lloyds of London. It was necessary to become affiliated with GCA as a member which gives both organisations mutual benefit.

Congratulations to Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, winner of Ecotourism Award 2015 by South Australian Tourism Industry Council, and our best wishes to AALBG as finalists in the Australian Tourism Award. The next AGM will see the retirement of the two AALBG representatives on committee. Most will recall the wonderful conference held in Port Augusta in 2012 when John Zwar and Geraldine Davis were welcomed to committee. They have both made great contribution to the AAFBG and we thank them sincerely, wish them well and look forward to continued news from AALBG.

Camperdown Friends have had a concerning and time-consuming year with the threat of commercial development within the historic Gardens landscape. The AAFBG committee have supported their efforts. Read more in this issue. And welcome to new member Redcliffe Botanic Gardens; looking forward to hearing more news. You can read their introduction in this issue.

On 18 March I was privileged to be invited as an observer at the first meeting since formation of the Australian Garden Council. This official body represents gardening and horticulture on the National Agenda of Federal Parliament. The Council will raise awareness and promote the significance of gardening to human life and wellbeing. See report on page 9.

This will be my last report as your AAFBG Secretary. It has been an honour and pleasure to serve in this role over almost two years, which have given me the opportunity to connect and make friends with many members, as well as learn of the great work of all the Gardens and the contribution they make to their communities. After nine years on committee, I have been re-nominated by Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens as a committee member for AAFBG and will look forward to continue in that capacity.

Thanks to all members for their support and contribution to our vitally important peak body of Friends in Botanic Gardens.

Gilfillan travels to foreign botanic gardens

Left: Sign in the Athens' Gardens. Right: the Curator of Nezahar Gokyigit Botanic Garden in Istanbul. Photos by Tim Gilfillan.

During a five week break in October my husband Tim and I had the great pleasure of visiting some interesting international Botanic Gardens. The Jan Sbil Botanic Garden in Fez, Morocco, operates with very limited resources and was a 'gift from the King'. It has little prospect of professional staff succession as the aged, dedicated staff manage to keep it going. We had a long chat with the Director who highlighted similar circumstances to those we experience here. He had been to the BGCI conference in Dunedin.

In the Garden there are palms, Eucalypts, willows, citrus, Bamboo Washington Filifera, *Cycas revolta* the mythic Argan trees, and it also boasts a 300 year old *Quercus rotundifolia*. The Garden is fed by the 'Oued Al Jawahir', the river of jewels, or the Fez River which emanates from the Atlas Mountains. Fez was one of the first cities in the world to build a water distribution network which enabled the city to develop the art of gardening. In Arabo-Andalousian culture the garden is a major element of balance in lifestyle.

In Istanbul we visited the wonderful Nezahat Gokyigit Botanic Garden, created on wasteland under freeway overpasses, the bequest of a generous, passionate businessman, to preserve and demonstrate the crucial importance of plant diversity, and to promote education. The most striking indicator of this diversity is that a new plant species is discovered in Turkey on average every 10 days. We were given a tour by the dedicated Curator, Professor Adil Gunner, who was at work on Sunday morning to have meetings with colleagues. He also had been a delegate at the Dunedin BGCI Congress.

We also visited Barcelona's small Garden with its very limited staff, but with a dedicated Friends group which plays a major role in the activities of these Gardens. In Athens the Garden was well cared for, with limited information, but a good children's education program. A children's cottage with a full time teacher, supporting programs and welcoming 'drop in' parents and grandparents with their children who can attend free activities. Visiting botanic gardens is always enlightening and a great way to gain insight into the culture of the area, highlighting the important role of community Friends groups in promoting and advocating for our botanic gardens.

Administrative Officer's Report

Lisa Tuck

Dear Members

It has been an incredibly busy start to my recent appointment as the new Administrative Officer for the Association!

I must thank the Executive Committee for their encouragement and Ro Noone, who left the Association in wonderful order. Ro was obviously very meticulous and thorough with her work, which has made the change over very streamlined. I'm certain everyone misses her involvement on a daily basis and we wish her well in her future endeavours overseas.

For those who don't know me, I am still currently Chair of the Australian Garden History Society (Vic. Branch) until I retire from the position in August 2016. The voluntary work I have experienced has given me the perfect background for my new role.

I am amazed when I read the newsletters sent in, how varied groups are and how hard volunteers work. Even the quality of the newsletters is very impressive so please keep sending them in so I can share them by email. Friends groups play a vital role in local communities and breathe so much life into these special places.

Thank you to all those members who have renewed their subscriptions. There are still outstanding subscriptions so I encourage those who haven't paid to finalise their membership, to assist the operations of the Association. Thank you also for returning the volunteer hours forms. This information will be collated and distributed in due course.

I look forward to assisting the AAFBG Committee in all aspects of administration and supporting groups as much as possible. If you have any new ideas on how the Association can help your group, please don't hesitate to email or phone me.

I look forward to meeting you!

Lisa Tuck

Birth of the Australian Garden Council

Graham Ross VMM, MAIH,
Founder and Board Member

'Would Graham say something important?' I've been asked to present talks and lectures on many different things in the last 45 years but this was an unusual request. I had accepted a guest speakership for an event in November 2014, in the NSW Blue Mountains' Blackheath Rhododendron Gardens, and numbers had passed the expected 50 to nearly 200, with 150 having to stand outside for the presentation, hence their request. It didn't take me long to focus on what was 'important'; clearly it was the dire state gardening was in across the nation. I had tried at different meetings to discuss the situation but I had no takers. It had become the 'elephant in the gardening room'.

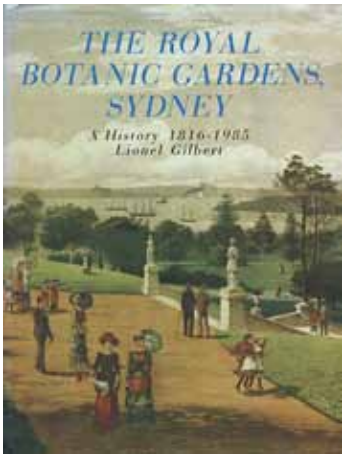
Campbell's Rhododendron Garden, Blackheath. From www.rhodogarden.org.au.

My assessment was from a broad-based concern:

- Australia was experiencing the lowest standard of horticultural training since education began at the School of Arts in Sydney with Thomas Shepherd in 1836.
- Apprentices in training, the future of the industry, were at their lowest numbers in nurseries, landscapers and parks and gardens, in 40 years.
- Open Gardens Australia suddenly closed having generated $6 million, leaving nearly 20,000 garden owners without an avenue to share their dedication and passion.
- National garden shows, festivals and expos being organised without any coordination, leading to some being held on the same weekend.
- Garden clubs across the country needing inter-generational support, with many closing after 80 years, as membership 'greyed', losing a valuable knowledge and experience base.
- Publication of Northern Hemisphere garden tourism numbers listed as 300 million but Australia attracting less than 2-3%, impacting on garden tourism related employment, horticultural industry growth, plant breeding opportunities and the survival of historic, unique and valued heritage gardens.
- Australia's magnificent Botanic Gardens facing increased financial pressure and government interference.
- The closure of 35% of garden centres nationally, reducing home owners' access to plants and reducing the community gardening participation rate.
- School children moving from the 'green and friendly' environment of primary school to a ' black and bleak' atmosphere in secondary high school, discouraging employment chances and discouraging a gardening fraternity from a young age.

I had much to focus on and more.

Australia's gardening history dates from four days after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. By 1789 we had established public and private gardens; by 1816 our first botanic garden; by1830 we had sophisticated plant nurseries propagating and retailing plants from around the world. In 1836 our first formal horticulture classes were being taught and by 1851 the rose and flower filled front garden and veggie backyards were being established across 'tent cities' in the gold fields and the capital city suburbs. Garden and horticultural societies flourished and ornamental plants were exhibited at the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879 with 1,045,898 visitors attending the fledgling colony's event. By the end of the nineteenth century gardening and ornamental horticulture were an integral part of the fabric of commerce, government and society.



Macquarie Street looking towards 'Garden Palace' at the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879. Powerhouse Museum Registration number 91/1323-3

That growth continued into the 20th century after the two World Wars with Australian cities becoming the world's biggest urban communities. The decade of the 1970s saw an explosion in gardening participation with native plant societies, horticultural student numbers, nurseries and garden centres quadrupling.

But everything went pear-shaped in the 21st century as I've outlined above. It was now time for state and federal governments to support Australians to get back into gardening and horticulture.

The social, health and wellbeing benefits to the Australian community cannot be ignored, with an increased gardening public. When added to the reduction in Medicare expenses it is very significant with the many economic, financial, educational and unique enterprise innovations ready to be created by actively pursuing a national ornamental horticulture agenda.

From early in 2014 I had also identified the problem was a recognition factor, for pure gardening as 'horticulture' had been 'kidnapped' by the commercial fruit, vegetable, nut, plant and tree industries, by grower owned companies with direct access to the relevant Minister. Nothing wrong with that *per se* but real gardening wasn't keeping up with the political game and we were seriously losing out. I believe all the myriad of garden and ornamental horticulture organisations had seriously dropped the ball.

A surprise attendee at the2014 Blackheath presentation was Louise Markus MP, Federal Member for the electorate of Macquarie. It was Ms. Markus who saw the need to 'tell Canberra of the dire straits of Australian gardening' and several months later persuaded me to submit a major Discussion Paper to Andrew Robb, Minister for Trade and Investment, on 24 June 2015.

Understanding the importance of the document, I spent the next seven months speaking informally with over fifty leaders across the Australian horticulture and gardening communities to gain their perspective and knowledge. It wasn't until a few weeks before the Canberra meeting that I realised I would need to include in my summary clear objectives to improve the problems I had identified. The 22 goals could be grouped generally into:

1. improving the standard of professional gardening and horticulture training
2. engaging with secondary students, inspiring gardening as a lifestyle and horticulture as a career
3. supporting garden clubs, the community and governments to re-engage and nurture gardening
4. assisting industry and governments to actively encourage international garden tourism events.

The Trade Minister's senior advisors strongly recommended setting up a formal group that government could talk with, so the concept of a garden council was formed, and again Ms. Markus offered support and advice from Parliament House with a launch proposed in November 2015 for the organisation.

That turned out to be the easy part. I had just four months to research such a body, register the business, contact possible members, write a full business plan and constitution, and establish a non-for-profit charity. From the 50 or so people I approached 12 accepted the role of director of the council.

On 24 November the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, joined with the Board at the launch of the Australian Garden Council in Parliament House. Joining him was Senator Richard Colbeck, Minister for Tourism, Ms. Markus MP, Philip Ruddock, 'Father of the House' who had been instrumental in behind the scenes advising the AGC, and Senior Parliamentary Advisors to Senator Simon Birmingham, the Minister for Education and Greg Hunt, Minister for the Environment, plus other MPs. A meeting was also held with Senator Anne Ruston, the new Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.

On 25 November Ms. Louise Markus announced, in the House of Representatives, the launch the previous day of the Australian Garden Council, and stated its aims and objectives. I was later told this was the first time Hansard had recorded the words 'garden' or 'gardening' for at least 26 years.

The AGC is now seeking funding from governments, industry and the community to further the important cause of gardening in Australia. The dynamic Board are about to launch a dedicated website, working with Young Horts Australia, and getting on with the enormous but exciting task ahead.

Board Members of the Australian Garden Council.
The following is a list of Board Members, not as shown in the photo: Graham Ross VMM, Jim Mitchell, Mick Conway, John Robb, Robert Reynolds, Kent Ross, Professor Tim Entwisle, Penny Fowler, David Glenn, John Mason FAIH, Lawrence Smith AM, Colin Barlow, Trevor Nottle, Anthony Vander Staay.

Federal Member for Macquarie, Hon. Louise Markus, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnball, Kate Grace the 2013 AIH Youth Award winner, with Graham Ross.

AAFBG committee members honoured

How fortunate are our Association members that we have had these people contribute to the leadership of AAFBG over many years!

1988 John Zwar OAM

For service to community in the Environmental area. John first initiated the idea of an Outback Botanic Garden in 1981, there were to be numerous challenges to overcome before eventual creation of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden in 1996. John was Friends founder in 1984 and he has served AAFBG as committee member for six years.

2009 Jayne Salmon OAM

For services to Geelong through the Geelong Botanic Gardens, long standing President of Geelong Friends. AFBG committee member 1993/4 & 2002/3 and champion of the cause of Botanic Gardens and Friends groups.

2015 Joan Garner OAM

For service to the community through the conservation and preservation of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Joan served AFBG as President 2003 and IPP 2004 during the transformation of AFBG to a National Body.

2016 Annette (Annie) McGeachy OAM

For service to conservation and the environment, particularly to Botanic Gardens. Committee member for Friends of Geelong, 1993 – 2003. Annie served AAFBG committee 2004-2014 and as tireless Secretary for seven years.

2016 Janet Thomson OAM

For service to the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne through a range of roles. FRBGM member 1991, Council member 1999/2014 and RBGM Trust Fund, Trustee 2011- Janet served AAFBG as committee member for nine years and as President 2011-12

Gifts to the Gardens

Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens Canberra, ACT

This is really ANBG news, but the Friends are very excited about it! The Ian Potter Foundation has donated $1.5 million, matching the Commonwealth Government's funding, to build a new Conservatory. The Gardens are now seeking expressions of interest to design the $3 million Ian Potter National Conservatory. The Gardens has already started work on preparing plants that will move into the Conservatory from the Tropical Glasshouse, which is now closed to the public.

The Friends Public Fund has also been making gifts to the Gardens. In January the Aboriginal Plant Use Trail was opened by Ngunnawal Elder, Aunty Agnes Shea. This trail consists of 27 interpretative signs on plants that were used by Aboriginal people for food, medicine and fibre. The plants include Quandong, Lemon Myrtle, Plum Pine, Grass trees, Spiny Mat Rush and Geebung.

Every year the Friends Botanic Art Groups display their beautiful paintings, of plants from the Gardens, in the Gallery at the Gardens, and every year the Friends select two paintings to donate to the Gardens. This year the paintings are a black and white scratchboard called 'Lace leaf' *Brachychiton acerfolius* (Illawarra Flame Tree) by Marjorie Roche and the watercolour of *Callistemon pinifolia* by Vivien Pinder.

Back in February 2015 the Friends Public Art Steering Committee met with Pamille Berg, public art consultant, to discuss the role of art in a botanic garden. That meeting focused on the possibility of the Friends commissioning an artist to design and install an imaginative tree house/elevated gazebo structure in the Gardens. As a result expressions of interest were sought and 34 were received for the design of such a structure for the Melaleuca Swamp. These were then whittled down to four artists who have now been asked to submit detailed designs.

Over the summer the Friends were heavily involved in another season of Summer Sounds concerts in the Gardens. Eight concerts were programmed over four weekends in January and February, and only one was cancelled because of rain. About 6,600 Canberrans (and their visitors) attended the concerts and the Friends collected just over $21,000 from entry fees, half of which went to pay for the bands and sound systems. The remaining funds will be used by the Friends to support the Gardens in a variety of areas.

In March this year the Gardens again joined Canberra's major event, Enlighten, and over two weekends lit up the Gardens for *Luminous Botanicus II*. The Friends' Guides assisted visitors as they wandered through the magically lit Gardens and listened to music from small groups hidden among the foliage.

Anne Rawson

Captions from top: *Angiopteris evecta* King Fern in the Tropical Glasshouse (Photo by Murray Fagg). Aunty Agnes Shea and Barbara Podger, Chair of the Friends Public Fund, at the opening of the Aboriginal Plant Use Trail (photo from the ABC). *Callistemon pinifolia* by Vivien Pinder. Melaleuca Swamp (Photo by David Cox).

An inspiring new Fernery in Ballarat

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens
Ballarat, Victoria

Old Fernery

Existing fernery. Traveller photo byThe Tessa from www.tripadvisor.com.au.

The Ballarat Gardens are getting a new Fernery and the redevelopment was officially launched by the Friends on 4 March. Invited guests saw and heard about this significant development while enjoying savouries and drinks informally in the Gardens.

For 131 years a fernery featuring a unique structure and botanic collection stood at the southern end of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. With continued exposure to all weather, the structure deteriorated and was closed in early 2013. With the tremendous support from the City of Ballarat, with a $1.4 million grant, a tender process for the new development was undertaken, and a fundraising campaign is now underway.

According to Elizabeth Gilfillan, the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Redevelopment Convener, this new development will really broaden the focus of the Botanical Gardens to highlight sustainability, increased awareness of the environment and education of how important gardens and living plants and trees are to our health and wellbeing.

'The project will help from a tourism perspective as well', she said. 'Garden tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism activities in the world. At a recent conference in Australia, Andrew Benfield, chair of the International Garden Tourism Association, noted that in the US, gardens attract more visitors than Disneyland worldwide. Garden tourists are also interested in the food, heritage and culture of the area.'

Andrew Laidlaw of Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design has been appointed as the landscape architect and his plan and vision was on display at the launch. 'Fernery structures on a very grand scale were common in 19th century gardens and Ballarat Botanical Gardens is fortunate to be one of the few which will revive this tradition. These structures were not just about housing plants, they were about providing an overall experience for the visitors. Often the structures were architecturally exciting and a strong focal point in the landscape. Together the architecture and plants created the experience. We are very honoured to be part of the redevelopment of Ballarat's Fernery and believe we can create a wild and inspiring space which excites people of all walks of life about plants,' Andrew said.

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens Trust Fund is now undertaking a public fundraising campaign, with tax deductible donations from individuals and organisations welcome.

From the Media release by Wendy Taylor

Irreconcilable differences

Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Trust Camperdown, Victoria

On the right-hand edge of the photo to the right you can see a small tree. It's *Melicytus ramiflorus*, the New Zealand Whiteywood. This one was propagated from an old specimen at the nearby historic Purrumbete homestead. It's one of many interesting trees in the collection of our Botanic Garden, but it's unlabelled and unnoticed.

Priority in the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum is being given not to plants and trees, but to a caravan park. It has been allowed to overtake the entrance and 3.5 hectares of this State-heritage-listed site. The 1.2-hectare fenced Botanic Garden, originally designed as an ornamental garden or 'floral enclosure' within a large park, is now sitting at the end of a driveway lined with randomly parked vehicles.

The local council is intent on developing this incompatible business in our historic public park. They have leased it to a private operator who is keen to add more cabins and more amenities, including a jumping pillow and swimming pool. To add insult to injury, the in-ground pool is planned in a shamrock shape to resemble the lake in the volcanic landscape the business overlooks.

The Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Trust is opposing the development. This is a special place. The Botanic Garden and Arboretum with their magnificent old trees and connections with 19th century garden makers, Daniel Bunce and William Guilfoyle, sit on a high ridge with spectacular views over two crater lakes and the volcanic plains and ancient scoria cones of the Western District. Camping occurred here as far back as the 1930s and a caravan park was established by the 60s. Transient holiday-makers might have been tolerated at the time, but a holiday park today, with its focus on a commercial star rating, is a different matter. The ambience of the park is already degraded by traffic, vans, boats and tents, banners, speed humps, concrete slabs, clothes lines, random signs, fire safety equipment and power poles, not to mention the personal household paraphernalia of 'permanents', and the faux Victoriana Brunswick green lamps that somehow bypassed heritage controls to become a ludicrous feature of the modern steel security gate.

A local garden contractor stopped for a chat in the street the other day. He asked me: 'So, how's it going at the Gardens?' I replied that we were keeping up our objection to the caravan park development. 'Good on you', he said. 'But I must say, I never go there any more. It's all been ruined. It's just too depressing to see what's happening.'

It would be easy to be discouraged, but we have added 30 more species of New Zealand plants to the Purrumbete *Melicytus*, started a collection of Canary Island flora and planted 40 new trees in the Arboretum where cattle currently graze. A Conservation Management Plan is finally under way and we will persist in our efforts to conserve and improve the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum.

Janet O'Hehir, Secretary

Frustrations, trials and elations

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden West of Melbourne, Victoria

March 2015 marked the beginning of planting the first species in the trial beds of the Southern African Garden section. The landscape design planting plan for the trial beds specified 29 species including trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, bulbs and succulents. Scrutinising weed lists to ensure that proposed species will not pose a threat to native Australian vegetation has been part and parcel of the process of planning the entire Southern African section. Now, one year later, we can report that we have encountered some frustrations and trials, as well as some heart-warming successes.

Frustrations include the seemingly impossible task of sourcing a number of the proposed species in Australia, such as *Felicia elongata* (Tricolour felicia) which has a limited distribution in South Africa, and *Bulbine frutescens* (Cat's tail) which grow in abundance in South Africa.

Due to the exceptionally harsh winter that we experienced, many of the newly planted species were frost-bitten! Despite all our efforts to cover plants with frost protection cloth some did not survive. Among those worst affected were *Erythrina caffra*, *Dais cotinifolia*, *Carissa macrocarpa*, *Aloe tenuior*, *Plectranthus* 'Mona Lavender', and *Pelargonium tomentosum*. Although some plants are lost forever, a number of them have sprouted again and are currently making a lovely display. Best performers during the winter were *Helichrysum petiolare*, *Leonotis leonurus*, *Plumbago auriculata*, *Leucospermum cordifolium*, *Pelargonium sidoides* and *P. reniforme*. Hardiest of all seems to be *Tulbaghia violacea* – they flower non-stop.

Towards the end of a frosty winter, another trial arrived in the form of caterpillars, namely larvae of the pasture day moth. They seemed to savour the *Geranium incanum* plants, which prompted us to do regular caterpillar patrols. The current drought is also taking its toll. The rainfall in Melton has been minimal and is well below the norm. This is keeping the Work Experience Activity Team busy as they do regular hand watering.

In a previous article we reported on the five trial beds with different ratios of compost. It is now evident, after one year, that certain species are averse to excess compost. All of the Proteaceae species are growing well in the beds with a lower ratio of compost (10-20%). Those planted in the beds with a higher ratio have died! Some other species are also not responding well to the higher ratio, such as *Helichrysum petiolare*.

We would like to highlight two sources of elation, firstly the plants. The *Kumara plicatilis* (Fan aloe) planted late last year surprised us by flowering now! *Leonotis leonurus* (Lion's ear) and *Plumbago auriculata* are currently flowering profusely.

The second source of excitement in the latter part of 2015 was looking forward to the landscaping and construction of the main, larger area of the Southern African garden. The plan is to establish a canopy before planting shrubs and groundcovers. Trees planted at this stage are *Calodendrum capense*, *Cussonia spicata* and *Schotia brachypetala*. The raised beds for succulents and Proteaceae are close to completion. The first five succulent trees, *Aloidendron barberae*, are planted and these will soon be followed by many more succulents including many Aloe species.

Steve and Ella Parker

Steve Parker and John Bentley planting one of four *Cussonia spicata* donated by the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Melbourne.

Plant-ing the future at Noosa

Friends of Noosa Botanic Gardens
Noosa, Queensland

Paul Plant, President of the Friends of Noosa Botanic Gardens.

It's that time of the year when organisations are having their AGMs and electing their new office bearers for 2016. One local Noosa group has certainly found an appropriate match between their activities and the name of their new President.

Horticulturalist and regional ABC radio gardening presenter, Paul Plant, has been elected as the 2016 President of the Friends of the Noosa Botanic Gardens. Paul is also the Editor and owner of the gardening magazine, *Sub Tropical Gardening*, on the Steering Committee for the recently established Friends of Brisbane Botanic Gardens, and an active member of the Friends of Noosa Botanic Gardens.

'I plan to proceed into 2016 with all the gusto and energy created over the past year by the Friends Committee, Garden Maintenance and Guides teams and all the volunteers,' said Paul on accepting the nomination. 'My aim is to complete current projects; repeat flagship events such as the Father's Day Plant Fair and develop new projects in conjunction with Noosa Council and its Noosa Botanic Gardens team.'

Paul made particular reference to implementing a 'Living Collection Policy'; a plant database and planning tool existing in other Botanic Gardens in Australia. 'This document will provide guidelines on what and how to incorporate new plantings and how to protect and enhance identified "significant" collection species.'

'2016 shall be a year of both consolidation and growth – particularly in encouraging new members with fresh ideas to assist both in the Gardens maintenance and as guides as well as for our varied musical and other events.' For further information email: FNBGsecretary@gmail.com

Christine Pritchard, Communications Co-ordinator

The Richard Niven Meadow

Friends of Orange Botanic Gardens
Orange, New South Wales

The Friends have linked in to the popular FOOD Week in Orange in April to present three functions focussed on the food-related art of Charlotte Thodey. An exhibition of Charlotte's paintings of fruit and vegetables, 'A Visual Feast' will run from 9 to 17 April in the Botanic Room at Orange Botanic Gardens. Charlotte will also present a two-day Still Life Painting Workshop on 12 to 13 April and this is already (late March) nearly fully booked. Towards the end of the week Charlotte will present the next in our series of Cultivated Chats on 15 April entitled 'Ways of Seeing: From Potager to Painting'. The week's activities are being jointly promoted by the Friends of Orange Botanic Gardens, Food of Orange District (FOOD) and Taste Orange.

Former President of the Friends, Dick Niven, has been honoured by Orange City Council by having the main open grassed area of Orange Botanic Gardens named the Richard Niven Meadow. Dick is also a former popular mayor of Orange and the Niven family is historically linked with the Gardens through its previous identity as Clover Hill Farm. A sign bearing the name of the new meadow was unveiled by Dick on 8 March after speeches outlining his contribution to Orange and to the Gardens by the current Mayor of Orange, Cr John Davis, and fellow councillors Reg Kidd and Neil Jones. The occasion was also attended by members of the Friends of Orange Botanic Gardens and staff of the Council associated with the parks and gardens of this beautiful city.

Murray Fletcher

Dick Niven (left) is congratulated at the unveiling of the naming of the Richard Niven Meadow by Orange City Councillor Reg Kidd, who is also a long term member of the Friends.

From cattle grazing to Botanic Gardens

Friends of the Redcliffe Botanic Gardens
Redcliffe, Queensland

A grant by the Gough Whitlam federal government provided money to build an education centre. The state government provided a small portion of land they owned slap bang in the centre of Redcliffe, Queensland. A partnership with the local Society for Growing Australian Plants group saw a nature trail developed in uncleared bushland surrounding the Centre. An innocuous letter to the state government of the day in 1986 asked for the remaining land now totalling 10 ha to be made available for the further development of the nature trail area.

The request was approved and the rest is history – a lot of history – as the area changed hands between the state and local governments on the basis that the land was to be used for educational purposes. Under the state government, the area was part of the State Environmental Education Centre network. Under the Moreton Bay Regional Council, it is a botanic garden.

Over time, a set of ecosystems has been developed to show visitors the unique flora of south-east Queensland. The Redcliffe Botanic Gardens, given its size, is a boutique botanic gardens where the emphasis is on showing a 'natural' ecosystem. It may look a little untidy to some but to the volunteers – almost 50 of them – it is a place where people can view the plant communities once found in this part of Queensland in close to their natural state. There is even the occasional scrub turkey!

In addition to the local plant communities of rainforest, Eucalypt forest, Wallum vegetation and native Redcliffe plant communities, the Gardens also has two areas dedicated to plants not native to south-east Queensland – the Herb Garden and the Permaculture Garden – where visitors can see and learn about useful plants from other parts of the world.

Bludging under the fig tree; Playing with pots; Permaculture makeover. All in an amazing location in the centre of a major city where the sounds of the real world are rarely heard (except for the whistle which calls volunteers in for morning tea.). Photos by Stephen Hill.

The FRBG team is excited at the moment as in the next few weeks a new headquarters is being constructed and after that, it is not long to our annual event, *What's Cooking in the Gardens?* held on the first Sunday in August each year.

The Gardens are open from sun-up to sundown year round; they are wheel-chair friendly with toilets and a BBQ area available. The FRBG team looks forward to meeting with visitors from other botanic gardens. Our best contact point at the moment is friendsofrbg@hotmail.com. Find us easily in our nursery, provided originally by a Greening Australia grant and recently extensively refurbished by the Moreton Bay Regional Council who also provide a permanent groundsman.

David Lergessner, President

Melbourne Gardens re-named

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne
Melbourne, Victoria

The Plant Craft Cottage – the oldest building in any public garden in Victoria – is a wonderful source of inspiration. Visitors can watch how skilled crafts people use plant materials to make baskets, natural dyes, fibre and other useful, beautiful objects. Friends members are welcome to join these classes. A wide range of hand-crafted items is for sale.

A paper book (above) and an Anzac tribute (right), both created at the Gardens Plant Craft Cottage.
Photos by Jean Walker

On Fridays, green-fingered Growing Friends coax seeds and cuttings from our Botanic Gardens into flourishing plants. In turn, these raise money for the Gardens – $25,000 changed hands at our two-day spring plant sale last October. We are hoping for a similar success in April.

Our artist members are being offered a broader scope for the biennial exhibition in November. In addition to traditional botanical illustration, work in any medium may be of innovative composition, a change reflected in the new title: *The Art of Botanical Illustration – A New Direction*. Meanwhile beginners' workshops and classes for artists of varying skills and experience continue throughout the year. Many members of the Whirlybirds, founded in the 1980s, are still painting together on Tuesdays in the Whirling Room Studio.

The Friends program of illustrated talks, guided walks, garden visits, accounts of famous overseas gardens and rare plants is always rewarding. An evening of bird-spotting and a talk by a grower revealing the wonders of hemp, its uses, benefits and potential, were part of recent well-attended events. A perennial favourite, a trip on the Maribyrnong River on the *Blackbird*, was enjoyable in summer.

A Landscape Succession Strategy has been launched, setting out a 20-year plan to deal with climate change as predicted to affect the Gardens. Included in this strategy is the proposal to facilitate improvements to the conservation of Victorian rare and threatened flora through the network of Victorian regional botanic gardens. Also looking ahead, a new Building Master Plan includes future opportunities for a new herbarium and a glasshouse.

Future-proofing comes into play as ageing trees must be replaced by species able to survive the predicted hot and dry conditions. Gardens' Director and Chief Executive, Professor Tim Entwisle, underlines the belief that all life on earth is sustained and enriched by plants. He feels the new title Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria reinforces our commitment to a strong network of botanic gardens across Victoria. There is no intention for RBGV to take over the more than 40 botanic gardens run by local councils and community groups.

Tim has launched a new visual identity covering plants and animals (including humans). This is now displayed on entry signs to the Gardens.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, together with the Cranbourne Gardens, has been rebranded as Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. This broader organisation will encompass both gardens as well as associated bodies such as the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology. At least, for the present, the Friends retain our existing name.

ROYAL
BOTANIC GARDENS
VICTORIA

Heather Ironmonger

Tamworth struggles on

Friends of Tamworth Regional Botanic Garden
Tamworth, New South Wales

The dam and the creek bed awaiting landscaping. Photos by Christine Reeves.

During 2015 the Friends applied for two grants made available by Tamworth Regional Council for funds to continue work on the Asian Garden Project. We were unsuccessful with both, but were very happy to receive news that the Council would make available $25,000 in the budget to continue with this work; this money to be allocated at the discretion of the Botanic Garden team leader. We anticipate that this will be enough to complete the remaining landscaping works, and the Friends may donate funds for additional plants as and when required. In early 2016 the stones and other materials will be obtained to finish the dry creek bed, waterfall feature, water holding tank and an oriental style bridge.

Unfortunately we received the bad news that the solar panels, installed to provide power for a bore to supply and maintain water levels in the dam in this part of the garden were destroyed by vandals. This was very disappointing to hear, as it would have reduced the cost of water reticulation over the long term, and it means that further use of solar panels can probably not now be considered viable. We have decided to trial planting a few azaleas in the Asian Garden, as the camellias planted in a sheltered location are doing well. Finding the right species that will cope with Tamworth weather conditions is the challenge.

Weather conditions have been the main reason for the group having a slow start to activities in 2016. The continuing hot dry conditions mean that it is very difficult to keep nursery stock in good condition, so we have not purchased or propagated much as yet. So we have not had any working bees to date. However, a new member is keen on propagation, so our propagation misting unit has been overhauled and put into use once more. Hopefully this will help generate some enthusiasm among members to get going again during autumn.

The group has postponed the usual April open day, so as to participate in the BGANZ Australia-wide botanic gardens open day on 29 May. This open day will be less of a fundraising event and more of a promotion to gain some new members. We will be putting more than the usual effort into advertising the event to generate some interest from the community in supporting the continuation of the Friends group. If we are unsuccessful it is doubtful that we will be able to form a committee at the 2016 AGM. The future of the group is uncertain at this point.

Meanwhile, development of the Victoria Park Precinct which includes the Botanic Garden is continuing. The Tamworth Regional Astronomy Club, recently incorporated in the local region, is developing a concept plan for the construction of a headquarters building and observatory. The Tamworth Men's Shed was officially opened for business on 17 April. The miniature railway is enjoying continued patronage and growth as well. The Children's Adventure Playground within the grounds of the Marsupial Park was completed and opened to the public in late 2015. These facilities all draw visitors to the area, many of whom enjoy a visit to the Botanic Garden as well.

Christine Reeves

All about Fiji's Gardens

Friends of Thurston Gardens
Suva, Fiji *An Associate Member*

View of Thurston Botanical Gardens from the Grand Pacific Hotel Balcony ca. 1935

History

The need for a botanic garden was recognised in 1879 by the then Colonial Secretary, J. B. Thurston, himself an amateur botanist. Thurston later became the Governor of Fiji and was also knighted. He died in Melbourne in 1897 and is buried there. Thurston engaged the services of a Kew Gardens-trained expert, John Horne, who was Director of the Botanic Gardens in Mauritius at the time. Based on Horne's positive report, the Gardens were initially set up in 1881 as a plant introduction center (also reported as a Botanical Reserve/ Botanical Station) close to the port of Suva, and were then progressively relocated to the present site by the first Curator in 1913.

Mr. Daniel Yeoward, who had been trained at Kew Gardens, left for Fiji in August 1889 and was appointed as first Curator of the Suva Botanical Gardens the same year. With very limited resources at hand he began to work to create the Suva Botanical Gardens. The Gardens were officially opened in 1913 and the following year a granite drinking fountain was donated by Henry Marks and his company, Henry Marks & Co Ltd. Marks' later donations were the current clock tower and octagonal bandstand, which was in memory of Gabriel Marks who was drowned in the St. Lawrence River, Canada, in 1914.

John Bates Thurston (1836-1897) Governor of Fiji 1885-1887 and 1888–1897.

The octagonal bandstand (1914) in Thurston Gardens ca.1930

The five hectare site was generally a low-lying and swampy one, only a few metres from the original beach, although it does also contain some steeper land further inland, near the indigenous fortified village site that originally occupied this land. In 1955 the Fiji Museum was constructed within the area, which was re-named Thurston Gardens in 1976. The Gardens have remained under the management of the Suva City Council.

It is an old-fashioned garden in that many of the species were originally from other countries around the world, although in recent years more endemic species have been planted. Thurston Gardens is only one of several other iconic features of the surrounding precinct: the immediately-adjacent State House in which the Fiji President resides; Albert Park on which the historic trans-Pacific flight of the *Southern Cross* landed in 1928 after a 34 hour non-stop flight from Kauai in Hawaii; the splendid heritage and recently-restored Grand Pacific Hotel, which was opened in 1914; and the main Government Buildings erected in 1938 by the British Colonial Government. The latter is one of Suva's outstanding art-deco buildings.

Kingsford Smith's *Southern Cross* airplane after the landing on 5 June 1928 at 5.50 pm

The newly restored Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva

Restoration planning process

A number of factors have contributed to the loss of trees in Thurston Gardens, principal amongst these being poor drainage. This water logging for much of the year, during which an average of 3,500 mm of rain falls in Suva, also restricts the full use of the site for special events and a range of educational and touristic activities. The need to drain and to also restore, improve and modernise Thurston Gardens has been recognised for some years and in fact several well-intended past initiatives have been undertaken with only minimal success. The poor drainage, coupled with the proximity to the sea of much of the site, has been the major challenge and the need to address this over-riding constraint is an imperative.

In late 2013 a number of interested stakeholders, including Suva residents, NGOs, relevant government departments and the Suva City Council, decided to work together to develop a Master Plan for the drainage and enhancement of Thurston Gardens. This process was jointly led by the National Trust of Fiji and the Department of National Heritage and Arts which undertook a consultative process with input from many different bodies. The draft Master Plan was launched by H.E. the President in November 2014, followed by a national workshop in December, which endorsed the plan.

In the words of the Plan's Mission Statement, the aim of the new Thurston Gardens is '…to conserve, discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment in order to preserve and enrich life' in a world class facility which will appeal to the people of the nation and to visitors. The Gardens will better link the people of Fiji, in particular the increasingly-urbanised school children, with their natural and cultural heritage. In addition to a much wider range of endemic trees and plants, the Gardens will feature: a range of thematic gardens, herbs/food/spices/fragrant/prehistoric/orchids etc; a mini-tropical rainforest ecosystem which will become a haven for birds; a modern Visitor Center with interpretive and educational resources; special provisions such as a water feature, night lighting and a real-time modern automatic weather center. In addition, it is planned to work with the customary owners, to construct traditional structures which will recognise the pre-history of the site and will strengthen the important link with the Fiji Museum

In October 2015 the Master Plan proposal was submitted to the Fiji Cabinet for consideration. with a request for funding from the 2016 Fiji national budget to enable the drainage to be undertaken next year. Both

The latest plan for upgrading the Thurston Gardens.

proposals were endorsed by the Cabinet, a decision which has made a very positive impact on the Working Group members who have collaborated so industriously on the initiative for well over a year.

Work Plan for 2016

Drainage of the site is the priority together with more detailed planning and costing of other initial features such as paths, pergolas and signage together with selected seedling collection by Forestry and friends, for planting out in 2017. In addition, detailed planning will be undertaken on the Visitor Center and on various thematic gardens which are intended for construction in 2017. Funding next year will also include a welcome provision within the Suva City Council capital budget. A 'Friends of Thurston Gardens' body will be established from the 20 or so existing individual friends who comprise the present informal group plus other interested persons. Specific areas in which advice and capacity-building will be necessary will be identified, some of which might possibly be delivered on a voluntary basis by different Friends groups in Australia and New Zealand. Our unofficial Friends group has been an affiliate of the ANZ Association since 2014, an arrangement for which we are most grateful, as we receive all of your interesting and informative newsletters. We also plan to work with several corporate friends which have already indicated an interest in supporting developments within the Gardens.

The main entrance of Thurston Gardens

After Cyclone Winston

Tree up-rooted in Thurston Gardens. Photo by Nick Hobgood from www.360cities.net.

While several trees were blown down and lost and a number of others were quite severely damaged, overall the Gardens fared fairly well. Now that the main clean-up is complete, the appearance is surprisingly good. Suva and the surrounding area actually suffered less impact than expected and most damage was in the form of trees blown down and branches damaged; this was as a result of the gust speeds being significantly lower than about 50 to 100 km to the north of Suva where actual recordings of 305 km/hour gusts were made.

However, one of the downsides for TG is that the funding that was within the 2016 national budget to undertake drainage within the Gardens will unlikely be available because of the huge requirement for funding for infrastructure and schools and other repairs. This will mean the restoration Master Plan will be delayed by up to a year although for very sound reasons. The drainage is absolutely essential as a pre-requisite to further tree planting and other planned improvements in the badly affected areas.

Come and see us

Visitors are received on a daily basis and in large numbers on Open Days as well as on cruise liner calls to Suva port, when 300 or 400 or more passengers visit the Museum/Thurston Gardens complex. It is intended to appoint a number of guides from amongst the descendents of the original land-owners and to mentor as well as inform these young people appropriately. This might be an activity where established guides from Australia and NZ gardens could play a key role. Running a modern garden and managing a Friends group will also be areas in which experience, lessons and best practice would add value to our team. Into the future, other activities such as merchandising, archiving of records and specimens and special events might also be possible areas for advice.

Should any individual members of AAFBG Friends groups be visiting Suva, they would be most welcome at the Thurston Gardens/Fiji Museum site. In the meantime, the interim informal Friends of Thurston Gardens extend warm greetings to all members of the AAFBG.

Flooding in Thurston Gardens. Photo by Nick Hobgood from www.360cities.net.

Members of Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc

Go to www.friendsbotanicgardens.org for email addresses and phone numbers

ACT

Australian National Botanic Gardens, Friends of. GPO Box 1777, Canberra ACT 2601.
National Arboretum Canberra, Friends of. PO Box 48, Campbell ACT 2812.

New South Wales

Albury Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 1056, Albury NSW 2640.
Botanic Gardens Sydney, Foundation & Friends of. Cottage 6, Mrs Macquaries Road, Sydney NSW 2000.
Burrendong Arboretum, PO Box 465, Wellington NSW 2820.
Dubbo Regional Botanic Garden, Friends of. P O Box 81, Dubbo NSW 2830.
Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 1068, Batemans Bay NSW 2536.
Lismore Rainforest Botanic Garden, Friends of. PO Box 1327, Lismore NSW 2480.
Moama & Echuca Botanic Gardens. PO Box 545, Moama NSW 2731.
North Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 648, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450.
Orange Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 17, Orange NSW 2800.
Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 707, Moss Vale NSW 2577.
Stony Range Regional Botanic Garden, Advisory Committee. 810 Pittwater Rd, Dee Why NSW 2099.
Tamworth Regional Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 1393, Tamworth NSW 2340.
Woollongong Botanic Garden, Friends of. 61 Northfield Ave, Keiraville, NSW 2500.

Northern Territory

Darwin Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 36435, Winnellie NT 0821.

Queensland

Brisbane Botanic Gardens Volunteer Guides, Mt Coo-tha Botanic Gardens, Mt Coo-tha Road, Toowong QLD 4066
Cairns Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 223, Edge Hill QLD 4870.
Gold Coast Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 5653, Gold Coast Mail Centre, QLD 9726.
Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. Friends Association. PO Box 6850, Mackay QLD 4741.
Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 445, Buderim, QLD 4556.
Noosa Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 454, Noosa Heads QLD 4567
Peacehaven Botanic Park, Friends of. 30 Sunray Drive, Highfields QLD 4352.
Redcliffe Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 299, Clontarff Beach QLD 4019.
Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens, Friends of. Forsythia Drive, Eagle Heights QLD 4272.

South Australia

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Friends of. PO Box 2040, Port Augusta SA 5700.
Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, Friends of. North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000.

Tasmania

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Friends of. C/o RTBG, Queens Domain, Hobart TAS 7000. .
Tasmanian Arboretum, PO Box 370, Devonport TAS 7310.

Victoria

Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton, Friends of. PO Box 6912, Shepparton VIC 3632.
Australian Inland Botanic Garden, Friends of. PO Box 2809, Mildura VIC 3502.
Ballarat Botanical Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 33W, Ballarat West VIC 3353
Benalla Botanical Gardens & Riverine Parkland, Friends of. PO Box 589, Benalla VIC 3672.
Bendigo Botanic Gardens, Friends of. 71 Napoleon Cres. White Hills VIC 3550.
Buninyong Botanic Garden, Friends of. 102 Cornish St, Buninyong Vic 3357.
Burnley Gardens, Friends of. C/o Burnley College, 500 Yarra Boulevard, Richmond VIC 3121.
Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Trust, Friends of. PO Box 270, Camperdown VIC 3260
Colac Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 403, Colac, VIC 3250.
Geelong Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 235, Geelong VIC 3220.
George Pentland Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 490, Frankston, VIC 3199.
George Tindale Memorial Garden, Friends of. 2/92 Main St, Upwey VIC 3158.
Gisborne Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 564, Gisborne VIC 3437.
Grampians Flora Botanic Gardens Group. C/o M. Sietsma, 146 Grampians Rd, Halls Gap VIC 3381.
Hamilton Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 43, Hamilton VIC 3300.
Karwarra Australian Plant Garden, Friends of. Mt Dandenong Tourist Rd, Kalorama VIC 3766.
Kyneton Botanical Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 47, Kyneton VIC 3444.
Malmsbury Botanic Gardens & Environs, Friends of. PO Box 116, Malmsbury VIC 3446.
Melton Botanic Gardens, Friends of. C/o PO Box 2381, Melton South VIC 3338.
Port Fairy Botanical Gardens, Friends of. 115 Regent St, Port Fairy VIC 3284.

Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne, Friends of. 1000 Bullarto Rd. Cranbourne VIC 3977.
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Friends of. Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne VIC 3004.
Sale Botanical Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 506, Sale VIC 3850.
St Arnaud Queen Mary Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 146, St Arnaud VIC 3478
St Kilda Botanical Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 1089, Elwood VIC 3184.
Warrnambool Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 1190, Warrnambool VIC 3280.
Williamstown Botanic Garden, Friends of. PO Box 826, Williamstown VIC 3016.
Wilson Botanic Park, Friends of. PO Box 412, Berwick VIC 3806.
Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 267, Daylesford VIC 3460.

Western Australia

Kings Park, Friends of. KPBG, Fraser Ave. Kings Park, West Perth WA 6005

Affiliate Members

Christchurch Botanic Gardens, Friends of. PO Box 2553, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand
Kirstenbosch Volunteer Garden Guides, Botanical Society of South Africa – Kirstenbosch Branch, PO Box 53445, Kenilworth, 7745, Cape Town, South Africa
Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, Friends. Membership Office, RBGE, 201 Inverleith Row, Edinburgh, EH3 5LR, Scotland, UK.
Thurston Gardens, Cakobau Rd, Suva, Fiji.

Total

59 Members, 4 Affiliate Members

Calendar of events 2016-17

BGCI's 6th Global Botanic Gardens Congress, Geneva, June 2017

Biennial Conference of Volunteer Guides 15-19 October 2017 at Australian National Botanic Garden, Canberra. The theme of the conference is 'Informed Guiding – Discovering the mystery and magic of our Gardens'. For more information go to: www,friendsanbg.org.au.

Websites worth visiting

Visit our website:
www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

Contact website editor to list your events or add garden photos to the members' gallery:
info@WordsWorthcommunicating.com

BGANZ on line Newsletter – *The Botanic Garden*
www.bganz.org.au/newsletter

Botanic Gardens Conservation International
http://bgci.org/resources/news

Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia
www.gpcaa.com

Weeds Australia
www.weeds.org.au

Australian Native Plants Society
http://asgap.org.au

Significant Tree Registers – there are a number of State and local registers. Search: Significant Trees

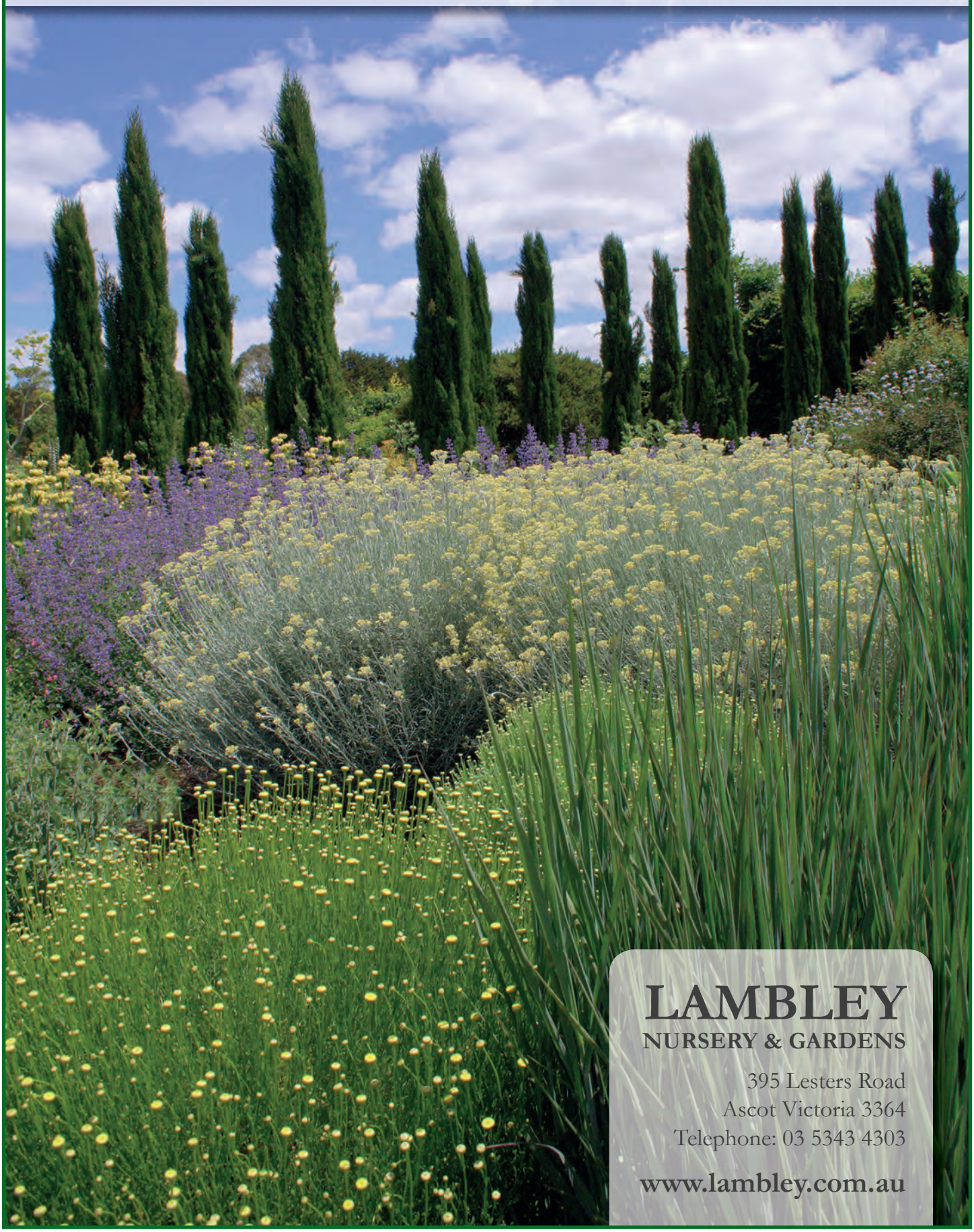
Fungimap:
www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap/home

Plants for the Planet:
www.plantsfortheplanet.com

The Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Association Committee. Neither the Association Committee nor the Association members accepts responsibility for statements or opinions expressed, although every effort will be made to publish reliable information.

"Lambley is a must-see for obsessive plant-aholics and anyone needing inspiration for gardening in Australia's hot and dry climate"

Better Homes and Gardens



LAMBLEY

NURSERY & GARDENS

395 Lesters Road
Ascot Victoria 3364
Telephone: 03 5343 4303

www.lambley.com.au