



# Campsis

## NEWSLETTER

### Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc.

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May 2006

## **BGANZ CONGRESS Hobart, October 28<sup>th</sup>- 31<sup>st</sup> 2005**

### **Impacts & Influence- the environmental potency of Botanic Gardens**

The Hobart Congress was attended by 130 delegates from the major and regional Botanic Gardens and Arboreta in all states and the major Botanic Gardens in New Zealand.

All levels and disciplines of Botanic Gardens staff attended, creating a vibrant atmosphere for discussion and excellent networking opportunities for the three Friends of Botanic Gardens attending.



*Dr Tony Kendle Annie McGeachy*

The aim of the Congress was to question and challenge current practices and to present a range of innovative alternatives. The four streams of the Congress were:

- Future Perfect – Environmental sustainability for Botanic Gardens
- Taming the Backyard – Weeds and urban ecology
- 20/20 Foresight – Collections into the future
- Cultivating Minds – Environmental education

The Key Note Speaker, Dr Tony Kendle, Foundation Director of The Eden Project in Cornwall was exceptional and delivered a fascinating address regarding the origins and the philosophy of the Eden Project and the concept of a garden for “people who didn’t care about plants” and a garden that must be commercially viable.

Developed in a defunct Cornish quarry, The Eden Project opened in 2001 and includes 15 hectares of temperate displays, a 2 hectare tropical house and a 1 hectare Mediterranean house- with 50 metre high domes based on award winning architecture. ([www.edenproject.com](http://www.edenproject.com))

The success of the Eden Project is demonstrated by the 1.2million visitors to Cornwall each year, the provision of 480 jobs and an economic regeneration to Cornwall’s ailing economy.

Dr Kendle’s opening address ‘Environmental Education and a duty to hope’-he expressed concern that we are developing a generation of closeted children, disconnected from the world they are in and with little understanding of their food and agriculture.

The Eden project provides an interface between education and environment to foster a stronger emotional understanding of the importance of plants in our lives that will stay longer than facts and figures. Some of the barriers to this connection can be the jargon we use and the habits of language.

A ‘Plant Take Away’, ‘food you are dependent on’ and a cake you can eat if you can find all the plants needed to make it- are just some of the innovative, simplistic and effective interpretative approaches used to

engage the visitor. This innovative work is developed by plant scientists, artists and educationalists working in teams. (see Eden Project website for programs [www.naturebase.net/projects/eden\\_splash.html](http://www.naturebase.net/projects/eden_splash.html) )  
Dr Kendle not only set the agenda for the conference, but proposed the concept that we are a “pivotal generation” with the capacity to initiate change in community attitudes and behaviour, provoking delegates to rethink the way Botanic Gardens and also Friends, present themselves to the public.

There were many other excellent speakers on the environmental issues and education in Botanic Gardens, with a particular highlight being the award winning “Theatre in a Wheelbarrow”. This wonderful group from the Wollongong Botanic Gardens does travel (<http://botanicgardens.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/> ) and can be arranged by contacting Michael Connor. The plays are vibrant and interactive, with titles of Captain Compost, Obnoxious Weeds, Tree talk and many others. Highly recommended!

*A. Mc Geachy*

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### RBG Cranbourne: A New Australian Botanic Garden

There is always great excitement among Botanic Gardens when an entirely new garden is to be opened. This certainly applies to the **Australian Garden**, within the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne, Victoria. Stage 1 being 11 hectares will be officially opened by Hon Steve Bracks, Premier of Victoria during the morning of Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2006.



This event will be the culmination of great vision, impressive design and an enormous amount of work. From the 1940's the management of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne was aware that their South Yarra site could not do justice to a comprehensive display of Australian flora. In the decades following a real effort was made to select a suitable site.

The Maud Gibson Trust contributed to the purchase of the first parcel of land at Cranbourne (174 hectares) approximately 45 kilometres South East of Melbourne. The Honourable Peter Howson played a major role in expediting the purchase which was made in 1970. The Trust has also been instrumental in enabling the purchase of a number of abutting properties which are now part of the total 363 hectares.

Nothing much happened until in 1992 the RBG Melbourne Board was established and Dr Philip Moors was appointed as Director. Development of the Cranbourne site accelerated and the concept of the



**Australian Garden** evolved. The site chosen being a depleted sand quarry was a real challenge to designers. The concept proposed by Taylor Cullity Lethlean with Paul Thompson was selected and they proceeded to detail the design. Contractors, sculptors and suppliers have been well chosen and the Divisional Director, Chris Russell, with his dedicated staff have made a wonderful contribution.

The **Australian Garden** now tells the story of water, from the parched red centre through a dry riverbed to the coastal streams with plants and sculptures to represent these different regions.

All Friends of Botanic Gardens are welcome to attend the open day on 28<sup>th</sup> May. Displays, tours and activities will fill a special day.

## **AFBG Conference at Cranbourne Victoria; September 2006**

The conference will commence at the Amstel Golf Club, Cranbourne on the evening of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2006 with a get-together of participants and an official welcome. Lectures will be held during the mornings of Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September. Saturday afternoon will involve a guided tour of the spectacular new **Australian Garden** and on Sunday afternoon there will be a visit to the garden of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. On Saturday night there will be a conference dinner where the after dinner speaker, resurrected for the occasion, will be the first Director of the RBG Melbourne Baron Ferdinand von Mueller.

Opportunities will be available for participants to exchange ideas to increase the effectiveness of our groups in supporting State and Regional Botanic Gardens. One whole session will be given to discussion of the role AFBG and opportunities to more effectively serve our members.

The organizing committee has endeavoured to minimise costs. Early bird registration will be available until 30<sup>th</sup> June at \$135, including the conference dinner, later registrations will be \$150. The Amstel Golf Club facilities limit attendance to 150 delegates.

Expression of interest brochures will be distributed shortly and those who respond will receive the details of the conference as soon as they are available.

*Alex Smart*  
*President*

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## **FROM THE SECRETARY**

President, Alex Smart, RBG Cranbourne and I represented the Association at the October BGANZ congress in Hobart for the launch of the botanic gardens management network Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ)

The AFBG has since become an Associate Member of BGANZ. The Association retains its autonomy but strongly supports the BGANZ initiative and proposed direction (see Campsis 25) and looks forward to developing a collaborative and mutually productive relationship for the benefit of Friends, Botanic Gardens and the community. The Association has the option of a regular column in the BGANZ newsletter, *The Botanic Garden*, which I have accepted.

Associate Membership of BGANZ (\$40) is an option for all members of the AFBG. The membership form is available on the BGANZ website or from the CHABG E-mail address listed at the back of this newsletter.

BGANZ has developed regional networks for Botanic Gardens and parks personnel to discuss and advance local and regional botanic garden issues. Members of the Association are encouraged to send a representative/s to their regional area meeting to better understand and contribute to local issues.

I wish to extend thanks to Dr Philip Moors and BGANZ Council for their encouragement and their support of the Association and also acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the Association for our attendance at the Hobart Congress.

### **On other issues:**

The review of the Association Purposes and Rules is progressing well. The final draft will be forwarded to members in due course for approval and confirmation at the Association Conference at Cranbourne in September.

I recently had the pleasure of attending the launch of a new Friends group, Friends of Kyneton Botanic Gardens (C.19) and welcoming a new member of the Association. I was surprised to see three fine Cork Oaks, *Quercus subra* and a Gingko, *Ginkgo biloba* among the collection of large heritage trees at Kyneton.

Early warning! – I am pleased to say, Friends of the Orange Botanic Gardens will hold the AFBG Conference in 2008. Orange will be a new venue for the conference, providing an opportunity to meet Friends from Botanic Gardens in NSW and Queensland-while enjoying the autumnal colours of Orange.

As we go to press the Greater Shepparton Botanic Gardens Association/Friends of Parkside Gardens, continue their 4 year struggle to prevent a housing estate being developed on the Gardens site that had professional and community support for the development of a Botanic Garden. In their struggle the Friends have achieved the amazing feat of having their previous Vice President elected to Council and as Mayor of Shepparton. While this is promising, nothing has yet changed. If you wish more information or would like to offer some support to the Shepparton Friends you can contact them at [www.home.vicnet.net.au/-parkside](http://www.home.vicnet.net.au/-parkside)

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## Tax Deductible Funds; what are they?

They are Public Funds established under Australian Tax Office (ATO) law specifically for the receipt of donations whereby the donor obtains a Tax deductible receipt. There are a number of Public Fund categories applicable to the varying eligible applicant groups.

An NAT3132- “Gift Pack for Deductible Recipients & Donors” (DGR’S) is quite well set out and available from the (ATO) on the website or by post .Ph 1300 720 092.

However I provided a few explanations on the subject that may be of initial help.

**A Fund is a Public Fund where;** Tax Ruling IT2149, Bray. (78ACT4179)

- It is the intention of the founder that the public will contribute to the Fund
- The public or a significant part of it does contribute to the Fund
- The public participates in the administration of the Fund

These conditions can be met by a “Friends” Public Fund.

## Incorporated Associations

Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc, as community non- profit organisations have the capacity to establish and act as Trustee for a ‘Friends’ Public Fund through their modified Committee Rules. Appointment of additional Trustees is then unnecessary and the separate ‘Trust Deed’ required becomes a much briefer document.

## What Type of Public Fund?

Gifts to public gardens are tax deductible on the basis that Botanic Gardens are museums of living plants. (ATO Ruling IT2020 1983)

On this basis a Friends Group can establish a tax deductible Public Fund for the benefit of a Botanic Garden in the ATO category, **Ancillary Fund** (IT Act 1936 Subsection- 78(4). & 78(5))

**NB.** Registration as an Environmental Organisation is not beneficial, as Public Funds (DGR’S) in this category restrict expenditure on capital works and ATO rulings state cultivated parks & gardens are excluded from the definition of ‘environmental’ purpose.

Completing a submission to the ATO for a Tax Deductible Fund status (a **DGR**) is not terribly difficult, it just takes time to achieve and a solicitor is of course essential to assist with the task. Further ‘how to’ information will, hopefully-be soon available on the Association Website

*Annie McGeachy*  
*Secretary*

## **FRIENDS OF ALBURY BOTANIC GARDENS**

**Murray Region New South Wales.**

Albury Friends are looking forward to a very exciting time over the next few months as plans begin to unfold for the establishment of a permanent office and potting up area in the precinct of the curators cottage.

A recent proposal put to gardens management has been accepted and we hope to be established in a permanent home within the next couple of months, complete with broadband, telephone and mailbox address. The Friend's office will be established in the original garden staff office at the rear of the curators cottage, with a completely fenced off garden area for the use of the Growing Group. The group will take over responsibility for the maintenance of the Orchid, Camellia and Liliium collections and the upkeep of the Tom Savage Memorial Camellia Garden and perpetuity of stock.

A group of enthusiastic young mothers are working on the establishment of a children's garden to compliment and extend the current "master plan" development. Their focus group will collect input from a general public meeting in late March and feed the information gathered onto Council for consideration in the master planning.

The long awaited Tea House project has suddenly found it's way higher in priority and is currently in final review stage, then final concepts can be put to plan and the long awaited Tea House soon become a reality.

High security fencing, if only there was such a thing, is also high on the priority list and may soon surround the gardens, hopefully cutting down theft and vandalism.

Catering for tour bus groups has kept us busy and is providing a good source of income, along with music and movies in the gardens, plant and souvenir sales. The income has enabled us to ear mark several thousand dollars for the carving of plant and animal seats for story telling time in the proposed children's garden.

All the excitement of the children's garden has prompted a bus trip by 14 Friends to visit RBG Melbourne Ian Potter Memorial Children's Garden on Wednesday March 8<sup>th</sup> 2006.

The Garden Graphics competition we launched in spring is producing some very good work by shutter bugs young and old and will conclude at the end of autumn 2006. Our intention is to publish a souvenir booklet for sale by Christmas. The Friends Annual General Meeting will be held this coming Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup>.

*Jeff Gates, President*

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## **FRIENDS OF KYNETON BOTANIC GARDENS**

**Macedon Ranges Region, Victoria.**

The launch of the Kyneton Friends was held on Sunday March 12<sup>th</sup>, at the Kyneton Botanic Gardens in lovely summer weather when fifty people enjoyed a wine tasting and a walk and talk through the gardens.

Organised by the Macedon Ranges branch of the National Trust and Friends for the benefit of a newly formed Friends' group it was a most successful gathering. Many who attended signed up as financial members of the Friends bringing our numbers to 36.

Dr Greg Moore, Principal of Burnley College addressed those present and expressed his pleasure at the formation of the new Friends group and also the hope that we will be able to conserve the many historic trees contained in these gardens. Seventeen of the trees are listed on the National Register because they are rare species, endangered in the wild, or significant specimens of a particular variety.

Dr Moore, then conducted the 'walk and talk' through the gardens highlighting some of the special trees such as redwoods and the cork oaks. His enthusiasm for trees and all things horticultural was highly infectious.

Dr Moore also urged the Friends to involve young members of our community in the activities of the group and to use this historic site as educational tool for locals and tourists alike.

*Ann Tomlinson, President*

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## **THE TASMANIAN ARBORETUM**

**Devonport, Tasmania**

Pecking at development, making a little go a long way.

The Tasmanian Arboretum is expanding its collection of southern hemisphere conifers following the recent release of *Wollemi nobilis* to the general public.

Unwilling to spend on security for a cage to house a Wollemi pine and unwilling to use our limited resources at the recent first release auction of Wollemi held at the Royal Sydney Botanic Garden, the Arboretum is using specially raised funds of \$4250 to plant a grove of 16 Wollemi and 2 specimens among the collections.

Thanks goes to a number of donors for supporting us in establishing this grove to reflect the Wollemi appearance in nature, unfortunately without the accompanying sandstone gorge.

This grove has entailed what is for us major infrastructure work, making a track to link the existing Gondwana collection with the new Wollemi site, relocating fences and installing a watering system.

Once the Wollemi plants are established we will be installing an interpretation and drawing attention to this addition to our landscape. The Arboretum receives visits from many older members of the community from people with disabilities and many school students and a dry path underfoot will benefit all of them during winter.

Also funded by a tied gift of \$1,400 is a footpath suitable for people with disabilities, leading to the current Visitor Centre. Even if this building reverts to its original educational function, the path will remain beneficial. On the 'drawing board' is a new visitor facility, a food outlet, shop and information point.

As part of that overall change we are also in the process of improving the landscape at our entry point and will soon be adding interpretation here, thanks to a \$5,000 Community Garden Grant from the Australian Open Garden Scheme.

With a recurrent annual budget totalling \$60,000 these additional funds of \$10,650 are an enormous boost to our growth- who would complain about 17.75% added to the budget to develop their institution. The support of Work for the Dole makes it possible to use a small sum very effectively.

*Phill Parsons MAIH, President*

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## **FRIENDS OF THE COLAC BOTANIC GARDENS**

**Western District, Victoria**

Although small in number, the Colac Friends group continues to work on a number of projects for the long term benefit of the Gardens and their users. Because of the close proximity of the Gardens to Lake Colac, the Friends have been closely involved in planning developments which will provide better links between two of Colac's great assets.

Like many groups, we are currently grappling with issues dealing with plaques and memorials in the gardens and drawing up a set of policy proposals to recommend to the Colac Otway Shire Council. If any group has come up with the perfect solution we would be delighted to hear from you! We are also part of a Living Collection Review Group that is examining future directions for the Gardens and ways of making the facility more relevant to the community, both for recreation and education.

Guided tours of the gardens are possible thanks to two or three of our energetic members who have volunteered to take on this task and we are looking at ways of providing more training for current and prospective guides. To further assist visitors in their appreciation of the Gardens, we are updating our brochure which will be available through Visitor Information Centres and hopefully on the Web.

The playground which forms part of the Gardens is being totally remodelled and we are hoping that this facility, which will cater for people of all abilities, will further enhance the attraction of a Botanic Garden. Our Friends were able to have considerable input into the early stages of the development of the plan.

One of the highlights of each of our monthly meetings is the presentation of our Gardener's report. Not only does Laurence provide us with a verbal report, but we are also treated to a full colour printed version as well. In addition to an update on work in progress and maintenance issues, the March report pictures crepe myrtle, lemon scented verbena, plectranthus and other flowering plants currently in bloom. This provides Friends and others with a wonderful visual record of what's happening in the Gardens. Visitors to Colac are able to obtain a copy of the report from the Colac Visitor Information Centre (if they're quick!)

Our potting group has attracted new interest from the wider community and we are now able to provide a greater range and number of plants for sale at the Botanic Café.

*Helen Paatsch*

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## **FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE**

### **Melbourne City, Victoria**

The Growing Friends were very pleased to raise \$22,255 from their plant sale on 4 and 5 March, as it had to be advanced from its regular 'autumnal' date, coinciding with the Open Garden Scheme plant sale.

Although the Gardens were in the spotlight with two cycling events starting and finishing at Observatory Gate, there was a downside. The Growing Friends Sale was one of many activities affected by the Commonwealth Games. The cancellation of Botanical Illustrators classes and our entire March program had a considerable impact on our budget, while Gardens staff had to forfeit their car park for some weeks. The Voluntary Guides showed great initiative by preparing a new guided walk showcasing the plants from 15 Commonwealth countries.

The Friends Trust Fund and our Council have agreed to grant \$35,000 to continue our major commitment to the Gardens' Automatic Irrigation System through the *Water Works, Water Wise* program. This time the Vireya bed will benefit.

In a joint commercial venture between the Melbourne and Sydney Gardens, branded plants, potting mixes and fertilisers have been developed for sale in Victorian Bunning's stores. If a current trial proves successful the sales network will be expanded, with royalties helping to support both Gardens.

The Victorian Government has reduced its funding for extension education programs at a number of organisations, including the RBG, however the highly successful RBG programs for schools will continue. In a very interesting development the RBG has been working on new educational and community engagement initiatives. One proposal is to introduce adult education activities which may offer the Friends an opportunity to collaborate.

Dean Stewart, the first Aboriginal Liaison Officer in the Gardens, left in March to join the Koori Heritage Trust. He was outstanding in evoking the early Aboriginal history in the Gardens and among other things, showing how many plants were used. The thousands who have been absorbed by Dean's guided walks will appreciate how hard it will be to replace him.

The 2005 Victorian Tourism Awards shone further light on two Gardens' treasures. The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden won the New Destinations Category and the Gardens Shop was declared winner of the Retailing Award for the second consecutive year.

Chair of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board, Elaine Canty, was Guest Speaker at the Friends' Annual General Meeting in November. Voluntary Service Awards were presented to five Members with 10 or more years of voluntary service for the Friends. First introduced in 2004, these Awards have proved to be an excellent way in which to recognise the hard work and commitment by a significant group of people. Seven Members have been Friends' volunteers for over 20 years. Our year wound up with sales of an elegant card designed by Botanical Illustrator Bernadette Lim and a very popular Christmas dinner at the Alexandra Club.

The Executive Officer of the Australian Garden History Society, Jackie Courmadias, has succeeded Jean Woodger as Assistant Treasurer of the Friends. As Jackie is a long-time occupant of the AGHS office in Gate Lodge, her two part-time jobs now dovetail very neatly for Jackie and both organizations.

*Heather Ironmonger*

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## **FRIENDS OF GOLD COAST REGIONAL BOTANICAL GARDENS Gold Coast, Queensland.**

The Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens Inc. (FGCRBG Inc.) have designed and coordinated the planting of over 10,000 plants along the western boundary of Rosser Park. This section forms part of the 'Mangroves to Mountains Transect specified by the Master Plan Report, (Landplan Landscape Architect, June 2002.) The Bushland Management Unit of the Gold Coast City Council(GCCC)have provided logistical support in the supply of plants as required by the planting theme of each area, the supply of tools and materials and preparation of the site. Publicity for the planting days has been co-ordinated jointly by the Marketing Department of the GCCC and by the President of the FOGCRBG Inc. Mr. Nick Bloor.

Design of each area is undertaken by Planting Day Co-ordinator Ms Kate Heffernan M.A.I.H., in consultation with Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens Project Manager Mr. Kit Smith and GCCC Bushland Management Unit Team, including Ms. Diane Wagner, Mr. Don Hawkins and Ms. Laura Hayward.

The criteria for the Mangroves to Mountains Transect requires;  
*“selected plants from each local ecosystem which have particular values such as rare and threatened, spectacle, character, function, ornamental potential, economic value etc”.*

To date over 10,000 plants from within these criteria have been installed. Each of the eight planting days have been attended by between 30–120 volunteers, Friends, GCCC councillors, local residents, individuals and families, TAFE horticulture students, members of the Horticulture Industry and groups from local businesses. There is now an additional maintenance activity every month.

A large component of maintenance is undertaken by the FGCBG Inc. members on the second Wednesday of every month, with weed control managed by council officers. In the short term this arrangement is providing essential shaping, pruning and manual weeding.

The plantings have been a success in terms of plant vigour, overall plant health and aesthetics and can be attributed to the hardiness and compatibility of the local species selected and the small container size

of nursery stock. Irrigation is limited to manual operation two to three times after each planting. All of the trees planted as 'tube stock' less than 100mm tall, have attained growth rates of up to 3.5 metres per annum. Infill plants have provided rapid dense ground coverage and in most instances display excellent growth rates. Current replacements would be between 2 to 3 % of the total planting number of 10000.

The commencement of the long awaited project is morale boosting for the community who have waited a considerable time to have a Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens. Rosser Park is now also a hub for like minded people to meet and enjoy occupation in beautiful surroundings and to contribute to this valuable project. The success of the first plantings is possibly providing a bench mark for future plant selection in the Gold Coast Region where long term sustainability is critical.



The first stage of the major Public works component of the project is also underway. With site works nearing completion the 2.5million Horticulture Display Gardens are almost ready for handover. The gardens are a feast of plants with emphasis on the drama of plant combinations.

A 'Senses' garden has been created by S.E. Queensland Rotary, in co-operation with the Friends coordinated the 100 or so Rotary volunteers for the planting. There will be pathways and gardens designed to enhance the experience for the visually impaired and a gardens with opportunities for assistance from planning and development.

By May we will have gardens that attract numerous visitors, those wanting to experience the development of a historically significant site and others who see the land only as a resource.

*Earlier plantings created by the Friends in Mangrove to Mountains Transect*

*Kate Heffernan M.A.I.H  
Planting Day Coordinator*

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## **FRIENDS OF BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS**

### **Gold Fields Region, Victoria**

With the completion last year of the Western bed developments we celebrated with a small ceremony followed by a BBQ for Friends, Gardens staff and other interested persons. This gave us some useful publicity in the local paper.

Our current project is to plan and build a new facility to cater for the Friend's activities and provide a more suitable venue for plant sales. This will be built close to our existing nursery which will continue to propagate plants for sale. The new building will also provide room for small groups to meet, storage for our archival files and at long last, suitable accommodation for our engraving group who have been operating in very cramped quarters so far.

The engraving group has recently acquired new software and a new computer which now makes it easier to produce their highly professional labels. Orders from outside organisations are always welcome. Please contact us for details and prices.

The annual Ballarat Begonia Festival is on in March and members are busy preparing for this with a new venue for our plant sales.

*Raoul Dixon  
President*

## **FRIENDS OF ORANGE BOTANIC GARDENS**

### **Central West, New South Wales**

The 'Happy Hour' held in November as a pre Christmas get together for Friends of Orange Botanic Gardens members was a great success. The committee also had the opportunity to welcome newer members to the Gardens with a drink and gourmet finger food provided by our catering group.

Also in November Orange City Council promoted the beauty of spring in gardens and parks in the region by hosting the first Orange Colour City Garden Weekend. The Orange Botanic Gardens participated with guided walks, providing refreshments, a plant stall and an exhibition of Botanic Art by some of our very talented members. Another Orange, 'Colour City Garden Weekend,' is to be held early March to promote the beauty of autumn in Orange and the Orange City Council plans to make these an annual event.

The year 2006 started with a musical flourish – 'Music in the Gardens'. The six Friday night twilight concerts held at various open-air stages around the Gardens attracted crowds of up to 1000 people each night. The music provided by the Orange Regional Conservatorium, ranged from brass to strings, with the highlight on the final evening featuring a full symphony orchestra.

The installation of electricity to the far side of the Gardens meant there was no need for noisy generators to power the sound system and lighting. The installation of power was financed by Orange City Council, overseen by qualified members of the Friends and the work carried out by the Garden's staff and Friends.

The guided walks held on the first Sunday of the month continue to be popular and a number of Friends are in training to help out with the demand for Garden Guides at other times.

The Wednesday Workers are again being referred to as the Wednesday Weeders – even after a light shower of rain, weeds appear everywhere and the compost bins are now overflowing. Propagation in the nursery slowed down due to the hot weather and many of the Growing Friends being away on holidays. As the days cool we will return to potting up and planting in the Gardens.

The deciduous trees in the Gardens, parks and streets are just starting to turn yellow, red and gold. Autumn in Orange is quite breathtaking

*Margaret Weaver*  
*Secretary*

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## **FRIENDS OF GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS**

### **Corio Bay, Victoria**

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens (FGBG) celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2005 with a Garden Expo supported by the horticultural and environmental groups who are corporate members of FGBG and use our meeting room/library.

The Expo included a wonderful botanic art exhibition organised by Margaret Muffet and her talented students. The concluding event was the opening the Botanic Gardens Heritage Trail by the Hon. John Thwaites, Minister for Water, Environment and Communities. We are very appreciative of generous sponsorship from Connie Luca and family of V & R Fruit and Vegetable Market for providing funding for the interpretive signage. A fact sheet was produced to compliment the Heritage Trail.

FGBG were approached by four final year Deakin University marketing students early in 2005 for partnership in a project. The aim was to promote the Geelong Botanic Gardens (gbg), celebrate the work of FGBG, organize an Expo and produce a brochure to attract sponsorship. We enjoyed working with the enthusiastic student's, they appreciated our dedicated work and learned something of working with local

government. The brochure is most attractive and relevant, and we shall continue to pursue sponsorship keenly throughout the year.

There was great excitement in early December when the Mayor Cr Peter McMullin planted a Wollemi Pine in the Gardens, it is the first specimen in a Botanic Garden not to be in a cage. The pine is growing well and adds great interest to the significant Araucaria collection held at the gbg. Our voluntary guides are all very familiar with the Araucariaceae and talk to visitors about our significant trees with pride.

A very successful summer music program was organised by the Friends during February. The three twilight programs featured Jazz, Irish and Classical music, the Irish music evening being extremely popular with families. We received a Community Arts Grant to help with marketing the event and this funding certainly helped to get the message out to the community. We are looking to expand the program in 2007.

The Growing Friends have a very successful nursery operation. Plants have recently been propagated by the Growers for a re-vegetation program undertaken by the City Council at Eastern Beach. Many indigenous plants that are showcased in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Garden are now being propagated in our nursery as there is great demand and they are often hard to obtain at the local nursery.

The gbg perennial border planted and maintained by talented members of FGGBG is quite magnificent this year. Bold colours, predominately yellow and red with an accent on foliage and ornamental grasses have made for a border comparable with that of any famous English garden. It gives a great deal of pleasure to visitors.

The Friends' Teahouse has enjoyed the busiest summer since opening in 1992. Our experienced Manager has created a wonderful atmosphere in which to work and the visitors keep coming.

FGGBG are strongly advocating a review of the 1995 Master Plan to address infrastructure within the Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park. A new 'All Abilities' play space has been built to the north of the Botanic Gardens in Eastern Park and enormous pressure is being placed on existing facilities. We hope Council will provide funding for a Master Plan review in this year's budget.

Friends recently enjoyed a visit to Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens and plan a visit to White Hills at Bendigo in May.

*Jayne Salmon, President*

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## **FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS**

### **Western District, Victoria**

A great number of Friends enjoyed the Christmas party which was particularly important because John Hawker came from Melbourne to speak to us about the significance of our gardens and the recommendation that the Heritage Council include the WBG in the Heritage Register of Victoria. The proposal was submitted in January and we eagerly await the outcome.

The Management Plan (2004), in which a curator for the Gardens had been proposed, has finally been accepted by Council. They have now agreed to consider this within the 2006/7 Budget process. The proposal relates to not less than 50% of a new full-time staff position being dedicated to curatorial duties and functions associated with the WBG. The salary of this curator is further augmented by a substantial donation from the Gwen and Edna Jones Foundation.

Over a fine summer season the gardens have provided a wonderful venue for several community functions including Australia Day celebrations and Wunta's Jazz in the Gardens.

Last October Warrnambool was chosen by Legacy for their annual conference and to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Legacy in Australia. At a memorial service held in the Gardens a fine "Gallipoli Oak", *Quercus calliprinos*, was planted near the "Lone Pine". This small but significant tree was raised by Bill Funk of Dunkeld and came from an oak planted by Captain Winter-Cooke MC, of "Murndal", Hamilton. The Gallipoli Oak is evergreen and has small holly like leaves similar to the early foliage of the Holm Oak or *Quercus ilex* planted nearby. These two varieties are the only oaks native to the eastern Mediterranean area. Captain Winter-Cooke, who fought at Gallipoli, had sent home some acorns in a matchbox. The family successfully grew several oaks from these and our oak tree is struck from the original one in the "Murndal" garden.

*Marigold Curtis*

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## **FRIENDS OF THE MACKAY REGIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS**

### **North Coast, Queensland**

MRBG Friends ended an extremely busy 2005 with a very pleasant Christmas break up dinner overlooking the Lagoons, then a couple of weeks later the final function of the year– Carols in the Gardens – a wonderful family night of song and dance. Storms in the area made a tremendous backdrop of lightning flashes, but the rain held off.

The summer was very long and very hot, but the Gardens are looking magnificent after some much needed rain has fallen in the past few weeks. The shrubs and trees have simply exploded with new growth and visitors are amazed to learn that most of them have only been in the ground for a little over three years.

Stage Two of the Gardens is nearing completion. Since 2004 a massive series of developments as large as the original project has been undertaken, with over 10 hectares of new gardens and landscapes now inviting visitors to explore and discover.



*Stage 2 development*

of play areas designed for different age groups with unique structures and interactive opportunities. This Play Garden will be located at the western end of Stage Two development and will be completed in time for the grand Stage Two Official Opening on July 2nd.

Friends have received a Regional Arts Development Fund grant. This will allow us to produce a brochure, booklet and display outlining the history of the Lagoons area of Mackay (where Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens are now situated) and their significance in the development of Mackay. This exciting venture will also be launched at the official opening of Stage Two.

Included in this section of works was the Coal Garden development, Heritage Gardens, Water Wise Gardens, Demonstration Gardens, Regional Flora Terraces, Monsoon Waterway and associated tropical species, completion of the Torres Strait Islands Precinct horticultural works and formation of temporary car park areas. The area is nearly ready for the Gardens staff, Friends and the Mackay public to commence the huge task of planting out more than 7000 m<sup>2</sup> of new garden beds.

Mackay City Council very generously found \$500,000 in their budget for the design and construction of the exciting new Play Garden *Under the Banyan* - a series



*Friends guided walk through Stage 2*

Friends continue to hold monthly meetings with interesting presentations – the first one this year was a late afternoon guided walk through the Stage Two development with the landscape architect Lawrie Smith, who inspired all the Friends with his vision.

Friends have a busy year of activities planned, with the first excursion to be a visit to Eungella National Park – about an hour's drive west of Mackay. Here we will see in the wild, many of the shrubs and trees growing in our Gardens and marvel at the contrast between the often spindly insignificant wild specimens and the lush plants in the Gardens. A social barbecue adjacent to the rainforest for everyone's enjoyment will follow.

*Robin McWhinney,  
Secretary*

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**FRIENDS OF BENALLA BOTANICAL GARDENS & RIVERINE  
PARKLAND  
North Eastern Victoria.**

Our new Rose Garden is now well established and with good autumn flowering is looking very striking. From the beginning of September the Friends have been holding weekly working bees to help maintain it to the highest standard. A number of new members have joined and visitors have stopped to discuss the Gardens with us as we work there.

At the end of March we enjoyed showing a large group of keen gardeners around the Botanical Gardens. With over 150 members from across northeast Victoria and southern NSW the 'Gardeners Inc' group gave us a great opportunity to hear how visitors view our Gardens. The news was very good. While many in the group had stopped at the Gardens before, they hadn't realised how extensive they are or the high quality of the planting.

The huge amount of work that has been undertaken in the Botanical Gardens over the last four years, by both council and the Friends, is now very evident. The Mediterranean planting behind the Grandstand, a project undertaken by the Friends, is now well established and was a wonderful surprise to many of our visitors.

On the Riverine Parkland front we have been busy lobbying to ensure that forthcoming work to reduce the effect of future flooding does not have a negative impact on our beautiful lake and Riverine environment. The vegetation management program of the Benalla Water Management Scheme will use selective vegetation reduction to enhance flood ways along the river and lake through town. As part of these works there is a great opportunity to remove many of the woody weeds, such as Privet and Desert Ash, within our remnant Red Gum forest. However in works of this nature there is sometimes a risk that all non-indigenous trees can be marked for removal.

We have lobbied to ensure that trees that have historic or landscape value and that do not present a flood or weed problem will be retained.

*Sally Gamble  
President*

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