

**Meeting of Council  
Tuesday 2 September 2014  
Dickson Room**



**Minutes**

**Attendance**

Present: David Coutts (Chair), , Glenys Bishop, Anne Campbell, Lesley Jackman, Marion Jones, Warwick Wright

Ex officio: Peter Byron, Steve Speer, Anne Phillips

Apologies: John Connolly, Alan Munns, Barbara Podger, Jan Finley, Dennis Ayliffe, Judy West

**1. Opening**

The meeting was opened by the President, David Coutts, at 1:30 PM.

**2. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**Motion:** That the minutes of the previous Council meeting of 5 August be accepted subject to some minor changes being made.

*Proposed:* David Coutts. *Seconded:* Marion Jones. *Carried.*

**3. Matters arising from Minutes of 5 August 2014**

**3.1 Summer Concerts 2015**

- Steve Speer reported that the budget for the 2015 concerts was under development by the Major Events Committee and would be provided through that committee to the Friends Council. The application to the ACT Government for funds for health promotion at the concerts had not been successful. Peter Byron and Lesley Jackman have not had any success yet with raising sponsorship.
- The meeting also discussed the operation of payment arrangements for the 2015 concerts, in particular whether this should be done by the Friends or the ANBG, outlining the implications of both approaches for GST. It was agreed that the ANBG, which will formalise arrangements with the bands and other providers, should pay the bills and then invoice the Friends for this expenditure.

**3.2 Insert in Australia's Garden booklet**

- It was agreed that discussion on this item be held over in the absence of Barbara Podger.

**3.3 BRC**

- Noting the inconclusive nature of the findings from the recent BRC review, Peter Byron advised that he would circulate some minutes from the round of consultations. There was some discussion of the suggestion made by Barbara Podger at the previous meeting that the BRC undergo limited remodelling to allow meetings to be held in its premises. David Coutts had discussed this proposition with the two remaining active volunteers, who were quite positive about this suggestion, provided there was not much re-arrangement of the room and the computers and specimens were retained; the Friends could let it be known that the room is available for meetings. Council agreed that the room could certainly be used for small meetings leaving the Friends Lounge for visitors to use.

**Action:** The President will draft some guidelines governing use of the room to be circulated to the various groups that use it.

- The President also mentioned in this context that the two computers in the BRC are elderly and could usefully be replaced by a more up-to-date system. He suggested that he and the two BRC volunteers speak to the Friends IT coordinator, Les Fielke, about possibly buying two new desktops. These computers can now be bought relatively cheaply, although they would need to be secured. The internet connection in the BRC is also slow. This upgrade would make the BRC more attractive to its users. Steve Speer reported that some university classes using the BRC facilities for plant identification.

### 3.4 Friends Craft Group

- The Treasurer reported that one of the Friends continues to make some small Tasmanian devils, identified as being made by the Friends Craft Group, for sale in the bookshop.

**Action:** The President will enquire how payment arrangements with the bookshop operate for these items.

## 4. General Business

### 4.1 Manual

- In Jan Finley's absence David Coutts reported that, following the August Council meeting, Jan had sent to Councillors for review the Terms of Reference for the Social Events and Activities Committee and a Checklist for Social Events and Activities. In the absence of any comments Jan proposed that the:
  - a. *Terms of Reference for the Social Events and Activities Committee* **be endorsed** and be included in the *Council Manual Part B*.
  - b. Checklist for Social Events and Activities is included in the Council Manual Part B.
- This material would then be downloaded onto the Friends' computer during the second or third week of September when both Les and Jan expected to be available. Council endorsed these recommendations.

### 4.2 Annual General Meeting

- David Coutts reported that the two people on whom Council had agreed to confer Life Membership at the AGM would now be overseas at that time. As it would be preferable to make this award in their presence, David recommended that Council take this opportunity to confer Life Membership on another excellent candidate. When Council agreed, David undertook to pursue this with the person's family.
- The major publication to come out of the recent alpine symposium will be available at the AGM, which is appropriate given Dr Adrienne Nicotra, a key partner in the symposium, will be the guest speaker.
- Notices about the AGM have been published in the August Fronds and in a broadcast email.
- The meeting also discussed the likely composition of the new Council.

### 4.3 Projects Committee

- With the committee convenor absent there was no formal report from the committee. Nevertheless, David Coutts was able to report progress in several areas:
  - David Coutts, Lesley Jackman and David More had met with Anne Fuchs of the ANBG to discuss the plant finder app. Anne had expressed interest in seeing if a Friend with GIS experience could be located. A person had come forward in response to the broadcast email.
  - Craig Cosgrove is managing the Red Centre Garden lighting project and has identified three possible suppliers. On current planning, the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2014, which would make it available for the February 2015 Friends Twilight Dinner.

- Peter Byron advised that he is waiting to hear from the Public Fund about the seedbank.
- Steve Speer explained that there has been no progress with the Aboriginal Plant Trail but he expects to have a proposal for funding assistance ready for the Public Fund meeting on 15 September.
- David Coutts has spoken to the Librarian who will send the final list of the books proposed for purchase to the Friends, in particular, the guides, to review.
- On public art, the President recalled that the Friends at the previous meeting had agreed to fund the Pamille Berg feasibility study, which is now underway. Ms Berg has requested a Friends steering committee, which the Council agreed should comprise, Lynden Ayliffe (already the Friends representative on the Public Art Advisory Committee), Marion Jones and Barbara Podger, and possibly also Max Bourke. Rather than formally define the role of the steering committee, it was agreed that it should work out its role with Ms Berg. The President also reported that the feasibility study would consider whether an open or selective tender process should be used for the choice of artists, with the latter likely to be the more efficient process.
- On the new Asteraceae garden, planting would take place on Thursday 11 September and the names of 11 people who would help had been given to David Taylor. The opening would be held on Monday 24 November at 1030am, the timing chosen to accommodate the Friends Patron, Lady Cosgrove.
- Mike Johnson is now working through a large number of books received from the Library and other sources with a view to categorising them and arranging their disposal. Some will be set aside for the Friends library, the more valuable ones will be sold for around \$20 to 30 each, and some less valuable for \$5, with a final group available on a 'free to good homes' basis. Some will be sold at the Growing Friends sale, and some at the AGM, with the least valuable on a table for people to take away at the Thursday Talks.

#### 4.4 2017 Guides Conference

- Glenys Bishop reported that the Planning Committee for the Guides Conference to be hosted at the ANBG in 2017 had met the previous week. Work was underway to identify possible venues and dates, and consider program themes. David More had established Dropbox and Google group facilities for communication on the conference. Glenys was also interested to know if there was any information available about any conferences possibly held prior to the 1999 Sydney and the 2001 Canberra conferences.

**Action:** Warwick Wright will check.

#### 4.5 MOU between the Friends and the Gardens

- David Coutts has sent the ANBG General Manager a slightly revised copy of the MOU, which includes one or two items missed from the previous version sent recently. There is still a need to deal with the parking provisions and with this in mind, David Coutts has proposed some words to the ANBG. It is important now to reach agreement on the special parking arrangements for those Friends who are not volunteers but who will require more than the standard three hours envisaged under the new arrangements; these are likely mainly to be Friends who are coming to the Gardens for a special occasion.
- Peter Byron explained that all volunteers would receive a staff parking permit and suggested that the Friends and ANBG establish a working group to consider the issue and identify mechanisms to manage it. The President noted the importance of dealing with this in time for information on the new arrangements to be provided with the membership renewals.

#### 4.6 Volunteers

- David Coutts spoke of the two databases that record volunteers at the ANBG, one run by the Friends and another by the ANBG itself, suggesting that a link be established between the two. Steve Speer advised that all persons who are Volunteers under the MOU (Schedule 1) have to sign volunteer agreements with the ANBG and their details are recorded on the ANBG database, which is run by Natalie Aked. (This requirement does not apply to Friends who are Voluntary Workers under Schedule 2 of the MOU.) Steve noted that it was possible, under the Privacy Act, for cross-checking to be done between the two databases but under current circumstances it would not be allowable to exchange information.
- It was, however, agreed in the ensuing discussion that this concern could be addressed by asking ANBG volunteers to indicate, by ticking a box on the volunteer agreement, that the information provided on the form

would go onto the Friends database.

- During this discussion, David Coutts raised a longstanding Friends concern that the ANBG did not currently require people volunteering at the Gardens (including volunteer guides) to become members of the Friends. In response, ANBG representatives at the meeting advised that, on advice from departmental HR and legal staff, it was not possible for the ANBG, under Australia's discrimination laws, to enforce a requirement for people to become Friends, although the ANBG did suggest people to take out Friends membership. When it was pointed out that the language in the Schedule 1 of the MOU discusses the Volunteers in the context of Friends Activities, the ANBG representatives suggested adjusting the language in the MOU, with one possible redraft reading 'members of the Friends who carry out activities listed in this agreement.' After some further discussion, David Coutts proposed that, while the ANBG might not be able to insist that its volunteers become Friends, it could 'very strongly suggest' that they do so. It was agreed that a meeting would be held to discuss this.

## **5. Reports**

### **5.1 Executive Director and 5.2 General Manager**

- In the absence of the Executive Director, Peter Byron spoke to items 5.1 and 5.2. He reported as follows:
  - The refurbishment of the café toilet will begin on 15 September. The facilities at the Crosbie-Morrison Building will be available for Breakfast with the Birds.
  - Work on the rainforest boardwalk is expected to finish in two to three weeks; the lighting on the walkway, which will be much wider, will be re-used. There will be a joint launch with new facilities on Christmas Island in October.
  - The ANBG would hope to finalise a consultant to work on the master plan in three weeks. The Advisory Committee that would be established as part of the process would involve representation from the Friends (Lesley Jackman), Canberra Airport and also the National Capital Authority.
  - The ANBG has funds to replace the voicemail on its telephone system and is awaiting quotes. The departmental switchboard will be upgraded at the same time. The work is likely to occur in early October.

### **5.3 Friends Liaison**

- Steve Speer advised that the ANBG is once more entering the eco-tourism section of the Australian Tourism Awards, which it won in 2013. The judges had made a site visit that week and reviewed paperwork and business plans.
- He also mentioned some upcoming events at the ANBG:
  - The ANBG would be marking Threatened Species day the following Sunday.
  - The ANBG had participated in a wedding expo run by the Hellenic Club and would hold its own at the Gardens on 31 October.
  - The ANBG would run some events featuring its artists-in-residence in late September
  - The Australian Native Plant Society would run a Sustainable Gardens and Australian Plants Workshop on 27 September.
- ACTION had introduced a new bus timetable on 1 September which would now include the Arboretum, as well as the ANBG.

### **5.4 Treasurer**

- The receipts and outgoings for August 2014 were noted.
- The Treasurer recommended that the term deposit for \$118,546 due on 11 September be rolled over for six months. Council endorsed this recommendation.

### **5.5 Secretary**

- In the secretary's absence a short list of inward correspondence was noted.

## 5.6 Friends Group Reports

- David Coutts noted that a query had been received from the Membership team about the information to be provided to members, at the time of renewal, about the new parking arrangements. It was agreed that the information provided should be consistent with that published in the August issue of Fronds. The President still needed to talk to the ANBG about the implementation of the arrangements for Friends, volunteers and some others, who would need more than three hours parking on a visit to the Gardens. In response to a request from Membership about adjusting the membership application form to address the changed parking arrangements, it was decided that it would be very expensive and labour-intensive to amend the form. Instead, this would be covered in the annual renewal letter to Friends
- Warwick Wright reported that he and his wife calculated that they had provide 92 external talks to more than 4,000 people over the years. He would provide a formal report to Council.
- No other Friends Group reports were received.

## 5.7 Other Business

- David Coutts reported that he had been asked to provide a contribution to the next issue of Campsis, the magazine of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens. Although the opening of the new Asteraceae garden would be after the deadline for contributions, he would ask the editor about a possible extension. As an alternative he suggested an article on some of the new Friends projects planned for the ANBG.

The meeting closed at 3.25 pm.

David Coutts  
President.

Approved

Council Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014