



Friends of the

Australian National Botanic Gardens



Meeting of Council of Friends of the ANBG

Tuesday 12 November 2013 at 1.30pm

Dickson Room, ANBG

Minutes

Attendance

Present David Coutts, Lesley Jackman, John Connolly, Marion Jones, Jan Finley, Dennis Ayliffe, Warwick Wright, Anne Campbell, Glenys Bishop.

Ex officio: Peter Byron, Anne Phillips, , Barbara Podger,.

Apologies Judy West, Steve Speer, Alan Munns,

1. Opening

The meeting was opened by the President, David Coutts, at 1:30 PM. As this was the first Council meeting since the 2013 AGM, he noted the changes with Lesley Jackman taking over as Vice-President and welcoming Jan Finley as a council member. Barbara Podger would continue as ex-officio Council member representing the Fronds editorial team.

2. Minutes of meeting 1st October 2013

The minutes were accepted on the motion of Anne Campbell, seconded by David Coutts

3. Matters Arising from Minutes of meeting 1st October 2013

3.1 Eucalypt Exhibition

- The application to the Dahl Trust for funding had been unsuccessful, mainly because of the non-ongoing nature of the exhibition.
- Warwick Wright informed the meeting that he had advised the Friends executive that, for personal reasons, he and Pat would no longer be able to co-ordinate the exhibition.
- ***In light of this and the current demands on the Friends it was decided to shelve the 2014 exhibition.***
- Material collected so far would be kept for possible use at some later time.

3.2 In Flower this week

- No approach to Barbara Daly on moving to fortnightly "In Flower This Week" had taken place
- ***Peter Byron would action this***

3.3 VIC Volunteers

- Jennifer Salkeld informed the meeting that there were now 27 volunteers including 5 or 6 Guides. The current target is about 35
- Many have volunteered for regular time-slots.,
- David Coutts asked that a review of the operation be held by the end of the year,
- Peter Byron suggested that it would be better to have such a review after the holiday period, at the end of January.
- ***Council agreed to this.***
- ***A further training session for VIC volunteers is planned as is the preparation of an information manual.***

3.4 Flora Explorer (Agenda Item 4.7)

- David Coutts commented that there should be a review of the Flora Explorer operation. He was assured that this was planned, again, after the holiday season.
- Barbara Podger requested that the current drivers be involved in any review.
- More drivers were needed and driver training was being looked at by Helen McHugh and Jennifer

Salkeld.

- *Peter Byron undertook to write to Council concerning driver training courses and provide details of the amplifier system being proposed for the Flora Explorer. (The Projects Committee will consider such proposals)*

3.5 Friends Mobile Phone

- There was further discussion on this.
- It was suggested that, as the phone in the Guides Office was little used, it could be used as the contact number for Friends events and diverted through to the phone of the relevant organiser.
- *Council agreed to trial this system*
- There was discussion about the need for a dedicated Friends notice board in the area around the Visitors Centre.
- Several ideas as to the form of such a board were put forward
- Council agreed that this should be pursued by David Coutts in consultation with ANBG for submission early in 2014

4 General Business

4.1 Red Centre Garden

- The Red Centre Garden was opened by Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham on 31st October.
- The Senator was very happy with the event and expressed his desire for further involvement with the ANBG.
- Council members expressed disappointment at the signage and lack of prominent acknowledgement to the Friends, particularly as it was the largest project funded by the Friends and was its gift marking the Canberra Centenary.
- Peter Byron stated that the sign was in the normal form of an attribution for an artwork.
- In answer to a suggestion of a further interpretive panel with explanation and acknowledgement of the Friends be placed on the observation platform he stated that this would involve significant alteration to the platform and additional cost.
- *Council then suggested that there should be a more prominent acknowledgement to the Friends perhaps in the form of a plaque set into the pavement near the artwork or just a Friends logo on the current attribution sign. Peter Byron said that this would be considered.*
- *Council noted that the approved maximum expenditure for the Pavement Artwork was \$116,000*

4.2 Summer Sounds Concerts

- Peter Byron informed the meeting that, as there had been no success in obtaining sponsorship for the concerts and, as there were no funds available in the ANBG budget to finance them, it would fall on the Friends to underwrite them if they were to go ahead.
- Peter Byron said that, although the ANBG Management fully supported the concept of the concerts they were not considered core business.
- There was some possibility of some funds coming from the ACT Government but the decision on this would not be made until into December, too late to influence any decision.
- There was considerable discussion on the probity and practicality of the Friends financing the concerts but the consensus was that, at least for the coming season, some concerts should take place.
- The total budgeted cost of staging 8 concerts, as was the case for 2013, was \$25,000.
- Figures tabled indicated that the best income from donations/car entry charges and drinks sales in recent years was about \$20,000.
- Jennifer Salkeld had tentatively booked the various bands, sound system etc and undertook to provide to the Social Events Committee before its meeting on next Tuesday, 19th Nov, costings on a number of scenarios covering varying numbers of concerts, with and without a professional MC and some other options.
- The Social Events Committee would make a recommendation to Council after its meeting and Council would make a decision by email / phone resolution.
- *Council agreed to run the Summer Sounds Concerts but would await the Social Committee recommendation for a final decision.*
- Council will set a maximum budget liability if it agrees to proceed

4.3 Alpine Project

- The application to the ARC for a second stage of this project was put on hold due to insufficient time being available to document the proposal.

- Council noted that an application to the ARC will be considered for the 2014 funding round
- David Coutts said that further involvement of the Friends should be conditional on a satisfactory delivery of outcomes from the initial project. So far this had not happened.

4.4 Orchid Group

- David Coutts reported that he had met with Ben Walcott and there still seemed to be some issues to be resolved.
- Peter Byron said that a reporting structure had been agreed to with the group reporting to Mark Clements but the Nursery being responsible for the actual glasshouse operation.
- ***It was agreed that consideration to incorporation of the Orchid Group into the Friends be put on hold until it is clear that issues with the volunteers have been resolved***

4.5 Friends Operational and Procedures Manual

- A committee consisting of Jan Finley, Barbara Podger and Alan Munns would progress this over the next six months, with David Coutts, Lesley Jackman and other Friends called in for input as necessary.
- Jan Finley offered to coordinate the production of the Manual.
- John Connolly said that he would collect information relating to the secretary's responsibilities and other reporting requirements.

4.6 Friends Cascade Sign

- Although a design had been circulated and comments on the text submitted, nothing had happened.
- ***Peter Byron undertook to investigate***

5 Reports

5.1 In the absence of Judy West and Steve Speer Agenda Items 5. 1 & 5.3 were dealt with by the General Manager Peter Byron and Jennifer Salkeld

5.2 General Manager

5.2.1 Bush Capital Weekend

- Although numbers both for the open events over the weekend as well as those for the ticketed concert were not up to expectations the weekend was felt by the Gardens to have been positive overall.
- Contacts and interactions with the Aboriginal groups had been positive.
- There would be a written report of the event together with a general review of Public events to assess what works and what does not. Friends input would be sought.
- There was an overall loss of \$5756 and Peter Byron had requested that the Friends fund half of this.
- Council opinion was that the financial risk for the Bush Capital Weekend event was with the ANBG but understood the problem faced
- It was suggested that, as an alternative to covering half the loss, the Friends might fund an item approximating to \$2880 from the Bush Capital expenses, for example, the cost of the stage or the bands at the Gum Tree Hop.
- There was a further suggestion that the grant from the Friends for the amount could be directed to a Gardens budget item such as the ANBG Map and Guide that fits better with the Friends project guidelines.
- ***It was decided to leave decision on this to the December Council meeting.***
- ***Council resolved that revenue from the event collected by the Friends be remitted to ANBG***

5.2.2 The ACT Tourism Awards night is on 28th November

5.2.3 Sunset Cinema starts this Friday (15th Nov) and will be on 4 nights each week until 21st December.

5.2.4 Senator Zed Seselja has provisionally agreed to present certificates to long term volunteers at the Volunteers Recognition Day on 6th December.

5.2.5 Peter Cochrane will retire on 11th December .The appointment of a new Director of Parks Australia is imminent.

5.2.6 There was a recruitment freeze that includes renewal of contracts. The effect on Parks Australia rangers and some other positions, largely staffed by contractors, is being considered

5.2.7 The new plumber has started

5.3 Treasurer

- The monthly financial statements for September and October had been circulated.
- The President had inspected and approved the October bank transactions statement.
- ***It was moved by Marion Jones, seconded by John Connolly that the accounts be received and***

payments approved. Motion carried

5.4 Secretary

- The list of correspondence for October had been circulated
- The return to the ACT Office of Regulatory Services had been prepared and would be submitted by next Friday, 15th November
- The on-line return to the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Association register was ready for submission.
- The Public Funds annual return to the Registrar of Environmental Organisations is due.

5.5 Friends Committees Reports

5.5.1 Guides

- Glenys Bishop had circulated a report on the Australasian Conference for Volunteers in Botanic Gardens held in Christchurch NZ. We were represented by 7 Guides.
- She told the meeting that ANBG had been selected for the 2017 Guides conference after a ballot with Kings Park WA being the other candidate.
- Glenys Bishop asked if the ANBG would provide backing with speakers at some sessions. Peter Byron assured her that this would not be a problem.
- ***Council endorsed the holding of the conference and the establishment of a co-ordinating sub-committee (Moved Anne Campbell, seconded David Coutts)***
- Glenys drew attention to continuing problems with booked walks and with large groups coming into the Gardens and expecting to go on the free guided tours.
- She informed the meeting that policy recommendations covering payments for booked walks and maximum numbers for the normal guided walks would be put to the Guides meeting.
- ***Council agreed that it would consider any such recommendations.***
- An information note "Guiding Matter for Council" (12 November 2013) covering the above items had been circulated to Council Members.
- Badges for the new guides were available for distribution.

5.5.2 Social Events.

- Jan Finley had circulated a report covering activities in September, October and the Bush Capital event held on 1st & 2nd of November.
- It also outlined some coming events.
- The committee would meet on Tuesday 19th November and would address the various scenarios for the Summer Sounds Concerts.
- The committee would convey its recommendation to Council members by email for an urgent (email) decision by Council

5.5.3 Projects

- Dennis Ayliffe reported that the Projects Committee had met and had received 8 project proposals. The committee was awaiting some further costing details but should be in as position to make recommendations to Council in December.
- The quote for a sound system for the Flora Explorer is in the pipeline and recommendations should be available before the December Council meeting

5.5.4 Photographic Group

- Lesley Jackman had circulated a report on the Group's activities and said that changes to the organising committee were being pursued in light of her increased responsibilities as Vice-President.

5.5.5 Plant Science Group

- Anne Campbell tabled a report on the Group's activities.
- She noted that problems with email notification had been resolved.
- Anne Campbell will act as co-ordinator for the time being

5.5.6 Botanic Art Group,

- A time line and other information on the Group's 2014 exhibition had been circulated
- ***Council noted that the cost of the exhibition flyer and drinks for the opening function would be met.***

- A speaker to open the exhibition was required.

5.5.7 Membership

- The report for October had been received.
- Membership stood at 1854, an increase over last year,
- The New Members' welcome and guided walk had been held on Sunday 10th November with around 6 present.
- *Council agreed that staging the New Members function was worthwhile, particularly as most were now contacted by email, and should continue.*

5.5.8 Public Fund

- The return to the Registrar of Environmental Organisations is due.
- David Coutts undertook to talk to David Headon as to his wish to remain as a trustee
- Trustees would need to be re-appointed in May 2014.
- A new Chairman would be needed as Neville Page had indicated he would retire.

5.5.9 Fronds

- The next issue is on track to be delivered by 1st December
- Flix-in-the-Stix are paying for an advertising insert.

5.5.10 `Schools Photography Competition

- Judging had taken place and the prize giving will be on Saturday 16th November at noon.
- *Council recorded its appreciation to Cecilia Melano and Janelle Chalker for running the competition.*

5.5.11 Campsis

- Lesley Jackman had written an article on the Red Centre Garden for Campsis.

5.5.12 Walcott's Open Garden Weekend

- Warwick Wright reported that there had been sufficient Friends volunteers for the Open Garden. However there were less visitors than previously probably due to poor advertising by the Open Garden Scheme.

5.5.13 Thursday Talks

- The theatrette audio system was reported to be still giving problems, Jennifer Salkeld advised that the portable a/v equipment would continue to be in use while ANBG investigated options for the replacement and/or repair of the current equipment.
- There was still the possibility that the Australian Native Plants Society, Canberra Region Inc might contribute to upgrading the theatrette sound system.
- Noting the funds that had been given to the ANBG and to the Public Fund to improve a/v in the Theatrette Lesley Jackman also asked if the ANBG might also investigate the installing of audio loops to assist those in the audience with hearing aids.

5.5.14 External Talks

- Warwick Wright tabled a report on external talks he and Pat had given and were planned.

The meeting was closed at 4:00 PM

D Coutts

President