



Friends of the
Australian National Botanic Gardens

33rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

29 October 2021

Shine Dome, Australian Academy of Science

MINUTES

1. Opening and Confirmation of Agenda

The meeting was opened by the President, Neville Page at 3.30 pm with a Welcome to Country. Neville confirmed that a quorum had been reached with thirty-eight (38) members of the Friends signing the attendance sheet. Guests included Judy West, Executive Director of the ANBG and Megan Donaldson, ANBG Friends Liaison.

After some housekeeping remarks, Neville thanked the Shine Dome and Rachel Doyle, in particular, for being such generous hosts. The Shine Dome allowed Friends to meet face to face in a COVID-safe way when the ANBG did not have the capacity. The agenda was confirmed.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Wendy Antoniak, Kate Armstrong, Andrew and Beryl Bettell, Cliff Brock, Peter Bryon, David and Anne Campbell, Merle Coutts, Lynne Curran, Les Fielke, Lesley Jackman, Marion Jones, Fleur Kelleher, Alan and Rana Munns, Barbara Scott, Brigitta Wimmer and David Young.

3. Acceptance of Minutes of 32nd AGM held on 15 October 2020 

No amendments were made to the [draft minutes placed on the Friends' website](#) on 17 October 2021. Linda Beveridge moved the following resolution that was seconded by David Coutts:

RESOLUTION: that the Minutes of the 32nd AGM of the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens Inc held on 15 October 2020 be accepted as circulated.

CARRIED

4. President's Report

The [President's Report for 2020/21](#) was placed on the Friends website on 17 October 2021 for Friends to view. Neville Page drew on this report and highlighted the following Friends' achievements and activities:

- An MOU with the ANBG was signed in November 2020 along with an MOU with Trustees of the National Parks Conservation Trust supporting the Trustees' Everlasting Circle initiative.
- Council made a detailed submission to the ANBG on its future 10-year Management Plan and is looking forward to the public review next month.
- Growing Friends had a difficult year looking after plants with COVID restrictions but had successfully increased their volunteer numbers and raised over \$8,000 in sales. He also congratulated them on winning a national award from the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens.
- The Project Committee also had a busy year and with the Public Fund recommended the payment of \$67,480 for 9 projects. There was also a \$235,000 commitment made by Friends for the East Core Project supplemented by \$30,000 from the Public Fund.
- There was a good response to the exhibitions run by the Botanic Art Group that managed to meet intermittently during the year.
- The Photographic Group had a successful exhibition while the Schools Photographic Competition held a retrospective exhibition.
- Despite COVID restrictions, Thursday Talks continued and attracted some worthwhile speakers despite limited numbers.
- Council continued to give moral and financial support to the ANBG's Volunteer Program in which many Friends participate.
- Membership of the Friends has increased over the past few years where some other institutions have seen a decrease. There are now 2059 memberships with 2984 members.
- Communications with Friends remains at a high standard through Fronds, the E-newsletters and website.
- Friends were able to celebrate our 30th anniversary at an event in November 2020.
- Flowers, Fruit and Foliage occurred every fortnight and there will be another made this Sunday.
- A new Group was formed this year: the Nature Journaling and Field Sketching Group. Thirty-two people have signed up for its first activity next Monday.
- Friends participated in the Gardens' *Seed the Future*, raising funds for the Seed Bank that was launched by Costa Georgiadis, better known for his role as host of the ABC's Gardening Australia TV programme.

Neville concluded by thanking Judy West, Peter Byron, Megan Menz and Megan Donaldson for their ongoing support, concluding that Friends had a very positive

relationship with the ANBG. He thanked the Friends Council and Convenors of the various Special Interest Groups that have done a great job and made the Friends such a success.

Linda Beveridge then moved the following resolution that was seconded by Barbara Podger:

RESOLUTION: that the President's Report for 2020-2021 be accepted.

CARRIED

5. Treasurer's Report

The [Treasurer's Report for the financial year ended 30 June 2021](#), including the audited financial statements for the Friends and the Friends' Public Fund, was placed on the Friends' website on 17 October for Friends to view.

The Treasurer, Helen Elliot, highlighted the following points from her report:

- Despite COVID restrictions, Friends were fortunate to be able to attend today's meeting.
- The Treasurer's role is an interesting one and she welcomed the support she received from other volunteers.
- The dedication of Special Interest Groups and volunteers meant that some events were still held generating welcome income and celebrating some milestones along the way.
- Several of the Friends' normal annual events were either cancelled, postponed or were severely restricted such as the ever-popular Thursday Talks program, the Growing Friends public plant sales and the *'Meet and Greet'* of new members.
- Thursday Talks managed to raise \$914 in donations from 19 talks compared with \$5000 the previous year.
- Booked Walks were also impacted by the restrictions but still generated \$1,200 in income, slightly down on last year.
- The Growing Friends managed to hold five internal sales of propagated plants with their "click and collect" practice, raising \$8270.
- The Botanic Art Group held two exhibitions during the financial year raising \$8,196 for the Friends.
- The Photographic Group's exhibition in November-December 2020 raised \$1,618 for the Friends.
- Both the Photographic and Botanical Art exhibitions take many, many months to organise, assemble and present the works of art for sale. The Friends are fully appreciative of the group members and of those who volunteer daily at these exhibitions.

- The Friends membership continued to increase and fees reached \$101,440, a 7.5% increase in receipted fees over the previous year. She thanked the membership team for their “great job” managing renewals, updating the database and issuing receipts.
- A special thank you to all the members who renewed their membership and to all the people who became new members. With the uncertainty of COVID and people reassessing their lifestyle, it is not surprising that people want to get out to enjoy nature and to appreciate the beautiful offerings of the Gardens.
- Donations to the Gardens (for 8 projects) and donated artworks totalled \$67,486 - less than previous years.
- Smaller but worthwhile projects included 26 new microscopes (\$10,225) for use by school children; 9 ChatterVoxes (\$4,500) wearable, portable voice amplifiers to be used during guided walks; and an interactive smartboard (\$7,580) installed in the Celia Rosser room for use by special interest groups and educators.
- During the year, the Public Fund made the final payment towards the interpretation signs in the Banksia Garden (\$8,611) and an international speaker for the Seed Science Conference.
- The Friends (including the Public Fund) have \$462,749 cash at bank, although there is a significant commitment to the new East Core Precinct, development on the lawns outside the Pollen Café and to an Online Education Resource “to engage with a broader audience of students and, for teachers to use in their classroom”.
- This year the Public Fund received \$28,893 with often the same members donating each year. In all, 225 donations were received, an increase of 28% on the previous year and it’s pleasing to see the awareness of the Public Fund broadening. Please continue to donate.

Helen thanked all the volunteers who work so tirelessly to generate income and to profile the dedicated work of the Friends. She also thanked the Garden management and staff who are very collegiate, Council members, Public Fund management committee and, of course, other members of the Friends for their continuing support and renewal of membership. Tricia Morton moved the following resolution that was seconded by Warwick Wright:

RESOLUTION: that the Treasurer’s Report, including the financial statements for the Friends and the Friends’ Public Fund, for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 be accepted.

CARRIED

6. Report by Executive Director, Dr Judy West

Judy West began by asking who had been to the reopening of Gardens today and remarked that the flowers were abundant. She said it was a pleasure to work with

Friends - a healthy and happy cohort supporting 16 volunteer programs in the Gardens.

Judy then outlined the major events over the past year:

- National Seed Bank design was launched by the Minister in mid 2021 and construction is scheduled to begin mid 2022.
- Construction of the Ian Potter National Conservatory is underway and expected to be completed by the end of 2022. Concrete will be poured next Monday. There is now a major focus on growing plants for the Conservatory and advanced trees have been ordered from QLD
- The new Management Plan for 2022-2032 will be available for public comment on 1 November 2021 with the final plan expected to be approved by Parliament mid to late 2022. Judy encouraged Friends to “Have a Say”. She went on to say that the ANBG had achieved 86% of the objectives set in the last plan and the new draft plan had reduced the number of goals from 9 to 4.
- MEGAfauna 2021, a new sculpture trail with interpretation signage, map and brochures attracted over 41,000 visitors in June/July with a 97% satisfaction rate. Significant reach was obtained on social media and received positive reviews.
- The Café Lawn redevelopment in part funded by the Friends is underway and should be finished by December 2021. The café opened on the day of the meeting.
- The Friends funded a new conservation video and a link to it was included in the last Friends email update. A short 1-minute version was then shown which was impressive and described by one attendee as *swish*.
- Visitation in the last financial year had risen to 505,273, a 20% increase over the previous year. There were 10,261 students, a 3% increase from 2019/2020 – a great result considering countrywide lockdowns.
- Visitor experiences included not only MEGAfauna but also *Symbiosis* by the Australian Dance Party during the Enlighten Festival in March and a *Magic Garden* concert in April during the Canberra International Music Festival. This April concert featured a music piece *Replica Garden* commissioned by the ANBG.
- There was also interpretation signage and a brochure for a Eucalypt Discovery Walk to promote National Eucalypt Day plus interpretation signage and a booklet for *Who Did that Children’s Trail*. In May 2021, a new Volunteer Programs brochure was developed for National Volunteer Week.
- A visitor survey by the University of SA in March 2021 showed a 99% satisfaction rate from 100% domestic visitors.

- A *Survive and Thrive* project is underway with the support of the World Wide Fund for Nature focusing on bushfire recovery.
- ANBG is also involved in a Tropical Mountaintop Species Project in partnership with James Cook University, the Australian Tropical Herbarium and other botanic gardens to conserve tropical mountaintop species.
- The Conservation and Nursery team is contributing to several other conservation projects through ex-situ plant collections and investigating suitable horticulture techniques for threatened species. The team's new manager is Zoe Knapp.
- The ANBG hosted a virtual Australasian Seed Bank Conference in September 2021, that was opened by Costa Georgiadis. It brought together 425 delegates from 34 countries.
- National Seed Bank staff contributed significantly to the new edition of Plant Germplasm Conservation in Australia published this year. It also was a lead partner in 11 conservation projects during the financial year. Five of these projects were aimed at assessing and collecting taxa impacted by bushfires in SE Australia.
- In all there were 233 new accessions to the National Seed Bank with 155 species from ACT, NSW & QLD including 14 EPBC listed species.
- Throughout the year, the Germination Retesting Program continued to track seed viability and longevity in long-term storage. The National Seed Bank also continued to build its ex situ conservation projects.
- The Seed Bank team and students are sharing knowledge through conference presentations and scientific publications.

Judy concluded by talking about the 16 volunteer programs that the Gardens operate such as Visitors Centre hosts, guides, herbarium mounters, seed bank and nursery volunteers to mention a few. The Gardens are looking forward to welcoming volunteers back with COVID Safety Plans and inductions. She indicated that their initiatives are held up as models within the Department.

7. Election of Office Bearers and Council members

The President handed over the chair of the meeting to Judy West who had agreed to act as the Returning Officer. Judy West declared that there were two vacancies on Council to be filled. The first was for the Executive position of Vice President and the second for one position of ordinary member. Appointments would be for 2 years.

Three people had nominated for the positions and their [personal profiles were included on the Friends' website](#) along with other agenda papers. These profiles were also handed out at the meeting along with a ballot form for the position of ordinary member.

As there was only one nomination for Vice President, the Returning Officer declared Linda Beveridge as the Vice President. Judy West congratulated Linda, who had previously held the position, and done a "great job".

There were two candidates for the position of ordinary member: Kerry Moir and Marg Nicholls. Judy West indicated that there would need to be secret ballot in line with the Constitution and asked people to fill out their ballot papers. Megan Donaldson and Alan Henderson then collected the ballot papers and counted them, before advising Judy of the outcome. Judy West then declared Kerry Moir elected as an ordinary member of Council for the next two years.

Given the calibre of both nominees for the position of ordinary member, David Coutts then raised the possibility of Marg Nicholls being coopted to Council. Helen Elliot responded saying that Marg was already a member of the Public Fund Management Committee.

8. Appointment of Auditor for 2021-22

The Treasurer, Helen Elliot, reported that she was extremely satisfied with the work undertaken by Jeff Brewer of MGI/Joyce Dickson over the past 5 years. After declaring a personal connection with the firm, she recommended that the Friends continue to engage MGI/Joyce Dickson for the 2021-2022 financial year. Helen indicated that Jeff had been particularly helpful and willing to answer questions at any time free of charge.

Marg Nicholls questioned whether there were future plans to canvas a new accounting firm to which Helen stated that the previous Auditor had been used for the Friends for many years. Glenys Bishop then moved the following resolution that was seconded by Pam Cooke:

RESOLUTION: that the appointment of Mr Jeff Brewer, Partner at MGI/Joyce Dickson, as the auditor for the Friends for 2021-2022 be agreed.

CARRIED

Judy West then handed back to Neville Page to chair the meeting.

9. Award of Life Membership

Life Memberships were awarded to Barbara Hamburger and Tricia Morton in recognition of their distinguished service to the Friends of the ANBG. The President congratulated both candidates who had made a significant contribution to the Friends and presented them with framed certificates and a book voucher for the ANBG bookshop. Their contribution is summarized at Attachment A.



L to R Barbara Hamburger, Neville Page, Tricia Morton

10. Any other business

After canvassing the attendees, there was no other business raised and Neville Page closed the meeting at 4.40pm.

Attachment A

Life Members

Nominees must meet the following criteria:

- be a member of the Friends for at least ten (10) years, except in exceptional circumstances.
- have contributed outstanding service to the Friends in at least two of the following:
 - the Council, sub-committees or special interest groups,
 - the management and administration of the Friends,
 - partnership arrangements with the ANBG, e.g. Guides Program, social events
 - the increased community awareness of the scientific, educational, conservation aesthetic and recreational function of the Gardens, and
 - any activities that have advanced the 'Purposes and Objectives' of the Friends.

Barbara Hamburger

Barbara has been a member of the Friends of the ANBG for 16 years and a stalwart of the Thursday Talks Team for 14 years. Over the years she has attended the Thursday Talks every week (except for when she took annual leave). She cheerfully welcomes attendees, collects the voluntary donations and ensures that the number of attendees does not exceed that allowed in the Theatre, then accurately recording the donations and attendance. Since the COVID restrictions she has also been ensuring adherence to seating and check-in restrictions.

Friends ANBG acknowledge Barbara's commitment, energy and reliability during her years of contributing outstanding service.

Tricia Morton

Tricia Morton joined Friends ANBG in 2008, and completed the Volunteer Guides training course that year. Tricia has been a very active member of Friends of ANBG ever since. She is an initiator, tireless organiser, selfless contributor, hands-on achiever and inspiring leader in the Friends for many years.

Tricia has a long history of social events and fund-raising activities through the Social Events and Activities Committee, including being convenor of that group for 5 years. This involved not only functions for the Friends ANBG but also coordinating Friends' support for aspects ANBG activities such as "Summer Sounds" and "Botanicus Luminus". Tricia also supported several activities of other Friends groups, including receptions for art and photography exhibitions, and managed the new booking system

for Thursday Talks that was needed in order to comply with COVID-19 restrictions of audience numbers. Tricia was also closely involved with “Breakfast with the Birds” and “Wake up with the Birds” for several years.

Tricia has not only been leading guides walks very regularly but also managed the Volunteer Guides roster for several years. She was also a Guide with “Flora Explorer” for at least seven (7) years. Tricia has been prominently involved in professional development, and in the development of new themed walks, which have been popular with fellow guides, and other Friends of ANBG, learning more about the native Australian plants in the Gardens.

The Friends of ANBG acknowledge her commitment, and energy during her outstanding service for so many years.