



# EUCALYPT

AAFBG MAGAZINE

No 56 MAY 2021

## A Botanical Tour of Tasmania



Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden, near Burnie.

The Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens has organised a boutique tour of Tasmanian gardens in mid-spring this year, from the 24–30 October.

Much thought has gone into the selection of arboreta, parks and gardens for inclusion in the itinerary. For the first three days we will be based in the centre of Launceston for easy access to local parks and gardens such as City Park and Cataract Gorge Reserve. We also travel to destinations that are further afield such as Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens near Burnie, The Tasmanian Arboretum near Devonport, Wychwood Garden and Nursery at Mole Creek and Culzean at Westbury.

On the way south to Hobart on Day 4 we visit the private gardens at historic ‘Strathmore’ and ‘Patterdale’, the homestead of the Colonial artist, John Glover, close to each other at Evandale. We stop for lunch at the village of Ross where there will be time to see local attractions such as the beautiful old sandstone bridge with its convict carvings. Before reaching Hobart we visit the historic Shene Distillery at Pontville for a tour and tastings.

A full day will be spent in Hobart. We will begin with a tour of the Edible Food Precinct on the Hobart waterfront, close to the CBD. A feature of the project is the use of Tasmanian bush foods in conjunction with European species. We then move on to the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens for a visit that will be hosted by the President of the Friends. There will be ample time to explore and to admire the Gardens wonderful site.

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION  
OF FRIENDS OF  
BOTANIC GARDENS

Incorporation A0026805Z

**Patron:** Dr Philip Moors

**Office bearers**

President: vacant

Vice-Pres: Murray Fletcher, Friend Orange  
BG

Acting Sec/Public Officer: Elizabeth Gilfillan,  
Friend Buninyong BG

Treasurer: Ahmed Rashidi, Friend Wombat  
Hill BG

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Regional BG

Jill Brownlee, Friend Noosa BG

Bob Ducrou, Friend Maroochydore BG

Phoebe LaGerche-Wilsman, Friend Roya  
BG Melbourne

Neville Page, Friend ANBG Canberra

Merrill Schulkes, Friend Ballarat BG.

**Admin Officer**

Chantal deVere

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**Membership**

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 April

\$50 for up to 100 members

\$75 for 101 to 250 members

\$150 for 251-500 members

\$250 for 501-1000 members

\$400 for 1000+ members

***Eucalypt***

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at [eucalyptar@gmail.com](mailto:eucalyptar@gmail.com) at any time to  
discuss your article, ideas, and timelines. We  
are flexible.

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## Tasmanian gardens



A misty, early spring morning in the garden at Old Wesley Dale.

After lunch we will visit the private garden of designer Susan McKinnon who was recently featured on the ABC. This will be followed by a visit to the recently established private garden of a RTBG Friend.

Our final day of garden visits will be spent on Bruny Island. We will have a guided tour of the unique and internationally recognised Inala Jurassic Garden and Nature Museum at South Bruny that has recently been selected for Global Genome Initiative Funding. We will also spend time exploring the nearby garden of Sprokkelwood, created by the artists who own it.

A highlight of the tour will be the opportunity to interact with Friends from different Botanic Gardens across Australia and to meet Tasmanian members of the AAFBG who will host visits to their gardens. Our tour leader will be Kate Heffernan, honorary life member of the Friends of Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, who has an extensive horticultural background and has led several garden tours in Australia and overseas.

The tour has been organised in conjunction with Jon Baines Tours P/L.

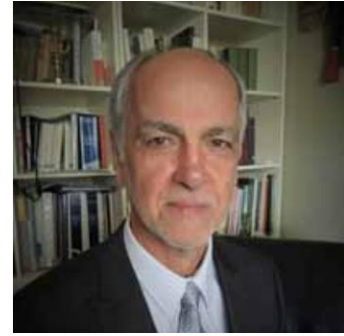
*Merrill Schulkes, AAFBG General Committee Member*

There are more pictures at the end of *Eucalypt* to entice you to go on this tour



# Past President's report for year April 2020 to March 2021

*Wayne Harvey*



Our last AGM was held in October 2020, deferred from April of that year and held in a virtual environment. The current AGM is back in the usual month of April, held immediately after the end of the reporting year, and here we are in a hybrid environment of face-to-face and virtual. Maybe things are starting to become normal again.

At last year's AGM I commented on the drought and the wildfires that challenged so many Friends groups, compounded by the social disruption of the pandemic shutdowns. And now our environment has just delivered the trifecta in some eastern states, re-affirming the need for communities to be resilient and be prepared for almost anything. ... As important as the Government's cash injections are, we should not overlook the contribution by the unpaid workforce, the volunteers, who in every community continue to make a difference.

National Volunteers Week will be held next month across the country, staged by Volunteering Australia. This designated Week in May is designed to acknowledge the contribution of Australia's six million volunteers. Each year these volunteers are estimated to give over 600 million hours of their time, their skills and their experience. While that sounds like a lot, it equates to 100 hours per person per year – 2 hours each week. Recent evidence suggests that two-thirds of those volunteers stopped volunteering in 2020 because of the pandemic. A study quoted by Volunteering Australia showed that 'social purpose' organisations (ie those for whom commercial profit is not the driver) continue to lose one in four volunteers due to illness, caution or caring responsibilities.

We also know that while volunteers come at no direct cost, volunteers usually need orientation, supervision, and the infrastructure through which they make their contribution – and all of that has a cost – maybe not obvious but still a cost to someone.

Volunteering Australia suggests we need to reimagine how volunteers, and the organisations they help, do things and have launched a 'Reinvigorating Volunteering Action Plan' to begin the work. There is a view in business circles that the so-called 'Rinse and Repeat' approach is not enough when re-establishing an organisation after a major adverse event. Going back to doing the same things in the same ways is not always the best way to keep moving ahead.

Quoting the CEO of Volunteering Australia '...volunteers make a huge contribution to Australia's social and economic well-being and are now needed more than ever to ensure stability and recovery in the wake of COVID-19'.

The AAFBG represents a small segment of those 6 million volunteers and provides a forum for volunteer workers in the gardens, parks and the arboreta that are found in most towns and cities. We like to celebrate volunteers. Our annual Handbury Awards are one way in which we can acknowledge exceptional contributions to gardens, parks and arboreta. Since launching the Handburys a couple of years ago, the response has been very heartening, and we have more Handburys to present later today. Clearly, a number of our member organisations are keen to acknowledge their own volunteers. These annual awards are named in honour of Dr Geoffrey Handbury, a generous benefactor to the Association. We are delighted to welcome Penny Fowler, representing the Handbury Family, to make the presentations for us this year.

The task of running the AAFBG falls to the Management Committee and I thank each of them for their own contribution – always as willing volunteers. AAFBG will, through its Management Committee and its member organisations, continue to have access to a group of enthusiastic and willing people to help the Association to bring value to its members and to grow its capacity to do even more to advance the objectives of the Association.

## Financial statements

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### Balance Sheet

As of March 2021

**AAFBG**  
 Australian Association of Friends of Botanic  
 Gardens  
 PO Box 62  
 ABN: 99 467 025 064  
 Email: info@friendsbotanicgardens.org

Assets	
Bendigo Bank 104571476	\$522.00
Bendigo Term Deposit # 2503	\$7,074.87
Bendigo Term Deposit # 2505	\$11,562.34
Trade Debtors	\$1,000.00
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$20,159.21</b>
Liabilities	
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$20,159.21</b>
Equity	
Retained Earnings	\$32,570.72
Current Earnings	-\$12,411.84
Historical Balancing Account	\$0.33
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$20,159.21</b>

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### Profit & Loss Statement

April 2020 To March 2021

**AAFBG**  
 Australian Association of Friends of Botanic  
 Gardens  
 PO Box 62  
 ABN: 99 467 025 064  
 Email: info@friendsbotanicgardens.org

Income	
Interest	\$214.51
Membership Subscriptions	\$225.00
Membership Subs	\$100.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$539.51</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$539.51</b>
Expenses	
Administration	
Administrative Services	\$8,699.31
Conference (staff)	\$1,500.00
Insurance	\$138.44
Postage and Delivery	\$450.89
Post Office Box	\$136.00
Printing & Photocopying	\$847.22
Promotion & Marketing	-\$768.68
Website	\$1,345.00
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>\$12,348.18</b>
Bank Charges	\$14.20
Committee	
Teleconferences	\$39.11
<b>Total Committee</b>	<b>\$39.11</b>
subscriptions	\$469.86
Gifts and Donations	\$80.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$12,951.35</b>
<b>Operating Profit</b>	<b>-\$12,411.84</b>
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Net Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>-\$12,411.84</b>

# Acting Secretary's report

*Elizabeth Gilfillan*



Two AGM's within six months! I would like to commend your committee and AO Chantal deVere, for continued dedication to Friends of Botanic Gardens; as the workload grew so did their achievements.

A members' survey has been produced and ready for circulation. Support of the Eurobodalla Friends as they move forward with conference 2022 and we look forward to attending the event.

The Information Kit, originally produced by our founding AAFBG committee, has been reviewed once more; refreshing this document is a valuable exercise for committee and our members. It is available on the website.

This is another great edition of our much-appreciated *Eucalypt* magazine. The hard copy remains a valuable communication tool which sits on coffee tables and desks for multiple reference.

A lot of valuable work has gone into the preparation of a unique Tasmanian tour of botanical experience, now on offer. Tour brochures now available online and tickets are selling rapidly. It should provide a much-needed boost to AAFBG funds.

Handbury awards highlighting the great work being achieved. The number of recipients has increased this time and it is a privilege to read the achievements of our Members and a great pleasure to have this opportunity for acknowledgement.

Friends and volunteers supporting each other by membership of your peak body AAFBG, a conduit for interaction and valuable information. The larger Gardens contribute an important mentor role. Memberships of AAFBG members are changing, some falling off and some growing. Appreciation and importance of the role of botanic gardens must be emphasised, communication a key ingredient. Botanic gardens Australia-wide are diverse and scattered, not normally high on funding priority lists for administrative bodies. This highlights the importance of supporting bodies, like ours.

Grant funding endeavours are strengthened by membership numbers and supporting funds raised, we are continually aiming to raise members profiles and encourage growth of membership.

I encourage members to add emphasis to the membership of your peak body, by adding AAFBG logo to your publications and links to the AAFBG website [www.friendsbotanicgardens.org](http://www.friendsbotanicgardens.org)

Spread the word. Friendship through Botanic Gardens.

# Administrative Officer's report

*Chantal de Vere*



I have been with you for just one year now and it's been quite a busy one, learning the role. I thank the committee for their help and patience during this time.

Since the last AGM, which is just six months ago, things have really sped up within the Association with work on the tour and the conference. Over the last months I managed to get an article written by AB Bishop and published by Gardening Australia which showcased the work of the volunteers around Australia.

It has been pleasing to get a Rockhampton Friend to join with us and some of the lost gardens Friends groups are now back with us. Gardens usually get lost through oversight and changes within committees and I have been working through these lost gardens.

I am hoping to bring those groups that do not have a web page of their own into taking advantage of the AAFBG page as we provide a service freely to those groups who would like to have an online presence. Friends of Gisbourne took up the offer this last year which was a great outcome.

Social media use has increased to cross promote all the groups I can when I see their news stories. Primarily using Facebook and Instagram and I am hoping that more promotion will occur to get the word out to members of the public about the great work that is done.

The fortnightly *e-ucalypt news* has been full of news and I am hoping that I may be able to get more from the Friends we never hear from. I feel that it is important to share the news to strengthen the community of groups and to know that they are not alone. Click rates for the *e-ucalypt news* has been constant at over 60 per cent of members and while that doesn't sound good to some, it is above the norm. Of course, I'd like it to be higher.

The survey that has been developed is almost ready to send out and we expect to have that on its way within the next meeting cycle. During the year, the Information Kit has also been reworked and is uploaded to the website ready to be used by Friends groups.

I have experienced two AGMs and the Handburys which are always highlights to me. How important the work is that is done by volunteers.

# Report of AGM

Murray Fletcher, Vice-President

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The 2021 AGM of AAFBG was held on Monday 12 April at the Waite Campus of the University of Adelaide. More than 20 people were able to attend in person and it was particularly good to have representatives from SE Queensland, including our Admin Officer Chantal de Vere, having had a three-day lockdown imposed in the greater Brisbane area in the previous week. And a number of additional people attended via Zoom. This worked really well, although some of the presenters wandered about the stage and were more of a disembodied voice than a visual presence to those watching from remote locations.

The formalities of the AGM itself proceeded fairly smoothly with Ahmed presenting his Treasurer's report on line from Ballarat. Following the election of officer bearers, ably managed by John Zwar from AALBG Port Augusta, the Handbury Awards were announced with certificates presented by Penny Fowler, Deputy Chairperson of the RBG Melbourne but, more importantly, Geoffrey Handbury's niece. Details of the remarkable individuals and groups who received these awards are featured elsewhere in this newsletter.

A short video promoting the 2022 AAFBG conference to be hosted by the Friends of Eurobodalla Regional BG, from 29 April to 1 May 2022, was followed by a short presentation on behalf of BGANZ by John Sandham, former President of that organisation. BGANZ is in the process of transforming from an Incorporated Association to the Company Limited by Guarantee – details are available at [BGANZ.org.au](http://BGANZ.org.au). Following the formal close of the AGM, an informal members' forum covered a number of areas, including *e-ucalypt news*, *Eucalypt*, the impact of COVID-19, student scholarships and other activities of various members around Australia.

The afternoon session featured four presentations followed by guided walks in the Waite Arboretum led by Friends of the Arboretum. The first presentation was by Myles Ritchie who





Urrbrae House at Waite Institute



Left: In the Waite Arboretum

beamed in live from the University of Hawaii. Myles focussed on development of tree management plans to combat the impact of climate change. He has a particular focus on heritage trees but all public trees in a Mediterranean climate, such as that in Adelaide, are at the highest risk. He predicted that, within 50 years, 20–50% of plants in botanic and urban landscapes will face temperatures never experienced before and some will need to be replaced with species more suited to these new conditions. The research being undertaken by Myles is based on a number of locations where a variety of trees are maintained including the Waite Arboretum itself.

The second presentation was by Scott Hawkens of the University of Adelaide who spoke on the Miyawaki Mini Forest concept. Mini forests have been used to model biodiversity management with their small scale being more efficient and informative than using a full scale forest. More trees can lead to cooler cities, helping to mitigate the effects of increasing temperatures. The concept has developed from cultural sites such as Shinto shrines in Japan which have small forests dating back thousands of years. The technique also enables a forest to be generated in 30 years instead of the 200+ years necessary for a climax forest to grow naturally. Tiny forests in the Netherlands and Belgium, which are managed by citizen scientists, increase the biodiversity of those cities.

Glenn Williams, of the Waite Arboretum, spoke to us about Treenet, an independent non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the urban forest for liveable towns and cities (see [treenet.org](http://treenet.org)). One aspect of Glenn's talk was the work he is doing to document trees planted as memorials, particularly of soldiers who lost their lives in wars. Many avenues were planted as memorial avenues of honour following the First World War but Glenn has now documented more than 600 avenues of honour across Australia, some lining streets, some as small copses and others as single trees. A magnificent tree-lined street in Hahndorf, SA, was planted by school children in 1885. Some of these avenues of honour are not recognised as such by their local communities so Treenet is aiming to resurrect recognition of these memorials across Australia.



The final presentation was a double act by Jennifer Gardner, visiting associate of the Waite Arboretum, and Marion McDuire, GIS consultant. With the support of the Friends of the Waite Arboretum, they have developed an app which identifies every tree in the Arboretum and its exact position. This allows users to locate every specimen of any species of interest or find particular trees within the collection. The data was generated with the aid of aerial photographs but this has since been considerably enhanced to include the ferns and palms which form the understorey, invisible under the tree canopy in aerial photographs. The understorey has been incorporated into the database through painstaking on-ground work by an army of volunteers to geo-locate and identify every understorey plant. The value of this app to the Waite is clear but the technology can be applied to map any garden or park. The afternoon sessions were also available on ZOOM but only Myles Ritchie and Annie McGeachy stoically stayed to the end. The day ended with guided walks in the Arboretum led by Friends of the Arboretum.

Overall, an enjoyable and informative day made all the more significant because of the opportunity, after a year of disappointments, to come together as an organisation face to face again. Thanks to the University of Adelaide who waived the fee for the use of the Charles Hawker Conference room and to the Friends of the Waite Arboretum for providing a delicious morning tea and providing guided tours of the Arboretum at the end of the afternoon sessions. Credit also to AAFBG President Wayne Harvey for his organisation of the day.

# Recipients of 2021 Handbury Awards

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The Handbury awards honour the memory of Dr Geoff Handbury AO who was a great philanthropist supporting hospitals, schools, sporting and health initiatives, the AAFBG and much more. The committee in 2019 decided that an annual award be made in two categories, to a Friends group or individual member who had done meritorious work in their Garden or community.



## Category 1. Selection criteria

Individuals who have shown a long-term dedication to fostering the cause of Botanic Gardens through volunteering, including writing, promotion, advocacy and education, or through a significant financial contribution at a local, state or national level.

**Margaret Lynch**, Friends of Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden

For decades of inspiring leadership as guide, mentor, educator and nursery volunteer.

**Ronda and Peter Hall**, Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Port Augusta Inc.

For decades of dedicated contribution in education, propagation and garden maintenance and development.

**Janet O'Hehir**, Friends of Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Trust

For remarkable dedication to advocacy, education and garden development and for the indomitable spirit she brings to the gardens

**Beth and Raoul Dixon**, Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens

For long-term dedication to the activities of FBBG through guiding, education and administration.

**Kevin Stokes**, Friends of Hunter Region Botanic Gardens

For long-term contribution to the establishment and development of the Gardens, education and administration.

**Kevin McDonald**, OAM. Friends of Hunter Region Botanic Gardens

For long-term contribution to the establishment and development of the Gardens, education and guiding.

## Category 2. Selection criteria

A Friends Group who has made a major contribution to their respective garden/s through fundraising for major works, or by creating improvements by collective volunteer effort or through a significant financial contribution.

**Friends of Kings Park and Botanic Garden. WA**

For major contribution to Kings Park, through fundraising for major works and volunteer effort.

**Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra.**

For major contribution by collective volunteer endeavour and financial contribution to major projects.

**Friends of Eurobodalla Botanic Garden.**

For major contribution in support of major works and volunteer endeavour.

**Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens.**

For outstanding contribution by collective volunteer endeavour and securing funding for major works.

**Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Growing Friends Group.**

For major contribution over many years of collective volunteer effort and financial contribution. Received by Dr Anne Campbell at the meeting.

**Friends of Orange Botanic Gardens. Propagation Group.**

For major contribution by preservation of threatened species by volunteer effort and for financial contribution. Received by Murray Fletcher at the meeting.

**The Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Port Augusta. Inc.**

For outstanding contribution to the foundation of AALBG and continued collective volunteer and financial contribution over decades. Received by John Zwar at the meeting



John Zwar from the Award winning Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden with Penny Fowler, niece of Dr Handbury, who presented the Awards.



Janet O'Hehir at Camperdown Botanic Gardens



The two Kevins from Hunter Region Botanic Garden.



Above: (l to r: Elizabeth Gilfillan, Beth Dixon and Raoul Dixon



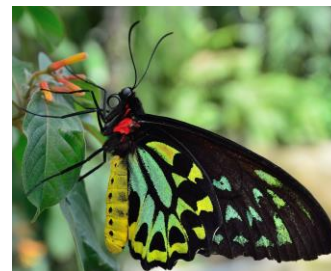
Friends of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens



# A haven for butterflies

Friends of Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens  
Tanawha, Queensland

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The spectacular, but vulnerable to extinction, Richmond Birdwing Butterfly, is resident in our Gardens. To survive and prosper these butterflies require their larvae's primary food source, the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly Vine *Pararistolochia praevenosa*.

Some years ago a small trellis with vines was installed and has been used by the butterflies. However, the Friends and Council decided the butterflies deserved a much bigger and better home.

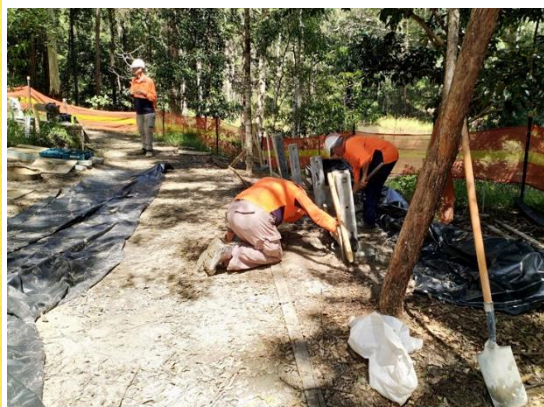
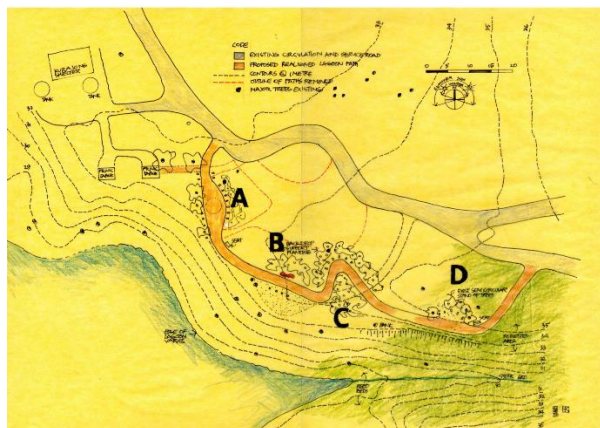
An area alongside the lagoon was chosen and four structures (nodes) will be constructed to evoke the life cycle of the butterfly. Each node will consist of a series of posts, each made from two pieces of hardwood. The posts will be arranged to form frames and will be linked by stainless steel wires to support the vines. Depending on location, the posts will be of varying heights up to 4 metres, and will slope towards or away from the viewer. A scale model of the first node has been made and has been successfully used to help all involved to understand and appreciate the three dimensional appearance of the structure.

It is intended that many of the posts will be topped by coloured artistic elements adding to the visual interest of the installation. These pieces will be designed and installed by Manning Daly Art, a team of local artists with great experience in creating public art works.

Construction of the first node is well advanced, with the timber posts shaped, drilled and treated, 16 holes each 1.6 m deep have been dug, reinforcing and steel supports fitted and concrete poured. The posts will be erected as the next step.

This project is very much Friends driven. Design concepts and details, procurement and project management and construction supervision and labour are all being carried out by Friends using their working-life experience. The Friends have engaged a consulting engineer to design the footings and confirm the integrity of the structures. Council has been deeply involved in the project, particularly with the safety concerns about the construction activities. The Friends have financed the bulk of the project, helped by a very generous donation by benefactors Valerie and Gerry Zwart. Council has provided a grant for the artistic elements.

The Friends are looking forward to completing construction in the coming months so that the vines, now flourishing in our propagation shade-house, can be planted and butterfly production started.



# A delay at Thurston Gardens in Fiji

*A message from one of our Associate Members*

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Like everywhere else, Thurston Gardens in the capital of the Fiji Islands, Suva, has been hit by COVID-19. Links with and information about Thurston Gardens, also known as the Suva Botanical Gardens, have been stretched and tenuous. My personal link to this historical and valuable facility has been as past Chair of a Citizens-Central Government-Suva City Council [SCC] group dedicated to restoring and also further developing Thurston Gardens. However, my initial connection was much earlier as a schoolboy in the late 1950s – my boarding school at that time, Suva Boys Grammar, was only 300 meters away from this site.

Our group developed a Master Plan for the enhancement of Thurston Gardens over a 3-year period from 2014, involving extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. Funding for the Plan had come principally from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and The German Corporation for International Development. (GIZ). While the Suva City Council Administrator is most supportive of the overall Master Plan, the impact of COVID-19 on Fiji's economy has been huge, given our high dependence on tourism. There are too many other competing demands for reduced Government funding at this difficult time to have the Gardens' project supported just yet. We will have to bide our time and explore other funding sources, in addition to those from Government.

One of the most pressing problems is the drainage of water from the Gardens. These sit on an historical site where the original indigenous village of Suva, which existed from at least the 1820s, was located. It is very close to sea level and is only 100 metres or so from the Suva harbour. This situation, coupled with Suva's high rainfall and run-off from adjacent slopes, means that there is a perennial problem with water which impacts the growth of many plants and trees in a negative way.

The Fijian Government had provided funding to enable the Gardens to be drained before we could commence implementing the Master Plan. Unfortunately, we were not able to proceed with the vital drainage, mainly because the funds had to be diverted for use in national rehabilitation efforts in respect of severe tropical cyclone 'Winston' which struck Fiji in 2016 and caused severe damage and significant loss of life. Efforts subsequently to secure the necessary capital funds to enable the drainage and initial follow-up to proceed have not been successful.

Many people and entities, including the SCC, would love to see the Master Plan fully implemented as it is an excellent plan with broad stakeholder input but the economic conditions in Fiji are understandably not the best at present.

A final note: I am an avid reader of *Eucalypt*.

*Robin Yarrow*



# A beautiful suburban garden

*Friends of Stony Range Botanic Garden*

*Dee Why, New South Wales*

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Stony Range Botanic Garden is nestled in the beachside suburb of Dee Why and is a green oasis amongst medium density housing. It's 3 hectares of natural bushland are set amongst fantastic Hawkesbury sandstone outcrops with winding soft natural tracks and hard surface paths suitable for all abilities. Indigenous plants from other areas in Australia have also been used and speciality plantings such as banksias, bush foods etc have been established. With support from the Northern Beaches Council, over the last 60 years a team of dedicated volunteers have turned a derelict and weed infested area into a bushland haven and respite from the busy world outside.

At the entrance, the Queensland Tree Waratahs, planted for the Bi-Centenary in 1988, delight in summer and the size of the large Staghorns on the Sydney Red Gums always amaze. An open area by the pool has seating and an undercover area ready for entertainment or just relaxing. The nearby BBQ area leads to a circular wheelchair friendly Sensory Track encouraging the use of all five senses while wandering along the path.

In 2001 the Federation Cascades were created, tumbling from the upper reaches of the Range down a natural watercourse to provide moisture and coolness to the surrounding areas and water where birds can bathe. Another cool haven in the heat of summer is the Rainforest where a collection of trees and ferns from rainforest areas around Australia can be found. A place to sit and relax.

There are leaflets describing plants that can be found along the tracks with information on their use plus magnifying glasses and 'Find Me' leaflets for children to use as they walk around the Range. Two areas have been set aside especially for nature play – a Magic Circle Area where children can make banksia men, help build a Dragon's Nest or decorate a fairy house. Next to the BBQ Area there is a Secret Hideout Area where they can build a cubby house, climb a rope ladder or walk along a rope bridge.

An upper path also leads to a Bird Wheel where the sound of bird calls can be guessed and there is a Photo Frame for taking a souvenir photo of the visit.

As it is 60 years since the official opening of Stony Range in 1961 there is to be a special Diamond Jubilee Spring Festival on Sunday 12 September 2021 with plant sales and advice from the Stony Range Nursery and the Northern Beaches Australian Plants Group plus displays, live native animals, music, children's activities, coffee shop and BBQ. Come and visit.

*Eleanor Eakins, Hon. Secretary.*



Entrance memorial gate; Rocky ledges; Cascade; Rainforest; Magic circle fairy house.





## THRIVING TOGETHER

Resilience and Renewal in a Changing World

[AAFBG2022@erbg.org.au](mailto:AAFBG2022@erbg.org.au)



Friends of  
EUROBODALLA  
REGIONAL  
BOTANIC  
GARDEN

29 April  
- 1 May 2022

The 2022 AAFBG Conference, 'Thriving Together: Resilience and Renewal in a Changing World', is taking shape at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden on the South Coast of NSW. Our program will showcase inspiring speakers and provide participants with opportunities to connect, reflect and re-energise.

We are excited to announce that our keynote speaker will be Professor Tim Entwisle, Director and Chief Executive at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Victoria. Tim will bring his global and local experience and insights to share with conference participants and will join us for the entire day on Saturday.

Our program will start on the Friday afternoon with registrations and a welcome cocktail party at our newly renovated Visitors Centre.

A session on Community Partnerships will involve Eurobodalla leaders from across a range of disciplines and institutions and an interactive session of Friends Groups will bring new perspectives. In addition, our Jenny Liney scholarship recipients will bring a youthful perspective to our theme and our Conference Dinner will be served with a dose of fun and frivolity.

For more information please email the Conference Organising Committee at [AAFBG2022@erbg.org.au](mailto:AAFBG2022@erbg.org.au). Please keep an eye out for Expressions of Interest coming soon – for your chance to contribute to the Conference.



Sugar Glider, a survivor of the ERBG bushfire.

Photo by Michael Anlezark

# RBGE adapts to COVID-19

*Friends of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, an Associate member in Scotland.  
Edinburgh, Scotland*

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Last year was to have been a year of celebrations at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the establishment of a botanic garden in Edinburgh. But the arrival of COVID and lockdown in mid-March brought about the closure of the Botanic Garden and the cancellation or postponement of these planned events.

When the Garden reopened to the general public it was, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future, on a booked slot system. For the Friends it was clear that all tours, domestic and overseas, would have to be postponed, including the day tours which so many Friends enjoy from May to July. Talks and coffee mornings also ceased, and when it became evident that these were unlikely to take place in the RBGE premises, the Friends Committee and the Membership Office had to quickly acquire the skills to move these events on to a digital platform!

We were privileged to have Dr Brett Summerell, Director of the Australian Institute of Botanical Science, give us a fascinating talk about the effect of the bushfires on the plant life in Australia with particular reference to the devastation wreaked on the Blue Mount Botanic Garden at Mount Tomah. We had an audience of nearly 350 for that talk – many more than if we had hosted the talk in the lecture theatre at the RBGE!

Over the summer months in 2020, until the most recent lockdown (from 1 January 2021), the shop and cafes were open. During the Festive period, the popular light show went ahead attracting plenty of visitors at a time when there was virtually no other outdoor evening entertainment. This year, the Friends have had to postpone tours – but have conducted a series of on-line coffee mornings and evening talks. Pending the COVID position, an autumn series of talks is planned which may follow a blended approach – in person and on-line.



A drone photo that shows the existing public and research houses but also the decrepit boiler house to be replaced by the shiny new efficient energy centre.

The Friends Committee will be working with the Membership and Events team to raise funds in support of projects in the Edinburgh and regional gardens which will include the major seven year refurbishment program. The Biomes project is ambitious, but necessary, and will see the research glass houses being replaced, the original Victorian glasshouses renovated, a new Plant Health facility established and a

Biome constructed to enable visitors to have an enhanced experience when viewing those plants which require a protected environment. Progress with this project can be followed on the RBGE website at <http://www.rbge.org.uk/news/articles/regeneration-of-a-lifetime-at-royal-botanic-gardenedinburgh/>

The Friends look forward to welcoming overseas visitors again to the RBGE and its regional gardens. In the meantime, sign up to the RBGE newsletters, or Facebook to hear about the on-line events which might be of interest to your members.



# The amazing case of Dr Ward

A new picture book for children about plants

By Jackie Kerin and Tull Suwannakit

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When you peel a banana, bite into a pear, when you smell a rose, pop a fuchsia bud, or scrape your knee climbing an old pine tree, do you ever wonder how these plants came to this country?



This is the question I pose for children in the story of *The Amazing Case of Dr Ward*. Now a beautiful illustrated book for children, it was a long time in the creating.

It began with a passion for my local botanical garden in Williamstown. Located by Port Phillip Bay on Boon Wurrung Country and designed by Edward Latrobe Bateman, the Gardens opened to the public in 1860. No sweeping lawns or grand vistas, they are embracing and intimate with a hint of the magical; Bateman's inviting design of winding paths and secret lawns remains intact. The 'bones' of the plant collection include mature specimens from around the world: South America, Europe, the Middle East, the United States, Japan and South East Asia.

It was while contemplating the Gardens and thinking about the movement of plants around the world, and the irrevocable change to indigenous landscapes, I stumbled into the story of the Wardian case – the wood and glass box that revolutionised the plant trade in the 1800s. I learned how a London doctor, Dr Ward, conducted a successful experiment with plant-filled cases, between the Sydney Botanic Gardens and London, in 1833-34. And how as a result, cases of plants were soon travelling the oceans carrying useful and ornamental specimens across hemispheres. The cases quickly became known as 'Wardian cases', after the good doctor.



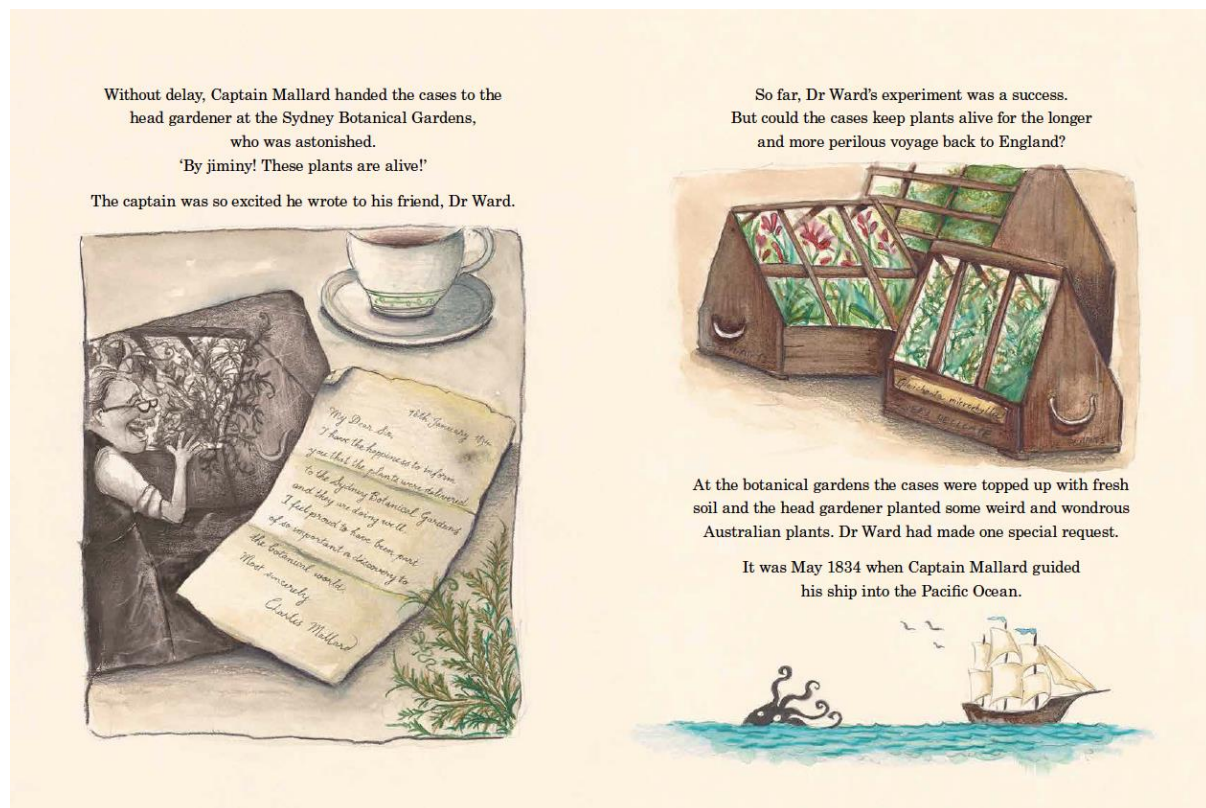
All this research manifested in a performance, developed in collaboration with violinist Sarah Depasquale and Loraine Callow (Program Development Officer Williamstown BG), launched in my beloved local Gardens and dedicated to the Friends group. Sarah and I subsequently went on to perform the story in the Kyneton Botanic Gardens for the combined anniversaries of the Horticultural Society (125 years) and Gardens (160 years). We also spent a wonderful afternoon in the Melton Gardens under a shady Eucalypt.

Our performances have been well received wherever we go but I was keen to take the story one step further and create an engaging version for children – one that didn't require our presence. The result is a beautiful 32 page book. Illustrator, Tull Suwannakit's warmth and humour puts shine on the story and by my count, he has painted 61 identifiable plants!

My aim in the writing of *The Amazing Case of Dr Ward* is to draw children into the botanical realm, ignite curiosity and inspire closer observation of plants. And perhaps, when we understand the changes that have been wrought by the introduction of exotic plants, we can think more clearly about what is being acknowledged during an Acknowledgement of Country.

It's my hope that the story of *The Amazing Case of Dr Ward* will not only be enjoyed by children but will become a valued resource for Friends groups and will assist in the telling of the history of our botanic gardens around Australia and beyond.

*Jackie Kerin*



*The Amazing Case of Dr Ward* was released in March 2021 and is available for order from Ford Street Publishing along with free downloadable teaching notes and activities.

<https://fordstreetpublishing.com/book/the-amazing-case-of-dr-ward/>

Bookshops can order from the distributor, New South Books, who also serve New Zealand.

<https://www.newsouthbooks.com.au/>

## Why not count birds in your botanic garden?

Wayne Harvey and Murray Fletcher



*It really shows the importance that birds came to have in our lives this year. As our personal worlds became more restricted and quieter, birds offered a much-needed connection with the outside world and brought us a sense of solace and delight.*

BirdLife Australia's chief bird nerd, Sean Dooley.

Birdlife Australia is a national organisation recording bird numbers and championing bird conservation programs throughout the country since 1901. The organisation relies on volunteers to record and conserve bird populations. One of their major annual events is the *Aussie Backyard Bird Count*.

Thousands of people across Australia took part in the 2020 Backyard Bird Count. About 108,000 volunteers made daily observations during one week in October last year, recording 4.6 million birds over the seven days. Participation rates rose substantially in every state, but in Victoria, which had the longest and strictest lockdown measures, the numbers more than doubled. Recognition of bird species is made easier through an identification system provided by Birdlife Australia.

Participation in the *Aussie Backyard Bird Count* requires little more than 20 minutes of casual observing for seven consecutive days in any outdoor environment. The 2020 Count saw record numbers of young people taking part, with more than 1500 schools participating. Birdlife Australia could not tell us if any counts took place in botanic gardens last year, but if you did it in your garden, please let us know. The scale of the project makes the *Backyard Bird Count* one of Australia's biggest citizen science activities.

The data gathered during the *Aussie Backyard Bird Count* is entered into BirdLife Australia's databases for use by researchers and volunteers.

The top ten species recorded in the October 2020 count were Rainbow Lorikeets, Noisy Miners, Magpies, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Galahs, House Sparrows, Welcome Swallows, Silver Gulls, the Common Myna and the Australian White Ibis.

Dates for the 2021 *Count* have been released, 18-24 October – see [aussiebirdcount.org.au](https://aussiebirdcount.org.au). Friends groups not already participating in the *Aussie Backyard Bird Count* are encouraged to consider taking part in the 2021 Count by counting the birds seen in their botanic gardens, arboreta or parks, and encouraging other local groups to join with them.

# A long association – the Alistair Watt collection

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens  
Geelong, Victoria

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Alistair and Julie Watt and the Pacific Rim Walkway.

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens are delighted with the recently landscaped southern annexe of the Gardens. The exciting highlight is the Pacific Rim Garden which displays a unique collection of plants, many of which originated in Alistair and Julie Watt's Otway Ridge Arboretum.

In July 1988, Alistair spoke to an enthusiastic group of Friends about plant collecting in Gondwanaland. He had been collecting in Chile, New Caledonia and Fiji and presented beautiful slides to illustrate the basic southern hemisphere families and genera – Araucariaceae and Podocarpaceae, with ancient broadleaves from the Cunoniaceae, Aquifoliaceae and Nothofagaceae.

On a collecting trip to New Caledonia in 1987, with botanists from Sydney and Adelaide Botanic Gardens, Alistair secured seed and plants which may not be imported today. He has introduced approximately 300 plants to Australia, including many species of conifer. The New Caledonian collection at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and the Gondwanan collection in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Garden at Geelong have been enriched by the introduction of these plants.

The Watt Collection is a key collection for Geelong Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park into the future. A memorandum of understanding was negotiated with the Otway Ridge Arboretum, Lavers Hill, to access plants, cuttings and propagation material from their extensive collection. The Friends financially supported this agreement to enhance the diversity of plants in our Gardens. A visit to the Otway Ridge Arboretum was organised as part of the Association of Friends Conference held in Geelong in May 2016. Participants appreciated the unique collection of southern hemisphere plants and Alistair's enthusiasm.

Geelong horticultural staff visited Lavers Hill many times to take cuttings and seeds to grow on in the nursery. Some of the podocarps and araucarias nurtured at the nursery for over two decades were planted in Eastern Park as part of the revitalisation program. Many others, including a selection from Chile, are now growing in our new Southern Hemisphere landscape.

Alistair has published two outstanding books which should be compulsory reading for those interested in plants and plant collecting: *Robert Fortune, a plant hunter in the Orient* (2017) and *Purdom and Farrer, plant hunters on the eaves of China* (2019).

This year, the Friends welcomed Alistair, Julie and Gardens Co-ordinator, Ashley Filipovski, to speak about the new Pacific Rim Garden: its landscape, the planning rationale and the valuable collection we now have on display. It is wonderful that we now have many unique southern hemisphere plants growing in a beautifully landscaped setting, including a beautiful *Dacrydium nausoriense* collected in the mountains behind Nandi in Fiji. Alistair is an esteemed modern day plant collector and long-time Friend of Geelong Botanic Gardens.

*Jayne Salmon OAM*



# Visiting Gardens after the AGM

Murray Fletcher

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On our way home from the AGM in Adelaide, we decided to do a loop through SE South Australia and western Victoria to Mildura via Mount Gambier. On our journey, we visited a number of botanic gardens with three worth promoting to travelling AAFBG members.



The entrance to Pangarinda Botanic Gardens.

anybody passing through the Murray Mallee.

The first is the relatively young Pangarinda Botanic Gardens at East Wellington, SA. This is a beautiful garden of Australian natives, specialising in South Australian and Western Australian species, including several threatened species, all labelled with their scientific names. The walk meanders through garden beds with many species flowering at the time of our visit bringing in New Holland and Spiny Cheeked Honeyeaters, Wattlebirds and even the delightful Elegant Parrots. A must see for

The second garden is in stark contrast to Pangarinda, being the fourth oldest in Australia at Hamilton in western Victoria. A classic Victorian garden taking up an entire city block, it features a range of magnificent mature trees, including several listed as significant heritage trees in Victoria. Throw in an ornate fountain, a central rotunda and a large aviary (the latest version opened only on 8 April this year) and you have all the elements of a classic Victorian garden. The original gardener's cottage is now home to the Friends of Hamilton BG and features a delightfully colourful cottage garden.

The third garden is an old friend, the Australian Inland Botanic Garden (AIBG) in Mildura. Of particular note this time was the field of Sturt's desert pea, *Swainsona formosa*, including red, pink and red/white varieties amongst the familiar red and black flowers. In the centre of the garden is their 'Wow Tree', an old Oil Mallee, *Eucalyptus oleosa*, which has a lignotuber estimated to be around 2500 years old – Wow indeed!



The 'Wow Tree', *Eucalyptus oleosa*, at the Australian Inland Botanic Garden, Mildura; and Murray in the cottage garden at the Hamilton BG.

A special addition to our visit happened on the night before we visited when AIBG's Ken and Ann Mansell walked into the same restaurant where we were dining and refreshed a friendship which started at the AFBG conference in Orange in 2004 (before it turned into the AAFBG).

# A UK Forum modelled on the AAFBG

*Friends of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, an Associate member in Scotland.  
Edinburgh, Scotland*

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June 2011 – I took up the role of Convener of the Edinburgh Friends at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. I had just retired after approximately 39 years in the NHS, and looked forward to spending my retirement widening my longstanding interest in plants – botanically and horticulturally. Little did I realise at the time how fortunate I had been in finding myself involved with one of the greatest botanic gardens in the world!

During my time as Convener I came across the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens. I was impressed with the community of Friends' organisations which had evolved and learning from your experience, decided to pursue the concept with colleagues in the UK, once my term of office as Convener had been completed. With the support of the new Convener of the Edinburgh Friends, I duly set about that task in 2016. Over the past four years, from a small beginning with the Friends of Botanic Gardens in Scotland, we then expanded to include Friends groups south of the border in England and Wales and across the Irish Sea in Northern Ireland. We now number 20 members and we have a logo and a website!

Our first UK wide meeting was held in September 2019, hosted by the University of Durham Botanic Garden. Since then all our meetings have taken place virtually, providing an opportunity for Friends groups to exchange news and ideas during this very difficult time. Covid inevitably has brought its challenges for botanic gardens and arboreta with some gardens remaining open, others closing for a period of time, and a few have yet to open up to the general public. Events have been cancelled or postponed, with talks/lectures migrating to on-line platforms. The latter have proved to be very successful with greater numbers of people attending and enabling overseas participants to access the talks.

We hope at some point in the future to host a conference/meeting for volunteers and Friends to which, of course, an invitation would be extended to your organisation. And with our increased skills in virtual link ups there is every possibility that you would also be able to participate from a distance! In the meantime, do visit our website [www.fbgf.org](http://www.fbgf.org) where you will be able to read our newsletters which will encourage you to visit our many botanic gardens/arboreta in the future when travelling is once again permitted.

Stay well and safe!

*Shiona Mackie. FBGF*



Members of Friends of Botanic Gardens Forum at the University of Durham Botanic Garden, Durham, September 2019.



# Go on a tour to Tasmania



Aerial view of Inala Jurassic Park on Bruny Island and a path through the park.

Susan McKinnon's garden and waterlilies at the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Garden.







Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is 350 years old.

For information about members of the AAFBG and for upcoming events see the website at: [www.friendsbotanicgardens.org](http://www.friendsbotanicgardens.org)