



**DRAFT MINUTES 36th Annual General Meeting**  
ANBG Theatre  
3pm 24 October 2024

## **1. Opening and welcome**

The meeting was opened by the President, Neville Page, at 3pm. Neville welcomed everyone present and thanked attendees for their interest and support in attending the AGM. He noted that a quorum had been reached with 36 members present.

Guests included Rebecca Pirzl, Branch Head, Science and ANBG, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; Helen McHugh, ANBG Friends Liaison Officer; who are ex-officio members of the Council of the Friends of the ANBG, and Judy West, Patron of Australian Association of the Friends of Botanic Gardens.

Attendees are listed in Attachment A.

## **2. Apologies**

Neville read out the list of apologies received that are listed in Attachment B.

## **3. Minutes of 35rd AGM held on 19 October 2023**

The draft minutes of 35rd AGM held on 19 October 2023 had been placed on the website for review prior to the meeting.

RESOLUTION: That the minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens held on 19 October 2023 as presented on the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens website be accepted

Moved: Glenys Bishop. Seconded: Beth Tyerman.

CARRIED

## **4. President's Report**

The President's full report for 2023-24 had been placed on the website prior to the meeting for members to view.

Neville Page noted that it had been a big year for the Friends of the ANBG, and highlighted a number of points of interest in the report:

- Revisions to the Constitution had been made necessary due to Government rules regarding environmental funds.
- Significant donations to the ANBG included \$82,000 for the Visitor Centre exhibition; \$50,000 for the Plant Science Learning Hub; and \$9,500 for a conservation video. New commitments include \$25,000 for two high quality projection microscopes and \$26,000 for new water bubbler facilities.
- A Don Beer Memorial Scholarship and two additional scholarships of \$7,500 each were awarded.
- The photographic competition for school students returned after a five-year absence.

- A major upgrade of the Growing Friends propagation facilities was commenced.
- Membership subscriptions totalled \$119,410 compared with \$106,758 the previous year, partly reflecting an increase in the proportion of 3-year membership applications.
- Plant recognition workshops were booked out and Thursday talks continue to be very popular.
- The Photographic Group produced the 2024 Gardens calendar that was sold by the Botanical Bookshop.

Neville thanks everyone who had contributed over the past year including Council members, group convenors, the membership team, workers, volunteers and Gardens staff.

RESOLUTION: That the President's report be received.

Moved: Neville Page. Seconded: Linda Beveridge

CARRIED

Rod King noted that the volunteer guides had not been mentioned in the President's report and Neville replied that the Guides are part of the ANBG and not part of the Friends.

### **5. Presentation of Handbury Award**

Judy West, Patron of Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AAFBG) presented a Handbury Award to Glenys Bishop for her major contribution to education and research fostering the cause of botanic gardens through guiding and volunteering at the ANBG.

In presenting the award, Judy noted that the award was presented in honour of Geoff Handbury, a Victorian philanthropist who donated millions of dollars in areas such as education, children's health, the arts and botanic gardens. He was also a generous benefactor to the AAFBG. There were two categories of awards: one for member organisations and one for individual members. Six awards had been made this year.

### **6. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer, Rod King, noted that the financial accounts and audit statement had been placed on the website prior to the meeting and noted that the financial audit had been completed successfully.

He highlighted that retained earnings at the end of the year were \$331,146, compared to \$332,659 at the end of the previous year. Donations to the gift fund were \$29,254, including \$5,000 for the Don Beer Scholarship. Significant expenses included student scholarships, project money to the Gardens, internet fees and newsletter printing and postage costs.

Rod concluded that the organisation is in a very healthy state financially.

RESOLUTION: That the Treasurer's report be accepted.

Moved: Rod King. Seconded: Linda Beveridge

CARRIED

### **7. Report by Rebecca Pirzl, Branch Head, Science and ANBG, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water**

Rebecca noted that the ANBG was very grateful to the Friends for their commitment and support and for the connection they provided to the community.

She identified a number of highlights from the last year.

- The Royal visit the previous week had been very successful. The visit had been scheduled for 25 minutes, but the King and Queen stayed for 45 minutes. King Charles and Queen Camilla, assisted by volunteer Doreen Wilson, planted a tree to commemorate the visit.
- Tenders for the completion of the Ian Potter National Conservatory close on 31 October.
- The fire fighting capabilities have been extended to better protect the collections, staff and visitors along our boundaries with Black Mountain Nature Reserve.
- The new 'More than Just a Garden' exhibition shows some of the work that goes on behind the scenes.
- The National Seed Bank houses over 4,000 species including 139 endangered species. Construction work is beginning to double the storage and upgrade facilities.
- There was a record number of visitors to the Gardens over 2023-24 with a total of 546,065, up 3.5% on last year. There were 22,900 student visitors, an increase of 16%.
- Special events included the MEGAfauna display with a hide and seek theme, and the launch of the Canberra edition Monopoly with the ANBG being one of the properties on the Monopoly board.
- The Botanica Food & Spirits Festival attracted many visitors, including 16% who had never been to the Gardens before.
- The Plant Science Learning Hub is a new online resource for primary schools. It was developed with a \$50,000 contribution from the Friends and was launched by the Minister. It has received lots of positive feedback with many repeat clients.
- Enhancements to the living collections included upgrades to the Tasmanian Garden, new fogging systems for the Tasmanian Garden and the Tasmanian Rainforest, Banksia Garden renewal and revitalisation, works to the Rock Garden waterfall and ponds, and replacement of the Otto Ruzicka shelter.
- The Gardens now has more than 200 volunteers across 10 programs, including the very successful Squishy Vols. 23 new volunteer guides were recruited and trained, the the Gardens hosted two science communication interns.
- Seed Bank staff hosted a group of Mala Rangers and staff from Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in February and made a return visit to the Northern Territory in June. A four-year translocation project of *Swainsona recta* has finished.
- The Conservatory Team has continued preparation for the new Conservatory with a research trip to South East Queensland and identifying options for the green wall. A predatory thrip *Franklinothrips vespiformis* 'Frankie' has been introduced on a trial basis as part of the integrated pest management program.
- The Nursery Team has continued a number of conservation projects including the Small Purple Pea, Survive and Thrive as part of recovery following the 2019-20 bushfires, and work on the Mt Imlay species.
- Peter Byron made three presentations to the 8th Global Botanic Gardens Congress in Singapore and all were very well received.

## **8. Election of Officer bearers and Council members**

The President handed over the chair of the meeting to Rebecca Pirzl who had agreed to act as the Returning Officer.

Prior to the meeting a nomination for Linda Beveridge for President had been received.

As there was only one nomination for the position, Rebecca declared that Linda had been elected President.

Linda had previously held the position of Vice President, so the position of Vice President was then vacant. Rebecca called for nominations from the floor and Alan Henderson was nominated. Alan indicated he accepted the nomination. As there were no further nominations for the position, Rebecca declared that Alan had been elected as Vice President.

No nominations had been received for the position of Secretary. Rebecca called for nominations from the floor, but none were received so the position remains vacant.

Two nominations for Ordinary Council Members had been received prior to the meeting from Chris Mackay and Catherine Robertson. As there were no further nominations, Rebecca declared that Chris and Catherine were both elected as Ordinary Council Members.

As there were two further vacancies for Ordinary Council Members, Rebecca called for nominations from the floor and Ian Primrose was nominated. Ian indicated he accepted the nomination and as there were no further nominations for the position, Rebecca declared that Ian had been elected as an Ordinary Council Member.

One position of Ordinary Council Member remained vacant.

Note: all positions are for a term of two years.

Rebecca returned the chair to Neville Page.

#### **9. Appointment of Auditor for 2024-25**

Neville stated that, as a small, registered charity, the Friends of the ANBG were not required by legislation to have an auditor. However, an auditor was required under the constitution to ensure that the financial records are accurate. Neville advised that appointment of an auditor was the responsibility of the Council and this would be done at a forthcoming Council meeting.

#### **10. Amendment of Constitution by special resolution**

Neville advised that revisions to the Constitution were needed due to new ATO rules that came into effect on 1 January 2024, relating to deductible gift recipients. This meant the Friends of the ANBG was endorsed as a deductible gift recipient, rather than our Public Fund

A sub-committee was formed to review the Constitution and draft the necessary changes. The subcommittee found that other amendments were needed to reflect changes that the ACT Government had made to its Model Rules for incorporated association such as the Friends.

The opportunity was also taken to:

- simplify the provisions concerning disciplining of members;
- include a provision whereby a member may apply to restrict access to personal information on the register of members; and
- update some procedures and make other necessary editorial amendments.

A draft Constitution which reflected the necessary changes was presented to the Council in May. The draft was then placed on the Website, together with explanatory material, and feedback sought from members by 30 July 2024.

Two members suggested minor amendments to clarify or simplify provisions. These were subsequently accepted and incorporated in the draft Constitution dated September 2024.

Neville noted that a 75% majority was required for the Constitution to be changed.

RESOLUTION: That the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens Incorporated adopt by Special Resolution the draft Constitution dated September 2024.

Moved: Neville Page. Seconded David More.

CARRIED

### **11. Award of Life Membership**

Neville advised that the award of Life Membership is the highest accolade that can be given by the Friends. 2024 Life Memberships were awarded to:

- Wendy Antoniak, and
- Jim Gould

Information about their contributions to Friends of the ANBG are included in Attachment C.

### **12. Other business**

Linda Beveridge noted that Neville had completed two 2-year terms as President and outlined some of the achievements of the Friends over that time. She thanked Neville very much for his contribution and presented him with a gift on behalf of the Friends. In response, Neville said he had enjoyed being and found it a rewarding experience. He thanked everyone for their support over this time.

There being no other business, Neville closed the meeting at 4.15.

Attendees were invited to move to the Dickson Room for refreshments, and then to view the new display in the foyer of the Visitor Centre and the fogging system in the Tasmanian garden – both projects that had been supported by the Friends.

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm

**Attachment A: Attendees**

Sharon Abrahams

Colin Allum

Linda Beveridge

Glenys Bishop

Tanya Brass

Wanda Bridgland

Bill Bush

Mary Bush

Pam Cooke

John Fitzgerald

Graham Gall

Jim Gould

Peta Gould

Alan Henderson

Kath Holtzapffel

Anna Howe

John Hyslop

Linda Hyslop

Catherine Ikin

Chris Ikin

Fleur Kelleher

Rod King

Chris Mackay

Joanne Maples

Kerry Moir

David More

Neville Page

Barbara Podger

Ian Primrose

Jennifer Rowland

Beth Tyerman

Ute Wegener

Brian Weir

Susan White

Pat Wright

Warwick Wright

**Attachment B: Apologies received**

Max Bourke

Penny Sharp

Margaret Bourke

Christianna Cobbold

Beryl Bettell

Trevor Cobbold

Amanda Gear

Lesley Harland

Sally White

Maurice Herman

Lynne Curran

Judy Pearce

Neil Porter

Helen Elliot

Kate Armstrong

Anne Campbell

Wanda Filsell

Bridget Wimmer

Trish Munro

Kumar S Sukumar

Iain Fyfe

Catherine Robertson

## Attachment C: Life Memberships

### Wendy Antoniak

Wendy has been a member of the Friends for 18 years since 2006. She:

- Has served as a volunteer at the Visitor Centre for 10 years
- Is a longstanding Convenor of the Botanic Art Group
- Has been a pivotal member of the annual Botanic Art Group Annual Exhibition Committee for many years (an activity that raises funds for the Friends to distribute to Gardens projects)
- Has been a member of the Council

### Jim Gould

Jim has been a member of the Friends for 10 years since 2014.

He nominated for his significant and longstanding contributions to the Photographic Group, Friends and the Gardens.

Jim's contributions to the Photographic Group include:

- He was instrumental in establishing and running the Annual Photographic Exhibition of the Friends Photographic Group including:
  - Helping draw up the terms and conditions of the Annual Photographic Exhibition;
  - Running the exhibition including :organising, collecting and collating entries, the financial aspects of the exhibition, organising sponsors, organising members to hang the exhibition and the delivery and collection of prints.
- Jim has been a committee member or Convenor over a number of years including in the role of Secretary.
- Jim helped start the Friends' Calendar (the Garden's calendar which was produced by the Bookshop and now by the Photographic Group).
- Jim arranged various activities for PG members both at the Gardens and elsewhere. For example, Jim was an essential part of a workshop for members of the public on "Learning Digital Photography" in 2018.
- Jim was also a strong proponent of native plants and the Gardens. One member recounts, "I joined the Friends Photographic group in 2013. Jim's photographic passion has always been taking pictures that display the beauty of the flora in the Gardens. He encouraged people to learn the different plant varieties".

Jim's contribution to the Gardens and Friends:

- Photography and promotion of activities in the Gardens
  - Summer Sounds etc
- Photography and recording of Friends annual events including

- AGM
- Life membership awards
- Volunteer awards
- 30<sup>th</sup> birthday of the friends –
- Awards being presented to the winners of the art group by Council
- ANBG Photographic Group

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**Attachment D: Proxies received**

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>PROXY NOMINATED</b>
Trevor Cobbold	Kerry Moir
Christianna Cobbold	Kerry Moir
Catherine Robertson	Barbara Podger
Wanda Filsel	Alan Henderson

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