



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2026

It is a pleasure to present my report to the 38th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens on behalf of the Council.

We have achieved many milestones this year in our role to support the development of the ANBG and to support the interests of the Friends as they deepen their knowledge and experience, and increase community awareness of the scientific, educational, conservation and recreational functions of the Gardens.

I would like to acknowledge the passion for the Gardens demonstrated by all our Friends volunteers who work behind the scenes and deliver activities. They are essential for maintaining the momentum of our Friends Groups, delivering innovative programs that successfully engage with our mission. These enthusiastic volunteers contribute great expertise as well as amazing resilience and resourcefulness to support our priorities and programs.

In this last financial year, about seventy percent of our funds were spent on contributing to Gardens projects, and engagement by members and the wider community, with the Gardens. Friends are grateful to the very generous donations from so many of our members during the year, which included tax-deductible donations to the Gift Fund including the \$5,000 donation from the family of the late Don Beer.

Fundamental to our endeavours is maintaining a close and productive partnership with ANBG. We have worked closely with the Director of the Gardens, Dr Matthew Parker, Ms Helen McHugh ANBG Assistant Director and Council Liaison Officer and all the members of the ANBG staff more broadly. We acknowledge and appreciate the warmth and consideration that is shown in all our interactions.

A notable example of working collaboratively this year for the Gardens was the Living Collection Strategy. It was a tribute to the high regard that the Gardens has for the Friends, that we were invited to participate in the Living Collections' Strategy workshops and, following that, the survey. Council is awaiting the report from this project. It has been mentioned that the priorities of the Gardens have been markedly readjusted as a result.

The framework for our collaborative working arrangements is set out in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). It was established in 2011 and regularly updated. In the last two years, myself, on behalf of the Council, and Matt Parker, for the ANBG have been negotiating the next Memorandum of Understanding.

Membership

Our membership is the bedrock for achieving our goals.

It is a pleasure to see that membership of Friends of ANBG increased during this financial year. The membership year is from 1 November to 30 October each year. The number of individual, household and other organisations' memberships at 30 June this year was 2175 covering 2898 members, which is more than at 30 June last year.

New members mornings were hosted by Council in September 2025 and May 2026, with the aims to welcome new members to the Friends of ANBG and its activities; to provide the opportunity for a guided walk/tour that features at least 3 items that Friends have funded over the years; and for current members to encourage new members to be involved in Friends groups. It is a pleasure to see that quite a few new members have become involved in Friends groups as a result.

The Council

Members of Council have diverse backgrounds and experience. With the revolution in IT and AI, the skills we need are becoming increasingly sophisticated. With the increase in members, Friends is an organisation of almost three thousand members, offering online services and creative engagement strategies. Thursday Talks, the Student Photographic Competition, our website and *Fronnds* require IT support services that are also highly sophisticated. We need to attract new members who are willing to offer their expertise to support our organisation.

The Council meets monthly on the second Thursday, commencing in February. In addition, the Executive, comprising the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer meet on the first Thursday of the month, commencing February. Council met on ten occasions in 2025-2026; but a quorum was not present for the July meeting, so voting matters were dealt with out-of-session.

The Council, since July 2025 has comprised Linda Beveridge, President, Alan Henderson, Vice President, Cathy Robertson, Secretary, Rod King, Treasurer, Beth Tyerman, Darrell Porter, Ian Primrose, John Barrow (elected October 2025) and John Pilbeam (elected October 2025), Kerry Moir (until October 2025) and Stacie Hall (until October 2025). Members of Council are actively involved with supporting our Special Interest Groups.

Highlights of the year

New Friends' website

It is a great pleasure to congratulate all involved in the new Friends' website, which was launched in April. The Friends contracted a local IT company, Even Dots Creative, to rebuild the Friends website and to provide ongoing maintenance. The Friends volunteer web editors are greatly appreciated in providing the valuable current and historical information on this website.

New membership system

It is also a great pleasure to congratulate the team who have made significant progress with implementing a modern online membership system during the year, based on Member Jungle. We started looking at a new membership system several years ago to replace our bespoke system. It is great to see that a commercial system can now meet our requirements.

The new member system went live on 1 August and immediately attracted new Friends eager to use the simple online interface. Hundreds of members have used the system already, including renewing membership and signing in for this meeting. In the long run it will streamline the membership process and provide better processes for communicating with our members.

The management of the previous durable and bespoke membership system has been in Lesley Harland's capable hands for the last eighteen years. Lesley is planning to retire from the membership team as soon as the renewals for 2027 are completed this year. She received the Life Membership award in 2020 for her outstanding contribution to the Friends, and we are grateful for her assistance in the transition to the new system. Please join me in showing Lesley our gratitude with a loud acclamation.

Bruce Lindenmayer Memorial Lecture

The inaugural Bruce Lindenmayer Memorial Lecture was held at the ANU in February. Distinguished Professor David Lindenmayer AO presented "*Re-imagining Fire in the land of fire*". The lecture attracted an audience of 220 people, exceeding expectations. There were numerous requests for a recording of the lecture, and a Friends branded YouTube channel was created to stream the lecture nationwide. This series of lectures was made possible by the bequest of the late Bruce Lindenmayer, who had been a member of the Friends for 14 years. The lecture series will continue with the second lecture scheduled for February 2027. Bookings will open in December.

The Research Students Scholarship Program

Three students are expected to successfully complete their PhD research studies in 2026: Tasha James at University of Canberra, Jay Nicholson at ANU and Shelley Rowntree at University of New England. The donation of the family of the late Don Beer partially funds Tasha James's scholarship.

It is an ongoing program and preparations are underway for the 2027 round. Advertisements for the Program were ready to be published in August 2026 and the selection committee includes Dr Rosemary Purdie representing the Friends.

Refurbishment of propagation facilities for Growing Friends

The Refurbishment of propagation facilities for Growing Friends has progressed through the first two of the three phases, resulting in several WHS issues being resolved. These two phases have achieved their goals for a safer, clearer work area creating a better workflow. We are looking forward to Phase three in the coming year.

Walk from the Gardens to the Arboretum

Another ambitious Friends project is the bushland trail linking the Gardens to the Arboretum, which is in the planning stage. This is a special priority for the Friends. This year we successfully enthused many government and community groups to support it.

FRIENDS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS [SIGS] AND PROGRAMS

The Friends has many activities that are designed for members to deepen their experience with the Gardens and explore their special interests associated with native plants and related environment. These activities are managed by our most active members who enjoy volunteering.

This last year at least 175 people were volunteers assisting with the management of the SIGs and programs and it is estimated that they volunteered more than 10,000 hours of their time to deliver to thousands of participants. They provide a web of innovative programs, services and products catering for members, and the wider community, to increase awareness of the scientific, educational, conservation and recreational functions of the Gardens.

Perhaps the most adventurous and ambitious of all is the engagement of Australian schools and colleges and their students in the **Student Photographic Competition**.

The entries for the 2025 Student Photographic Competition closed on the last Friday of August 2025. Entries were received from 223 students, from 56 schools, colleges and homeschools in the ACT Region and States. Cristy Froehlich, Ben Harvey and Simone Slater judged more than 440 entries across the 5 categories, an increase on the number of entries in 2024. The awards were presented by Matt Parker, Director of the ANBG, and Julie Hamilton co-convenor of the group in September. Also, the five Schools of the first prize winners held special occasions in May 2026 for autumn planting of the native plants provided by Growing Friends. We were pleased that the entries were mostly from high schools and colleges.

A good deal of the work for the 2026 Student Photographic competition was carried out in the 2025-2026 financial year. A large number of entries has been received for the 2026 competition, and the prizes and commendations will be exhibited in the Banksia Gardens. All of the highly rated entries will also be on display on digital frames in the Visitor Centre during September and October 2026.

Botanic Art Group

The Botanic Art Group held the 19th Annual Botanic Art Exhibition from 10 April to 3 May 2026. Twenty-nine artists exhibited 62 works of art on the themes of wetland and native plants. One of the works of art was purchased by the Friends of the ANBG for donation to the ANBG; Margaret Saul's *Nymphoides crenata*. Attendees at this AGM have the opportunity to view it during refreshments afterwards.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

E-Bulletin

The small E-Bulletin team obtains information on news and activities for Friends. The team also issues bulletins on special topics; such as advice on the New Membership System, invitations to the New Members Welcome events; Invitation to Friends to view 'Mangroves: Tales from the Tide' at Questacon; AGM reminders; advice on Membership and Parking cards and other membership-related topics; notification of total fire bans; advice on a Living Collections Strategy Survey; the launch of the new Friends website; activities for Botanic Gardens Week 2026.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Flowers Fruit and Foliage

Flowers Fruit and Foliage is the very popular fortnightly self-guided walks leaflets that are available from the Visitor Centre and the Friends website. They feature illustrations of 15 plants in the Gardens that are in flower or displaying distinctive fruit or foliage.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Fronde newsletter and Publications Team

The *Fronde* newsletter and Publications Team published *Fronde* in April, August and December for distribution to Friends membership and organisations with common interests as well as uploading onto the Friends website. Last year they featured articles on:

- "Worrying trends in the ANBG Superb Fairywren population" and "Lifting your game: How to improve flora and fauna photography" in the December 2025 issue;

- “Various vile weeds: Close up” and “National Seed Bank upgrade” in the April 2026 issue; and
- “The Ducrou Pavilion revisited” and “After the flooding rains” in August 2026.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Growing Friends

The Growing Friends conducted 2 plant sales to the public in October and March. During Botanic Gardens Week this group gave 2 presentations of 1 hour each on propagating native plants, in which participants were able to pot up chosen cuttings from ANBG. The group gained new members from these activities. The Friends Growing area has had 2 stages of refurbishment /improvement, and they are looking forward to the next stage.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

IT Support team

The IT Support team provides IT support for the many IT projects and tasks encountered by the Friends. This ranges from purely technical tasks including maintenance and hosting, procurement and ongoing administration of software, to support with payment solutions for Friends exhibitions, to preparing new laptops, to working with groups for large projects such as the Students Photographic Competition, through to assistance with major projects such as the launch of the new Friends website in April, and the rollout of the new Membership system which went live on 1st August. The Team comprises two members at present, plus contracted website support through *Even Dots Creative*.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Membership Team

The Membership Team managed membership-related matters using a bespoke database prior to Member Jungle being rolled out as the primary Friends membership system using Member Jungle, as mentioned above. The new system went live on 1 August and immediately attracted new Friends eager to use the simple online interface.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Nature Journaling Group

The Nature Journaling Group arranges monthly visits for like-minded people who enjoy being outside, and contemplating the beauty of nature. Members observe and sketch whatever appeals to them: plants, birds, landscapes, people, insects or other animals. Afterwards their creative works, including sketches and poetry, sometimes find opportunities for publication. An average of 12 members came each month. They find the Gardens to be a great inspiration and such a peaceful place to be.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Photographic Group

The Photographic Group's 12th annual exhibition, *Illuminate '25* took place in November and December 2025. At the official opening, the President of the Friends, Linda Beveridge announced the prize winners. The blind judging for the awards was undertaken by award winning nature photographers Helen McFadden and Cristy Froelich. The Friends purchased two photographs for the ANBG. They are "Bubbling bee" by Karin Neufeld and "Mountain gum" taken by Debbie Howard. These photos will be on display during the refreshments after the AGM 2026.

Last year Photographic Group members were also involved with the 2025 Birdlife Australia Photographic Conference, and developed the 2026 Calendar. The group invited ANBG to select the images for the 2027 Calendar, which proved to be a very beneficial partnership.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Plant Recognition Group

The Plant Recognition Group's ten (10) workshops were well attended by 142 Friends, and several workshops had waiting lists. The main aspects of the workshops' success are:

- Knowledgeable and enthusiastic workshop leaders, often scientists, who are willing to attend and share their passion for particular plant groups;
- Capacity to observe and handle live plant or fungi material to see the diversity of features.
- Occasional off-site workshops, for instance a visit to the STEP garden at the Arboretum to view plants from the pea family in flower.
- Resources and information on the plant groups prepared by leaders are often provided to participants for the workshops and to use afterwards to reinforce learning.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Plant Science Group

Last year Plant Science Group's program for Friends included

- the talk by Professor Peter Bernhardt, who was in Australia promoting his new book '*The Unsung Heroes of Pollination*';
- the visits to the ANBG Glasshouses on a cold, wet morning hosted by Carol Dale and her staff; and
- the visit to the regional native plants of the Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park.

The group's 8 technical talks were attended by about 300 people, and their two visits were attended by about 45 Friends.

Emeritus Professor Ian Noble and Dr Habiba Gitay became the new co-convenors of this group in March 2026.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Projects Sub-committee

The Projects Sub-committee seeks and evaluates proposals for projects that are put forward to be funded by the Friends. Last year this included expenditure managed directly by Council for the following projects:

- Four water filling and bubbler stations at busy visitor locations (\$52,000);
- Explorer backpacks – available for loan from the Visitors Desk, designed for preschoolers and their families for use in the Gardens (\$3,000);
- Ten additional binoculars for use by visitors (\$2,263).

During the year they also worked on other projects, such as the shelter for the Flora Explorer, which was installed just after the end of the financial year. You will be able to see it after the AGM.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Social Events and Activities Committee

A particular highlight of the Social Events and Activities Committee for this year was their coordination of Friends activities for Botanic Gardens Week in May, which impressed many Friends and the wider community. The Committee assisted with the organisation and running of events for Friends and members of the public during the year; such as

- A visit to Questacon to view the exhibition “Mangroves: Tales from the Tide” in August 2025, 34 participants.
- Visit to the STEP Garden at the Arboretum, in September, 30 participants.
- Wake Up with the Birds at the ANBG, in September and October, with 127 participants.
- After Dark in the Gardens, in September, with 31 participants.
- Butterfly walks in the Gardens in January with 31 participants.
- Bushland precinct nature walks, ANBG, in February and May, 29 participants.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Students Photographic Competition

The Friends' Students Photographic Competition is open to Australian-based students in years 3 to 12, for images taken in the Gardens in Canberra in the preceding 12 months. It aims to share the value and beauty of the ANBG through the students' photographic skills. As mentioned above there was a great increase in participation last year.

A good deal of the work for the 2026 Student Photographic competition was carried out in the 2025-2026 financial year. A large number of entries has been received again for the 2026 competition, and the prizes and commendations will be exhibited in the Banksia Gardens. All of the highly rated entries will also be on display on digital frames in the Visitor Centre during September and October 2026.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Thursday Talks Team

The Thursday Talks Team manages lunchtime talks for each Thursday from February to November each year. The program included scientific research undertaken by ANBG staff and partners, along with other speakers from CSIRO, some research departments at the ANU, and other organisations. The speakers covered a wide range of topics related to botany as well as current and historical environments. The talks are aimed at a general audience and everyone is welcome. The Friends use donations received to support the Gardens' programs and development. Copies of most of the presentations are held in the ANBG Library for access by appointment with the Librarian.

The total audience for the year increased to 2,652, and several talks were heavily booked.

Special highlights of the year were the Bruce Lindenmayer Memorial lecture, mentioned above, and the new audio-visual system installed in the theatre. The team greatly appreciated the technical support by IT and Venues staff to deal with the technical problems.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

Website Team

The Website Team looks after the content of www.friendsanbg.org.au, the Friends of the ANBG website. It maintains the 'general' pages, add calendar items about activities in the ANBG, and add special interest and News items as they arise; such as information on scholarships. A special highlight of this year was the contract with the local IT company *Even Dots Creative*, to rebuild the Friends website and to provide ongoing maintenance. The new Friends website was launched on 15 April 2026. Another member of Friends joined the website editor team, and there is scope for more volunteers.

Further information about the group is in the attachment.

The Annual reports received from our Special Interest Groups and committees have been attached as Attachments to this Report.

I offer my **heartfelt thanks** to everyone who has contributed over the past year, including Council members, Special Interest Group committees, the membership team, workers, ANBG's staff and volunteers. I also acknowledge the wonderful collaborative working relationship we have with the Gardens staff.

Linda Beveridge
President

23 September 2026

BOTANIC ART GROUP

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026

The aim of the Botanic Art Group (BAG) is to inspire, inform and connect members with the beauty and detail of Australian flora in line with the ANBG's mission. BAG brings together people at all levels of experience who are interested in botanical art and who have a special interest in Australian native plants. We are privileged to be able to portray Australian native plants from every state and territory through our location at the ANBG and the services provided by the Friends and the ANBG.

The Botanic Art Group meets three times a month. Meetings are generally well attended, particularly the Saturday meeting. Total group membership is currently 134 Friends.

The BAG held its first ever General Meeting on 16 May 2026. It was agreed at the general meeting that there be a three-year term for BAG roles.

Specific highlights of this year are:

The 19th Annual Botanical Art Exhibition was held on 10 April to 3 May 2026. Twenty-nine artists exhibited 62 works of art in a range of mediums including watercolour, graphite, coloured pencil, scraperboard and for the first time, oils and linocut. Half the entries were on the wetlands theme, the other half other Australian natives. Thirty-one artworks were sold (48%); including a painting purchased by the Friends for the ANBG (Margaret Saul's *Nymphoides crenata*) which is donated to the ANBG.

Total sales (Artworks, cards, squares and raffle tickets) came \$14,086. After expenses, \$3,694 was raised for the Friends of the ANBG.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

BAG Member Liaison (point of Contact)	Vivienne Howe
Venue booking officer:	Annette Dahler
Convenors – Thursday	Judy Hutchinson and Jann Ollerenshaw
Convenors - Saturday	Charani Ranasinghe, Chris Meadham and Naomi Nellie
Convenors - Wednesday	Kate Ramsay and Margaret Saul
Backup Convenors	Maria Boreham, Annette Dahler, Kerry Eckersley, Barbara Hill
Workshop Coordinators	Annette Dahler, Kate Ramsay and Margaret Saul
Exhibition Committee	Coordinator Jenny Mun, Mignon Atkinson, Annette Dahler, Glenda Shelley, Susan Spiller, Naomi Nellie.
Communications/Publicity	Mignon Atkinson and Jenny Mun

Graphic Designer	Cheryl Hodges
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b. **Number of committee meetings:** The Exhibition Committee conducted most of its business via email and had four (4) face to face meetings.

c. **Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:**

Two BAG beginner workshops were held – Watercolour on 20 July 2025 and Colour Pencils on 23 August 2025.

The 19th Annual Botanical Art Exhibition was held on 10 April to 3 May 2026. Details overleaf.

d. **Number of participants during the year:**

Monthly BAG meetings were attended by 216 members during the year, averaging 9 for Thursday meetings, 10 for Saturday meetings and 8 for Wednesday meetings.

E-BULLETIN TEAM

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026

The ebulletin team produces a monthly electronic newsletter which is emailed to all subscribed Friends around the third Thursday of the month.

We email all the SIG representatives and Council members one week before the newsletter is due to go out, asking them for submissions. These submissions are sorted, amalgamated and formatted in MailChimp for distribution.

The newsletter contains items of potential interest to the Friends along with a What's On section telling of upcoming events.

Specific highlights of this year are:

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

Beth Tyerman Sends out requests for information, formats them and sends them out via MailChimp. We do hope to move across to Member Jungle for delivery of the newsletters within the next month or two.

Doris Kordes Receives and amalgamates submissions and forwards the draft document to Beth

b. Number of committee meetings: Occasional social get-together

c. Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:

12 standard ebulletins per year plus special notification emails including:

- advice on the New Membership System,
- an Invitation to Friends to view 'Mangroves: Tales from the Tide',
- invitations to the New Members Welcome events,
- AGM reminders,
- advice on late arrivals of Membership and Parking cards and other membership-related topics,
- notification of total fire bans,
- advice on a Living Collections Strategy Survey,
- a bulletin on the launch of the new Friends website,
- an email about Botanic Gardens Week 2026, and
- notice about special ANBG Friends events

FLOWERS FRUIT AND FOLIAGE TEAM

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

New information sheets describing a self-guided walks to see flowers, fruit and foliage are published every two weeks by the Friends of the ANBG and are available from the Friends website and the Visitor Centre. The majority of the fifteen entries are of what is in flower with photographs for each entru/

The main purposes are:

1. To guide the public to interesting plants and their flowers, fruit and foliage at this time and also to provide some information about them.
2. For use by the guides, who sometimes use it to plan their walks.
3. For use in garden design by the Design Group at the Gardens to determine flowering periods for particular plants, for example, and to draw attention to unusual fruit and foliage.
4. To alert those photographing the plants at the ANBG (eg Friends Photographic Group) not only to when the plants are likely to be in flower but also to those with interesting fruit and foliage.

Specific highlights of this year are:

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

Convenors	Ben Walcott
	Ros Walcott

b. **Number of committee meetings:** 26

c. **Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:** 26

d. **Number of participants during the year:** 2 to produce the leaflets, and thousands have been printed and made available from the Visitor Centre.

FRONDS NEWSLETTER AND PUBLICATIONS

Fronds is the newsletter of the Friends of the ANBG and is produced in magazine format in hard copy three times a year. It is also provided in digital format on the Friends website.

Each issue contains information about the activities of the Friends special interest groups, news from the Friends and from the Gardens, and reviews from the Botanical Bookshop. A feature article or articles in each issue focuses on some aspect of the Gardens or on Australian native flora.

In the last year we have featured articles on:

- “Worrying trends in the ANBG Superb Fairywren population” and “Lifting your game: How to improve flora and fauna photography” in the December 2025 issue;
- “Various vile weeds: Close up” and “National Seed Bank upgrade” in the April 2026 issue; and
- “The Ducrou Pavilion revisited” and “After the flooding rains” in August 2026.

The section “What’s On in the Gardens” provides information about all the events and activities taking place in the Gardens, or organised by the Friends, during the following four months.

A copy of *Fronds* is posted out to all financial members, and sent to a number of other interested persons or groups.

Our only costs are printing and mailing.

The four members of the editorial committee are: Sharon Abrahams (design), Barbara Podger, Cathy Robertson, and Denis Warne.

We welcome ideas for articles, feedback or comments, and photographs of Friends’ activities and of flora or fauna in the Gardens. These may be emailed to: newsletter@friendsanbg.org.au

Barbara Podger

Fronds team

a. List of participants

Barbara Podge (coordinator), Sharon Abrahams (designer), Cathy Robertson, Denis Warne

b. Number of meetings: 9

c. Number of publications: 3

d. Number of participants: 4

GROWING FRIENDS ANBG

Purpose and activities during the financial year 2025-2026

Working within the objectives and purposes of the Friends of the ANBG, and the Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the ANBG and the Friends, the group aims to:

1. Enable members to learn about Australian native plants and how to propagate them.
2. Select cuttings and seeds from a wide variety of ANBG plants, for members to propagate.
3. Offer to the public a range of Australian native plants, propagated from plants growing in the ANBG, principally through Autumn and Spring plant sales.

Specific highlights of this year are:

Growing friends have conducted 2 plant sales to the public during the financial year October and March.

The Friends Growing area has had 2 stages of refurbishment /improvement.

The works consisted of removal; of old raised beds in both the shade cloth area and the "igloo," These beds harboured vermin and took considerable unusable space.

Several OH &S issues have been resolved to include separating water from electricity as both these services were in the same close area, and fittings were not up to standard.

This has resulted in a safer, clearer work area creating a better workflow.

In having said this we are still constrained by space & comfort.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

As below.

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

Convenor	Debbie Dennis
Secretary	Bronwyn Houlden
Treasurer	Rosalie Knox
Procurement /Roster Officer	John Buckley

b. Number of committee meetings:

One monthly meeting conducted each month usually on the 1st Saturday of each month
Monthly meetings are attended by upwards of 33 people

c. Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:

Growing friends have conducted 2 plant sales to the public during the financial year October and March.

During Gardens Week members provided 2 presentations of 1 hour each on propagating native plants

In which participants were able to pot up chosen cuttings from ANBG.

Our group gained several new members from these activities.

Growing Friends have a column in *FRONDS* magazine – Friendly Chatter

d. **Number of participants during the year:**

Every working bee held on Tuesdays averages 19 members.

The numbers vary from approximately 28 in the warmer months to 15 during winter months.

The temperatures in our polytunnel (igloo) soar from high extremes to minus.

The area does not have heating or cooling for humans.

Growing Friends currently has 76 members on our list

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP. Several of our members have participated with David Moore, about Member Jungle (MJ) – the Friends new online membership system which is now up and running.

DATABASE REDEVELOPMENT:

Members are also working to improve the **Friends of the ANBG** database in conjunction with David Moore

My understanding is that it is an old system and provides important information to our group (i.e. data for our Succession Report) given at each monthly meeting about success and failures at any given month and year from our propagations, this data is not easily extracted, and we also require more details.

The data base is the only one in Australia of this type founded by a gardens group.

IT SUPPORT TEAM

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

The IT Support team provides IT support for the many IT projects and tasks encountered by the Friends. This ranges from purely technical tasks including maintenance and hosting, procurement and ongoing administration of software, to support with payment solutions for Friends exhibitions, to preparing new laptops, to working with groups for large projects such as the Students Photographic Competition, through to assistance with major projects such as the launch of the new website and the rollout of the new Membership system.

The Team comprises two members at present, plus contracted website support through *Even Dots Creative*. Any Friends interested in learning more about this area would be very welcome.

Specific highlights of this year are:

A major task this year has been work on the new Membership system Member Jungle. The new system went live on 1 August and immediately attracted new Friends eager to use the simple online interface.

Another major project was the rebuild of the Friends website. The new website was launched 15 April 2026.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

David More	Technical expertise, software and web hosting administration
Beth Tyerman	Stripe Administrator, website contractor liaison

b. Number of committee meetings:

Occasional combination planning sessions, technical workshops and social get-togethers. Project meetings for the Website and Membership projects.

c. Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:

Ongoing tasks 'on demand'

d. Number of participants during the year:

MEMBERSHIP TEAM - NEW

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

The new Membership Team has been put together to manage membership-related matters now that Member Jungle has been rolled out as the primary Friends membership system. They will send out new membership packs to new members, new cards to renewals, answer queries that arise and handle other membership-related tasks.

Specific highlights of this year are:

A major task this year has seen the rollout of the new Membership system Member Jungle. The new system went live on 1 August and immediately attracted new Friends eager to use the simple online interface.

The new team of volunteers are currently learning the tasks associated with managing memberships.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

Beth Tyerman	Stripe Administrator
Evelyn Jacobsen	Old and New team member
Janelle Chalker	New team member
Margaret Smythe	New team member

b. Number of committee meetings:

Weekly processing meetings

c. Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:

Ongoing tasks 'on demand'

d. Number of participants during the year:

MEMBERSHIP TEAM- 'OLD'

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

The 'old' Membership Team managed membership-related matters on a bespoke database prior to Member Jungle being rolled out as the primary Friends membership system. They sent out new membership packs to new members, new cards and parking permits to renewals, answered queries that arose and handled other membership-related tasks. They are currently assisting the new membership team to learn the tasks associated with managing the memberships and are running the bespoke database in parallel with Member Jungle for a few months as back-up.

Specific highlights of this year are:

The move from the bespoke database to Member Jungle allowing the Team Leader to relinquish her position after almost 20 years on the team.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

Lesley Harland	Team Leader
Evelyn Jacobsen	Team Member
Merelyn Southwell-Keely	Team Member

b. Number of committee meetings:

Weekly processing meetings

c. Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:

Ongoing tasks 'on demand'

d. Number of participants during the year:

NATURE JOURNALING

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

The **Nature Journaling Group** arranges monthly visits for like-minded people who enjoy being outside, and contemplating the beauty of nature. Members observe and sketch whatever appeals to them: plants, birds, landscapes, people, insects or other animals. Afterwards their creative works, including sketches and poetry, sometimes find opportunities for publication.

The Gardens is a great inspiration and such a peaceful place to be. The weather is variable but there still some quiet sheltered places to contemplate nature.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens.

Although the group is larger, an average of 12 members come each month.

PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

The Photographic Group was formed in 2011 and aims to bring together people interested in photography of the natural world, to share their experiences and:

- Contribute to the ANBG's overall stock of native plant photographs
- Provide training to improve the skills of its members
- Improve community awareness of the ANBG and of native flora
- Contribute to the Friends' raising of funds for the ANBG

This has been an active and successful year for the Photographic Group (PG). Participation in our regular monthly meetings and Cameras and Café walks on the weekends has been consistently high and enthusiastic.

The PG has continued its contribution to the Friends and the Gardens more broadly including through:

- Selection of images for the Gardens' social media presence
- Provision of judges and support to the Students Photographic Competition
- Support and photographic images for the Gardens' 2027 Calendar
- Photographing Friends events such as welcome morning teas for new members
- Provision of photographs and stories for *Fronds* Magazine

Specific highlights of this year are:

The Photographic Group's 12th annual exhibition, **Illuminate '25** took place in November and December 2025. It was highly successful, aesthetically and financially. Total sales were around \$15,000 with raffle sales of \$1,300. Twenty per cent of the value of sales went to the Friends. Over half the framed photographs on display were sold. In addition, multiple reprints of several images and plenty of other merchandise were sold.

For the first time in some years, we held an opening event at the start of the exhibition. The President of the Friends, Linda Beveridge announced the prize winners, all of whom were present and delighted to be recognised.

The David Cox Memorial Prize for Australian Native Flora and Fungi was awarded to Karin Neufeld for her photograph "Rusty." Pam Rooney was Runner Up with "A Silver Princess." Narelle Aldridge received a Highly Commended for "Dew Drops in the Desert."

Pam Rooney won in the Fauna Category for her multi imaged "Bush Dialogue: Tracks and tunnels of the scribbly gum moth larvae." Karin Neufeld was Runner Up with "Bubbling bee." Simone Slater received Highly Commended for "Seven!"

The blind judging for these awards was undertaken by award winning nature photographers Helen McFadden and Cristy Froelich.

This year's Rangers Choice and Peoples' Choice Awards were collected by Narelle Aldridge for "Dew Drops In The Desert." The Friends of ANBG selected two photographs to purchase for the Gardens. They are "Bubbling bee" by Karin Neufeld and "Mountain gum" taken by Debbie Howard.

A big thank you to all the exhibitors, other members of the Photographic Group that helped with staffing the exhibition and the Illuminate '25 working group, chaired by Simone Slater, which put such a big effort into making it a success.

During the 25/26 financial year the 2026 Calendar was printed with \$300 contributed to Friends. The PG also worked towards the production of the 2027 Gardens Calendar. This year was the first year of the Gardens selecting the images for the Calendar and it has proved a very beneficial partnership.

The PG's **monthly program of meetings** included stimulating and informative presentations including on preparing for international travel from a photographer's perspective, technical and aesthetic aspects of photographing flora, the 2025 Birdlife Australia Photographic Conference and constructive critiquing of members' photographs.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens.

a. List of convenor and other office bearers on 30 June 2026

Convenor	Phil Green
Membership Secretary	Paul Bainton
Secretary	Kevin Gale
Publicity Officer	Stephen Hunter
Member and coordinator of images for the Gardens' social media	Simone Slater
Member and coordinator of input to the Gardens' calendar	Wendy Shelton

b. Number of committee meetings:

The PG Committee met eleven times in 2025/2026

c. Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:

Ten regular monthly meetings of the PG were held each featuring a presentation on a topic of interest to the Group as well as a show and tell session in which members share up to six photographs and the stories behind them.

Eleven Cameras and Café weekend walks took place.

The Illuminate '25 Exhibition was held in November and December 2025.

The PG produced the 2026 Gardens Calendar and commenced work of the 2027 calendar.

Each month three images were provided to the Gardens social media team for use in publicising events at ANBG.

d. Number of participants during the year:

Membership at 30 June 2026 was 155

PLANT RECOGNITION GROUP

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

Throughout 2025-26, the Plant Recognition Group has continued its activities to assist members of Friends increase their knowledge and skills in identifying native Australian plants. There have been 10 workshops held, one workshop is scheduled each month except in January, but one workshop had to be cancelled due to health issues with the proposed leader. The workshops offer participants the opportunity to learn from an experienced leader and spend time examining specimens with a microscope or hand lens.

Workshops have been held on Reeds and Sedges, Acacia, Eucalypts, Myrtaceae (non-Eucalypt) and Fungi, amongst other topics. There is consistently positive feedback from attendees on the opportunities these workshops afford for learning about plant families and detailed examination of specimens.

Specific highlights of this year are:

All the workshops have been well attended, and participants have been very engaged. There are generally plenty of questions for and interaction with the workshop leader. Participants also enjoy engaging with each other to investigate and better understand plant identification features. The main aspects of the workshops' success are:

- Knowledgeable and enthusiastic workshop leaders, often scientists, who are willing to attend and share their passion for particular plant groups;
- Capacity to observe and handle live plant or fungi material to see the diversity of features. These are often collected within the Gardens, with permission but sometimes samples may be collected from outside, with due regard to quarantine measures.
- Occasional off-site workshops, for instance a visit to the STEP garden at the Arboretum to view plants from the pea family in flower. Visits to natural grasslands in flower also are planned for spring 2026.
- Resources and information on the plant groups prepared by leaders are often provided to participants for the workshops and to use afterwards to reinforce learning.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens.

By moving the workshops from the Celia Rosser Room to the Solander Studio, we have been able to increase the number of participants from 12 to 15. This still enables plenty of interaction and access to specimens, but it would be difficult to grow further. Generally, we can accommodate all interested parties. Since September 2025, we have had 142 participants in total across the 10 workshops. Workshop attendees generally include several regular attendees who come to most meetings together with a range of people who come only occasionally.

A small group of volunteers organises the workshops, including identifying specialist leaders, registering participants, setting up the workshops and tidying away afterwards.

We are particularly grateful to the workshop leaders who often devote considerable time to preparation and specimen selection as well as leading the workshop.

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

Convenor	Julia Newton-Howes
	Linda Beveridge
	John Vranjic
	Leonie Jones

		Paul Lewis
Resigned 2026	August	Cedric May

b. **Number of committee meetings:** 8

c. **Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:** 10
Workshops

d. **Number of participants during the year:** 142, excluding PRG organisers

PLANT SCIENCE GROUP

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

The main, regular activity is the Technical Talks, held on the second Monday morning of each month (except January and December) unless this is a Public Holiday when they are on the third Monday; they are only open to the Friends of ANBG, although visitors are welcome. The Talks are more technical than the regular Thursday lunch time talks, which are open to the general public.

As appropriate, other activities are organized for Plant Science Group members e.g. visits to the ANBG Nursery, Glasshouses and STEP at the Arboretum

Specific highlights of this year are:

The visit to the ANBG Glasshouses on a cold, wet morning hosted by Carol Dale and her staff; the talk by Professor Peter Bernhardt, a widely read expert on pollination from USA, who was in Australia promoting his new book 'The Unsung Heroes of Pollination'

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

John Busby	Convenor (2025)
Habibia Gitay	Co-convenor (2026)
Ian Noble	Co-convenor (2026)
Lesley Harland	Secretary
Faseny McPhee	Assistant secretary (2026)

b. **Number of committee meetings:** NIL

c. **Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:**

8 talks + 3 visits

d. **Number of participants during the year:**

On average - 20 members and 9 visitors at talks; 15 members at visits (numbers limited to 20)

PROJECT COMMITTEE

Surplus funds from membership fees, proceeds from special group activities, combined with donations to the Gift Fund has enabled the Friends to finance annually around \$140,000 worth of projects in recent years. Most proposals are suggested by ANBG staff, but suggestions also are invited from Councillors, Friends Groups and individual Friends. The Project Committee evaluates proposals, and if necessary, ranks them, and presents recommendations to Council for consideration and decision.

The projects comprised:

- Four water filling and bubbler stations at busy visitor locations (\$52,000);
- Explorer backpacks – available for loan from the Visitors Desk, designed for preschoolers and their families for use in the Gardens (\$3,000); and
- Ten additional binoculars for use by visitors (\$2,263).

Council has committed to fund a significant number of additional projects, that the ANBG are progressing, which will be paid for in 2026-27 or later. Aggregate commitments exceed \$200,000 and include \$65,000 for a Bunya Pine Arbor to protect visitors from falling pine cones in the rainforest gully, and \$25,000 for a shelter shed for Flora Explorer.

The Project Committee comprises seven members: Alan Henderson (Convenor), Sharon Abrahams, David Coutts, Lynne Curran, Wanda Filsell, Kristiane Herrmann and Ian Primrose.

The Committee prepared regular reports for Council's monthly meetings in 2025-26.

Alan Henderson
Convenor
September 2026

SOCIAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

The Committee assists with the organisation and running of Friends events during the year, including the refreshments for the New Members morning tea, and the AGM.

It also organises events for members and for members of the public during the year.

This year (from July 2025 to September 2026) these have included:

A visit to Questacon to view the exhibition “Mangroves: Tales from the Tide” in August 2025, 34 participants.

Visit to the STEP Garden at the Arboretum, in September, 30 participants.

Wake Up with the Birds at the ANBG, in September and October, with 127 participants.

After Dark in the Gardens, in September, with 31 participants.

Butterfly walks in the Gardens in January with 31 participants.

Bushland precinct nature walks, ANBG, in February and May, 29 participants.

Visit to the National Insect Collection, CSIRO, in July, 30 participants.

Visit to the National Herbarium, CSIRO, in August, 24 participants.

Frog Listening evening, in September, ANBG, 30 participants

Coordination of events offered by Special Interest Groups during Botanic Gardens Week.

The Committee meets monthly. Committee members are: Barbara Podger (Convenor), Liz Hall, John Barrow, Ute Wegener, Sue Chambers, Glenda Andrewartha, Peter Andrewartha. Kerry Moir and Elaine Staples have resigned from the committee and we thank them for their great involvement and support.

The Committee's policy is to charge a small fee for each event, to raise money for projects in the Gardens. Discounts are given for financial members, for most events.

We welcome any ideas for events, or offers of assistance to organise these.

Our thanks to the volunteer leaders who take these walks, without whom we would not be able to offer these events. We also thank our other volunteers as well as Gardens staff for their assistance with many of these activities.

Barbara Podger

Convenor

STUDENTS PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

The Friends' Students Photographic Competition is open to Australian-based students in years 3 to 12, for images taken in the Gardens in Canberra in the preceding 12 months. It aims to share the value and beauty of the ANBG through the students' photographic skills.

The Friends' Students Photographic Competition team successfully delivered the 26th annual student photo competition in 2026.

Specific highlights of this year are:

The 2026 competition received slightly fewer entries than the bumper year of 2025: entries from 178 students, with 375 eligible images across 5 categories (primary monochrome and colour; secondary monochrome, colour and altered reality). Most entrants were ACT students. The students represented a total of 40 schools, three-quarters from the ACT.

Winners and commended entries received certificates and first, second and third placegetters received cash prizes at a presentation on 26 September 2026. Dr Matthew Parker, Director ANBG, and Ms Linda Beveridge, President of the Friends, presented the prizes. First-prize winners also received a cash prize (\$250) and a plant for their school. This streamlines the system in recent years when all first, second and third placegetters received money for their schools, sometimes as little as \$50.

The winning and commended entries will be exhibited in the Banksia Garden in October 2026. The highest-ranked entries will be displayed on the video wall outside the Theatre. For the first time, all eligible entries will be displayed on digital photo frames in the Visitor Centre during the exhibition.

The team was delighted to again welcome Cristy Froehlich, a local professional photographer, and Ben Harvey (Friends Photographic Group and former ANBG ranger) as the guest judges, together with Phil Green from the Photographic Group. The team will present the 2 guest judges with ANBG Bookshop gift vouchers in recognition of their considerable contribution to the competition.

Linda Beveridge and Glenys Agnew liaised with the schools of the 2025 First-prize winners to plant plants in their school gardens. The team thanks the Growing Friends for providing the plants.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

Co-convenor	Linda Beveridge
Co-convenor	Julie Hamilton
Members	Glenys Agnew (joined during the year) Tracey Bicknell (retired during the year) Amanda Coleman (ANBG Visitor Experience rep) Phil Green (Photographic Group, judge and liaison for the judging panel) Alain Menager (joined and retired during the year) David More (technical expertise) Elaine Staples

b. **Number of committee meetings:** 7 plus extra meetings for a review of the 2025 process

c. **Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:** Awards presentation (26 September); exhibition of award winners' images in the Banksia Garden (26 Sept to end October); digital exhibition of all images (end September until ANBG determines).

d. **Number of participants during the year:** around 180 students entered the competition and many more would have visited the Gardens as part of school photographic excursions

Summary for *Fronde*

The popular Students Photographic Competition celebrated its 26th year with 375 entries from 178 students. The team thanks the judging panel of Cristy Froehlich and the Photographic Group's Ben Harvey and Phil Green.

[Image of the winners, judges and VIPs to be supplied after the awards presentation. The 5 1st prize-winning images plus Rangers award are also recommended if space permits.]

Time to prepare document: 2:00 hours

THURSDAY TALKS TEAM

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026

- The team manages lunchtime talks for each Thursday from February to November each year. Whilst the principal focus is sharing information about botany, the topics range anywhere across the natural world.
- The talks are aimed at a general audience and everyone is welcome. We welcome donations by gold coin, notes or electronically, and we thank all those who have donated. The Friends use donations received to support the Gardens' programs and development.
- Copies of the presentations are held in the ANBG Library for access by appointment with the Librarian.

Specific highlights of this year are:

- The inaugural Bruce Lindenmayer Memorial Lecture was held at Manning Clarke Hall, Kambri, ANU. This lecture was by Bruce' son, Distinguished Professor David Lindenmayer to an audience of 219. The lecture was videoed and made available on YouTube to ensure recognition of the talk, with a Bruce Lindenmayer Memorial Lecture playlist to host this and coming talks in the series. (www.youtube.com/@BruceLindenmayerMemorial)
- A new audio-visual system was installed in the theatrette. Some talks in May 2026 were held in the Crosbie Morrison Room when the audio-visual system in the theatrette was being upgraded. The new system has caused some technical problems, and IT or Venues support was often required to coax the system to work. We are, however, discussing with ANBG and technical support staff the possibility of recording or livestreaming presentations, both made possible by upgrades to the system.
- The total audience for the year has increased to 2,652 (compared with 2,202 in the previous financial year) and just under \$3,500 in donations had been received (compared with \$3,100 last year).
- Several talks were heavily booked, with 70 or more attendees (the maximum seating capacity is 80). Attached is a full list of the Thursday Talks for the Financial Year 2025-26, with heavily booked talks highlighted in green.
- The program has included scientific research undertaken by ANBG staff and partners, along with other speakers from CSIRO, some research departments at the ANU, and other organisations. The speakers covered a wide range of topics related to botany as well as current and historical environments.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

Convenor	Sharon Abrahams
Members	Barbara Hamburger
	Elaine Staples
	John Pilbeam
	John Vranjic
	Kate King
	Kathy Eyles (ANBG)
	Linda Beveridge

b. **Number of committee meetings:** 5

c. **Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:** 42

The talk scheduled for 23 October was cancelled because of speaker illness.
d. **Number of participants during the year:** 2,652

WEBSITE TEAM

Purpose, and activities of the financial year 2025-2026 (about 300 words)

The website team looks after the content of www.friendsanbg.org.au, the Friends of the ANBG website. We maintain the 'general' pages, add calendar items as they are advised to us, and add special interest and News items, such as information on scholarships, as they arise. We also include links to various publications that may be of interest to the Friends.

Specific highlights of this year are:

The Friends Council contracted a local IT company *Even Dots Creative*, to rebuild the Friends website and to provide ongoing maintenance. The new website was launched 15 April 2026.

We also advertised for new web editors and have expanded our ongoing team to three.

Data about the Group: membership participation and volunteering contribution to support the Friends and the Gardens. (use more or less space as you need for the first subheading).

a. List of convenor and other office bearers

Beth Tyerman	Convenor and web editor
Anne Lange	Web editor
Brian Moir	Web editor

b. Number of committee meetings:

Occasional social get-togethers

c. Number of workshop/ activities/ events/ exhibitions/ publications:

Ongoing tasks 'on demand'

d. Number of participants during the ye

