

Wellingtonia

Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens inc.

Newsletter | Autumn 2024

FROM THE PRESIDENTS DESK

Colours of Autumn.

BY JULIE BRADBY



Autumn is my favourite season. For many of us, living in cooler climate regions like the Central Highlands, it is a time of blue sky days, reviving rain and mellowness. Thanks to gardeners from previous centuries and lovers of deciduous trees and shrubs, many towns have wonderful seasonal displays. The range of colours and the gradual, gently changing, tree-scapes are an ephemeral joy. This seasonal shift is a time when we still feel the remnants of summer, but also the coming of winter. It is a time to slow down, to enjoy our Botanic Gardens, streetscapes and the changing countryside.

As a new President of the Friends, it is, of course a busy time. It's a huge responsibility and I hope to do the role justice. I feel truly privileged to hold this position for the coming three years. The Friends are a wonderful group of people and achieve such positive outcomes for our whole community.

Andrew Thomas is one of those people and has been a great supporter of the Friends. Many will be familiar with his beautiful photographs and all members, with his recent work as designer of Wellingtonia. Putting our quarterly newsletter together requires skill, patience, creative flair and more. Unfortunately he will be retiring from this role due to ill health. A big thankyou and we at the Friends wish you well Andrew!

This year's Begonia Festival was a challenge for all, with three days of intense heat. Hats off to our many volunteers! The Plant Crèche workers were wonderful and congratulations to the Nursery, on, yet again, such successful plant sales! A highlight of the Festival was the opening of Fernery Landscape Project. The Friends, past and present, have proudly supported this project, donating a phenome-

“Autumn leaves shower
*like gold, like rainbows, as the winds
of change begin to blow.*

I can *smell autumn dancing in the breeze.*

The sweet *chill of pumpkin,
and crisp sunburnt leaves.*”

nal \$200,000! The BotaniKids team celebrated at the Cottage with a focus on ferns. There were children's activities, information panels and displays, including those by the Ballarat Floral Art Group, creating a cool oasis for all.

Another aspect of the Begonia Festival is the many appreciative visitors we meet, from Melbourne, the regions, interstate and overseas. This year we hosted a morning tea for members of the Friends of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. It was delightful to sit under shady trees and share our love of botanic gardens, gardening and much more.

Also in March, was Inspired by Begonias, an art exhibition of 46 works at the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre. For over a year, the Botanical Art Group has been proudly working on this very Ballarat project. It was a wonderful showcase of artistry and science and a delight to see the work of such skilled botanical artists. I hope you were one of the nearly 600 people who enjoyed the display and perhaps purchased an original artwork or card.

The new Masterplan of Gardens, for the next 20 years, is being developed. Its guiding principles and Friends priorities were outlined in Summer Wellingtonia. Andrea Proctor is the Horticultural Landscape designer and is interested in feedback from our community. She designed the Fernery Landscaping project and a small group from the Committee will be meeting with her in April. We look forward to contributing and working with Andrea, Donna and the team, to continue the progressive development of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

17-26 May is the Ballarat Heritage Festival and the Friends will be running an array of events. This year the History and Botanical Art Groups will be focusing on Pinaceae (Pines, Cedars, Firs, Spruces, etc.) with an exhi-



bition opening 18th May. The 26th May will include a range of events, John Hawker will speak on the importance of the Wardian Case, followed by afternoon tea and at the Cottage there will be family activities such as live storytelling. The Guides will also be leading walks, helping us to appreciate the Gardens Pinaceae collection.

It is exciting to be part of a growing and increasingly active membership and I would like to welcome new members and to ask all members to help out when you can. Please note the table of events and happenings; your work will always be appreciated and it is a great way to get to know other members.

Over the last three years, President Terry O'Brien was a very effective and hardworking President. He achieved great results, did some excellent work and inspired the Committee with renewed purpose. My aims include a focus on supporting and caring for our members and positive change, particularly regarding the Masterplan. I look forward to working with Donna and her exceptional staff, in helping to make our Botanical Gardens and precinct stronger and even more welcoming, beautiful and respected.

Do take time to enjoy the many delights of autumn.

Heritage Festival

Exhibition Saturday 18th May - 26th May

Ballarat Botanical Gardens Conservatory, 9 - 4pm, Free

Narrowed down to Needles

- Is it a Pine a Spruce or a Cedar



Artist Ro Bancroft

This is a chance to see up close the wonderful illustrations of the significant heritage Pine, Spruce and Cedar Trees from the 19th century in the Pinaceae collection in the Ballarat Gardens -Presented by the talented Botanical Art

Group of the Friends of the Gardens.

Botanical displays will illustrate prickly and pointed information about the Pines.

Guided Tour Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Sun 26th May, 12:30pm

Meet at the Conservatory, Free

Narrowed down to Needles - Is it a Pine, Spruce or Cedar?

Find the answer and more in a tour with the Guides at the Gardens for an hour long leisurely stroll through the gardens amongst our magnificent centurion Pines



Autumn Events

The Amazing Story of the Wardian Case and the even more astonishing story of the man who invented it?

FAMILY EVENT - HOSTED BY BOTANIKIDS

Sunday 26th May, Gatekeeper's Cottage, Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Two Sessions, 10-11am and 11:15am-12:15pm
Gold Coin Donation, please book Trybooking



Australian Author and renowned storyteller performer Jackie Kerin and violinist musician Sarah Depasquale will be performing the story of Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward and the story of his invention The Wardian Case



This revolutionary little case changed the way plants were transported successfully by sea for 100 years. Hence the unique collection of beautiful heritage 'cent-

turian' trees in the Botanical Gardens today.

This will be followed by a nature craft activity.

26th May 10am -1pm

Two shows Gold coin donation per child.
Parents must accompany child.



A Family Event Hosted by Ballarat BotaniKids Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens,

Book with Trybooking
www.trybooking.com/CPUGH



Wheelchair and prams access Toilets nearby with special and baby changing facilities

What's the Point - Is it a Pine a Spruce or a Cedar?

TALK AND AFTERNOON TEA

Sun 26th May, 2pm

Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanical Gardens : Free



John Hawker, long time horticultural and former adviser with the Heritage Council of Victoria will present prickly and to the point stories about the Pinaceae family - Pines, Cedars and Spruce

John has assisted the National Trust with the development and management of the register of significant trees in Victoria

www.trybooking.com/CPTEI

May Meeting of the Friends

Thursday 23rd May at 10am

Robert Clark Centre

Craig Castree, our guest speaker is an award winning Horticulturist of 45 years experience at growing his own food organically. The title of his talk "How the health of soil effects the planets health and human health" will sure to interest members. Craig has published 5 books on this subject and how to help people towards becoming self sufficient on a suburban block.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A time to reflect on new directions and value old ways.

BY SUSAN PILBEAM

Presiding over his last AGM, Terry O'Brien welcomed our Patron, Professor Tim Entwisle, Mayor Des Hudson, Councilor Samantha Macintosh, Gardens Curator Donna Thomas and team. There was a special welcome to visitors from Camperdown and Kyneton Friends and Horticultural groups and to our new members. Terry began by discussing the Friends' legacy of 40 years, developing community connections, taking initiatives, raising funds and issues. He thanked key personnel and then enthusiastically summarized growth over his term, the new sub-groups, partnerships, resources and our increasing diversity of membership.

Kim Nolan's Treasurer's Report recognized the work of many in raising over \$142,000 for the gardens this year, particularly acknowledging the Garden's staff and Growing Friends; our Nursery raising \$42,000 of this total. Our contributions to the Fernery development are now over \$200,000.

Our Patron was Guest Speaker and his theme, "A Healing Place: The Modern Botanic Garden as a Reimagined Physic Garden". Beginning with the oldest continuous Botanic Garden, Padua (1545), he explained its medicinal origins, commenting that 75% of present drugs come from plants and fungi. It, like all Botanic gardens, is 'artificial', yet also part of nature and the landscape. Such gardens enable us to appreciate plants from different envi-

ronments, eg. in glass houses, which for many, are our first experience of global diversity. Images of Kew, Sydney and Singapore, of sculptures, day and evening events, illustrated a discussion of gardens as a place of culture, attracting new audiences to green spaces.

Botanic Gardens have always had a scientific basis, with living collections and specimen collections. Some Herbariums maintain collections over hundreds of years. Such information is increasingly available on-line, such as Vic-Flora: (rbg.vic.gov.au) and is also linked to Seedbanks and new research into Genomes, bio-diversity and evolution. International initiatives such as Care for the Rare, not only mitigate decline, but research causes and highlight issues of landscape succession and climate change. Horticultural research and conservation are also vital, enabling different choices and future adaptations.

The talk finished with a discussion of the fragmentation of landscape, emphasizing the importance of public green space to physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. This need, linked with the significance of plants to medicine, making the whole Botanic garden a physic garden.

Mayor Des Hudson congratulated the Friends on their achievements over 40 years and the value and importance of volunteerism and collaboration. He thanked the Garden's staff for their year round work, but particularly



during the Begonia Festival, when over 60,000 people visit the gardens. Acknowledging the Friends contributions, notably to the Fernery, he asked members to get involved with the new Master Plan for the Gardens. He then presented the 2024 Certificates of Appreciation.

Curator Donna Thomas presented an illustrated summary of the year and its most significant achievements: the completion of the Conservation Management Plan, the new Fernery Landscape project and renovations to the Conservatory. Other developments include the continued updating of the irrigation system, returning mulched areas to lawn and the development of collections, such as Clematis.

The team has been learning firsthand about the challenges facing other Botanic Gardens, with visits to Bendigo, Melbourne and BGANZ. They also spent time with the Friends History Group, finding out more about the gardens and about the importance of the Wardian Case, at the Gatekeepers Cottage exhibition. Invitations to the Friends Spring Luncheon Talks, Open Gardens, exhibitions and meetings have also been much appreciated and Friends and the team are equally pleased the new Tuberous

Begonia cultivar is named in honor of George Longley.

Donna thanked the Friends for all they do for the gardens and Terry for his contribution as President. She looks forward to working with new President Julie Bradby and invited members to participate in the new Gardens Masterplan that will guide our gardens through the next 20 years.

Professor Tim Entwisle then supervised the election of Office Bearers and Committee for 2024 and new President Julie Bradby began by thanking Terry O'Brien, Robert Selkirk, Merrill Shulkes, Councilor Samantha Mackintosh, Committee members and the Catering team, for their long term contributions. Julie's focus will be connection; with the Ballarat community, with the precinct stakeholders, the Committee and our growing membership of over 450. The Gardens Masterplan is a priority and Jock Gilbert will be taking a leading role for the Friends. Julie looks forward to working with so many committed and passionate people. Her first official task was to joyfully present gifts, recognizing the work of members. Morning tea in the courtyard was enjoyed by all. A happy start to the year.

Volunteer Recognition Awards for 2024

At this year's AGM eight members who joined the Friends in 2014 were presented with Certificates of Appreciation to acknowledge their significant contribution and commitment over many years.

Pamela Thompson, Trudie Dickinson, Tony and Joan Ennis, Shirley Jones, Vivien Verlaan, Joy Morrish and Margaret Towers.

Remembering Our Gardens' Founder

BY STEPHANIE DE BOER

Many Friends will know the name George Longley, the first Curator of the Ballarat Botanic Gardens appointed in 1858. Tom Toop, Curator for fifty-five years wrote that Longley “did pioneer work in the truest sense, as his was the hand that put the first spade into the ground and created from its virgin state the present beautiful landscape.” Besides Longley’s leadership in the development of the Botanic Gardens and nurseries, his many responsibilities included, the training of staff, the Sturt Street garden beds, street trees, the Viewpoint garden beds, care of the white swans, the Acclimatization Society, the Fish Hatchery, Menagerie and Deer Park as well as the maintenance of the Borough Meteorological records, all for a salary of three pounds a week. All of these tasks were performed without electricity, mechanical devices or mains water.

Originally, Longley had trained as a gardener at Lowther Castle, in England. He married Helen Tickle in 1853, arrived in Port Phillip and became a miner at the Black Hill diggings the following year. The hard physical labour associated with being a miner may well have been valuable preparation for the energy and self-discipline needed in his later career as a multi-skilled Curator.

Meanwhile, for the first 18 months, Longley and his family lived in a tent on site. One can only imagine the hardships endured by Helen Longley in Ballarat’s cold.

After Longley was appointed as Gardener in Ballarat, one of the fundamentals of family life was attendance at the Jubilee Methodist Church overlooking Yuille’s Swamp. Longley acted as Sunday School Superintendent and bell ringer there, which honed his skills as a leader and teacher. And, as a devout, sober and upright Methodist, he also ensured that the seats on the Garden swings were removed on Sundays!

His correspondence with the Ballarat Council and the Botanical Gardens Committee of Management revealed an abrupt, plain-speaking, practical man. In 1869, the Council ordered that the prison labourers who had worked in every corner of the Gardens were not to work within 50 yards from any tree or street. As no prisoners had escaped or gone missing, Longley wrote that he thought the order was “a most ridiculous idea” and there would be no other place than the Swamp for them.

At another stage, the Council replaced the Council cart-horse with a pony. Longley was quick to point out that dung was heavy.

There was the expectation that Longley would provide reports on all that happened in the Gardens, even less important events. Various, he was to ensure boat holders did not allow passengers after sunset and report on the theft of the white swans’ eggs.



Over the years of his service, at times, Longley had a difficult and tense relationship with those at the Town Hall. As Longley became older and not as strong, the Council sought his retirement and proposed to halve his salary and reduce his supervision and work to half. There was, understandably, a public outcry.

As a leader in his church and community, he was a foundation member of the Ballarat Horticultural Society; a frequent exhibitor in plant shows and he displayed the first pineapple grown in Ballarat. Under his stewardship, festoons would be supplied for a Mayoral Ball and 500 garlands of cut flowers were regularly prepared for the cemetery. Longley's purview as Curator extended into myriad aspects of Ballarat life.

What contributed significantly to Longley's work as a renowned Curator were his other talents as a teacher, lecturer and mentor. While Longley could be a dour and taciturn man in his dealings with the City authorities, he instinctively knew the value of education and generously passed on his skills and knowledge to those who were to succeed him.

Between 1880-1888, Longley began providing outdoor lectures for the Botany students at the School of Mines and Industries in Ballarat. Furthermore, Longley had his apprentices at the Gardens undertake a six-year programme and then two years as improvers with no guarantee of further employment. Longley was a hard man. And yet, as with most exceptional teachers, he inspired some of his apprentices, notably, John Lingham and John Williams. By 1890, these two men succeeded Longley as Curators. They continued and developed Longley's work with great success. BBG became a standard for other public gardens. Another of Longley's apprentices, Hugh Linaker

went on to design the State Institutional Gardens of Lakeside, Mayday Hills, Larundel and Parkville with the Melbourne Domain being his last work.

Throughout the long years of service as pioneer Curator of the BBS, Longley acquired a world of experience and influenced other important gardeners. Longley had contacts far and wide, in Victoria, Australia and overseas. If he was not meeting or corresponding with other Curators such as von Mueller in the Melbourne Botanical Gardens, he was busy procuring seeds from San Francisco and plants, birds and animals from other parts of the world. With an encyclopaedic knowledge of gardens, he was not only an authority in the world of gardens he had become a great communicator.

After Longley's death, Ballarat Council grudgingly permitted his second wife to remain in the Curator's cottage for a short time. No recognition was given for the essential support she gave her husband in his work. George Longley came to be remembered by a street named after him and the George Longley Building. And yet to this day, there is no actual memorial in the BBG celebrating his outstanding achievements! (Why not? Ed.)

George Longley is an iconic figure in Ballarat's history who must not be forgotten in the 21st century when we stroll through our beautiful Botanical Gardens.

****Editor's note: First published in the 2018-19 Summer Wellingtonia, this wonderful article by Stephanie de Boer has been reprinted in recognition of the new begonia cultivated by the Ballarat Botanical Gardens team and named after the Gardens' inaugural curator, George Longley.*

Guiding Friends, *Keep Guiding.....*

BY JULIE CHANDLER

Guides Convener

At least 30 years ago one of the first three sub groups of the friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens was the Guides. Rummaging through very early copies of Wellingtonia it is clear that under the enthusiasm of early Conveners, in Joan Garner, Ian Smith, Alison Kirk, Denise Taverner, Rosemary Manion and Anne Watson our Gardens have always been shared with visitors in a competent and friendly manner... To quote Ian Smith...

“Communication is perhaps more important than botanical details”

From 2010 to the present day the Guides have been led by Beth Dixon, Terry O'Brien and Julie Chandler and Ian Smith's words still ring true! Today's Guides undoubtedly take inspiration from Guides of yesteryear and their many and varied activities over 30 years.

Regular season specific Free Sunday morning Guided Tours have always been offered to visitors to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Booked Tours sometimes for less than 10 or as many as 40 occur due to the generosity of spirit and time of the Volunteers. Friends Jane Monro has been our contact person for Booked Groups and her meticulous planning is always complemented by the friendly efficient Office Staff.A quote from Jane....

“People come from all over the world and all over Australia to see our Gardens. Many comment on our wonderful borders and massed plantings of annual plants... and often say ...Our Botanic Garden used to have these, but they don't any more and it's good to see them again!..... Some groups come on a sort of whirlwind tour and tumble out of the buses looking tired and even grumpy but most react well to the beauty and peace of the Gardens...”

Special Theme Guided Tours, be they Stories of Entertainment followed by a Picnic, a Twilight Tour on the Prime Ministers Avenue on Australia Day, Australia Be-

fore the Gum Trees, Quirky Oak Tales and The Mystical Elms during Heritage Week, A Wander down the Western Bed, Tree Tales and a Picnic in the Shade, A Remembrance Tour or The Giants of Wellingtonia Avenue, have all offered opportunities for the Guides to further explore the outstanding trees in the Gardens. (Watch this space for “Narrowed Down to Needles” Heritage Week 2024!) It's a sterling effort to research and then to speak in front of a large wandering crowd but feedback assures us of much appreciation. Many of the Themed guided Tours have been in conjunction with expertly presented

Exhibitions of Botanical Artists' fine work and the informative panels orchestrated by Lorraine Powell.

An invited Speaker has been an addition to some themed tours. John Hawker, a long time horticulturalist and former advisor to Heritage Victoria for one and an absolute highlight for many was Barry Jones presenting “The P.M.'s and Barry Jones”. Barry had written a letter critical of material in the Friends Prime Ministers Avenue brochure. One direct response from the Friends was an amended version of the brochure put into circulation and the second response an opportunity to publicise the Gardens with such a high profile guest Speaker! B.J. delivered all and more to a packed house!

The production of Publications of Significant Trees of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, Statues of the Gardens and The Prime Ministers Avenue at the Gardens certainly has been the result of a worthy work of the Guides ably assisted by the History Group and members of the Committee at the time. Pamphlets and Maps certainly help visitors but it is the conversations that take place on guided tours that give opportunities to explore other aspects and ask questions about our Significant Aged Trees, Our Significant Buildings and Stunning Statues.

Seven U3ABallarat Botanical Gardens Courses in 2013-2019 offered an extended program for those keen to learn more about the Gardens through a series of presentations by a wide range of speakers plus some tours and excursions.





Visiting other Botanic Gardens including Bendigo, Shepparton, Melton, Camperdown and Colac, St Kilda Botanic Gardens and the Port Phillip Eco Centre has been a much rewarding activity for the Guides. The sharing through Wellingtonia of individual visits to Gardens worldwide only encourages more adventures! Over the years Guides from Ballarat have attended National Conferences for Botanic Garden Guides in Sydney, Perth, Melbourne & Christchurch NZ. Guides have also attended the Australian Association of Botanical Gardens Conferences thus broadening their knowledge and forging friendships with like minded people. The Friends from Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria warmly welcomed our Guides to their training programme in 2016.

Whilst much of what we share as Guides focuses on the Central Gardens, the Wetlands beckon and we look forward to working with the newly established Biodiversity Group.

In searching for material to share in this report, past copies of Wellingtonia mandate, that a past, much valued member of the Guides, John Garner, had a great gift of sharing his knowledge and experience of all things Ballarat Botanical Gardens related. We are ever grateful for John's Jottings and so we know of Lych Gates, Amazing mazes, Cowardly Lions and much more!!!!

As Guides it's a privilege to share The Gardens and all that we do there with other groups within the Friends. It's a pleasure to share The Gardens with friendly knowledgeable staff as we work together to promote our Gardens. From time to time we share activities and learn from each other.

To quote T. O'B".As Guides we are always on a learning curve and discovering and exploring new insights into the Ballarat Gardens. We appreciate these opportunities and enjoy the sharing and contributing that's all part of Guiding..... The Guides share a common interest in gardening and botanical developments. Through combined efforts we trust that we are an informed and helpful source to visitors. "

We meet at 10.00 on 4th Wednesday of each month in George Longley Building. If you have a positive attitude & a willingness to share ... Do come & join Us!!!!

Thankyou to Guides past and present, your enthusiasm has brought and will surely bring much joy to many people.

I feel privileged to share Guiding with caring, confident, flexible, willing and witty friends!



Ballarat Begonia Festival

A visual report on the 2024 festival.











CURATORS' REPORT

A clock turns 70 and ferns return

BY DONNA THOMAS

It's just after Begonia Festival, and despite it being the hottest in my 15 years here, the festival was a wonderful success, and again drawing visitors from far & wide. It was also one of the teams busiest with multiple projects reaching milestones at the same time.

The celebrations started the week before festival with our Floral Clock turning 70! Widely believed to be one of Australia's oldest, it was originally located in Sturt St moving to it's current location in 1980.

In an exciting new direction - our team enjoyed a more active role in the festival this year, manning a new gardens information tent, and up on the main stage with Erin talking Begonias with Jerry Coleby-Williams, Glen & Anna sharing 'all things Dahlias' & talks about our

gardens history and trees – collectively sharing greater insights on the gardens.

The gardens were also filmed for TV show Postcards (Maddie with Glen, Anna, Dan & Chris), Better Homes & Gardens (Sheree with Melissa King – screens Sep), & Jerry-Coleby Williams facebook video with Erin & Jaclyn.

We revealed our latest Begonia release – Begonia 'George Longley' - bred by the nursery team here in the gardens and proudly named after our first curator. George was featured in the Conservatory with our other recent releases in Begonia 'Peter Marquand' and Begonia 'Lady B'.

Begonia 'Lady B', produces some of our largest blooms, reaching 20cm across last year. She was also created by Sheree Blood & Erin Brennan in the nursery team with the name reflecting the first initial of their surnames 'B',

and their nickname for each other of 'Lady'. With over 45 years of combined Begonia growing experience between them, Lady B's amazing size & unique colour in our collection, we thought she too was worthy of sharing this year!

We also saw the official unveiling of the new Fernery Landscape, which also showcases some 1800 plants including a new native fern collection.

It is with this monumental occasion I wish to say thank you again for the Friends extraordinary contribution of \$200,000 to this project, along with DEECA \$150,000, and the Gardens Foundation \$50,000, which enabled such a high level design & quality delivery to become reality. It truly is now a landscape befitting the building, and fast becoming our most popular visitor entrance to the gardens.

We also launched the beginning of the new Botanical Gardens Masterplan community consultation with the opening of the Masterplan My-Say online survey. We welcome you all to contribute to this survey with your individual view, in addition to the very detailed collective guidelines already meticulously prepared by the Friends group.

Finally, I wish to say how delighted I was to attend the Friends of the Gardens Botanical Art Exhibition. Again a truly inspiring collection of beautiful works, this time showcasing our very own Begonia collection in a level of detail never seen before! Truly talented!



Floral Clock turned 70! *Photo by Sheree Blood*



Begonia 'George Longley'



Begonia 'Lady B'



Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation



BY MARK SCHULTZ
Chairman

The Foundation started the new year with a strategy workshop in February where we met with key stakeholders and partners to become more informed on the matters of importance to both the Gardens and the Foundation. Participants included a private meeting with the Mayor Councillor Des Hudson and the Chief Executive of the City, Evan King as well as key Gardens management from the City of Ballarat and representatives from our major partner, The Friends. This workshop enabled the Board to formulate its strategy for the next 12 -18 months, which includes:

- Participating and contributing to the development and finalisation of the Gardens Masterplan (this is now happening with a meeting scheduled in early April with further opportunities to be provided as the project unfolds.)
- A collaboration with the Marketing & Communication department of the City of Ballarat whereby the City will provide professional resources (5 hours per month) to assist the Foundation develop its brand and increase and enhance awareness of the Foundation across our City. This will place the Foundation in a stronger position to generate interest and hopefully donations and sponsorships as the year unfolds and as we prepare for the launch of the Masterplan later in the year.
- We have agreed in principle to explore the opportunity to fund new gates for the entrance to the Fernery from the main road. This will take some time as we navigate the usual process, and we will keep members updated as we progress.

We were delighted to be represented by Elizabeth Gillfillan at the opening of the Fernery and new landscaping project. The fernery and its surrounds are certainly an out-



standing contribution to the infrastructure of our Gardens and now there for everyone to enjoy and admire. (now to finish the project in totality!)

The creation of the bust of former Prime Minister Scott Morrison has commenced with the first sitting being recently undertaken – we all look forward to having the next addition to the Prime Minister's walk completed and erected sometime this year.

2024 will be an important year for all of us – the creation of the Masterplan will provide a clear pathway for the development of the Gardens and the Foundation looks forward to playing an active role in the implementation of important projects.

If anyone requires any further information on the Foundation, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

In the *Know*

BY WENDY TAYLOR

Begonia Festival Snippets

Attendances for the Festival were estimated at 44,000 over the long weekend, 9 - 11 March. Although down on last year it was a fantastic number considering the very hot days. The Friends Nursery took around \$5,000. A great result!

A special visit by over 30 members of the Australian Horticultural Judges Association to the Gardens involved a tour and talk by Glen Fisher on the magnificent Dahlia Collection. Glen is the Gardens expert staff member on everything to do with raising dahlias. The group also toured the Buninyong Botanical Gardens. A great time of year to showcase Ballarat and the Gardens to this national body.

Congratulations to Kevin Moneghetti who was honoured by the City earlier in the year winning the Ballarat Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award. His link to the Begonia Festival and the Friends is his supply of begonias from his wholesale horticultural business in Broomfield. Growing many of the begonias on display for the Festival and for sale in the Friends Nursery over the past 3 decades, Mr Moneghetti also contributes plants to Ballarat's Christmas decorations.



Adelaide Friends Visit

REPORT FROM MERRILL SHULKES

Eighteen Friends of Adelaide Botanic Gardens, led by Judith Ball, visited Ballarat Botanical Gardens on the first day of this year's Begonia Festival. They were welcomed by a small group of Ballarat Friends. President Julie Bradby invited them to view the Fernery Exhibition and the Floral Art Display in the Gatekeepers Cottage and they were then served a delicious morning tea under a gazebo outside the Cottage, prepared by Heather Boyd.

Afterwards the group was taken on a tour of the Fernery, Friends Plant Nursery and Statuary Pavillion by Lorraine Powell. In appreciation of our hospitality the Ballarat Friends were presented with the autobiography of Dr. H.C. Robjohns who founded the Adelaide Friends in 1977. He has an interesting connection to Ballarat. From 1958-1963 he worked as a geriatrician at the Queen Elizabeth Home.

A Members story behind joining our group!

In 2019 Edwina Millar returned to Ballarat after 20 years living and working in Brisbane. Showing a visitor around our Gardens she was amazed at the gorgeous summer blooms and colours. After a lengthy chat to our Ambassador on duty, Cathie handed Edwina an enrolment form for the Friends. The next year Edwina visited the Friends Nursery, caught up by chance with a friend working in the Nursery and happened on the spectacular flower - *Haemanthus coccineus* with its pink pom pom flower. But it was not for sale!

Edwina did join the Friends and the Growers Group and was so happy to find this plant again, this time available to buy! Thanks to Yvonne!

So now Edwina is a happy volunteer with new friends and the owner of a lovely plant.

Wellingtonia Membership Report

13 March 2024.

Our Current Membership is standing at 477 members and 52 mini-members.

The Friends welcome the following new members:

Dianne Gowe, Teagan Hughes, Melanie Punton, Grady Punton, Jim Kierce, Carol Woodley, Jessica Clarke, Rosemary Davies, Hayley Hynes, Nick Hynes, Sarah Elford, Greta Sabatino, Thomas Batters, Luke Icely, Sarah Sharp, Jessica Perovic, Elly Graetz, Nel Chandrasena, Maria Bell, Naomi Commons, Peter Commons, Beck Davies, Bronwyn Williams, Margaret Harris, Angeline Warnest, Trish Winthrop, Sue Broome, Gwyneth Ottrey, Nadra Khan, Sulochana Naiker and Robert Hammond

Membership Renewal

If you've received a renewal form please remember to pay promptly. Discounts for 2 year or 5 year renewal.

Our preference is Direct Debit
(Please note 'name', 'subs', 'year length')

eg P Symons, Sub 2yr.

BSB 633 000 Acc No. 125 334 615

Please send/email your form back to the office to help with processing.



Vale Kathleen Hobson OAM

Kathleen was a Vice President and a life member of the Friends.

A wonderful quiet advocate for 'The Gardens' and supporter of all the Friends' endeavours from the establishment of Botanikids to the Western Bed and the History groups collecting of garden history and story.

Ever the voice of reason, enjoyed a cup of tea and a chance to swap a recipe or a plant or two.

She was a truly beautiful soul and gracious generous lady.

Giving her time to meet to advise to make to arrange without rancour.

When we think of Kathleen we will remember her lovely smile, her grace, her honesty and her kind heart. Sadly missed

The Challenge of Change
 Relationships - Volunteering - Climate - Technology
2024
AAFBG
CONFERENCE
23 - 26 August

Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Garden

Join us as we tackle the big issues and explore solutions

- to create rewarding **relationships**
- to work well with **volunteers**
- to identify opportunities within a changing **climate**
- to employ **technology** that enhances our message and effectiveness.

Keynote speaker: Dale Arvidsson, Curator of Brisbane Botanic Gardens.

Pre and post conference tours of Sunshine Coast Gardens.

Twilight welcome drinks and Handbury Award presentations.

Conference Dinner at Mooloolaba Beach.

Key Takeaways

You will leave armed with a portfolio of experiences gleaned from Gardens around Australia. Learn what has worked and what hasn't, as well as:

- **valuable information**
- **new networks**
- **actionable ideas**

to share with your Friends group.

For further information

www.FriendsBotanicGardens.org



Enjoy August on the Sunshine Coast



Images: Visit Sunshine Coast





Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Inc.



Friends Groups Convenors

ADMIN: Office Manager Kim Nolan
AMBASSADORS: Trish Twaites
BIODIVERSITY GROUP: Terry O'Brien
BOTANICAL ARTISTS: Ro Bancroft
BOTANIKIDS/EDUCATION: Julie Bradby
CATERING: Heather Boyd
EVENTS: Carole Haines
FOTOFRIENDS: Ro Bancroft
GUIDING: Julie Chandler
GROWERS/NURSERY: Yvonne Curbach
HISTORY: Natalie Radomski
EXHIBITIONS/LIBRARY: Lorraine Powell
PLANT TROLLEY: Sue Rattray
WELLINGTONIA LIAISON & PUBLICITY
FOR MAJOR EVENTS: Wendy Taylor

Committee 2024

PRESIDENT: Julie Bradby
VICE PRESIDENT: Karen McLean
TREASURER: Kim Nolan
MINUTE SECRETARY: Suzy Cochrane (acting)
GENERAL COMMITTEE: Jock Gilbert,
Geoff Notman, Siobhan Burgoyne,
Jill Wheaton, Marg Ellis, Jim Kierce

Nominated Committee Positions

GROWING FRIENDS: Yvonne Curbach
BOTANIKIDS/EDUCATION: Julie Bradby
EXHIBITIONS/LIBRARY: Lorraine Powell
GUIDES: Julie Chandler
HISTORY: Natalie Radomski
HOSPITALITY/AMBASSADORS: Heather Boyd
MEMBERSHIP: Karen Mclean
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE FRIENDS
OF BOTANICAL GARDENS REP: Marg Ellis
BOTANICAL ART: Ro Bancroft
BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS
FOUNDATION REP: Julie Bradby
STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE: Jock Gilbert
PRECINCT REP: Geoff Notman

PATRON OF THE BALLARAT FRIENDS:
Professor Tim Entwisle

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*The Friends are proud
to recognise our
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Contributions for Winter Wellingtonia 2024 are due by Friday 14 June.

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