



Annual General Meeting. Acting Secretary Report 1st May 2022

Cause for celebration AAFBG is in its 30th year. In 1991 the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne invited representatives of Botanic Gardens throughout Victoria to a seminar to discuss matters of common interest, which was attended by Friends and others from local authorities. The seminar was so successful that it was repeated the following year, resulting in strong support for the establishment of an umbrella organisation and the formation of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Victoria) Inc in January 1993 with a membership of 18 Friends groups.

In 2001, due to the increasing interest of Friends and Botanic Garden representatives from interstate, the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Victoria) Inc became a national body, the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc. Association Conferences subsequently became biennial, with the Australasian Volunteer Guides Conferences.

To mark this 30th year we can announce the Friends RMBG have proposed to host the next AGM day event in Autumn 2023.

The conferences and events don't just happen; through passion and commitment our members have hosted conferences, the last being in Benalla four years ago, having unfortunately to cancel the Brisbane Conference in 2020. It was in Benalla that we met Liz Barraclough representing Eurobodalla. Liz spoke to us and said this was something that would be great for Eurobodalla and here we are. Sincere thanks to Liz who had to step back from leadership and now to Lynne Anlezark and her team our appreciation for this great weekend. I feel confident to repeat quote Lynne "everyone attending the conference will return to their Groups energised, inspired and better equipped to meet the challenges that we face".

Communication between AAFBG members is invaluable showing support and advocacy. The website is the resource of current news, historical information and governance documentation. Our thanks to WordWorth communicating for their professional technology support. Technology plays a vital role and it has exploded since AAFBG inception. Professional expertise in support of your Peak Body operations is essential. Eight years ago with finances at break even the AAFBG received the generous gift from Dr Geoffrey Handbury, of \$10,000.00 per annum for five years to support administration, the remainder of the gift is held in term deposit and of course AAFBG has managed very well until the last three years which has taken a considerable toll but has been ably

supported with the success of the recently held three very successful AAFBG Botanical Tours.

The AAFBG states in its Structure and Rules the requirement for Administrative Assistance. A contracted Administration Officer responsible to the COM Executive manages the general operations and communication with members. (Part 5. 47 (2) The Secretary acts in association with the Administration Officer.)

My appreciation and best wishes to Chantal De Vere for her assistance over the past two years.

The support of all AAFBG committee members and Magazine Editor Anne Rawson, is greatly appreciated. It was a great pleasure to welcome Kate Heffernan back during the year and our sincere thanks for her Presidency.

Reminders to Members, to reference the valuable Information Kit available with updates, on the website . It is essential guidance for members and for newly forming groups to download and print hard copies to have in your offices.

Also your AAFBG committee highly recommends its Members identify affiliation with its own Peak Body by adding AAFBG logo and web details to publications thus adding strength to their endeavours.

The title of this conference “Thriving together, Resilience and Renewal in a changing world” has never been more appropriate, with many of AAFBG members encountering obstacles of many varieties over the past three years and of course your Peak Body committee is not exempt. At this AGM it is proposed that the new incumbent committee investigate a fresh pathway to the future and we look to everyone for guidance, the outcomes from this conference weekend will be very poignant within the decision making process.

The Legislation re Associations doesn't mandate the structure of the governing body so “an Association can determine the structure it wants” [needs]. This National Peak Body of passionate representatives are extremely busy in their own roles. The Peak Body plays a vital role in connection and advocacy. It meets four times a year by Zoom including face to face at the AGM, holds conferences and facilitates communication, so at this AGM your committee will seek your approval to investigate future Governance possibilities.

Promotion through the bi annual Eucalypt Magazine broadcasting Members achievements and stories along with regular three weekly E-ucalypt News keeps us up to date with your events and happenings, your input is greatly appreciated and we ask you to please pass on to secretaries and send to all your Members.

Meeting passionate people and being inspired by achievements in other parts on the Botanical Tours to both Singapore and Tasmania has been a great source of pleasure and will be repeated in new locations. AAFBG Merchandise, Tea towels and post cards are now available to share.

Dame Nellie Melba I am not, this is my final farewell as your Acting Secretary, I thank you for the honour of this office. My time on this committee began fourteen years ago representing Friends of Ballarat and Friends of Buninyong, over eight years ago as the then Vice President I accepted the nomination of Secretary, the responsibility of the role remains with me, with great respect for those who have preceded this committee and the fine work of all who have contributed for the past thirty years.

My personal connection with Friends and support for Botanic Gardens comes from lifelong understanding and appreciation, beginning with childhood connection to the environment and gardening, through to a career in Nursing with connection of Sciences the land and human wellbeing. Thank you for the privilege.

Elizabeth Gilfillan