



Farewell and thankyou from our ex-Patron, Dr Philip Moors AO

As much as I'd like to be with you all for this year's AGM, at the moment I'm rather a long way away – in fact, I'm in Paris on a long-planned European holiday! I had hoped that I could attend my 'retirement', AGM in person, but unfortunately the date clash couldn't be avoided. My appreciation to Linda for delivering this message for me.



First up, I want to thank the Association most sincerely for bestowing on me the honour of being your Patron. I have enjoyed and greatly appreciated my involvement with AAFBG and its members for the past ten years, and I've seen how positive a difference the organisation has made to Friends groups and botanic gardens across the country.

The past three years of Covid and its consequences brought some tough challenges for botanic gardens, for Friends groups, and indeed for the Association itself. Thankfully we now seem to be heading for better times. A community's engagement with its local botanic garden is always important, but in my mind the vital role of these public places was never clearer than during the pandemic. During the last few years of lockdowns and 5-kilometre restrictions (and the need for virtual AGMs!), local botanic gardens were essential places for exercise, for mental refreshment, touching nature, and simply for staying optimistic. AAFBG's member gardens amply fulfilled that role for tens of thousands of people – and will undoubtedly continue doing so through the committed support of their Friends groups.

Like you all, I've enjoyed the beauty and tranquility of many botanic gardens across the country, often accompanied by Friends or staff, sometimes with my family, and occasionally on my own. Recently I added a new garden to my list – Dunedin Botanic Garden in New Zealand, one of our five international associate members. It was a glorious sunny afternoon, with the perennial border a blaze of colour, the rose collection in brilliant bloom, and the Garden's diverse other collections a delight to encounter. Twelve months ago our previous AGM was held at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden during the highly successful AAFBG Conference hosted by the ERBG Friends. They ran a superb meeting, with informative speakers, enjoyable social occasions, and the chance to see a new garden rising literally from the ashes of the devastating bushfire which razed the site in January 2020. It was a pleasure meeting so many of you at the conference and hearing about the activities, challenges and achievements at your home gardens. It certainly reinforced for me how essential Friends groups are in supporting, maintaining and promoting our botanic gardens as essential places of public pleasure and education.

I wish the Association, its Committee chaired by Linda, and our members continuing success in all your activities, and I warmly welcome Dr Judy West as our new Patron.

Thank you again for the honour of being your Patron since 2013, and for your friendship. With best wishes from a distant city - and its wonderful public gardens!

Philip Moors

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS

The AAFBG has 68 members all round Australia plus five overseas associate members. See our website for a full listing.

Incorporation A0026805Z

Patron: Dr Judy West AO

Office bearers

President: Linda Beveridge, Friend ANBG

Vice-Pres: vacant

Sec/Public Officer: Bob Ducrou,

Friend Maroochy Reg. Bushland BG

Treasurer: vacant

Honorary Accountant: Neville Page Friend ANBG

General Committee

Kate Heffernan, Friend Gold Coast BG

Jill Brownlee, Friend Noosa BG

Elizabeth Gilfillan, Friend Buninyong BG

Merrill Shulkes, Friend Ballarat BG.

Lynsey Poore, Friend Royal BG Victoria, Melbourne

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Membership

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 April

\$50 for up to 250 members

\$150 for 250-500 members

\$250 for 500-1000 members

\$400 for 1000+ members

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Coombe Wood Garden

A Botanical Tour of Gardens of Southern Highlands

with the Australian Association of
Friends of Botanic Gardens (AAFBG)

29 October – 4 November 2023

1 night Sydney – 5 nights Bowral



Welcome to our new Patron, Dr Judy West AO



I am pleased to accept the invitation to take on the role of Patron of the AAFBG and I am looking forward to ‘working’ with you all.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend your AGM on 5 May and therefore didn’t have the chance to meet those of you who were present, so I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and share some of my background with you.

I began my botanical career with a Science degree at University of Sydney and a PhD at University of Adelaide, based on taxonomic and breeding system studies of the genus *Dodonaea* (hop bushes) in the family Sapindaceae.

From 1980 I worked as a research scientist in CSIRO based in Canberra, as Director of the Australian National Herbarium and then as Senior Principal Research Scientist leading the Australian Flora and Natural Resource Management Program. My research in these years focussed on genera such as *Calandrinia* (Portulacaceae) and *Pultenaea* (Fabaceae) and several other groups in collaboration with PhD students and post-doctoral research fellows.

Throughout my career, I have promoted plant taxonomic and systematics research through participation on numerous national and international associations and committees. I have also had long term interest and have published on issues relating to biodiversity, biogeography and biodiversity informatics.

In 2009 I was appointed as the Executive Director of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG), only retiring from this position in November 2022. It has been a wonderful place to work and particularly to build its profile as an innovative scientific botanic garden.

During my time at the ANBG I worked closely with the Friends of the ANBG and I respect and greatly appreciate their ongoing dedication and support of the Gardens. Their assistance contributes significantly to the quality of the visitor experience and enhances conservation and research activities.

With inspiration from you as AAFBG members I will continue to be a strong supporter and advocate of Friends Groups across the botanic gardens sector.

President's pre-AGM report

Linda Beveridge



At the last AGM I was elected to the AAFBG Committee of Management. Afterwards I accepted the invitation to fill the casual vacancy of President. It is wonderful that many members of the committee had more experience with AAFBG and they have been wonderful during my strong learning curve.

The AAFBG was incorporated in 1993, 30 years ago, and we are grateful to the Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and colleagues who are not only hosting our Annual General Meeting this year, but have also arranged celebratory events. This included a day tour to Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne and Cruden Farm, the morning tea celebrating people who have played integral roles in AAFBG over the years, and guided walks in the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. Such arrangements certainly make this AGM a very celebratory get-together.

AAFBG has greatly appreciated the wise patronage of Phil Moors AO for the past ten years and we were sorry to hear that he is now retiring from formal responsibilities. He told me that he felt it to be a real honour and privilege to be patron of the AAFBG, and has been delighted to see how the organisation has grown in its activities and membership over the years. Although the last few COVID years have been tough, Phil is confident that AAFBG will flourish now. Phil was unable to attend this Annual General Meeting because he is overseas, but kindly sent a message of farewell, thanks and best wishes.

It is a great pleasure that Dr Judy West AO has agreed to be patron of the AAFBG, and we warmly welcome her to that role. During her career Judy has promoted plant systematic research in Australia and raised the profile of Australian plant systematics through her participation on numerous national and international associations and committees. In 2009 Judy was appointed Executive Director of the Australian National Botanic Gardens and head of Parks and Biodiversity Science in federal government. She has a great appreciation of the role that Friends organisations play in large and small botanic gardens.

As far as reporting on the health of the Association I am pleased to say that it is in good health from both membership and financial perspectives. I would like to say a special thank you to all the members and the Friends of Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens for their respective contributions to the AAFBG, and to Bob Ducrou, the Secretary, and Ahmed Rashedi for their respective roles with the membership.

Sharing ideas, successes and challenges are important for organisations that rely on collaboration. This sharing could be organisational and individual contacts, meetings, as well as our biennial conferences, *e-ucalypt newsletter* and *Eucalypt magazine*.

The Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) and the AAFBG agreed to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) several years ago. We are looking forward to continuing with the MOU in the coming year. There are members of AAFBG in every state and territory, and there have been times when we have been asked where they are. It is a great pleasure to see not only the list of members on the website, but also the map which is now on the home page of our website, and we launch that as part of our celebrations. In the next phase of this map, we shall have the facility to plan a trip to several of the Friends' Botanic Gardens that you wish to see, too. I would like to especially thank WordsWorth Communicating for professionally managing the AAFBG website and for valuable administrative assistance.

During the year many of our Gardens dealt with bad weather, and it is wonderful to see how the theme from the Eurobodalla conference 2022, *Thriving together: Resilience and Renewal in a Changing World*, has been evident in these locations as they made significant efforts to repair damage done by

excessive rain and floods. We have liaised with various members about water management and put them in touch with other groups who have been addressing sound ways for water to be collected, stored, managed and used for the benefit of the gardens.

Friends of Maroochy Bushland Botanic Garden's conference team have been planning the next conference 2024. Bob Ducrou, the Secretary, is a member of that conference team and will be sending us more information. This conference will be a real highlight in a different area from others in recent years. The dates of 23-25 August 2024, plus a tour on Monday 26 August are well worth saving. We are also starting to look forward to our conference in 2026. We are looking forward to hearing from you if you wish to host the conference in that year.

Our publications are appreciated by our members, who like to hear about other Friends activities and they are very much appreciated for being accessible in both electronic and print formats. Twenty four of our members have contributed to the *e-ucalypt newsletter* this year, and eight of our members contributed articles to the *Eucalypt magazine*. We thank the Secretary and Wordsworth Communicating for their excellent roles with these publications. We also thank Anne Rawson for continuing to edit the *Eucalypt magazine* at a high level.

One of the attractive features of AAFBG for our members is the tours of gardens. They are another wonderful way to share ideas, successes and challenges not only at the gardens we visit, but also among the members of the tour group. Arrangements have been made for the tour of Southern Highlands gardens that will occur in 29 October – 4 November 2023. Preliminary information has been circulated and we anticipate that people will be booking early for this tour.

A special feature of the year is the presentation of the Handbury Awards. These awards are not only recognition of the contribution of individuals or Friends groups, the awards add to the reputation of Friends groups and hopefully lead to acknowledgement from their Gardens' management and local communities. Congratulations to this year's recipients.

The committee of management is itself a wonderful group of people who volunteer labour and intellectual firepower on a weekly basis to plan and organise things and solve problems along the way. All of them step up when an issue arises to contribute in various ways. It has been a pleasure and privilege to work with them and I would especially like to thank Bob Ducrou, Secretary, Ahmed Rashedi, Treasurer, Elizabeth Gilfillan, Gill Simons, Jill Brownlee, Kate Heffernan, Lynsey Poore, and Merrill Shulkes. I thank them sincerely for their support and guidance during this year.

President's post AGM report

Linda Beveridge

We celebrated 30 years of AAFBG from Friday 4 to 5 May. These celebrations included visits to Cranbourne Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and Cruden Farm on the Thursday before the AGM; a celebratory morning with talks from office holders in previous years, Jayne Salmon OAM, Janet Thomson, and Alex Smart OAM; greetings from the retiring Patron, Phil Moors AO and our new Patron, Dr Judy West AO; launching of the map of AAFBG members and their gardens; and guided walking tours by Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne after the AAFBG's AGM on the Friday.

At the AGM the following people were elected to the AAFBG Committee of Management:

President	Linda Beveridge	Friends of Australian National Botanic Gardens
Secretary	Bob Ducrou	Friends of Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens
Members	Jill Brownlee	Friends of Noosa Botanic Gardens
	Elizabeth Gilfillan	Friends of Buninyong Botanic Gardens
	Kate Heffernan	Friends of Gold Coast Botanic Gardens
	Lynsey Poore	Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne
	Merrill Shulkes	Friends of Ballarat Botanic Gardens
	Gillian Simons	Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide

There were no nominations for the positions of Treasurer and Vice President which are now vacant, and Committee of Management will seek people for these positions.

Hayley Allen, Board Chair, Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) was our guest at the AGM and gave a presentation about the latest developments with BGANZ.

The celebrations were also a great opportunity to present celebratory certificates to Friends of Botanic Gardens who had reached significant milestones, and to present the Handbury Awards for exceptional contributions to Botanic Gardens, Parks or Arboretums. Further information about the recipients of these awards are in this issue of *Eucalypt Magazine* and on our website.

We warmly thank everyone involved in these celebratory days and the AGM, including many Cranbourne Friends, Monique Dieguez and Michael Morrison at Cruden Farm, Friends of the Melbourne Gardens for hosting the celebrations, guided walks and the AGM on Friday, and especially committee members Elizabeth Gilfillen, Merrill Shulkes, and Bob Ducrou for their initiative and expertise that resulted in very enjoyable and productive celebration of AAFBG's 30 years.

The AAFBG 30th year celebrations were also a great opportunity to present celebratory certificates to Friends of Botanic Gardens who had reached significant milestones, and to present the Handbury Awards for exceptional contributions to Botanic Gardens, Parks or Arboretums. The Gardens celebrating milestones are listed in Secretary Bob's report below and the Handbury recipients are on page 8.

AAFBG warmly congratulate all of these friends for their very significant dedication and contributions to their botanic gardens in so many ways.

Secretary's AGM report

Bob Ducrou



Twelve months ago, at the Eurobodalla Conference, there were eight committee members in search of a Secretary. According to our Rules, we must have a President, a Treasurer and a Secretary to keep functioning. Anecdotal evidence suggests many Friends groups (and other incorporated Associations) have difficulty filling executive positions, something I'll come back to later. To complicate matters our Administration Officer had resigned.

After some protracted discussions, I agreed to try to fill the role of Secretary, but with some differences to the way we had been operating. Firstly, it was decided to try functioning without an Administration Officer, with a subsequent saving in operating expenses. Secondly, some of the functions of the Secretary and the Administration Officer would be taken on by Committee members to reduce the Secretary's workload. I have to say I fully supported this proposal. Also, our accounts were changed to MYOB and membership renewals generated by this platform were sent out for the first time.

Our President's Report has comprehensively covered the activities of the Association, so I don't intend to duplicate that. Speaking of our President, I would like to both congratulate and thank Linda for the huge role she has played in keeping this last year's transition on track. Linda was new to the Committee, but has been ever positive, ever enthusiastic, ever quick to acknowledge the efforts of others and ever full of ideas to advance the Association. I would also like to thank my fellow committee members for lightening my load and keeping me on the straight and narrow. A special thank you to Barb Schriver and Adel Urie from WordsWorth Communicating, who update and improve our website, monitor the mountain of emails we somehow generate and put together and publish the *e-ucalypt news*. Thank you to Anne Rawson, our *Eucalypt* editor for many years and so good at the gentle reminder to members to contribute their news and promote the profile of their Gardens.

Mentioned above are three ways AAFBG reaches out to members – website, *e-ucalypt news* and *Eucalypt magazine*. We encourage all our members to access and distribute these valuable sources of information about your events, happenings and achievements (which we will only find out about with your input).

Speaking of input, one of the tasks of the Secretary is maintaining a register of members, which is why we ask a number of questions on the membership renewal form. The answers have revealed significant milestones achieved by our members in 2022/23.

45 Years	Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide (see page 17)
40 Years	Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Inc. Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Inc. Friends of North Coast Regional Botanic Garden Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens Ltd. Sydney
30 Years	Friends of Burrendong Arboretum Friends of Kings Park Inc Pangarinda Botanic Garden
20 Years	Friends of Burnley Gardens Inc. Friends of Moama Echuca Botanic Gardens Inc. Friends of Melton Botanic Garden
10 Years	Friends of Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Trust Inc.. Friends of Noosa Botanic Gardens Inc.

Our next AGM will be held on 25 August 2024 at the Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens on the Sunshine Coast, as part of the 2024 AAFBG Biennial Conference. Now I mentioned at the start the problem of getting volunteers for committee positions. Indeed, mid-COVID, it seems to have become the problem of getting volunteers. COVID appears to have accelerated the rate of change in the 'world'

we Friends inhabit. Changes in how to attract, keep and nurture our volunteers, changes in Friends/owner relationships (owner being Council for most of us), changes in how technology affects our interaction with gardens and visitors and, of course, climate change. That's what our Conference will be about - the challenge of change.

I ask that you all consider contributing, by way of presentation or workshop/discussion group, to how Friends can meet and overcome these challenges. We'd also like to hear from you about your successes in these areas so we can all benefit.

Looking forward to seeing you in 2024 on the Sunshine Coast.

AGM in pictures

Hayley Allen from BGANZ guest speaker at the AGM



Having refreshments and a chat.



Three engaged listeners



Two Gardens with milestone awards, Kirsten Binns Smith, from Burnley Gardens for 20 years and Lynsey Poore, President RBG Melbourne Friends, for 40 years (Linda and Bob are also in this photo.)

□

Handbury Awards

All the recipients had their photo taken with President Linda Beveridge and Secretary Bob Ducrou. I have left them in one picture but have chopped them out in all the others. Tony Davis The Awards are in two categories, one for individual contributions to Garden, Park or Arboretum, and category two for a group contribution.



Tony Davis, Friend of Southern Highlands BG, has propagated thousands of plants and bulbs, is a daffodil, daphne and dahlia guru, he was a founding member, past Chairman and now Life Member, and is infinitely patient sharing his vast botanical knowledge.

Category One Awards. Gwen & Rodger Elliot, Cranbourne Friends of RBGV. Many achievements in fostering botanic gardens not only at Cranbourne, but also in Victoria nationally and internationally, their advocacy and promotion of gardens, as well as engaging professional and volunteers, extensive writing about Australian native plants, and significant fundraising. Del Van Mierlo, Cairns Friends, Dedication in her roles in promoting Friends and the Gardens, as well as educating Friends and advocacy that contributed to significant fundraising and assets with long term benefits.



Category Two Awards: Jenny Potten, Christine Strahan & Barbara Jeffrey, RBG Cranbourne Growing Friends collective effort has contributed to significant benefits in promoting and advocating for the Gardens, and Australian native plants, has also led to significant education of Friends and community awareness and significant financial benefit. Dianne Honey, Heather Harrington and Evelyn McAdam, Friends of Sale BG. recognizing the contribution the Friends have made in fostering the sustainability of the Gardens, highlighting their role in advocacy, promotion and education, in particular, mentioning the dedication and passion of these three women, for their combined efforts and team work. Chris & Charlotte Webb, Friends of Southern Highlands BG, for ensuring the sustainability of these Gardens which has been evident in the ongoing maintenance and development of the Gardens, as well as in promoting the Gardens, educating people about plants, and enhancing community awareness of the values of the Gardens.

Celebrating 30 years of AFBG, then AAFBG

Jayne Salmon OAM, Member Associated Friends Committee 1993-2003, President Geelong Friends 1989-2009

Janet Thomson AOM, Friend RBGV Melbourne, past Committee Member, Vice-President then President AAFBG 2011-12

Alex Smart, past President Cranbourne Friends RBGV, President AAFBG 2006-8



This report is an amalgam of Jayne and Janet's talks. We have no hard copy of Alex's report.

In May 2023 the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens marked its 30th anniversary at its AGM with two days of celebrations, absorbed in the history and tradition of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Melbourne, and dazzled and inspired by the contemporary Australian vision of RBGV Cranbourne. It was appropriate to mark the anniversary in Melbourne because in 1985, for Victoria's 150th anniversary celebrations, 15 botanic gardens were given much needed and long overdue assistance by 15 German/Australian companies. This gift acknowledged Baron Ferdinand von Mueller's outstanding contribution to botany and horticulture in Victoria.

One of the stipulations for this assistance was that the recipient botanical gardens formed an associated group of Friends to act as future watchdogs for the gardens. Early in 1991 Friends of RBG Melbourne invited representatives of botanic gardens throughout Victoria to a seminar so that they could discuss matters of common interest. Some who attended were Friends, some represented local authorities. The seminar was so successful another was held in Melbourne the following year. There was strong support for an umbrella organisation and this led to the formation and incorporation of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Victoria) Inc in January 1993. The late Lawrence Cohen, secretary of the Melbourne Friends, was instrumental in the establishment of the organisation. He undertook all the administrative work, kept meticulous records, edited the newsletter *Campsis* and much more.

A third seminar was held in Ballarat in 1993 and a fourth in Geelong in 1994 and they continued every year at Benalla, Wilson Botanic Park, Melbourne, Mildura, Warrnambool and Albury. At the Albury Conference in 2000 it was suggested by John Hawker that the Association be broadened to become a National Association, which indeed it did. In early 2000s it was decided that conferences would be held every other year, alternating with the Guide's conference. By 2005 membership had grown to 35, Lawrence Cohen had resigned and Annie McGeachy from Geelong Friends became secretary.

The format of *Campsis* was updated and content improved. Members' photos were included and electronic distribution was introduced. The Future Directions Sub-committee met for the first time which resulted in a complete re-write of the Rules, undertaken by Annie. Members were surveyed to find out how many members they had, how many volunteers, where their money came from and what activities they ran. It also asked what member Friends thought about the future of AFBG and ways in which it could be improved. An Information Kit was produced. Jayne Salmon wrote the history of the AFBG. Annie McGeachy wrote sections on sources of funding and submission writing. Janet Thomson contributed sections on the balance, the practicalities and steps needed in founding a friends' group, attracting members, keeping members, possible activities, ways of obtaining publicity, etc.

Over the next few years AFBG became an associate member of BGANZ and then entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with them. A website was developed by WordsWorth Communicating, a new logo of a eucalypt flower was introduced, *Campsis* changed its name to *Eucalypt* (turned out *Campsis* was an environmental weed) and Anne Rawson took over editing. In 2013 Dr Geoffrey Handbury AO, a great believer in the educational role and many benefits of botanic gardens, made a generous donation of \$10,000 to the Association to help fund its work.

Then in 2015 Annie retired as Secretary and Elizabeth Gilfillan from Ballarat took over and the Association changed its name to the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AAFBG). At the same time a category of Associate member was created and five overseas Gardens from New Zealand, South Africa, Scotland and Fiji are now Associate Members. In 2019 the Association decided to honour Dr Handbury by creating the Handbury Award for a Friends group or individual who has done meritorious work in their Garden, Park or Arboretum.

From 2000 conferences were held every other year. Going backwards: 2022 Eurobodalla; 2020 Brisbane cancelled because of COVID; 2018 Benalla; 2016 Geelong; 2014 Gold Coast; 2012 Australian Arid Lands Port Augusta; 2010 Australian Inland Botanic Gardens Mildura; 2008 Orange; 2006 Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne; 2004 Australian National Botanic Gardens Canberra; 2002 Ballarat with Buninyong Castlemaine and Wombat Hill; 2000 Albury. These conferences give the hosting Friends group the opportunity to involve appropriate local authorities, obtain significant speakers, organise workshops, network with other Friends, Garden managers and staff, view other Gardens and their operations, and raise the profile of the hosting Garden with their local community.

Jayne Salmon rounded off her presentation by saying that the strength of the AAFBG is in assisting botanic gardens to lobby their Council for improvements and assistance. Janet Thomson rounded off her talk thus:

I very much enjoyed my years on the Committee of the AFBG which became very close to my heart I think because I had such a great admiration for the commitment and dedication of its members who frequently seemed to be dealing with enormous challenges, particularly the challenges posed by local Councils in relation to funding and proper maintenance of their botanic gardens which were not high on their priority list. Indeed, some gardens only survived due to the efforts and hard hands-on work of their Friends who always soldiered on and never gave up. They understood and do understand how precious their gardens are. In addition, Friends were, and I am sure are still, so innovative in the ways in which they raised funds and the activities they organised for their members.

One person I would particularly like to acknowledge is Elizabeth Gilfillan who took over as Secretary when Annie McGeachy retired in 2014. Elizabeth with great skill and an enormous amount of very hard work always managed to keep the AAFBG moving forward. She dealt with some stressful and unfortunate challenges along the way, solving them in ways which benefitted the AAFBG.

There have been many achievements and successes since 1993 and I believe there is a wonderful future ahead for the AAFBG, founded as it was by all those passionate Friends who cared deeply about their Botanic Gardens. The commitment and passion of those who have taken on the challenges since and who will continue to do so augers well for the years ahead.

Happy 30th Birthday Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens!

What is a birthday without a cake?



Erin Cosgriff, President Friends RBGV Cranbourne and Linda Beveridge, President AAFBG, cutting the cake watched by Chris Russell, RBGV Director.



Excursions to RBGV Melbourne and Cranbourne and Cruden Farm



More Cranbourne and Cruden Farm



Listening to Michael Morrison, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's gardener for 40 years.



BGCI Global Conference delivers

Penny Hoswell, Botanic Garden Education Officer
Wollongong Botanic Garden, New South Wales

When I flew to Melbourne for the 7th Global Botanical Gardens Congress in September I had three fixed aims: education, climate change and cultural studies. I chose every session that covered those topics, going as the educator to be educated – and did they ever deliver!

A day at the Cranbourne Botanic Garden showed me a protection area for the rare and endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot, with federal and state funding for fencing and infrastructure to conserve the habitat vital to the Bandicoots' existence. I also found that Cranbourne's outreach to the community was huge: cats are banned in new housing estates on the boundaries, the public are involved in helping protect the Bandicoots and fires used to regenerate the land, calling on Indigenous people for advice.



A *Flip the Script* workshop showed how children can learn to recognise plants, think critically about their uses, read labels and recognise scientific names. I am already working on introducing some of those ideas here.

Then there was the *Plant Botany Bootcamp* (true). I was bowled over when the instructor turned up in lycra, then took us on a tour, peering at labels and attaching a yoga position to every botanical term. I intend to use this on the Uni students who should no longer be bored learning all those Latin terms.

On the last day I attended sessions on the expected disappearance of forests over the next 100 years, due to an increase in temperatures causing canopy dieback. Invasive species are also smothering out the plants needed for public health.

I was also struck by the climate resilience assessment tool: a website that shows how resilient a single specimen tree would look by 2030, 2050 and 2090 – brilliant. <http://cat.bgci.dev>. A street tree out on its own, suffering from compaction and the heat coming off a road for example is given a real voice in this tool. Wollongong has already begun rolling out Tiny Forests, which you may have read about in a past edition. According to science, these will have a much better chance of survival. The Tool is about not only assessing resilience, but building resilience. An educational gift that every Botanic Garden can contribute to, building our knowledge base and supporting each other.

At the Congress I met some amazing people and now believe I have a huge Brains Trust to call on. I hadn't thought about getting to meet so many knowledgeable people and how willing they would all be to share their knowledge. I went to a conference with a bunch of plant nerds and learnt that I am not alone! Together we have influence to change actions and help our environment.

Koalas thrive at Maroochy

*Friends of the Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens
Tanawha, Queensland*

The Friends of Maroochy Botanic Gardens have been interested in koalas since 1996, when the newly formed Friends began their hard of gardens development Koalas were spotted infrequently, but welcomed joyfully.

Researchers from the University of Queensland were aware of the presence of koalas in the Gardens and captured a number of them to assess their general condition. One young female was suffering from chlamydia and was taken to the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital. On recovery several months later, Lizzy Koala (named by the Friends) was released back in the Gardens, wearing a tracking collar fitted by the UQ researchers. This research activity was encouraged by the Sunshine Coast Council and the Friends assisted wherever possible.

Back to Lizzy - Council loaned the Friends a tracking antenna, and soon the Friends were locating her every week or so. Over the next four years we were able to regularly map where she was, and we were able to take Friends and Gardens visitors out to see her. It was a big adventure for the visitors to be able to see a koala 'in the wild'. We recorded her territory, as well as favourite tree species for feeding (Tallow-wood *Eucalyptus microcorys*, Queensland Blue Gum *E. tereticornis* and occasionally Blackbutt *E. pilularis*) and resting (almost any tree species) as well as daylight activity.

Late 2019 bought an end to our tracking activity when Lizzy broke the weak link on her collar, and lost it. That coincided with some research that concluded that tracking collars were not beneficial to koalas, so the collar was not reinstated. Since then, Lizzy (and other koalas) have been sighted very occasionally at the Gardens.

Early in 2022, the '2022 Great Koala Search' was planned and implemented. It was jointly planned between the Friends, the Sunshine Coast Council and the Detection Dogs for Conservation from the University of the Sunshine Coast — the Gardens was a training ground for the dogs. Using a drone at night, and a detection dog the next morning, it was very thorough and successful, with 14 different koalas located across the 170 ha of bushland at the Gardens and adjacent council owned reserves. Scats (droppings) from all koalas were collected for later analysis at USC. This analysis (funded by the Friends) established that the population was healthy, the gender balance good and the genetic diversity better than expected.

For further information and a short video and press release with details of the 2022 Great Koala Search, please view Council's YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FnwuobGQas> and Council's press release: <https://oursc.com.au/community/drones-and-dogs-team-up-in-sunshine-coast-koala-conservation-project>

Tony Ireland



Lizzie with tracking collar and TAFE students looking for Lizzie

Volunteers build a Fernery

*Volunteers of the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens**
Heatherbrae, New South Wales

Ferneries have been a popular feature of botanic gardens since Victorian times. Visitors are drawn to the cool atmosphere, the sound of running water and the delicate green beauty of the foliage. In the early days of our Gardens, a Fern Gully was created as part of what became a larger Rainforest Garden. Over time it became apparent that the site chosen wasn't ideal for many species and was too remote from the main areas visited by the public. A decision was eventually made to seek funding to construct a purpose-built Fernery.

A grant was obtained in 2019 from Port Waratah Coal Services, a major business in the Hunter Region and a long-time supporter of the Gardens, which met the major part of the cost. The building was designed and constructed entirely by Gardens volunteers. Construction proved to be an extended process, principally because of the intervention of the COVID pandemic which impacted on both the supply and availability of materials, and the progress of work.

The Fernery was named in honour of Kevin Stokes, the Curator of our Living Collection and the Gardens longest-serving volunteer, who received a Handbury Award in 2021. Kevin has had a long interest in Australian ferns, along with other Australian plants, and the Fernery is a project that he has conceived and developed over many years.



The new Fernery and Trudi Lanarch and Kevin Stokes at the opening



The Fernery was jointly opened on 15 November 2022 by Trudi Larnach, Manager Sustainability & Corporate Affairs at Port Waratah Coal Services, and Kevin Stokes, in the presence of Meryl Swanson MP, Federal Member for Paterson. The Patron of the Gardens, Emeritus Professor Tim Roberts AM, and Gardens Board members and volunteers were also present.

A decision was made by the Gardens' Living Collection Committee to include ferns from Australasia only. It is hoped this will inform the public of the variety of ferns peculiar to Australia and New Zealand. Also included will be fern allies such as club mosses and *Selaginella* and *Psilotum* species. While the main objective of the collection will be to display fern species, there will also be an emphasis on educating interested visitors on the differences in reproduction found in ancient plants, such as ferns, that predate flowering plants in the history of life on Earth by many millions of years.

It is envisaged that our fernery will be a learning space for school children and horticultural students as well as other visitors. It is already a popular attraction at the Gardens.

Ken Page, Chair of the Gardens

*The Hunter Region Botanic Gardens was established in the 1980s by volunteers and remains a Gardens built, managed and maintained by volunteers.

Forty-five years of service

*Friends of Adelaide, Mount Lofty and Wittunga Botanic Gardens
Adelaide, South Australia*

This is a seriously edited version of a much longer report.

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden was opened to the public on 5 November 1977 and at that event Dr Collin Robjohn handed out information about forming a group of like-minded people wishing to establish a formal Friends of the Botanic Gardens. A meeting was held on 8 November at which the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide was founded with Dr Robjohn as its first President and first member. This makes us the first Botanic Gardens Friends group in the country, a badge we wear with pride.

Like other Friends groups the Adelaide Friends promotes the botanical, educational, scientific, cultural and conservation efforts of its three Botanic Gardens by volunteering labour, educating visitors, guiding walks, assisting community events and raising money. In my estimation, in today's money terms, the Friends have given in excess of \$1,000,000 to the Gardens.

Some projects supported are mundane but important like the fence round Wittunga, acid-free paper for mounting Herbarium specimens, benches and refrigerators. More spectacular gifts have been the Friends Gates in Adelaide and the Collin Robjohn Gates at Mount Lofty, the sculpture Nymph and the Goat Amalthea in Adelaide and a pavilion at Mt Lofty.

Friends have also funded the publication of *Seeds of Change*, a video of the construction of the Bicentennial Conservatory, upgrading Adelaide's International Rose Garden, Mediterranean Garden (\$10,000) and North Lodge (\$60,000 budgeted this year) and interpretative signs for Classground (\$10,000). To celebrate our 35th anniversary we donated \$35,000 to the Library to digitise former Director Noel Lothian's 9,000+ slides for its collection.

All this money is raised through Friends' regular activities: plant sales, booked walks, botanic art sales, profits from tours and member donations. These regular activities include: the Hands on Hort groups helping to maintain all three Gardens; 40+ years of free and booked guided walks; volunteer staff at the Visitor Centre and Museum of Economic Botany; and assisting at Children's Workshops in school holidays. In 2021-22 this amounted to 27,000+ hours worked.

On top of all this the Friends have supported Gardens' staff development through the Gwen Thomas Scholarship Fund. This year five staff went to the International Botanical Congress in Melbourne. In the past we have supported plant collecting trips intrastate, interstate and overseas.

Looking back over these years it seems to me that the Friends, while maintaining our independence, have become a critical part of the Gardens functioning. I salute the efforts of past members and volunteers and am convinced that our current group will continue the good work for the benefit of the Gardens and the general public who enjoy them.

Ed McAlister AO, President



The Friends gates, looking into the Gardens and out to Botanic Park

Saving plants by collecting tissue samples

*Dr Tonia Cochran, Founder, Collection manager and curator
Inala Jurassic Garden, Bruny Island, Tasmania*

The Inala Jurassic Garden, on Bruny Island off the south-east coast of Tasmania, along with nine other gardens from around the world, has just been awarded a share of \$35,000(US) to collect genome-quality plant tissue samples from their living plant collection. These samples are preserved in Global Genome Biodiversity Network (GGBN) biobanks so they are accessible to researchers around the world. The award has been made by Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), along with United States Botanic Gardens (USBG) and the Global Genome Initiative–Gardens (GCI–Gardens).



Aerial view of Inala Jurassic Garden within the 600-ha Inala property, South Bruny Island Tasmania, photo Brad Moriarty, Inala



Herbarium voucher specimen of *Bellendenia montana* for GGI-Gardens project, photo Catherine Young, Inala

The Inala Jurassic Garden is a small, privately-owned botanic garden and is a repository for more than 700 species of plants with Gondwanan connections, planted in family groups for easy comparison of species from the southern continents, especially Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, South America and South Africa. The garden was originally designed to demonstrate the Gondwanan connections of these plants but, increasingly, the focus is to grow *ex-situ* insurance specimens of species at most risk of extinction. Many are already listed as threatened in the wild and their future looks bleak.

Inala, opened to the public in March 2014, is tiny (2 ha) and young in comparison with most other botanic gardens in the world. It is also unusual in that it is privately-owned and funded, originally created as a tourism and educational enterprise to augment a wildlife tourism business. However, a fortuitous combination of ‘goldilocks’ climatic conditions that allows the growth of a wide range of species, meeting the right people at the right time, and a determination to achieve a positive conservation outcome, has enabled Inala to become actively involved in collaborative global conservation programs.

In 2021 Inala also received one of the 14 grants awarded that year by the GGI–Gardens program and, as a result, we collected genome-quality leaf tissue samples and prepared voucher herbarium specimens of more than 100 different species within 45 genera and 13 families from our living collection. This year we will collect genetic samples from a further 29 species from 27 genera and 14 families. These include six species which are listed as either critically endangered or endangered in the wild, which increases the importance of securing and preserving such genomic material in GGBN biobanks and in our own *ex-situ* living collection.

These samples are available to researchers through the GGBN, which aims to preserve and understand the genetic biodiversity of Earth’s flora. During this process Inala became one of the four registered GGBN biorepository members in Australia, joining CSIRO (Canberra), Australian Museum (Sydney) and Museum of Victoria (Melbourne). Reference voucher specimens are lodged in the Tasmanian Herbarium to enable access by future researchers.

Tonia Cochran

Wollemi Pines propagation project

*Friends of National Arboretum Canberra
Canberra, ACT*

The Wollemi Pine is native to a temperate rainforest area of the Wollemi National Park near Sydney. First discovered by David Noble in 1994, the *Wollemia nobilis* belongs to the Araucariaceae family. The discovery of this ancient rainforest tree from the time of Gondwana caused a global sensation and this living fossil has outlived the dinosaurs. Fossil remains indicate it was once widespread in Gondwana, excluding Africa. It is now a critically-endangered species, with approximately only 46 adult trees remaining in the wild.

The Arboretum Friends' Wollemi Project was initiated in September 2019 with the aim of growing Wollemi Pine trees from seed collected from the Arboretum's Wollemi Pine Forest 32 for sale under licence to the public to continue the conservation of this rare species and to raise funds to support Arboretum projects. Forest 32 at the Arboretum had Wollemis planted in 2007 and 2008 and was one of the largest plantings of Wollemi Pines in the world – what better place to start!



Two Friends full of admiration for the growth of these *Wollemis*

From seeds collected from the Arboretum a local, commercial nursery grew one hundred trees, 30 for two years and 70 for three years. There were an additional 32 trees for contingency as we had little idea how many would survive this pilot project. Quarterly inspections were undertaken with measurements carefully plotted. Of great note is the provenance of each tree in the project being preserved so each propagated tree can be traced back to the parent tree in the Arboretum's Forest 32 from which the seed was sourced.

These trees are now mature enough to be offered for sale! If you would like to take this opportunity to own one of these very special trees or would like more information, visit the Friends' website <https://friendsarboretumcanberra.org.au>. There are two sizes available for purchase: 200 mm pot at \$295 (1.2+m height) and 300 mm pot at \$395 (1.6+m height).

Purchased trees can be collected from the Arboretum by arrangement – take advantage of the spectacular autumn weather to visit Canberra and take home a living fossil from Australia's world class National Arboretum! With each tree sold, buyers receive: a plant tag with the tree number and growing information; a Certificate of

Authenticity with the Friends' licence number and a map of Forest 32 on the reverse showing the trees chosen for the project and a QR code to locate the identified trees; a brochure explaining the project with a seasonal care plan for ongoing maintenance; and a souvenir box containing female seed cone bracts that can be used as mulch.

Help the Friends assist in the preservation of this species, especially using valuable Arboretum resources in the form of seeds, and help Citizen Science develop its research to further propagate these dinosaur trees!

Ange McNeilly, author and photographer

Plants, birds and FOOD (Food of Orange District)

*Friends of Orange Botanic Gardens
Orange, New South Wales*

It was a big autumn week in Orange. Two major functions of very different types organised by the Friends generated considerable interest in our Gardens. On the first weekend in April, we had our latest biannual plant sale over two days, bringing in several hundred buyers to browse through a few thousand healthy little plants grown by our Handbury Award winning Propagation Group. The sale generated thousands of dollars for the work of the Friends. These sales are well known in Orange and are the best source of funding for our work. A client survey at our last sale (in November) indicated that most buyers are locals living in town rather than visitors or those on out of town acreage so we were able to tailor our stock to suit mainly city gardeners.



Buyers browse for additions to their gardens.



Vicki's group inspecting the ducks on our billabong.

Earlier in the week, and despite heavy showers of rain, a sell-out crowd gathered at the Gardens on 29 March for Breakfast with the Birds, a component of Orange's popular FOOD Week activities. Rosemary Stapleton and Vicki Glover from the Orange Field Naturalist and Conservation Society led two groups of walkers around the Gardens looking for our feathered friends. We scored many of the more common species such as Crimson Rosellas and Australian Wood Ducks but a few smaller birds such as Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Superb Fairy Wrens were also braving the weather. Returning to the Clover Hill Centre, we were served a superb breakfast prepared by the more culinarily capable members of the Friends, a very welcome activity after trudging the muddy walkways in the rain. FOOD Week events attract many visitors to Orange in autumn and there were a number of visitors as well as locals who enjoyed the morning in the Gardens despite the weather.

Murray Fletcher, Hon. Secretary



The Clover Hill Function Centre in Orange Botanic Gardens was an ideal venue away from the weather to enjoy a sumptuous breakfast.

Women in Botany in Australia

Linda Beveridge, President AAFBG

Friend of ANBG, Canberra ACT

Many women are known for their role in Australian botany from early days of settlement to recent times in all parts of Australia. Our new Patron, Judy West AO, is an outstanding living Australian woman in botany, see page 2.



Perhaps one of the earliest in Western Australia was **Georgiana Molloy** who arrived in Western Australia in 1830 and from about 1836 became passionate about collecting and documenting plants from the south west of Western Australia. Georgiana Molloy's enthusiasm and talent for botany had made Western Australia's remarkable floral heritage known throughout the world. The Georgiana Molloy Anglican School is in Yalyalup, a suburb of Busselton, WA. She collected material from an area within what is a high priority conservation area, now known as the Southwest Australia Biodiversity Hotspot.

Photo from anbg.gov.au/biography/



Also from Western Australia, **Dr Nancy Burbidge AO** graduated in science from University of Western Australia, and won a scholarship to work and study at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, England. After returning to Australia, she was the first systematic botanist at CSIRO Division of Plant Industry in 1946, and became first Curator of Herbarium Australiense (later the Australian National Herbarium). She published Dictionary of Australian Plant Genera, studies of plant groups, completed the Flora of the Australian Capital Territory with Max Gray. Nancy was the scientific leader for Flora of Australia. In addition to her many scientific publications Dr Burbidge wrote about botany in simple terms for the interested lay person. Many non-botanists had their first introduction to the wonders of the Australian flora through Nancy Burbidge's writing.

Photo from anbg.gov.au/biography/



Enid Robertson dramatically improved our understanding of South Australian plants. She was appointed to the Waite Institute at the University of Adelaide in 1947 and became Curator of its Herbarium, and Research Fellow at the Botany Department, University of Adelaide in 1953-55. Enid was responsible for intensive research into the taxonomy of several species of South Australian flora, particularly algae and seagrasses. She published on Asteraceae, Danthonia and seagrasses, and revised Part 4 of the second edition of J.M.Black's *Flora of South Australia*.

Photo from anbg.gov.au/biography/

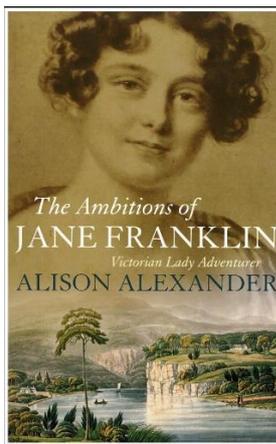
More Australian women in Botany



Olive Pink was a strong advocate for the recognition of Australian arid plants, particularly those of central Australia. She moved to the Northern Territory in 1943 and eventually set up a small museum to exhibit some of her artworks and arid plant specimens. After 1956, Olive was given a license to pitch a tent on a vacant plot, now the Olive Pink Botanic Garden, Alice Springs. It contains more than 300 of Central Australia's plant species. It is said to showcase the best of Australia's arid plants.



Welcome sign Olive Pink Botanic Garden from opbg.com.au and Olive Pink's picture from anbg.gov.au/biography



Lady Jane Franklin was interested in Tasmanian botany 1836 to 1843. She bought 130 acres at Lenah Vale near Hobart Town that she named 'Acanthe'. Her Grecian-temple-style natural history museum was surrounded by a botanic garden that had special emphasis on Tasmanian native plants. This site is now Lady Franklin Gallery, the Art Society of Tasmania. It is still surrounded by native bushland. In 1841, Lady Franklin travelled to New Zealand meeting both Ernst Dieffenbach and William Colenso, who named the filmy fern *Hymenophyllum frankliniae* in her honour. Lady Franklin was also a strong influence for the establishment in 1839 of a scientific society which became the first Royal Society for the advancement of science outside Britain. In her spare time she was wife to the Governor of Tasmania.



Ellis Rowan was born in Victoria, and is famous for her natural history art; such as botany, birds and occasionally insects. She won important art prizes in Australia and overseas, which was controversial as the 'purist art world' regarded her work as flower painting belonging in museums, not art galleries. Nevertheless, Ellis continued to have successful international exhibitions. Ellis was an adventurous and intrepid traveller. The bulk of the collection of her Australian and New Guinea paintings is now housed in the National Library of Australia.

Ellis Rowan with *Acacia pycnantha* from anbg.gov.au/biography/

Still more Australian women in Botany

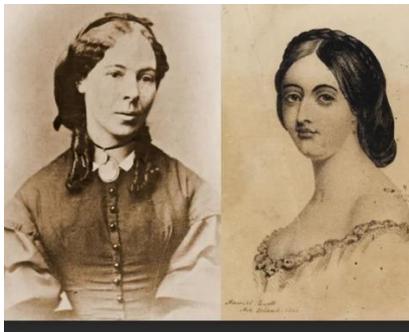


Celia Rosser is internationally known for her botanic art and especially for her three-volume series *The Banksias*, with accompanying text by Alex George (1981, 1988, 2000). This series contains life-size watercolour images of all known banksia species, which took over 25 years to complete. In 2001, *Banksia rosserae* was named for her.



Beth Gott, AM was a plant physiologist and ethnobiologist who challenged white-centric views of botany and advocated for Aboriginal land-management practices. Beth was based in Victoria and was responsible for creating a large database of plants that were used by Aboriginal people of south-eastern Australia and has written valuable books on the subject, including *Koorie Plants*, *Koorie People: Traditional Aboriginal Food, Fibre and Healing Plants of Victoria*. In 2017, Beth was made a Member of the Order of Australia for ‘significant service to the biological sciences as an ethnobotanist specialising in the study of the use of native plants by Indigenous people’.

Harriet and Helena Scott grew up on Ash Island, near Newcastle NSW. They were educated at home in natural history by their father, and were two of the many women in Australia who collected and illustrated plants from many parts of Australia for Baron von Mueller. They collected in many parts of NSW. Harriet also collected in Queensland, and Helena in South Australia. They also completed a magnificent collection of watercolour plates for their father A.W Scott's publication *Australian Lepidoptera and their transformations* (Vol I published 1864 and Vol II 1890-1898). Original plates of moths and butterflies, some in their plant habitat, were purchased by the Australian Museum in 1884 and are preserved in the Museum's Archives. Harriet Scott collected type specimen of *Dampiera scottiana* F.Muell. (1881), which was named for her.



The sisters, Harriet and Helena Scott, *Dampiera scottiana* © ANBG, Murray Fagg, and an illustration from *Australian Lepidoptera and their transformations*.

A Botanical Tour of Gardens of Southern Highlands with the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AAFBG)

29 October – 4 November 2023

RUN in association with the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, this boutique tour to the beautiful Southern Highlands of New South Wales explores the botanical, historical and culinary offerings of this historic area.

With lush rolling hills, award-winning food, cool climate wines, gushing waterfalls, national parks, country markets and galleries in enchanting towns and historic villages and four very distinct seasons, the Southern Highlands is a destination like no other in NSW.

This bespoke tour with the AAFBG examines the diverse botany of the Southern Highlands, with visits to several important and historic gardens, including private gardens not usually open to visits, and a wide range of specialist visits and fascinating talks by botanical experts. There will be local guides on walks and at all Botanic Gardens (Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens, Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens and Mt Annan).

There is the option to join the tour without paying for the hotel night in Sydney – please see the costs page for details.

Tour Leader

Now semi-retired, **Kate Heffernan's** career in horticulture spans more than 40 years. The last two decades have been spent in professional and volunteer roles with Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens (GCRBG) and as a consultant to other botanic gardens in Queensland and Victoria. Kate is a former Chair of BGANZ Queensland, later National Representative, and also a member of BGCI and AAFBG. She has made presentations at Australian and international conferences.



Kate was also a vocational horticulture and landscape teacher, undertaking the development of many community landscape projects on the Gold Coast and Brisbane as a practical component of student training. A feature writer from 2003, Kate wrote for journals including Horticulture Australia, weekly articles for Gold Coast papers and was Saturday Morning Gardens presenter for ABC Gold Coast. Kate recently published a book 'Celebrating Regional Biodiversity', which tells the story of the unique South East Queensland flora through the lens of GCRBG.

A keen traveller with an emphasis on garden-based travel, Kate has led tours to the gardens of France, United Kingdom, Ireland and a wildflower tour to Western Australia. She has travelled widely in Australia and overseas. Kate has been awarded the Gold Coast Australia Day Environmental Achievement Award for her role in the establishment of GCRBG, Queensland Australia Day Award for Vocational Training, and was Gold Coast Teacher of the Year. With husband Alan Donaldson, Kate is an Honorary Life Member of Friends of GCRBG.

"Kate was wonderful"

Rosemary McDonald, AAFBG Botanical Tour of Tasmania, Oct 2021



Have lunch at Southern Highlands Winery

Itinerary 29 October – 4 November 2023

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

1 night Sydney – 5 nights Bowral

Day 1: Sydney (Sun, 29 Oct)

Pm: Check in to Radisson Blu Sydney and visit the nearby Royal Botanic Gardens (around 2.30pm).
Eve: Welcome drinks and dinner.

Day 2: Sydney-Bowral (Mon, 30 Oct)

Am: Drive to Menangle to visit Camden Park House, one of the most important historic houses in Australia, with one of the country's oldest and best-preserved colonial gardens. Hear an introductory talk, take part in a tour of the stunning house and visit the gardens. There will be a box lunch provided at Camden Park.
Pm: Visit Jeanne Villani's Highdown Cottage on Nott's Hill in Bowral. This historic garden boasts significant trees, sweeping lawns, perennials, a dam and a lake. Check in to Links Hotel in Bowral and at leisure.

Day 3: Bowral (Tue, 31 Oct)

Am: Visit the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens in Bowral to meet with the volunteers and enjoy a morning tea.

Pm: Lunch at Sturt Coffee, a boutique art café at Sturt Gallery. Visit the Florencia exhibition in the gallery, which is a joyous spring-themed vase and flower show featuring ceramicists, floral artists and painters. Visit Mount Gibraltar Reserve and take a walk, with excellent views of the area from three lookouts.

Day 4: Fitzroy Falls (Wed 1 Nov)

Am: Visit Fitzroy Falls National Park and explore the East Rim wildflower walking tracks.
Pm: Lunch at The Hearth Café before visiting lovely Coombe Wood Gardens in Sutton Forest, which has been developed under the philosophy of 'slow gardening' for over 37 years, much of the garden raised from seed or cutting. The owners aim for botanically interesting plants and the garden displays many influences. John Stowar writing in Highlife Magazine in an article on Coombe Wood in 2012 summarised it thus: 'As the garden further matures Coombe Wood will be a treasure trove of the rare and beautiful, sought out by the horticultural cognoscenti.'

Day 5: Berrima / Fitzroy Falls (Thurs, 2 Nov)

Am: Visit Berrima District Museum and visit the Landscapes of the Southern Highlands exhibition. Take a historic town walk of Berrima, visiting Harper's Mansion and accredited rose garden on the way. Enjoy lunch at the charming book barn at Bendooley Estate, where a roaring fire warms a space lined by walls of books. After lunch continue to Fitzroy Falls to visit Prittlewell Gardens. Acclaimed as one of the loveliest gardens in the Southern Highlands, Prittlewell is sited on 29 acres adjoining Fitzroy Falls Reservoir and overlooking a beautiful lake.

Day 6: Sutton Forest (Fri, 3 Nov)

Am/Pm: Full day excursion at Oldbury Farm, Moss Vale. Oldbury Farm is a stunning heritage-listed residence, built between 1822 and 1828. Every section of its garden is impressive, with a very wide range of

cold climate styles, from formal parterres to woodland gardens, native plantings and topiary. Spend the whole day here, with a break for lunch at the lovely Southern Highlands Winery in Sutton Forest.

Eve: Farewell dinner.

Day 7: Bowral / Sydney (Sat, 4 Nov)

Am: Check out of the Links Hotel before visiting the Australian Botanic Garden Mt Annan, which contains over 4000 plant species amidst more than 400 hectares of natural woodland, stunning gardens and wide, open spaces. Enjoy morning tea with the Friends of the Botanic Garden before a guided tour of the garden and the heritage plant bank.
Pm: Lunch at the gardens before returning to Sydney, arriving mid-afternoon.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites, marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering, be moved by the riches of culture and art, and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

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Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney (top), Camden Park House, Menangle, Berrima River. Enjoy lunch in Bendooley Estate's book barn (above)



Coombe Garden



Waterfalls in Prittlewell Gardens (top), Prittlewell Gardens (above)

The cost of the tour is \$3,392 per person sharing (\$3,120 without Sydney hotel night)

The cost of the tour with a room to yourself is \$4,082 (\$3,550 without Sydney hotel night)

The cost includes:

- The services of tour leader, Kate Heffernan
- 6 nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in medium grade hotels
- Breakfast and lunch or dinner daily except on Day 1
- All specialist visits and admission fees
- GST
- All transport services

The cost excludes:

- Meals not mentioned and drinks with meals
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Arrival and departure transfers

This tour supports the work of the AAFBG.



The inviting lounge at Links Hotel

Walking

There is a significant amount of walking involved in this itinerary. It is essential that all participants have a good level of physical fitness and no impediments to walking strongly without assistance.