

PATRON'S MESSAGE TO AAFBG AGM, SYDNEY 19 JULY 2019

I send greetings to all members of the Association, and especially to those Friends' groups represented at today's AGM. I also send apologies for my absence – but to be honest, I've had a slightly better offer to be elsewhere in Australia at this moment! Right now I'm on a small expedition vessel crossing Joseph Bonaparte Gulf on the way from Darwin to begin an eleven-day cruise of the Kimberley Coast!

2019 has been yet another successful year for our Association – we have 62 members from Friends' groups in Australia, including welcoming a new member Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens, and another five groups overseas who are affiliated with AAFBG. Activities have included our first international tour to see Singapore's marvellous gardens, and a popular stand at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show promoting the Association and four members. And of course we've had two informative issues of our impressive newsletter, *Eucalypt*.

This AGM brings the retirement of seven Committee members, and I want to thank each of them for their valuable service to the Association. Dennis Ayliffe, President for the past 3 years, and Elizabeth Gilfillan, Secretary for 5 years and General Committee for another five years, are each retiring after considerable periods with the Committee. They've given untiring leadership and energy and have brought expert administrative skills to their roles, and I thank them most warmly for all their contributions. I also acknowledge John Bentley (Vice-President for 2 years and General Committee for 4 years), Bodo Jensen (General Committee for 3 years) and Robyn Saunders, Janet O'Hehir and Trish Keller for their time and varied contributions to the activities of the Committee and our Association.

I applaud the introduction of the Dr Geoffrey Handbury Certificate of Merit by the Committee. It is a wonderful initiative to recognise Dr Handbury's generous support for and interest in our Association. I look forward to hearing of the inaugural recipient.

With my very best wishes for a successful AGM and for the year ahead,

Philip Moors
AAFBG Patron