



AAFBG SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR AGM 19 JULY 2019

Your AAFBG are thrilled to be here in Sydney being hosted by Foundation and Friends of The Botanic Gardens.

Sincere thanks to Melissa Ellis and Charlotte Sandes for facilitating our AGM.

Who are Friends, what is AAFBG

Your Association is here to:

Advocate - Facilitate - Communicate

The AAFBG network was formed by Friends groups to represent, encourage and support the activities of Friends groups in increasing community participation, understanding and appreciation of the role of botanic gardens and supporting the work of Botanic gardens staff and institutions in general.

Tucked away on AAFBG website in history, in 1985, for Victoria's 150 anniversary celebrations, 15 botanic gardens were given much needed and long overdue assistance for rejuvenation to acknowledge Von Mueller's outstanding contribution to botany and horticulture in Victoria, donated by 15 German/Australian companies.

One stipulation of the Grant was that botanical gardens had an associated group of Friends to act as future watchdogs for the gardens. This led to the formation of many Friends groups in Victoria.

In 1991 the Friends Royal botanic Gardens Melbourne initiated talks to establish an umbrella organisation, formation and incorporation occurring in 1993

2001 due to increased interest and request the Association became a national body. Bringing with this move far more work and complexity for the peak body.

Your AAFBG Committee needs assistance to spread information and news to its vast network of 24,000 + individuals and further afield. We would ask that Members add the AAFBG Logo to their publications and websites as being part of their Peak Body which represents them.

Share on social Media and emails, Eucalypt Newsletter, E-ucalypt News and the new Facebook presence.

Your Friends representing on AAFBG Committee are already committed, volunteering to their own Garden, are not only on one committee but two.

Expectations of the Peak Body can sometimes become distorted.

With complementary aims is BGANZ, the industry body was formed to represent, promote and support the interests of botanic garden institutions and their professional staff members, to enhance the state of botanic gardens for the benefit if the community.

Helen Vaughan, managing editor of BGANZ Newsletter The Gardener, in Editorial Insights, commented on current articles, quote

“stories from and about volunteers, who keep Botanic Gardens going and growing and without whose input these Gardens would fall into neglect or may never have become into being in the first place “

AAFBG and BGANZ are two very unique, complementary, distinct and crucial organisations. In some instances gardens are both initiated and run by volunteers and the differences can become blurred.

Today the current Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations will be signed by their Presidents.

Every Garden has a story to tell.

As Secretary it has been a privilege to be in more close contact with AAFBG members directly learning about their challenges and celebrations.

From the smallest to largest groups struggling drought or tornados, administrative development or funding cuts. Others celebrating expansion and new facilities, the larger gardens each playing a mentor role.

It is rewarding to see the passion and dedication of volunteers and silent members who make up the varied network of contributors.

Best wishes to Friends of Brisbane BGSA as they prepare and we look forward to the 2020 conference.

It has been an honour to be part of the AAFBG organisation and meet with many wonderful people.

My sincere appreciation to the committee and Rosemary Noone for their friendship, President Dennis Ayliffe for his professional, steadfast and balanced leadership. Kathy Wright for her thorough accounting skills. John Bentley as he devotes his time and expertise to Melton, John's suggestion of a National Friends Day will certainly be considered by the incoming committee.

I would like to congratulate Dr Wayne Harvey for accepting nomination as President and wish him and his committee well in supporting Botanic Garden volunteers Australia wide.

Farewell.....thank you.

Elizabeth Gilfillan
AAFBG Secretary

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