

MESSAGE TO AAFBG AGM, ADELAIDE, 12 APRIL 2021

Greetings to all members of the Association, and especially to those Friends' groups represented at today's AGM! I'm sorry I'm unable to join you.

It seems strange to be having a second AGM only six months after the last one – but then everything's been rather strange for quite a while now. Hopefully, though, life is getting back to being near-normal as covid restrictions ease and we begin receiving vaccinations.

As Friends, getting back to normal means of course being able to visit, work in and support our glorious botanic gardens. We need the restorative experiences of being in nature and gardens just as much as the gardens need our care and involvement. I hope you and your botanic gardens are nurturing each other and that the year ahead will be thoroughly successful.

The past year has been a real challenge for Friends groups and for AAFBG – meetings almost entirely online, cancelled plans and activities, lowered income, and for some gardens recovery from fires and floods. I thank the AAFBG Council and Chantal de Vere, our indefatigable Admin Officer, for all their hard work in coping with covid impacts and keeping the Association functioning. We're fortunate indeed to have such a committed group of people in charge of AAFBG.

We're even more fortunate to have the tireless efforts of thousands of dedicated Friends giving their time and skills to keeping our gardens blooming. Our annual Handbury Awards recognise these special people and the contributions they've made, often over many years, to their botanic gardens and their Friends group. This year we have thirteen Handbury Awards, six recognising individual achievements and seven recognising group achievements. I warmly congratulate all the recipients for their talents and dedication. Our botanic gardens can't do without you!

With best wishes to you all and to AAFBG for 2021.

Philip Moors
AAFBG Patron