



CONFIRMED MINUTES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 30 June 2020 at 12.30pm

held in the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion, National Arboretum Canberra

with hand-sanitiser available and chairs spaced 1.5m apart (max attendance 30)

1. **Welcome**

The Chair, Trish Keller OAM, welcomed all to the meeting and made the Acknowledgement of Country, using text from a Year 6 student, Samuel Knight.

2. **Attendance and Apologies**

Attendance – Mary Arnold, Margie Bourke, Max Bourke AM, Christine Callen, Del Da Costa, Cally Earnshaw, Helen Hemphill, Cathy Ikin, Trish Keller OAM, Barry Langshaw, Sandra Linsley, Joanne Maples, Jocelyn Plovits, Lyn Rees, Scott Saddler AM, Hans Van Haalen, Mike Woolley, Vicki Woolley. [18; quorum = 10].

Apologies – Malise Arnstein, Ange McNeilly, Ian Sayers OAM, Jan Morgan, Cherie Whan.

Trish brought Scott Saddler AM to the stage and congratulated him on his recent inclusion in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List being appointed a Member, MA, in the General Division. His citation reads, *for significant service to public administration and supported and mentor of indigenous youth*. Scott thanked everyone and in response said he had started his career as a greenkeeper while studying at TAFE. With his new job, Scott started missing his TAFE lessons, but his mentor chased him down and told him in no uncertain words to get back to studying at TAFE. Mentors can change lives for the better.

3. **Acceptance of Minutes of 2019 AGM and Matters Arising**

Mary Arnold moved and Max Bourke AM seconded that the minutes of the 14 May 2019 Annual General Meeting be accepted without amendment. Carried.

There were no matters arising.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

The 2019 audited financial statements, which incorporated the National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust Fund, were available on the Friends' website.

At 31 December 2019, there was \$173,746 cash at bank. This comprised \$79,590 in the Trust account and \$94,156 in the general account.

Friends' total income was \$98,129 of which \$74,951 came from donations to the Friends DGR2 Trust Fund and \$23,178 related to Friends' income mainly derived from memberships.

Friends total expenditure for the 2019 year was \$99,615 comprising \$8,393 from Friends' operating expenditure, and \$91,223 related to Trust fund expenditure. Included in this expenditure is \$25,000 donated by Friends to the Arboretum as a 50% payment for the Friends' Zigzag Garden, and \$53,245 for purchase and installation costs of seats and picnic settings for sponsorship.

At the end of the 2019 financial year, the Friends had made an overall loss of \$1,487. From the Friends' general activities, we made a surplus of \$14,785. However this was offset by a reduction of the Trust funds of \$16,272 – a result of providing funds to the Arboretum for the purchase of new picnic settings and seats for sponsorship (\$53,245), the first payment towards the establishment of the Friends' Zigzag Garden (\$25,000) and Trust funds raised by STEP for the purchase of their new shed (\$12,630). Overall, the Friends continue to maintain a healthy financial position with a total equity of \$177,357.

Hans van Haalen queried whether this was the right time to be discounting the remaining copies of The Arboretum Book, given that we are about to update the Book for its next edition. The Treasurer replied that we have already made a profit from the current issue and covered our costs.

Max Bourke said that, as Chair of the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, he had spent two years encouraging the ANBG Friends to spend its funds on 'shovel-ready' projects, ready to go, as they have plenty of money in their account. He believes that no more than 1-2 years' running costs should be kept back. Finding worthwhile projects to fund is very important and encourages donors.

The Treasurer thanked the auditor, Christopher Harding, for completing the audit pro bono. Council had gifted him a free parking pass.

Lyn Rees moved and Hans van Haalen seconded that the 2019 Financial Statements for the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc and incorporating the National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust Fund be accepted; and that Christopher Harding be appointed auditor for 2020. Carried.

5. Chair's Report

Trish Keller OAM, as Chair of the Friends at the 2020 Annual General Meeting, offered her fifth Report. The full report appears as an appendix to these minutes. All attendees were very pleased to know that there were almost 23,000 volunteer hours done in 2019.

Trish moved and Joanne Maples seconded that the Chair's Report be accepted. Carried.

6. Election of Office Bearers

Del Da Costa, Secretary of the Friends, acted as Returning Officer. She declared the relevant positions vacant.

Position	Incumbent	Nomination to date
Chair	Trish Keller OAM	
Deputy Chair	Mike Woolley	
Treasurer		Lynley Rees
Secretary	Del Da Costa	
Publications Editor		Mary Arnold
Donations and Sponsorships Manager	Trish Keller OAM	
Social Media Manager	Cherie Whan	

STEP Member	Cathy Ikin	
National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Aust. Member	Mike Woolley	
Ordinary Member (up to 5 Members)		Helen Hemphill Sandra Linsley Hans van Haalen Nicole Pietrucha

Trish thanked Jan Morgan, who was stepping down from Council, for her contributions and support over the past two years.

Del Da Costa moved and Max Bourke seconded the nominations. All these nominations were unanimously elected. If needed, Council can co-opt other Members.

7. Other Business

- Max Bourke wanted to recognise the significant Citizen Science work done by volunteers at the Arboretum. He noted it gave prestige and status to the Arboretum. The two latest reports are available on the Friends' website (under News -> Citizen Science).
- Sandy Linsley reported that the training for new guides had commenced in February with nine starters. Two of the volunteers are already doing concierge work. There will be a need, post-COVID-19 restrictions, to regroup and reprogram the training with a refreshed and extended program.

The meeting closed at 1.00pm.

Chair's Report AGM 2020

I'd like to begin with my Acknowledgement of Country: These words were composed by Samuel Knight, a year 6 (approximately 12 years old) student at Giralang Primary School in 2019.

I'd like to acknowledge and congratulate Scott Saddler AM, Senior Director of the NAC for his recent inclusion in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List being appointed a Member, AM, in the General Division. His citation reads '*for significant service to public administration and supporter and mentor of indigenous youth.*'

The second phrase – '*supporter and mentor of indigenous youth.*' What does that mean? Scott has been a public servant for well over 20 years right around Australia. But not many public servants can claim that they are Indigenous from the Wiradjuri mob from the Wagga Wagga Riverina area. Scott can do that.

He may have told you some of this already, but in every workplace across Australia he has employed and trained many young Indigenous men and women, becoming their role model and their mentor. He has provided opportunities for their development and advancement. As a leader of these young mentees, he has walked the talk and behaved in a manner consistent with his values and beliefs and with the ability to create new realities for these young folk. The stories he has fashioned and embodied in his life, his stories of identity, have struck a chord with them all.

In 2018 Scott was awarded the ACT Reconciliation Award by Kathy Leigh, Director General, CMTEDD, for this extra, but important work he carries out on a regular basis.

"Scott's leadership and advice supports the retention and career development of the trainees while also providing an avenue to strengthen their connection with their culture." In this particular mentoring program, he leads young Indigenous men and women in the ACT Government's Directorate of Property and Venues, Chief Minister and Treasury and Economic Development. The citation concludes with '*His passionate commitment to young Indigenous employees reflects the unique contribution he has made as a public servant.*'

There are other Indigenous features that Scott has initiated and has already implemented here at the NAC. Maybe at the next Volunteers Meeting, whenever that will be, it could be the first item on his agenda!!

And now he has been appointed an AM in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours. As you can see he is so richly deserving of this appointment.

Please join me in applause.

Welcome to all Friends and Volunteers and in particular I want to especially thank the Council Members for their ongoing support over the past year.

Council, you are a remarkable group with all your skills, talents and expertise. I couldn't manage in my role as Chair, without you. Thank you most sincerely.

I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to our new Council Member Nicole Pietrucha, and thank Jan Morgan, as she steps down, for her contribution to Council.

The Friends' key achievements for 2019 –

Our key achievements for 2019 – and there are two – are:

The first was the finalisation of our Strategic Plan. We are now in sync with that of the NAC Strategic Plan. Our Plan dovetails into a very flexible Annual Partnership Plan, and Memorandum of Understanding with the NAC. We believe we are now achieving and fulfilling our main purpose which is, supporting the NAC.

The second key achievement is the Friends' sponsorship of the new Arboretum Bus. It is our Friends' financial support in the form of monthly lease payments for five years, that has made this possible. Thank you, Friends! I believe the bus is due to arrive very soon at the Arboretum. Is there any update, Scott?

And beyond the achievements, there were many happy events during 2019:

In March last year, I launched the Friends' Zigzag Garden. The Arboretum offered this exclusive opportunity to be part of their vision to grow 100 Gardens and I congratulate the Friends for taking the initiative and sponsoring a Garden in the Central Valley – Garden No 19, the Saltbush Garden.

The 2019 Jake Keller Scholarship was awarded to Carol Dale who has been working with the horticultural team in the coming months.

And we had some wonderful guest speakers strut their stuff in their fields of expertise last year at our Seasonal Talks.

Professor Kate Auty, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment spoke on environmental reporting and communicating the science to the general public; we learned a lot about carnivorous plants with Bob Little and Owen O'Neill spoke, courtesy of the Australasian Carnivorous Plant Society; the NAC's own Christine Callen wowed us with tales and photos from her trip to Wellington Botanic Garden, Gisborne Eastwoodhill National Arboretum and Zealandia. Mike Woolley entertained us with Bonsai information from the national collection, and Julianne Evans spoke about Forest Bathing!

2020 has to date been quieter for the Friends, but we have been beavering away behind the scenes (behind the laptops?). The Friends' Executive plus Mel O'Hanlon from the Curatoreum and Christine Callen and Cally Earnshaw, the NAC's newish Community Engagement Officer, have met on ZOOM and in the flesh, a few times and have developed a proposal for a new edition of the Arboretum Book. A Brief has been formed describing the rationale and nature of the proposal.

Council has formally signed off the project and a Working Group under the leadership of Jocelyn Plovits, former Chair of the Friends, will undertake the substance of the Project. With this formal decision to work on a new edition, the current Arboretum Book has been discounted to \$20.00.

A Trailer for the Working Bees (and any other activity where it is needed) has been sponsored by the Friends and it is ready to go. The Friends' logo will be proudly displayed announcing our sponsorship of this most useful vehicle, which holds all manner of tools and equipment in one tidy place.

The Wollemi Pine Project is significant in that Friends Council approved the funding in February 2020. The main purpose of the project is to propagate, grow and sell Wollemi Pine trees from 100 seeds collected at the NAC. The contract for propagation and growing has been contracted out to Yarralumla Nursery. We await the first progress update soon I'm told. Significant benefits are revenue for Yarralumla Nursery, and more importantly for the Friends and the NAC.

The Harvest Group haven't been able to have their very popular Market Stalls over the past few months. However, the Discovery Garden continues to be well tended by volunteers led by Ange McNeilly. It is so much admired by all who wander past.

The Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park – STEP – is a busy place year-round. There is so much to see down there.

Working Bees on Tuesdays and Thursdays have begun again only recently and there is much for them to do. 23 Volunteers appeared on deck on a recent Thursday morning!

The Friends' Zigzag Garden, the Salt Bush Garden, has just recently been completely paid for, thanks to the generosity of various Friends and proceeds from events such as the Market Stalls.

Warm Trees 2019 was a spectacular success with our diplomatic partner, the Embassy of the Republic of the Netherlands in 2019. So many bicycles, tulips and creative arts featuring wheels and other Dutch culture! Unfortunately, Warm Trees 2020 has been cancelled. But we do have the commitment of support from our diplomatic partner, the High Commission of Singapore, for 2021. Colours are red and white so keep knitting!

The Seat Sponsorship Program continues with sponsorships being sought on a regular basis. Just recently within two days of each other, two seats in the Children's Garden were sponsored; there remains one other to be sponsored in that particular Garden.

And with the launch of the Tracks and Trails last year, opportunities for seats and picnic tables have raised considerable interest with their amazing locations and wonderful views.

As you know funds for these sponsorships go into our Trust Account and are available for the next request or project from the NAC.

I would like to recognise the great work done by the Friends' Membership and Parking Passes officers. These ladies quietly go about their work completing this vital task behind the scenes. Thank you very much for this work.

Finally, I'd like to pay tribute to all the diverse volunteer groups that support the Friends. In 2019, Volunteers donated almost 23,000 hours (22,937.5 hrs) to the Arboretum! What an achievement!

I especially appreciate all the support each Volunteer offers me.

Thank you all for coming today!
