



## **CONFIRMED MINUTES**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Tuesday 12 May 2015 at 7pm in the Village Centre, National Arboretum Canberra (AGM Commences after the farewell function for the Chair)**

1. **Attendance:** Jocelyn Plovits (Chair), Richard Bear, Sherry McArdle-English, Mike Wooley, Linda Muldoon, Raoul Middelman, Bev Kaiser, Trish Keller OAM, Kathryn Cole, Joanne Maples, Margie Bourke AM, Anna Kieltyka, Anne Meade, Ermelindo Maculan, Tralie Kimlin, Lorraine Nicholls, Ruth McLucas, Sue Brown, Jenny Cantlon, Sue Wright, Andy Russell, Max Bourke, Anna Howe, David Lyons, Roger Hnatiuk, Tony Lawson, Cherie McLean, Vicki Thompson, Sallyann Ducker, Yole Daniels, Jennie Widdowson, Anthony Widdowson, Colette Mackay (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Cynthia and John Blount, Colin & Lorraine Adrian, Kathryn McCarthy, Jim & Chris Payne, Yvonne Hackman, Rex & Deirdre Carmody, Yvonne Kilgour, Susan Parsons, Kate McCarthy, John Mackay AM, Marelle and Rob Rawson, David Nichols, Meredith Hinchliffe, Martin Wright, Spero Cassidy, Susan Webb, Bek Hyland, Rob and Carol Ey, Nick and Tabitha Plovits, Bronwyn Halbisch, Sanya Ritchie

### **2. Minutes of Tuesday 13 May 2014 were accepted without change. (TK/SM-E)**

### **3. Treasurer's Report - Richard Bear**

#### **- acceptance of the Audited Financial Statements for 2014**

Total Assets as at 31 December 2014 is \$123,971, Net Assets \$102,171. There was a \$12,682 loss in operating profit caused by a range of issues including purchase of the water trailer and depreciation costs on plant and equipment and information technology. The deficit from ordinary activities after providing for income tax amounted to a loss of \$14,928. This deficit was made up from funds available from previous years.

The audited statement was made available before the meeting and circulated at the meeting – there were no questions about the report. Richard offered to be available to answer questions should any arise.

The Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report were accepted. RH/SM-E

**- appointment of Auditor for 2015** – Members agreed to the Treasurer implementing a process to look for a pro bono auditor. The meeting recorded thanks to Michael Sinclair as our pro bono auditor for the past years except 2014.

### **4. Chair's Report - Jocelyn Plovits (Jocelyn's speech inserted here)**

I would like to sincerely thank the members of Council who have unstintingly worked for the betterment of the Friends and the Arboretum. A special thank you to Colette Mackay – an

innovative and fantastic person in the role of Secretary – we have been an indomitable team. Similar thanks to Trish Keller (Deputy Chair), Richard Bear (Treasurer), Linda Muldoon (publications Editor), Spero Cassidy (Web Manager), Bek Hyland (Social Media Manager), Kathryn Cole (member), Tony Lawson (STEP rep member), Max Bourke (member) and most recently Mike Wooley (Bonsai rep member). For those who are not standing for re-election, our undying thanks, what a great contribution you have made.

For those who are standing again – thank you very much indeed for offering your ongoing effort. Last year I prepared a discussion paper called “Moving Forward” based on the questions - What will Friends look like in 5 years? What do we want to lobby for? And in answering these questions I reviewed the strategic plan agreed with the members when I commenced as Chair six years ago. How satisfying it is to see so much of the strategic plan has been delivered. I assumed two main goals:

1. Friends help the Arboretum to self-sufficiency and to have a high reputation (think Kew Gardens standard or better) – always making a contribution to the development of the Arboretum – agenda set in collaboration with the Arboretum
2. Develop the full potential of the membership and increase the numbers of members

Actions achieved:

- a. Social events – increasing (Friends Around The Lake opportunities plus our own events)
- b. Accommodation in the central area of the Arboretum – Friends office and access to storage in the new section of the Admin demountable. Many thanks to Arboretum management.
- c. Specific program of skills acquisition and development – ongoing – with guides, working bees, tree measuring, bird counts, Friends Talks
  - A very large group of volunteers to thank.
- d. Encourage the involvement of children – volunteers assisting the Education Co-ordinator, kite making, bonsai
- e. Moving inexorably towards being well funded – book production loan from TAMS has been fully repaid (\$20,000), profits from additional sales being accumulated and now we are collecting contributions for items like the enclosure of the Covered Outdoor Learning Area
- f. Smooth administration – heavily dependent on volunteers willingness which has been forthcoming and so wonderful to have nominations for the next round of Council positions
- g. All types of membership under one umbrella (one newsletter for all, discounts for all etc) – MOU between the Friends and the Arboretum has been completed and involves Friends management of the parking voucher scheme. Many thanks to Colette Mackay and Annette Lock.
- h. Tours and trips as fundraisers – have run two now and plenty of potential for more. Many Thanks to Max Bourke and Del Da Costa.

- i. Products for sale in the shop including calendars, the Arboretum Book – working in liaison with The Curatoreum to develop products (these will also be available on our website) – congratulations to Linda Muldoon and her team.
- j. Nurture groups and subgroups (thanks to all who have stepped forward to lead these and who have been running some for years) – going well – pleased to report working bees have more than doubled in numbers – Many thanks to Annette Lock for nurturing the Tuesday group.
- k. Relationship with DGR1 now in place. Our Trust fund accumulation going well.
- l. Reciprocal arrangements with other Friends groups. – in progress
- m. Program for bequests– in progress
- n. Volunteers with clear roles and clear processes – guides, Jake and Trish Keller Scholarship– in progress
- o. Research – massive additional contribution with Tree Audit in 2014/2015 – congratulations to Roger Haniuk and the volunteers
- p. Special events like WARM TREES 2014 with around 250 volunteers and 30 installers – a very different demographic involved with the Arboretum.
- q. Events coming up – Wollemi birthday, Warm Trees 15
- r. Strong links to the evolving new entity – Minister has guaranteed the Chair has membership on whatever entity evolves
- s. Sponsors – always in progress but profound thanks to the sponsors who have been with us from the beginning and the new sponsors coming on board.

### **Friends achievements after the formal opening**

- Membership at a new high – 1500 memberships representing an estimated 4,000 people with additional corporate and associate members adding a further (approx.) 4,000 people.

### **Contributions to the Arboretum**

- Donated as a Centenary Gift of a Fire Trailer (not only helps with potential fires but also can be used for watering and other maintenance) Funds raised by the Friends.
- the amazing new Arboretum Book launched by the Chief Minister on June 24 – expert volunteers donated more than 1000 hours to its preparation. We are currently selling about a box a week!
- First photo competition – 200 entries.
- Friends Talk Series every two months on the last Monday at 6.30pm in the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion.
- Trained around 250 guides (for general guides and bonsai guides) guides have led thousands of tours including a considerable number of bus tours. Provision of uniforms. Annual guide training from now on in October.

- World recognition for the community science program run by Dr Roger Hnatiuk (a member and volunteer) and supported by a dedicated group of volunteers
  - tree monitoring – a world first in that measurements taken from initial planting and showing interesting results in the way trees maximise their potential – this was reported at the international BGANZ conference in NZ in collaboration with the ANU (students also use the data).
  - Recordings to contribute to Frogwatch found the burrowing frog at the Arboretum (a rare report in the ACT)
  - Reporting ad hoc observations of the biodiversity returning to the site
  - In collaboration with the Canberra Ornithological Group surveys of birds
- Volunteer involvement in working bees expanded from once every two months to twice a week in collaboration with the Horticulture Team – everything from removing tree covers to squashing unwanted caterpillars.
- Hundreds of volunteers have supported the school holiday programs, the Arboretum's program during the Floriade period, and special events like the opening Festival first Year Celebration.
- Launched the innovative Warm Trees installation to encourage people to explore the forests during the cooler months. With 250 volunteers (increased by 100 since the first year) from throughout the ACT and interstate (even overseas) providing bright coloured scarves for trees (from children to residents of nursing homes). Will be launching Warm Trees 15 in April
- Established the Harvesting Friends to help with collection of the forests products (seeds, fruit etc) – in progress
- Special working group to develop the Friends Forest. (*Allocasuarina verticillata* – Drooping She Oak) – many thanks to Max Bourke
- Special relationship for schools – model developed with Girralang Primary – now assisting the Arboretum's education program.
- Provision of the wonderful Arboretum Calendar (raises funds for Friends contributions to the Arboretum).
- Continuation of the successful seats donation program – first 20 seats installed and another 20 seats on order.

### **Achievements for members**

- New website – some elements in collaboration with Arboretum (for the management of parking passes)
- membership cards working well
- 10% discount at the Curatoreum.
- 10% discount at the Sprout Café (in the Village Centre)

- Discounted entry to the Friends Talks program.
- Discounted parking pass (only \$25 for members).
- Multiple year memberships proved popular.
- Development of members' knowledge and skills through training for volunteer activities (incl guiding, events, working bees).
- Four fabulous newsletters a year.
- Special events for Friends including:
  - long informative walks on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month – members of the public also welcome (must wear sturdy boots).
  - End of year party in the Friends Forest
- Friends office
- Development of members' skills through participation in the expanded admin team to handle memberships and related matters like the discounted parking pass and manage all the groups.

**5. Presentations:** Jocelyn presented the three awards for Volunteer(s) of the Year

**Robert Ey (in absentia)** – for developing professional long walks and for positive public speaking and leadership in leading walks and volunteering. Rob was absent and overseas.

**Bev Kaiser** – for being a role model in guiding, has provided the most number of guiding hours and leadership in guiding and mentoring and other volunteering.

**Ruth McLucas** – for extraordinary hours at the NBPCA as a volunteer. She shows leadership in her roles as Chair of the Collections Advisory Committee and in training, promoting, as a role model, and is always happy to share her knowledge.

**6. Election of Office Bearers** – Roger Hnatiuk, was the Returning Officer.

Roger declared nine positions vacant and stated that there was one nomination for each position with the exception of the STEP Member who have not yet nominated a person for the position. Two positions, the Guide Coordinator Member, Kathryn Cole and Member, Max Bourke AM are continuing. Roger called each position with its' nomination and in turn, each nomination was accepted by the members.

Position	Status	Nomination to date
Chair	Vacant	Trish Keller OAM
Deputy Chair	Vacant	Jenny Widdowson
Treasurer	Vacant	Richard Bear
Secretary	Vacant	Del Da Costa
Publications Editor	Vacant	Linda Muldoon
Social Media Manager	Vacant	Cherie McLean
Donations and Sponsorships Manager	New position - vacant	Colette Mackay
STEP Member	Vacant	Nomination to come from STEP
National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Aust. Member	New position - vacant	Mike Wooley

Guide Coordinator Member	Kathryn Cole	continuing
Member	Max Bourke	continuing

Other positions not on Council:

**Public Officer** - Jocelyn Plovits

**Web Manager** - Spero Cassidy

It was noted that Jocelyn would continue as Volunteer Coordinator for the time being and would make regular reports to Council.

## 7. Nomination(s) for Life Membership

Trish Keller took over as the new Chair and announced a Nomination for Life Membership for **Jocelyn Plovits** for her extensive contribution to the Friends and in particular, her six years as Chair.

Trish thanked the Council Members for their nominations.

## 8. Other Business

Colette thanked the members for their patience over the last few months while the website was being updated.