



## **CONFIRMED MINUTES**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Tuesday 10 May 2022 at 5.30pm**

**held in the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion, National Arboretum Canberra**

#### **1. Welcome**

The Chair, Trish Keller OAM, welcomed all to the meeting and made the Acknowledgement of Country.

#### **2. Attendance and Apologies**

*Attendance* – Malise Arnstein, Margaret Bourke, Max Bourke AM, Del Da Costa, Cally Earnshaw (NAC), Bronwyn Halbisch, Maggie Hawes, Helen Hemphill, Fran Hinton, Roger Hnatiuk, Trish Keller OAM (Chair), Yvonne Kilgour, Wendy Launder, Colette Mackay OAM, Joanne Maples, Leigh Mitchell, Vivien Palmer, Nicole Pietrucha, Marelle Rawson, Allan Read, Maureen Read, Lyn Rees, David Shorthouse, Lainie Shorthouse, Carolyn Thomas, Anthony Widdowson, Jennie Widdowson, Shirley Wilton, Mike Woolley, Vicki Woolley.  
[30 attending]

*Apologies* – Meryl Causebrook, Annette Cronin, Alan Doolan, Cathy Ikin, John Mackay AM, Ange McNeilly, Jan Morgan, Linda Muldoon, Lorraine Nicholls, Jocelyn Plovits, Nick Plovits, Tabitha Plovits, Hans van Haalen, Cherie Whan.

#### **3. Acceptance of Minutes of 2021 AGM and Matters Arising**

Roger Hnatiuk moved and Max Bourke AM seconded that the minutes of the 11 May 2021 Annual General Meeting be accepted without amendment. Carried.

There were no matters arising.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

The 2021 audited financial statements, which incorporated the National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust Fund, were available on the Friends' website.

At 31 December 2021, the Friends had a **balance** of \$98,356 in funds at the bank. This comprised \$58,350 in the working account and \$40,006 in the term deposit.

The National Arboretum Canberra Trust held \$117,527 of which \$74,242 was held in the Trust general transaction account and \$43,285 in the term deposit.

The Friends' total **income** for the year was \$77,974, with the majority coming from fundraising (\$35,262) which included a fundraising dinner and Market Stalls; a \$20,000 grant

from the ACT Government; and Memberships totalling \$15,140. We also made a profit of \$7,080 from Calendars and The Arboretum Book sales.

Total donations to our National Arboretum Canberra Public DGR2 Trust Fund amounted to \$91,667 with \$83,750 from seat donations.

Total operating **expenditure** for the Friends came to \$66,337. This included donations to the National Arboretum Canberra for the Forest Shelter (\$25,000) and payment of the Ngala bus lease (\$10,885); plus fundraising dinner expenses (\$11,289) and a shipping storage container (\$6,567).

The National Arboretum Canberra DGR2 Trust fund made donations to the NAC DGR1 Fund of \$59,471 which included donations for the Forest Shelter (\$25,000); and the provision of funds for the purchase and installation costs for seats and picnic settings to be made available for seat donations (\$34,151).

**Summary** – At the end of the 2020 financial year, the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra made an overall profit of \$11,637 while the National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust fund increased its funds by \$32,196.

2021 saw the fruition of a commitment made by the Friends Council to update The Arboretum Book with the new 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. This was completed in December with an initial print run of 2,000 copies being received in time for a book launch to be included with our End-of-Year Friends and Volunteers celebration. Coming in at just under \$29,000, this was a remarkable achievement for the Friends, and very close to our budgeted expense of \$25,000.

The Friends and the Trust Fund also contributed \$50,000 towards the new Forest Shelter which covered the second and third payments, with only one payment remaining to be paid in 2022. The Friends also contributed \$10,885 towards the lease for the Ngala bus in its five-year commitment to the Arboretum.

These funds are being provided in keeping with the Friends' Mission to provide the National Arboretum Canberra with funds *to enhance and develop the Arboretum* and to help the public to engage with the establishment and growth of the Arboretum.

Overall at the conclusion of 2021 the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra continue to maintain a healthy financial position with overall assets of \$132,373 less liabilities of \$32,334 leaving us with a total equity of \$100,040. This should enable the meeting of commitments already agreed to by Friends Council for 2022.

The National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust also continues to maintain a healthy financial position with an overall equity of \$117,527 which will also enable the meeting of commitments already agreed to by Friends Council as the Trustees of the Trust Fund for 2022.

The cost of proposed projects approved by the Friends' Council (and Trustees of the Trust Fund) for funding in 2022 and beyond is \$102,535 comprising Seat donor program, STEP funds held, annual donation to the Arboretum for workshops, annual donation for Ngala bus lease, Wollemi Propagation Project balance, and the final payment for the Forest Shelter.

Lyn Rees moved and Max Bourke AM seconded that the 2021 Financial Statements for the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc and incorporating the National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust Fund be accepted.

Maggie Hawes moved and Yvonne Kilgour seconded that Hardwickes be appointed auditor for 2022. Carried.

## 5. Chair's Report

Trish Keller OAM, as Chair of the Friends at the 2021 Annual General Meeting, offered her seventh Chair's Report. The full report appears as an appendix to these minutes.

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

## 6. Celebrating Success

Trish Keller OAM showcased the *What We've Achieved* document, available to attendees which itemises the significant financial and volunteer contributions made by the Friends in recent times.

## 7. Activity Reports

a) Guides' Report – Due to lockdown, meetings were held in a combination of face-to-face and virtual format. The Arboretum developed Guide story-telling skills with a facilitated workshop updating the Ngala Discovery tour. The Arboretum consulted and surveyed with Guides throughout the pandemic to understand what they most enjoyed about Guiding and what changes they would like to see. The survey led the Arboretum to recommend a number of changes to Guiding activities including:

- Updated signage in the Village Centre for Welcome Walks
- Welcome Walks times changed to 10:30am, 11:30am, 12:30pm
- 15 minutes of networking time allocated during Guides' meetings
- Guides' forest walk added to Guides meeting agenda for networking/skill sharing
- A second Guides' meeting time was decided by a follow up survey, to allow more Guides to attend meetings
- Guides regularly invited to join Forest Walks lead by other Guides

The survey also identified that the Concierge role was not clearly defined and that some Guides found shifts less rewarding where they were greeting visitors but not delivering public tours. Further guide consultation led to the development of a new Greeting role focussing on welcoming visitors to NAC that also better meets the needs of visitors.

Total volunteer hours, just for Guides, in 2021 was over 1,295 hours.

b) **National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia** – Mike Woolley reported:

- The annual Bonsai Week, normally held at the end of March, was able to go ahead in 2021 albeit with a shortened, 3-day, duration. It was titled *Bonsai Reshaped* and focused on Australian native plants as bonsai, featuring Australian bonsai artists including Jarryd Bailey, Scott Martin and Khanh Linh. Some of the activities were streamed online to provide access to those from interstate who were unable to travel due to Covid restrictions.
- The Pot Acquisition Prize was conducted again to promote those potters in Australia who are creating locally-made bonsai pots. The 2021 winner was Pat Kennedy. The second and third prizes went to Marie Hewartson and Luke Parsons respectively.
- At the end of April 2021, Jeff Barry from Victoria, spent several days at the Collection as the inaugural Artist-in-Residence.
- Lindy Dugard was awarded the NBPCA volunteer of the year. The curator highlighted her knowledge and welcoming smile, her energy, engagement and enthusiasm towards teaching children about the different bonsai.
- In late July, Australia Post issued a stamp series which highlighted the NBPCA and a number of native bonsai featured in the collection.

- The Collection was closed between mid-August and the end of October in line with Covid restrictions. This led to the postponement of the second Artist-in-Residence activity and cancellation of several planned bonsai workshops.
  - In November, the inaugural NBPCA Patron was announced – Mr Lindsay Bebb. Mr Bebb’s profile within the global bonsai community will assist the NBPCA achieve its aspirations and strategic goals at an international level. Mr Bebb has had a long involvement with the NBPCA, beginning with the Bonsai Management Committee, who were instrumental in the establishment of the NBPCA, along with other roles in the Collection Advisory Committee.
- c) **Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park -**
- Having signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Arboretum and with a new 10-year Strategic Plan drawn up in 2020, STEP committee representatives met with NAC administration to discuss our partnership with a view to implementing some specific goals from the Strategic Plan. As a result, we have a growing collaboration with the Arboretum’s Horticultural Team which has proved very valuable. We really appreciate all their help and consultation.
  - At our annual get-together lunch in January 2021 STEPpers looked forward to a year with fewer restrictions and anxieties. Alas, this was not to be. Heavy rain in February created significant damage to paths and plantings. Drainage continued to be problematic, causing different challenges to those expected.
  - Sadly, being inundated with water, a number of large Eucalypts on the upper part of the block died and had to be felled.
  - However, Autumn was particularly active for STEPpers, as the venue for Reconciliation Day celebrations was moved from Glebe Park to the Arboretum. We spent many weeks preparing for 31 May when several thousand people visited the Arboretum. STEP offered guided tours of Forest 20 and there were many visitors interested in accepting the offer.
  - With more heavy rain in May causing further damage to our new entrance, a sturdy rock wall was built to support the crushed granite. New signage giving directions to the various places of interest in Forest 20 was designed and installed at this rock wall, being the new entrance from the newly constructed lower carpark.
  - During winter months Thursday volunteers weeded, papered and mulched around the Acacias along a large part of the newly planted Wattle Walk, in preparation for Wattle Day at the beginning of September. Sadly, with the ACT in lockdown, Wattle Walk activities did not eventuate. However, we now have a clearly defined path and signage for the Wattle Walk and there is always next year!
  - Spring brought no relief from La Niña. Trees and understorey plants were inundated and are dying. Paths were flooded and damaged. We had rampant weed growth. All this curtailed our usual Spring planting.
  - On a positive note, STEP continues to gain greater recognition and appreciation as a visitor destination and we are getting involved with a wide range of community groups. During the ACT COVID-19 lockdown, Forest 20 became an exercise area of choice for many families and individuals. With birds, reptiles and insects active in the environment we have created, and bikes now excluded from riding through Forest 20, birders, photographers and “forest bathers” are now among our regular visitors.
  - During 2021, STEP received a grant from FOG (Friends of Grasslands), one of our “parent” organisations to update our grasses leaflet and provide more signage for the many grass species growing along Boundary Rd. Another grant was received from the ACT Government to assist with the electronic recording of plants at Forest 20. We are very grateful for their support.

- If you enjoy gardening on a Thursday morning, we welcome your presence at STEP to see “how does [our] garden grow”. We also welcome you to join us for morning tea and a chat at 10am.

Cathy Ikin

d) **Harvest Group** – (January to April 2021 report)

- Despite being the second year of the Covid-19 Pandemic, 2021 was a successful and productive one. The annual harvest of the English lavender in the Sensory Garden occurred in January with the lavender laid out to dry on the shelves in the shed. Two new volunteers joined the garden team also in January, Martha and Tai Chin Woon, who were rostered on alternate Saturday mornings.
- The good growing conditions during the first part of the year meant the garden produced a bountiful harvest of beans, eggplants, and tomatoes all processed into preserves in April for sale at the two scheduled market stalls in May. The wet spring and summer conditions of the latter half of 2021 were not so conducive to growing many vegetables that required sustained heat to ripen thus resulting in lower yields than in previous years.
- The annual allocation of funds for 2021 of \$500 was received in August for garden plant purchases and at the end of December 2021 there was an unspent balance of \$229.80.
- There were over 820 volunteer hours devoted to the Kitchen Garden in 2021.
- The **Fig Forest** flourished in 2021 with trees growing healthy and strong. The crop did not start producing until the end of February. However, this was a bumper year with the last harvest day being 21 April. Despite some supply issues being experienced, about 70 dozen jars were used for the season’s processing.
- There were 369 kilograms of figs picked by sixteen pickers on ten days. Fourteen cooks processed the figs for a total of 591 hours. Fig picking coordination and organisation totalled 234 hours. A small harvest of Cornus Kousa (Dogwood) fruit occurred on two days in March. In total, there were 1143 volunteer hours spent on the 2021 fig harvest
- Because of lockdown restriction this year, only three Market Stalls were scheduled. Nevertheless, these were very successful with a number of new products being trialled such as Maidenhair Creeper topiaries, and Warrigal Greens Pesto using Australian Macadamia nuts and oil as well as finger limes. Both products were popular and sold well. Propagated plants and packaged seeds from the garden are also popular.
- **Friends Wollemi Pine Propagation Project** – the Yarralumla Nursery received additional seeds to make up the contracted number of plants. This was due to the slow germination rates of the second batch of Wollemi seeds provided. The second batch of Wollemi seeds were sown on 27 January and the third batch on 4 March. The delay in sowing the third batch was due to the very hot weather experienced in January! The Wollemi continued growing strongly with only one plant succumbing to a fungal attack from which, over time, it might recover. Yarralumla Nursery delivered the first 30 Wollemi on Friday, 6 May, 2022 and during the last two weeks since the trees have been available for sale online, 10 have sold to a value of \$2,950. The remaining 20 trees are expected to sell in the coming weeks.
- **Gratitude for Assistance** – A big thank you goes to all the Kitchen Garden Team volunteers for their dedication and commitment in making the garden look spectacular all year round and to all the Harvest Group volunteers who pick, cook, and help at Market Stalls. Thank you to Dr Matt Parker and his staff at the Yarralumla Nursery for their ongoing care of the Wollemi. Sincere thanks to Ange McNeilly and Dr Roger Hnatiuk for their valued company and support along this exciting three-year Wollemi

journey. Finally, and importantly, thanks to Arboretum staff for their assistance and support and in particular, to Michelle McMahon, for her skilled professionalism working on the Wollemi tags, brochures, certificates of authenticity, website and other promotional material to produce such outstanding results.

Colette Mackay OAM

e) **Working Bees report**

- Working bees resumed in February 2021, with a whole of forest makeover/ maintenance approach to the working bee activities. The first activity was to continue the work commenced in December 2020 of pruning the lower branches in the Himalayan cedar forest a cool location in the heat of the summer. The impact of the pruning is visually pleasing.
- The horticultural staff describe and demonstrate to the bees (volunteers) the activity at the beginning of each working bee. They work alongside the bees, provide guidance, and educate with answers to the bee's questions.
- Activities have included spreading mulch, new plantings, weeding, checking, and repairing irrigation, making irrigation loops, installing, removing, and maintaining tree guards, fertilising, basal shoot pruning, branch pruning and installation of weed mat.
- Mid-August saw the pandemic lockdown come into play and bees were suspended. Lockdown ended mid- October, but working bees were cancelled due to the rain. First activity on resumption was the installation of weed mat in Forest 77 the pagoda trees and toromiros.
- On resumption the bees were introduced to and commenced using Better Impact the application used by other volunteers in the NAC to roster on for sessions and record volunteer hours.
- Forest and garden maintenance continued through to mid-December 2021 with the bees undertaking activities in the following forests and gardens:
  - Himalayan Cedar
  - Japanese Flowering Dogwood
  - Trident Maple
  - Gallery of Gardens
  - Chilean Wine Palm
  - Mediterranean Red Bud
  - Chilean Myrtle
  - River Birch
  - Discovery Garden
  - Crepe Myrtle (Adam's Forest)
  - Euphrates Poplar
  - Acacia host of the Toothed Lancewood
  - Sugar Pines
  - Ginkgos
  - Morrisby's Gum
  - Date Plum
  - Dove Tree
  - Callery Pear
  - Californian Fan Palm
  - Village Centre Garden

Vicki noted at the end of her report that trees has now grown sufficiently to provide shade in some of the forests and how lovely it is to be able to sit in their shade for a break. Vicki also reported that in a previous report, Working Bees had been strip mulching in the Silver birch forests. But a family of choughs is now turning it over and aerating the mulch so we can add them to the list of Working Bees!

Vicki Woolley and Des King (Thursday and Tuesday coordinators)

## 8. Election of Office Bearers

Del Da Costa acted as Returning Officer. She declared the four positions vacant: Treasurer, Publications Editor and two Ordinary Members.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Incumbent</b>	<b>Nomination to date</b>
<b>Chair</b>	Trish Keller OAM	
<b>Deputy Chair</b>	Mike Woolley	
<b>Treasurer</b>		Lynley Rees
<b>Secretary</b>	Del Da Costa	
<b>Publications Editor</b>		Nicole Pietrucha
<b>Social Media Manager</b>		vacant
<b>Donations and Sponsorships Manager</b>	Trish Keller OAM	
<b>STEP Member</b>	Cathy Ikin	
<b>National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia Member</b>	Mike Woolley	
<b>Ordinary Members</b> (up to 5 Members)	Fran Hinton Ian Chambers Maggie Hawes	Helen Hemphill Marelle Rawson

Del Da Costa continues as Public Officer and Spero Cassidy as Website Manager. Del thanked Spero at the meeting for his considerable assistance this year fixing the current website and demonstrating to the new website group the advantages of the soon-to-be launched website, Pictal.

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

Trish Keller paid tribute to outgoing Council members Hans van Haalen and Cherie Whan, and displayed framed certificates of thanks to Hans and Cherie.

9. **Awarding of Life Memberships** – none awarded this year.

10. **Any Other Business**

It was noted that the collective noun for ‘moths’ is an eclipse of moths: cf the Chair’s Report, Warm Trees information.

Trish thanked everyone for coming to this meeting.

The meeting closed at 6.15pm.

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## Chair's Report for Friends' May AGM 2022

With great pleasure I offer my Chair's Report to the Friends' AGM.

Firstly I'd like to acknowledge and thank each and every Council member for their great support of me as the Chair in 2021. Each member played a significant and important role in getting the job done in support of you, the membership. So very grateful thanks to each of you.

And a reminder that this AGM is my penultimate .... next year will be my last and I'm very keen to get new members nominating for Council with the ultimate aim of a new Chair. Participating in the governance of the Friends is the most rewarding experience I have had had since I retired.

The ramifications of Covid certainly played a part in the reduction of our meeting schedule with no seasonal talks or guest speakers. But things picked up and we are looking forward to a variety of speakers to come in the next seasonal talks in 2022 and none more so than our guest speaker tonight. Thanks to Joanne Maples for 'finding' our speaker tonight. And that's a job all of you can do ... if you know somebody who has expert knowledge and you think would be a good fit with our Friends Seasonal Talks, let us know.

Highlights and low lights... where to begin...importantly I begin with membership!

Since the pandemic, membership has shown its disappointing downward trend.

We discussed various strategies at Council to address this issue and one that is having a positive effect was the formation of a Membership Committee. A few Council members put their hands up to really focus on every strategy they thought would entice new members to join us, and old members to renew. Now in May 2022 the tanker is turning and these strategies are working as the numbers are on the up. The new flier worked really well and more are being being printed; word of mouth always works; fliers are on the tables again in the café. Thanks to Ian Chambers who is leading the group.

I could go on but suffice to say we encourage you to renew your membership when its due and sign up a friend or family member at the same time. We can't do all the things we'd like to achieve without your financial and moral support.

I've been taking copious notes since last AGM of the HIGHLIGHTS to regale you with tonight. Many you have heard about in previous newsletters but which I will touch on again tonight ... the first of which was being a finalist and consequently a winner of a HANDBURY AWARD by the Australian Federation of Friends of Botanic Gardens – AFFBG – our peak body. There is a handout to tell you of how the Friends qualified for the award. Well-deserved I'm sure you will agree!

Harvest Stalls go from strength to strength even in the Covid year and huge thanks to Colette Mackay OAM and her Harvest team – and to the STEP team coming on board with their variety of plants and other items for sale their contribution which has enhanced the Market Stalls with their different variety of products. Thanks Harvest Team and STEPPers!

The Friends Gazebo/Forest Shelter, was all but completed and was opened in fine style early March. Thanks to all of you who braved the elements to attend this launch and all agreed that it certainly IS fit for purpose! There was continuing information about this new edifice at the NAC. Meanwhile we continued to pay it off.

The Wollemi Pine Propagation Project has gone from strength to strength. Roger, Ange and Colette have accomplished a magnificent outcome for the Friends in their liaising with the Yarralumla Nursery, Matt Parker and the team over there.



Those of you reading the latest e-newsletter will know that the first Wollemis went on sale on-line and at the NAC at this past weekend's Market Stall. A wonderful achievement to all concerned.

A special note of thanks to the NAC for all their support in achieving this great outcome. I'd particularly point to Michelle McMahon, or Shell as she is known to us for her art – her design work, her talent and expertise in creating the images FOR the WOLLEMI publications which are QUITE REMARKABLE. THANKS SHELL!

Warm Trees 2021 with Singapore as the diplomatic partner was the last Warm Trees with Jocelyn Plovits at the helm as Coordinator/Convenor. It was a huge success and the Singapore High Commissioner and his wife Pearl were thrilled to be involved. They brought several of their diplomatic colleagues to the launch held in July and were most interested in this fun Friends-Arboretum activity. I don't think there will be any difficulty over the next few years to get a diplomatic partner.

A new coordinator was found for 2022... JAN MORGAN put her hand up. AND WE THANK HER VERY MUCH FOR ALL THE EFFORT she is putting in to Warm Trees 2022. It was decided the diplomatic partner in 2022 would be the Indigenous Marathon Foundation created by Aussie icon Rob De Castella, AM OBE and strongly supported by the Ngunnawal Elders Council. The launch will coincide with NAIDOC Week. Have you started your knitting yet? Have a chat to Jan for further instructions or look on our website for the latest Warm Trees Newsletter which has full details. Many (knitted/crocheted) bogong moths will adorn the gabion walls leading to the Village Centre.

The new Arboretum Book was launched in December, under the watchful eye of Jocelyn Plovits and her team of expert researchers. It's selling at the Curatoreum and you can also buy a copy/copies on our website. Another note of thanks goes to Mel O'Hanlon for her wonderful cooperation in this venture and for her support of the Friends again. Nothing was too much trouble in getting the book ready for sale from her point of view - thanks Mel!

And the Friends Council agreed to buy a shipping container in which to lodge the new consignment of books and which has the Friends logo attached. It is located near the Depot and has the Friends logo on it. Thanks Deren Signs!

Which takes me to our new website....the website team, Del, Lyn, Christine Keogh with Spero have been working on establishing our new website...watch this space for its launch! ....

We had 500 COPIES OF THE 2022 CALENDAR PRINTED AND THEY SOLD LIKE HOTCAKES - YOU MIGHT SAY - WITH NONE LEFT AT THE END OF FEBRUARY! So thanks to Mike Woolley for all the beautiful photos he took and for coordinating this edition and once again working with Mel at The Curatoreum.

The Friends were asked in an email from Roger Hnatiuk on 31 October 2020 to have a history of the Arboretum written. His email says many things including "2023/2024 will be here before you know it . The Arboretum Project was initiated in 2003 which makes 2023 the 20th anniversary and 2024 the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary. [And 2023 will also be the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arboretum opening up to the public.] So what would be a fitting project to have ready for the celebration of either date?"

As Roger pointed out that this particular project has a creeping loss of access to the people component in it and it really needs to be underway as soon as possible. And what can we, the Friends, do to expedite the venture.

I wanted to mention Phil Morrall AM CSC, a close colleague of mine on the National Australian Order of Australia Committee, who lives locally, and who has been making oral histories since his

retirement. Phil was invited to Council and gave us some points to consider based on his experiences. I offer him a huge vote of thanks for his support of the Friends and this project. His advice couldn't have been more helpful.

I'll share just a couple of these points the first being THE PLAN! Phil says planning is the key to all this. The next valuable point is to Start at the End.

What were we looking for ....well we envisaged a product or products that can be used across multiple platforms – from small cinema through to various web channels.

Our first thoughts were a combination of interviews with key players in the creation and early development of the Arboretum who can tell their stories and visuals that capture that change that has occurred around Dairy Farmers Hill and the various aspects of the Arboretum - the forests, the Gardens, the Bonsai Collection, the Pod Playground etc.

We were very keen to make contact with companies who would, with their services, endeavour to shape our project.

Scott Saddler AM gave us the name and a business contact where we might go to as the company had done work at the NAC. Arron Hage, from Wolflab was invited in to give his perspective. The two partners from another company Vivienne O'Connell and Shaun Humphries, SRH, known to Mike Woolley, also came to talk with us.

Both companies outlined their production processes of our project as they saw it. The upshot of these discussions were taken to a significant meeting with NAC management in April 2022 to discuss how to proceed with this project as it will be a joint FNAC/NAC project.

Well Roger let me tell you what Council will do this week..... we will push the 'send' message to these two companies outlining our preference for how the project will look. We want it to be able to be archived for future generations to discover and enjoy. It would also provide a current snapshot of the first 20 years for the ACT and broader community, in edited packages, that would cover the various facets of the Arboretum. These may be used at other ACT or national attractions, including at the Arboretum for its visitors. The facets of the history to explore would include the Arboretum's inception, design, physical characteristics such as the buildings, the forest and gardens, its role as a public amenity as well as its role as a research/ education/conservation resource.'

The Governor General at our Friends Fundraising Dinner in his speech says it's 'a story to tell' ...we agree! Indeed it is ....AND WE WILL!!! The launch will be in 2023 in conjunction with the Arboretum's celebration activities.

Speaking of the Friends Fundraising Dinner - it turned out to be a very successful evening on 8 June, complete with the support of the Governor General, His Excellency David Hurley and Mrs Hurley, the NAC team, Ginger Catering and Del herself! Minister Steel and his partner also attended.

Special thanks to Friends Council Secretary Del Da Costa for her extraordinary efforts to make this such a huge success.

Mrs Hurley has composed a song especially for the Friends. Earlier that week we had practised the song when the Governor General planted a tree in the Central Valley. At the dinner Mrs Hurley invited us to sing to the person next to us with feeling the words of You Are My Sunshine. I know some of you have heard me tell this story before and I promise this is the last time, but....never before nor again will I get that opportunity to sing to and gaze into the eyes of a Governor General! And he didn't bat an eyelid!!!!

The total of funds raised at this event was close to \$16,000. I thank you again Del and all of you who supported this event. It helped pay for the Forest Shelter - think Gazebo - considerably!

The Friends Tourist Bus continues to take visitors around the Arboretum. When the new roads are completed, Ngala's journey will be longer and more circuitous....we are still watching this this space!

Cally Earnshaw, the Arboretum's Community Engagement Officer sent out an expression of interest for a Guides Coordinator role. The Guides are the backbone of the Friends engaging daily with visitors to the Arboretum in a variety of specialised tours, talks and walks. There is more about this Coordinator's role and the folk involved in Cally's report.

Dr Suzette Searle, the Wattle guru, Cally and Mike Woolley are liaising on the seed collection from the Golden Wattles with Friends and Volunteers. I can report to you that at this stage in 2022 negotiations are well underway with packaging etc and Suzette and Mike are meeting this Wednesday to confer on progress and possibly production.

As Manager of the Seat Sponsorship Program on behalf of the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra I am regularly approached by members of the public who want to sponsor seats and picnic settings. It continues to be a slow but rewarding process but nevertheless there were a few sponsorships taken up yielding a positive result in the Trust Fund.

Despite the Covid shadow we the Friends of the National Arboretum had a good year and I can only thank each and every one of you for the generous contribution you made for its ongoing success.

Before I end my report, I want to particularly thank and pay tribute to two departing Councillors. Cherie Whan....our Social Media Manager, a mostly behind-the-scenes Councillor. And to Hans van Haalen ...an original Guide ...not many of those left!  
A membership team member.

*[Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation to Cherie and Hans, if they are present]*

Thank you!

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**After the AGM, we welcome Guest Speaker, Trevor Lipscombe.**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends, I am delighted to have as our guest speaker tonight, TREVOR LIPSCOMBE. Joanne Maples had signified to us ages ago that that Trevor would be a great speaker for the AGM ... and so it comes to pass ... thanks Joanne.

Trevor will talk about Griffin's Green Hills. Trevor is currently co-convenor of the National Trust (ACT)Monthly Heritage Walks Program and has been from 2017 until 2021. He has researched and led several heritage walks. Last year he researched the Green Hills for a video and talk to Australian Garden History Society. Since then, he has uncovered more about the significance of the area of the Canberra story.

Trevor....welcome and thanks for being our special guest speaker to complete our AGM evening.

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