



**DRAFT  
MINUTES**

**GENERAL MEETING**

**Held on Tuesday 9 April 2024 at 5.30pm**

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

**1. Welcome – Mike Woolley, (Chair)**

Mike welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Attendance:**

Mike Woolley (Chair), Daniel Bailey, Del Da Costa, Alan Doolan, Fran Hinton, Roger Hnatiuk, Damien Keddie, Trish Keller OAM, Barry Langshaw, Chris Langshaw, Mark Lodder, Joanne Maples, Sharon McAuliffe, Nicole Pietrucha, Marelle Rawson, Maureen Read, David Rees, Lyn Rees (Treasurer), Alison Stewart, Carolyn Thomas, Jennie Widdowson, Vicki Woolley. [21]

*Apologies:* Ian Chambers, Maggie Hawes, Helen Hemphill, Alan Read.

**3. Minutes** of the last General Meeting held on 10 October 2023 were accepted without change: Moved: Barry Langshaw; seconded Fran Hinton. Carried.

There were no Matters Arising.

**4. National Arboretum Canberra report – Daniel Bailey, Executive Group Manager**

After the resignation of Scott Saddler, Executive Branch Manager (EBM), Daniel outlined his role with the ACT Government: he is the Executive Group Manager – Operations with responsibility for Events ACT; National Arboretum & Stromlo Forest Park; Sport & Recreation; Venues Canberra; and Strategic Infrastructure Coordination within the Economic Development portfolio in the Chief Minister, Treasury & Economic Development Directorate.

Daniel's team is currently seeking a temporary replacement and interviews would be held the week of 15 April. Then a national search would be undertaken for the permanent position. In addition, Christine Callen has moved to Access Canberra and Alison Stewart is acting in that position. This position is also being advertised.

Daniel noted that the Arboretum is highly respected in government circles as are the Friends. And the huge volunteer investment is recognised. There were over 14,000 people through the Arboretum over Easter, although this was not a record probably because it did not coincide with ACT school holidays. Joanne Maples asked whether the roles of the new EBM would differ from Scott's role. Daniel replied that they were looking to take this role to the next level. Carolyn Thomas said it would be good to have a Friends representative on the interview panel, which would show that the Government's values the Friends' contributions.

## 5. Chair's Report

Mike reported on a number of activities with which the Friends are involved:

- Arboretum Story update – Perry Lethlean now woven in and finalising release through NAC and Friends website. Also have the transcripts cleaned up for lodging with ACT Heritage along with the documentary. We are trialling a weekly viewing period in the Bugang room – probably 4 Sundays in May – to gauge the public interest and value of doing this on a more consistent basis.
- At the last General Meeting (Oct 2023) we flagged that we were looking at new projects through which we could support the Arboretum. To date we have provided funding for the Nature Playgroup programme, sponsored a Friends picnic setting – although a site is yet to be finalised. We have also started discussions with the Arboretum to have a Friends art installation on the Art Trail.
- While on financial matters, happy to say that we have sold all but 25 of the 500 wattle seed packs which has realised a profit of about \$2000; and we sold out of calendars this year – producing 500 – also producing a profit of about \$2200.
- To date, the Friends have purchased uniforms – hats and shirts and hi-vis vests – for volunteers at the Arboretum. This has been a tricky process to manage – selecting the appropriate styles and getting the right supply of sizes to match usage. We have agreed with the Arboretum that the Friends will sponsor uniforms through an annual allocation – allowing the Friends to forecast expenditure and the Arboretum to manage the variables that are largely their responsibility. We still get to plaster the Friends logo on these items.
- Flowing from the Wollemi propagation project which wrapped up last September (\$12,000), Roger Hnatiuk embarked on another research venture to study what he saw were unusually small Wollemi grown under the same controlled conditions. This has resulted in over 100 Wollemi trees being grown from seed collected here at the Arboretum. As the project proceeds, there are about 80+ trees, one year old, that are now surplus to the research – and available for sale through the Friends. We have some here tonight if anyone is interested in buying one or more – for themselves or for a present. They are competitively priced at \$35 with the proceeds being itemised for investment into possible Arboretum related research projects in the future.
- At the AGM next month, we will have a vacant position on Council and so have a think about joining the team and help us pursue our role of the number 1 supporters of the Arboretum. We are also keen to find an assistant treasurer to share the load with Lyn and be a possible succession plan. For the treasurer role, one would need some formal accounting or bookkeeping qualification.
- Make sure that you visit the Arboretum this coming Friday, Saturday or Sunday as the Bonsai Reshaped event is on with a bonsai market and some interesting temporary displays in the Collection. There will be a display of small bonsai pots from over 20 Australian ceramicists and a display of small bonsai provided by the Canberra Bonsai Society.
- In the second half of March, Vicki and I visited NZ and as a part of that trip, arranged a networking visit with the Wellington Botanic Gardens – with whom the Arboretum has an MoU. We were given a tour of the Botanic Gardens by the boss there, David Sole, and this was followed by a tour of the Otari – Wiltons Bush Botanic Garden – comprising of NZ native species – a large natural area of native

bush with a number of endangered species being introduced to help revegetate other areas across NZ. I was able to speak with my counterparts in both gardens and share experiences.

- A couple of reminders: Don't forget to encourage friends and family – and complete strangers - to join the Friends, if not for the sheer joy of being a part of a great institution, but for the access to an annual parking pass and discounts at the Curatoreum and the café. If you are an Instagram user, we need 10 more followers to make 400!
- Lastly, I'd like to thank Council, Anne (parking passes) and Sue (memberships), the Harvest Group, the NAC team and all the others that volunteer to help the Friends do what we do.

Mike invited comments or questions from the floor:

- Joanne Maples asked about the Ngala bus with the lease ending in June 2025. It is likely that the NAC will do a review of the bus costs, usage, etc and then make recommendations to the Friends and other stakeholders. Alison Stewart (NAC) commented that the Ngala bus does get a fair amount of use especially at weekends. They are working on developing a new loop after the asphaltting has been done on the new roads.

## **6. Finance Summary**

Lyn Rees, as Treasurer, summarised the Friends' financial position.

As at 31 March 2024, the Friends had a balance of \$109,305 in funds. These are held in the following accounts:

- Friends Working Account - \$27,465
- Business Transaction Account - \$20,272
- Friends Term Deposit #1 – \$41,564
- Friends Term Deposit #2 - \$20,000

Year-to-date, we have recorded a positive net cash movement of \$5,125 (compared to a positive net cash movement of \$1,764 at the end of March 2023).

*Trust account* – As at 31 March 2024, the National Arboretum Canberra Trust Fund had a balance of \$165,180 in total funds, which are held in the following accounts:

- Trust Savings Account - \$60,209
- Trust Term Deposit #1 - \$44,971
- Trust Term Deposit #2 - \$60,000.

Lyn noted that we have finished funding the Wollemi Pine Tree propagation project, the documentary film and we are looking to fund resources for the NAC's Nature Play playgroup, and a Friends' picnic setting. There are plenty of funds to cover our future responsibilities.

Roger Hnatiuk moved and Carolyn Thomas seconded that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Carried.

## **7. Arboretum Volunteer Summary**

There was no report.

## **8. Any other business**

There was no other business.

9. **Next Meeting** – The next General Meeting is the Friends AGM on Tuesday 14 May at 5.30pm. Guest Speaker is Peter Kanowski.
10. **Close of meeting** – 6.25pm

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The Guest Speaker after the meeting was scheduled to be David Rees to talk about Butterflies of the ACT Region and the Arboretum. Due to technical difficulties, his talk was postponed to another date.