



CONFIRMED MINUTES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 14 May 2024 at 5.30pm

held in the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion, National Arboretum Canberra

1. Welcome

The Chair, Mike Woolley, welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Attendance and Apologies

Attendance – Mike Woolley (Chair), Malise Arnstein, Margie Bourke, Max Bourke AM, Ian Chambers, Sandra Corrigan, Del Da Costa, Alan Doolan, Jocelyn Fitzhardinge, Fran Hinton, Roger Hnatiuk, Cathy Ikin, Stuart Jeffress (NAC), Damien Keddie, Trish Keller OAM, Yvonne Kilgour, Naomi Landau, Barry Langshaw, Chris Langshaw, Wendy Launder, Mark Lodder, Colette Mackay OAM, Sharon McAuliffe, Ange McNeilly, Joanne Maples, Hugh Milloy, Jan Morgan, Anne O'Shaughnessy, Rosy Pate, Nicole Pietrucha, Marelle Rawson, Rob Rawson, Allan Read, Maureen Read, Lyn Rees, Sue Sheridan, David Shorthouse, Lainie Shorthouse, Jon Stanhope AO, Helen Stevens, Alison Stewart (NAC), Cecily Sutton, Carolyn Thomas, Shirley Wilton, Vicki Woolley.
[45 attendees]

Apologies – Christine Brill, David Denham, Maggie Hawes, Helen Hemphill, John Mackay AO, Linda Muldoon, Susan Parsons,

3. Acceptance of Minutes of 2023 AGM and Matters Arising

Roger Hnatiuk moved and Trish Keller OAM seconded that the minutes of the 9 May 2023 Annual General Meeting be accepted without amendment. Carried.

There were no matters arising.

4. Treasurer's Report

The 2023 audited financial statements, which incorporated the National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust Fund, were made available at the meeting and on the Friends website.

As at 31 December 2023, the Friends had a **balance** of \$104,176 in funds at the bank. This comprised \$22,407 in the working account; \$20,204 in the Friends Savings account; \$41,564 in the first term deposit; and \$20,000 in the second term deposit.

The National Arboretum Canberra **Trust** held \$165,044 of which \$60,073 was held in the Trust general transaction account and \$44,971 in the first term deposit; and \$60,000 in a second term deposit.

The Friends' total **income** for the year was \$52,100, with the majority coming from Market Stalls (\$13,601); Wollemi sales (\$13,185) Memberships (\$17,335); Income from sales of Calendars and The Arboretum Book (\$5,562).

Total donations to our National Arboretum Canberra Public DGR2 **Trust** Fund amounted to \$79,981 with \$60,000 coming from seat donations; \$17,431 from General Donations and Interest; and \$2,550 as Donations for Forest 20, Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park.

Total operating **expenditure** for the Friends came to \$51,038. This included donations to the National Arboretum Canberra for the Ngala tourist bus lease (\$10,885); the Arboretum Story Project (\$20,348); Market Stall Expenses (\$1,032); General Expenses (\$5,845); Bank and Accounting Fees (\$2,330); and Discovery Garden (\$250).

The National Arboretum Canberra **DGR2 Trust** fund made donations to the National Arboretum Canberra DGR1 Fund of \$70,312 for the provision of funds for the purchase and installation costs for seats and picnic settings. Total Trust expenditure including Bank and Accounting Fees amounted to \$71,407.

Summary – At the end of the 2023 financial year, the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra made an overall profit of \$1,062 while the National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust fund increased its funds by \$8,573.

In 2023 the Friends realised their project to chronicle the story of the National Arboretum Canberra from 2003 which was ready for launch during the 10th Anniversary celebrations of the National Arboretum in 2023. Total expenditure for this project in 2023 was \$25,839. The final total will be \$32,980 which is slightly over the initial budget of \$30,000

The Friends also continued their commitment to fund the 5-year lease of the Ngala bus at a cost of \$10,885 per year; and funds were provided by the Trust to fund the cost of Bench Seats and Picnic Settings under the Seat Sponsorship Program.

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.

In conclusion, at the end of 2023 the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra continue to maintain a healthy financial position with a total equity of \$116,251. The National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust, for which the Friends are the Trustees, also continues to maintain a healthy financial position with an overall equity of \$166,199. With their ongoing major projects now having been mostly finalised, the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra are exploring future opportunities to support the National Arboretum Canberra.

Fran Hinton moved and Marelle Rawson seconded that the 2023 Financial Statements for the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc, incorporating the National Arboretum Canberra Public Trust Fund, be accepted. Carried.

Lyn Rees moved and Nicole Pietrucha seconded that Hardwickes be appointed auditor for 2024. Carried.

5. Chair's Report

Mike Woolley, as Chair of the Friends at the 2024 Annual General Meeting, offered his first Chair's Report. The full report appears as an appendix to these minutes.

Fran Hinton moved and Mike Woolley seconded that the Chair's Report be accepted. Carried.

6. Celebrating Success

Mike Woolley highlighted the *What We've Achieved!* document, available to attendees, which itemises the significant financial and volunteer contributions made by the Friends in recent times. It's an impressive document, he summarised. These achievements appear at Appendix 2 at the end of these minutes.

7. Approval of revised Friends Constitution

Mike introduced the proposed amended Friends Constitution. Consistent with good practice for associations, Council has reviewed the Friends' constitution, last amended in May 2017, to ensure that it is up-to-date and fit for purpose. In undertaking this review, Council has taken into account the amended ACT Government Model Rules for Incorporated Associations, which was released recently following a period of consultation.

The main changes are as follows:

- Clearer provisions for disciplinary procedures which better reflect principles of natural justice;
- Updated provisions to provide for communication by email and virtual attendance at meetings; and
- Clearer descriptions of the role of committee members.

Max Bourke AM moved and Wendy Launder seconded that the Constitution of the Friends of the National Arboretum Inc be amended as set out in the proposed May 2024 amended Constitution. The motion was carried unanimously by show of hands.

8. Activity Reports

Stuart Jeffress, Acting Executive Branch Manager of the National Arboretum Canberra and Stromlo Forest Park introduced himself. He immediately recognised the Friends and volunteers for all that they do, and he paid particular tribute to the Friends documentary video. Stuart's background is ACT Parks with a recent role in Heritage. He indicated the themes he has been hearing as he consults around the site are that there is a great team of staff, and similar great teams of volunteers. He will be looking to improve education and research areas of work, and take the guides forwards. Stuart will be in this acting role for at least three months.

Jon Stanhope AO asked whether the celebrity tree plantings would continue and Stuart affirmed this would be the case.

Alison Stewart then introduced herself as Acting Senior Director, Community Engagement and Events Management. Alison commended the Activity Reports, saying they are an excellent summary of the many activities that occur at the Arboretum – there's a lot going on. Management knows it is blessed to have such an active and diverse volunteer base. Trish Keller OAM was also acknowledged for her work as Sponsorship and Donations Manager.

The Activity Reports, comprising reports about Guides, Working Bees, Harvest Group & Discovery Kitchen Garden, Wollemi biodiversity research, Frogwatch, Warm Trees 2023, National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia, STEP and Sponsorship and Donations, can all be found as a separate collated document on the Friends website.

9. Election of Office Bearers

Rob Rawson acted as Returning Officer. He declared six positions vacant: Deputy Chair, Treasurer, Publications Officer, National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia representative and two Ordinary Members.

Position	Incumbent	Nomination to date
Chair	Mike Woolley	
Deputy Chair		Fran Hinton
Treasurer		Lynley Rees
Secretary	Del Da Costa	
Publications Editor		Nicole Pietrucha
Social Media Manager	<i>vacant</i>	
STEP Member	Hugh Milloy	
National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia representative	Mike Woolley (resigned)	Sandra Corrigan
Ordinary Members (up to 5 Members)	Ian Chambers Maggie Hawes Barry Langshaw	Mark Lodder Marelle Rawson
Donations and Sponsorships Manager (not a Council position)	Trish Keller OAM	

From nominations received, the following were elected to Council:

Fran Hinton (Deputy Chair), Lynley Rees (Treasurer), Nicole Pietrucha (Publications Editor), Sandra Corrigan (NBPCA representative), Mark Lodder and Marelle Rawson (Ordinary Members).

Del Da Costa continues as Public Officer; and Spero Cassidy as Website Manager. Del, Lyn and Mike thanked Spero for his considerable assistance this year in our new website management of Pictal.

Rob Rawson then moved and Max Bourke seconded all nominations which were unanimously elected to Council for a period of two years. If needed, Council can co-opt other Members.

There was no one stepping down from Council which is testament to the enjoyment Councillors get from leading the Friends.

10. **Awarding of Life Memberships**

There were no Life Memberships awarded this year.

11. **Any Other Business**

A member of the audience thanked the meeting organisers for hard copies of the documents, especially the pie charts found in the Treasurer's Report.

12. **Close of meeting**

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.

Mike thanked everyone for coming to this meeting, and welcomed everyone to stay and hear our Guest Speaker, Prof Peter Kanowski, for his presentation entitled 'Reviving the arboretum dream: the making of the National Arboretum Canberra'.

APPENDIX 1

CHAIR'S REPORT TO FRIENDS' AGM, 14 May 2024

Chair's AGM Report Notes – 2024

1. **Many thanks are due** – In opening, I'd like to thank Council who consider, discuss and help decide what we do and how we do it. Special thanks to
 - a. Lyn Rees, our Treasurer and website go-to person - which is where I insert an advertisement for members who would be able to help in either of the Treasurer or Website management roles. Get in touch to find out more.
 - b. Del Da Costa, our secretary who, as in many organisations, is the glue that keeps things all together.
 - c. Nicole Pietrucha for producing our quarterly newsletter.
 - d. Anne Hodgkin (parking passes) and
 - e. Sue Sheridan (memberships) and
 - f. the Harvest and Kitchen Garden Groups who provide significant funds to the Friends through their efforts year-round and
 - g. Warm Trees team and crafty people led by Jan Morgan and
 - h. the Arboretum team and
 - i. Ginger Group and The Curatoreum who sponsor us through their discounts and
 - j. Spero Cassidy for our website support and
 - k. all the other members that help the Friends do what we do and
 - l. all the others that volunteer at the Arboretum.
2. **Arboretum Story update**
 - a. Perry Lethlean now woven in and released through NAC and Friends website.
 - b. Also have the transcripts cleaned up for lodging with ACT Heritage Library along with the documentary.
 - c. We are trialling a weekly viewing period in the Bugang room – continuous loop with a couple of Friends to be hosts– aiming now at the 4 Sundays in July – to gauge the public interest and value of doing this on a more consistent basis.
3. **Projects in the pipeline**
 - a. Nature Playgroup programme
 - b. Friends picnic setting – although a site is yet to be finalised
 - c. To have Friends art installation on the Art Trail
 - d. Wide Brown Land presentation tidy-up
 - e. Arboretum Book will need a re-print, probably sometime next year, and so we need to evaluate the degree of update we might tackle.
 - f. Ngala bus lease expires mid next year.
 - g. Support research projects.
 - h. Other community engagement activities.
4. **Merchandise**
 - a. 500 wattle seed packs which has realised a profit of about \$2000 and we will re-run that project.
 - b. Calendars this year produced a profit of about \$2,200.
 - c. Wollemi propagation Project profit \$12,000
 - d. Pop-up Wollemi sales – ex R Hnatiuk morphology research - \$2,500 with possible small numbers later as the research progresses.

5. **Join us!** Lastly, don't forget to encourage friends and family – and complete strangers - to join the Friends, if not for the sheer joy of being a practical supporter of the Arboretum, but for the access to an **annual parking pass** and discounts at The Curatoreum and the Arboretum café and the regular communication about the Friends and Arboretum.

Mike Woolley
Chair
Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc
14 May 2024

Celebrating Success

WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED: HOW THE FRIENDS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA

❖ Financial contribution

The Friends have funded:

- The first Forest Shelter on the Arboretum site (March 2022)
- 5-year leasing of the Ngala Tour bus (late 2019)
- The Friends Garden atop Dairy Farmers Hill (2018)
- Zigzag Garden No 19, the Saltbush Garden (2018)
- The Arboretum Story – a 30-minute documentary on the development of the Arboretum from 2003 – 2023 (2023)
- Retrofitting a vehicle trailer for Working Bees' use (2020)
- Provision of guide uniforms and volunteer hi-vis vests
- Funding resources such as Nature Play at the Arboretum (playgroup for pre-schoolers) (2024)
- Picnic table setting (2024)
- A number of Arboretum community engagement activities
- Centenary Gift of a Fire Trailer - can be used for watering

Financial contributions to the National Arboretum via the Friends have been made possible from a variety of sources, including:

- Wollemi Pine Propagation Project – which has seen the growth from seed (each individually provenanced from the Wollemi Pine Forest) of over 130 Wollemi Pines
- Regular Harvest Group Market Stalls, where sales of chutneys, jams etc are made by volunteers from produce from the Discovery Garden and forests
- Sales of The Arboretum Book – and the revised edition published in 2022 – which was produced and created by members of the Friends
- Sales of annual calendars, with images captured from around the Arboretum throughout the year
- Sales of Golden Wattle Seed packets, with seed sourced from the Golden Wattle Garden near the Cork oak car park.
- Fundraising events such as the 2021 Friends' Dinner to help fund the Friends Forest Shelter
- And most importantly, membership fees

❖ Volunteer effort

Many Friends are regular volunteers in a range of Arboretum activities, such as:

- National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia – greeting visitors and assisting in the maintenance of the Collection
- Working Bees – general maintenance of the forests led by the NAC horticultural team
- General guiding – around the Village Centre and into the Forests and Gardens beyond
- Harvest Group – gardening, harvesting, cooking and preserving produce from the Forests
- STEP (Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park) – maintaining Forest 20

- Warm Trees – knitting and crocheting to add winter colour to Arboretum
- Ngala Tour Bus drivers and guides – describing Arboretum forests and features to passengers
- Citizen Science projects – eg frog watch and Wollemi seed collection
- School holiday programs – assisting NAC staff in their delivery
- Administration of the Arboretum parking pass system
- Management of the Friends organisation in accordance with ACT legislative requirements
- Provision of an online environment including a website, social media, newsletters, email updates
