



NEWSLETTER Issue 49 December

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year



Reminder: Please join us for the End of year celebration for Volunteers and Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra, at the Village Centre, 6pm to 8pm on Monday 14 December 2020. Light supper and refreshments will be provided.

With guest speakers: ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA and Penny Spoelder, senior associate - sustainable recreation and conservation. Including Friends Volunteer of the Year Award and the presentation of the Jake Keller Scholarship.

RSVP arboretum@act.gov.au by 7 December 2020. This event has limited capacity and the RSVP list will close once at capacity. **Please RSVP asap to ensure your attendance.**

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Chair's Report

Dear Friends

As this 'annus horribilis' draws to a close, I would like to thank you, the Friends' membership, for your understanding and forbearance as we have been unable to deliver all our usual activities with postponements and cancellations. The pandemic has challenged us all, but we have remained COVID-free.

However, there has been much work going on behind the scenes and one of the highlights for the Friends, despite the restrictions, is the success of the Friends sponsored bus. The Ngala bus is parked at the top of the carpark every day. The wrapping logo is from an artwork created by Indigenous artist Krystal Hirst and most eye-catching. Ngala bus tours have been running Wednesday to Sunday every week at 1.30pm. A huge thankyou to all who offer their support to make this possible. If you are interested in either delivering tours or driving the bus, please let Cally Earnshaw, our Community Engagement Officer, know, as it would be great to increase the pool of talented drivers and guides.

The most recent Discovery Kitchen Garden Harvest Market Day on 21 November yielded a plethora of beautifully presented items. The proceeds raised go to the Friends to be used in projects around the Arboretum. Congratulations to Colette Mackay OAM and her Harvest Group team for implementing this highly successful Friends activity again. Did you see the article by Tracey Bool in the latest Canberra Weekly entitled 'More than you imagine at the National Arboretum'?

Your Friends' Council always has a full meeting agenda and much is accomplished. I'd like to pay tribute to all Council members for their significant contributions. The various representatives from STEP, Bonsai, Harvest Group, Guides, Volunteers and the Wollemi Pine Propagation Project present a report each meeting. Thanks especially to our new Newsletter Editor, Nicole Pietrucha, for taking up this new challenge! I'm sure you will like her first issue!

At the October Council meeting, there was much discussion – and subsequent agreement –on the Rationale for Friends' Sponsorship of a Gazebo at the Arboretum. There will be, in the years to come, 12 of these gazebos built in prime locations around the forests. While we recognise that the installation of this first Gazebo is an expensive proposition, the money is there in our accounts, and Friends' funds are for spending on Arboretum beautification projects. Full payment will take place over 2 years and a projected draft budget has been presented by the Treasurer.

Since the Friends' priority purpose is to support the development of the Arboretum and to facilitate community use, we vowed to proceed. In partnership with the NAC, an MOU has been developed and this document will be signed at the end-of-year celebration for Friends and Volunteers on Monday 14 December in the Village Centre by Scott Saddler AM, Executive Branch Manager, NAC and Stromlo Forest Park Branch and yours truly. Where will the Friends Gazebo be and what will it be like I hear you asking! It will be a shelter-type structure (designed by local architects and built by local ACT labour) located above the top path in the allee between the Smoke Bush and the Moroccan Cypress (Forests 49 and 40) set back and nestled into the landscape. An artist's impression of the gazebo is below.



The multi-purpose shelter, aesthetically and environmentally appropriate to fit within the existing landscape, will provide sun and rain protection, onsite interpretation for visitors and seating suitable for educational, corporate and tourist groups. This location will offer the best outlook of iconic views such as Lake Burley Griffin, Parliament House, Government House and the Captain Cook Water Jet. This will be the largest project yet that the Friends will have supported. I will let you know when the first sod turning ceremony will occur!

Under the watchful eye of previous Friends Chair, Jocelyn Plovits, the next version of The Arboretum Book is progressing to a very strict timeline. Plans are on track for a launch in October and Christmas sales next year, 2021! Thanks to Jocelyn and her team of volunteer helpers for the considerable amount of work that they are doing ... content checking, amending, new content gathering etc, etc.

I do hope to see you all at the previously mentioned End-of-Year Ceremony for Friends and Volunteers on Monday 14 December. As well as the networking, there will be two Friends annual highlights - the presentation of the Jake Keller Scholarship and the awarding of the Friends Volunteer of the Year Award. Included in the evening will be a Silent Auction. Items include vouchers from Ginger Catering and The Curatoreum.

Condolences are extended again to former Council Member and Newsletter Editor, Mary Arnold's family. The Celebration Picnic in the Cork Oak Forest on 29 November (see below) was a touching occasion which reiterated just what a splendid Friend Mary was and the huge contribution she made to the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra in a variety of ways.

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Enjoy the upcoming festive season; stay safe and I'll see you at the Arboretum.

Trish Keller OAM
Chair

November 2020 Tree Dedication

The 5th of November was indeed a day to remember at the Arboretum - the day when Tom Calma AO, human rights and social justice advocate and Chancellor of the University of Canberra planted a hoop pine. Actually, it was so wet and rainy that the event was moved indoors and we can say we saw a tree already planted in the Central Valley!



Scott Saddler AO, as MC for the event, introduced Auntie Violet to give the Acknowledgement of Country. This she did, while also paying tribute to Professor Calma for his work on tackling Indigenous smoking which, for her, was personally successful. Chief Minister Andrew Barr then gave a brief bio of Professor Calma, and in particular, paid tribute to his Social Justice Report (2005).

Professor Calma then spoke, sharing the tree dedication with his family. He reminded the audience that Hoop Pine trees were growing around Lake George about a million years ago. He and his family have also sponsored a Zigzag Garden (No 13 - Conebush, Leucadendron 'Safari Sunset') and, finally, Tom acknowledged that his is a family with cherished members in two territories (NT and ACT) both close to his heart.

The Hoop Pine dedicated by
Prof Calma framing the
Margaret Whitlam Pavilion



Help record the Arboretum's history

The Friends of the Arboretum (Friends) are planning to embark on a project that will capture the 'told' and 'untold' history of the National Arboretum Canberra (NAC). It is proposed that the history be compiled through interviews with the players in government and the private sector who were involved in the early planning and decision-making that led to the opening of the NAC in February 2013. Those who have further developed the NAC since its opening would also be included. To complement the oral history, media accounts of the NAC project, will help provide details of local community engagement and involvement. The Friends are seeking expressions of interest from those amongst our membership who have the skills and time to carry out the required interviews and research. This would not need to be one person – perhaps a small team. Equally, members may know of others who would meet the broad criteria for such a project who would be interested in helping the Friends. There may also be roles in a project team for transcription of the interviews and the coordination of the accumulated material into a product that could be made available as a 'gift' to the Arboretum and the Canberra community. The Friends' executive and committee, the Council, would oversee the project. Email contact@arboretumcanberra.org.au if you would like to discuss being involved in this important historical project.

Keeping in STEP

It was with much relief that STEP volunteers greeted the rain. We had done considerable planting and the task of watering by hand becomes a difficult and time-consuming task. As usually happens, it never rains but pours and we now find a small stream running steadily through the Central Garden and lots of beds with sodden and oozing water. The old maxim of “be careful what you wish for” comes to mind.

The completion of the new carpark has given us the impetus to create a new entry point to STEP. The concrete path from the Visitor Centre gives easy access for visitors. We have moved the sign from the She-oak to this new location, created a crushed granite path and a visitor assembly area with rock seating and have completed extensive paper, mulching and planting. The visual effect is very pleasing but we have some water runoff and reticulation issues to address. Thanks to Bill Handke for his engineering expertise in seeing this task to completion.





On October 11, we had a visit from the Friends of Mount Painter. They were interested to see what species thrived at Forest 20 as possible plantings for the area they maintain. Sarah Hnatiuk organized this visit and the members indicated they found it a very useful exercise. Thanks to David Shorthouse, Robyn Black, Jennie Widdowson and Jane Cottee for acting as guides for the group.

Considerable work has also been done around the ephemeral wetland. A gravel stream line with a rocky crossing diverts water from the Boundary road into the wetland and rock gardens with new planting have added considerable interest to this part of Forest 20.

On Sunday 8 November the National Parks Association visited. Their visit was to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of this group.

The NAC has provided signage to inform cyclists not to ride though Forest 20. They have made an alternative route which takes cyclists along the allee between Forest 20 and the Mesa Oaks, thence to the Boundary Road. We are hopeful that this will be the route of choice.

Finally, STEP's AGM was held on Thursday 26 November.

Regards to you all and best wishes for 2021.

Judy Smith
(President, STEP)

Chat with Cally

Dear Friends

With restrictions easing and interstate travel once again possible, we seem to be hurtling towards the end of a very unusual year.

The Village Centre and the Arboretum continue to be a very busy spot and our team of Volunteer Guides provides an invaluable service greeting and providing tours and walks to visitors, many of whom are discovering the Arboretum for the first time.

We have a range of guided experiences available courtesy of our wonderful Guides, including:

Welcome walks: Free introductory walk in and around the Village Centre

10.00-10.20am: Arboretum views

11.00-11.20am: Discovery Garden

12.00-12.20pm: Gallery of Gardens

Forest Walks: A one hour walk through the forests with a knowledgeable Guide – \$5 adults, children over 12 free, bookings via Sticky Tickets.

Spring times: Sundays and Mondays 11am, Saturdays at 2pm

Summer times: Saturday, Sunday and Mondays at 9.30am

Long Forest Walks: A themed long stroll through some of the forests that are just a little further afield from the Village Centre. \$5 adults, children over 12 free, bookings via Sticky Tickets.



Join the long forest walk on 6 December and explore the six members of the Araucariaceae family growing at the Arboretum and their role in human history and culture. It is a tale containing stories of myth, reverence, curiosity, celebration, ruthless exploitation and the finding of a long-lost relative!

https://www.stickytickets.com.au/gss1m/kauris_pines_and_wollemis_ancient_trees_in_a_modern_world.aspx

Ngala Tours: Our new tourist bus, generously sponsored by the Friends, operates Wednesday to Sunday at 1.30pm each day. Prices are from \$5 per person with group tickets for family groups. Bookings are available through Sticky Tickets or our friendly staff in the Village Centre can take bookings at the information desk.

We do have spaces in the Ngala team for both Drivers and Guides – becoming a driver requires a health check and a public bus drivers' licence which we can help you obtain. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact me via email: cally.earnshaw@act.gov.au



Guides training: We are planning to hold training workshops for new Guides to join the team – if you love talking to people and interested in learning more about the Arboretum and sharing it with visitors, please get in touch with me via my email (as per above).

New Gardens: On Tuesday 24 November, two new gardens in Central Valley were launched. The gardens were made possible through the generous support of the 2020 Ambassador Program donors. The two new gardens are located in Garden 20 with the mass planting of Creeping Thyme, and also Garden 18 with the mass planting of Blue Moon. If you are interested in joining or learning more about the National Arboretum Canberra Ambassador Program please email Christine.callen@act.gov.au

ACT Government funding: The Arboretum has received economic stimulus funding to improve accessibility across the site, as announced during the ACT Election. Himalayan Cedars and Central Valley paths will receive upgrades to be wheelchair accessible and sections of Boundary Road will be sealed. The works will be completed by the end of this financial year.



Paraná Pines at the Arboretum

Arboretum Notes from Roger Hnatiuk, November 2020.

Forest 23 has a large population of *Araucaria angustifolia*, the Paraná pine from Brazil. Most of the trees were planted in late 2011 and early 2012. A small number of trees have been replanted in recent years to complete the pattern. The trees are growing well and have reached 3-5 m. They have begun to provide an indication of how impressive they will be at the Main Entrance, once they begin to take on their iconic mature shape.

This species is considered critically endangered in the wild, due to extensive clearing of forested areas for agriculture in south-eastern Brazil and neighbouring Argentina. Although logging is now prohibited by law, cutting of the trees for timber and land clearance apparently still continues. The large seeds are a favoured food.

Generally, trees can start producing cones at about 12-15 years of age. They take 20 – 22 months from pollination to ripe seeds, according to the *Handbook of the World's Conifers*, by A Farjon. The first female cones were seen in 2019 and ripened in 2020.

A survey of the Forest in 2019 discovered three trees with female cones, and six male trees-see **Table 1**. A repeat survey in October 2020 found 10 female trees, bearing 61 cones, and 31 male trees, bearing 662 cones. Maps of these findings are presented in 4 and 5. Just under 14% of the trees have matured to cone-bearing.

Table 1. *Counts of numbers of male and female trees and cones, 2019 and 2020.*

	2019	2020
# Female trees	3	10
# Female cones	20	61
# Male trees	6	31
# Male cones	8	662

At this early stage in the maturing of the trees, the patterning of the trees that are bearing cones cannot be related to known environmental factors in Forest 23. You can see, in the maps, that the male cones occurred in three of the four areas that are defined by the roads, in 2019, but by 2020, they occurred in all four areas. The site rises from low in the south to high in the north, but there does not appear to be any relationship with this topographic feature. The female trees occurred in the two lower areas in both recording periods. With such low numbers, this 'low elevation' location is probably only due to chance. The trees are wind-pollinated, thus perhaps accounting for the significantly larger number of male trees and cones compared with the female trees and cones, but we should see how things develop as the whole forest matures.

It has been possible to count each cone on each tree at each of the recording times. However, this will not be as easy as the trees grow taller. The cones are typically produced in the upper crowns, though a small number may occur lower down. As the trees increase in height, it will become difficult or impossible to do these counts from the ground. Counting, even now, is challenging. The crowns vary in the density of the leaves. In some you can easily see 'through' the crown, whereas in others, the leaves and branches are so dense that it is difficult to impossible to see readily into the crowns. The male cones are typically displayed on the outer parts of the branches (better access to wind to pick up the pollen) .



Figure 1: Male Araucaria angustifolia cones, Oct 2020

The female cones are produced at the ends of small side branches near the tops of the trees, where they are displayed like short round decorations pointing upwards to the sky.



Figure 2: Female Araucaria angustifolia cones ready for pollinating



As they mature, the female cones become located ‘within’ the canopy as the branches around them grow longer. When mature, the cones disintegrate, scattering the bracts with seeds attached. As these are quite heavy, they are not carried far and mostly fall onto the branches beneath them and thence to the ground below. They are thus ‘safe’ to be under when the seeds are shed, unlike their Australian cousins, the bunyas. Their huge cones fall intact and could inflict quite an injury to an unsuspecting walker.

Figure 3: Nearly mature female cone of Araucaria angustifolia, now “within” canopy.

As an aside, a quick search of the bunyas, in Forest 71 found no new male or female cones. Last year, four trees were found with female cones, though no male cones were seen. The female cones produced seeds, but it appears that these were not fertile.



Figure 4. Census of tree bearing cones, Dec 2019.

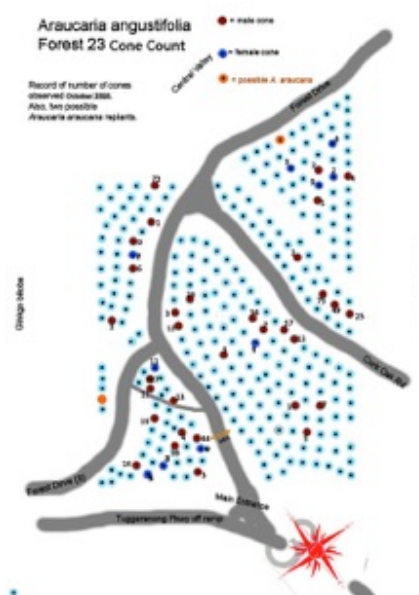


Figure 5. .Census of tree bearing cones, Oct 2020

Harvest Group and Discovery Kitchen Garden Update



La Niña weather pattern predicted this year typically means an increase in rainfall across much of Australia; cooler daytime temperatures south of the tropics; warmer overnight temperatures in the north; a shift in temperature extremes and decreased risk of frost. This is great news for Aussie gardeners who have been dealing with adverse weather conditions for some time. The additional rain will also accelerate the regeneration of burnt out areas due to bushfires.

The effects of this weather pattern is obvious to see in the greening of the landscape and abundant plant growth, including the weeds! Gardeners can breathe a sigh of relief but not too deeply, as the pollen count this year is very high!

Due to Covid 19, the Harvest Group has held only two market stalls this year, one at the end of October and the other just three weeks later, on Saturday 21 November. Both days were a resounding success with total takings of over \$4,000. The Canberra public, as well as people from NSW, Queensland and Tasmania who were undoubtedly happy to be travelling again, demonstrated their support for the National Arboretum Canberra by attending and buying generously. The small amount of stock remaining will be offered for sale at the Friends and volunteers End-Of-Year celebration to be held at the Arboretum on Monday, 14 December 2020.

The market stalls were successfully advertised several times in The Canberra Times newspaper and on radio, thanks to Colette, as well as in an article on the Discovery



Kitchen Garden written by Tracey Bool which appeared in the Canberra Weekly Magazine on 19 November and which created a high demand for Ladybird Poppy. These poppies had been planted to flower in time for Remembrance Day and seedlings sold out at the first market stall. However, these plants with such striking flowers and seeds will definitely be available for sale again next year.



Sincere thanks to the wonderful Arboretum staff for their assistance in setting up for the market stalls and to the dedicated Harvest Group Volunteers who grow, maintain, harvest, process and sell produce from the Arboretum's gardens and forests to raise funds. Their ongoing commitment is of immense value to both the Friends and the Arboretum. Photo below by Jennifer Griffiths

Above photos by Michelle McMahon



With all the rain during the past few months, snail and slug patrols have been an essential task in the garden as well as trying to contain the rampant growth of nasturtium, alyssum and Warrigal greens spilling over the sides. The globe artichoke has grown so tall that photographing the bud and flower is a difficult feat! Trolley-loads of spent vegetation of borage, cornflower, sweet pea, pea and broad bean were removed and composted to make space for planting summer vegetable and flower seedlings.



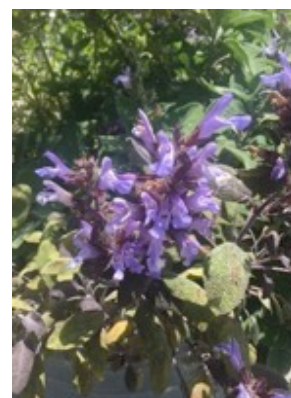
Incidentally, a bumper crop of artichoke and broad beans from my community plot (see photo right) has produced some interesting information when searching the internet for more recipes. Artichokes are wonderful plants packed with antioxidants and are a good source of folate, dietary fibre, and vitamins C and K. The water that artichokes are cooked in can be consumed as a healthful tea. So it is both a beautiful plant and good for health!

Also in the garden, a variety of tomatoes including Cherry Double Truss, Mini Roma, Apollo, Mortgage Lifter, Grosse Lisse, Ox Heart and Honey Drop have been planted with companion herbs such as basil and parsley (flat-leaf and curly) and flowers of French marigolds and calendula for natural pest control. Jack-Be-Little miniature pumpkins have been planted to climb up the posts of the metal umbrellas. Chillies, capsicums and a variety of eggplants including Bonica, Listada de Gandia and mini Striped Lebanese have also been planted. Eggplant chutney and tomato relish are two very popular products sold at market stalls along with basil pesto.



Growing in the garden currently alongside the already mentioned vegetables, flowers and herbs are French sorrel, scarlet runner beans, fennel, viola, strawberry (much to the delight of children), chives and climbing spinach. Compost from onsite has been used to top up the garden and mulching will be done at the beginning of summer. The three finger limes in the Daleks have been covered in a profusion of blossoms which hopefully will set some fruit and the wonderful purple spikes of sage have almost finished flowering and will need to be cut back. The pomegranate, which bore only one fruit last year, has many beautiful deep orange flowers and hopefully will bear more fruit this year as is hoped for the strawberry crowns planted underneath. Happy gardening and hope to see you at the Arboretum.

Article and photos by Ange McNeilly



A Story from the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA)

In 2020 the Canberra Bonsai Society (CBS) published their first 45 years in a limited-edition book titled *A History of Canberra Bonsai Society*. In covering the people and stories behind the society, the important contribution that some of its members provided to the establishment of the NBPCA was recorded. The history details some trees that have been accepted as donations from CBS members.

One such donation was made by the inaugural NBPCA curator, Grant Bowie. The following is an extract from *A History of Canberra Bonsai Society* which describes one of the most recognised bonsai in the collection. It is reprinted below with the permission of the CBS and Grant.

Montezuma bald cypress (*Taxodium mucronatum*) Grant Bowie

The trees in this group were grown from seed collected at the Sydney Botanic Gardens as early as 1974 – before the existence of the CBS. Grant describes the background to the trees in the group and its development below.



The *Taxodium mucronatum* group has one major tree and numerous others of varying size. All the trees, except for the largest tree, are the same age. The size variation is the result of a mix of pot and field growing culture. The major tree was started from seed collected by Tom Coogan in 1974 and grown on for a few years by Max Candy. The tree changed hands and was in the collection of Edna Ellison when she died in 1988. Her trees were auctioned and I purchased the tree and grew it on for many years as a single tree.

Meanwhile, in autumn 1993, I collected more seed from the same *Taxodium mucronatum* in the Sydney Botanical gardens. I picked up seed in cones on the ground that the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos had conveniently separated from high up in the tree to fall to the ground where they harvested the cones for seed to eat. My wife and I got a few angry stares from the cockatoos on the ground as we were stealing their food; but we persevered and got a good haul of plump cones. We took the cones home, tidied them up by removing any attached foliage and discarding any thoroughly chewed cones, then placed the cones in paper bags (to catch any seed fall) and allowed them to dry for a few weeks. The heat of autumn dried out the cones and forced them to open and shed their seed. The collected seed was sown in May or June 1993 into shallow seedling trays and germinated in the spring. The seedlings were separated, root trimmed and put into 100mm pots and moved into bigger pots over the following years. A large number of trees were also planted into the ground in mounded rows that were irrigated with water from our large dam where we lived on the NSW Southern Highlands.

I was asked to do a demonstration for the Sakura Bonsai Studio at Terrey Hills at their annual show some time in the early 2000s, so I chose to dig and pot up some of the field grown trees in advance of the demo and picked out some of the previously potted trees as well as subordinate trees. The field grown trees had grown very well after a few years in the ground and were 100mm or so in girth at their base. I put together a group of 7 trees on the day of the demonstration and maintained it till 2004 when I decided to expand it and include the purchased larger single tree taxodium. I bought a very large, shallow, unglazed Chinese pot from a well-known Sydney importer of Chinese pots and enlisted the help of Chris Allnutt, a Sydney Bonsai enthusiast, to assemble the new group. The new group did well and thrived. In 2007 I donated it to the NBPCA. It has been re-potted at the NBPCA a few times since but has never been pulled apart or rearranged. There has been ongoing training of the branches with wire and trimming and today it stands proudly and in very good health at the entry to the collection.

Thank you to all our Contributors:

Many thanks to the people who have contributed articles and photos for this and previous issues of the Newsletter, and given generously of your time to write, read and proofread. I could not do it without your help. If you have ideas for articles, or items that might be of interest to the Friends such as stories or photos from the Arboretum or further afield, please contact me Nicole Pietrucha on: pietruchanaci@gmail.com

And thanks to our sponsors whom we value:



Friends of NAC Newsletter



December 2020



CanberraNet



ELECT PRINTING



If you would like to join the Friends – or give a gift of a Friends’ membership to someone special – go to:

<https://www.arboretumcanberra.org.au/support-us/membership>

OR Email your details to: contact@arboretumcanberra.org.au and pay by funds transfer or cheque

OR Complete the Application Form (see last page) and mail it to: The Secretary, Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra, PO Box 48, Campbell, ACT 2612.

Note: An Individual Member is entitled to apply for one Parking Pass at the Friends’ rate and a Household Member is entitled to apply for two Parking Passes at the Friends’ rate.

Don’t miss out on your 2021 Calendar

ONLY \$15 (add \$3 for postage within Australia) and selling fast!

Available from **The Curatoreum** in the Village Centre or order through the **Friends on line shop**.



How to join the Friends

Visit arboretumcanberra.org.au to join online or to find out more about the benefits of being a member

OR

Email your details to: contact@arboretumcanberra.org.au and pay by funds transfer or cheque

OR

Complete the Application Form and mail it to:

The Secretary, Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra,
PO Box 48, Campbell, ACT 2612, and pay by funds transfer or cheque.

☐ **Bank details for funds transfer:**
Westpac, Petrie Plaza, Canberra, ACT: BSB 032 719.
Account: 375379 – please include surname in description.

☐ **Cheques payable to:** Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.

Membership type	1 year	2 years
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$45	\$80
<input type="checkbox"/> Household	\$55	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Concession *	\$25	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Club/Association **	\$100	\$180
<input type="checkbox"/> Business **	\$500	\$900

* Pensioners, health card holders & students

** See website for details

Membership Application Form

Membership type:

Title: First name:

Last name:

OR

Club/Association/Business name:

Address:

State: P/code:

Email address for newsletter and updates:

Phone: Mobile:

Number of parking passes:

Total amount payable (include membership/s and parking pass amounts): \$

Signature:

Date:

Parking Pass **1 year**
☐ Friends' Annual \$35 per vehicle
Parking Pass

For a parking pass, please include your vehicle's registration number.

Note: An Individual Member is entitled to apply for one Parking Pass at the Friends' rate and a Household Member is entitled to apply for two Parking Passes at the Friends' rate.

Parking passes are issued for one year from the date of purchase.