



DRAFT MINUTES

GENERAL MEETING

**Held on Tuesday 13 September 2022 at 5.30pm
in the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion, National Arboretum, Canberra**

1. **Welcome** – Trish Keller, OAM (Chair)

Trish welcomed everyone to the meeting and then introduced Scott Saddler AM, Executive Branch Manager, National Arboretum Canberra to make the Acknowledgement of Country.

2. **Arboretum Update** – Scott Saddler AM

Scott thanked the Friends and Jan Morgan in particular for Warm Trees this year with its connection with the Indigenous Marathon Foundation and local Ngunnawal Elders. He also thanked the Harvest Group for their generous donation of a Wollemi Pine and harvest produce hamper for the recent Forest Sculpture Gallery launch. Scott noted that 330kg of figs had been picked in the most recent season and at 6 jars of fig produce per kilo, that was almost 2,000 jars of produce available for sale at Market Stalls – quite an achievement!

Scott urged everyone to go and see the new sculptures: The Cloak in the Himalayan Cedars; and the Map of Molonglo soon to appear in the Pin Oak Forest.

Recently, Scott and the Chief Minister made a business trip to Singapore to sign a three-way MoU with Singapore and Wellington Botanic Gardens (New Zealand). The MoU also incorporates an element of staff exchange for professional development.

The Arboretum has just completed its Annual Report to June 2022, which notes that there were 16,539 volunteer hours tallied in this time which equates to 23 staff. Huge thanks are due to the Friends.

Scott also mentioned the following information:

- The Margaret Whitlam Pavilion (MWP) now has a defibrillator;
- There have been new plantings in the Camden White Gums and Snow Gums which has re-emphasised their forest pattern;
- In the past 20 months (Jan 2021-Aug 2022), two metres of rain has fallen which has hindered considerable work around the Arboretum although many forests have benefitted and grown;
- The Arboretum will host a 70s disco concert in November;
- There will be further replanting of trees to fill gaps in forests;
- The Gallery of Gardens will enjoy 'uplifts' – minor renovations;

- The Central Valley will have ag pipes installed on either side to allow rain to more easily run down to the dam.
- There were questions: why were there bags on the Strawberry Trees – for seed collection; what is on the Arboretum Master Plan – Scott spoke of tripling the size of the MWP kitchen to provide for a restaurant underneath; a glamping area for kids in the quarry; upmarket hotel-style accommodation; a second entry/exit – individual briefs are now being prepared for the Minister for funding. Strategically, it's important to future-proof the Arboretum.
- Visitors to the Arboretum pre-Covid totalled 800,000 and it is quite likely that we will reach one million by April next year. The parking areas have been expanded so that there are now 900 car parks.

Trish thanked Scott for his attendance and informative update.

3. **Attendance:** Cilla Chapman, M L Christenson (?), Glenn Cocking (Guest speaker), Del Da Costa (Secretary), Cally Earnshaw (NAC), Fran Hinton, Roger Hnatiuk, Cathy Ikin, Trish Keller OAM (Chair), Naomi Landau, Jan Morgan, Hugh Milloy, Nicole Pietrucha, Lyn Rees (Treasurer), Scott Saddler AM, Jennie Widdowson, Anthony Widdowson, Mike Woolley, Vicki Woolley [19].

Apologies: Christine Callen (NAC), Maggie Hawes, Helen Hemphill, Colette Mackay OAM, Ange McNeilly, Shirley Wilton.

4. **Minutes** of the last General Meeting held on 13 April 2021 were accepted without change (moved: Vicki Woolley; seconded Trish Keller OAM). Carried.

There were no **Matters Arising**.

5. **Chair's Report – Trish Keller OAM**

Trish highlighted the following items:

- Seat sponsorships – the inquiries keep coming and two have recently been paid; up to 10 others under consideration.
- Trish continues to drive the Ngala bus tours and thanked the guides for their informative commentary.
- In this the Queen's Platinum Jubilee year, we are awaiting the Governor-General to unveil the plaque in commemoration at a date of his choosing.
- Congratulations to the Arboretum staff on the launch of the Forest Sculpture Gallery. It was a good evening.
- The Arboretum History Project, under the auspices of SRH, is moving along and should be ready by mid-December. All ten proposed interviewees agreed to provide their oral history comments. It will be launched in conjunction with the Arboretum's 10th anniversary, in February. Trish gave a vote of thanks to Phil Morrall AO who provided good advice to us for this project.
- Colette Mackay OAM has resigned as chair of the Harvesting Group though she will see out the year.
- Succession planning – We are seeking a new Friends' Chair and Harvest Group Manager/Coordinator.
- Friends thank Jan Morgan for the wonderful success that Warm Trees was this year. We are pursuing South Africa as our diplomatic partner in 2023.
- Thanks to Mike Woolley, the 2023 Calendars are now on sale, ready for Floriade.
- And thanks again to Mike, and also Suzette Searle, for our latest Shop item of Golden Wattle Seed packets available for sale at The Curatoreum.

Trish closed her report by saying that the Friends Council is known for getting things down – there is a high level of cooperation and camaraderie. Why don't you join us!

6. Treasurer's Report

Lyn Rees, Treasurer, presented the Finance Report. Movement for the Friends' funds from 1 January – 31 August 2022 was negative \$13,376 resulting in a decrease to the Friends' funds to \$84,980.

The net cash movement for the Trust Fund for the same period was \$19,586 resulting in an increase of Trust funds held at the bank to \$137,113.

Friends' income for the period was \$46,007 less expenses of \$59,383 resulted in a loss of \$13,376. This loss was largely due to the payment of \$25,304 (for expenses related to the 2nd Edition of The Arboretum Book which is now available for sale); Gift to the Arboretum of \$11,500 and Ngala bus lease of \$8,164. Income for the Friends has been mainly due to Membership (\$16,190, Market Stall income (\$9,058), sales of Wollemi Pines (\$9,440), sales of the Book (\$9,353, and sales of Calendars (\$2,006).

Trust funds' increased income for the period (\$19,586) was due to money received for Seat Sponsorships less payment to the NAC for new seats for future sponsorship and the final payment for the Friends Forest Shelter of \$14,226.

Proposed and committed projects for future spending include future picnic settings and seats; balance of the 5-year annual lease of the Ngala bus; balance of funds needed for the 3-year Wollemi Propagation Project; and the Arboretum Oral History Project. This totals \$123,295 over the next three years.

Fran Hinton moved and Roger Hnatiuk seconded that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Carried.

7. Volunteers & Guides Update

Cally Earnshaw, Community Engagement Officer, thanked Friends for their help with Wattle Day celebrations. At a recent Volunteer Meeting, Jessica Spencer, Indigenous Education Officer and Ange McNeilly gave presentations on their role and the Wollemi Propagation Project respectively. The number of volunteer working hours is increasing rapidly, as is the number of visitors to the Arboretum.

8. Friends Reports

a. Bonsai Report

Mike reported that several of the black pines have recently been re-potted as spring is an optimal time to undertake this activity.

Two media related projects are concluding in time for the NBPCA to be showcased at the October World Bonsai Convention that is being held in Perth from 8 – 16 October this year – and virtually around the world! There will be an NBPCA coffee table book and a virtual (online) tour of the NBPCA (with 360-degree views of trees) both released to coincide with the convention – showcasing the NBPCA around the world.

Plans are also underway to feature an installation of the Canberra Art Biennial within the NBPCA – to accompany other installations at the Arboretum.

In March 2023, the centennial Bonsai Prize will be presented (awarded every 10 years).

b. STEP

Cathy Ikin reported on STEP developments. Forest 20 has re-opened to the public and it is good to see visitors wandering through again. A new drain has been constructed along the top boundary. Hopefully this will slow the streams of water

flowing onto the garden beds. Gravel paths have also been renewed in preparation for the re-opening. Several cross-paths in the Central Garden remain closed.

Considerable work has also been on-going around the (not so much) Ephemeral Wetland area. Drainage lines and rock crossings have been constructed and there had been a huge effort made to remove excess *Carex* and *Juncus* from the pond edges. It is also such a joy to hear the very musical frog chorus from the ponds.

Signage for the Grasses Gallery has finished the design stage and will be erected shortly, consistent with NAC standards.

c. Harvesting Group including Discovery Garden

To date there have been three Harvest Group market stalls held. Another market stall is scheduled for Saturday, 17 September and a further two may be held in the months of October and November. This will make 2022 one of the busiest and profitable years for our group. The bumper fig harvest this year resulted in our shed filled with many boxes of preserves ready for sale.

It was an altogether different story for the produce from the kitchen garden, substantially reduced due to the lack of the usually hot summer/autumn weather to ripen vegetables. Nevertheless, there were plenty of green tomatoes to make preserves along with propagated seedlings, packaged dried herbs, and seeds to sell.

Following the spectacular Wollemi Pine tree sales from 28 April to 6 July during which 33 sold, no further sales have occurred since even though the Wollemi remained available for purchase online.

d. Working Bees Report

Vicky Woolley gave this report, saying that there was an interesting Working Bee report with photos in the Newsletter. Thanks to Francesco for providing hot water for tea/coffee in winter.

9. Friends Achievements

- Sponsorship of the Friends forest Gazebo (shelter) was completed and launched in March 2022 by Special Minister of State, Chris Steel.
- Sales of Golden Wattle seeds are going well.
- Friends Arboretum calendar 2023 – sales going well but promotion still needed.
- Trish reported on highlights of the Wollemi Pine Propagation Project, which was going well, even if sales have slowed.

10. Other business

There was no other business.

11. Next Meeting – Tuesday 8 November 2022 at 5.30pm – Annual General Meeting.

The General Meeting closed at 6.30pm and was followed by Guest Speaker Glenn Cocking at the Seasonal Talk. Glenn spoke inspiringly about Moths in the ACT, including the Arboretum grasslands.
