



FRIENDS
*of the National
Arboretum Canberra*

DRAFT SUMMARY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Tuesday 14 May 2013 at 5:30pm

**in the Jim Service Room, ActewAGL House,
Corner Bunda & Mort Streets, Canberra City**

1. **Attendance:** Jocelyn Plovits (Chair), Jocelyn Fitzhardnge, Marie Mannion, Peter Paramore, Jenny Hicks, Cris Brack, Campbell Macknight, Sue Brown, Sherry McArdle-English, Sue Genner, Ray Sloan, Alan Franklin, Lorraine Ovington, Bev Kaiser, Bev Kaiser, Tony Lawson, Del Da Costa, Margie Bourke, Max Bourke, Bronwyn Halbisch, Wanda Horky, W Horky, Linda Muldoon, Trish Keller, OAM, Richard Bear, Spero Cassidy, Judy Smith, Jenny Cantlon, Gail Burns, Hary Hodgkinson, Carolyn Toms, Jim Payne, Chris Payne, David Shorthouse, Ermelindo Maculan, Phillip Moore, Sue Wright, Martin Wright, Bill Brown, Kristine Brown, Carmel Maher, Carolyn Thomas, Naomi Landau, Joanne Maples, Michael Burton, Bea Thompson, Sharon McAuliffe, Raoul Middelman, Jacqueline Elliott, Rob Ey, Agnes Walker, Colette Mackay (Secretary)

Apologies: Shirley Wilton, Yvonne Hackman, Marelle & Rob Rawson, Sanya Ritchie, Glynnis & Paul Moran, Anna Howe, Trevor Rice, Di Wright, Meredith Hinchliffe, Dan & Maureen Etherington, Caitrin Dunn, Mary Samara-Wickrama, John & Kay Beagle, Anne Meade, David & Jeanne Trebeck, Meg Gardiner, Michael & Anne Hodgkin, John Mackay, Jane Cassidy, Rex & Deirdre Carmody, Claire Mackay & Sebastian Borges, Ben Mackay & Bec Jackson

Trish presented Welcome to Country.

2. **Acceptance of Minutes and Actions Arising.** - The Minutes of 8 May 2012 were accepted without change.

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Richard Bear, tabled the Auditor's Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2012. The report was circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The Report showed an operating result of \$24,475.42 after providing for income tax compared with the previous year where \$38,037.27 profit was recorded.

Gross profit from trading was \$3,354.95 compared with \$808.95 in 2011.

Accumulated surplus at the end of 2012 was \$80,480.32 compared with \$56,004.90 in 2011.

Operating surplus after income tax was \$24,475.42 compared with \$38,037.27 in 2011.

The Report states the basis for Qualified Opinion "It is not practicable for the association to maintain an effective system of internal control over cash receipts until initial entry into the accounting records. Accordingly, our audit work in relation to receipts was limited to the amounts recorded. ... The financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra as at 31 December 2012 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the Associations Incorporation Act."

The Auditor's Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2012 were accepted without comment.

4. Chair's Report

Jocelyn thanked everyone for coming and the volunteers, the guides and the Council members for their unstinting efforts to progress our community engagement activities in the last year. It is amazing what we have achieved for the Arboretum and the ACT Government.

Special thanks to Colette for her endless work as Secretary, to Linda for the calendar and newsletters which have had excellent feedback, Spero for developing and enhancing our website, Trish for her innovative support and promotion of the Arboretum and to Cathy who brings ideas and with whom we can collaborate on the STEP projects. Also, Sherry who helps with her fabulous marketing ideas and Richard who so ably took up the Treasurer's role. An extra special thanks and well wishes to both Cathy and Sherry who have resigned from Council after many years of service.

With the transition to the Arboretum as a business with the opening in February 2013 various changes have occurred, not least the introduction of regular guided tours and the availability of guided bus tours to groups by appointment. Jocelyn thanked Roger Hnatiuk and Max Bourke for their untiring efforts in assisting with the training of 110 guides. She also thanked the volunteers who did the training and now provide an excellent service with a fabulous reputation for friendliness and forest knowledge. Anna Howe assisted with roster and guide management, Marelle Rawson with uniforms and many other tasks and Bronwyn Halbish and Sherry McArdle-English with the dinner and the raffle. Unfortunately the dinner was cancelled due to insufficient numbers.

Jocelyn read an email received from visitors to the Arboretum praising Marelle's guiding efforts. Marelle, our first Volunteer of the Year, continues to be an inspiration to other volunteers with her enthusiasm and expert knowledge as one of our guides.

Susan Webb is now managing memberships with Colette and Kathryn Cole has taken on the rostering of guides. Many thanks to everyone who has helped so generously in so many ways.

The following has been achieved in the past year:

- * Friends participation in the Arboretum Opening,
- * membership trebling to an estimated 1550 with an extra few thousand in corporate and association/club members,
- * Bonsai volunteers formally joining our membership,
- * ongoing lobbying of the ACTG for parking arrangements,
- * Frog Watch and Tree Measurement - now recognised as important community science contributions,
- * event volunteering at the Arboretum's Community Festival, Voices in the Forest, Australian National Botanic Garden (ANBG) Day and later this month the Retirement Expo,
- * working bees and the special and very successful second Friends Forest planting,
- * ongoing positive collaboration with STEP, ANBG, COG, Greening Australia, and ANU and other interest groups,
- * finalising participation in the City of Trees Centenary Art Program,
- * delivery of audited financial statements demonstrating probity,
- * very successful end of year function
- * hundreds of talks to thousands of people on bus tours and in community groups, and
- * managing the seat donation program - 7 seats now donated.

Some new initiatives include:

- * numbered membership cards about to be issued showing expiry date will allow for a discount of 10% at the Arboretum Shop, members will be advised of other discounts as they are arranged
- * the introduction of 'members only' orientation walks on the third Saturday of each month,
- * Warm Trees already has more than 100 knitters in action,
- * Harvesting Friends will look at making use of Arboretum fruits and other produce for sale in the Arboretum shop,
- * Meeter/Greeter role is being developed in collaboration with the Arboretum Team and will include surveying visitors,
- * celebration in the Pavilion on 24 May - Harriet Elvin, CEO of CMAG is our speaker will talk about Art in the Community and the Friends bumper raffle will be drawn,
- * significant representation in the new "Arboretum" magazine every six months,
- * invitation to meet with the Department to discuss a new Arboretum business plan. Once this is in place the Friends can develop their business plan to best support the Arboretum within our resources, and
- * development of a set of frequently asked questions for inclusion in the website.

With the opening of the Arboretum and setting up of the Arboretum Team some tasks have been handed back:

- * Rocky Knoll Program needs to sit with the resource manager to work successfully,
- * Marketing of the Arboretum is now by invitation - we respond to the Arboretum team's needs when appropriate, and
- * Bus bookings (now an enormous task) - we provide the guides on request.

Jocelyn explained that she had recently benchmarked our arrangements with the Friends of Kings Park in WA. There are not many similarities with this organisation a statutory authority funded by the mining industry and state lottery with paid part-time staff for Friends. They have a similar number of members to our membership. However we could learn things and I was grateful for their friendly provision of information.

In the next year we plan to seek reciprocal and discount arrangements with other Friends organisations.

On a personal note, Jocelyn thanked the members for their support and indicated that her enthusiasm continues for the most wonderful Arboretum in the world.

Volunteer of the Year

Jocelyn explained that a nomination for Anna Howe as the Friends Volunteer for 2013 had been received from Marelle Rawson.

Anna has and continues to provide a very substantial contribution to the Friends over the last year, in particular, identifying possible walks, preparing mapping and guide notes. Anna is one of our experienced guides. As a volunteer she is always ready to take on extra tasks.

The meeting accepted and endorsed the nomination and congratulated Anna as the Friends Volunteer for 2013.

5. Office bearers

Sherry McArdle-English read the nominations for Council positions:

Chair - Jocelyn Plovits
Deputy Chair - Trish Keller OAM
Treasury - Richard Bear
Secretary - Colette Mackay
Special Events Coordinator - Spero Cassidy
STEP Member - Tony Lawson
Member/Publications Editor - Linda Muldoon
Member - Caitrin Dunn

As there was just one nomination for each position the meeting accepted all nominations unanimously and congratulated each Council member. Jocelyn thanked each of the Council members for their continuing commitment and efforts and welcomed Tony Lawson and Caitrin Dunn to the Council.

6. Other business

1. David Shorthouse asked if we could consider Bank Mecu as our banker.

Jocelyn took this suggestion on notice and referred the matter to Council for consideration.

2. Frog Watch and Tree Measurement Sub-Groups

Jocelyn thanked Roger for his outstanding commitment to these subgroups. The Frog Watch gives us regular information about the health and wellbeing of the Arboretum. The tree measurement is a first, giving yearly measurement data from the time of planting and from a large number of forest tree species. The information is available to and is already used by a number of scientists. It is a great credit to Roger's foresight and commitment over a number of years.

3. Anna Howe's suggestion that Seniors have a special day when they can get special deals at the Arboretum.

This suggestion will be presented to the Arboretum Team and the ACT Government for their consideration. It is in the hope that suitable arrangements and benefits can be put in place and senior members of the community will be encouraged to support the initiative.

Guest Speaker: The interesting Dr Cris Brack who is in charge of the ANU research at the National Arboretum Canberra and is a world leader in forestry innovation.

Dr Cris Brack, Associate Professor, Fenner School of Environment & Society, ANU College of Medicine, Biology and Environment talked about trees and forests being "the answer" to managing the world's natural resources. He talked about the importance of the ANU research forests on the Arboretum site, explaining that the work will look at how trees manage their water use and deal with periods of drought.

The two varieties on the research site, *Corymbia maculata* or Spotted Gum and *Eucalyptus tricarpa* or Red Ironbark have been selected based on how their systems manage their water use and particularly, how their systems behave when water is significantly restricted.

Jocelyn thanked Dr Brack for his very memorable, entertaining and informative presentation.