Dear Friends

Warm trees 2018 is over! Did you meet Mahana, the giant kiwi on the hill under Wide Brown Land?

The world's largest knitted kiwi bird!

The launch of WARM TREES this year was wonderful. The installation was in place for the whole of July - we hope you didn't miss it.

Ms Cheyne, representing the Chief Minister, and Mr Roberts, Acting High Commissioner for New Zealand, both gave very positive speeches about WARM TREES and the amazing contributions of the volunteer knitters and volunteers from the Friends. Mr Roberts named the main feature of the installation, the giant kiwi (21m x 14m). The name is Mahana, which means "warm" in the Maori language.

We were welcomed to the launch ceremony by the Tumanako Maori Cultural Group with a very moving ceremony. The Group also performed two songs for the launch which brought a real feeling of New Zealand. The Group also ran three free workshops – they were a very unusual activity for school children.

We had so many creative contributions in the scarves installed around the Arboretum, and in the crocheted ferns, which were on the gabion walls leading to the Village Centre and on the fence around the Pod playground, and also in the hand crafted Pohutukawa flowers which were also on the gabion walls. Each year we organise themed display features and the ferns and flowers are icons of New Zealand.

There were scarves in groves of trees including the Himalayan cedars, the Camden White gums and the Monterey pines and, of course, the tiniest scarves were in the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia. If you visited the Himalayan cedars you could have appreciated the circles on one of the first trees you saw. These were a reciprocal gift this year from Warooma in Western.
Australia. We sent these circles when they asked for circles to help in their bushfire recovery effort after their terrible fires in 2016. You may remember circles were part of our WARM TREES display in 2016.

Thanks to the New Zealand High Commission for supporting us this year, to the staff of the Arboretum who have been so helpful and the media unit of Chief Minister's Department. It is important that WARM TREES achieve its aims which include community engagement with the Arboretum, an interesting display for visitors to encourage them out into the forests even during winter, and to promote the Arboretum. We have certainly achieved all these goals - we have received a lot of media coverage indeed.

At the end of WARM TREES all these scarves are collected and washed and then donated where they are needed. Some are formed into rugs by volunteers which may be sent overseas as part of Rotary's Wrapped-With-Love project for people affected by disasters. Most donations go to our local community.

Particular thanks go to the volunteer knitters who gave so much time to provide the resources for the installation, and the Friends’ installers (including the members of the Friends’ Thursday working bee) who made it all possible. Special thanks go to Rob and Carol Ey for making the whiskers for the kiwi (who knew kiwis had whiskers?), Jenny Cantlon for creating the beak and eye for the kiwi and Tabitha Plovits for creating the legs. We were so grateful for the kiwi layout team led by Nick Plovits - this made it easy during the following weekend for installers to place the scarves to create the feathers. And very special thanks go to Jenny Cantlon, Jocelyn’s very able assistant, who is indefatigable.

We have had so much positive feedback. We hope you enjoyed the display too.

THANK YOU Convenor JOCelyn! What a wonderful Warm Trees 2018! I wonder what is in store for 2019?

Seasonal Talk: Our last Seasonal Talk was provided by local visual artist, potter and ceramicist, Dr Cathy Franz. She gave us a journey through her work via a powerpoint presentation of the way she explores her fascination with Australian plants, particularly Canberra flora, and the environment in her work. Dr Franz likes to work on location and research with scientists which informs her conceptual and studio approach. She showed us some examples of her work which are also available at the Beaver Galleries in Deakin.

Harvest Group: The 21 July Market Stall netted a profit for the Arboretum of $1,094.60 - a tidy amount. The Visitor Centre seemed to be filled with people through the 10-1pm time allocation. We had the luxury of having eight volunteers on the roster so we could incorporate some different ideas: e.g. Sue Wright spent most of the 10-1pm around the front desk area advising visitors of our presence, and she was pretty successful. Larraine gathered a selection of produce in a pretty basket and walked around the school holiday visitors and lunch-goers.

The Market Stall was staged inside the Visitor Centre which made all the difference for the volunteers to remain inside and warm on such a cold, windy day.

Sponsorship: Recently Colette Mackay handed over the management of the Seat Sponsorship Program to me. First of all thanks to Colette for managing this program which over the years has seen many folk taking advantage of sponsoring a seat at the Arboretum dedicated to family and or friends. You may have seen the advertisements in the local newspaper or in your mail from ActewAGL. Colette was responsible for pursuing these ads at no cost to the Friends. The funds raised go directly in to the Friends Trust account. They in turn are devoted to a project in support of the National Arboretum Canberra. There has been a steady stream of interested potential sponsors looking at what is available.

The sponsorship of the gardens down the zigzag pathway of Central Valley has recently become available. There is more about these gardens and how they can be sponsored on our website.

The 2019 Calendar is well under way. It will be ready for purchase for Floriade.

Congratulations to the new Newsletter Editor, Mary Arnold, on this her first edition. May there be many more Mary!

See you at the Arboretum!

Trish
Trish Keller OAM
Chair

Jocelyn Plovits, Llewellyn Roberts, Acting High Commissioner NZ, Scott Saddler and Trish Keller
Warm trees

Thank you to the New Zealand High Commission for supporting Warm Trees 2018 and enhancing the Kiwi theme through the Matariki Display in the Village Centre.

Matariki is the Maori name for the group of stars also known as the Pleiades or the Seven Sisters. The Maori new year is marked by the rise of the Matariki in May and the sighting of the next new moon in June each year.
Annual Awards 2018

Volunteer of the Year

Jan Morgan

Jan’s courses at U3A on ‘Trees of the Arboretum’ have attracted full classes over the past three years. There would have been hundreds of hours undertaken on research and preparation and Jan has created a wonderful resource. Jan also provides guided tours around Canberra identifying mature species. She is involved in the Seed Provenance Program as Citizen Science with Roger Hnatiuk. And, as we all know, Jan prepares and hosts overseas tours to seek out Arboretum trees in their natural habitat. Jan is a highly-worthy recipient of the Friends’ Volunteer of the Year award for 2018.

Read the extended interview with Jan on the next page.

Life member

Colette Mackay

Colette was on Council for over 10 years, initially as Secretary and then in the role of Sponsorships and Donations Manager from May 2015. In the early days, the role of Secretary wasn’t as devolved to others as it now is, so Colette was responsible for everything relating to Council meetings, and the General Meetings, including refreshments at the General Meetings, taking the minutes, and clearing up afterwards. She was also heavily involved in the start of the webmail and website, doing the memberships (new and renewing), and sending out the hard copies of the Newsletter.

She is very deserving of this recognition, and luckily for us we haven’t lost her - she still continues her work with the Harvesting Group, and looks after the webmail/PO Box when Del is away.

Sterling Service Awards

Ange McNeilly

Ange continues to be the heart and soul of the Discovery Garden. Her hard work and commitment to the Garden, as well as providing plants, has seen the Discovery Garden flourish. Ange sources and buys plants and seeds for the Discovery Garden, as well as herb drying and preserve-making at home, and volunteering at the Market Stalls. The Arboretum and the Friends continue to be indebted to Ange’s commitment and passion!

Ian Sayers OAM

Ian has made a big contribution to Guiding over many years. He freely shares his expertise and knowledge with all around him. Ian is known as Mr Reliable, taking on additional shifts at the last minute, whenever the call goes out! He is an invaluable Mentor for new guides; and his knowledge is appreciated by all when he undertakes the VIP tours.

Christine Keogh

Christine is a behind-the-scenes volunteer, who processes the online memberships and is proactive and efficient in responding to queries as they arise. She faultlessly reconciles the membership and funds received monthly for the Treasurer. She never hesitates to join the team when hard copies of the colourful Newsletter need to be mailed out. She has also recently volunteered at the understorey planting at Dairy Farmers Hill and has registered to help with the Wollemi Pine seed project. As you can see, Christine is very committed to the Friends and the Arboretum.

Sue Sheridan

Sue, has for many years worked behind the scenes processing hard-copy memberships, which she collects from the PO Box and the Welcome Desk. More recently she also took on the processing of all Parking Passes – no mean feat, especially at busy times in December and January. Sue is also part of the invaluable team who fold, stuff, label and stamp the hard copy Newsletters for mail-out. We are so grateful to Sue for her commitment to the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra!

Kenn Basham

Kenn has been a long-term member of the Canberra Bonsai community and an enthusiastic supporter of the NBPCA from the beginning. Kenn’s current commitment is the equivalent of a quarter of a permanent staff member – or more than a day a week.

Kenn is involved in all activities within the Collection, as he is an excellent guide, full of bonsai and related knowledge which is very much appreciated by visitors; and, being one of the most experienced volunteers, he is often tasked with the more detailed and complex tree maintenance activities to assist the curators.
Volunteer of the Year: an interview with Jan Morgan

Jan your award recognised a range of activities in and around the Arboretum

Can you tell me when and how you first got engaged with NAC?
I tell the story in a talk I’ve been giving to various groups in Canberra, called Confessions of an Arboretum junkie. In November 2011 I was driving along the Tuggeranong parkway and was disgusted that they were replanting a pine forest so close to the city centre. I only learnt that it was a new Arboretum a few months later and was initially hostile to the idea of the monoculture plantations, but I after I went an Open Day and took the bus trip around the site, I started to see it differently. I joined the Friends, participated in some working bees, and to my surprise found myself volunteering for the inaugural Guides training course in late 2012.

You are widely known for running the U3A Trees course – can you tell me how this started and how long it has been running?
The U3A course Trees of the Arboretum grew out of my early experiences as a volunteer guide, when I realised there was so much to learn, both about our species and botany in general. Following the principle that the best way to learn is to teach others, I decided to offer a course for U3A. In the first course, in 2014, I thought I could cover all 100 species in 8 weeks, but once it got under way I quickly realised that this was going to be very unrealistic, and I ended up covering just a quarter. My participants wanted me to continue, so in 2015 I repeated course 1 and ran a new course 2. This pattern continued in the next two years, and this year I repeated all four courses – a good opportunity to update and correct earlier versions. I’m particularly grateful to Roger Hnatuk, Max Bourke and John Turnbull, who acted as my expert panel whenever I was unclear about a botanical issue or asked a question by a participant that I couldn’t answer.

An offshoot of this course has been the walks you lead around Canberra showcasing local examples of NAC trees
I was keen to find whether there were mature specimens of our trees in Canberra, so that started a hunt through records of trees planted in streets, in the Botanic Gardens, in Westbourne Woods and also at the ANU. I’ve now found close to 70 of our species already growing in public places here, and there are probably more growing in private gardens.
I had decided to start with the Australian natives in the Arboretum, so that led naturally to including a walk at the ANBG as part of course 1. In the following year, I thought there were 11 of our trees growing at the ANU, but I’ve now discovered around 35, so course 2 includes a walk to see them. For course 3 we visit Fetherston Gardens, a little-known gem in Weston, and in course 4 we walk around the part of Westbourne Woods that is outside the golf course. And again, I have been helped enormously by several people in Canberra, including fellow Arboretum guides, ANBG guides, members of Friends of ACT Trees (FACTT), and ANU staff.

Another fruit of the U3A course is the overseas trips – can you tell me about these?
The trip to Chile in 2016 came about after I went on a bird watching trip to Ecuador in 2014 and stopped off in Santiago en route. I saw a palm in some gardens in Viña del Mar, and thought I recognised the scientific name, Jubaea chilensis, which I later confirmed is one of our species – the Chilean Wine Palm. I thought it would be fun to see them growing in the wild, and another tree person, this time from the Herbarium, helped me track down all seven species native to Chile and advised me on places to see them. And then I thought that there might be some other people who would be interested in seeing them too …
The Chile trip went well and even before it finished we started talking about another trip, this time to the eastern side of the United States. We leave in October, and hopefully will see some wonderful autumn colours.

The Seed Provenance Project sounds interesting. What does this involve? Jan has offered to write a separate article for a future edition about this fascinating project, which harks back to the early days of the Arboretum.

After so many hours and years of volunteering – what do you get out of it? Greatest achievement?
When I started the U3A course I had no botanical knowledge at all; I didn’t know that oak trees could be evergreen, and I certainly didn’t expect to be able to learn and remember scientific names. So I have had enormous pleasure and a sense of achievement in learning so much about the trees. And the feedback from participants, from the courses and walks, has also been very encouraging.
In addition, I’ve now visited several botanic gardens in Australia and overseas, tracking down and photographing our species. I have met many people and made great connections and learnt that plant people are so friendly, helpful and supportive. I’ve realised also that travel with a purpose is far more interesting and enjoyable than simply travelling for sightseeing.
Not sure what my greatest achievement is but knowing that I have helped several of our guides learn more about trees is certainly very satisfying.

Where to next? What other ideas/ projects are budding?
It wasn’t planned, but it looks like I might become, in the words of a friend, a ‘specialist arboreal tour guide’! I’m already planning a trip to the west coast of North America to see the giant sequoias, the Californian fan palms, and the endangered Monterey pines. There are also plans for a trip along the Australian east coast heading up to the Bunya Mountains National Park and Girraween National Park. And perhaps a European trip could follow in 2020.

Fruits of your experience: Any thoughts about how to engage more people with NAC? Other volunteer opportunities?
There are many opportunities for people to engage at NAC. I encourage anyone who has a question, a passion or a budding interest to just go for it!

Jan is a great example of how a personal quest for deeper knowledge has led to a resource which has not only been of interest to the U3A community but a resource and broaden­ing of knowledge and experience to those who support our favourite national institution.

Thanks Jan!
National Bonsai and Penjing Collection: Winter in the Collection

The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA) or just, the Collection, has about 115 trees made up of deciduous and evergreen species. While growth slows down as we enter winter for the evergreen trees and comes to a stand still for deciduous trees, activity remains high with regard to tree maintenance during this period.

It is a particularly important time in the annual maintenance cycle for the deciduous species because this is when, what has been going on under the cover of the leaves during spring, summer and early autumn, is finally revealed – hopefully after a spectacular burst of colour.

For the bonsai artist, studying the trees at this time is akin to a doctor looking at an x-ray view of a patient as they try to see what is going on inside them.

In the previous spring, new buds opened and extended into shoots with a number of leaves that covered the tree. While some shoot pruning occurs during the growing season to maintain the structure of bonsai, the outcome of this is only obvious in the following winter when there are no leaves on the tree. Invariably, the new spring growth will produce branches that appear in an unsuitable position or in a direction or at a length that is contrary to the intended design of the tree. The new shoots are important as they contribute to the more detailed structure of the bonsai, mimicking the branch characteristics found on a mature tree in nature.

To keep the frequency and scale of the branching on a bonsai in proportion to its size, winter pruning usually involves cutting as far back on a branch as possible – to the earliest visible bud or, on certain species, a point on the branch at which there is a high probability that a dormant bud will emerge in the coming spring. Winter pruning also allows the direction of the spring shoots to be chosen, influencing the future profile and design of the tree. The chosen buds will invariably grow out from their position on the branch - left, right, up or down – if the tree is given even light.

One other important pruning practice that is used in conjunction with bud selection - across most species not only deciduous – is to introduce a ‘two by two’ branching structure as shown below. This means pruning at a branch intersection from three or four branches back to two.

Two by two branching

The following photographs illustrate the pruning activity described above. The first two remind me of ‘spot the difference’ puzzles.

Japanese maple – May 2018

Trident maple before winter pruning

Trident maple after winter pruning
Close up of branches being pruned – just above two buds

Close up of branches after pruning

The winter pruning in bonsai also shows the main reason why bonsai are able to be kept small. The new shoots grow each year to reach a particular size and profile, then, in winter, they are pruned back to improve the tree’s branch detail and complexity (collectively called ramification). This annual ‘grow and prune’ cycle results in an overall consistency of the size of a bonsai.

All this time however, their trunks and major branches are, ever so slowly, increasing in size and some years more major pruning adjustments are made.

The roots are also growing, gradually filling the bonsai pot and will also require pruning attention to keep the tree healthy. Contrary to popular belief however, it isn’t a factor in keeping the bonsai small.

Visit the Collection this winter and have a close look at the deciduous trees to see if you can spot the winter pruning evidence and the buds that are waiting for the days to get longer and the temperatures to rise.
Sophora microphylla

As the unofficial national flower of New Zealand these beautiful flowering trees share Forest 64 with another NZ native, Podocarpus totara, which will feature in the next edition of Trees in Focus.

The genus Sophora comprises around fifty species of trees and shrubs found in the tropics and the more temperate parts of North and South America, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Until 2001 just three species of Kowhai were recognised in New Zealand, but in that year scientists from Landcare Research and the Department of Conservation (DoC) named five new species. All eight species have different growth habits, leaves, flowers and flowering times, as well as different habitats.

Sophora microphylla is the most widespread of the eight species. It is endemic throughout the main islands, but scarce in parts of Northland. It is also scarce to absent over large parts of the eastern North Island from about East Cape. The Kowhai grows naturally in open forests, forest margins and riverbanks and Sophora microphylla trees are now grown throughout the country and are a common feature in New Zealand gardens.

Sophora microphylla is distinguished from other NZ species by its somewhat tangled (divaricate) juvenile form which can last for up to 10 years and the conspicuous yellow – orange/brown juvenile stems. Mature trees usually have a single trunk with spreading branches. The trees in Forest 64 were planted in 2010 but we don’t know how old they were at planting and it looks like some may have flowered already, so try to take a look in the spring. The kowhai is deciduous in winter and is moderately fast growing.

The scientific discovery of the kowhai began with Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander, the botanists who accompanied Captain James Cook on his 1768–1771 Pacific voyage on HMS Endeavour. Cook made landfall in the eastern North Island in October 1769, when kowhai would have been in full flower, so it’s hardly surprising that Banks and Solander collected herbarium specimens and seeds to grow. One type was introduced to cultivation in Britain in about 1772, while another was grown in the Chelsea Physic (or Apothecaries’) Garden in about 1774.

Using the herbarium specimens, Solander prepared formal botanical descriptions of the two types for his Primitae Florae Novae Zelandiae, but following his untimely death this work was never published. It fell to others to complete what he had started. Using the names provided by Solander in his manuscript Philip Miller, for 48 years director of the Physic Garden, published a description of the plant there, Sophora tetrapetra, and, in 1789, William Aiton, gardener at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew (and previously Miller’s assistant at Chelsea), did the same for the other, S. microphylla. (NZ Geographic https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/kowhai/)

Planting pattern:

Forest 64 is planted in a square grid pattern of Podocarpus Totara, with the Sophora microphylla planted in the shape of a whale’s tale, representing its significance to Maori culture.

The juvenile form of Sophora microphylla growing at Pukekura Park, New Plymouth
Give the Gift of a Garden

Imagine:

- giving a gift that lasts forever...
- a gift which uplifts the spirit and frees the mind...
- your gift full of colour, movement, fragrance and beauty...
- sharing your gift with over half a million people every year..

The plans for the gardens to be created in the Central Terrace have been recently released, with a prospectus detailing the proposal for each of 24 garden beds and the opportunity to be part of the vision of ‘100 Gardens’

The National Arboretum Canberra has set aside twenty-four individual garden beds and is offering the opportunity to contribute to those gardens - to passionate people who see the beauty in giving, who understand the satisfaction of nurturing living things, and who appreciate the importance of preserving and protecting our natural world for future generations to enjoy.

Each garden bed will be planted with one of the specially-chosen species our horticulturalists have selected, to achieve a stunning visual display of colour and texture lining the ‘Central Valley’ pathway. The pathway zig-zags nine hundred metres, leading from the Arboretum’s sweeping entrance to the iconic Village Centre.

The opposing side of the garden beds along the Central Valley pathway will develop into a shady avenue of ceremonial trees, planted by visiting dignitaries and world leaders. Plans to incorporate a water feature cascading down the spine of the Central Valley path and winding its way via waterfalls and stepping stones, will transform the Central Valley into an impressive walkway though a tranquil forest and stunning garden beds.

For more information and details of the plans for each individual garden see the prospectus on the website:

24 gardens prospectus
Keeping in STEP

Forest 20 has been a busy place over the last few months.

On May 2 we held our open-air art activity for Tree Week, STEP into Plein Air. Some 35 artists and STEP volunteers had a most enjoyable morning. Megan Spiers, tutor with Julia Landford’s NatureArtLab spoke about painting eucalypts before the artists spread out to produce their own work. We provided morning tea and coffee and found some creative ways to provide for a crowd when we have no access to power.

As a follow up to this event, NatureArt Sketchers came to STEP Monday 16 July for two hours drawing in the field.

Another event was the launch of our Grasses leaflet. With a grant from Friends of Grasslands, the leaflet was produced by Andy Russell, Rainer Rehwinkel and Max Bourke, with illustrations by Michael Bedingfield and editorial and design assistance by David Shorthouse and Mariana Rollgejser. The result is superbly informative and easy-to-use.

Steppers are a hardy bunch who are not deterred by frost or fog on Thursday working days. An analysis of our attendance details for the year to 30 June 2018 gives a clear indication of our volunteers’ industry and dedication. Our hours equate to 595.5 8-hour days (or 59 5-day working weeks). Average Thursday attendance was 14 people, with a maximum of 22 people and minimum of 8, so the hours worked are very impressive.
Winter is a good time for getting the house in order. Our shed has been cleaned out and the stakes sorted and stored in a more orderly fashion. I thought a suitable caption should be “It’s a stake-out”.

Come and visit Forest 20 in August and enjoy our display of Acacias.

Judy Smith (President STEP)

A word from the editor:

Many thanks and congratulations to Linda Muldoon for her remarkable dedication and creativity in driving the publication of the Friends Newsletter since Issue 15, 2011, setting a high standard for her successors.

This is my first issue, which I must say has been a steep learning curve, so please bear with me while I bed it down, and in the meantime I hope you enjoy this edition.

I welcome your suggestions for future issues and of course any contributions you would like to make – photos, articles or jottings are all welcome. I can be contacted by email at maryarno@gmail.com

New Business membership category

When you pick up a copy of the vibrant new Friends brochure from the Visitor Centre or the new membership form on the back page of this newsletter you will notice that there is a new membership category for Business members. This is for businesses who would like to support the Friends and receive the Friends newsletter. As a thank you from the Friends, business employees will be able to receive a 10% discount on their own Friends membership.

An exciting consequence of this change is that Business membership also includes a single annual four-hour hire of the Terrace room for a function, meeting or social event. The Terrace room has capacity for approximately 60 people standing. It is available for hire during the hours of 9am – 5pm week days only depending on availability. Conditions apply.

All bookings should go through the Community Engagement Officer on arboretumvolunteers@act.gov.au
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,
P.O. 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 Application Form

Membership type: ..............................................................

Title: .................. First name: .......................................

Last name: .................................................................

OR

Club/Association/Business name: ........................................

Address: ...........................................................................

....................................................................................

....................................................................................

State: ......... P/code: ..................................................

Email address for newsletter and updates: ................................

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.....................................................................................

Pheno: ......................................................... Mobile: ..............

Number of parking passes: ..................................................

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

Signature: .................................................................

Date: .................................................................

Parking Pass 1 year

☐ Friends’ Annual .............................................. $27.50 per vehicle (2018)

Parking Pass ............................................... $28 per vehicle (2019)

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’ discounted rate and a Household Member is entitled to apply for two Parking Passes at the Friends’ discounted rate.