

## FMBG Annual Report July 2014 – June 2015

On behalf of the Executive I have pleasure in presenting the annual report for the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden (FMBG). This report covers the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

Many notable achievements during the year including FMBG winning the Westwaters Hotel City of Melton Business Excellence Award for “Best Community Enterprise Business” in May 2015. We have further developed of the Melton Botanic Garden in building and commencing new gardens and maintaining the established sections of the garden. There has been a number of improvements to the Depot and Nursery thanks to Dave Peters, FMBG funds, grants and volunteers. Thanks to Margaret Cook, Nursery Manager and her team in managing the propagation and sale of plants. The sale of plants is helping to fund projects and cover expenses. Our active groups in the garden and supporting groups are: Creekers (Margaret Peters), Gumnuts (David Pye), Lakers (Jill Bentley), Odd Jobbers (John Bentley), Sandgropers (David and Barb Pye), Safaris (Ella and Steve Parker) and the Nursery Team (Margaret Cook). The volunteer hours recorded for these activities show we have contributed over 4,500 hours. Thanks to Elaine Neely as Depot Housekeeping Coordinator and her helpers for cleaning the depot and toilets. The cleanliness we experience is due to their effort and diligence. This has been our best ever year for guided tours and presentations. They help to bring in donations and sales of plants that contribute to our funds. Thanks to everyone who help with guided tours and presentation. Many thanks to the leaders and volunteers who participate in the groups as the results can certainly be seen. We continue to receive many positive comments from visitors about the development of the garden and the ensuing beautification of the area. The end of year celebration was held at the home of Tony and Janet Dyke and we thank them for their hospitality and use of their wonderful property at Strathtulloh.

It is pleasing to see the increasing involvement of the community and other groups in FMBG activities and the opportunities to help develop and involve others. We continue to promote our motto “Growing Plants, Growing People” in what and how we do things. This is very much seen in the CVGT Work Experience Activity Teams and thank Phil Newman as the team supervisor for making changes that can be seen in the garden and depot. We thank CVGT for five years involvement at the garden and a successful partnership. We were saddened to hear they were one of the many groups that did not have Melton contracts renewed as the Federal Government sought to limit the numbers of the providers. We commenced discussions with Matchworks who requested a five days per week contract for a Work Activity Team at the garden which we have been able to accommodate. The Creekers have continued involvement with CaLM. Young PAG (the Planned Activity Group) have continued to assist each month in pot washing, propagation and rolling up plant guards. They bring with them a great sense of enjoyment and we thank Elaine, Anne, Jill and the FMBG volunteers who work with them. Centrelink volunteer numbers have increased to eight people undertaking gardening, construction and administrative tasks.

New garden beds have been created with: 1) the Victorian Volcanic Plains Aboriginal Plant Usage garden being completed; 2) the Sensory Garden has been completed with the addition of two flat bench seats made possible by a CVGT Community Grant; 3) the bed construction and first plantings in the large area for the Western Australian and South Australian gardens commenced and 4) the commencement of the Southern African Garden. We have worked again with



Bacchus Marsh Grammar students in the MBG. We have continued discussions with the Rotary Club of Melton and Melton City Council on a path around Lake in the Melton Botanic Garden, unfortunately 10 year and 100 year flood levels and the need for bridge construction are proving to be a stumbling block preventing the project from being undertaken at this stage. Our involvement with District Scouting led to a very successful National Tree Day with 143 participants, the majority being Joeys, Cubs, scouts and their families. Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services horticulture students helped plant in the Southern African Garden.

The Melton City Council (MCC) allocated \$30,000 in the 2014-2015 and have allocated an increased amount in the 2015-2016 budget towards the development of the Melton Botanic Garden following intensive discussions at the Community Consultation Budget Sessions. We continue to have good communication and positive relationships with MCC. Most of the funds have been used to assist in the development of the Western Australian and South Australian Gardens (WASA). Many thanks go to David Pye who has managed the expenditure of MCC funds and prepared the project plan and budget that were approved by MCC. The Sandgroppers are now looking after the WASA garden development. Many thanks to David and Barb Pye, Anne Langmaid and others in planting and maintaining the WASA garden. We give special thanks to David and Barb Pye for their oversight of the MBG Working Party with Barb as an excellent Chair and David as Secretary to the group and especially for the Action List that he creates for us to ensure we follow up on what needs to be done. Without their dedication and expertise I am sure we would have not have achieved so much of the development of the Melton Botanic Garden

We were successful in a number of competitive grants. These included a Melton City Council Collingwood Grant for the covered Wash Up area and the shaded Work Area at the Depot and Nursery, a Melton City Council Environment Grant to produce plant labels for the Victoria Volcanic Plains Garden, a Melton Community Grant for two accessible picnic settings, a Department of Justice grant to improve security at the Depot, a CVGT Community Grant for bench seats in the Sensory Garden a Melbourne Water Grant for the commencement works to make the lake island into a native bird sanctuary and thanks to David Pye for an Australian Plants Society Victoria grant for plant labels in the Eucalyptus Arboretum. Tony Dyke obtained a grant through SP AusNet where he works which allowed us to purchase a 55L spray unit for weed control. Many thanks to Anne Langmaid who followed up on an APS Maroondah Group guided tour which led to a very generous and sizable donation towards the WASA garden development.

We received donations as reported in the FMBG Financial Report and we would especially like to thank CWA Melton Owls and all the individual donors for their monetary contributions to the Melton Botanic Garden.

The number of visitors and guided tours shows a clear increase in patronage of the botanic garden. Public guided tours included: Seniors Week, three walks during the Sustainable Living Festival attracting visitors from far afield, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. We gave a personal tour to Tim Entwisle, CEO and Director Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in February. Melton City Council with our third annual tour for MCC staff. We provided tours to both small and large groups. Thanks to our tour guides throughout the year: Alan and Jean Partridge, Jill Bentley, David and Barb Pye, Anne Langmaid, and Daryl Akers. Also thanks to all those who help with tours as we receive positive about our welcoming, hospitality and provision of refreshments.



We continue to give presentations to various groups in Melton and beyond. The focus of these were on the development of the Melton Botanic Garden and especially the Eucalyptus Arboretum but we were also able to include photographs of understory plants and eucalypts in flower and all the new garden beds.

Our patron Jane Edmanson has been able to promote FMBG and the MBG on 3AW and other media outlets. Jane visited the garden in January and we were very pleased for her to install the first plant label in the Eucalyptus Arboretum and to meet the Mayor Cr Sophie Ramsey and Deputy Mayor Cr Nola Dunn on her visit.

Six FMG members attended the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AAFBG) Conference at the Gold Coast in August. We gave a presentation that was well received and did plenty of networking. John Bentley continues as a representative on the AAFBG Committee.

We continued our promotion of the botanic garden in Melton at the Platypus Festival, Djerriwarrh Festival, Bunnings Spring Launch, Bunnings National Volunteers Week, Bunnings Community Days, Coburns Primary School Fete, Aspire Villawood Open Day, APS Geelong Plant Sale and the Australian Plants Society Melton and Bacchus Marsh Group Plant Sale. Further afield at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2015 (MIFGS) we had 4 metres of wall space for our display and a hanging basket in the competition. We added a Facebook page for the Plant Nursery and Depot and a Twitter account (@Melton\_BG) to our social media outlets. We had a successful activity with the Melton Environment Group when we hosted their Bird Week activity of a presentation at the depot and a bird walk in the garden.

Our corporate members have continued their contributions to the development of the MBG especially Melton Home Timber and Hardware who have continued to support the work of the Friends providing storage space and materials towards our work. Melton Toyota contributed funds for plants for National Tree Day. We have ten corporate members which is a thirty percent increase from the previous year. Bunnings Melton have assisted in use of their hire equipment and provision of materials.

Our membership base has increased to 236 individual financial members, 10 corporate and 4 Associate members at the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015. Individual members in 2010-11 were 141, 206 in 2011-12, 207 in 2012-13 and 218 in 2014-15. On Facebook we have increased from 150 to 300 plus friends. We would encourage you to take every opportunity to promote the activities and the Melton Botanic Garden to those in your area and at work. Having a strong membership base helps with obtaining grants and demonstrates commitment to having a botanic garden.

The Executive Committee has done a marvellous job in planning activities plus organising speakers, applying for grants, holding FMBG dinners, preparing flyers, organising field trips, making and managing partnerships, managing the finances and all the other administrative functions to provide a well-run organisation.

Thanks to Alan Partridge in his role as Vice President and Assistant Secretary for his continuing work in overseeing our volunteer attendances and working with the Admin Team to record these. We also thank Alan who prepares and sends the many FMBG thank you letters throughout the year. The monthly meeting raffle continues to provide the group with funds to assist with the meeting expenses and we thank Lyn Nardella and Phil Newman for running the raffle each month. Other fundraising towards FMBG funds has been provided through Bunnings



Sausage Sizzles and plant sales. Thanks to everyone who assists with in our fundraising efforts as we have been able to commit funds to develop the Depot, new equipment and the botanic garden.

The Newsletter has had more issues produced as Daryl Akers has helped prepare the issues, so many thanks to Daryl.

Thanks to Councillors and Melton City Council staff for their support and encouragement towards FMBG and the continuing development of the Melton Botanic Garden. Adrian Cope became our MCC Liaison Officer and he has helped and a made a contribution to building the garden. We thank Glenn Mulcahy for his work with FMBG. Glenn moved into a new position. The City of Melton was given a sapling from the Separation Tree in the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and Councillors voted to have it planted in the Melton Botanic Garden. The Mayor Cr Sophie Ramsey planted the tree in the garden in December 2015.

Many thanks to all those who actively contributed during the year in so many ways. To those who make our monthly meetings run well by providing supper, helping set up chairs, tables, welcoming, managing the library, and selling the raffle tickets. Finally to everyone who has contributed to the many volunteers hours that go into propagating, maintaining, weeding and planting to create and manage the Melton Botanic Garden.

The Executive Committee continued its dedicated work as it has again been another full on year and we seem to be giving well over 100%. We held our annual planning day in January which included reviewing the last year and planning the next. It is pleasing to see we are meeting the goals in our strategic plan.

Thanks to all committee members for their support and great work throughout the year to Alan, Margaret, Janet, Anne, Jill, Dave and Myles. Each has contributed a significant amount and used their skills and talents to shaping FMBG. Anne Langmaid is not standing for another term and we thank Anne for her contribution and insights over the last two years. Anne will continue an active role in FMBG groups and also her APS commitments. Myles Bentley had to resign his Executive Committee position as he was elected a Melton Councillor and we thanks Myles for his contribution to the Executive. We thank Jen Eldridge for stepping up to replace Myles in the committee which adds to Jen’s already active involvement in FMBG.

All these achievements and efforts throughout the year provide a strong foundation for us to continue our work towards the development of the Melton Botanic Garden in 2015/16 and beyond.

John Bentley

President, Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden

*Report presented at the Annual General Meeting 12 August 2015*



Category Winner  
Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria  
Sustainable Cities Awards 2013  
[sustainability.vic.gov.au/KABV](http://sustainability.vic.gov.au/KABV)

