

FMBG Annual Report July 2016 – June 2017

On behalf of the FMBG Committee I have pleasure in presenting the annual report for the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden (FMBG). This report covers the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

We had another year with many outstanding achievements which include: further developing the Melton Botanic Garden in building and commencing new gardens and maintaining the established sections of the garden. Thanks to Margaret Cook for her 3 years as Nursery Manager and her team in managing the propagation and sale of plants. We welcomed Anne Langmaid as the new Nursery Manager in a seamless transfer in Nursery roles in March. The sale of plants continues to help fund projects and cover operating expenses. Our active groups in the garden and supporting groups are: Creekers (Margaret Peters/Alan Partridge), Gumnuts (David Pye), Lakers (Jill Bentley), Odd Jobbers (John Bentley), Sandgropers (David and Barb Pye), Safaris (Ella and Steve Parker) and the Nursery Team (Anne Langmaid). We commenced a Bushies group (Steve Leyden) to manage the Bushfoods Garden and a Tweepers group (Geraldine Kelly) doing bird surveys in the garden. The volunteer hours recorded for these activities show we have contributed over 9,100 hours. Our volunteer hours have increased by 2,500 hours over the 6,500 hours in 2015/16. We have also inducted an increased number of new volunteers this year. These figures do not represent all the FMBG volunteer activities as we have not included many meetings, plant pickups, fund raising activities, promotions and external plant sales. 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. Many thanks to the leaders and volunteers who participate in the groups as the results can certainly be seen both in the development of the garden beds and visitor experience. We continue to receive positive comments from new and returning visitors about the development of the garden, the ensuing beautification of the area and the plant collections.

It is with sadness we note the passing of Richard Ladders who curated the Sensory Garden and always had a very positive and caring nature. His wicked sense of humour and passion for the garden will be long be remembered. He will be sadly missed.

This has been another good year for guided tours and presentations. Visitors participating on our guided tours were from far and wide including groups from Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat, Diamond Valley, Landsborough, Lara, Romsey, Shepparton, Werribee, and APS groups from Keilor Plains, South Gippsland, Maroondah, South East Melbourne and people from across the state who enjoyed our tours as part of the APS Victoria 60th Anniversary Celebration. One notable visitor we took on a tour was Phillip Johnson, the designer of the Best in Show Garden at the 2013 Chelsea Flower Show. Phillip Johnson Landscapes has since joined as an FMBG Corporate Member. Dr Dean Nicole also visited and has included photos of MBG Eucalypts in his book "Smaller Eucalypts for Planting in Australia".

Guided tours have helped to bring in donations and sales of plants that contribute to our funds. Thanks to everyone who helped with guided tours and presentations. The number of visitors and guided tours shows a clear increase in patronage of the botanic garden. Public guided tours included: Seniors Week, the Sustainable Living Festival, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week all attracting visitors from far and wide. We held the fifth annual garden tour for Councillors and Melton City Council staff. We provided tours to both small and large groups. Thanks go to our tour guides: Alan and Jean Partridge, David and Barb Pye, Jill Bentley, Anne Langmaid and Jen Eldridge. Many thanks also to all those who help with tours as we receive positive feedback about our welcoming, hospitality and provision of refreshments.



**Friends of the
Melton Botanic Garden Inc.**

We participated in the second Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand Open Day on 28th May 2017. Unfortunately it was an exceptionally cold and overcast day. However, we had some new visitors to the garden and had a good range of activities and exhibits with support from local Melton groups which included the Melton Environment Group, District Scouts, Willows Quilters, and CWA Melton Owls Group. We also had new activities with the Greater Western Community Band, Melton Visitor Information Centre, Aboriginal rock painting, the Fairy Garden and the Penny Farthing.

New garden areas have been created: 1) the Bushfoods Garden and revegetation of a section of Ryans Creek near the small lake as the defined project by the Matchworks Work Experience Activity Team and their following project 2) the construction of the Amphitheatre and surrounding beds beside the concrete path 3) launched the boat in June 2017 and have commenced planting of the Lake Island.

Work on existing gardens continued: 1) understorey planting in the Indigenous Peoples Garden as a District Scouting project 2) the final bed construction and more plantings in the Western Australian and South Australian garden beds to get close to completion of the garden especially with the plant labels placed in garden beds enhancing the visitor experience 3) further plantings in the main garden beds in the Southern African Garden and 4) commencement of the Mediterranean Garden with the landscape design, some groundworks and path network.

Installation of seating and picnic settings in the Southern African and Western/South Australian garden due to the \$10,000 donation by the Rotary Club of Melton.

We won jointly with MCC a Keep Victoria Beautiful Sustainable Cities in the Resource Recovery and Waste Management category for use of compost in the Southern African Garden.

One major challenge for us was the Lakewood Boulevard housing development which at one point looked as though it was about to take half of the Indigenous People's Garden and much of the Victorian Volcanic Plains Garden to construct the sewerage line. We were able to halt the project and successfully work with council to achieve a drastic reduction of damage to garden.

We have continued involvement of the community and other groups in FMBG activities and opportunities to help develop and involve others.

We continue to demonstrate our motto "Growing Plants, Growing People" in what and how we do things. This is very much seen in the Matchworks Work Experience Activity Teams. We thank Mick Hewitt as the team supervisor for works by the WEA Team that can be clearly seen in the garden and depot. We thank Matchworks for their involvement at the garden in what is proving to be a successful partnership after two years of 5 days per week activity. Our program featured in a Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services video to promote Work for the Dole programs.

The Creekers continued involvement with CaLM but this has much decreased in 2017. Young PAG (the Planned Activity Group) have continued to assist each month in pot washing, propagation, organising used plant guards for re-use and have planted near the lake on a couple of occasions. We thank Elaine, Jill and the FMBG volunteers who work with them. Centrelink volunteer numbers have remained steady. They are invaluable to the development of the garden and operations in managing garden beds, weeding, planting, construction and administrative tasks.

We have formed a partnership with the Djerriwarrh Health Services Aboriginal Parenting Group.

Our involvement with District Scouting led to another successful National Tree Day with over 70 participants, the majority being Joeys, Cubs, scouts and their families. Many thanks to Janet Dyke in organising the participants.



**Friends of the
Melton Botanic Garden Inc.**

The Melton City Council (MCC) allocated \$50,000 in the 2016-17 budget following intensive discussions at the Community Consultation Budget Sessions. In June 2017 on appealing the council budget FMBG were allocated an amount of \$35,000 in the final 2017-2018 budget towards the development of the Melton Botanic Garden. We thank all the individuals and groups who wrote letters of support to help gain the funding outcome. We continue to have good communication and positive relationships with MCC. Many thanks go to David Pye who has assisted in the expenditure of MCC funds and prepared the project plan and budget for approval by MCC. Thanks go to David and Barb Pye for their continuing oversight of the MBG Working Party with Barb as Chair and David as Secretary to the group. Without their continued dedication and expertise I am sure we would have not have achieved so much in the development of the Melton Botanic Garden

We were successful in a Melton City Council Environment Grant for \$2000 to produce more interpretive signage in the Garden.

We continue to give presentations to various groups in Melton and beyond. These focus on the development, existing gardens and plants of the Melton Botanic Garden. We have also given presentations specifically on the Bushfoods Garden.

John Bentley continues as a representative on the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Committee and has also become a member of the Plant Trust Committee.

Our patron Jane Edmanson has been able to promote FMBG and the MBG whilst on 3AW and other media outlets. We continued our promotion of the botanic garden at the Djerriwarrh Festival, Bunnings Spring Launch, Bacchus Marsh Horticultural Show, APS plant sale events by Geelong, Yarra Yarra, and Melton and Bacchus Marsh groups. At the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2017 (MIFGS) we again had a wall space of 8 metres for our display. We fully staffed the display for the whole show and had plenty of good visitor interaction. The Melton Environment Group hosted a successful Bird Week activity and a bird walk at the MBG.

Our corporate members have continued their contributions to the development of the MBG. Bunnings Melton have assisted through use of their hire equipment and provision of materials.

Our membership has decreased from 262 individual financial members in 2016 to 233. However, we had 18 corporate members (up from 9) and 3 Associate members as at the 30th June 2017. Individual members in 2010/11 were 141, 206 in 2011/12, 207 in 2012/13, 218 in 2013/14 and 236 in 2014/15. On the MBG Facebook page we have increased from 450 to 830 likes and have around 276 members of the FMBG Facebook group and 110 Twitter followers. We encourage you to take every opportunity to promote FMBG membership and the Melton Botanic Garden. Having a strong membership base helps in obtaining grants and demonstrates commitment to the botanic garden.

The monthly meeting raffle continues to provide the group with funds to assist with the meeting expenses. The end of year celebration was held at the Depot with a good turn out and another great raffle with prizes contributed by local businesses. Much of our fundraising has been done 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, purchase new equipment and build the botanic garden.

We thanks Councillors and Melton City Council staff for their support and encouragement towards FMBG and the support for the continuing development of the Melton Botanic Garden. We thank Adrian Cope from MCC as our Liaison Officer who really helps to address issues and actions.



Friends of the
Melton Botanic Garden Inc.

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 FMBG Committee continued its dedicated work as it has again been another full on year and we all 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 and continue to be amazed by our list of achievements.

The FMBG Committee has again done a wonderful job in planning activities plus organising speakers, applying for grants, preparing flyers, organising field trips and social events, making and managing partnerships, managing the finances and all the other administrative functions to provide a well-run organisation. Many thanks to Barbara Frampton for taking on the position as Secretary. We also welcomed Sarah Baldacchino as new young face on the Committee.

Thanks to Alan Partridge in his role as Vice President and Assistant Secretary for his continuing support and contribution. Alan prepares and sends the many FMBG thank you letters throughout the year, so here is a thank you to Alan for a job well done.

Thanks to all our committee members, Alan, Barbara, Jen, Sarah, Steve, and Jill for their support and wonderful work throughout the year. Each has contributed a significant amount and used their skills and talents in steering FMBG. The Treasurer's role had been covered by John Bentley with many thanks to Corinne Cole, Manager, Platinum Accounting & Taxation, a Corporate Member for entering and maintaining our accounts in MYOB. This has been greatly appreciated.

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

John Bentley

President, Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden

Report presented at the Annual General Meeting 9 August 2017



Category Winner

Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria
Sustainable Cities Awards 2013
and 2016

sustainability.vic.gov.au/KABV

