



FRIENDS OF THE MELTON BOTANIC GARDEN (FMBG) Inc.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2017



Category Winner

**Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria
Sustainable Cities Awards 2013**

sustainability.vic.gov.au/KABV

1 FMBG Purpose/ Mission/VISION



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

**To foster, promote
and support the
development of a
botanic garden in
Melton**



FMBG Patron
Jane Edmanson OAM

2 BACKGROUND

The Strategic Plan set out herein is based on the premise of an on-going, mature and actively communicative relationship between the Friends of the Melton Botanic Gardens (“FMBG”) and the Melton City Council (“MCC”).

In the case of the FMBG this relationship is recognised and expressed in Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of Partnership Arrangements signed by the President of the FMBG and the authorised signatory for the MCC. An integral part of this process will set out the establishment of a Committee of Management (“COM”).

The FMBG Strategic Plan has been established and functioning since 2008.

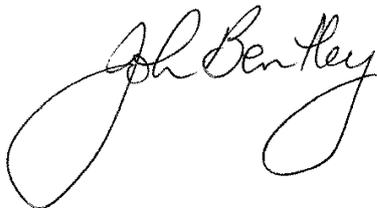
The 2014 – 2017 Strategic Plan is underpinned by a general undertaking and assurance by the FMBG that the implementation of all actions in the Plan will be carried out with appropriate and due consultation between the FMBG and MCC and that all actions are enabled by the current Constitution of the Friends and its bylaws.

Importantly, the Strategies and Actions within the Action Plan have been positioned within the framework of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc.

The Strategic Plan is a dynamic one and will be reviewed regularly and at least annually in a process facilitated by the FMBG Executive Committee. This will involve an Action Plan review within 3 months following the FMBG’s Annual General Meeting each year.

The Strategic Plan herein is formally adopted by the Friends’ committee as will amendments made following regular reviews.

John Bentley
President of the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden

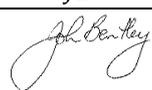


January 2014

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Document Revisions

Revision	Issue Date	Description	BY	CKD	APP
Rev a	Sept 2016	Updated actions list	JB	Exec	JB
Rev a	March 2016	Updated actions list	JB	Exec	JB
Rev a	Sept 2015	Reviewed and updated	DP/JB	Exec	JB
Issue 2	06/01/2014	Final Review & Approved for Issue	DP/JB	Exec	
Rev c	20/01/13	Final Review & Approved for Issue	DP	Exec	JB
Rev b	2/10/12	Reviewed and updated	DP	Exec	JB
Rev a	16/01/11	Reviewed and updated	DP	Exec	JB
Issue 1	19/01/10	Approved for Issue	DP	Exec	JB
1A	19/01/10	Draft for Review	DP		



3 INTRODUCTION

About the Friends

Unlike many Friends Groups throughout Australia which were established to support the strategic priorities of existing Botanic Gardens, the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden (FMBG) was initiated in 2003 as an idea conceived by a small group of Melton residents keen to see a Botanic Garden that would become a significant community interest and educational facility for Melton and the surrounding district.

This idea grew to the point where Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden FMBG now has a solid and rapidly growing membership of fully paid members, corporate members plus numerous supporters in the community. The FMBG has a strong relationship with the Melton City Council (MCC) and this is demonstrated through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Both groups work strongly towards promoting the Botanic Garden. The Melton Botanic Garden was officially gazetted in February 2011. We have strong support and involvement from groups in and around Melton such as The Australian Plants Society Melton and Bacchus Marsh Inc., Lions Club of Melton, Rotary Club of Melton, Powercor, Western Water and Melbourne Water.

The current FMBG membership provides a valuable and active support group for the Melton Botanic Garden. The FMBG currently donates many hours of voluntary time each year on garden development, environmental conservation, clean-up days, Grow the Garden Days, water testing and Frog Census and managing community involvement in the Botanic Garden. Specific groups have so far centred on plant propagation, restoration of indigenous vegetation along Ryans Creek and the main lake and planning and developing the Eucalyptus Arboretum within the north section of the Botanic Garden. As the Botanic Garden develops and there is increased public interest in the growing garden the FMBG will initiate various activities within the Melton Botanic Garden precinct providing visitor services which would not otherwise be available.

These visitor services will include: providing guided walks and printed information for the Garden; staffing of an Information Centre and exhibitions within the Garden; exhibiting examples of environmental conservation and sustainability; and enriching the experience of the Garden for visitors and tourists.

The FMBG developed a concept plan in 2006 and participated in the resulting landscape design for the Botanic Garden. In December 2010 MCC formally endorsed the Melton Botanic Garden Master Plan which is based on the Landscape Design Plan.



4 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The FMBG recognises the importance of having strategic partnerships with all levels of Government, community groups, business organisations and educational institutions

MBG initiative is actively supported by the MCC and the direction has been clearly set. The establishment of the MOU confirms and aligns the partnership between the FMBG and MCC. A Committee of Management has been identified as a critical step in the process to enable a number of key initiatives to take place to progress the Botanic Garden to the next level with appropriate ongoing grants to finance activities.

The FMBG also recognises the importance of developing and maintaining relationships with other botanic gardens, friends groups and common interest organisations and associations. It is important to align the strong interest from within these groups with the goals of the FMBG.

5 OBJECTIVES

The Melton Botanic Garden will be the only such community facility within the Urban Growth Boundaries of Western Melbourne and beyond and should be classified as a regional open space facility. The theme of the garden will be to showcase plants from low rainfall regions and sustainability principles. The area being developed will not only provide a recreational facility, but will provide a habitat for various fauna species which previously inhabited the area.

We propose, as outlined in the Master Plan and Landscape Design, to offer community education in flora identification and the opportunity for participation in the Botanic Garden development which will ensure the future community interest in the gardens.

In order to achieve its objectives the FMBG will need to maintain a strong viable memberships of volunteers and management.

The MBG will be a major tourism attraction for Melton.

OBJECTIVE 1: FRIENDS' PRIMARY FUNCTION

The Friends' primary function is to work in partnership with the MCC Management to support the following specific objective:

- **To oversee the implementation, development and promotion of the MBG.**

OBJECTIVE 2: FRIENDS' OBJECTIVES

This will be achieved through the Friends' objectives:

- **To increase knowledge and appreciation of plants, their significance and conservation local and globally, for the ongoing benefit and enjoyment of the community.**
- **To engage community and public interest in the activities of the MBG.**
- **To raise funds which may be used for any purpose being of benefit to the MBG and FMBG.**
- **To promote the MBG as a tourist destination.**
- **To demonstrate sustainability principles.**
- **To develop a scientific and educational focus for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge and appreciation of plants.**
- **To increase knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Australia's flora and fauna heritage.**
- **To promote Cultural and Heritage principles and recognise the contribution of the Traditional Owners.**

6 STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

The Strategic Plan has been developed around six core principles underpinned by implementation strategies with corresponding actions. Because key activities in the Strategic Plan depend on third party actions this plan must be reviewed every 12 months and where goals have not been met, new goals should be set with consultation between the parties involved. Whether goals have been met or not, they shall be recorded in the Action Schedule for the ensuing 12 months, until closed out or become irrelevant.

PRINCIPLE 1: STRONG IDENTITY FOR THE FRIENDS

- 1.1 Ensure a strong image for the Friends.
- 1.2 Disseminate and promote our logo and branding for the Friends.
- 1.3 Enhance the Friends' current publications, Website and use of the electronic media.

PRINCIPLE 2: EXCELLENCE IN INTERNAL OPERATIONS

- 2.1 Develop, document and improve governance, management processes and succession planning.
- 2.2 Streamline administrative processes within the FMBG.
- 2.3 Improve communication channels within the FMBG network.
- 2.4 Appoint Sub-Committees to ensure a coordinated approach to all Friends' activities.
- 2.5 Create a communication protocol for dealing and interacting with external organisations.
- 2.6 Develop clear guidelines to select and fund projects.
- 2.7 Prepare information and processes for new members to improve recruitment and retention of members.
- 2.8 Continue an active volunteer's program, systems and framework for FMBG volunteers.

PRINCIPLE 3: RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 Maintain a cash positive position with optimum financial management processes.
- 3.2 Continue and further develop our program to ensure an ongoing positive growth in membership.
- 3.3 Diversify funding streams.

PRINCIPLE 4: SMART PARTNERSHIPS

- 4.1 Nurture and improve a strong relationship with the MCC.
- 4.2 Establish a Committee of Management to manage the development of the MBG.
- 4.3 Grow links with other botanic garden friends groups to foster the exchange of ideas.
- 4.4 Continue cooperative activities with kindred organisations and clubs.
- 4.5 Continue “hands on” activities for public groups and schools.
- 4.6 Establish long term mutually beneficial relationships with organisations which ‘Share the Vision’.

PRINCIPLE 5: PROMOTE SOCIABILITY AND COMMUNAL ACTIVITY

- 5.1 Nurture the Friends through a range of interesting, inclusive and enjoyable people friendly events and activities.
- 5.2 Foster relationships and involvement with cultural and heritage groups and other groups which are compatible with the spirit of the botanic garden development.

PRINCIPLE 6: STRONG PUBLIC RELATIONS

- 6.1 Raise the profiles of the FMBG and MBG in Melton, regionally and beyond.
- 6.2 Market the FMBG and MBG.
- 6.3 Effectively use the FMBG Patron to promote the FMBG and the MBG.

7 Action Plan

PRINCIPLE 1: STRONG IDENTITY FOR THE FRIENDS

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Comments	Due Date	Achievements
1.1 Ensure a strong image for the Friends.	<p>Advance public awareness of the FMBG.</p> <p>The FMBG and its members present a positive image at all times and measure its performance.</p> <p>Actively seek awards and external recognition.</p>	FMBG and members.		Ongoing.	<p>Appeared on Gardening Australia (May 2014).</p> <p>Won City of Melton Business Excellence Award – Best Community and Not for Profit Org (2014), Best Community Enterprise Business (2015), and Best Access and Inclusion (2016). Sustainable Cities Keep Victoria Beautiful Award 2016 in partnership with Melton City Council. Australian Organics Recycling Association 2015 for Victorian Compost User Demonstrating Innovation and Advocacy in Amenity Markets.</p> <p>Achieving cross promotion from Western Region organisations.</p>
1.2 Disseminate and promote our logo and branding for the Friends.	Logo to be used to promote FMBG using it on promotional material, including all documentation and correspondence.	FMBG Executive committee, Members. Various.		Ongoing.	On track. Ongoing positive feedback on logo.

<p>1.3 Enhance the Friends' current publications, Website and use of the electronic media.</p>	<p>Continually review publications for relevance and interest. Use electronic and social media as the primary point for information. Maintain currency of electronic media.</p>	<p>FMBG and Members.</p>	<p>Twitter @Melton_BG – Followers: 94 Jan 2016, 104 Sep 2016. Instagram account created.</p> <p>MBG brochure produced (Dec 2015) and well received.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Webpage content is current. Facebook Group membership has increased: 175 Nov2014, 208 Jan 2016, 238 Sep 2016. Facebook MBG Page has increased – Likes: 191 Nov 2014, 380 Jan 2016, 643 Sep 2016. Plant Nursery and Depot Facebook Page – Likes: 132 Jan 2016, 181 Sep 2016. Standard Flyer has been revamped and has been well received.</p>
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PRINCIPLE 2: EXCELLENCE IN INTERNAL OPERATIONS

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Comments	Due Date	Achievements
2.1 Develop, document and improve governance, management processes and succession planning	Develop relevant policies and Management Plans that set out good management practises and meet legal obligations. Provide safe workplace guidelines and management principles. Set up a central repository for documentation which is accessible to the FMBG executive and members as appropriate.	FMBG Executive committee.	The strategies to introduce management processes are under way and will be an ongoing activity.	Ongoing	A FMBG anti-discrimination and harassment policy has been approved. Ongoing improvement of systems and records.
2.2 Streamline administrative processes within the FMBG.	Develop and streamline an internal process for triggering reminders, deadlines, agendas and the like. Establish a schedule and objectives for each FMBG Meeting. Circulate in advance of meetings.	FMBG Executive Committee.		Ongoing.	Continuing
2.3 Improve communication channels within the FMBG network.	Refine the processes for keeping members and appropriate groups informed. Timely distribution of publications and internal documents.	FMBG Executive Committee.		Ongoing	Continuing.
2.4 Appoint sub-committees to ensure a coordinated approach to all FMBG activities.	Assign a sub-committee to coordinate large events or activities. Appoint a Team Leader to each activity. Establish a reporting protocol for sub-groups to report to the executive. Ensure Calendar is current and circulated to members and the public.	FMBG Executive Committee.		Ongoing.	Actioned and ongoing.

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Comments	Due Date	Achievements
2.5 Create a communication protocol for dealing and interacting with external organisations.	Develop a communication protocol that delegates an appropriately experienced or skilled person to the relevant organisation.	FMBG Executive Committee.		Ongoing.	Ongoing.
2.6 Develop clear guidelines to select and fund projects.	Increase focus on developing guidelines for project priorities and the selection of sources of funds. Write guidelines for the selection of grant opportunities.	FMBG Executive Committee.	Focus on MOU arrangements for cooperation on seeking funding. Work towards Deductable Gift Recipient and Tax Concession Charity status to expand funding opportunities.	Ongoing.	Grant success led by MCC with "Back to Earth at MBG", Metropolitan Organics Strategy Fund Grant (Oct 2014). SCP Grant Bushfoods Garden (2016). Approached an Accountant re: DGR. Further ongoing actions required.
2.7 Prepare information and processes for new members to improve recruitment and retention of members.	Provide information for new members. Develop a member's handbook. Establish a guided walk schedule.	FMBG Executive Committee.		Ongoing.	Guided walks have brought in new members. Initiating the formation of a guiding team. Volunteer Handbook released May 2016.

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Comments	Due Date	Achievements
2.8 Continue an active volunteer's program with systems and a framework for FMBG volunteers.	<p>Prepare standard guidelines for the use of volunteers.</p> <p>Develop and communicate a range of suitable activities for volunteer participation.</p> <p>Network with other organisations to share knowledge and promote volunteer activities.</p>	FMBG Executive Committee/ Team Leader, MCC as required	Encourage volunteer participation with personal approaches.	Ongoing.	Well advanced with program.

PRINCIPLE 3: RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Comments	Due Date	Achievements
3.1 Maintain a cash positive position with optimum financial management processes.	Continue with the current effective structure with clear goals to identify and apply for grants from organisations and businesses. Invest and use funds for FMBG activities in developing the MBG.	FMBG Executive Committee.	MCC, Benevolent Organisations, Utilities.	Ongoing.	On track.
3.2 Continue and further develop our program to ensure ongoing positive growth in membership.	Attend community gatherings and place the FMBG and its intentions in high profile wherever possible. Advertise achievements.	FMBG Executive Committee, members		Ongoing.	On track. Used promotional opportunities for renewals and new memberships.
3.3 Diversify funding streams	The Executive to investigate fund raising activities by similar organisations to find ways to maximise grants and find alternative sources of funding. Seek tax deductibility status for donations. Develop a profitable nursery.	FMBG Executive Committee and Nursery Manager	FMBG to focus on grants for maintenance and infrastructure for maintenance activities.	Ongoing.	Retail nursery plant sales have exceeded planned budget and offer significant opportunities with additional opening days. Donations and plant sales from guided walks etc. MCC Funding amount of \$30k 2013/14, \$30k 2015/16, \$35k 2015/16, 50k 2016/17.

PRINCIPLE 4: SMART PARTNERSHIPS

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Comments	Due Date	Achievements
4.1 Nurture and improve a strong relationship with the MCC.	Invite MCC CEO, Councillors and staff to visit the garden and MBG events and activities on a regular basis. Establish regular meetings with the MCC MBG Liaison Officer. Report to the MCC on progress and planning of the MBG on a regular basis, at least annually.	FMBG Executive Committee, MCC.	FMBG reps attend most public Council Meetings	Ongoing	Monthly liaison meetings are held. An MCC tour in the MBG was held in (Sep 2014 & Oct 2015). We are now known to more divisions of the MCC and they are providing support. We had a briefing with MCC (July 2014).
4.2 Establish a COM to manage the development of the MBG.	Work with the MCC to gain in principle agreement for a COM and to draft Terms of Reference. Actively seek to be involved during this period.	FMBG Executive Committee and MCC.	MCC held their own discussion about the direction and commitment to MBG in Oct 2015.	Ongoing.	Awaiting the new MCC MBG master Plan with this projected to be funded in 2017/18. This item is on the MCC/FMBG Action.
4.3 Grow links with other botanic garden Friends groups to foster the exchange of ideas.	Actively seek out advice and support with other friends groups and encourage delegate exchanges and attendance at relevant conferences.	FMBG Executive Committee.	BGANZ, AAFBG FMBG representative on AAFBG Committee. Hosted an AAFBG post-conference tour of the garden.	Ongoing.	Six delegates attended the 2014 AFBG conference and a presentation given during the conference program. 4 delegates at the 2016 AAFBG Conference. Delegate attended & presented at 2015 BGANZ Congress.
4.4 Continue cooperative activities with kindred organisations and clubs.	Identify and strengthen lines of communication with local groups and organisations, Local and Federal Government and organisations such as Lions and Rotary, APS and common interest groups.	FMBG Executive Committee and Team Leaders and members.	Lions Club project completed. \$10k donation from Rotary Club of Melton for seating and picnic settings.	Ongoing.	Ongoing development of relationships. District Scouting Project – Indigenous Peoples Garden (2015, 2016).

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Comments	Due Date	Achievements
<p>4.5 Continue “hands on” activities for public groups and schools.</p>	<p>Introduce the FMBG to schools and interested groups using speakers presenting interesting information and/or cooperative activities. Grow the contact into a medium to distribute information and nurture interest by involvement.</p>	<p>FMBG Executive Committee and delegated representatives.</p>	<p>Try to organise at least 2 visits and/or contacts per year.</p> <p>Increased presentations to primary schools and kindergartens (2015/2016)</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Kurunjang Primary School Indigenous Aboriginal Garden completed in (June 2014). Bacchus Marsh Grammar school community week - 2 days at the MBG (Feb 2014, Mar 2015, Mar 2016 3 days). Melton GO! 2015, 2016. We had an excursion from the Kurunjang Primary School (Mar.2014). CRC Melton Y9 student planting Dec 2015 and other CRC students for NTD 2016. Kangan Institute undertook a 5 week course (May 2014).</p>

<p>4.6 Establish long term mutually beneficial relationships with organisations which 'Share the Vision'.</p>	<p>Include Public Utilities and organisations with common interests such as Water, Environment, Heritage, Cultural and Traditional Owners into the FMBG information loop and invite to jointly promote those interests that overlap. Invite high level representatives to attend meetings and view presentations.</p>	<p>FMBG Executive Committee and delegated representatives.</p>	<p>Bosistos, Powercor, Melbourne Water and Western Water.</p> <p>Member on the new Western Water Community Engagement Reference Group 2016.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>FMBG representative on the Western Water Community Consultative Committee (2014/15). Attended a Networking meeting with Powercor Managers June 2014. Promotional visit to Eynesbury Homestead (June 2014). Attended Vision West and Western tourism seminars (Feb 2014 & May 2015). Active representation on the Melton Network Tourism Group.</p>
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PRINCIPLE 5: PROMOTE SOCIABILITY AND COMMUNAL ACTIVITY

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Comments	Due Date	Achievements
<p>5.1 Nurture the Friends through a range of interesting, inclusive and enjoyable people friendly events and activities.</p>	<p>Give priority to including social activities at events such as barbeques, walks in the MBG, bus trips, planting days, clean-ups and invite attendance from a wide range of people. Encourage a positive, inviting and friendly environment for volunteers, guests and visitors. Seek regular feedback from members, visitors and volunteers.</p>	<p>FMBG Executive Committee, Team Leaders, and members.</p>	<p>Effective distribution of Newsletters and use of electronic media. At least 2 trips/year; at least 3 social dinners/year and at least one major guest speaker/year.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>We have had well attended clean-up, grow the garden, social dinners and bus trips.</p>
<p>5.2 Foster relationships and involvement with cultural and heritage groups and other groups which are compatible with the spirit of the botanic garden development.</p>	<p>Develop areas of the garden as per the Plan with the involvement of cultural and heritage groups and other groups as appropriate.</p>	<p>FMBG Executive Committee, members and relevant groups.</p>	<p>Project partnerships with the Melton Aboriginal Men's Groups and also UTSAV Malayalee Samaj an Indian Community MBG history project underway.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>We have planted a Sensory Garden With PAG and the Victorian Volcanic Plains Garden is well under way with strong interest from the relevant parties. Propagation for the Nursery and gardens has involved the various groups. Djerriwarrh Health Services Melton Men's Aboriginal Group (2015) and Aboriginal Parenting Group (2016) and UTSAV Malayalee Samaj (2015) in MCC Partnerships.</p>

PRINCIPLE 6: STRONG PUBLIC RELATIONS

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Comments	Due Date	
6.1 Raise the profiles of the FMBG and MBG in Melton, regionally and beyond.	Prepare a schedule of relevant opportunities where the Friends can attend and promote the MBG. Develop Nursery and MBG based and other sales opportunities to attract the public and stimulate interest in the MBG.	FMBG Executive Committee, Nursery Manager and members.	Actively circulate information to information centres.	Ongoing.	The FMBG Newsletter, project specific pamphlets and a 'Birds of the Melton Botanic Garden' have been disseminated and are available on the updated FMBG Webpage. Presentation at the BGANZ 2015 Congress.
6.2 Market the FMBG and MBG.	Prepare a Marketing Plan. Market newsworthy events and milestones to the press and radio stations and invite press attendance at events.	FMBG nominated Communication Officers.	President, secretary and nominated communication officers.	Ongoing.	We receive regular mentions on local radio and in the local newspapers. Also in social media.
6.3 Effectively use the FMBG Patron to promote the FMBG and the MBG.	Regular communication with the Patron highlighting achievements with suitable information for the Patron to use to promote the MBG and FMBG.	FMBG.	Aim for at least annual visits by the patron.		The Patron is referred to in FMBG documentation.

Appendix 1 Melton Botanic Garden Map

