

2023 Cranbourne Friends

Royal Botanic Gardens Vic Inc.

The Cranbourne Friends Community and Collaboration 2022/23 in Review

Annual Report



CRANBOURNE FRIENDS

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS VICTORIA



Welcome to the Cranbourne Friends RBGV 2022/23 Annual Report

We are delighted to present this report to you, in celebration of yet another successful year for Cranbourne Friends. As we ended the 2021/22 financial period, we longed for life to return to normal and for the worst of the pandemic to be behind us. Fortunately, this wish came true.

This Annual Report highlights the good works undertaken during the year by our volunteers on behalf of the Cranbourne Friends' membership. Each of these efforts will have been overseen by the Committee of Management, the Events Subcommittee and/or one of the Special Interest Groups. These teams and their volunteers work tirelessly to provide an engaging program of activities for our members and the public. Through their efforts, we raise funds to support the RBGV by providing grants for various infrastructure or enhancement projects. We are deeply grateful for everyone's contributions, big and small, and for the continued loyalty shown by the public in their support of the efforts of the Cranbourne Friends.

The Committee of Management takes this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all our new members, and we hope to see your involvement and enthusiasm grow as you become part of the Cranbourne Friends family. We are always open to any feedback you may want to share about your experience as a Friend, as we

are keen to continuously improve our offerings according to the interests and preferences of our members.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the RBGV and their staff for their support for the endeavours of the Cranbourne Friends. From Gardens' staff's cheerful hands-on assistance at Plant Sales to the administration's open-door policy and willingness to listen and consider our needs and proposals; all have been invaluable in fostering a strong and collaborative relationship. It is wonderful that the Friends can offer the RBGV sizeable financial grants that serve to make a difference, and in some instances, enable the completion of critical works.

Our ongoing support of the iconic Cranbourne Gardens makes an important contribution to Victoria's social, recreational and cultural fabric. These gardens are a refuge of serenity and beauty and a haven for our native flora and fauna. A hub of important horticulture and conservation, Cranbourne Gardens serves as a green oasis in the midst of rapidly growing housing estates. It is both a privilege and honour for the Cranbourne Friends to be associated with this very special and safe place.

*Cranbourne Friends
Committee of Management*



Melaleuca Spits and
Southern Lake
Photo: Jill Burness

Contents

Welcome to the CF RBGV 22/23 Annual Report	2
Cranbourne Friends - What do we do?	3
Acknowledgement of Country	3
President's Report	4
Members of the Cranbourne Friends Committee of Management	6
New Committee Member Profiles	6
Members of the Events Subcommittee	7
Highlights for 2022/23	8
Tributes	12
Special Interest Group Reports	13
Friends in Focus	13
Friends in the Gardens	13
Growing Friends	15
Botanical Illustrators	16
Herbarium Collectors	17
Botanical Fabricators	17
Events Subcommittee Report	21
Social Media Report	22
Membership Report	23
Nominations for an AAFBG Handbury Award	24
Treasurer's Report	28
Financials	30

Cranbourne Friends. What do we do?

We are a dedicated and active group of volunteers called the Cranbourne Friends. We exist to support the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria by undertaking voluntary tasks and organising activities which enhance community understanding and appreciation of the Gardens, and of Australian flora and fauna, and to enable the donation of funds to support Gardens' projects.

Cranbourne Friends' tasks and activities are conducted in a spirit of friendship, cooperation, and respect between members, to promote feelings of enjoyment and achievement, and in accordance with Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria procedures. We seek to build a strong culture based on mutual respect, collaboration, and common purpose. It's all about building a community of friends with Cranbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens at its heart.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that the Bunurong / Boonwurrung People are the traditional owners of the land on which the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne is located, and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in our communities today.

We recognise the very special and respectful relationship that our First Peoples had and continue to have, with the land and its waters. We acknowledge that this relationship is fundamental to Australian Indigenous culture: spiritual connectedness, language, law, family and identity.



Falls Creek trip 2023.
Photo: Alexandra Stalder



This year's membership card featuring
Acacia leprosa. Photo: Amy Akers



Handbury awards.
Photo: courtesy Christine Strachan.

President's Report

Dear Members,

Thank you for your loyalty to the Cranbourne Friends and our magnificent Gardens. So many of you are 'frequent flyers' and have watched the maturing of these Gardens from a time before the Australian Garden was even conceived. We are particularly keen to inform and include newer members and hope that this report highlighting the work and achievements of the last year might encourage you to become more active in the Friends. Our groups showcase their achievements in this annual report and welcome new interest. Our committees are always keen for renewal and welcome those with ideas, a range of skills and the time to commit to be an engaged contributor.

Our theme for this report revolves around celebrating the values of community and collaboration, and to that end I want to talk to you about what great 'teams' we have built.

The Committee of Management (CoM) is well structured, with a wonderful team bringing varied skills and lovely camaraderie. We believe that relationships with our Events Subcommittee and Special Interest Groups go from strength to strength as we support their activities. The relationship with the RBGV has flourished with encouragement from former Board Chair Chris Trotman, our recently retired Director and CEO Prof Tim Entwisle and especially from our Cranbourne Director Chris Russell and senior staff.

The Events Subcommittee has regrouped and found refreshed enthusiasm and ideas under the leadership of Mick Robertson. We are back – after the COVID blip – to being able to offer

"It is vital to bring new interest and diversity to our membership and to find active volunteers..."



interesting and exciting face-to-face talks, lectures, workshops and tours to slake members' thirst for knowledge and being with like-minded appreciators of our natural world.

Our significant contributions to the refurbishing of the Xanthorrhoea walk in the Stringybark Garden

and to the vast new Dry Riverbed already show tangible progress as watering systems are buried underground, new plants are burgeoning and planting is imminent. So much to enjoy, watching as they develop and feeling proud that our contributions have refurbished such significant areas of the Australian Garden.

Many members have supported the Plant Labels direct donation Project which will have lift-off in the new year. We are heartened that this vital project has been personally embraced by more than 30 contributing members. Thank you. Bringing this process under the watch of the Horticulture team will ensure that our Garden better provides critical plant information to all the appreciators, volunteers, staff and experts who spend time here. It may seem a small thing, but meeting the identification and scientific naming needs of a Botanic Garden is essential for everyone who wants to understand our flora.

This year has seen some great collaboration with the RBGV Development, Marketing and Communications team to design and install some suitable and attractive Cranbourne Friends promotional material within the Australian Garden in 2024. We are hopeful that locals who discovered the Gardens during lockdown will be interested to learn that there is a

group supporting this community asset which would welcome them. It is vital to bring new interest and diversity to our membership and to find active volunteers to spread the message of the importance of protecting and nurturing our local habitat.

I thank all our members who contribute their talents, time and energy in big and small but useful ways to the administration and organisation of the work of the Friends. They manage to provide members with great linkage through *Quicklink* and *Naturelink* and open house, fundraising through plant propagation and sales, and tours, events and activities. They are all valued and appreciated, and I salute their

"The Events Subcommittee has regrouped and found refreshed enthusiasm and ideas under the leadership of Mick Robertson."

creativity, resilience and loyalty – without this key band of committed supporters the Friends would not exist.

We support the vital work of Botanic Gardens both locally and globally

to bring both knowledge and an appreciation of the beauty and essential role of plants to the wider community. Our involvement in spreading the word about our local treasure can also foster understanding of why we are conserving plants for our changing climate. How good does it feel to contribute to making the big and small changes needed for all species to survive and thrive – including us?

Erin Cosgriff

Erin Cosgriff



Red Sand Garden Photo: Jill Burness

Members of the Cranbourne Friends Committee of Management

Erin Cosgriff	President
Jenny Potten	Secretary
Rosemary Miller	Vice President
Wendy Herauville	Treasurer
Helen Kennedy	Ordinary Member
Alexandra Stalder	Membership Secretary
Jill Burness	Ordinary Member

Treasurer Profile – Wendy Herauville

The Friends welcomed our new Treasurer after long-serving member Richard Clarke handed over the reins late last year. First joining the FiGs group, Wendy Herauville was happy to also take over responsibility for safeguarding the Friends' finances; she already manages the accounts for the family electrical contracting business in Cranbourne but knew she could take on more. As well as enjoying the 'hard yakka' two mornings a month with the FiGs and being on the Committee of Management, Wendy has now found time to join the Events Subcommittee, where her contribution as a local resident and in trip planning will help the Friends ensure programs and events offered are vital and relevant.

A person with huge energy and commitment, Wendy says: 'I have always been on committees (since her first child's kindergarten). I see them as the people who get things done; no point complaining about the lack of something if you're not prepared to put in the effort'.

Wendy brings a broad range of experience to the group. Starting as a cadet in Myer, she learned the skills of retail management, which stood her in good stead for future undertakings. When the family moved to Magnetic Island to live, Wendy ran a busy 7-day-a-week tourism business for many years, and in her spare time, she joined a committee that built a new Child Care Centre. Returning to Melbourne again, she then spent



Wendy Herauville

ten years as Chief Financial Officer at Trios Tabaret and later worked in a large accounting practice in Kew.

With a big infectious laugh and a wicked sense of humour, Wendy loves being involved with people who share her interests and relishes the physical work of the FiGs and helping to keep the Australian Garden shipshape for visitors to enjoy.

Living on a largeish property with a few sheep, chickens and bee hives, Wendy, a keen gardener, is currently learning about bee attractants and the importance of their relationship in the garden. She grows mostly native plants, and her partner tends a huge vegetable plot, producing enough food for regular big family get-togethers. A talented cook, Wendy enjoys experimenting with new recipes. Now a presence at the Growing Friends Plant Sales, Wendy will happily take your money in exchange for your box of plant treasures, while also having something delicious to share with other workers at coffee breaks!

Wendy particularly loves walking in the bush and being amongst the majesty of tall trees. She has always been a passionate camper, but twenty-two years in a tent has now given way to the luxury of a caravan. Nevertheless, she still misses 'the sound of the wind and the wildlife through the thin walls.'

Ordinary Member, Jill Burness

We have been delighted to welcome newly retired

RBGC Landscape Planner, Jill Burness, back to the Friends Committee. The wheel has come full circle, as she first joined the Committee as a staff representative and over her many years of service has undertaken a number of major activities, including reshaping the old staff quarters into the Elliot Centre, the new Friends home. She also ran some international and local tours and served with such distinction that she is one of our Honorary Life Members. So, Jill not only brings a wealth of horticultural and design knowledge but also a clear understanding of and

commitment to the role of a Friends organisation in the life of a botanic garden.

After her first degree (a Bachelor of Arts at Monash University), Jill moved to Canberra to work in the Department of Environment and later in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, returning to Melbourne in 1985 to study landscape architecture at the University of Melbourne. On a new career path, Jill worked for the South Melbourne City Council and later in a landscape design collaborative, based in the western suburbs.

Then, in 1995 Jill landed her dream job as Landscape Planner at RBGV, and for 27 years, was a much-loved and respected staff member, being heavily involved with TCL in the design and development of the Australian Garden. But retirement from the Gardens in 2022 didn't herald a life of idleness; rather it just meant exciting new doors opening for Jill. She has been



Jill Burness

appointed to the Maud Gibson Trust Committee and to the Board of the WAMA Foundation, where she has become involved in the establishment of the Grampians/Gariwerd Endemic Botanic Garden. The WAMA site is currently building a world-class National Gallery for Environmental Art. As a member of BGANZ, Jill has also generously given her time and knowledge to other regional botanic gardens.

Jill is a lover of classical music and live theatre, but her major passion is sailing. As a member of her local yacht club, she races on a keelboat every weekend, weather permitting! She's also a passionate traveller and now has more time to indulge this love, often joining the Friends on their tours; Jill enjoyed the first Sicily trip so much that she went again on the most recent one. All who have travelled and worked with Jill value her wide experience and knowledge and have enjoyed her warm company and ready laughter.

Members of the Events Subcommittee

Mick Robertson	Convenor
Nicky Zanen	Minute Secretary
Rosemary Miller	Administration
Ros Shepherd	Bookings
Tim Morrow	IT Facilitator
Tanya Johnson	Social Media
Alexandra Stalder	Promotions
Wendy Herauville	Member
Helen Morrow	Member
Louise Anderson	Member
Tony Anderson	Member
Melanie Fowler	RBGV Liaison

NB: Rodger Elliot was a Member until July 2022



Events Subcommittee new members. (L-R) Wendy Herauville, Rosemary Miller, Tanya Johnson, Nicky Zanen, Mick Robertson, Tony and Louise Anderson. Photo: Judith Cooke

Highlights for 2022/23

Committee changes

Changes in roles and membership are inevitable for voluntary committees; the key is to attract suitable office-bearers and enable them to flourish. Wendy Herauville was elected as Treasurer of the Friends in late 2022, following the retirement of Richard Clarke. Wendy is a most capable and efficient Treasurer and the Friends' finances are in good hands. Wendy is also an enthusiastic member of FiGs and Events.

Another welcome new appointment to the Committee is Jill Burness, who brings a wealth of professional knowledge about RBG Cranbourne to our deliberations. Mick Robertson, also a former RBGV staff member, has taken on the role of Event Coordinator with aplomb, after the resignation of long-standing Event Coordinator Barbara Jeffrey and a refresh of the Events Subcommittee. Welcome all!

Janette Wilson, who resigned from the Committee of Management at the 2021/22 AGM, also served as the CF Graphic Designer. She remains an enthusiastic member, plant lover and photographer. We are so grateful to Janette for her offer to provide ongoing assistance to the committee for this year's Annual Report's graphic design and layout.

Celebration of Warren Worboys and Jill Burness

In conjunction with the 2022 Annual General Meeting, we celebrated the careers and retirement of Warren Worboys and Jill Burness and expressed the Friend's gratitude to them. These two staff members have long worked closely with the Friends, both serving considerable periods on the CoM and have played pivotal roles in the creation of the Australian Garden. After moving speeches by Rodger Elliot and Helen Kennedy, they were presented with bouquets and individual photobooks recording their early days at Cranbourne and involvement with the Friends.

Australian Friends

To celebrate the 30th Anniversary and as a precursor to the AGM, the AAFBG members and delegates travelled to RBG Cranbourne, where they were welcomed with a celebratory morning tea by the Friends Committee. A Garden Ambassador guided tour of the Australian Garden followed before the coach tour continued on to Cruden Farm in Langwarrin.

The Cranbourne Friends is pleased to work with the AAFBG, which helps Friends groups throughout our vast country keep in contact.

Highlights for 2022/23

Professional development supported.

In September 2022, the 7th Global Botanic Gardens Congress (7GBGC) was held in Melbourne, with RBGV as the main organiser. The Cranbourne Friends sponsored the attendance of 16 Cranbourne RBGV staff at the congress, providing them with an amazing professional development opportunity and allowing them to coordinate group sessions and workshops.

A second major conference hosted by RBGV in October 2022 was the Botanic Guides Conference; the Cranbourne Friends sponsored the attendance of Garden Ambassadors, provided IT and logistical support for the conference workshops, and chaired sessions as needed by the organising committee, led by Barrie Gallacher.

Financial contributions to landscaping projects

Early in 2023, the Friends' finances were healthy following successful plant sales and events in 2022, despite the vicissitudes of the continued COVID disruption. This allowed the Committee to contribute funding towards several RBGC projects. One was the full renovation of the Dry Riverbed precinct. The design was revised in response to poor plant performance, unsightly plastic edging and difficult-to-manage river

pebble mulch. The State Government had funded much of this project, and the Friends were able to cover the costs of irrigation installation and new planting, to be completed in spring 2023.

A second injection of Friends' money was able to help bring to fruition the creation of a raised boardwalk that will take visitors through the ancient Grass Trees within the Stringybark Garden, reducing compaction and enhancing the visitor experience. Our funding is supplementing State funds and a private donation, to remediate the soil and install additional *Xanthorrhoea* and *Kingia* in the space, completing the transformation of the 'Grand Elders' precinct.

Plant Labels campaign

The Plant Labels project was developed to give the Friends membership a direct opportunity to help the Australian Garden have better, more comprehensive plant signage. Visitors, staff and volunteers rely on this information to fully appreciate and engage with the stunning flora at Cranbourne Gardens.

Members' direct donations helped to fund a major changeover whereby management of plant label production will move into the hands of the horticulturalists responsible for each Garden precinct. The project donations totalled \$12,000 of the \$25,000 required for its first phase, with the initial development of a design template that



Highlights for 2022/23

integrates seamlessly with the Living Collections database. This will move towards ensuring that accurate and up-to-date labelling keeps pace with the Gardens' planting evolution. It will result in an initial production of 500 labels across all Australian Garden precincts.

Visual promotion of the Friends in the Gardens

The Friends have had very productive discussions with Executive Director, Chris Russell and Alice Molan, Head of Development, Marketing & Communications regarding better visual promotion of the Cranbourne Friends within the Australian Garden. The aim is to develop appropriate signage and locations to highlight our existence and work. We trust that interested visitors seeking to develop a closer connection with the Gardens will see this signage and realise that they can join our group and become more informed about the Gardens and our environment.

Revitalisation of Group Activities

- Growing Friends

Since July last year, the Growing Friends have held three successful plant sales which is a sign that our activities are returning to normal. In 2023, the location changed, as our regular place near the kiosk was unavailable during building



Winter Plant Sale. Photo: Brenton Graystone

renovations. We had the Autumn Plant Sale on the lawn of the Ian Potter Precinct on a glorious sunny weekend, and the Winter Plant Sale in July in the same area but with foot traffic mainly using the pathway near the lake. We appreciate the assistance of the RBGV Infrastructure Manager Kevin Alexander in helping us to find suitable locations. Kevin and his team provide the equipment and much of the muscle necessary to set up our display tables, marquees, fencing and volunteer work stations. Their contribution is essential and their good humour is certainly appreciated.

• Friends in the Gardens

The Friends in the Gardens group now volunteers on two mornings per month; their assiduous efforts under the supervision of a horticulturist help keep the Australian Garden looking at its best.

Highlights for 2022/23

Visit of an Indonesian botanic illustrator

The Botanical Illustrators Group hosted Sue Foran from the Melbourne Friends and distinguished botanical artist Eunike Nugroho from the Indonesian Society of Botanical Artists for a day in late February 2022.

The visit provided the Botanic Illustrators and Fabricators group with a wonderful opportunity to exchange artistic ideas with Eunike. Eunike exhibits widely internationally and has many artworks in major collections of botanical art including our State Botanical Collection. Eunike toured the Growing Friends nursery and the Australian Garden, where she was intrigued by the Australian flora and vegetation, especially the large and ancient *Xanthorrhoea* (Grass Trees). Eunike's visit to Melbourne followed her attendance at an Australia Council for the Arts International residency program in Queensland.

Online resources a benefit

Training sessions have been provided to committee members on the use of the TidyHQ software for membership, booking and administrative functions. The benefit of its storage capacity is now evident, with an online archive of historic trip reports and diaries being gathered together by Rodger Elliot. This



Eunike Nugroho admiring banksia flowers. Photo: Kerry Robinson

information is available to members, through a Member Resources page. An online calendar for the Elliot Centre has similarly assisted in better sharing with RBGV when Friends are on site and/or the centre is occupied.

Member benefits and a booklet

Membership Officer Alexandra Stalder created a new guide for new members, an A5 booklet, which describes the different activities of the Friends and explains the purpose of the group; printed copies have been given to new members who enrolled at plant sales. A further feature of the booklet is an updated list of supporters and businesses that provide benefits to Friends members.



The New Visitor Reception Space. Photo: Jill Burness



The New Cafe. Photo: Jill Burness

Tributes

Shirley Russell

Shirley, mother of Chris Russell, RBGC Executive Director, died in January 2023. A true Friend, she was one of the people who came to the inaugural get-together of the Botanical Fabricators in November 2005. She remained a Fabricator for many years and contributed numerous items to the Fabricators' collections. Her major interest was in embroidery, and she was frequently a warm and friendly face welcoming visitors to special events like the Quilt Fairs.

Helen Kennedy

Vale Founding Friends' Member Neil Laird

Neil was a very important, strong and extremely reliable contributor to developing the Cranbourne Friends. He was a founding member of the interim steering committee which was formed at a Special Meeting in September 1991.

Neil served on the inaugural Committee in 1992 and made excellent formal contributions as Treasurer, Vice President and President until 2006. Neil's steady and constant support during these early days was commendable. In 1992,

he helped prepare the draft constitution and opened the first bank account. In the early days, Neil was a reliable person to attend committee meetings in order to have a quorum. In 1996, the initial small nursery was relocated to a space within the Gardens works area. Neil was involved and organised a plumber relative to install the irrigation.

At Friend's activities, it was common for Neil to be accompanied by his partner Vickie with their very energetic and active young children. They participated in the installation of the rabbit-proof fencing along the southern boundary, contributed to planting days in the bushland, joined in the fun of Fungi Forays and many more activities that generated financial support for the Cranbourne Gardens.

In recognition for performing his various roles so well and so freely, Neil was awarded Honorary Life Membership in October 1999.

After an extended illness, Neil died on 3rd August 2023. Our thoughts are with Vickie and her family following their loss and during their time of grieving.

Jill Burness and Rodger Elliot

Special Interest Groups

Friends in Focus

Although we have welcomed new members, membership remains relatively small, and attendances continued to be affected by the lingering effects of COVID. As the world began to open up once more, some of our members took up travelling again and returned with exciting images from exotic places, including distant parts of Australia and overseas.

Throughout the year we undertook a series of walks in the Australian Garden, watching the substantial makeovers taking place in the Dry River Bed, the Arid Garden and elsewhere, as well as recording seasonal changes. The colourful and prolific flowerings of iconic species in the Garden and sightings of resident wildlife provided highlights to our visits.

We set aside part of our meetings in July and November for 'Show and Tell' presentations. During these sessions, we enjoy sharing examples of our recent work in various formats, such as albums and photobooks. In September, we had the pleasure of hosting eight members from the Melbourne Friends Photography Group during one of our meetings. For our October meeting, we ventured to Stringybark Picnic Ground, where

member Laurie led a successful walk focused on bird photography.

The weather continued to provide challenges, the year producing overall cooler, windier and wetter conditions. However, this caused the historic filling of the Perched Swamp in the Bushland leading to photo opportunities not available for around 20 years.

We celebrated the third anniversary of our monthly publication, *Cranbourne Lens*, in April with a special issue that showcased the work of most of our members.

Members have also contributed to Friends' publications including *Naturelink* and *Quicklink* and Amy Akers was successful in having her image on this year's Membership Card. Members have also attended other Friends' events which have provided images for our collection.

Judith V Cooke

Friends in the Gardens

Mathieu Lascostes is the Horticulture staff team member who supervises most of our days in the Gardens although other staff also take occasional responsibility for the group. We make a good



Special Interest Groups

team and Mathieu always appreciates our efforts. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday morning of each month, although flexibility of attendance is always important. As in 2022, Christine Kenyon co-ordinates the 1st Tuesday group and Sue Spicer, the 3rd Tuesday group. There are generally 6-8 members for the first Tuesday group but often only 2-3 for the third Tuesday. During the months that Sue and Christine could not attend it was wonderful that different members took on the roles that kept the group in touch. FIGs has become a very friendly and social group. It is an ideal way for local residents and members of the Friends to enjoy some 'hands-on' experience. New members are welcome to join us.

Over the past 12 months, the group has:

- helped clear *Syzgium* hedge and Kangaroo Paw prunings. There are so many Kangaroo Paws in the Gardens that this job took several FIGs days in February and March.
- worked for several days in the Red Sand Garden in April, weeding the *Westringia* circles and the garden leading from the Dry Riverbed into the Red Sand Garden.

- worked at the edge of the Dry Riverbed and Red Sand Garden with Matt Henderson and other Horticultural team members.
- mulched the Forest and Gondwana Gardens - a big job that involved several of the Horticulture team also taking part.
- planted 200 Pigface (*Carpobrotus* sp.) plants along the Dry Riverbed Garden adjacent to the Red Sand Garden - a fantastic effort for that morning.
- raked and swept paths - a regular job.
- weeded and tidied the Garden beds adjacent to the Growing Friends plant sale site.
- weeded the garden beds adjacent to the car park.
- recently rejuvenated the Serpentine Path by raising and cleaning the stone mulch edging.

In September 2022, some members of the group spent extra time helping the Horticulture staff (who worked through 2 public holidays) prepare the Gardens for the BGANZ conference. The result: a beautifully presented Garden for delegates from around the world to see.

Special Interest Groups

Tony Anderson requested help from the Friends to buy new tools for the Horticulture staff and for the group to use. This need was raised by the Committee with the Executive Director who subsequently approved the purchase of new tools, a wonderful outcome.

Early this year the group, with partners, enjoyed a social night out with dinner at the local Amstel Club. We still finish each session with lunch in the café.

Christine Kenyon and Sue Spicer

Growing Friends

Looking back, it seems that each year brings surprises, challenges or something new - and so it did this past year. Highlights were a Casey Grant, a record Plant Sale at a different site and being nominated for a significant award.

In early August we successfully applied for a \$1,000 City of Casey Small Equipment Grant to go towards the purchase of three new plant benches; these replaced some short and narrow benches which were relocated to the Gardens' Nursery. The result was some much-needed extra space for plant storage.

Early February revealed that, due to changes at the usual Plant Sale site, we would no longer fit in that space alongside the kiosk. The area has been upgraded and now offers more protection, storage and learning space for the Gardens' Learning Programme - a positive change.

As that area is now too small for the Growing Friends, an alternative site had to be found for the upcoming March plant sale and the lawn at the Ian Potter Lake Precinct was chosen. This picturesque site was very much appreciated by both the Growing Friends and customers for its space, views and sunshine but not so by the lawn, as some wear and tear did occur. At this very busy Autumn sale the takings record was broken when we reached the \$30,000 mark.

Our sales continue to increase in popularity. The three annual sales, plus casual sales to individual customers as well as small orders, have resulted in this year's takings reaching over \$81,000. Expenditure was over \$16,000.

Customers are taking an increased interest in the *Gardens 4 Wildlife* concept. Accordingly, we have increased our holdings of plants that this program recommends. They are mostly grown from cuttings and seed from plants which

FIGs applying mulch to the Gondwana Garden. Front: Sue Gilbert, Bill Jones and Wendy Herauville. Behind: Sue Delaney, Matheiu Lascostes (staff) and Barrie Gallacher. Photo: Christine Kenyon



Christine Strachan, Mark Russo and Rob Francis at the cuttings table, propagating for Growing Friends. Photo: Jill Burness



Special Interest Groups

grow in the natural bushland surrounding the Australian Garden.

In May we learnt, much to our surprise and delight, that the Growing Friends had been nominated by the Cranbourne Friends (as members of the Australian Association Friends of Botanic Gardens), for a Handbury award. This nomination was successful, and the Award was presented at the AAFBG's 30th anniversary AGM. The award recognises exceptional contributions to an Australian Botanic Garden, Arboretum, or Park. We are proud to display the award certificate in the nursery.

To keep up with the demand, we expect that the 2023/24 year will be a busy one.

Marjanne Rook

Botanical Illustrators

The Botanical Illustrators have continued to meet twice a month over the last 12 months. Our diverse activities have included an exhibition at Karwarra Botanic Gardens, four workshops, a visit to the Melbourne Herbarium, bushland walks to collect specimens for the Cranbourne Collection, and selling cards at plant sales.

In August Margaret Holloway organised a visit to the Melbourne Herbarium to view the Cranbourne Collection. This was to provide a stimulus for the group to undertake artwork which will be donated to the Collection in the future. It was a

very interesting and informative activity. This was closely followed by a workshop titled 'Nuts about Graphite', entertainingly and skilfully conducted by Linda Weil. Linda reviewed the materials required and demonstrated tonal and textural techniques, imparting much information in an interesting manner. *Banksias* and *Hakeas* were the predominant subjects.

At the start of October, we participated in an exhibition of our work at Karwarra Australian Native Botanic Gardens in conjunction with the Australian Plants Society F.J.C Rogers Seminar, titled *Fabulous Peas*. We sold several works as well as cards depicting our artwork. At the end of October, we conducted a 3-day coloured pencil workshop with Geoff Sargeant. The subject of the workshop was *Grevilleas* and Geoff ably guided us through the intricacies of drawing a *Grevillea* and then suggested different techniques and colours with which to enhance our image. All our *Grevillea* images became welcome additions to our range of cards.

In December, at the Cranbourne Friends Annual General Meeting, Jenny Rollason presented her depiction of *Acacia suaveolens* to the Cranbourne Collection.

In February we had a visit from Sue Foran from Melbourne Friends and Euniko Nugroho from the Indonesian Society of Botanical Artists. We put on a small exhibition of our work, along with that of the Fabricators, and enjoyed showing Euniko

Special Interest Groups

the Australian Garden. Euniko presented us with a calendar from the ISBA.

May brought us another workshop with Linda Weil: 'Botanink'. This time the topic was using inks in botanical art. Linda encouraged us to use a style looser than we are used to, using liquid ink, soluble ink pens, markers and fine liners and no guidelines. We appreciated Linda's wonderful skills as a tutor providing both group demonstrations and targeted individual guidance while encouraging us to relax and have fun.

During June some of the BI group participated in an in-house workshop learning the techniques required to create linocuts and their printing. We were ably led by Chris Grevis-James, who specialises in linocuts and etching. We enjoyed making our own linocuts, and hand-printing the results and were pleasantly surprised with our results, a really worthwhile endeavour.

The Illustrators group continued to sell cards at the Plant Sales in conjunction with the Fabricators. The sales all contribute to the Friends' fundraising endeavours.

Thanks must go to Jan Maslen, Jenny Rollason, Kerry Robinson, Margaret Holloway and Chris Grevis-James for organising and coordinating our activities throughout the year. It all helped to provide a lively and enjoyable atmosphere where we can work on our art under the auspices of the Cranbourne Friends.

Margaret Kitchen

Herbarium Collectors

COVID has been a major disrupter to our group. We have lost many months of collecting and general work on the collection. Two more of our group have retired, both photographers, so the search for their replacement is pressing, as this is a vital part of our records.

The most notable species collected this past year were Orchids. The pride of the collection: *Caladenia fuscata*, *Cyanicula caerulea*, *Caladenia carnea* and *Glossodia major*.

Very little was out this winter, or had already been collected, so the emphasis has been on sorting and cataloguing in numerical order in keeping with the collection numbers, reviewing

the computer records, assessing the quantity of the material for recollecting if necessary and solving any anomalies in the records. All slow inside work, which unfortunately does not appeal to most of the group. They prefer the joy of being out in the bush area. However, when the work is completed, it will speed up authentication, aid easy placement and removal of field notes, and enhance the many steps needed before mounting.

The Herbarium Collectors are deeply appreciative of the efforts of Warren Worboys and Alex Smart, who have helped keep our project going over many years.

Nola Foster

Botanical Fabricators

In October 2022, the Australian Plant Society Maroondah group held the FCJ Rogers Biennial Seminar *Fabulous Peas*. In conjunction with this event, Karwarra Garden & Nursery in Mount

Continues on page 20

Herbarium Collectors Nola Foster, Carolyn Landon and Sue Bradley pressing and cataloguing. Photo: Larry Hills



Botanical Illustrators colour pencil workshop. At front, Carolyn Landon and Helen Morrow opposite Margaret Kitchen. Photo: Jan Maslen





Group in Taormina, Sicily.
Photo: Jill Burness



Rockpool Group on Lord
Howe Island. Photo P Miller



Falls Creek Group Photo: Alexandra
Stalder



Falls Creek Trip 2023
Photo: Alexandra Stalder

Special Interest Groups

Dandenong hosted an eight-day exhibition featuring displays from the Botanical Fabricators and Botanical Illustrators. On the conference’s final day, the APS groups visited Karwarra Gardens and our exhibition. These extensive Gardens, always worth visiting, are particularly beautiful in October, with wonderful displays of Waratahs, *Chorizema*, Orchids and *Prostanthera* varieties. The exhibition achieved sales totalling \$327.

During that same month, we participated in the Growing Friends Plant Sale. The event faced a challenging start, with heavy rain on the previous day and opening morning and while the Growing Friends were able to begin trading, we had to delay our opening. Fortunately, after an hour the rain cleared to an overcast day. Suddenly we looked around and customers were appearing, ready to purchase plants and our items. So an unpromising and gloomy start finished with pleasing sales results of \$1,110.

The weather was perfect for the Textile & Art Marquee stall held in conjunction with the Growing Friends Plant Sale on the 25th and 26th of March. We could not have hoped for a better Autumn weekend and the Fabricators made an impressive contribution, raising \$886. An interesting mix of items was on offer, with two Signature Quilts that had been in stock for several years, and many new items, selling very quickly.

Unfortunately, numbers in our group have declined since the onset of COVID. Due to a family illness, we were so short-staffed for the March stall, that we considered cancelling it. However, thanks to the dedication of Jenny Rollason and Dorothy Cole, who stepped in and managed the stall for the full weekend together with the Botanical Illustrators, we were able to proceed. The level of sales was especially good despite the shortage of helpers. Our need for new members was further emphasised at our April Fabricators meeting when only three members were present.

Total takings for Botanical Fabricators for the year 2022-2023 are:

October 22, Karwarra Gardens	\$ 327.00
October 22 Plant Sale	1110.10
March 23 Plant Sale	886.00
TOTAL	2323.10

Wendy Smart

Botanical Fabricators display. Photo: Wendy Smart



Events Subcommittee

The Events Sub-committee has undergone quite a change in personnel over the last year. We have lost a lot of experience, but we have gained an injection of new people with fresh ideas. Over the year we have been sad to farewell Rodger Elliot, Alex Smart, Lyn Blackburn, Barbara Jeffries, Ian Chisholm, Jacqui Winstanley and Richard Clarke. That is a wealth of experience and a very hard act to follow. Wish us luck! However, we are still able to call on their knowledge, and more broadly will be reaching out to the membership for support and ideas. The current committee going into the 2024 year comprises Mick Robertson as Convenor, Nicky Zanen: Minute Secretary, Rosemary Miller: Administration, Ros Shepherd: Bookings, Tim Morrow: IT facilitator, Tanya Johnson: Social Media, Alex Stalder: Promotions, Wendy Herauville: Treasurer, and Helen Morrow, Tony, and Louise Anderson: members, with Melanie Fowler our Gardens Liaison.

It now feels like we have emerged from the most serious constraints imposed on us by the COVID pandemic and whilst we might not have run quite the variety of activities we did previously, it has been a full schedule and we are preparing an extensive and exciting calendar of activities for the coming season.

The third and much-postponed Sicily tour finally took place in May this year. Originally scheduled for 2020, it was stopped by the new contagious disease that had established a stronghold in Italy and which rapidly became a global pandemic. But despite the long delay the trip was once again a fabulous success, only slightly marred by some unseasonal rain and cool weather. Alf Reina and Alfie Orlando led a well-organized and fun-filled tour of this fascinating southern Italian island.

In descending order of global magnitude, the international tour is followed by the September 2022 interstate tour of the now rat-free Lord Howe Island. Verena Reich presented an overview of the trip at an Open House with a glowing account of the trip and some great photos. Lord Howe Island is a beautiful location offering much interest and has been hugely popular with the Cranbourne Friends; we might need to run this trip again.

Alex Stalder again managed to pull off the Alpine Tour this year, despite the Falls Creek access road closure; it was the first tour back on the schedule after Covid, in January 2023. It was based at Howman’s Gap and co-led by Chris Clarke, with twenty-eight members attending to enjoy the alpine flora.

Very successful workshops were completed, including Native Flower Arranging with Warren Worboys where many of the flowers came from Jenny and Paul Sierakowski’s Inverloch Garden and a 2-day *Proteaceae* plant lab. with Chloe Foster and Rodger Elliot. Other activities included the booked-out Native Plant propagation workshop, a Fungi Foray with Dr Camille Truong and a behind-the-scenes Water Treatment Plant tour by recently retired Warren Warboys.

One of the Events Subcommittee’s prime functions, aside from providing opportunities for just having fun and learning things, is to generate revenue that is donated to the Gardens to further enhance the experience of visitors and its conservation work. Income generated from tours and workshops amounted to \$19,154.60 which is significantly up on last year.

Open House talks are members-only events for which there is no charge. Held at the Elliot Centre, and run on the second Thursday of the month, these events regularly command audiences of 15-30 members. Many of these events are also now live-streamed for members unable to attend in person. Our diverse offerings have included talks by Gardens staff: on the *Fire Protection Plan* by Ricardo Simao and the *Fauna Protection Program* by Tricia Stewart. Other talks included *Paleo-Meteorology* with Tim Morrow, *Colours of Australia* with Rodger Elliot, *Moroccan Gardens* with Andrew and Suzy Spiers, *Climate Change* with Deb Abbs, *Where Art Meets Nature* with Jill Burness and *Bird Banding in Broome* with Prue Wright.

Our final event for the year was the 2024 Event Planning afternoon, where about 20 people contributed ideas to help map out what promises to be a full and exciting calendar for next year.

Mick Robertson



Sicily Tour, Taormina, Photo: Jill Burness

Social media report

Over the past 12 months, the Cranbourne Friends Facebook page has seen a reach of 52,680, with Instagram having a reach of 11,311 for the same period. We've gained 253 new likes on Facebook, taking our total to 3,777, with 5,484 followers on Instagram.

Over 80% of our Facebook followers are women, whereas on Instagram that figure drops to 65%. These numbers are similar to the previous 12 months. Across both platforms, the 35-44 age group has the highest number of followers for both men and women.

The top city for our audience is Melbourne, which isn't surprising, although it is encouraging to know people from other parts of Australia are interested in Cranbourne Gardens, and Cranbourne Friends. While Australia is the top country for our followers, we do have interest from people in other countries. Second on the list is the United States.

While all the Growing Friends Plant Sale posts are extremely popular across Facebook and Instagram, the post with the most reach on Facebook was the 2022 Winter Sale.



Tanya Johnson

"The 35-44 age group has the highest number of followers for both men and women."



Overall, the most popular Facebook post was about the *Xanthorrhoea* (grass trees) in the Stringybark Garden, with photos by Eril Deighton.

A repost of Kaishan Qu's photograph of *Homoranthus darwinoides* in the Ironbark Garden was the most popular Instagram post for 2022.

While I may be the hands behind the Social Media posts, I am not alone in this position. The Friends Committee is very supportive and provides lots of input and ideas as well as sending photos and text that I can then share across our platforms. There are also many people who share wonderful photos of the things they see at the Gardens, and it's a delight to be able to repost these for our followers.

It's been a great year on Social Media for Cranbourne Friends, and I'm eager to see what the next 12 months bring.

Tanya Johnson

Membership Report

Welcome to the 132 new members who joined us in the last year, many of whom signed up at one of our Growing Friends plant sales. We hope that you are enjoying your membership and all that it has to offer. Our membership card this year featured Friends member, Sharon Start's fabulous photograph of a Silvereye, *Zosterops lateralis* in the Gondwana Garden at the Cranbourne Gardens. The photo was taken by Sharon in the early morning when the light was soft creating a lovely blue hue.

This year we also introduced a new handbook for members 'Welcome to the Friends: A guide for new members of the Cranbourne Friends, RBGV Inc.' The handbook is filled with useful information about the Friends, detailing how we support the Gardens, resources available for members and how to get involved in Friends special interest groups. The handbook is sent to all new members and is also available in the members section of the Cranbourne Friends website.

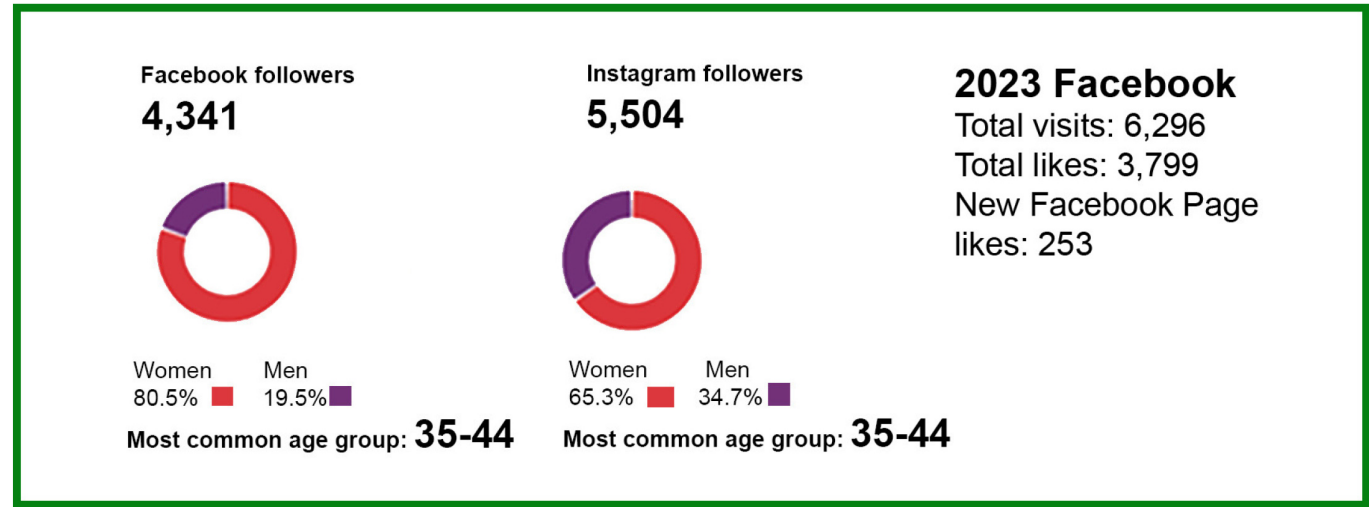
Thanks to the wonderful work of committee member Helen Kennedy we have also been able to reinvigorate our Friends benefits, through which businesses and organisations can support the Friends by providing discounts to our members. A full list can be found in the members section of the Cranbourne Friends website.

Looking ahead we are excited to have the opportunity to improve our visual presence at the Cranbourne Gardens, to share with the community and visitors what we do and inspire them to join us!

Alexandra Stalder
Membership Secretary



Below: The Rock Pool Walk, Photo: Jill Burness
Right: This year's card features *Acacia leprosa* 'Scarlet Blaze'. Photo: Amy Akers.



About the AAFBG Award

The Cranbourne Friends continues its membership of the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AAFBG), a not-for-profit incorporated association.

Its purpose is to engage and empower communities, and to foster the growth of Friends groups who share a common passion for the well-being and public appreciation of botanic gardens. Its focuses are multifaceted and include conservation and development, scientific research, education, historical preservation, cultural enrichment, and recreational enjoyment.

Their logo features a eucalyptus flower brimming with numerous stamens, representing both their Australian members and international affiliates.



Nomination of Gwen and Rodger Elliot for an AAFBG Award

Rodger and Gwen have devoted their entire lives to Australian flora in one way or another. Rodger's interest started early, and his vast knowledge expanded hugely when he and Gwen began and ran Austraflorea Native Plant Nursery in Montrose in the 1960s. They travelled throughout much of Australia to study indigenous plants and as a result, their wholesale nursery arm was used for the research and propagation of new species of Australian plants that were suitable for home horticulture. (Much later, Rodger also participated in the development of an export business called Koala Blooms, which provided a range of attractive Australian plants for sale on the west coast of the United States). Austraflorea Nursery soon became the gold standard nursery for Australian plants and made Rodger the go-to guru for anybody needing to make wise choices for their gardens.

It was not surprising, therefore, that in the early stages of planning a new Garden to showcase only Australian flora at Cranbourne in the early 1990s, Rodger's expert knowledge was called upon by the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) - where he had already developed close contacts with staff. He was one of a small group of skilled professionals gathered by the then RBGV CEO Philip Moors, to prepare the brief for what would become a brand new 'twenty-first century' Botanic Garden. Rodger's expertise – and wisdom - was so valued that in

The Cranbourne Friends is a part of this community, sharing experiences, knowledge, and enthusiasm for Australia's extraordinary array of botanic gardens.

The contributions of particular Friends Members were formally recognised by the [Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens \(AAFBG\)](#) in May 2023, at their AGM and 30th birthday function, hosted by the Melbourne Friends. The Handbury Awards recognise exceptional contributions to an Australian Botanic Garden, Arboretum, or Park, by an AAFBG member group or individual from a member group. Our successful nominees were Rodger and Gwen Elliot (Individual awards) and the CF Growing Friends group (organisation award).

1994 he was appointed to the RBGV Board, remaining in that role until 2002.

Rodger and Gwen joined the Friends of the Cranbourne Gardens soon after it was formed in 1991, its major objective being to promote knowledge about and raise money for the Gardens. They soon joined the Committee, and both served a term as President. Rodger then ran the Events sub-committee while Gwen, as well as regularly sharing the responsibility of running tours with her husband, turned her mind to different and new undertakings that would appeal to members. One of these was the creation of the Botanical Fabricators group, its members meeting monthly for friendship and to create items for sale using fabrics featuring Australian flora or fauna. Over time Gwen also organised several textile exhibitions and associated raffles at the Gardens, both good money-raisers. These exhibitions attracted huge crowds and for many attendees, it was their first introduction to this new botanical garden. Giving her knowledge to the Growing Friends, Gwen has also been a member of that hugely successful group for many years.

The Elliot's worked tirelessly in their varied roles and both were awarded Life Membership of the Friends for their joint service to the organisation. The Friends' new home on site was named the Elliot Centre in their

honour. Rodger was also invited to join the Board of the Maud Gibson Trust, a major supporter of the RBGV, eventually becoming its Chairman. As well as providing funding for Gardens projects, the Trust also gives scholarships to Gardens staff wanting to undertake research to benefit the Gardens, and many have received these awards. Rodger served on the Maud Gibson Trust Committee for 31 years, a very substantial commitment by any measure.

In addition to their work supporting the RBGV as advisors, fundraisers and hands-on activists, Rodger and Gwen led or organised countless Friends outings and tours, involving visits to Botanic Gardens in other Australian states, including Western Australia and Tasmania, and overseas, to America. During a private visit to America, they were invited to design a garden at the San Francisco Botanical Garden and since the 1970's the Elliot's have also supported an Australian plant collection at the Santa Cruz Arboretum, regularly sending specimens.

The close and abiding friendships the couple developed over many years with experts from Botanic Gardens across Australia and around the world led to their regular involvement in events run by the Cranbourne Friends Events Subcommittee. Many have benefitted from their time, skills and enthusiasm at workshops (from successful propagation techniques to researching specific genera), tours and festivals organised by the Friends. Cranbourne Gardens staff also were often involved, as both groups worked together to raise both awareness of the new Botanic Garden and its flora. Rodger continues to unstintingly share his knowledge with staff on both RBGV sites, fostering their professional development.

The Elliot's have written an astonishing 35 books between them, the subject matter reflecting the writers' particular passions. Gwen has written 10; all offer accessible advice on Australian plants: for garden colour, for pot cultivation, for use in art and craft, etc – and for just having 'fun' with them. Rodger's range from practical hands-on publications on how to prune native plants and what diseases they might suffer from, to others recommending species suitable for growing in a warming climate. His tour de force, however, is the massive 9-volume Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants



Rodger and Gwen Elliot after the award presentation with Linda Beveridge and Bob Ducrou of AAFBG.

Suitable for Cultivation, published over 30 years. These volumes became invaluable bibles for anyone - including the Cranbourne Gardens nursery staff - wanting advice on propagation, cultivation and care. In addition, Rodger has written countless advice sheets, guides, and articles, for newspapers and magazines. Rodger and Gwen also found time to give regular plant advice on radio and over many years have developed a coterie of loyal listeners. They have participated in many television gardening programs. They were both founding members of the Horticultural Media Association and have been inducted into their Hall of Fame. Both also have Order of Australia medals, presented in 2001 in recognition of their outstanding roles in the promotion of our flora.

The Elliot's have been a formidable partnership, in life, work and dedication; indeed it is hard to think of one without the other. They have given of themselves with endless generosity and little fanfare. Whether it's been promoting the growth of the Cranbourne Friends membership, running big events at the Gardens (like the week-long Kangaroo Paw Festival – to which countless members of the public came to enjoy, learn – and buy), leading tours to Botanic Gardens overseas, giving time and knowledge endlessly to members at workshops and Gardens staff (who are often offered free or discounted entry to seminars and workshops), writing books or broadcasting, it would be hard to imagine anyone more fitting to be the recipients of the 2023 Handbury Award than Rodger and Gwen.

Nomination of the Growing Friends for an AAFBG Handbury Award

The Growing Friends have and continue to make exceptional and varied contributions to support the association's objectives, the aspirations of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne, and Australian native plant-loving gardeners.

The Growing Friends is a Special Interest Group of the Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens. More than 20 volunteers gather each week on-site to propagate native plants from seed or cuttings generally sourced from the Gardens.

Many visitors to the Australian Garden in Cranbourne are amazed by the beauty and diversity of the Australian flora they see growing within a backdrop of stunning and quintessentially diverse, interpreted landscapes.

Seeing the mature form of these living plants including their flowers often propels visitors and gardening enthusiasts alike to extend their plant collections. A visit to the Growing Friends Nursery or any of its plant sales offers members or the public a broad selection of plants found within the Cranbourne Botanic Garden.

The funds generated from these sales return a substantial and steady stream of income for the Cranbourne Friends. The money raised by the Growing Friends plant nursery is returned to the Royal Botanic Gardens, funding enhancements that will benefit future visitors. These enhancements might include new plantings, adjuncts to new or existing infrastructure, or services that promote visitor access such as the bus service that runs between the Cranbourne Railway Station and the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens.

This interconnected dynamic between the public at large, the RBGV and the Cranbourne Growing Friends brings about benefits for all and is at the heart of why we the Cranbourne Friends exist.

Members and the public are able to take a piece of the gardens home, at the same time as supporting the work of the nursery and the Gardens. The Growing Friends plant nursery benefits from the sales, and the Royal Botanic Gardens benefit from the funds raised as it allows them to continue to enhance and improve the gardens for future visitors to enjoy.

By working together, we can leverage resources and expertise to achieve greater impact and raise awareness about the importance of using native plants in landscaping. This, in turn, can have a positive impact on local ecosystems and biodiversity, as native plants are better adapted to the local climate and provide important habitat and food sources for our native wildlife.

This collaboration and collective action also serve to promote sustainable and environmentally friendly practices to which we feel strongly committed.

The Growing Friends thrives as a result of the considerable support provided by the RBGV staff and by the dedicated and passionate efforts of a solid core of loyal volunteers who work all year round. The growing of Australian native plants and their sale to the public dates right

back to 1993, when they started in the tiny nursery No. 1. They are now using the well-equipped and very much larger Nursery No. 4, after 30 years of work. Likewise, some of our volunteers have also been around a very long time indeed which says something about the sense of purpose and camaraderie that all the Growing Friends share and enjoy.

Many of the volunteers bring a deep understanding and curiosity about a particular genus of plant, for example, Banksias,



Barbara Jeffrey, Christine Strachan and Jennifer Potton received the award on behalf of the Growing Friends, from AAFBG President Linda Beveridge (at left) and AAFBG Secretary Bob Ducrou (far right). Photos: courtesy Christine Strachan.

Brachychitons or Eremophilas. Others with professional backgrounds in horticulture are our resident experts for all sorts of inquiries. Others know the power of good record-keeping systems which guide us about what strikes best and when. Some help us awaken dormant seeds using different techniques such as abrading, smoking or soaking. Others are great at weeding, cleaning, pruning, feeding, identifying, describing and labelling. Whatever people's contribution, it's all of value and important to the cycle of life within our wonderful plant nursery.

This collaborative spirit and willingness to share knowledge and skills, helps everyone learn and appreciate Australian native plants and each other. While relatively small in number they are nonetheless driven contributors committed to making a meaningful difference.

There is nothing that excites the Growing Friends more than a bumper plant sale. The atmosphere is lively with lots of enjoyment, laughter, and helpful conversation among customers seeking advice for their gardening

needs. The sense of achievement and contribution to a worthy cause is a strong motivator that fills all the volunteers with a deep sense of pride and goodwill.

In addition, the Growing Friends readily responds to good causes, particularly within the local community. Its association with the City of Casey's Gardens for Wildlife program is an example of a collaborative partnership between the City of Casey and the Growing Friends. This program provides an array of plants that provide habitat and food for insects, birds and animals native to the local area. It also supplies batches of select plants to the City of Casey for planting in public spaces, for the Seaford Arboretum and for RBGV educational programs. This breadth of impact highlights the capacity and reputation of the Growing Friends only limited by available nursery space.

The committee believes that the exceptional service provided by Marjanne Rook, and the Growing Friends team make them worthy candidates for the Handbury Award, and it is our hope that their dedication and commitment can be recognized and celebrated.

Treasurer's Report

I accepted the role of Treasurer for the Cranbourne Friends at the 2021/22 Annual General Meeting, following Richard Clarke's retirement. To prepare for this transition, I had several meetings with the former Treasurer to familiarise me with the responsibilities of this position and assumed sole responsibility for Cranbourne Friends finances in December 2022. I am thankful to Richard for his support and guidance as it assisted me to understand the intricacies of the role and the work of the Committee more fully.

Despite this preparation, I have been on a steep learning curve as my exposure to the Gardens was limited prior to this time. In fact, it was living under the restrictions of COVID that led me to explore the Gardens more closely and more often. Since then, my level of involvement has increased and in addition to this role, I am also involved with the Friends in the Garden team and help out in other practical ways. I have attended some events and have enjoyed getting to know people along the way. I have had great fun, had lots of laughs and made several new friends and connections.

During the second half of the 2022/23 financial year, I focused on several key administrative tasks. I reviewed the number and structure of the cost centres in the Profit & Loss statements. I also engaged with the bank regarding the frequency and type of records required and reviewed the presentation of financial reports received by the committee of management. Additionally the committee has taken the initiative of establishing term deposit bank accounts, leading to a notable enhancement in annual interest income.



Wendy Herauville

“An overall increase in the annual income... of 71%.”

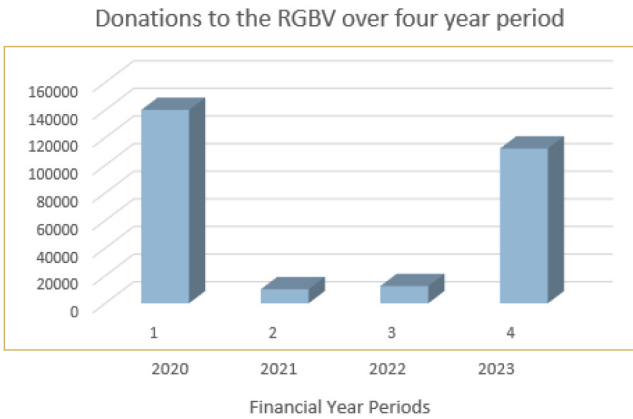
By comparing the financial data of 2022 with that of 2023, a clear picture emerges of some very deliberate endeavours aimed at revitalizing and enhancing the spectrum of activities available to our members in the wake of the COVID pandemic and in spite of the economic downturn besetting the Australian economy.

This has resulted in some substantial improvements as shown in our financial records. This financial turnaround is not a coincidence; rather, it is the result of a variety of collaborative and targeted initiatives, underscored by some remarkable achievements.

Noteworthy progress has been achieved across various fronts: revenue from plant sales witnessed an impressive surge of 113% and membership income grew by 50%, and untied donations increased by 40%. It is also notable that event income has held steady between 2022 and 2023, as the new subcommittee has taken up the challenge to deliver a more targeted range of activities with decreased costs, thereby yielding a higher level of event income overall.

These results have culminated in an overall increase in the annual income for this period of 71%. The disbursement of a donation of \$112k to the Gardens resulted in the year ending showing a deficit. Nevertheless, there remains a robust \$160k retained from previous years available if needed for various upcoming works within the Gardens.

As shown in the graph below, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly hindered the Cranbourne Friends' ability to raise funds for donation to the RGBV. At the same time, the RGBV had been fortunate to secure a number of Eco Tourism funding grants, geared at enriching visitor experiences within the Cranbourne Gardens. The fiscal year 2022/23 has seen a remarkable upturn, driven by robust member and public support of a range of reinvigorated income-producing activities held throughout the year. Having already donated \$112,000 to the RGBV, we are pleased that we remain in a good position to fund more projects once the current



This graph highlights the effects of COVID on our activities during 2021 and 2022 and the focus of the RGBV on other activities.

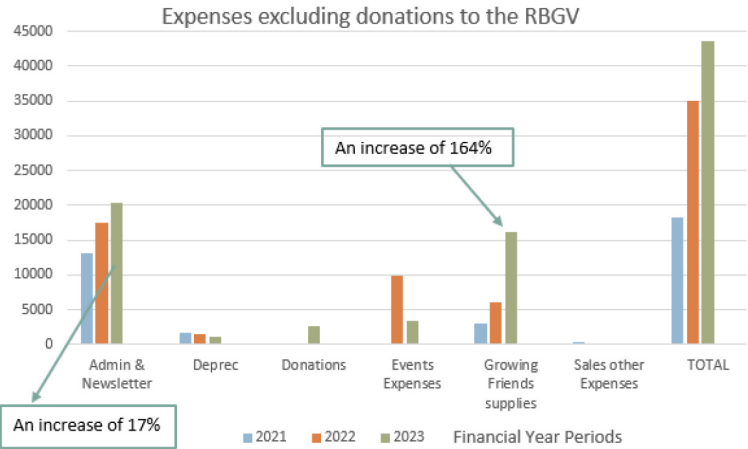
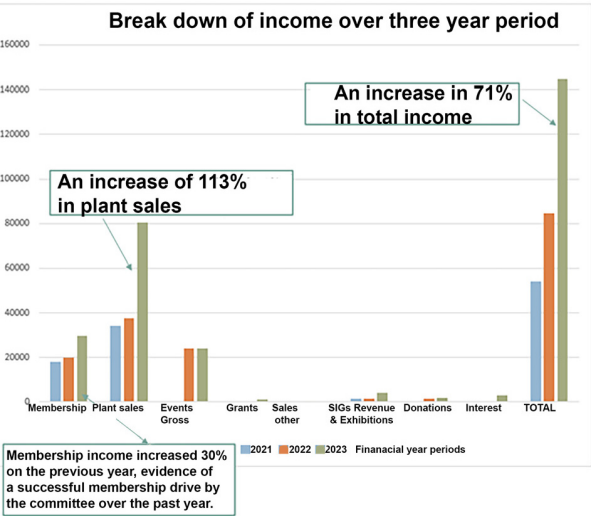
Stringybark and Dry Riverbed gardens and Plant Labels projects are completed. The value of our efforts in quietly supporting the work of the RGBV at Cranbourne has regained momentum.

Note 1 in the 2022/23 Audited Financial Report presents a detailed breakdown of both Administration and Newsletter expenses. This breakdown highlights an increase in costs which the committee attributes to rises in supplies procurement, production processes and services obtained from external providers. This upward trend is evident throughout various facets of the Cranbourne Friends operations including for instance in the Growing Friends Nursery and will be an area to be reviewed more closely in the coming financial year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Cranbourne Friends volunteers and members for their loyal and consistent support. Without the combined dedication of each individual and the collective contributions our ability to assist the RGBV Cranbourne would be far less substantial. It is also important to acknowledge the many interested members of the public for their support of our endeavours. We hope this continues and that news of the remarkable work of the CF spreads and inspires an even broader audience.

Wendy Herauville

Wendy Herauville



Stringybark Boardwalk Construction. Photo: RGBV

CRANBOURNE FRIENDS BOTANIC GARDENS VICTORIA INCORPORATED

ABN 43 551 008 609

FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

Kevin Jessup | Chartered Accountant

0407 545 288

Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

Profit and Loss

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2022	2023
Income		
Membership Subscriptions	19,886.00	29,804.00
Sales of Plants by Growing Friends	37,644.18	80,511.30
Events Gross Receipts	23,907.55	24,197.41
Grants Received	-	1,000.00
Sales Other	38.00	270.00
Exhibitions & SIG Revenue	1,571.00	4,155.10
Donations	1406.00	1,962.50
Interest	42.66	2,810.66
Total Income	84,495.39	144,710.97
Expenses		
Administration & Newsletter Expenses (Note 1)	17,434.57	20,320.91
Depreciation	1,485.00	1,176.09
Donations	-	2,600.00
Donations to Royal Botanic Gardens	12,500.00	112,050.00
Events Expenses	9,912.61	3,382.19
Purchases & Supplies - Growing Friends	6,112.99	16,146.15
Sales - other expenses	50.00	-
Total Expenses	47,498.17	155,675.34
Net Operating Income/(Loss)	36,997.22	(10,964.37)

Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

Notes to the Accounts

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2022	2023
Note 1: Administration & Newsletter Expenses		
Accounting & Licence Fees	681.80	474.40
Audit Fee	495.00	495.00
Bank Fees	-	30.00
Catering Costs - Open House & Other	181.94	390.85
Cleaning	-	486.00
Filing & Statutory Fees	60.00	-
General Expenses	-	2,170.98
Gifts and Tributes	-	481.11
Insurances	582.05	422.95
Membership - Printing, Stationery & Postage	638.00	1,884.95
Merchant Fees - Tidy HQ, Stripe etc	2,591.75	3,029.47
<i>Naturelink</i> - Printing & Postage	7,635.25	7,944.56
Office Expenses	-	230.89
Publicity	3,491.78	247.50
Subscriptions	395.00	675.00
Telephone	685.00	1,102.50
Website & Domain Name	-	254.75
	17,437.57	20,320.91

Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

Balance Sheet

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2022	2023	2023
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash at Bank			
National Bank - Current Accounts	98,606.97	8,848.68	
National Bank - Term Deposit #1	-	122,023.24	
National Bank - Term Deposit #2	-	55,474.66	
National Bank - Savings Account	85,437.14	437.14	
	184,044.11		186,783.72
Cash on Hand	120.00		120.00
Prepaid Tour Expenses	3,000.00		-
Sundry Debtors	1,190.00		-
Total Current Assets	188,354.11		186,903.72
Fixed Assets			
Plant & Equipment - at cost	29,776.06	29,776.06	
Less Provision for Depreciation	(23,101.00)	(24,277.09)	
	6,675.06		5,498.97
NET ASSETS	195,029.17		192,402.69
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Subscriptions Received in Advance	8,720.00	-	
Accounts Payable	367.78	27,857.07	
Advanced Bookings	15,060.00	4,628.60	
Total Liabilities	24,147.78		32,485.67
NET ASSETS	170,881.39		159,917.02
Represented by:			
Equity			
Retained Earnings - brought forward	133,884.17		170,881.39
Current Earnings - 2022	36,997.22		(10,964.37)
TOTAL EQUITY	170,881.39		159,917.02

Independent Auditor’s Report

To the Members of Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc. (the “Association”), which comprises profit and loss statement and balance sheet as at 30 June 2023.

The Committee responsibility for the financial report

The Committee of the Association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor’s responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards which require me to comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance as to whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor’s judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error.

In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Association’s preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association’s internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

.Independence

In conducting my audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Auditor’s opinion

In my opinion:

The financial report of Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc. is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, including:

- (1) Giving a true and fair view of the Association’s financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- (2) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.


KEVIN JESSUP

Chartered Accountant

Balwyn North

26th July 2023

Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

Certificate by Members of the Committee

We, Erin Cosgriff and Wendy Herauville, being members of the Committee of Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc., certify that the statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position of Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc. during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2023.



ERIN COSGRIFF



WENDY HERAUVILLE



Dated

Statement by Members of the Committee

The Committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards as applicable to not-for-profit organisations.


In the opinion of the Committee the financial statements:

1. Present fairly the financial position of Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc. as at 30 June 2023 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



ERIN COSGRIFF



WENDY HERAUVILLE



Dated

Seeking New Members

Joining the Cranbourne Friends, especially as a volunteer, will provide you with a new sense of purpose and numerous opportunities for sharing, growth, and learning.

Here are some exciting ways you can volunteer your time to support our work:

- Nurture plants in the nursery with your passion for cultivation.
- Participate in one of our special interest groups.
- Get involved with a committee to gain insights into our inner workings.
- Put your marketing and publicity skills behind a good cause.
- Join the FIGs gardening team or the Friends in Focus photography group.
- Display your graphic design skills.
- Write an article for Naturelink on some aspect of Australian plant gardening for example, pot culture, plants for balconies or small spaces.

Photo: Jill Burness, Design: Janette Wilson Design

Contact:

The President
president@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

The Secretary
secretary@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

The Membership Secretary
membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

The Cranbourne Friends
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Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne
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www.instagram.com/friendsrbgcranbourne

