

# Cranbourne Friends

Royal Botanic Gardens Vic Inc.



CRANBOURNE FRIENDS

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS VICTORIA

## Annual Report 2024/25



# Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	02	Friends in the Gardens	13
President's Report	03	Savvy Stitchers	14
Highlights of 2024-25	05	Growing Friends	15
Treasurer's Report	06	Friends in Focus	16
Social Media Report	08	Herbarium Collectors	17
Membership Report	09	Basketry Weaving	18
Events Sub-Committee Report	10	Feature Profile: Katherine McKee	19
Committee Members and Special Interest Groups – Who's Who?	11	Feature Profile: John Arnott	20
Special Interest Group Reports	12	Feature Profile: Paul Sierakowski	21
Botanical Illustrators	12	Audited Financial Report 2024/25	22



This year's membership card featuring  
The Dry River Bed. Photo: Jill Burness



Falls Creek trip 2025.  
Photo: Peter McGrath



Banksia Flower Basket,  
Photo: Paul Sierakowski

## 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 we 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.



## Acting President's Report

This has been a year marked by considerable change, both in the Friends Committee (CoM) and at the Gardens. Change always brings new challenges – but also opportunities, to think afresh and create new and exciting visions.

At the Annual General Meeting in November 2024 our President Erin Cosgriff, and Secretary Jennifer Potten, stepped down from their positions after five years of service. Their dedication and administrative skills have left the Friends in a very strong position. However, there were no nominations for a new President and since then the Committee has been unsuccessful in its efforts to find someone to take on this role. In the interim it was agreed that Treasurer Wendy Herauville would also take on the role of Acting Vice President and that I, Rosemary Miller, would act as President as well as Secretary. We also are delighted have two new wonderful CoM members: Banksia enthusiast Paul Sierakowski and ex-RBGC Head of Horticulture, John Arnott. Both bring enthusiasm, wide experience and passion to the group.

A number of other, pleasing changes have occurred. New volunteers have come forward to take on office work for the Friends: Linda Lee now capably assists the Events Sub-Committee with promotion and administration; Ana Murdoch took on the Booking Officer role with aplomb and Libby Proud brings a range of experience as a proof-reader. Thanks to you all from the bottom of my heart. We are also out-sourcing the graphic design of Naturelink to a professional designer, as part of enabling me to function as Secretary and cover the Acting President's role.

The Growing Friends have found that the Plant Sales are now so successful that the enormous work of three Plant Sales each year can be reduced to Spring and Autumn sales only. This decision helps conserve everyone's energy and reduces the workload for our many long-term volunteers.

Other interest groups have maintained their small cohorts of active members and give pleasure and engagement as well as contributions to revenue through workshops and sales of creative products. Our Botanical Weaving group has commenced regular meetings on fourth Sundays, after a period in abeyance and is now growing strongly. The Botanical Fabricators



***“The Friends have funded staff development including travel to the 8th Global Botanic Gardens Congress in Singapore...”***

group has found both new leaders and a new name, the Savvy Stitchers.

The Friends in the Gardens now operate two groups and are making a significant difference in the Australian Gardens with their “beautifying and detailing” efforts.

Event highlights included a heavily-supported presentation by the legendary Leon Costermans; his work describing the link between geology and what

native plants grow where, is fascinating. The Raising Rarity team also showed us their achievements in research and through a Gippsland schools program. This year the Friends have offered tours to Falls Creek and the Grampians, and a trip to Kangaroo Island is planned for the end of October 2025.

Over 2024-5, the Friends have contributed to initiatives at the Gardens. The Friends have funded staff development including travel to the 8th Global Botanic Gardens Congress in Singapore and the cost of additional security cameras, following thefts at the Gardens. Funding of improvements to the Gardens' Nursery, with more space needed for collected wild plants and research material, and of the concept plan for vital changes to the Kids' Backyard and Rockfall Waterway area, was approved in the 2024 year and payments made in August 2025.

The Friends have also directly supported professional development of the RBGV's Garden Ambassadors, on the recommendation of RBGV staff. We are subsidising over this and next year, the costs of three Garden Ambassadors (who are also Friends) to attend the Australasian Botanic Garden Guides 18th Conference in Adelaide in October 2025.

### **RBGV reorganisation**

In July 2024, Chris Russell was appointed as the Director and Chief Executive of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. On behalf of the RBGV Board, he set up an organisational review to examine the traditional way the organisation has operated and link both Gardens more closely. For example, Cranbourne Gardens and Melbourne Gardens no longer have separate Executive Directors, and a number of new roles have been created. The Friends are now reporting to Tim Sansom, the new





Executive Director, Living Collections and Environment across both sites, and we expect to work closely with Tex Moon, the new Director of Horticulture at Cranbourne.

During the year, Kevin Alexander, then Acting Director, was always warmly friendly and considerate and has assisted us in many ways. We thank him for his cooperation and look forward to continue working with him in his new role as Manager, Infrastructure and Emergency Response.

### Charity Status confirmed

In 2024, Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc (ABN: 43551008609) was required to apply for registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission as a charity and to demonstrate the organisation's eligibility for income tax exemption, effective 1 July 2024. The ACNC is an independent

statutory office which undertakes many back-office services for the Australian Tax Office. Subsequently The Cranbourne Friends was advised that its registration as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) was approved from 5/05/2024.

This qualifies the Cranbourne Friends for operational tax concessions as a charity, but does not confer Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status to the organisation.

Donors who wish to make a tax-deductible donation can do so through the RBGV and specify that their donation is in support of the Cranbourne Gardens in particular.

The Cranbourne Friends RBGV is now required to report its financial results annually to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, rather than to Consumer Affairs Victoria, as previously.

Rosemary Miller

***“The Friends have also directly supported professional development of the RBGV’s Garden Ambassadors, on the recommendation of RBGV staff.”***

*Friends enjoying the scenery.*

*Spectacular scenery of Falls Creek. Photo: Rosemary Miller*



## Highlights of 2024-25



Planning for the Banksia Festival has been a major focus for this year. Organising such a big event has led to closer liaison with RBGV marketing staff and the Acting Manager, Visitor Experience and Volunteers, which will be beneficial in the longer term. John Arnott's presence on the Committee is beneficial as he has many contacts. Talks by Banksia experts, workshops and guided walks to look at Banksia species in the Australian Garden and the Special Collections Area were included in the program.

The Growing Friends nursery continued its excellent work in plant production and sales; moving to two large plant sales a year instead of three has not, however, adversely affected profits, which have been outstanding. The RBGV's renovated kiosk at the north end of the Australian Garden now provides a stunning, practical and weatherproof new location for plant sales and other activities. A training arrangement established with Wilson Park in Berwick led to their volunteers being trained by the Growing Friends, a beneficial outreach activity.

The Botanic Illustrators and the Savvy Stitchers have been hard at work for more than a year preparing illustrations, artworks and craft items for both the Mornington Peninsula APS's Epacrid (Heath) Festival, held on 2-3 August 2025, and the Cranbourne Friends' Banksia Festival two weeks later.

Over 2024-5 the Secretary has liaised with Special Interest Group leaders to ensure the Child Safety records we have for active Friends members are up to date and remain relevant.



*Photos: Barbara Jeffrey (right) and Janette Wilson (below)*



# Treasurer's Report



The end of another financial year sees the Friends in a great position again. The two Plant and Art Sales have set another record for income, retaining the high benchmark set after the break-out year 2 years ago.

At the time of writing, we are holding a large amount in our Transaction Account as there will be further payments to the Gardens in July and August, which made locking into a Term unadvisable. Holding our surplus cash in Term Deposits over the year has netted us a very healthy \$8,000 interest.

A major effort goes into the raising of funds through many endeavours and pursuits: where does the money go?

This year we have contributed \$50,000 to the Gardens towards Security Cameras, due to some expensive and distressing break-ins at the Depot early in the year. Due to major reviews and organisational changes of staff at Melbourne and Cranbourne, realigning the management group, the following payments will go to the Gardens via RBGV in the next financial year:

- \$80,000 towards the Gardens' Plant Nursery upgrade, with two \$40,000 payments to go out shortly.
- \$50,000 towards the concept and design of the new Waterplay area for children, coming soon!
- \$1,500 payment within General Expenses was to a Garden Ambassador towards expenses for a

development opportunity at the Guides Conference in Adelaide.

We have managed to keep our Expenses low, generally speaking, although there are some slight increases on last year that reflect price increases across the board. The continuing decrease in administration expenses is mostly due to the significant reduction from not printing many copies of *Naturelink*. While Growing Friends' expenses remain low, they also slightly increased on last year, due to high demand for our plants requiring more

supplies as well as increases in prices.

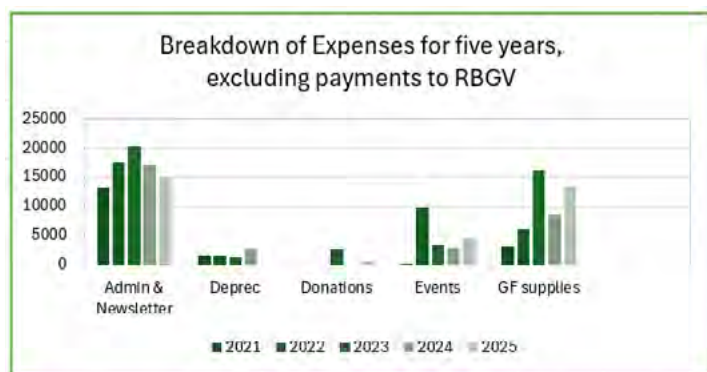
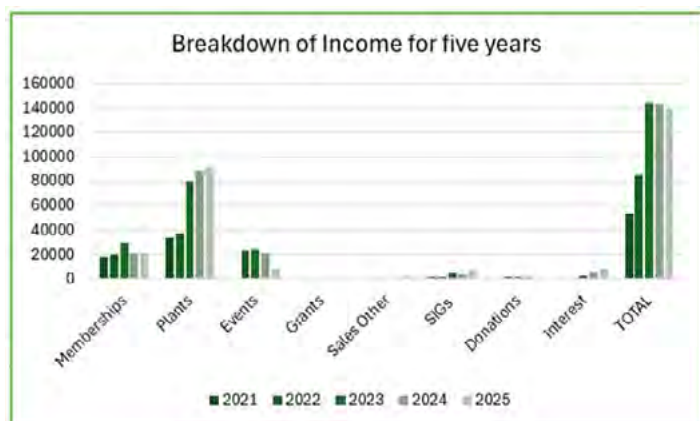
Membership remains steady, a very slight decrease possibly reflecting the reduction of most people's discretionary spending due to the global financial crisis.

Our Events income is lower than last year with the Events Committee focusing on two big tours, the funds from which will come into next year's budget, as well as the Banksia Festival!

Special Interest Groups' Income is from Illustrators and Fabricators (Savvy Stitchers) and they have almost DOUBLED their sales this year and deserve our congratulations. Some market research and updates to items they are stocking have borne fruit.

On another note, this has been a very busy year, and my thanks go to Rosemary for her unending energy and attention to detail, keeping us running through a

*"The major effort that goes into the raising of funds through many endeavours and pursuits: where does the money go?"*

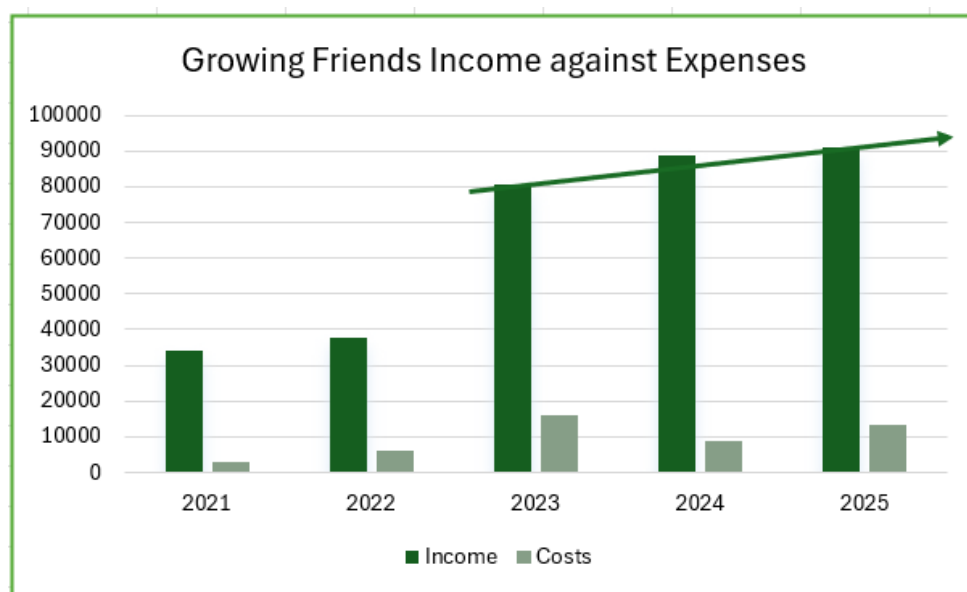




challenging period. We aspire to increasing the Committee numbers at the Annual General Meeting so that the 'work' can be shared more widely. I love the Gardens and its tranquillity; the bush tracks have always been my place to de-stress. I don't regard doing the accounts for this place that is my haven to be labour. I hope there are a couple

more people with talent and energy that will join us to keep the Friends running. I'm greatly looking forward to enjoying the Tour to Kangaroo Island with peers in October.

Wendy Herauville



*Eucalyptus petiolaris* in flower on Howson Hill.  
Photo: Janette Wilson

# Social Media Report



Our top posts over both Facebook and Instagram for the year were all about the Growing Friends Spring Plant Sale. The Plant Sales continue to be our most popular posts on social media. They garner a lot of interest from people who follow us, and those that don't, which speaks for the reach of our posts.

Accounts that follow us share the posts and people tag their friends. The Spring Plant Sale 2024 posts were bolstered by advertising that Angus Stewart would be in attendance.

Tanya Johnson



## Instagram

Reach:	9,998
Content Interactions:	315
Follows:	171
Visits:	763



## Facebook

Reach:	43,113
Content Interactions:	1,743
Follows:	300
Visits:	17,739

[www.facebook.com/rbgfriendscranbourne](https://www.facebook.com/rbgfriendscranbourne)

[www.instagram.com/friendsrbgcranbourne](https://www.instagram.com/friendsrbgcranbourne)



Past President Erin Cosgriff introduces Angus Stewart to an enthralled Spring plant sale crowd. Photo Janette Wilson.



*“The Plant Sales continue to be our most popular posts on social media.”*

# Membership Report



Welcome to all our new members who joined us over the past year! We hope you're enjoying being part of the Cranbourne Friends, RBCV, and making the most of the many opportunities, activities, and friendships that membership brings.

As of 30 June 2025, we had 671 financial members – around 40 fewer than at the same time last year. This dip likely reflects the reduced number of plant sales, which are traditionally one of our biggest recruitment periods, as well as limited capacity for on-site promotion within the Gardens.

Despite this, it's encouraging to see so many renewals from long-standing members and a steady stream of new faces joining our community throughout the year. Every member plays an important role in supporting the Gardens and the Friends' ongoing activities.

Our 2025/26 membership card features a stunning photograph by Jill Burness, capturing the Red Sand Garden and dry river bed – a beautiful reminder of why we're all so passionate about these extraordinary Gardens.

Looking ahead, we'll continue working to increase our visibility within the Gardens and make it even easier for visitors to learn about the Friends and join us. We'll also build on our presence at activities and events to share stories, showcase our work, and celebrate the many ways members contribute.

Together, we can look forward to another rewarding year of connection, learning, and support for the Cranbourne Gardens, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

*Alexandra Stalder*

*Right: This year's card features the Dry River Bed. Photo: Jill Burness*

*Below: Howson Hill's new plantings. Photo: Janette Wilson*



# Events Sub-Committee Report

The Events Sub-Committee has organised or been involved in successful trips and public events in the last financial year including:

- Author talk – Leon Costermans – July 2024
- Special Offer for Friends – Art Glass by Amanda Loudon – July 2024
- Paint a Spotted Pardalote – Workshop with David Reynolds – August 2024
- Visit to two private wildlife-friendly gardens – August 2024
- Plant expert Angus Stewart's appearance to offer advice to customers at the Growing Friends Plant Sale – October 2024
- Fern Illustrators Workshop – November 2024

- Falls Creek Wildflower Adventure tour – January 2025
- Cyanotype Workshop with Gail Stiffe – February 2025
- Welcome to 2025 Sausage sizzle – March 2025
- Raising Rarity presentation and tours – May 2025

We were also pleased to run other events, which will be described in the 2026 Annual Report: three more popular public events for Cranbourne including a talk by Stephen Ryan about botanic illustrator Ellis Rowan and her proposed statue, a Wattles and Wildlife talk by Bill Aitchison and a nine-day Banksia Festival in collaboration with the Special Interest groups and RBGV Cranbourne. Also, two tours, one to the Grampians and one to Kangaroo Island, were planned.

The Events Subcommittee is keen for more volunteers to join the group so that the range of events and trips offered to date can be continue to be offered.

Top: Kangaroo Fern Illustrators workshop.  
Photo: Vanda Cummins.  
Second row: 1) Matt Henderson presented Raising Rarity event in May.  
2) Kangaroo Grass. Cyanotype print: Gail Stiffe.  
Falls Creek Wildflower adventure tour. Summer flowering species abounded:  
3) *Xerochrysum subundulatum* (Orange or Alpine Everlasting) and 4) *Celmisia pugioniformis* (Slender Snow Daisy).  
Photos: Peter McGrath.



# Committee Members and Special Interest Group – Who's Who?

## Members of the Friends Committee of Management

Secretary and Acting President	Rosemary Miller
Treasurer and Acting Vice-President	Wendy Herauville
Membership Secretary	Alexandra Stalder
Immediate Past President	Erin Cosgriff
Ordinary Member	John Arnott
Ordinary Member	Jill Burness
Ordinary Member	Helen Kennedy
Ordinary Member	Kim (Katherine) McKee
Ordinary Member	Paul Sierakowski

**Committee members 2025:** Rosemary Miller, Jill Burness, Wendy Herauville, Paul Sierakowski, Kim McKee, Helen Kennedy.  
Absent from photo: John Arnott, Erin Cosgriff, Alexandra Stalder.



## Members of the Events Sub-Committee

Convenor	Mick Robertson
Minute Secretary	Nicky Zanen
Administration/Promotions 2025	Linda Lee
Administration to Dec 2024	Rosemary Miller
Bookings	Ana Murdoch
IT Facilitator	Tim Morrow
Social Media	Tanya Johnson
Promotions	Alexandra Stalder
Treasurer	Wendy Herauville
Member	Helen Morrow
Member	Louise Anderson
Member	Tony Anderson
RBGV Liaison until June 2025	Jai Slatter-Bloom
RBGV Liaison from July 2025	Melanie Fowler

## Special Interest Group Coordinators

Growing Friends	Marjanne Rook
Friends in the Gardens	Christine Kenyon
Savvy Stitchers	Jenny Rollason and Bev Williamson
Botanical Illustrators	Margaret Kitchen
Herbarium Collectors	Nola Foster
Weaving	Tess Holderness
Friends in Focus	Email contact – Judith Cooke

# Special Interest Group reports

## Botanical Illustrators Report – by Margaret Kitchen

The Botanical Illustrators have continued to meet regularly on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. These sessions are held in a convivial and supportive atmosphere, where members generously share their skills and encouragement as we work on our botanical art.

### Workshops

In late 2024, the group undertook two highly successful two-day workshops ably led by David Reynolds, each designed to enhance our technical skills and artistic confidence.

#### Pardalote Workshop

This workshop, organised by Jan Maslen, focused on the drawing and painting of the Spotted Pardalote. Participants also worked on painting the delicate grey-green foliage of *Eucalyptus polyanthemos*, honing their botanical accuracy and colour blending skills.

#### Kangaroo Paw Fern Workshop

Organised with care and efficiency by Pam Everson, this workshop provided participants with a valuable opportunity to explore the colour green in depth – developing realistic tones and compositions. The focus was on improving painting techniques and building confidence through practical application.

*Spotted Pardalote. Watercolour: Margaret Kitchen,  
Kangaroo Paw Fern. Watercolour: Kerry Robinson.*

## Group Activities

In addition to our workshops, members of the group participated in the Plant Sales, where we successfully sold images of our artwork in the form of greeting cards and bookmarks. This initiative proved to be both popular and rewarding, allowing members to share their work with the wider community.

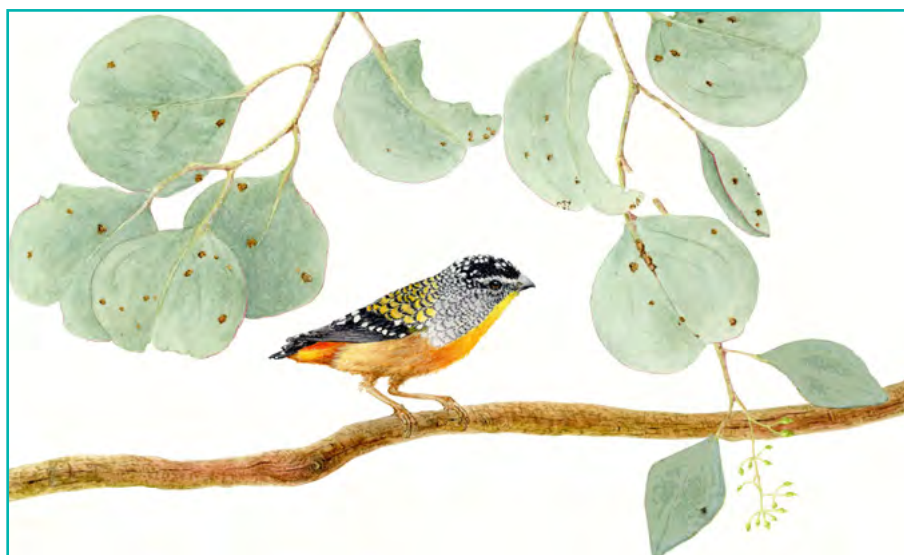
Throughout much of 2025, the group has dedicated significant time and effort toward preparing for two major events:

- The 15th FJC Rogers Epacrids Seminar, hosted by the Australian Plant Society in early August.
- The Banksia Festival, held a few weeks later.

These events have provided a clear focus for our artwork, and we look forward to sharing the results with the public.

## Acknowledgements

The continued success of the Botanical Illustrators group relies on the wonderful contributions of its members. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to: Pam Everson, Chris Grevis-Jones, Jan Maslen, Jenny Rollason and Kerry Robinson who contribute by collecting subscriptions, planning activities, baking eagerly awaited muffins, and offering warm encouragement to fellow artists. Your enthusiasm and support are the heart of this group.



# Special Interest Group reports



## Friends in the Garden (FiGs) Report – by Christine Kenyon

FIGS continues as a very hard working, friendly and social group. Christine Kenyon co-ordinates the group and looks after the group Whatsapp. Members attend on either, or both days each month. The group continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday morning of each month with 6-8 members at each session.

In June 2025 we have 18 members in the group. This year, we gained seven new members but lost three. It was sad to lose these people but paid work and study are a necessity for a career. We wish them well. A few members are not attending at the present time due to ill-health or family responsibilities but they will return when they can.

Mathieu Lascostes, our marvellous horticulture staff supervisor in the Gardens, plans a variety of jobs for us and always appreciates our efforts. The group now tend the areas of the Australian Garden (AG) that do not have a curator: the Red Sand Garden, Serpentine Path, Home Garden, Bloodwood Garden and the carpark area. We also help staff if they have a large job that needs to be completed quickly, such as clearing Kangaroo Paw prunings from the Dry River Bed with Sam Chong. Mathieu Lascostes spends quite a bit of time preparing projects and setting up for each day we are in the AG and has devised the series of gardens that we now look after. This effort makes our time in the AG more interesting and informative.

### Our activities over the past 12 months:

- We helped clear Syzygium hedge and Kangaroo Paw prunings across the AG. These are annual activities. Members turn up rain, hail or shine, especially if Mathieu has already pruned the hedges and the clippings need to be removed.
- We raked and swept paths in the Bloodwood Garden – a frequent activity.

- We cleared dead bushes from behind the lunettes in the Red Sand Garden, which needs constant attention as does the Ephemeral Garden. We also added new soil and compost and planted new *Acacia sulcata*. This was a project that took several months.
- We rejuvenated the 4 banks of *Lomandra confertifolia* 'Little Con' that line the swales adjacent to the Bloodwood Garden. This ongoing project started in 2024 and now new Lomandra fill the gaps. We also weeded and replanted the carpark garden beds.

In December, the group had an outing that included a talk and guided tour of the Karwarra Native Botanic Garden and Nursery with Shelley Graham, followed by a shared BYO picnic lunch at the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden. Tex Moon, who has since joined RBGV Cranbourne, then led us on an interesting tour of the Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda and the new Conservation Cloud Garden (similar to the Australian Garden). This was a most informative and enjoyable excursion.

- We hosted an RMIT Environmental Science and Landscape Design student who enquired about doing her required work experience with us. We wish her well in her career.

At the recent Raising Rarity Workshop it was gratifying to hear Matt Henderson mention (several times) the work done by FIGs in the AG and how appreciative the staff are. Quite often the staff will tell us what a great job we do and how helpful it is to them.

As in previous years when I have been unable to attend for a lengthy period, members of the group offer to take on the jobs that need to be done: write the monthly report, provide morning tea, send out reminders, keep a photographic record of each month's effort. This year Wendy Herauville and Dennise Rossetti have offered to take on the writing of the *Naturelink* article while I am away. I am so proud of this happy, friendly and hard-working group.



## Special Interest Group reports

### Savvy Stitchers Report – by Bev Williamson and Jenny Rollason

The Savvy Stitchers used to be called the Fabricators but we decided to change our name to one that better reflected what we do. It has been another exciting, enjoyable and productive year for our group.

Our attendance at October's Plant Sale in 2024 saw \$1800 worth of items sold. We grouped items into baskets, which seemed popular with our customers.

We were grateful to Gwen Elliot and Wendy Smart for their previous work, for example, cutting and packaging fat quarters. It was sad to say goodbye to Wendy, who moved with Alex to Geelong.

In November, we were once again inspired by a visit to Tooradin's extraordinary annual Craft Bazaar, followed by lunch at Tides restaurant.

The March Sale this year provided another opportunity to sell our wares and we were very pleased with the space allocated to us, especially on the Sunday, when half of it ran parallel to the

path people walked along to reach the plants for sale. Our decision to add items made specifically for children proved a success, as many little aprons, cot toys and mobiles were sold. As we predicted, grandparents, extended families, friends as well as parents, were customers. Our total sales were a pleasing \$2029.

The following Thursday we set up at AVEO Retirement Village, in Craig Rd, for their lifestyle Expo. It was more of a public relations exercise, with just \$40 in sales.

In the Elliot Centre we used the display cabinets to showcase some items using fabrics depicting Epacrids and Banksias we had sewn in readiness for two upcoming events in August. We were well-stocked for both these significant events.

Our group meets at 10am on the second Tuesday of each month – and we always welcome new members.



# Special Interest Group reports



## Growing Friends report – Marjanne Rook

It's been quite a year, with a record income of \$91,195, but it has also been an expensive year with expenditure totalling \$13,423 meaning that our profit was down from the previous financial year. As our prices had remained the same since 2017 but costs had risen considerably since that time, we increased our prices by 20% from January, which could have partly accounted for our record takings.

As we no longer hold a Winter Sale, we decided to hold a mini, 'in nursery' Second Chance plant sale in August, which was then followed by busier than ever Spring and Autumn sales. We almost sold out of plants in October and have since made sure that this will not happen at the next sale.

The City of Casey organised the issue of vouchers for 3 free plants through their Gardens for Wildlife (G4W) program and lent us a few of their willing volunteers to assist us at our G4W section at the sales. And the Gardens' shop issued us with 10% discount vouchers to be used at the shop by our customers for the duration of the plant sale.

Our upgraded, mostly under cover, location on both sides of the kiosk where coffee and food are available, has worked very well and has been much appreciated by both Growing Friends' volunteers and customers.

We have moved on to some new ventures: some gorgeous Bonsai, created by one of our volunteers, have been much admired and sold. Also, a number of Rock orchids, which were donated, sold very quickly – hopefully there will be more in the future. Large pots with plants such as the *Brachychiton rupestris*, have also been popular.

This past year some of our plants have ended up in both the Cranbourne and Melbourne Gardens. They also feature in a few landscaping projects, including the 'Laak Boorndap' pop-up Trial Garden for the future Melbourne Arts Precinct. We supplied medicinal plant species to the Indigenous owned Art and Bush Medicine organisation called 'Earthwise Culture' as well as 'useful' plants for their Cultural Training program.

A number of Australian Plant Society groups visited our nursery, including delegates from the Australian Native Plant Society Australia (ANPSA) 2024 Conference. The new Friends of Wilson Botanic Park group also visited our nursery to see where and how we work. We subsequently provided, at their request, numerous weeks of training for their new volunteers.

A big 'thank you' to all our volunteers, committee members and the, forever helpful, Cranbourne Gardens staff. It has been quite a busy year.

Photo Bottom Left: Barbara Jeffrey captures happy customers mingling at the Autumn plant sale. Other photos show customers at the Spring Plant sale with their selections: Janette Wilson.



# Special Interest Group reports

## Friends in Focus – by Judith Cooke

This year has seen the group develop and become a close-knit supportive unit where members feel comfortable and their work is valued.

Our monthly walks in the Australian Garden are always enjoyable, providing opportunities to practise our photographic skills as well as learning more about our amazing native flora. We often have discussions on plant identification during our walks and the new plant labels in the Garden have been most helpful.

Members regularly provide photographs to *Quicklink* and contribute images to social media. Our dedicated display page in *Naturelink* has been a success and an impressive collection of members' images appear in each quarterly issue. Members have also contributed images for consideration for the Friends membership card.

The group's monthly news magazine the "Cranbourne Lens" continues to provide members with an opportunity to share their work in a safe environment and records impressive ongoing improvement.

During the year we farewelled members who have moved away, including Alex Smart. We have also welcomed a new member.

The weather is always a significant factor in our activities, providing challenges ranging from oppressive

heat to hail or occasionally offering magical lighting effects such as a rainbow to enhance our experience.

Throughout the year, the changing seasons and new developments in the Gardens have provided us with a wealth of subjects to photograph, including a never-ending succession of flowering plants and a variety of wildlife. We have photographed bandicoots, a number of bird species, dragonflies and damselflies skimming across the surface of Ian Potter Lake and even a juvenile tiger snake that briefly got tangled up in a member's feet.

In addition, special events such as Botanic Gardens Week, NAIDOC Week, Lightfall and plant sales gave us opportunities to add new topics to our portfolios.

We held two "Show and Tell" exhibitions during the year, in November and May, when we shared many examples of our work in various formats. We also learned about the process of focus-stacking employed by one of our members to produce high resolution images.

On a number of occasions, we concluded our walks with welcome refreshments at the Kiosk or the cafe, giving us a chance to relax and socialise.

We look forward to continuing our photographic adventures in our wonderful Australian Garden.

*The people in the photographs below are Peter Williamson, Sue Keon-Cohen, Prue Wright. The Red Sand Garden with a passing shower. Photos: Judith Cooke.*



## Special Interest Group reports



### Herbarium Collectors – Nola Foster

Does anyone else believe we have already started in another drought? For months now our plant finder Dawn Neylan reports that nothing is coming up. As you know, we only collect in the bush area, not in the irrigated Australian Garden. Even the few plants we wanted to re-collect are not appearing.

Meanwhile, we continue with the careful work of sorting and rehabilitating, recording and cataloguing the collection, and storing by field note number. There are now over 780 species and multiple specimens.

It's a large task and slow, but reveals any missing information and also enables a particular specimen to be located quickly.

Storage facilities are far from ideal, at The Melbourne Herbarium also. We can keep insects at bay by rotating the collection through the freezer regularly, and keeping our room dust free etc. But temperature and humidity need to be controlled, plus a sterile environment is required for safe storage. This will need to be addressed at some time in the future.



*Bushland surrounding  
the Australian Garden  
Photo: Janette Wilson*

## Special Interest Group reports

### Botanical Weaving, Basketry and Fibre Arts – Tess Holderness

Working with plant fibres to create woven works, baskets and more sculptural pieces, provides an opportunity to connect with plants in a different way, and to see the natural world through a different lens.

The Cranbourne Friends' 'Botanical Weaving' Group provides a space to explore the use of plant fibres, particularly from Australian native flora, through the creation of a range of woven works. This creative practice draws upon different techniques and types of materials – from Lomandra and Dianella, to native grasses, Cumbungi (Typha), reeds and rushes, Sheoak branchlets and various vines.

From humble beginnings, as an offshoot of the more established 'Botanical Fabricators' (now known as the 'Savvy Stitchers'), basketry and weaving at the Cranbourne Gardens has a history that dates back more than 15 years. Initially led by Susan Birch, two of the earliest members of the inaugural 'Basketry' group – Lynn Lochrie and Sue Dilley – were quite new to the world of weaving when they first joined but have since gone on to become master weavers and respected workshop facilitators in their own right. Both women have also served terms as President of Basketmakers of Victoria (BoV).

While the current incarnation of 'Botanical Weaving' at the Cranbourne Gardens comes in the form of our newly revived group (in the wake of a post-Covid hiatus), we recognise that we are actually part of a much longer 'Basketmaking' lineage at the Gardens, and also, part of a much broader weaving community.

### Reconnecting with the Basketmakers of Victoria

One of the highlights of the past year has been our group's (re)connection with the Basketmakers of Victoria. Poised to celebrate their 40th anniversary next year, BoV is acknowledged as a place of connection and learning about all things weaving-related.

I first caught up with Lynn Lochrie and Sue Dilley, at BoV's 'Summer Muster' at Wattle Park in Melbourne, where

the Basketmaking HQ is housed in a beautiful heritage cottage (a former Parks Victoria curator's residence), with meetings and workshops that take place in their historical Stables Studio. A range of weaving plants are grown in the gardens, which are located within the bushland setting of Wattle Park.

Cranbourne's Botanical Weaving Group went on an offsite adventure to visit the Basketmakers HQ earlier in the year. The new President, Marilyn Hickson, hosted our collective, giving us a guided tour of the facilities and a talk on the history of BoV and basketmaking in Victoria, before running an informal activity, featuring some random weaving with Lomandra and Meulenbeckia vines, harvested from their gardens.

Merilyn commented that our visit was a wonderful opportunity to build upon the links that already exist between the two groups, and she hopes to continue to exchange visits. We are planning to welcome a contingent of BoV members, for a reciprocal visit and some native plant inspired activities at the Cranbourne Gardens in the near future.

Following the reinstatement of a weaving group at Cranbourne last year, 2025 marks our second year of hosting monthly 'Botanical Weaving' gatherings at the Gardens. We have settled into the rhythm of meeting on the '4th Sunday' of each month (Feb to Nov), to continue with our personal and collective learning journeys.

The group has become an informal coalition of weavers and makers, providing support and encouragement to each other, and sharing resources and materials, information and ideas. Special thanks go to Eileen Blake, for her wonderful catering, inspired by native plant foods and flavours, and to Pam Everson and Julie Thompson, for their assistance in organising activities. Gratitude also goes to the Friends Committee for their ongoing support of our Special Interest Group.

For enquiries about the Botanical Weaving group, please email: [weaving@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au](mailto:weaving@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au)

*Left: Sue Dilley at Basketmakers of Victoria (BoV) and Centre: Lynn Lochrie at BoV. Right: Cranbourne's Botanical Weaving group takes part in some activities during a visit to the BoV. All photos: Tess Holdness*



## Feature section

### KATHERINE McKEE profile – by Helen Kennedy

Kim, as she prefers to be known, joined the Committee of Management in 2024, although she's been an active member of the Friends for a considerable time, as evidenced by her 7 years' commitment to the Growing Friends.

Kim's passion for plants and gardening was fostered by her creative father. Having developed her skills over the years with several other gardens, in more recent times Kim has been creating a wildflower meadow amongst the bush environment of the 12-acres on which she lives, a project involving many home-propagated plants, plus the assistance of some stalwart Growing Friends. The property is a family-owned chicken farm on the Mornington Peninsula, and while it is now run by her son, Kim is still involved in many of its day-to-day activities. A "Jack of all trades", she helps maintain equipment, prepares sheds for day-old chicks – and for the night-time despatch of mature ones. One of the more challenging tasks she used to face was the 'dead round' – which involved the collection of the bodies of any chickens that had died overnight. Not a job for the squeamish – or fainthearted!

An idyllic childhood close to the sea ("we lived on the beach"), also led to an interest in sailing – she crewed

on a 12' dinghy – and the family owned a number of big boats over the years. They also went on many long trips, exploring the country in their caravan. This active outdoor life also involved tennis, birdwatching and bushwalking, and one of Kim's great pleasures today is going on a day-long trek with her son.

Kim trained as a primary school teacher and has particularly happy memories of living in Yackandandah and teaching at a little one-teacher school nearby. She loved her close interaction with the students, engaging their interest across a range of creative activities. Having discovered a personal passion for painting, Kim undertook further training as an art teacher, and these days she's a member of the Peninsula Plein-Air group and loves to paint in the outdoors.

A keen reader, Kim always has two books on the go: one is a work of non-fiction (the "brain book") and the other a novel (for light relief). She's also a gamer, encouraged by some of her 11 grandchildren, against whom she has honed her skills. She's become a fierce competitor, as anyone who has played against Kim in a "social" game at a Friends event, can attest. Kim is a most thoughtful and considered contributor to the Friends committee.



## Feature section

### JOHN ARNOTT'S profile – by Helen Kennedy

John is the second recently retired member of the RBGC staff to join the Cranbourne Friends Committee of Management. Like Jill Burness, he brings a wealth of knowledge about the Cranbourne Gardens, Australian plants – and how to run things! And also like Jill, he's already much in demand by other organisations, so we're delighted to have him on board.

John's stellar career began at the Melbourne Zoo, where amongst other things, he brought the significance of flora in the zoological world to the public consciousness, with the creation of the famous Butterfly House. Then, under his watch as Director of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, the Eastern Park Horticultural Complex was created, with six community groups eventually basing their work there. Finally, over sixteen years as Manager of Horticulture at Cranbourne, John oversaw the curation of this unique site, meeting soil, landscape and other challenges to bring the horticultural components of the Australian Garden to completion. He also led the development of new conservation programs, like Care for the Rare. But John says that he counts the joy of leading a dedicated team and being able to mentor and support younger staff members, as some of the most rewarding aspects of his role. (Watch the staff rush to embrace him whenever he visits the Gardens now!).

A multi-talented man, while on a youthful exploration of Kakadu – with guitar – the folk-singing John, to his surprise and delight, was snapped up by Archie and Ruby Roach, and became an unofficial member of their band, in memorable performances across the Top End. And his musical skills came with him to the Gardens, as

anyone who has seen him singing, with Chris Russell, an original piece written to celebrate a departing staff member, will attest.

Probably many Friends have seen John riding his bike around the Gardens (he cycled to and from work almost every day of his tenure, rain, hail or shine). And in 2020, this life-long passion took him 1500k along the length of the Rhine River, when he and wife Lisa rode a tandem bike from the source to the sea. Nurturing a love of exploration and the natural world in his children meant that all the family has backpacked and camped across Australia and Europe.

John has been recognised with Honorary Life Memberships by several organisations, was a founding member of BGANZ (and remains on the committee), is a popular co-host on the 3CR Gardening Show, and amongst several other 'retirement' commitments, is writing a Living Collections Plan for Burrendong Arboretum in NSW.

But retirement, John says, is bringing a lovely balance to his life now.

There's time to kick a footy with the grandkids in the park, to tend his own native garden, and to nurture the three olive trees, whose 'bucketloads' of fruit John recently preserved. (He also makes a mean green curry...). And there's time to continue 'giving back' to the public horticultural institutions that are so dear to his heart.



## Feature section

### PAUL SIERAKOWSKI's profile – by Helen Kennedy

Could there be anything more to discover about Paul, following his profile in last year's Annual Report? The Friends all now know that he was a pioneer stay-at-home-dad, is a passionate gardener, banksia enthusiast and stalwart of the Growing Friends and that, a life-long learner, he was an educator across several fields.

However, since he joined the Committee of Management this year, we've uncovered some other interesting facts about this truly Renaissance man! Unsurprisingly perhaps, we've learned that he's an avid traveller, who has explored widely across Asia, Europe and the Pacific. He even met his wife Jenny in Kathmandu, when they were both travelling on a four-month-long bus trip to London. Following that, keen for more discovery, they cycled together across England, Wales and Ireland for two months. Some of his other adventures took him to the then Burma (Myanmar) three times, as well as to Mexico and Mongolia. In a life full of adventures, Paul says that making the bleak crossing from East to West Berlin at Checkpoint Charlie in late 1978 was an unforgettable, and genuinely scary experience.

A hands-on man, Paul is the family's Mr Fix-it. He's renovated two houses from top to bottom. He was sad to leave the first home, an 1800's terrace in Carlton, because by the end of all his work it looked utterly fantastic! The family's current home and large garden on the Bass Coast have both also been extended (with serious 'garden creep'); one is warmly welcoming, and the other a showcase of banksias and other flora, which he says, is their "huge labour of love".

Living near the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary for 28 years firmly planted the seed of his love affair with Australian native plants. Discovering the flora of Western Australia, joining the local South Gippsland APS and getting to know many staff and Friends at Cranbourne Gardens, have all helped to grow that passion. He warmly credits the many people whom he's met on his plant journey, "who know so much", with the huge expansion of his knowledge. But it's Paul's own intellectual curiosity, plus determination, propagation experimentation and

care, that have made him a serious student of banksias. (Currently, over a cold winter, batches of seedlings are being nurtured in the warmth of the family living room).

Finally, Paul is also a baker! He makes all the family's bread – and their yoghurt, his background in chemistry proving invaluable here. The family's "pantry to die for" is full of preserves they have made from the produce of the extensive vegetable garden and orchard. (Last year's 70k of Granny Smith apples have turned breakfasts into culinary delights!).

This multi-talented man – with a laugh as big as his personality – is a great addition to your Friends Committee.





# **CRANBOURNE FRIENDS BOTANIC GARDENS VICTORIA INCORPORATED**

**ABN 43 551 008 609**

## **FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025**

**Kevin Jessup | Chartered Accountant**

**0407 545 288**

# Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

## Profit and Loss

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2024	2025
<b>Income</b>		
Membership Subscriptions	20,861.00	20,659.00
Sales of Plants by Growing Friends	88,850.70	91,195.48
Events Net Receipts	20,569.68	8,725.82
Grants Received	900.00	–
Sales Other	898.40	2,283.00
Special Interest Groups Revenue	4,077.40	7,277.59
Donations	1,743.02	188.40
Interest Received	5,736.35	8,087.76
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>143,636.55</b>	<b>138,417.05</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Administration & Newsletter Expenses (Note 1)	17,068.80	15,222.39
Depreciation	2,714.00	1,229.00
Donations	–	700.00
Donations to Royal Botanic Gardens	29,612.98	50,000.00
Events Expenses	2,844.92	4,426.23
Purchases & Supplies – Growing Friends	8,699.05	13,423.67
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>60,939.75</b>	<b>85,001.29</b>
<b>Net Operating Income/(Loss)</b>	<b>82,696.80</b>	<b>53,415.76</b>
Balance at 1 July 2024	160,539.43	243,236.23
<b>Current Earnings – 2025</b>	<b>82,696.80</b>	<b>53,415.76</b>
<b>Balance at 30 June 2025</b>	<b>243,236.23</b>	<b>296,651.99</b>

# Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

## Notes to the Accounts

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2024	2025
<b>Note 1: Administration &amp; Newsletter Expenses</b>		
Accounting & Licence Fees	768.00	840.00
Audit Fee	825.00	748.00
Catering Costs – Open House & Other	371.84	–
Filing & Statutory Fees	262.40	49.00
General Expenses	325.56	1,581.89
Gifts and Tributes	288.32	200.00
Insurances	–	600.44
Membership – Printing, Stationery & Postage	1,446.80	3,313.00
Merchant Fees – Tidy HQ, Stripe etc	3,087.48	3,470.37
<i>Naturelink</i> – Printing & Postage	7,613.53	2,707.81
Subscriptions	1,350.87	911.29
Telephone	550.00	600.00
Website & Domain Name	179.00	200.59
	<b>17,068.80</b>	<b>15,222.39</b>

# Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

## Balance Sheet

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2024	2025	2025
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash at Bank			
National Bank – Current Accounts	24,652.21	173,756.37	
National Bank – Term Deposit #1	166,360.07	140,000.00	
National Bank – Term Deposit #2	30,937.51	–	
National Bank – Savings Account	10,437.14	10,437.14	
	<b>232,386.93</b>		<b>324,193.51</b>
Cash on Hand	49.00	120.00	
Sundry Debtors	4,842.19	610.50	730.50
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>237,278.12</b>		<b>324,924.01</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Plant & Equipment	20,189.06	21,563.06	
Accumulated Depreciation	(13,258.09)	(14,487.09)	
	6,930.97		7,075.97
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>244,209.09</b>		<b>331,999.98</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
National Tours Holding Account	–	35,347.99	
Accounts Payable	972.86	–	
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	972.86		<b>35,347.99</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>243,236.23</b>		<b>298,651.99</b>
Represented by:			
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained Earnings – brought forward	160,539.43		243,236.23
Current Earnings – 2025	82,696.80		53,415.76
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>243,236.23</b>		<b>296,651.99</b>

# 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 2025.

### **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 2025 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 2025

# Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

## Certificate by Members of the Committee

We, Rosemary Miller 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 2025.

*Rosemary Miller*

ROSEMARY MILLER

*Wendy Herauville*

WENDY HERAUVILLE

*26 July 2025*

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 2025 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:

*Rosemary Miller*

ROSEMARY MILLER

*Wendy Herauville*

WENDY HERAUVILLE

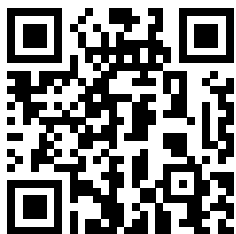
*26 July 2025*

Dated

## Seeking New Members

*"It's fun, you get to meet wonderful people, and most importantly you become involved in purposeful efforts that take you outside of yourself and contribute to actions important to our future and to that of the generations yet to come."*

Photo: Janette Wilson | Design: Janette Wilson Design



### Contact:

**The President**

[president@rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au](mailto:president@rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au)

**The Secretary**

[secretary@rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au](mailto:secretary@rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au)

**The Membership Secretary**

[membership@rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au](mailto:membership@rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au)

The Cranbourne Friends  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.,  
Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne  
Cnr Ballarto Road and Botanic Drive,  
Cranbourne VIC 3977



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