

# CRANBOURNE FRIENDS- GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A NEW SPECIAL INTERESTS GROUP

Currently, in 2024, the Cranbourne Friends have 6 Special Interest Groups. They are: the Botanical Fabricators, Botanical Illustrators, Friends in Focus, Friends in the Gardens, Growing Friends and Herbarium Collectors.

The groups foster friendship, help develop skills and assist the Gardens both directly and indirectly, through fundraising and activities.

If you are interested in starting up a new Friends group to follow a particular interest, there are some protocols that must be followed, as set down by the Gardens, the Friends Committee of Management and the Rules of Association by which the Cranbourne Friends operates.

Any SIG group established and hosted by the CF RBGV must operate under the general direction of the association by contributing to the fulfilment of its objects by enhancing community understanding and appreciation of the Cranbourne Gardens and of Australian flora and fauna, and to enable donation of funds to support Garden's projects.

## 1. POLICY REQUIREMENTS AND BENEFITS

1.1 **Establishing** a new SIG must follow a distinct process including the following key administrative milestones. :

- The proposal of a new SIG group requires the approval of the CF RBGV Committee of Management.
- Any workshops or events open to members or the public need to be planned in consultation with the Events Subcommittee and the Treasurer to ensure room bookings are available and that a sustainable financial plan has been developed to cover costs e.g. of teachers. Such activities cannot be run at a loss.
- The group leader needs to report regularly to COM meetings, in addition to contributing articles to *Naturelink* or *Quicklink* when appropriate.
- Establishment of any new permanent SIG group must be ratified at an AGM and added to the Rules of Association in section 77 at the end of the year.

1.2 Under the Cranbourne Friends Rules, all participants must be **members** of the Cranbourne Friends, for which there is an annual charge.

At present the memberships fee offers three options: Individual membership \$42, Pensioner or Full Time Student \$32, Households \$54.

Membership provides a range of benefits and discounts:

- *Naturelink* – our quarterly magazine
- *Quicklink* – a monthly news update

- a 10% discount on purchases from Boon Wurrung Café in the Cranbourne Gardens
- a 10% discount at the Gardens Shops at the Cranbourne and Melbourne Botanic Gardens
- Free access to the Elliot Centre and its various resources
- Growing Friends nursery plants at a 15% discount
- access to a host of activities, events, workshops, talks, tours etc.

1.3 The following points from the **Rules** are important to know:

- a. The Committee of Management can make a cash float available to a SiG for change or advance a sum of money to be used to defray any reasonable expenses in the group's normal activities.
- b. Any monies earned by a SiG are to be paid to the Treasurer as soon as practicable.

1.4 **Child Safe Policy:** All Special Interest Group members are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy, and asked to do the following:

- a. Provide a copy of a Working with Children check (scanned copy (or photo), which will be uploaded to the membership TidyHQ membership base. Cards are obtained via an application as a volunteer through the [Services Victoria](#) website. The application process can be completed online, and Volunteer checks are free. They can also be obtained by a visit to a post office.
- b. RBGV requests that members read the [RBGV Child Safe Policy](#) and [RBGV Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) and sign the RBGV's [Consent form](#). Again we ask that members photograph or scan these documents for uploading to TidyHQ.
- c. Listen to the RBGV's [Child Safety training](#) program. This is a one-hour video which puts it the matter in perspective.

## 2. GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

### 2.1 The Elliot Centre

The Friends home is the Elliot Centre which is located in the Gardens depot area. Many groups hold their meetings and activities in the Elliot Centre. A calendar showing when different groups meet (and when other activities, like free Open House talks, are held), is created annually and made available to all SiGs leaders.

- a. The main door is kept locked but group leaders are given a key. You are asked to lock the Elliot Centre when your group leaves after a meeting. An alternative entry is via the first door which has a door handle and key code. Once you are given access to that code and in the building, you can then open the main entry door. To the left of the front door (looking out onto the adjoining building) is the Visitors Book. Please ask all visitors to sign in *and* out.
- b. The Elliot Centre has an office, a storeroom, a library, a kitchenette, a large central space equipped with big tables and chairs and 2 bathrooms.
- c. The office is equipped with basic services. As the main cupboards contain Committee of Management records, we do not encourage open access.
- d. The storeroom is generally only used by the activity groups. If you need group storage space we will designate one.

- e. The lovely library can be used at any time. Magazines and books can be used at leisure, but there is no facility for borrowing and removing books from the E.C.
- f. The kitchenette is well-equipped with a new refrigerator, microwaves, crockery and cutlery and stores of tea, coffee and sugar; it is advisable to take milk as this isn't generally left on site. Sometimes biscuits are left but it is wise to bring your own afternoon or morning tea supplies. If the group does meet regularly it is generally acceptable to ask people to bring (and donate) biscuits or cake to share. This can be done on a rotating basis to ensure this as a shared member responsibility.
- g. The central space: tables and chairs can be used in any configuration, although we do ask that people leave the space as found.
- h. There are two separate toilet facilities off the main meeting room.
- i. The large room at the back of the main meeting area is designated for use by the Herbarium Collectors and is out of bounds due to the nature of their work.
- j. It is suggested that the layout of the Elliot Centre be explained to people, particularly if they are new.
- k. We also ask that the E.C. be left in a clean and tidy state after use, ready for the next occupants. A vacuum cleaner is usually left in the larger bathroom and should be used if the floor warrants a clean following an activity.
- l. The Cranbourne Friends Special Interest Groups and their members can use the Elliot Centre for meetings, provided the facility is available and the Cranbourne Royal Botanic Gardens are open. The RBGV at Cranbourne operates daily from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and is accessible via the South Gippsland Hwy or Ballarto Road. Both entrances are gated and locked after hours so official opening and closing times need to be observed.

To use the Elliot Centre, a booking is necessary through the online Elliot Centre Calendar for the relevant year, such as [Elliot Centre Calendar 2024](#). Please record your meeting dates and times to avoid scheduling conflicts and to ensure only one event is held at a time. In the event of a clash, alternative arrangements will be needed.

If multiple events are planned for the same day at different times, ensure that seating is returned to its original layout and all facilities are left clean and tidy. Factor in time for this task to minimize disruption and allow participants to comfortably leave the Elliot Centre and exit the Gardens before closing time. Your cooperation in maintaining a smooth and organized schedule at the Elliot Centre is appreciated.

## **2.2 Naturelink, Quicklink and the Annual Report**

- a. *Naturelink*, the CF newsletter, is published four times a year. Leaders of each SiG are asked to write either a brief report on what their group has done in that quarter, or a piece to promote and advertise a forthcoming event. And to submit photos if available.
- b. Upcoming SiG activities and events are also publicised in *Quicklink*, our 'monthly update' newsletter.
- c. Our Annual Report is distributed far and wide; the contents reflect the substantial activities undertaken by the Cranbourne Friends over that year, and all SiG leaders are asked to write a report on their group's year.

## **2.3 Website**

The Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (CF RBGV Inc) has its own website which contains lots of interesting and useful information. Please

encourage members to explore this site at their leisure.

<https://rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au>

#### **2.4 Volunteering**

The CF RBGV is operated entirely on volunteer labour. We appreciate everyone's effort and together we manage to achieve many remarkable results. Much money is raised to support the Gardens, and firm friendships are made across the entire membership. The SiG members form special, close bonds and they are fully supported by the Committee of Management.