



CATCHING UP WITH FRIENDS

New committee:

At the AGM in March 2018 we said goodbye to Odette Aspinall, Judy Chappell and Lee Ross who plan to put their energies into other things for a while. Lee has been a real stalwart on the committee for many years and has played a major role in making our monthly talks happen, organizing Jazz under the Stars and helping out with plant sales and other fundraisers. Odette has also been an active member, instrumental in acquiring the native bee hive and interpretive signage on the balcony of Friends House and initiating a native bee workshop which ended up being one of our most popular activities in 2017. Thanks Lee, Odette and Judy and welcome to Michael Hyde, Meredith Gawler, Barry Muir and Jenn Muir who are new committee members stepping up to fill the big shoes of our retired members.

Plant sale:

The plant sale on the Sunday before Easter was rained out but this didn't stop hordes of buyers from attending. The plant propagators - the Gardeneers - were drenched as they assisted people to juggle their purchases and umbrellas. The **next sale will be on Sunday 2 September** as part of Carnival on Collins and the group is busy propagating to ensure there is plenty of stock on hand for that big day.

“New Shoots” collaboration with Tropical Writers’ Festival:

We have agreed to support a wonderful initiative by the Tropical Writers’ Festival. Eight local poets will undertake a master class in poetry in June and will select a place in the Gardens about which they’ll write a poem. On a Sunday in August – at a date to be confirmed – groups of people will be guided by Friends to the various locations where the poems will be on display on signage and the poets will recite their poem and answer questions. It’s something new for the Gardens and promises to be a very different and interesting activity.

We are looking for Friends’ members to volunteer to guide groups of visitors to the poets. It is only for an hour and a half and afternoon tea will be provided. Contact us if you’re interested.

A face-lift for Friends House:

Friends House will be closed for several weeks in June 2018 as Council undertakes a refurbishment of this heritage-listed building. New steps and balcony floor tiles will be installed, the old lattice work replaced, a post removed and the disability access made compliant. Unfortunately, the shop will be closed for the renovations and our volunteers will not be on hand to staff the shop and provide information to visitors. When the work is completed, we will look at refreshing the signage to the right of the door to complete the face lift.

Projects for 2018/2019:

We welcome suggestions from Friends about projects that might be implemented with our funds. Council staff would like us to consider a rain-proof “porch” outside the Conservatory or to make the wall immediately inside more attractive. At the moment visitors walk straight in to see the plants and barely cast a glance at the current signage. Committee members explored whether we might contribute to funding art in the Gardens or new plantings, a palm trail or enhancing the collection of

gingers. One suggestion is to build on our links with Cairns' sister city of Lae and develop a New Guinea Palm Trail. Nothing has been committed at this stage so ideas are welcome from Friends' members or visitors to our Gardens who may have seen projects in other botanic gardens which would enhance the Cairns gardens.

Can you help? We are looking for garden guides and shop volunteers

We are always on the lookout for people prepared to be trained as garden guides and be rostered on to show visitors around the gardens? Illness and departure have thinned the ranks of our volunteer guides and we need to recruit several people who are willing to be rostered on for 1 – 2 hours on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis to show small groups around. Detailed knowledge of horticulture is not a pre-requisite. Rather, we need people who are passionate about the gardens or particular plants, trees and flowers and are prepared to share their enthusiasm with others.

Join the Friends or renew your membership

The membership fee has been reduced to \$15 and we would love you to join or renew. Bank transfer to: BSB 633 000, Acct no. 122886849; drop it into Friends' House or post to: PO Box 223, Cairns, 4870.