

Friends of the Cairns Botanic Gardens

Annual General Meeting – 8 March 2023

President's report

Committee:

- At last year's AGM we farewelled Lorraine Smith and Barry Muir and saw two new members elected to the committee: Gardeneer, Annabelle Symes and new member, William Martin, who put up his hand to take on the role of Publicity officer. William van Bakel came back on board as Treasurer. Continuing in their roles were Megan Lilly (secretary), Jeannette Wehrle, Michael Hyde (BBQ extraordinaire), Sue McCulloch, Jenn Muir (membership) and Peerapan Maslen (assistant to the Treasurer). Elaine Harrison stepped into Del van Mielo's position as Vice-President while Del continued with shop rosters. And we greatly appreciate that David Rentz continued as patron.

Enhancements

- Knowing that two local nurseries were closing down we took the opportunity to purchase even more of the **orchids** that locals and visitors appreciate so much in the conservatory.
- The curator has implemented a new system of **plant identification** in the Gardens and the Friends purchased a **labelling machine and software** to enable this to be progressively implemented.
- A **fogging machine** in the gully has been installed making that interesting area very atmospheric . . . and making all the plants happier as well.
- We funded two **portable amplifiers** for moth nights at the Gardens and Cattana Wetlands as the ones previously acquired were not very effective.
- Although not part of the gardens, we funded a new Elefantus **entry gate** and a **decorative path** to the Green Space Our Place community garden in Greenslopes Street. This important space brings new people to the Gardens precinct and fulfils an important educational role.
- We now have a **continuous pdf electronic copy** of the 1880's Accessions register and hoped to take delivery of the **facsimile copy** of the register which we had restored early in 2022. Regrettably, some pages were mis-printed and the facsimile will be here and available to handle in the next couple of weeks.

Life membership:

- We enjoyed a very pleasant morning tea in September when both **Judith Pedersen** and **Lee Ross** were awarded with Life Membership of the Friends. Judith kept our library running for twenty years and Lee has been one of our most active members playing leadership roles on the committee, organizing events, writing submissions and working with the Gardeneers. We sincerely thank them for their work. We also held a morning tea to thank **Jackie Frost** who has put in many years volunteering in the shop.

Events:

- We nearly cancelled **Jazz Under the Stars** after a wet week that ended with a completely grey sky and very soggy grass on Saturday 3 September; but decided to go ahead, the rain held off and 450 people brought waterproof rugs to sit on and enjoy a fabulous repertoire put together by Bernie Lee Long and the Jazz Club. Thank you to Sue who took over the organisation of JUTS.

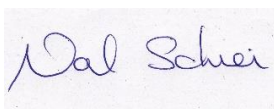
- The weather was kind for the Fathers' Day **Carnival on Collins Plant Sale** which was another success. The **Gardeneers** put lots of work into setting up for the plant sale and being there on the day along with other Friends' members who operated the usual plant cloakroom to enable plant buyers to leave their plants while they visit other carnival attractions. Gardeneers Val Auld, Rod, Rae, James, Norma, Annabelle and Daniel have been joined by Adrian Stroober who sang at our Christmas party to great applause.
- **\$17,000** was raised at the two events.
- **Sculpture Botanica Cairns 22:** Covid forced us to miss out on the 2020 event but we went ahead last year with funds allocated by the Friends. Hopefully, members, family and friends were able to walk the Art Trail in the Flecker and Gondwanan gardens from 7 to 23 October. The 14 installations were the result of works created by nine commissioned artists and in five workshops. We received lots of positive feedback and many new people visited the Gardens during the exhibition.
- **Starry Nights cinema:** We again partnered with End Credits film club to show films on fine nights between July and November and again our share of the profits was over \$5,000.
- **Guided walks:** have continued with Barry organising the weekly free walks and Del the paid walks. The ever-popular weekly bird walk has a new starting time of 7.30am.

Going into 2023:

- **Removal of the kauri tree:** non-active members are probably unaware of the implications of the removal last week of the huge kauri tree in the nursery outside Friends House, behind the café. Gardeneers can no longer use this space for their propagation and have had to move across to the Saltwater Creek depot. Council is upgrading this infrastructure – toilets, fencing etc – and Friends greatly appreciate the efforts that council staff have made to ensure their operations continue, particularly the **weekly trolley sales**.
- **Friends House:** council staff all moved out into a demountable early last year and Friends were the sole occupants of Friends' House until the curator and supervisor, Dave Paschetto moved back in recently. The future of the premises is tied in with the Gardens Master Plan which is out for consultation this year. In the meantime, Del oversees the roster for the shop where Barry's booklets are a best seller and some new products have been introduced.

The Committee has completed its 34th year of operation since being established in 1989 providing the framework to be able to put the icing on the cake of our stunning Botanic Gardens.

- We would like to thank curator Charles, supervisor Dave and all the Gardens staff who provide so much support for the Friends. We know when talking to members of other Botanic Gardens that we are privileged to have developed a real partnership with Council staff. Last but not least we save our biggest thanks for Louisa Grandy who smooths the way with all our dealings with Council and is always positive, enthusiastic, helpful and patient. We could not do it without you Louisa.



Val Schier, President