

FMBG Annual Report July 2011 – June 2012

On behalf of the Executive I have pleasure in presenting the annual report for the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden. This report covers the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012.

It has been another year where great strides have been made in the development of the Melton Botanic Garden. Especially in the Eucalyptus Arboretum with the understory planting and the Gumnuts group getting going. We also started up the Lakers group from a Melbourne Water grant and the Ryans Creekers continued their great work in indigenous areas along Ryans Creek.

It is rewarding to see the increasing involvement of the community and other groups in FMBG activities and the opportunities to help develop others. This led us to start promoting FMBG as an organisation which can promote itself as “Growing Plants, Growing People”. This is very much seen the work with the CVGT Work Experience Activity Teams and CaLM.

We hosted two significant events in March: BGANZ Victorian Branch Network Meeting with about 80 participants from botanic gardens and parks across Victoria followed by a tour of the Melton Botanic Garden, and an afternoon tea and garden tour for the Victorian Australian Plant Society meeting. We thank Western Land Services an FMBG corporate member for the extremely generous donation of \$1,000 to cover the cost of catering for the BGANZ meeting plus providing a \$1,000 of work in the Melton Botanic Garden. Both of these events were very successful and have gone a long way to further promoting the Melton Botanic Garden.

A major achievement included winning the Best Community or Not for Profit Organisation category at the Powercor Melton Business Excellence Awards 2012 in April. We also made a successful submission to the Melton Shire Council budget for 2011-2012 to set aside \$130,000 towards the provision of a toilet amenity block in the Melton Botanic Garden.

One of our most significant achievements was Jane Edmanson OAM accepting our offer to be patron of the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden and her subsequent visit to garden in June.

We continued to give talks to various groups in Melton and beyond. The focus of these were on the development of the Eucalyptus Arboretum. In October 2011 I gave a presentation at the Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand Congress in Albury. Apart from telling people from botanic gardens in Australia and New Zealand about the Eucalyptus Arboretum there were also a number of high profile international people at the Congress.

We have made connection with Bosisto's who will fund production of the Eucalyptus Arboretum brochure which was magnificently produced by Andrew Traczynski. Bosisto's are donating some blue gums which were propagated from the original trees they planted 150 years ago and they will assist with sponsorship towards the Eucalyptus Arboretum signage.

We were successful in a number of competitive grants. These included an MSC strengthening grant for polo shirts and hats with the FMBG logo on them and electronic



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mailing software, MSC Environment Grant to purchase 80 more tree labels, Commonwealth Volunteer Grant for weed spraying equipment and training, MSC Community Grant for a trailer and marquee, Melbourne Water Grants for planting stage 1 of the lake and promotional items, and a CVGT grant for bench seats in the Eucalyptus Arboretum which the CVGT Team will install. Melton Toyota an FMBG corporate member gave \$200 towards plants for the 2011 National Tree Day. Williamstown Garden Club donated \$100 towards the Eucalyptus Arboretum.

We continued our promotion of the botanic garden in Melton at the Platypus Festival, Djerriwarrh Festival, Bunnings Spring Launch, Bunnings National Volunteers Week, APS Melton and Bacchus Marsh Group plant sale and at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2012 including a hanging basket in the competition.

Special thanks must be given David and Barb Pye for their wholehearted contribution to the Eucalyptus Arboretum. Without their dedication I am not sure we would have achieved so much of the development of the Eucalyptus Arboretum. David's project planning skills have helped to ensure the project is on track. David managed to save expenditure which has led us to having enough money to plan for the construction of the depot and access road that will assist in the future development of the Melton Botanic Garden. Melton Home Timber and Hardware an FMBG corporate member continued to support the work of the Friends providing storage space and materials towards our work.

Our membership base has soared to just over 200 from 141 in 2010-2011. This has been achieved through member's efforts and we can declare the Target 200 campaign a huge success. At the end of June 2012 we had 206 individual members in categories seniors, students, individual and household; 7 corporate members and one Associate member. We were very pleased to have the local CWA Night Owls group join as an associate member. On Facebook we have increased from 70 to 124 friends. I would encourage you to take every opportunity to promote the activities and the Melton Botanic Garden to those in your area and at work.

The Executive committee for the past year has done a sterling job organising speakers, the FMBG dinners, newsletters, the finances and other administrative functions to provide you the members with a group that is vibrant, interesting, active and fun.

Attendance at monthly meetings and other activities has remained steady. Our average meeting attendance for the financial year has been 20, which is less than the previous year but we did not hold a major meeting event. Grow the Garden days have remained steady at around 9 but we have also included in this average more smaller activities than previous years, covering Creekers, Gumnuts and Eucalyptus Arboretum activities. Each group has a core of dedicated members. What is pleasing is not just the number but the diversity of people we are attracting to the various activities. It means volunteers do not feel they have to attend all activities or feel guilty if they cannot attend. The age range at activities is from very young to very senior. We also participated in Keep Australia Beautiful Day with



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Council (4th March 2012) and National Tree Day (31st July 2011). The very pleasing aspect is that we all seem to have a great time and we can observe and celebrate our achievements. The end of year celebration attracted 31 members and we are grateful to Bev and Allan for hosting this at their home last December.

The monthly meeting raffle continues to provide the group with funds to assist with the meeting expenses. Other fundraising towards FMBG funds have been provided through Bunnings Sausage Sizzles and plant sales which have been a little less than previous years. Thanks to everyone who assists with in our fundraising efforts as we have also been able to provide a number of free BBQs at the Melton Botanic Garden as part of our activities and at the February meeting.

The Executive Committee continued its dedicated work. We had a planning day in February reviewing and making some minor changes to the Strategic Plan. It is pleasing to see how well we are meeting our goals in many areas.

The Newsletter has continued to be a bimonthly publication due to the work commitments of the editor. We have received good feedback from the members and others that it is circulated to. We have continued to distribute the newsletter by email as it saves on paper and postage and we print just a limit number to hand out at meetings.

Thanks to our corporate members for their support: Melton Home Timber and Hardware, Melton Produce, Melton Toyota, Platinum Accounting & Taxation, Satellite City Furniture, SOV Consulting and Western Land Services. Thanks also to MSC, Councillors and staff for their support and encouragement towards FMBG and the continuing development of the Melton Botanic Garden.

Many thanks to all those who contributed articles to the newsletter, wrote up the monthly talks, provided supper, helped put the chairs, tables and library books out, sold the raffle tickets and of course to everyone who has contributed to the many volunteers hours that go into propagating, maintaining, weeding and planting to create and manage the Melton Botanic Garden.

Thank you to all my fellow committee members for their support and great work throughout the year to Alan, Margaret, Janet, Corinne, Lynette, Allan and Jill.

All these achievements provide a strong foundation for us to continue our efforts towards the development of the Melton Botanic Garden and we look forward to celebrating the 10th anniversary of FMBG in 2013.

John Bentley

President FMBG

AGM 8 August 2012