



FMBG Annual Report July 2013 – June 2014

On behalf of the Executive I have pleasure in presenting the annual report for the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden (FMBG). This report covers the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

It has been a memorable year as we celebrated 10 years of FMBG, won two awards and appeared on ABC television. We have further developed of the Melton Botanic Garden in building and commencing new gardens and maintaining the established sections of the garden. The development and use of the Depot and Nursery has advanced. The Depot is now an established base for the development of the Melton Botanic Garden and hub for FMBG activities in the garden. Thanks go to David Pye and Dave Peters in establishing the Depot and Nursery. Thanks must go Margaret Cook who accepted the position of Nursery Manager and is managing the propagation and sale of plants. Our active groups in the garden and supporting groups are: Creekers (Margaret Peters), Gumnuts (David Pye), Lakers (Jill Bentley), Odd Jobbers (John Bentley), and the Nursery Team (Margaret Cook). Thanks to Elaine Neely for becoming the Depot Housekeeping Coordinator and it is thanks to Elaine that depot and toilets are clean. Many thanks to the leaders and volunteers who participate in the groups as the results can certainly be seen. We have received many positive comments from visitors about the development of the garden and what we are doing.

In celebration of our 10th year we held an Open Day, Anniversary Dinner, an exhibition at the Melton Visitor Information Centre and had Beth Gott as our September guest speaker and culminated the year with a very special end of year celebration at the home of Margaret and Dave Peters.

It is pleasing to see the increasing involvement of the community and other groups in FMBG activities and the opportunities to help develop and involve others. We continue to promote our motto "Growing Plants, Growing People" in what and how we do things. This is very much seen in the CVGT Work Experience Activity Teams and included new team members undertaking Office Administration, the continued involvement of CaLM with Creekers and the Planned Activity Group with Gumnuts. New garden beds have been created with: 1) the Lions Club of Melton in the Victorian Volcanic Plains Aboriginal Plant Usage garden through their funding and participation in the project and 2) the Department of Education with the Koori Engagement Support Officer Michelle Marion and the Melton City Council Environmental Education Officer Linda Bradburn where we did the planting of the garden with the Koori Student Garden in September. We have worked with Bacchus Marsh Grammar students in the MBG and with Kurunjang Primary School to build an indigenous garden at the school. We have continued discussions with the Rotary Club of Melton on a project in the Melton Botanic Garden. Our involvement with Cubs and Scouts led to a very successful National Tree Day with over 100 participants, the majority being Joeys, Cubs, scouts and their families. Kangan Institute horticulture students undertook a 5 week practical component of their course at the Melton Botanic Garden. They planted at the lake, constructed paths in the Victorian Volcanic Plains Garden and laid pavers in the sheds and shade house at the depot.

The Melton City Council (MCC) allocated \$30,000 in the 2013-2014 and again allocated the same amount in the 2014-2015 budget towards the development of the Melton Botanic Garden following discussions at the Community Consultation Budget Sessions. We have continued to



have good communication and positive relationships with MCC. Contingent on the expenditure of MCC funds FMBG were required to improve our risk management system. Dave Peters prepared our revised Risk Management and OHS culminating in the release of the document "Home Safe" which was approved and commended by Melton City Council. Most of the funds have been used to assist in the development of the Western Australian and South Australian Gardens (WASA). Many thanks go to David Pye who took on the Project Management of the WASA garden and prepared the project plan and budget that were approved by MCC. A WASA group was established to prepare the garden development. Many thanks to David and Barb Pye, Anne Langmaid, and Monique Perry (MCC) who have contributed to the design, construction and plant selection in preparation of this new garden section. However, we do need to give special thanks to David and Barb Pye for their continued commitment and contribution to the Eucalyptus Arboretum and their involvement to lead the development of the West Australian and South Australian beds. Without their dedication and expertise I am not sure we would have not have achieved so much of the development of the Melton Botanic Garden

We were successful in a number of competitive grants. These included a Melton City Council Collingwood Grant for solar panels at the Depot, Melton City Council Environment Grant to produce and print a "Birds of the Melton Botanic Garden" brochure for which we thank Nora Peters, Kelly and Geraldine for their work on the brochure, Commonwealth Volunteers Grant for a defibrillator and first-aid kits, a Melbourne Water Grant for infill planting of the lake wall and an Aspire Villawood grant to install 50 plant labels in the Koori Student Garden.

We received a large increase in donations as reported in the FMBG Financial Report and we would especially like to thank the Rotary Clubs of Melton, CWA Melton Owls and the City of Melton Mayoral Charity Fund (Sensory Garden) and all the individual donors for their monetary contributions to the Melton Botanic Garden.

The number of visitors and guided tours shows a clear increase in patronage of the botanic garden. Public guided tours included: Open Day, Seniors Week, three walks during the Sustainable Living Festival attracting visitors from Daylesford and also the inner city suburbs to Melton, and a very well attended Reconciliation Week walk. We gave a personal tour to Kel Tori, CEO Melton City Council and hosted our second annual tour for MCC staff. Thanks to our walk guides throughout the year: Alan and Jean Partridge, Jill Bentley and Allan Benson.

We continue to give presentations to various groups in Melton and beyond. The focus of these were on the development of the Melton Botanic Garden and especially the Eucalyptus Arboretum but we were also able to include photographs understorey plants and eucalypts and also the Koori Student Garden.

Following the judging in May 2013 for the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities Award for the project "Growing Plants Growing People" in the Community Action and Leader category we were informed we were a finalist. At the awards dinner we were one of nine finalists in our category with each finalist being a very strong contender. We were extremely surprised and very pleased to be announced the winner.

We had a good turn-out when the judges for Powercor Melton Business Excellences awards visited in April. We became a finalist in the Best Community or Not for Profit Organisation category and then announced as the winner at the awards night in May.



These awards demonstrate the commitment of members and their achievements. We all need to be proud of winning these awards.

Our patron Jane Edmanson has been able to promote FMBG and the MBG on 3AW and Magic and Jane visited the garden on 20th March. Jane suggested to the ABC Gardening Australia producers that the MBG was at a stage for a suitable story. Well things moved very quickly and on 8th and 9th April Costa, Jane and the crew filmed an ABC Garden Australia episode from the Melton Botanic Garden. The episode was first screened on Saturday 24 May. This has done wonders for our profile and got FMBG and the MBG known across Australia. It has also been a positive for the City of Melton. Our overseas members have also been able to watch the program from the ABC website.

We hosted the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AFBG) Annual General Meeting at the MBG. John Bentley is now a representative on the AFBG Committee. The lunch prepared by FMBG was well received and enjoyed. Our hospitality received very favourable comments.

We continued our promotion of the botanic garden in Melton at the Platypus Festival, Djerriwarrh Festival, Bunnings Spring Launch, Bunnings National Volunteers Week, Bunnings Community Days, Summersault Festival at Caroline Springs and the Australian Plants Society Melton and Bacchus Marsh Group plant sale. Further afield we had a display at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2014 (MIFGS) and a hanging basket in the competition. A resultant highlight of the MIFGS was meeting international students from Monash University who came to a number of activities at the MBG between April and June, becoming FMBG members before returning to their home countries of China, South Korea and Japan. We certainly would like to meet them at the MBG again one day. Facebook, email and the internet helps us to keep in touch.

On a negative, we have experienced a number of break-ins and damage at the depot since late March. The positive is the way FMBG members have worked to repair the damage and improve the depot security. A wonderful attitude of "Keep Calm and Carry On" has been shown by members! The police have been able to lay charges on some of the offenders.

Our corporate members have continued their contributions to the development of the MBG especially Melton Home Timber and Hardware who have continued to support the work of the Friends providing storage space and materials towards our work. Bunnings Melton have assisted in use of their hire equipment and provision of materials.

Our membership base has increased to 218 financial members at the 30th June 2014. In 2010-2011 we had 141, 206 in 2011-2012 and 207 in 2012-2013. On Facebook we have increased from 128 to 152 friends. We would encourage you to take every opportunity to promote the activities and the Melton Botanic Garden to those in your area and at work. Having a strong membership base helps us with grants and demonstrates commitment to having a botanic garden.

The Executive committee for the past year has done a marvellous job towards the 10th Anniversary activities plus organising speakers, applying for grants, holding FMBG dinners, preparing flyers, organising field trips, making and managing partnerships, managing the finances and all the other administrative functions to provide a well-run organisation.



Thanks to Alan Partridge for his continuing work in tracking our volunteer attendances and working with the CVGT Admin Team to record these. The monthly meeting raffle continues to provide the group with funds to assist with the meeting expenses. Other fundraising towards FMBG funds has been provided through Bunnings Sausage Sizzles and plant sales. Thanks to the Nursery sales achieved by improving quality and range of plants and sales outlets we have had a very large increase in funding raising from plant sales. Thanks to everyone who assists with in our fundraising efforts as we have been able to commit funds to develop the Depot and botanic garden.

The Newsletter has struggled to be a bimonthly publication due to the commitments of the editor and so only 3 editions have been published but the December Issue was a special 10th Anniversary edition.

Thanks to Councillors and Melton City Council staff for their support and encouragement towards FMBG and the continuing development of the Melton Botanic Garden.

Many thanks to all those who actively contributed during the year in so many ways. To those who make our monthly meetings run well by providing supper, helping set up chairs, tables, library, and sell the raffle tickets. Finally 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.

The Executive Committee continued its dedicated work as it has again been another full on year and we seem to be giving well over 100%. We held a planning day in January which included reviewing the year and planning the year. We prepared and released a new Strategic Plan in January. It is pleasing to see we have met many of the goals in the previous plan and are now ready to tackle the challenges for 2014-2017 with our Strategic Plan as our direction.

Thanks to all committee members for their support and great work throughout the year to Alan, Margaret, Janet, Anne, Jill, Dave and Myles. Each has contributed a significant amount and used their skills and talents to shaping FMBG.

All these achievements and efforts throughout the year provide a strong foundation for us to continue our work towards the development of the Melton Botanic Garden in 2014/15 and beyond.

John Bentley

President, Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden

Report presented at the Annual General Meeting 10 September 2014



Category Winner
Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria
Sustainable Cities Awards 2013
sustainability.vic.gov.au/KABV

