



## FMBG Annual Report July 2022 to June 2023

On behalf of the FMBG Committee I have pleasure in presenting the annual report for the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden (FMBG). This report covers the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Firstly, a big thank you to everyone who helps and supports FMBG, especially as in 2023 we began our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. We have a wonderful and dedicated crew of FMBG volunteers committed to volunteering and working hard. It has been another year of outstanding achievements, we reached 470 financial members on 30 June 2023, launched the Queen’s Jubilee Tree Planting Project and moved to full operations as COVID restrictions eased.

### FMBG Meetings

We had a full year of FMBG face-to-face meetings with a great line up of guest speakers and topics for our meetings in 2022/23. The monthly meeting raffle was well supported, as we raised \$1,093. Thanks to Carlene in organising and serving the supper for the meetings, to Jill and Vee for the raffle and Kathy and Barbara for opening and closing the venue. Committee Meetings were at the Brookfield Lifestyle facilities. Thanks to Mike for opening and closing the Brookfield meeting facility.

### Membership

Individual memberships increased to 444 from 354 the previous year. It is very positive to see a substantial increase in membership as a result of our membership drive. We received good support from businesses through corporate memberships.

FMBG Memberships											
30 June	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Individual	444	354	312	323	303	235	233	251	236	218	207
Corporate	24	21	22	19	16	16	18	10	10	NA	NA
Associate	2	2	2	1	3	4	3	4	4	NA	NA

### Garden Development

New garden areas have been created and others further developed. Major areas in development include: 1) Lake south east near the boardwalk including construction a dry creek bed and surrounds, 2) the Eastern Australian Dryland Garden, 3) the eastern MBG boundary along Collins Road with the Queen’s Jubilee Tree Planting Project and 4) the Californian, Central and South American Garden. We commenced a sponsorship of the Bushfoods Garden with our Corporate Member, Edible Eden Design. Council finally commenced the Nature Play Space development in April 2023.





## Volunteer Hours

The table below shows the volunteer hours contributed through the Depot sign-in sheets:

Group/Activity	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Bushies*	231	-	3	6	-
Clean Up Days	158	75	78	118	193
Creekers	511	487	421	334	538
Depot (inc. Admin)	248	85	56	161	296
Grow The Garden	511	193	154	153	215
Guided Tour Volunteers	42	43	15	193	223
Gumnuts	1,935	1,401	1,458	1,509	1,391
Lakers	2,227	1,099	1,680	1,405	1,018
Mixed Garden Beds North	64	17	-	-	-
Nursery	2,940	2,530	2,005	2,150	2,695
Odd Jobbers	1,612	714	641	609	670
Schools/TAFE Volunteering	-	90	-	60	210
Safaris*	*309	527	399	548	513
Southerners	1,200	-	-	-	-
Tweeters*	*	67	17	5	29
VVP*	*	-	12	-	12
Latham's Snipe Survey	52	22	11	60	29
Required hours volunteers	2,885	5,074	6,197	8,765	7,711
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>14,925</b>	<b>12,678</b>	<b>13,152</b>	<b>16,186</b>	<b>16,709</b>

\*Missing data. Also, some rows have been removed due non-continuing groups/activities

The volunteer hours in the table show we have contributed over 14,925 hours which is an increase of 2,247 hours. At the minimum wage rate of \$23.23/hr (1 July 2022), our hours equate to a value of \$346,708 for volunteer hours supporting the garden. However, the work we do is of a higher value than the minimum wage. The Funding Centre using ABS data (2021), values volunteer contribution at \$46.62/hr (based on the average weekly wage), using this rate it means our volunteer contribution is \$695,804. We have not reported all the other activities we do as volunteers, such as: Committee Meetings, other meetings, project management, collecting plants, external events e.g., presentations, fundraising activities such as Bunnings etc. and all those activities our volunteers do in their own time to support FMBG and the garden. Many volunteers use their own vehicles and are covering their running costs in many of our activities and in the garden. We have many volunteers who purchase or donate items without re-imburement to support FMBG and our activities. All these contributions demonstrate what a dedicated and committed team of volunteers we have in FMBG. Congratulations to everyone!

We continued our program for volunteers on required hours. Without their wonderful assistance across the garden and in administration we would have difficulty developing and maintaining the garden. We thank Ian Barnes for inducting and training the new Required Hours Volunteers working in the garden.

## Garden Groups

Our active groups in the garden and supporting groups are: Admin (Janet Dyke), Bushies (Dianne Tran Winkworth and Rob Baird), Creekers (Alan Partridge), Gumnuts (Michael Marshall, who took on the position of Team Leader following the retirement of David and Barb Pye as project managers), Lakers (Jill Bentley), Odd Jobbers (John Bentley and Robin Stewart), Safaris (Steve and Ella Parker), Southerners (Ian Barnes), Sun-seekers (Chris Triplett), Tweeters (Margaret Smith/Jaden Fanari), Collections and



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Records Management Team (John Bentley and Jennifer Peters) and the Nursery Team (Anne Langmaid). Thanks to the leaders of all groups and the volunteers in each group.

### **Nursery**

Thanks to Anne Langmaid, Nursery Manager, and the nursery team in managing the propagation and sale of plants. The sale of plants continues to be the major source of funds to cover our operating expenses. The nursery helps support new projects and propagates plants for the garden. This year has seen the highest plant sales since the nursery commenced sales. Well done to the nursery team.

### **Guided Tours and Visitors**

We have led tours for specific events, festivals and groups. However, we have deliberately restricted the number of tours so we can focus on the garden development.

Thanks to everyone who assisted with the guided tours and associated morning teas.

### **Plant Recording**

Jennifer Peters, has continued developing her IrisBG capabilities diligently entering plant records into IrisBG and producing reports. Many thanks to Jennifer for her precise and hard work on this project.

Volunteers are using Garden Explorer to undertake plant audits of various garden beds. We continued to add photos to IrisBG. Garden Explorer is the public interface to IrisBG data. It is being used by visitors.

### **Seating**

We undertook installation garden recycled seating and picnic settings across the garden. Seat pad preparation and installation are undertaken by the Odd Jobbers Team. We thank them all for their work in enhancing the garden through the furniture installations.

### **Community Involvement**

Kurunjang 'Hands on Learning' students have been working with the Lakers and some community groups have assisted at Grow the Garden Days and Clean Up Days. Some of the Kurunjang students did their work experience at the garden with FMBG. At the Clean Up Australia Day event in March the Rotary Club of Melton members helped clean up and hosted a sausage sizzle for the volunteers.

### **Council Funding**

We received funding from the council budget of \$36,500 ex. GST. This funding is specifically to develop and maintain the garden. The funding continued each year until June 2023, so the Committee had to undertake a resubmission resulting in \$36,500 in being allocated for 2023/24. The funding process is being consider so as to incorporate future funding allocations in the new MOU. MCC funds are expended as per the MCC budget plan which is monitored by council. There are strict recording and reporting responsibilities we must comply with in expending public funds.

### **Promotion**

We continued our strong presence on social media and through our web page. FMBG and volunteers appeared in the Melton and Moorabool Star Weekly several times. The garden has been mentioned more by council in its communications through printed material, social media, and the local newspaper.

A new notice board was installed at the public car park in June 2023.

Our patron, Jane Edmanson OAM, has been continuing to promote FMBG at events she attends and has visited the Friends and MBG a couple of times during the year.

Presentations to other groups focus on the development, existing gardens, and plants of the MBG.



## Social Media

Our social media numbers have increased in all areas, except Twitter.

	30 June	2023	% inc	2022	2021	2020	2019
MBG FB Page Likes*		NA	-	NA	2,024	1,631	1,300
MBG FB Page Followers		2,897	10.6%	2,619	2,174	1,741	NR
MBG FB Check-ins		NA	-	NA	2,493	NR	NR
Nursery FB Page Likes		1,284	15.6%	1,111	923	675	500
Nursery FB Page Followers		1,480	17.6%	1,258	1,027	725	NR
Nursery FB Check-ins		110	0%	110	104	NR	NR
FMBG FB Page Likes		166	22.1%	136	110	87	NR
FMBG FB Page Followers		188	24.5%	151	121	96	NR
FMBG FB Group Members		919	12.3%	818	695	493	380
Twitter Followers		139	-0.7%	140	138	137	124
Instagram Followers		845	6.6%	793	706	454	396

\*NR – Not Recorded. \*NA -Not Available. \*FB have ceased likes on MBG page (only Follow is allowed)

## Thanks

Many thanks to all those who actively contributed during the year in so many ways. Thank you to every financial member, you are supporting the Friends and helping to make FMBG one of the larger friends of botanic gardens groups in the State of Victoria.

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered at the botanic garden by propagating, maintaining, weeding, watering, and planting, mulching, making paths etc. which all help enhance and manage the Melton Botanic Garden.

Thanks to everyone who make our monthly meetings run well by providing supper, helping set up chairs, welcoming and running the raffle.

Thank you to Mike Coveney, who continued as the Assistant to the Treasurer. Mike enters the FMBG accounts each month into MYOB and ensures we meet our ATO BAS requirements. The Treasurer's role had been covered by John Bentley.

A thank you to Adrian Cope, Melton City Council, the FMBG Liaison Officer who helps to address MBG issues and actions them.

Special thanks for David and Barb Pye for the project management of the Eucalyptus Arboretum and Western Australian and South Australian Garden as they have retired from their formal positions but will continue volunteering. Thanks to Michael Marshall for taking on the role of Gumnuts Team Leader.

Many thanks to everyone assisting in our fundraising efforts as we have been able to commit funds to develop the botanic garden and purchase new equipment.

Thanks to the Admin Team for their work, which many of us do not see directly. Their efforts ensure we have items such as the volunteer hours diligently recorded.

The **FMBG Committee** continued its dedicated work and operated as a strong team. The FMBG Committee has done a wonderful job in helping to achieve a well-run and well-respected volunteer organisation in the Melton and the wider community.



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Many thanks to Barbara Frampton for a superb job as Secretary and Public Officer, and her invaluable commitment to continue in this role for one more year, it is greatly appreciated.

Thanks to each of our committee members who have worked and supported the management of FMBG through their teamwork, discussion, research, honest feedback, and decision making. Many thanks to Adrian Booker, Barbara Frampton, Jackie Mihalec, Jennifer Peters, Jill Bentley, Kathy Smith, Mike Coveney, and Stewart Brown for their support, dedication, and commitment. Each one has contributed a significant amount and used their skills and talents in overseeing FMBG.

All these achievements and efforts throughout the year provide a strong foundation for us to continue our work to achieve our mission in our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year and beyond.

John Bentley

President, Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden

*Report presented at the Annual General Meeting 13 September 2023*

**Mission: To enrich the community and the environment by fostering, promoting and supporting the development and activities of the Melton Botanic Garden.**

