

FRIENDS OF GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS



THE FRIENDS HANDBOOK



FRIENDS OF GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

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FGBG Committee of Management

Your Committee is responsible for the effective management of the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens. If you have any problems or queries, don't hesitate to contact us. You can do this by email, phone or by speaking to the FGBG staff in the Office who will direct your enquiry to the Committee.

WELCOME

Welcome to Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens also known as “the Friends”. We are delighted you have joined us. How fortunate we are to live in a City by the Bay, with unsurpassed views across the water to the remarkable You Yangs. The close proximity of our historic Botanic Gardens to the bay with its beautiful vistas as well as the wonderful trees and rich plantings in the Gardens truly lift the spirits. The Geelong Botanic Gardens is one of the very few in Victoria that has been continually highly cultivated and maintained since the 1850’s. It is an iconic jewel in the City of Greater Geelong.

This booklet sets out to give you some information about the Gardens and the Friends. It includes an introductory history of both the Gardens and the Friends. It also provides a brief outline of how we operate. We hope you find the information useful.

Acknowledgement to Country

The Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens acknowledge the Wadawurrung who are the traditional owners of this land. We also pay our respects to Elders past and present of the Wadawurrung nation. The Friends actively seek to learn about indigenous culture and flora.

ABOUT THE GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS

The **Geelong Botanic Gardens** (GBG) occupies the land of the earliest known peoples in the region, the Wathaurong, who lived throughout the Bellarine Peninsula for more than 25,000 years (see Eve Johns <http://www.camoola.net/about.php>). Our Gardens are the fourth oldest in Australia and one of the loveliest. Its founders were visionary. In 1851 almost 81 hectares (200 acres) of land were set-aside for a botanic garden on the Corio Bay headland, east of the present city centre, just two years after Geelong was designated as a town. The then barren site, buffeted by sea breezes, had little water. Nevertheless, in 1856 the present Botanic Gardens were commenced on 0.4 of a hectare (one acre) of this land, located in a small, protected cleft of the larger area (much of which is now Eastern Park and the golf course), and by 1857 Daniel Bunce was appointed Curator.

Bunce was already an avid collector of both indigenous and exotic plant material, sometimes trekking with explorers and, at other times, exchanging seed and information with botanic collectors around the world. He soon expanded the precious garden to 2.25 hectares (5.25 acres). The long parallel beds in the Gardens are remnants of the seven Bunce planted for accessible horticultural and scientific study. In 1859 he published a catalogue of the 2,235 plants he had established in the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Another of his legacies is the arboretum. Bunce planted many of the mature trees in the Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park.

After Bunce’s death, in 1872, John Raddenberry became Curator. He soon reduced the number of Bunce’s elaborate walks and replaced many of his blue gums with English trees. Between 1885 and 1887 he built an enormous timber lattice fernery in the shape of a basilica. This extraordinary structure was 300 feet long by 60 feet wide, with a raised octagonal, central section 60 feet high. There were numerous small ponds throughout the fernery, which was filled with ferns, mosses and palms. However, it eventually fell into disrepair and was demolished after World War II. Tall palms, including the iconic Chilean Wine Palm (*Jubaea chilensis*), clearly visible in the Gardens, and planted by Bunce, mark the place of Raddenberry’s great building. (*Jubaea chilensis* has since become the Friends’ logo.)

Over the years the Gardens shrank in area until they occupied only the nursery. In 1959 they were enlarged again, extending the western boundary to include the broad lawn planted with specimen trees, the fan-shaped rose garden and a conservatory, wrought iron gates and fence. In this way a less formal garden was added to Bunce’s nursery layout. (For a history of Geelong Botanic Gardens, see George Jones, *Growing together*, Vols. 1&2, Geo. Jones, Geelong, 1984 &1996, available at the FGBG office.)

Ours is a botanic garden in three parts, responding to changing nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century ideals. In recent times the 21st Century Garden has opened the Geelong Botanic Garden to Eastern Park, to the City and to Corio Bay. As an outcome of the 1994/5 Master Plan, the Chris Dance Land Design concept cleared away senescent palms and conifers along Podbury Drive, replacing them with regional grasses in special beds referring to the prows of boats on Corio Bay. The new approach leads seamlessly to new entrance steps and into the drought tolerant plants garden on axis with the Bay. The centre of this garden is an elliptical sand bowl, developed below the natural contour of the site, open to sun and sky, while protected from destructive winds. This starkly different garden showcases plants from around the world held in our collections. The 21st Century Garden is a celebration of Geelong's indigenous flora, of Australian native plants, plant evolution, plants of ancient origin and those from areas in South Africa and the Americas; all of which have adapted and survived in dry conditions.

The designs of Bunce, Raddenberry and Dance for the Geelong Botanic Gardens reflect three distinct landscapes, each specific to the concerns of their era. However, the primary role of the Gardens to hold plant collections for the purposes of conservation, education, research and display has been the focus of all three designs. The Geelong Botanic Gardens attract many thousands of visitors each year. It is an innovative and leading regional Botanic Garden connected to its community, funded by the City of Greater Geelong and supported by the Friends.

ABOUT FRIENDS OF GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS

The **Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens** (FGBG or Friends) is a not-for-profit association, established in 1985 and incorporated in 1986, to support and advocate for the Geelong Botanic Gardens (GBG). Our Friends was one of the earliest of these associations in Australia and was a founding member of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc., the national organisation. Members of the FGBG come from many different backgrounds and experiences and we welcome newcomers.

- The FGBG has members who have joined to enjoy socializing through participating in garden related events and others who are also volunteers.
- Members are encouraged to become volunteers, but this is a personal choice and by no means compulsory.
- To become a volunteer, it is necessary first to be a member of the FGBG. Before commencing voluntary work, all volunteers must attend a Friends Induction session, where they will be required to sign an Induction Form, indicating that they have read and understood the Members' Handbook. Members volunteering as hands on horticulture volunteers will also be required to read, sign and adhere to a *Standard Operating Procedure* document which outlines safety and OHS procedures whilst working in the workspaces of the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Volunteers are required to observe CoGG policies and protocols when working in Geelong Botanic Gardens.
- When members join the Friends they agree to support the Friends' Rules and Purposes 2014, comprising our Constitution, as well as our Code of Conduct and Policies and Procedures. Friends policies cover our obligations to uphold the City of Greater Geelong, State and Federal policies, as well as our commitment to the engagement, safety and well-being of members and the public.

FRIENDS OF GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of an organisation are united by their shared values and expectations. As members of the Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens we will endeavour to show:

- **RESPECT** by listening to and acknowledging feedback and treating others as equal, being respectful and positive in thoughts and actions. This includes our interactions with fellow FGBG members, staff and GBG staff.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** by being responsible for our actions and following common procedures, goals, guidelines and policies.
- **PROGRESSIVENESS** by pursuing an innovative and transformational path, ensuring that our decisions are informed and balanced, whilst acknowledging the contributions and achievements of former members.
- **OPENNESS** by being transparent in decision-making and communication with others. We encourage the contributions of members and the involvement of community, GBG staff and the City of Greater Geelong.
- **UNITY** by working together co-operatively, in a mutually supportive manner.
- **BOTANIC SPIRIT** by respecting and celebrating our traditions and our Garden's history, with the desire to leave a legacy for future generations.

Communication

Members must not make statements to the media or external organisations that suggest they are representing the views of the FGBG or GBG. This does not restrict members from acting as an independent person, as long as no reference is made to representing the FGBG or GBG.

As an association our members are committed to work in **PARTNERSHIP** with the City and to **SUPPORT** the City. When representing the FGBG, members must show respect to the City and their staff as well as other FGBG members and the public. Criticism or negative opinions and feedback directly to City staff, or shared with other volunteers or the public, reflects on the Friends as an organisation. It is the Committee's role to raise and deal with internal and external issues. Concerns should only be raised with the FGBG Committee who will then act as appropriate on your behalf.

Refer to The Friends' policies relating to conduct, discipline and resolution procedures for more information, or members may arrange a confidential meeting with Committee to share concerns.

FUNCTIONS OF THE FRIENDS OF GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS

While our chief function is to support the GBG, FGBG volunteers work in various capacities to provide services and events for members and the public, as well as to raise funds to be used in support of the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

Our volunteer groups are:

- *Committee of Management* who are responsible for the management of the Friends.
- *Friends Guides* who introduce visitors to various aspects of the Gardens through guided and booked walks in GBG and Eastern Park
- *Growing Friends* who grow plants from the Gardens collection for sale;
- *Gardening Friends* who assist in maintaining designated garden areas;
- *Friends Library Volunteers* who manage the Library for FGBG members and GBG staff;

- *Friends Botanic Art School Committee* who manage the Geelong School of Botanical Art.

The Friends Committee of Management

These members are elected annually at the FGBG AGM in August. Responsible for all aspects of governance of the Friends, as well as the management of members and volunteers, the Committee plans and delivers events and services, such as:

- administration of our association
- management of the Geelong School of Botanical Art
- management of our website and Facebook page
- production of *Jubaea* (our triannual newsletter)
- workshops, evening lectures
- our biennial '*Inspired by Nature*' botanic art exhibition
- our annual Winter Lunch
- trips and tours of special gardens
- social/fundraising activities

The Friends Guides

These Friends Guides have promoted the Gardens to the public since 1986. They undertake extensive training and research as well as leading regular and booked guided walks for groups and visitors to the Gardens.

The Nursery Growers

The Friends established the Friends Nursery in 1993. Members volunteer each week to raise plants sourced from the Garden. They also offer the plants for sale to the public every Wednesday morning. Three seasonal weekend Plant Sales are held annually. Nursery sales are a core part of the Friends' business. Nursery data base volunteers print plant labels and maintain the Nursery plant data base.

The Gardening Friends

The Friends have hands-on volunteer roles assisting Geelong Botanic Gardens staff to maintain the **Perennial Border** and **Heritage Rose Garden**. We also have a team of **Weeders** who provide maintenance in designated areas throughout the Gardens.

The Friends Library Volunteers

The Friends Library volunteers, including our Volunteer Librarian, build and maintain the Friends' library and the reference library for GBG staff. They also maintain the Friends' archives and research material.

Geelong School of Botanical Art

This School was established in 2003 and the Friends took over the management in 2007. Classes are conducted by highly qualified professional tutors during school term and workshops are usually conducted in school holidays. The School holds a Biennial Exhibition displaying students' work. In 2017 the school was registered as a business entity of the Friends. It is administered by a volunteer sub-committee under the direction of the Friends' Committee of Management.

Events, Tours and other Activities

The Friends provide an annual program for members and the public –bus tours, speaker evenings, open gardens and many more activities to cater for a wide range of interests. We have a Catering Team who provide services for Friends events and for other Not for Profit Organisations.

Publishing and Merchandise Teams

The triannual newsletter *Jubaea*, published by the Friends, keeps members informed of Friends activities and features a variety of articles of a horticultural nature. From time to time projects to produce other publications and selected items of promotional merchandise are undertaken by volunteer teams.

Professional Development Financial Support

The Friends provide support for members and Volunteer Guides to attend conferences and other professional development and educational activities.

The Friends have always been committed to their support of the GBG staff. Ongoing Financial contributions since 1997 enable staff members to attend professional development and conferences, including some international venues.

Conferences and Exhibitions

The Friends have hosted three National Conferences for the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens and have managed a number of significant non-Friends art exhibitions.

FGBG CONTRIBUTIONS FOR GBG PROJECTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Since November 1985, when the Friends was formed to support the Geelong Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park, an enormous amount has been achieved by this 'non-profit' organisation, through the involvement of their members and volunteers.

FGBG Gift Fund

In 1997 the Friends established the *Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Gift Fund* which accepts tax-free donations for the sole purpose of giving financial support for specific programs and projects within the garden area designated as Geelong Botanic Gardens. The Friends are Trustees of this Gift Fund.

A summary of the ongoing contributions to the GBG and Eastern Park made from the Gift Fund, grants and funds raised by the Friends is listed below, and a detailed list of financial contributions is available upon request and on the Friends' website.

Financial Contributions by the Friends

This includes contributions for the development of the 1994 Master Plan, development of the 21st Century Garden, restoration of the historic Eastern Park Rotunda, Ladies Kiosk and Hitchcock Fountain.

Financial Contributions by member donations, sponsorship or public subscription

This includes contributions for the installation of the Bunce Bollards and the purchase of a computerised plant labelling machine.

Grants obtained by the Friends

Applications for grants have been sourced by the Friends from many organisations including Parks Victoria, Federation Community Project, Heritage Victoria and the City of Greater Geelong. The Friends continue to seek funds to support the precinct. These grants have supported the restoration of the Cabmens' Shelter, the Hitchcock and Traill Fountains and the Ladies Kiosk. They have also supported the GBG Reference Library as well as interpretive and front entrance signage in the Gardens.

Financial Contributions by the Friends for the GBG Meeting Room

The development of the GBG Reference Library and furnishing of the Meeting Room has been a significant benefit to the community.

Financial Contributions by the Friends for Interpretation and Promotion

In addition, the Friends continue to promote the precinct with *What's On* magazine, the Friends website and social media.