



# Friends of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Port Augusta Incorporated | ABN 72 979 332 415

# Newsletter

August 2018

## President's Report *by John Zwar OAM*



Teddy Bear Native Bee - Chris Nayda

**#1 REGIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN IN AUSTRALIA**  
AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC

Our next meeting on 8th September is the AGM and the Guest Speaker is Jane Edmanson, from ABC TV Gardening Australia. Jane is an excellent speaker and presenter so this meeting is not to be missed if you are able to attend. In recent weeks I have spoken to the very active Strathalbyn Garden Club, giving an update on developments at the AALBG in recent years. About 90 members were present and were so impressed with progress that they are now looking at arranging a tour to the Garden. I was also interviewed on the Radio 5AA Garden Show two Saturdays running and had the opportunity to talk about our wonderful Garden and encourage people to visit. Chris, our Secretary, spoke to a group meeting at William Creek several weeks ago and Brian, our Vice President, spoke to a Probus group in Port Augusta recently. There is certainly interest in The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden in the wider community. I have heard that in the last financial year 106,967 visitors came to the AALBG, the first time we have exceeded the 100,000 and the Café and Gift Shop (including plant sales) have been kept very busy. Some Friends committee members showed a group of visiting state and federal members of parliament around the Garden recently and I understand they were impressed with what they saw. Of course our Friends made the most of the opportunity to lobby for some government funding to assist Council to run the Garden.

We were recently the recipients of a generous donation of \$4,000 from Open Gardens SA which will be put towards a touch screen to provide visitors with information on the Garden. Council will make up the shortfall using donated funds that they have received. We also received

a \$500 donation from the Australian Plant Society and a number of donations from Friends members. We are most grateful for all of these! The Garden has received some good falls of rain this year but has also had some heavy frost so we hope there is not too much frost damage. August to October is peak flowering time at the AALBG and a visit any time is worthwhile, but particularly so in these months. Many members will know of Neville Bonney or at least some of his many books, which are mostly on aspects of native vegetation. Neville was able to attend our last meeting and was most impressed with progress at the Garden and was particularly interested to see grafted eremophilas which our trainee gardener Perry Jones produces in the nursery. (See page 3 for Photo). Over the last couple of months Friends volunteers have taken trailer loads of our plants propagated at the AALBG for sale at various regional events and made \$16091 for the Council. This is in addition to our volunteer Garden Guides, plant propagators, garden maintenance volunteers and construction workers. We were recently advised that Council will continue to assist the University of Technology, Sydney with the ongoing research into the heat tolerance of arid zone plants at the AALBG. This research involves PhD students under the guidance of Professor Andrea Leigh. The Friends also assist with funding and field work for this ground breaking research work. There is plenty happening at the Garden. We hope to see you at the AGM or for a visit to the Garden in coming months if distance allows. Thank you all for your support of our amazing Garden which just gets better and better every year.

Best wishes, John Zwar - OAM, President.

### NEXT MEETING & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Venue:** WMC Meeting Room, AALBG

**Date & Time:** Saturday 8th September 2018, 1:00pm

**Topic:** Native Plants of Victoria

**Guest Speaker:** Jane Edmanson

- Victorian Presenter on ABC television Gardening Australia for over 29 years
- Patron of the Royal Horticultural Society Victoria, Melton Botanic Gardens, Victorian State Rose Garden, Werribee and The Gardens of Austin Health
- Leads Garden Tours with lovely people each year overseas and within Australia
- Talks to garden clubs, other people and school groups
- Loves gardening and the Australian bush

Jane has wanted to come to AALBG for a long time and is looking forward to her visit.



### DIARY DATES

#### Saturday 8th September at 1:00pm

Friends Meeting and Annual General Meeting  
WMC Meeting Room. Guest Speaker **Jane Edmanson** will be presenting a talk entitled: Native Plants of Victoria.

#### Sunday 9th September at 10:00am

Jane Edmanson will be doing a **Walk around the Garden** pointing out and answering questions about Arid Plants.

To join Jane on the walk and/or talk please ring AALBG on 86419116, or call in to the Gift Shop.

Bookings and pre-payment are essential.

Cost: \$10 which covers both events.

**THIS EVENT WILL FILL UP QUICKLY!**

**PLACES ARE LIMITED. IF YOU INTEND**

**COMING ALONG PLEASE BOOK & PAY EARLY.**

#### Bird Watching Field Trips of the Birdlife Australia & Birds SA Clubs PORT AUGUSTA GROUP

Please bring binoculars, sturdy footwear, hat, sun protection, morning tea and lunch.

**Contacts:** Peter 8642 5723 / 0457 708 859 or Bernie 0419 863 834 / b.haase@telstra.com

#### Sunday 19th August: The Dutchmans Stern Cons. Park.

Meet at the Quorn Swimming Pool at 8:30am.

#### Sunday 16th September: Bernie's Block.

Meet at Mambray Creek parking bay at 8:00am.

#### Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th September and

#### Monday 1st October: Ironstone Cons. Park.

Meet at Whyalla Wetlands at 8:30am.

Camp out. No facilities available.

#### Sunday 21st October: Mt. Maria, Willowie Forest, Melrose.

Meet at the Wilmington Pub at 8:00am.



# Volunteers in The Garden *by Brian Reichelt*

A lot has happened since our last newsletter with regards to the volunteers.

Our propagating group members have continued to grow and prepare plants for sale, and without their help the propagating staff would find it difficult to keep up production.

Since January there has been a concerted effort to lift plant sales and volunteers have been to many places to sell plants and since the beginning of the year have managed to sell \$16,091 worth of plants for the Garden. Well done to all those that have volunteered their time to achieve this fantastic figure.

The outdoor volunteers have again been busy since our last newsletter. Along with Garden staff they have installed all new bollards in the carpark area as the old log types were rotting off at ground level. The new bollards are steel and timber and look great.

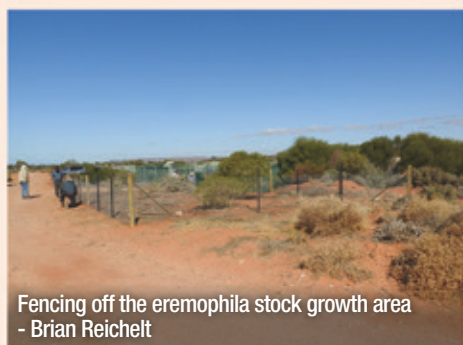


Installation of the new car park bollards  
- Brian Reichelt

Due to our extremely dry year kangaroos have become a problem in the garden and so the two bird watching hides have been fenced to stop the kangaroos and emus from damaging the plants and the water points for the birds. It has also been necessary to fence off the eremophila stock plant areas due to rabbit and kangaroo damage.

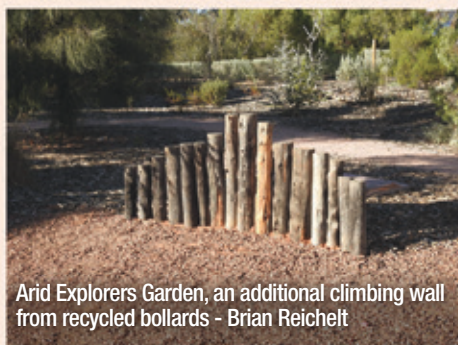


Fencing off the bird hide area - Brian Reichelt



Fencing off the eremophila stock growth area  
- Brian Reichelt

Some of the timber bollards from the carpark have been rescued and used as a small log wall in the Arid Explorers Garden and have proved popular with the children as another area to climb and balance on.



Arid Explorers Garden, an additional climbing wall from recycled bollards - Brian Reichelt

As reported some time ago we were successful in obtaining a Fund My Neighbourhood grant from the State Government to purchase a large octagonal shelter for the Picnic Area, and I am pleased to advise that the Friends and Staff have been busy in commencing the erection of this large shelter.



Site in readiness for the octagonal shelter  
- Brian Reichelt



Octagonal shelter under construction  
- Brian Reichelt

A total of 4.5 cubic metres of concrete was mixed and poured to secure the posts by the volunteers and staff, a sterling effort by this group. It is anticipated that by the time you receive this Newsletter the shelter will be completed.

Landscaping of the area has also commenced with a gabion wall being built and new plantings are to take place to upgrade the area. It will then be a matter of deciding what type of picnic tables will be installed. It has also been decided to also install a drinking fountain in the picnic area and this will include a dog watering bowl as this is the only area that dogs are allowed within the Garden.

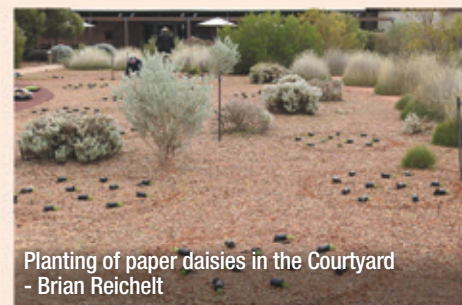


Construction of the gabion wall near the octagonal shelter adjacent to the car park  
- Brian Reichelt



Completed gabion wall and preparation of the planting area - Brian Reichelt

A total of around 400 paper daisies have been planted in the courtyard and areas around the Café/Gift Shop and when they flower should create a splendid sight for visitors.



Planting of paper daisies in the Courtyard  
- Brian Reichelt

Friends of the Garden joined Chris Nayda and myself in conducting a tour of the Garden for our local Federal Member Rowan Ramsey and Federal Minister Dan Tehan and of course we emphasised the qualities of the Garden and requested that the Federal Government consider some support funding for the Garden. Tour Guide and committee member Jim Hayward conducted a tour of the Garden for State Minister of Tourism David Ridgway and of course requested assistance funding for the Garden.



At the Volunteer Morning Tea at AALBG, Rowan Ramsey MP, Federal Minister for Grey and Hon. Dan Tehan, Minister for Social Services, with Volunteers Chris Nayda and Peter Langdon  
- Greg Willcocks

Once again it has been a busy time for volunteers in many different ways, but it all leads to the continued growth and promotion of our wonderful Garden.

# Bird Talk from The Garden by Peter Langdon

The White Ibis (*Threskiornis moluccus*) seen on edge of mangroves at Matthew Flinders Red Cliff Lookout, was a "first" sighting of this species in the Garden. A few have been seen since and also flying over the Garden. Colloquially called the "Bin Chicken", because of its habit of fossicking for food in garbage, especially in the eastern states of Australia, it has finally been seen north of the town, despite being around the old Power House area for many years.

Australian Bustards (*Ardeotis australis*) spent several weeks in the Garden with two seen near the Chenopod Hide on 13th June 2018. The males of these tall ground birds can stand up to one metre and can weigh 7kg making some bustards the heaviest flying birds. Females are smaller, around 70 centimetres tall.



Australian Bustard - Peter Langdon



White Ibis - Brian Reichelt

## Jim's Jottings By Jim Hayward

### FIRST SATURDAY CLUB

Thanks to those Friends who have come on our First Saturday tours exploring different aspects of the Garden. In June we went to the Boardwalk and Beyond, in July to the Great Victoria Desert Region.

August 4th: we will look at the Acacias in the Garden

September 1st: reviewing the different Regional Gardens

### TOUR VISITORS

- State Minister for Tourism, Hon David Ridgeway, visited on Friday 6th July for a short Garden tour.
- In May Flinders View Primary School brought four of their young leaders to view our bush foods plants as they research and plan their own garden.
- Also in May we took the Garden to the Hawker Area School as they planned, with support from the Friends of the Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park, to undertake plantings in Sacred Canyon.
- Also in May the Hawthorndene Probus Club brought 34 people for Garden tours. 40 of them sat down to lunch and the Cafe was very busy that day.



Rob Hatcher Bonsai Work Shop, with Kunzea - Jim Hayward



Rob Hatcher Bonsai Work Shop, with Kunzea - Jim Hayward

### BIG FRIENDS

On June 10th we had a wonderful three hour workshop with Robert Hatcher, senior horticulturalist at the Mt Lofty Botanic Garden, and a bonsai enthusiast for nearly 30 years. Rob told us a little of his bonsai story and then

- demonstrated repotting an older Ficus, choosing a new bonsai pot, pruning, including root pruning;
- showed us how to take a Kunzea from its black pot and prepare it for potting on as a bonsai, with rather severe root pruning, as well as pruning over half the branches for an 'old' look, and wiring the remaining branches into a new shape;
- tutored each participant as we all chose a pot, and an Australian native plant, and created our own new bonsai on the day.

Many thanks to Rob and all participants.

## Snippets



Grey-headed Flying-fox - Brian Reichelt

### UNUSUAL SIGHTING IN THE GARDEN by Brian Reichelt

Ryan Hayward one of the Garden staff called my attention to a large deceased bat which had become entangled in the boundary fence of the scientific area of the Garden on the opposite side of the Stuart Highway. To the best of our knowledge the bat is a Grey-headed Flying-Fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*).

Description: The grey-headed flying-fox is the largest Australian bat with a wingspan of up to one metre. It has dark-grey body fur, a grey head, and a distinctive reddish-brown collar. It is also the only flying-fox with hairy legs right down to its ankles.

The grey-headed flying-fox occurs along the south-east coast of Australia, from Rockhampton in central Queensland through New South Wales to western Victoria. During the last few years, the grey-headed flying-fox has also been recorded from Adelaide.

This is as we understand a first sighting of this species for Port Augusta. We can only assume that it had moved north from Adelaide, possibly in search of food, and more than likely became weak and landed on the fence, only to become entangled in the barb wired top.



Teddy Bear Native Bee - Chris Nayda



*Allocasuarina verticillata*, Weeping Sheoak - Chris Nayda

### CHRIS'S OBSERVATIONS

#### by Chris Nayda

The chubby Teddy Bear Native Bee *Amegilla* (*Asaropoda*) is out and about doing what bees do, collecting pollen on the many flowering eremophilas at AALBG. Perhaps they are having a picnic!

They are solitary and live in holes or burrows in the soil or in eroded creek banks or under houses. Come out and see them.

#### IN THE NURSERY - by John Zwar

AALBG Trainee Gardener Perry Jones with AALBG Friend and author of many native plant books, Neville Bonney, looking at grafted eremophilas which Perry produces in the AALBG nursery.



Neville Bonney and Perry Jones - John Zwar

# 2018 Corporate Members

## 2018 CORPORATE MEMBERS OF FRIENDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN

**We welcome these additional corporate members and encourage Friends to patronise their business.**  
Don't forget to mention that you are a Friend of the AALBG and that we appreciate their business participating as a corporate member of the Friends.



**WESTSIDE  
NEWSAGENCY**



**CROSSROADS  
ECOMOTEL**

## Peter's Plants *by Peter Hall*

*Eremophila christophori* is a shrub of 2 to 2.5 metres in height and about 1.5 metres in width, and has green, elliptic leaves. The flowers are tubular and about 2cm long, usually blue, but can be found in pink and white. They are insect attracting, but I have seen birds visiting them. It flowers over a long period of time and can have a few flowers most of the year. It is drought and usually frost tolerant.

*Eremophila christophori* grows naturally in the Macdonnell Ranges and can be seen not far from Alice Springs.



## Reminder

Are you financial? Renewals for Corporate Memberships for the 2018 year were due 1st January, 2018.

**Renewals of Memberships for Friends (singles & families) were due on 1st July 2018, at the start of the NEW FINANCIAL YEAR 2018-2019.**

Discounts for the purchase of meals and gifts in the café and gift shop only apply to the Friends Membership card holder/s and cannot be transferred to family and friends who are not members.



## Join or Renew Subscription & Contacts

### TO JOIN OR RENEW SUBSCRIPTION

Request a form from Contacts or collect one from the Visitor Centre

Or fill in this form and send with remittance to:

**Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Port Augusta Inc.**

PO Box 2040, Port Augusta SA 5700

[www.australian-aridlands-botanic-garden.org](http://www.australian-aridlands-botanic-garden.org)

Enclosed is my:

Subscription \$ .....

Donation \$ .....

TOTAL \$ .....

PLEASE TICK: ☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal of Membership

NAME: Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms: .....

Address: .....

..... Date: .....

Email Address: .....

Any donation will be gratefully accepted. Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible. Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Inc.' Receipts will be posted. A SAE would be appreciated but not obligatory.

### DIRECT DEBIT BANKING DETAILS

BSB: 035-065

Account No.: 164 604

Account Name: FAALBG

Reference: 'name of person banking'

Please notify by email to [friends@aalg.gov.au](mailto:friends@aalg.gov.au)

### MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

Individual (1 adult) \$30

Due annually 1st July. Includes 1 membership card.

Family (2 adults & dependent children under 18) \$50

Due annually 1st July. Includes 2 membership cards.  
(2 forms must be filled in).

Corporate \$250 Due annually 1st January.

(includes 1 membership card issued in one name  
nominated by the business)



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Issued August 2018 by Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Port Augusta Inc. Designed, Produced and Supported by Multi Print SA Port Augusta ~ Telephone: (08) 8641 0900