

FRIENDS OF THE ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN OF PORT AUGUSTA

A petition has already been signed by over 2,500 people in favour of the establishment of an Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta, South Australia, and the State Minister of Environment and heads of other Government Departments have already expressed interest. A Government Working Group has been set up to investigate all aspects of the proposed Garden for the State Government.

The proposed Garden is to be developed over a 40 hectare (100 acres) area of land (already set aside for the purpose), some 2 kilometres north of the city proper and having magnificent views of the nearby ranges. That Garden will include arid land plants from many areas including a section of native plants from the South Australian region, a section for plants from right throughout Australia, and a third section will be for plants from all over the world. It will be the first of its kind in Australia.

The benefits of such an establishment are many and varied. A Nursery will be established, experimental work undertaken, and an Advisory Service provided for people all over the world. The Garden will directly benefit Port Augusta by way of providing employment (not only at the Garden itself but by way of many other services, e.g. in the building trades, accommodation and services for tourists, etc.). With the correct backing and enthusiastic promotion, the spin-off from tourism alone could become quite enormous. It is estimated that around 40,000 to 50,000 people a year will be attracted to the area when the Garden is established. These will include people from throughout the whole of Australia as well as from overseas. Eventually the Garden will be fully serviced with kiosk, souvenir shop, and other facilities.

A well attended Public Meeting was held at Port Augusta on 1 May 1984 to discuss the Arid Lands Botanic Garden proposed for Port Augusta. That Meeting was chaired by Mr. John Zwar, Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, Port Augusta, who is a member of the Government Working Group. Mr. Zwar gave an extremely well presented insight into what has obviously been a very "in depth" study by him of the proposal for the establishment and development of a \$1.5 million Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta, together with details of progress to date. Mr. Zwar stated that the location of Port Augusta in relation to the rest of Australia, together with its climatic conditions, makes it the logical ideal site for the establishment of an Arid Lands Botanic Garden.

As a result of that Public Meeting, an Interim Committee has been appointed to form a support group to be known as the "Friends of the Arid Lands Botanic Garden of Port Augusta". The Interim Committee members concerned are:-

Mr. J. Pugh (Chair-person)	42 View Street, Port Augusta (42-4882 Bus.)
Mrs. P. Schiller (Secretary)	61 Dartmouth Street, Port Augusta (42-6281)
Mr. W. Schiller	61 Dartmouth Street, Port Augusta (42-6281)
Mr. G. Clark	4 Simmons Cres., Pt. Augusta West (42-2050)
Mrs. M. Kosonen	45 Hunter Cres., Pt. Augusta (42-2590)
Mrs. U. Meese	30 View Street, Port Augusta (42-2142)
Mr. M. Vile	180 Hamilton Rd., Pt. Augusta West (42-2021)
Mr. W. Trotman	108 Hurcombe Cres., Pt. Augusta West (42-0699 Bus.)
Mrs. J. Hill	1 Holds Street, Port Augusta (42-5748)
Mr. J. Zwar (Advisory capacity)	8 Carroona Rd., Pt. Augusta West (42-4944 Home)
Mr. B. Eden	C/- Pt. Augusta High School. (42-3555 Bus.)

The immediate objectives of that Interim Committee are to raise some "working finance", prepare a Constitution, call a General Meeting and elect a Committee, and for the body to become Incorporated. These matters are well in hand already.

Initially the aims of the "Friends of the Arid Lands Botanic Garden of Port Augusta" will be to keep the project alive by publicising the proposal, foster interest in the activities associated with the proposal, and raise funds which may be used for the benefit of the proposed Arid Lands Botanic Garden of Port Augusta.