



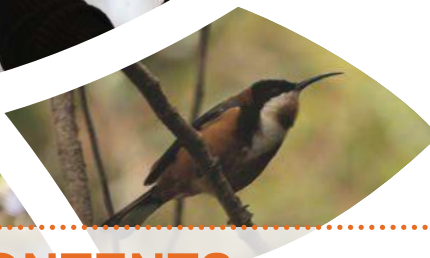
MELBOURNE FRIENDS

ROYAL
BOTANIC GARDENS
VICTORIA

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018





CONTENTS

Reflections from The President	1
Our Support for RBGV	2
The Friends	3
Our Volunteers	4
Events, Workshops and Classes	5
Friends' Financial Report	6
Friends' Trust Fund Financial Report	7

Photo credits: We acknowledge photos taken by members of the FRBGM



REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

This last year has been one of both change and consolidation. Major changes have occurred within the Friends' office, with the retirement of long-term Manager Virginia Henderson in February and Administrative Assistant Marguerite Hancock leaving us in March. We thank them both for all they have given to the Friends in their time with us. In June we welcomed Jill Scown as our Marketing and Relationships Manager and she, along with Karlene Taylor (Finance & Business Process Manager) and Georgina Ponce de Leon Huerta (Office & Technology Support Manager), will be looking to modernise processes to better look after your interests, and to expand and build our membership base for the future. The office could not operate however without the dedicated group of volunteers who come in every day and we are very grateful for all the time they give.

A wonderful achievement has been the completion of our Oral History Project. This has captured memories of the first years of the Friends from some of our founding members and will be a valuable historical record. Their commitment and enthusiasm for the Friends is clear and we shall strive to emulate this in the years ahead. Another milestone was our first-ever online survey of members. We were encouraged by the positive feedback and are endeavouring to incorporate some of the ideas and suggestions we received. Overwhelmingly, people join the Friends to support the Melbourne Gardens financially and to that end, a new level of membership, Passionate Friend, has been introduced to allow for a donation along with the membership fee.

Our Trust Fund continues to support the RBGV financially through grants for major projects, staff scholarships and research. The past year has seen the restoration of the Fern Gully Rest House (\$75,000) and the Trust Fund has committed \$200,000 over the

next two years to support the Sensory Garden project, with \$36,000 disbursed so far.

Events and activities were clearly enjoyed by those who participated. Our Insider Walks remain very popular, along with day trips and guest speakers at talks. Highlights included Attila Kapitany with his extensive knowledge of succulents and Christine Johnston, who spoke about H E Ramsay's botanical collection, which is of State significance and is now held here in the Herbarium. Our major events each year highlight two of our most prolific groups. Last October the Botanical Illustrators drew good crowds with their penguins leading people to the reFraming Nature exhibition, generating \$18,000 in income, while the Growing Friends continued to prosper raising almost \$70,000 in income across their two main plant sales.

The Photo Group has gone from strength to strength and is a wonderful way to discover hidden gems in the Gardens while enjoying the camaraderie of like-minded people. Plant Craft Cottage is another area where people can gather and enjoy one of the more secluded spots of the Gardens. The garden is maintained by the Cottage Garden Group while inside all manner of crafty delights await. Workshops in various craft-based activities from basketry to dyeing were held over weekends, and children's workshops were held during school holidays.

Our operations and activities depend on the willingness of members to give their time as volunteers, not least the production of, what was shown by our survey to be the number one benefit of being a Friend, our quarterly Botanic News. Volunteering not only gives our members the satisfaction of being actively part of a vibrant not-for-profit group, but also the opportunity to create friendships, learn skills and discover interests. So be it at an event, at a plant sale, an exhibition, or as part of a planning committee, in the office or on Council, we are indebted to you all.

OUR SUPPORT FOR RBGV

The Friends of the Gardens continue to provide financial support to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) through restoration and development projects and scholarships for RBGV staff.

Following the Friends' Trust Fund support for the construction of the new Fern Gully boardwalk, the Friends' Trust Fund granted \$75,000 to the RBGV for the restoration of the Fern Gully Rest House which had begun to show its age.

The project also proved to be a wonderful opportunity for Philip Bowyer-Smyth, who was a Friends' scholarship recipient in 2016, to implement his acquired project management skills by overseeing the restoration project. The Fern Gully Rest House can now stand valiantly for another century.

A Sensory Garden, is the third project in the Fern Gully area within the Gardens which has received support from the Friends' Trust Fund. The initial stages of the new garden began during the 17/18 financial year and will continue to evolve during the coming year with a further \$164,000 grant committed for the 18/19 financial year.

The Friends' continued to support the professional development of RBGV staff with four staff members receiving Scholarship Awards in 2017. Additionally Megan Hirst received the Helen McLellan Research Grant to test the horticultural potential of rare and threatened Australian plants.

Helen McLellan Research Grant

Megan Hirst
\$20,540

RBGV Staff Scholarships

Peter Berbee, \$4,277
Quercus conference, USA

Katherine Kominiarski, \$630
Wildlife Rescue Course

David Robbins, \$2,400
Record Keeping Diploma

Mandy Thomson, \$2,205
Australian Plant Society
Conference

\$36,000
Site of new
Sensory
Garden

\$75,000
to restore
Rest house

THE FRIENDS

The members of the Friends can celebrate another successful year not only financially, but also through the diverse range of scientific talks, craft workshops, successful plant sales, botanical illustration exhibition and other activities shared.

The Friends have enjoyed learning the fine art of botanical illustration and were treated to the spectacular reFraming Nature exhibition. Many of our photography group shared ideas and conversations while walking through the gardens seeking the perfect photo. The Growing Friends shared many laughs around the propagation bench in preparation for their two super plant sales in autumn and spring. Years of knowledge and history were shared with visitors to Plant Craft Cottage during Open House Melbourne weekend and regular craft workshops, whilst many of us simply enjoyed catching up with friends at events focussing on broadening our botanical knowledge.

The extensive program of activities, hosted by the Friends of the Gardens allowed us all to engage with the gardens in different ways. The program together with our quarterly publication, *Botanic News*, is highly valued by members. Here are a few highlights of how we engaged with the Friends' activities this year:



Botanic art classes and workshops

Your guide to the Gardens

Botanic News

Access to science and research



Exclusive tours, guided walks and workshops



Meeting new friends



OUR VOLUNTEERS

The volunteers of the Friends of the Gardens, are the foundation of our organisation. Over the last 12 months, the organisation has recorded almost 13,000 hours generously given by our hardworking volunteers to support the RBGV. Here's how you contributed this year:

- ▶ Warmly welcomed visitors to the Friends' office
- ▶ Gave the Friends a new visual identity
- ▶ Shared skills and knowledge with willing workshop participants at Plant Craft Cottage
- ▶ Provided strategic decision making for long term benefit of the organisation
- ▶ Prepared our most loved publication: *Botanic News*
- ▶ Liaised with RBGV to determine how the Friends can add most value through staff scholarships and garden development projects
- ▶ Hosted another successful art exhibition
- ▶ Warmly greeted all visitors to Plant Craft Cottage
- ▶ Assisted with the operations of the Friends' office
- ▶ Prepared the eNews to keep us all abreast of happenings in the gardens
- ▶ Coordinated, catered and hosted numerous events
- ▶ Promoted Friends memberships to many
- ▶ Coordinated volunteers for plant sales and art exhibitions
- ▶ Determined what we love most about the Friends in an online member survey
- ▶ Presented walks and talks on all things related to the Gardens.



Weeded and nurtured gardens



Organised, catered and hosted events



Almost
13,000
volunteer
hours



Plants lovingly propagated for sale



EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES

Our events program, art exhibition, plant sales and specialised workshops provide a wonderful opportunity for the Friends to engage with the wider community and impart our enthusiasm for what we know and love about the Gardens.

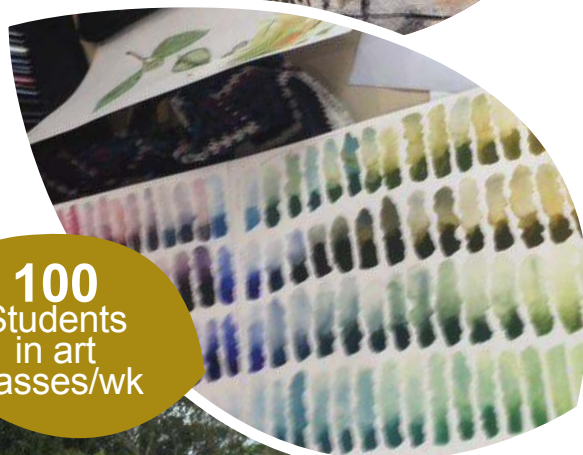
This year the events program had a little something for everyone. The reFraming Nature exhibition showcased the talent of the Botanical Illustrators generating almost \$18,000 income. Visitation was significantly increased on the previous reFraming Nature exhibition in 2015, by the way-finding penguins which led visitors to Domain House.

Botanical illustration master classes and specialist craft workshops were delivered by talented tutors and enjoyed by so many. Basketry and dye workshops also continued to be favourites within the Friends' annual program.

The Botanic Illustrators found a new home in Domain House and continued to produce some of the most highly regarded botanic art in Australia. With classes running seven days a week consistently throughout the year, more than 100 art students participate in the Botanic Art program each week.



Event Program
and Children's
Workshops



100
Students
in art
classes/wk



\$70,000
income

FRIENDS' FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial position for the year ending 30 June 2018 was an operating surplus of \$10,368; a good result in a year of both planned and unexpected changes. The revenue was \$442,602 and expenditure was \$432,234.

Although the operating surplus was down from \$51,380 in 2016/17, this can largely be attributed to two factors: smaller revenues from Exhibitions and Memberships. The major biennial art exhibition, *The Art of Botanical Illustration* was not held this year so the decrease in exhibition revenue of \$43,218, was to be expected. The decline in membership revenue of \$12,252 was disappointing however, initiatives were put in place during the year to reverse the reduction in membership, with the appointment in June of a Manager to focus on membership acquisition and retention. The planned office restructure was successfully completed during the year. Unexpectedly botanical art classes had to be relocated from the Whirling Room. It was very pleasing that expenses in most areas were contained and in line with budget.

The total assets of the Friends as at 30 June 2018 was \$483,152, compared with \$502,817 in 2017, a decrease of \$19,665 over the financial year. This decrease can largely be attributed to a decrease in cash held. Together, cash and deposits totalled \$440,204 (compared with \$471,642 in 2017). Liabilities reduced by \$30,033 as a result of payment of leave provisions, due to staff changes.

At the conclusion of the \$2017/18 year, the Friends were in a sustainable financial position.



STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2018	2017
INCOME		
Botanical Art Tuition	191,347	173,250
Membership Subscriptions	89,826	102,078
Growing Friends	69,962	73,986
Events and Activities	64,062	64,880
Exhibition Revenue	17,995	61,213
Interest	9,410	12,225
TOTAL INCOME	442,602	487,632
EXPENDITURE		
Employment Expenses	145,813	143,184
Membership Expenses	10,816	10,089
Botanical Art Tuition	120,266	123,051
Growing Friends	17,765	16,601
Events and Activities	61,638	58,609
Exhibition Expenses	11,517	25,491
Administration Expenses	64,429	59,227
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	432,234	436,252
OPERATING SURPLUS	10,368	51,380

BALANCE SHEET

	2018	2017
ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	25,204	126,642
Investments	415,000	345,000
Receivables and Prepayments	24,762	13,080
Plant & Equipment	18,186	18,095
TOTAL ASSETS	483,152	502,817
LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payables	104,156	112,716
Provisions	22,658	44,131
TOTAL LIABILITIES	126,814	156,847
NET ASSETS	356,338	345,970

TRUST FUND FINANCIAL REPORT

The Trust Fund completed its funding of the Fern Gully Rest House restoration with a grant of \$75,000 and commenced funding of a Sensory Garden with an initial grant of \$36,000.

The Trust Fund has contributed \$361,000 to the Fern Gully renewal projects, made up of \$250,000 for the Fern Gully Boardwalk, \$75,000 for the Rest House restoration and (to date) \$36,000 for the Sensory Garden.

Another milestone is the 10th anniversary of the receipt of the bequest of the late Helen McLellan in 2008 of some \$2.5 million and its growth over that 10 year period to nearly \$3.88 million as at 30 June 2018 (or 55% over 10 years). It has exceeded the current "real value" of the original bequest, measured in constant inflation adjusted terms, of \$3.37 million.

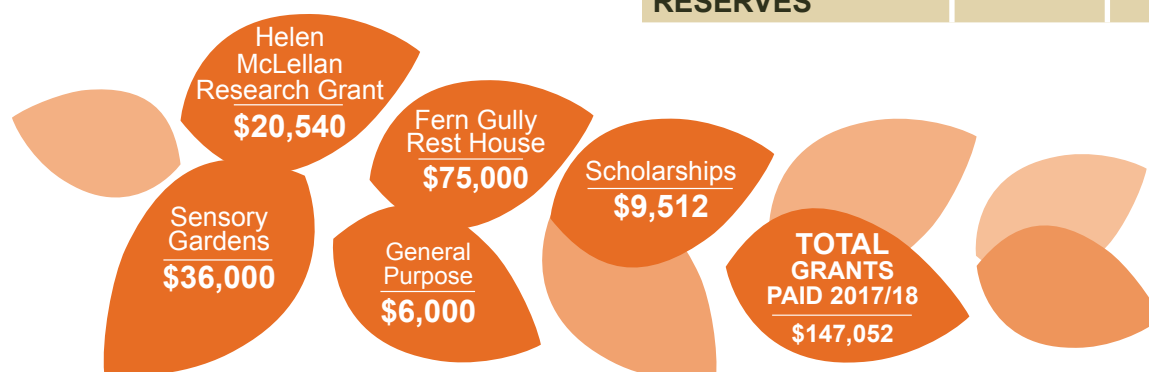
GRANTS PAID BY TRUST FUND TO THE GARDENS 2017-18

Fern Gully Rest House	75,000
Helen McLellan Research Grant	20,540
Sensory Gardens	36,000
General Purpose	6,000
Scholarships	9,512
TOTAL GRANTS PAID 2017/18	\$147,052

SCHEDULE OF ALL GRANTS PAID 1985 - 2018

1985 - 1989	67,172
1990 - 1994	213,892
1995 - 1999	371,154
2000 - 2004	670,010
2005 - 2009	323,064
2010 - 2014	610,347
2015 - 2018 (4 YEARS)	490,108
TOTAL GRANTS PAID 1985 - 2018	\$2,745,747

GRANTS PAID BY TRUST FUND TO THE GARDENS 2017-18



CONCISE STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2018	2017
INCOME		
Dividends & Distributions	141,555	139,888
Franking Credits	29,110	27,143
Donations & Bequests	23,385	74,856
Realised Profit/(Loss) on Investments	38,967	60,250
Interest	10,348	14,738
TOTAL INCOME	243,365	316,875
EXPENDITURE		
Audit Fees	4,500	4,350
Management Fees	42,973	48,077
Other Administration Costs	4,212	4,559
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	51,685	56,986
PROFIT	191,680	259,889
Unrealised increase (decrease) in investments	159,659	200,040
Less grants to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria	-147,052	-58,149
COMPREHENSIVE PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	204,287	401,780

BALANCE SHEET

	2018	2017
ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	167,566	193,939
Receivables	29,100	27,133
Other Financial Assets	3,759,088	3,497,422
TOTAL ASSETS	3,955,754	3,718,494
LIABILITIES		
Creditors	76,247	43,274
TOTAL LIABILITIES	76,247	43,274
ACCUMULATED RESERVES	3,879,507	3,675,220



ABN 43 438 335 331
Friends of Botanic Gardens
Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue,
Melbourne Vic 3004