



FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA Inc.

D A T E F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 1 | V O L U M E 1 2

Dear *Friends*

Welcome to the most exciting year yet for our wonderful Arboretum. Members of Council and I met with the Chief Minister on 25 January 2011 to present the draft strategic plan, the program for the Festival of the Forests 2011, and also to discuss our general progress. Our presentations were very well received by the Chief Minister who confirmed and endorsed our roles at the Arboretum: delivering community engagement, supporting maintenance with our working bees and through our really positive members who are such fine ambassadors for the Arboretum. I also reported on the overwhelming response to the radio broadcast on 8 January 2011, when I received more than 100 calls about the bus trips in one hour. (It took two hours to manage the messages!) The Chief Minister congratulated all our members on our efforts. The works will soon commence on the innovative Visitors Centre – it will be very exciting to watch this project progress throughout the year. The building of the roads continues, weather permitting, and we will have our best ever Festival of the Forests on 20 March.

With our growing membership we are able to offer a wide variety of activities for you all, and this year I am hoping that there are sufficient volunteers to let us run more than one activity at a time, sometimes. The main elements of our activity calendar have been finalised and are published later in this newsletter, but always make sure to check updates on our website www.arboretumcanberra.org.au which will also include programs detailing the activities of our sub-groups. We will also post updates to those without

internet access. The calendar in this newsletter has the main information and training days listed. These sessions are very useful if you are a new member or need a refresher. Please let me know if you simply can't attend these days and I will run an alternate session.

Our draft strategic plan was also welcomed by the Governing Board and the Department. This document forms the basis of the Deed of Agreement being drawn up with the Department for our annual funding arrangement (from this point until 2013), so it is already proving its worth. It will be finalised after 20 February and posted on our website.

A special thanks to Linda Muldoon who has taken over as editor of the newsletter – please remember to send her items to be included to e-mail: lindaon@grapevine.com.au. I have saved the best to last – you too can be a volunteer at the Festival of the Forests this year. Our program has changed and with bucketeers focused on only collecting at the entrance, this provides greater opportunities for volunteers to interact with the visitors and tell them all the wonderful information we have been collecting, through our knowledge and experience with the site. The Festival program will be published shortly and I look forward to seeing you all volunteering at the Arboretum in 2011.

See you at the Arboretum!

Jocelyn Plovits
Chair





FESTIVAL OF THE FORESTS VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

A key contribution you can make to the success of the Arboretum is to devote a couple of hours to presenting the Arboretum to the community.

Last year the Festival of the Forests was a very successful event which attracted about 10,000 visitors. The most popular activities were the talks: talks in tents, talks in the forests and talks on tour buses.

This year we will be presenting many exciting family-oriented activities, including wonderful guided walks through the forests, plenty of intriguing activities for children, a family cycling event and many displays.

The Friends' role is to be host for the day and facilitate the Festival by providing explainers, bucketeers, bus

guides (and manage a roster of these volunteers) and also to provide administrative support for the collection of moneys.

The Department will provide a fabulous site, some of the talks, and support for people with mobility problems. Once again Tom Tom Events have been contracted to manage the whole event, including the publicity and program for the day.

This is an important event for the Friends. It is our main fundraiser for the year as well as being a major opportunity to present the Friends and the Arboretum to the media and the community.

So please let Jocelyn know if you can do one or more two-hour shifts. E-mail contact@canberraarboretum.org.au or mobile 0406 376 711.



Talks on tour buses were very popular during the 2010 event

PHOTO: LINDA MULDOON





MEMORIES OF DAIRY FARMERS HILL

*By Christine Lawrence
President, ACT Equestrain Association*

The loss of the Stromlo pine forests in the 2003 bushfires was a particular loss to local horse riders. We rode through those forests from the early 1970s and have fond memories of the area as a place of cool retreat in summer and of great beauty on cold frosty mornings. Many of us got there via the old wooden bridge at Southwells Crossing, then along the river, sometimes stopping to pick some blackberries beside the track. After a brisk trot or canter up the eastern face of Dairy Farmers Hill, we would usually stop for a while to admire the view while our horses had a breather and grabbed mouthfuls of grass. If we then rode north on soft beds of pine needles through the Himalayan cedars to the cork oaks, we would sometimes discover those red and white fairy toadstools out of children's stories.

Since 1988 the Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) has traversed the Stromlo Forest fire trails from the cork oaks to the Molonglo corridor. The BNT is the longest marked trekking route of its kind in the world. In its 5,330 km route from Cooktown in North Queensland to Healesville in Victoria, Canberra is the only city the BNT actually traverses and it is a great asset to locals and tourists alike. Although the trail is meant for horse riders, walkers and touring cyclists, we've also seen camels and donkeys come through the Arboretum in the last year.

While horse riders can only access the Arboretum on Sundays at the moment, we are looking forward to



PHOTO: LINDA MULDOON

freer access as the big machinery leaves the site. When the Arboretum is completed there will be many more visitors than in the past, but we are looking forward to promised new equestrian infrastructure on the site and many fine rides as we watch the trees grow.

More details about the BNT are available at www.nationaltrail.com.au.



Riders from Gympie, Queensland, on the Bicentennial National Trail near the cork oaks

PHOTO: JENNY COSTIN



SHERRY MCARDLE-ENGLISH STANDS DOWN

By Jocelyn Plovits

This article is to celebrate the wonderful successes Sherry McCardle-English achieved for the Friends and, on behalf of you all, to wish Sherry and her husband Gavin, all the best for the next stages in Gavin's health.

For those of you who may not have heard, Sherry has stepped down from her role as Events Manager on our Council to enable her to devote more time to Gavin. She will be missed by us all in this and the many other roles she has undertaken. However, she has already volunteered for the Festival of the Forests so we will still see her from time to time.

Sherry was the Interim Chair and then the Inaugural Chair of the Friends from 2007 to 2009. She was a driving force in making the early years of the Friends such a success, including lobbying and advertising, working with the community, setting the templates to deliver and then delivering our wonderful Festival of the Forests, negotiating the free buses on second Sundays, holding Open Days on second Sundays, developing our logo and corporate vests - and the list goes on.

But most of all we will remember her infectious enthusiasm and be glad to see her occasionally, as she volunteers from time to time.

Thank you Sherry and good luck with the next stages of your life.



Sherry, a passionate Friend, addressing the public at the 2010 Festival of the Forests

FOREST TALK

FROGWATCH UPDATE

Roger Hnatiuk reports that another survey of the Arboretum's frog population was completed in January. The findings were as follows:

- Still no frogs at the STEP site, but the ephemeral wetland is looking good with water and aquatic vegetation.
- Cork oak dam had two species, though only one called during the recording time. Fewer frogs than last recording. The species was the 'ratchet frog' or 'spotted grass frog' *Limnodynastes dumerili*.
- At the main dam site, there were about five spotted grass frogs and this was similar to the last recording.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS

2011 is the International Year of Forests. For more information and a world view on the importance of forests go to www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011/.

BUS TRIP TO NALYAPPA ARBORETUM ON 19 NOVEMBER

This is the first of what may become a series of bus trips to other arboreta. Nalyappa is a truly magnificent private arboretum, established by Mr & Mrs Maurie Henderson on the upper Murrumbidgee in the beautiful Yaouk Valley. This trip is a joint venture with FACTA and only 48 seats will be available. More details next newsletter.



2011 PROGRAM

Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc

For information about specialty sub-groups please contact Jocelyn on contact@canberraarboretum.org.au or on mobile 0406 376 711. Also note that the calendar may be updated from time to time and changes will be announced in the newsletter.

JANUARY

- 9 Sunday Murrays Bus Tour to Arboretum
- 11 Tuesday Council Meeting
- 25 Thursday Council meets with Chief Minister

FEBRUARY

- 8 Tuesday General Meeting -
speaker Trish Keller OAM
Also discussing arrangements for Festival
of the Forests 2011
- 13 Sunday Murrays Bus Tour to Arboretum
- 14 Monday Council Meeting
- 20 Sunday Working Bee @ Arboretum

MARCH

- 5 Saturday Volunteer training for Festival of the
Forests 2011
- 6 Sunday Volunteer training for Festival of the
Forests 2011
- 8 Tuesday Council Meeting
- 20 Sunday **Festival of the Forests 2011**

APRIL

- 10 Sunday Open Day @ Arboretum
- 12 Tuesday Council Meeting
- 17 Sunday Working Bee @ Arboretum

MAY

- 10 Tuesday **Annual General Meeting**
speaker Dr Maxine Cooper,
Commissioner for the Environment
- 15 Sunday Open Day @ Arboretum

JUNE

- 12 Sunday Open Day @ Arboretum
- 14 Tuesday Council Meeting

JULY

- 10 Sunday Open Day @ Arboretum
- 12 Tuesday Council Meeting
- 17 Sunday Working Bee @ Arboretum

AUGUST

- 9 Tuesday General Meeting
- 14 Sunday Open Day @ Arboretum

SEPTEMBER

- 3 Saturday Volunteer training for
Floriade @ Arboretum
- 4 Sunday Volunteer training for
Floriade @ Arboretum
- 11 Sunday Working Bee @ Arboretum in Friends
Forest
- 11 Sunday Canberra Ornithological Group
conducting bird survey
- 13 Tuesday Council Meeting
- 18 Sunday Floriade @ Arboretum
- 25 Sunday Floriade @ Arboretum

OCTOBER

- 2 Sunday Floriade @ Arboretum
- 9 Sunday Floriade @ Arboretum
- 11 Tuesday Council Meeting
- 16 Sunday Floriade @ Arboretum
- 29 Saturday Volunteer training for 'Voices in the
Forest' ushers
- 30 Sunday Volunteer training for 'Voices in the
Forest' ushers

NOVEMBER

- 12 Saturday 'Voices in the Forest' special
event @ Arboretum
- 13 Sunday Open Day @ Arboretum
- 15 Tuesday General Meeting
- 19 Saturday Bus trip to Nalyappa arboretum on the
upper Murrumbidgee
- 27 Sunday Working Bee @ Arboretum followed by
Members' End of Year Party

DECEMBER

- 11 Sunday Open Day @ Arboretum
 - 13 Tuesday Council Meeting
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FACTA WESTBOURNE WOODS ARBORETUM WALKS

Free two-hour guided walks through the grounds of Royal Canberra Golf Club on the second Sunday of every month

Meet 9.30am at the golf club entrance, Bentham Street, Yarralumla

13 March	Native trees and Canberra	Guide: Dennis Nichols, phone 0448 330 057
20 March	Walk and ferry to the Festival of the Forests at the National Arboretum Canberra	Contact: Stephen Thomas, phone 6281 1587
10 April	From the nursery to the bush ACT Heritage Festival theme: Design	Guide: Frank Grossbechier, phone 6295 3937
8 May	Trees large and small	Guide: Roger Hnatiuk, phone 6251 2228
12 June	Conifers for production	Guide: Richard Hart, phone 6253 1999 (w)

Dress code of the club applies if you would like to accept the club's invitation to take refreshments at the Spike Bar after the walk (details at www.royalcanberra.com.au).

For further information contact the guide or **Friends of ACT Arboreta** on 6288 7656 or 6281 1587. No dogs allowed.



Royal Canberra Golf Club in May 2010

PHOTO: LINDA MULDOON



VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

EVENTS

- Support **Open Days @ Arboretum** in most months by volunteering to do one or more two-hour shifts as an explainer or a bucketeer.
- Support **Floriade @ Arboretum** on one or more of five consecutive Sundays by volunteering to work as an explainer or a bucketeer.
- Be an **Usher** at the **Voices in the Forest** concert on 12 November 2011. Ushers will gain free entry to this wonderful evening of Broadway tunes and fantastic opera.

WORKING BEES

- **Working Bees** are held about once every two months. A morning of hands-on work (and fun) is followed by a get-together over morning tea.
- **Special Working Bees** are held occasionally. One will be held soon (date to be announced by the Department) for planting reeds around the the now full dam.

SUB-GROUPS

Involve yourself in the activities of one or more of our various sub-groups:

- **Explainer at the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection** - contact Grant Bowie directly on nbpca@bigpond.com.au or phone 6262 9219
- **Bus tour guide** - assist on an ad hoc basis by guiding interested groups
- **Tree measuring** - establish records for future research into growth
- **Researching species** - compile a written and pictorial record of the forest species
- **Recording history** - archiving material about the development of the Arboretum project
- **Annual wall calendar** - help prepare a calendar for publication and sale
- **Frogwatch** - assist with assessing frog numbers and species on site
- **Birdwatching** - assist the Canberra Ornithological Group with their annual site survey (11 September in 2011)

Education and Collecting herbarium specimens are emerging as other sub-groups. If you have ideas for another activity please let us know.

CONTACT

If you would like to get involved in any of these activities please contact Jocelyn:

- by e-mail contact@canberraarboretum.org.au
- or mobile 0406 376 711.



PHOTO: LINDA MULDOON

Working bee volunteers in the Himalayan cedars on 20 February



OPEN SUNDAYS AT THE ARBORETUM DURING FLORIADE 2010

During 2010 the Friends' Council determined that there needed to be a change to the Friends' participation in promoting the Arboretum during Floriade, in order to maximise the use of volunteer time and enthusiasm and ensure the best outcome in community engagement with the Arboretum.

Sherry McArdle-English proposed to the Governing Board that the Friends run an Open Day at the Arboretum on the five Sundays during Floriade. This achieved the Board's goal of testing the viability of opening the gate so that people could drive onto the site on Sundays and this development was well-supported by our members.

The Open Day initiative was in addition to the agreement between the Friends and the Department about providing guides for bus tours from Floriade to the Arboretum: two each Sunday, sponsored by the Department and guided by Friends' volunteers. Jocelyn and Sherry shared the majority of the preparation work, with Jocelyn on training manual, rosters and bus bookings, and Sherry on Showroom and collection of donations at the gate. Thanks to all the volunteers who undertook the training.

Sherry negotiated with Yarralumla Nursery to provide plants to bring a 'Floriade look' to the display in the temporary visitors centre, which was renamed the Showroom. The Showroom provided an interesting display on the Events Terrace where people came to visit, collect brochures, and learn about the project's progress while enjoying free tea/coffee/biscuits provided by the Friends. On fine days tables and chairs were placed outside the Showroom so that people could sit and enjoy the view.

Each Sunday the Friends provided two bucketeers on the gate and two explainers in the Showroom between 10.00am and 3.30pm, with set-up commencing by 9.00am and close down by 4.00pm.

Friends recruited plenty of volunteers for all the roles. Bucketeteers explained about driving around the site and collected donations at the gate, while explainers educated the public about the Arboretum project in the Showroom. Volunteers repeatedly stated how pleased they were to be making a contribution about the Arboretum at the Arboretum. During Floriade volunteer effort, including explainers, bucketeteers and bus guides, totalled at least 375 hours.

The only exception to public access was during an event run by the ACT Veterans Athletics Club (ACTVAC). Earlier in the year ACTVAC had approached Sherry to

conduct an event on site during Floriade, and Sherry obtained Board approval. The event was held on Sunday, 26 September. Sherry met the first of the runners at the gate at 7.15am, and manned the gate through to the 11.00am completion. The gate was then re-opened to the public at 11.30am on that day. Visitor numbers during the Floriade period were as follows:

SEPTEMBER

- 12** 96 cars, 2 buses with 45 passengers, sunny
- 19** 112 cars, 3 buses with 144 passengers (includes regular Second Sunday tour), sunny
- 26** 166 ACTVAC cars, 203 other cars, 3 buses (includes Vic. Horticultural Soc. tour), sunny

OCTOBER

- 3** 102 cars, 2 buses with 96 passengers, intermittent rain
- 10** 97 cars, 2 buses, weather overcast

Total number of cars: 776 carrying approximately 1940 visitors (based on an average of 2.5 per car)

Total number of buses: 12 carrying 538 passengers

Total number of visitors: 2,478 (excluding walkers and cyclists that could not be included in this count)

These attendance numbers proved the Floriade Open Days to be successful. The weather affected the number of visitors but this is not unexpected when dealing with an open air event. On several Sundays the rain caused dirt road access to be limited. Sherry noted that the majority of people were very positive in their comments and estimated that about 70 per cent were first time visitors from Canberra. She also noted that by the third Sunday people were returning with family and friends, or the visitors had heard from other visitors about the site. The word of mouth advertising was positive and powerful.

Thanks to all these volunteers who made the Open Days so successful: Anne Baylis, Linda Beveridge, Cynthia Blount, Max Bourke, Spero Cassidy, Tony Fearnside, Vicky Fox, Yvonne Hackman, Bronwyn Halbisich, Roger Hnattiuk, Trish Keller, Jocelyn Plovits, Colette Mackay, John Mackay, Marie Mannion, Sherry McArdle-English, Linda Muldoon, Doug Nancarrow, Cathy Robinson, Jennie Widdowson, Doreen Wilson, and Bronwyn Vincent.

All volunteers who responded to a request for feedback expressed satisfaction with their involvement and they reported very little experience of negative comments from the public. All were delighted to be promoting the Arboretum at the Arboretum. The bucketeteers really enjoyed working with Sherry and the positive experience of talking to visitors, collecting donations and being able to work in fine weather.



A total of \$2,546 was raised through collection by the bucketeers at the gate, from guides collecting from bus passengers, and from explainers collecting donations in the Showroom. The Friends provided a report to the Governing Board about the success of the Open Day initiative. The Board has supported the following recommendations:

1. With low key advertising undertaken by the Department there was sufficient public interest to warrant repeating this Floriade opening strategy in the future. However, it is noted that this will need to fit in with construction programs and other events planned for the site.
2. It is worth running an Open Day program on a regular basis on the same day as the Second Sunday bus tours.
3. The Friends are happy to assist in running the program with the assistance of the Department in making sure the site is ready each month.
4. Donations continue to be collected to defray Friends' costs and contribute to projects to assist the NAC.
5. The bucketeers will be allowed to erect an umbrellashelter at the collection point for weather protection, which will also make their presence more visible to passing cars.



PHOTO: LINDA MULDOON

A mix of clovers was sewn during soil preparation in some forests, but it also provided plenty of colour during the Floriade 2010 period.



TREES IN FOCUS: QUEENSLAND BOTTLE TREE *Brachychiton rupestris*

By Linda Muldoon

Our December newsletter included photos of recent plantings in the Arboretum's bottle tree forest, so it seems timely to take a closer look at *Brachychiton rupestris*. The forest occupies Lot 67 which can easily be seen from Tuggeranong Parkway. Our Queensland bottles will eventually share this space with the local kurrajong species, *Brachychiton populneus*.

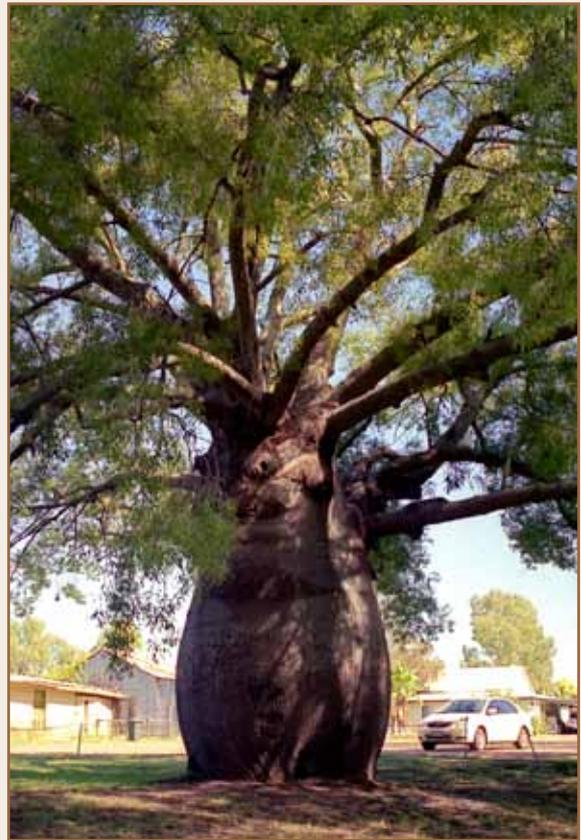
QUEENSLAND BOTTLE TREE

This wonderful feature tree is native to central Queensland and northern New South Wales where it reaches 10-12m in height. It is recognised for its swollen bottle-shaped trunk which varies amazingly in size and form. The trunks can be over 2m in diameter and quite short, or tall and slim with an elegant neck and some have divided trunks. The canopies above the elegant trunks can be quite pointed and restrained in width (from 5m), whereas those on thick trunks can be quite broad and rounded spanning up to 12m.

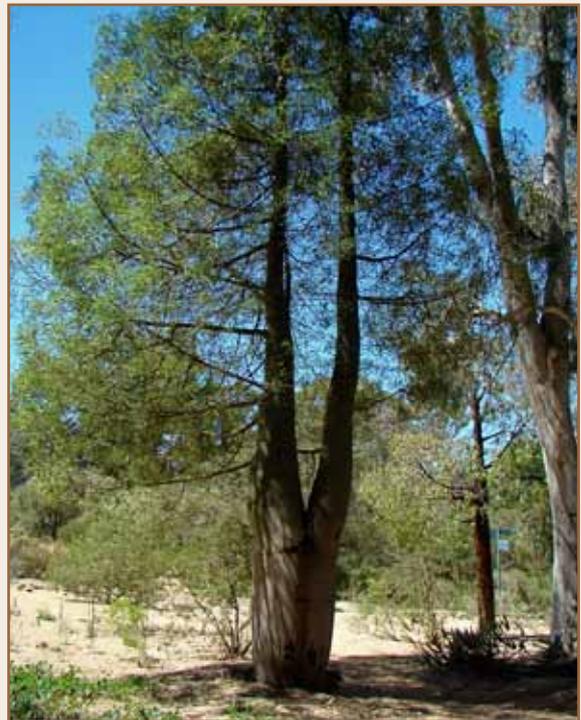
Leaves are about 100mm in length but their shapes vary wildly: simple and elliptical on some trees, deeply divided with five or more points on others, and sometimes there's a wide variety of leaf shapes on the same tree. Most of the year the leaves are shiny and deep green but the trees are semi-deciduous and after keeping their leaves all winter they can shed them just prior to flowering which occurs between October and December. When new leaves appear they tend to be flushed with red.



Deeply divided leaves are a feature of some trees, particularly in their early stages



Roma, Queensland, is renowned for its mature bottle trees



Some trees develop twin trunks (this one is at ANBG)



New growth tends to be flushed with red



Ripe seed capsules on a young tree at Goondiwindi



Another tree at ANGB



One of the trees relocated to our Arboretum in October 2010

The flowers are inconspicuous, small and bell-shaped with five points curling outwards, creamy-yellow in colour and blotched with red inside. They hang in clusters at the ends of the branches and tend to get hidden by the leaves. Male and female flowers occur on the same tree.

Seed capsules follow and ripen to be 30mm long and woody brown in colour. At this stage they split open to become boat shapes and reveal their golden seeds. These are enclosed in a layer of fibrous bristles and care must be taken when handling the seeds as the bristles are notoriously irritating to the skin.



© Galina Malamant
TopTropicals.com

Historically, Aborigines carved holes in the bark to create reservoir-like structures. They also utilised the seeds, roots, stems and bark in traditional foods and the fibrous inner bark was used to make twine, rope and fishing nets.

Brachychiton rupestris is a very tough tree that withstands drought by storing water in its trunk and it can tolerate extreme temperatures of -10°C and +50°C in its natural habitat. In times of drought, branches can be lopped and fed to stock. It can be transplanted successfully and many have been relocated from the outback to become feature trees in other venues in Australia and around the world.

REFERENCES

www.angb.gov.au/gnp/interns-2005/brachychiton-rupestris
www.bottletrees.info/page2
www.asgap.org.au/b-rup.html

NOTE

All photos by author, other than flower photo.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Please fill out the following application to renew your annual membership or to become a new member.

UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

We have noticed that a number of email addresses and street addresses are out of date, so if you have recently changed your address or email address, please email Colette Mackay, our Secretary on j-cmackay@hotmail.com.au with your new details.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Yes, I/we wish to become a Friend(s) of the National Arboretum Canberra

Date: / /

1. Title

First Name

Last Name

2. Title

First Name

Last Name

Address

.....

..... Postcode

Tel (h) (w)

e-mail

Do you agree to the use of your e-mail for AGM notifications? Yes No

Membership arrangements (please indicate)

Single \$25

Household \$30

Concession \$10

Association or Club \$50

Corporate Friend \$2000

Payment details for members:

Cash Cheque Direct Deposit

Cheques payable to the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.

For direct deposit: Westpac, Petrie Plaza, ACT
Account: Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.
Account BSB No: 032719
Account No: 375379

Please make sure to record your name when making a direct deposit so that your membership can be identified.

Annual membership falls due in December each year.
Gift memberships available.

Send applications and questions to:
The Secretary
Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.
PO Box 48
Campbell ACT 2612

CONTACT US

Phone mob: 0406 376 711 during business hours
by e-mail: hackman@grapevine.com.au
by web: canberraarboretum.org.au

The Friends thank the ACT Government, ACTEWAGL and Yarralumla Nursery for their support.

Information prepared by the Friends of the NAC Inc.
2/2011

