



NEWSLETTER

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Colette Mackay honoured with OAM



Canberran Cancerians, helping to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for breast cancer research. "I felt I wanted to give back because I was a survivor and others weren't," she said. "You get back a lot more than you give."

She started as secretary of Friends of the National Arboretum in 2007. The Harvest Group tends to 170 fig trees, volunteers making jam to sell at stalls at the arboretum, as well as a market garden.

Mrs Mackay also started a program where people can sponsor a seat at the arboretum, in honour of a loved one.

The seats provide comfort to many people as they sit and enjoy the vistas of the arboretum.

Colette Mackay is one of those vital backroom people, not fussed with any recognition, just happy to do the job and do it well.

She's perhaps more well known as the wife of former Actew and ActewAGL chairman John Mackay. But Mrs Mackay is also a passionate advocate for Canberra and has been recognised as so in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Mrs Mackay, of Braddon, has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to the ACT community.

Her work has included inaugural secretary of the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra and founder of its Harvest Group.

A breast cancer survivor herself, she also volunteered with Bosom Buddies, including visiting patients in hospital. She was also a long-time member of the

She and her husband also funded the Mununja the Butterfly garden at the arboretum, of which she says: "I'm proud of how it's developing".

Her husband initially roped her into helping out at the arboretum, 12 years ago. "John came home and told me the Friends had just had their first meeting and they didn't have a secretary, so I was their secretary," she said. Mrs Mackay, as always, was happy to help.

"Being the secretary to an organisation is not terribly exciting but being involved in the arboretum is extremely exciting," she said.

"I get a huge amount of satisfaction when I look at the arboretum and think,

'If I hadn't been here, maybe that seat or that garden might not be t; here'," she said.

Story: Megan Doherty

Photos: Elesa Kurtz

*The Canberra Times
Monday 10.6.2019*



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The Friends are celebrating!

Greetings one and all!

Last week at the ACT Volunteering Awards held in the Visitors centre of the Arboretum, the STEP Team won the prestigious Volunteering Team of the Year. Congratulations to them. And quite recently STEP celebrated the 10th anniversary of the first plantings at STEP with the Chief Minister, Andrew Barr, in attendance. At this memorable event in STEP history Mr Barr planted a *Eucalyptus melliodora* to mark the occasion.

At the AGM on 14 May, we made our award presentations for the last year.

Our Friends Volunteer of the Year for 2019 is **Ian Sayers, OAM**. Congratulations Ian!

Five Sterling Service awards were made:

- ◇ **Ange McNeilly**, her 3rd year in a row to receive this award for her management and amazing work in the Discovery Garden.
- ◇ **Carolyn Thomas** for her efforts in various roles over many years, as a Guide and mentor.
- ◇ **Shirley Wilton** for her years of work in the Working Bees.
- ◇ **Vicki Woolley** for her work in Bonsai and the Working Bees.
- ◇ And to **John Hemphill** for the countless hours he worked with Council recently, guiding us on the path to the revitalisation of our Strategic Plan and MOU.

Congratulations on well-deserved awards to Ian, Ange, Carolyn, Shirley, Vicki and John!

And more congratulations to **Colette McKay OAM** for her recognition in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

The Election of Officer Bearers was held by Returning Officer and Friend Jocelyn Plovits.

Elections were unnecessary as all positions were filled. It is noted that Lainie Shorthouse, the STEP representative stood down and was immediately replaced by Chris and Cathy Ikin.

Thank you STEPPERS for this consideration.

I was very pleased to present my Chair's Report and covered a long list of activities that Friends had been involved in during the year.

One memorable activity was Council's revamp and refreshing of our Strategic Plan and Memorandum of Understanding under the watchful eye and facilitation through this process

from John Hemphill. John has many years of experience in this line of work and we are extremely grateful to him for the countless hours he has spent with us. And these hours were at no cost. Thank you, John.

We are in the process of having a conversation with NAC Director, Scott Saddler and his team to ensure that our Strategic Plan priorities and methods are in alignment with that of the NAC. Watch this space in the next newsletter for the final documents which will appear on line on completion after the signing off process.

We are all looking forward to **Warm Trees 19**. This year our diplomatic partner is the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The theme this year is 'bicycles and tulips'. Convenor of this program, Jocelyn Plovits, has once again produced an exciting schedule of activities all culminating in the Launch of Warm Trees on 2 July with the Chief Minister in attendance. The scarves, banners, and other hand-crafted items are magnificent. Thanks Jocelyn!

The guest speakers following the AGM were from the Australasian Carnivorous Plant Society, a not for profit group that promotes the cultivation, conservation and education of carnivorous plants. They brought along a selection of plants to show us and talk to us about. It was a most interesting evening learning the ins and outs of carnivorous plants. Who would have thought that putting your finger in to the teeth of the fly catching plant would take it days to recover? One of the presenters, Owen O'Neill, developed an interest in this field as a young lad of 15 years.

By the way, don't miss the Friends next Seasonal Talk on Tuesday, 9 July at 12.30pm. Director of the National Arboretum Canberra, Scott Saddler and Christine Callen will talk to us about their recent roadie in New Zealand. They visited the National Arboretum of New Zealand at Gisborne, 'Eastwoodhill', the Botanic Gardens in Wellington and other exciting places. MOUs were set up. There are other MOUs in the pipeline and the 'seasonal talk' will outline these exciting developments at the Arboretum.

Bring your lunch and enjoy this 'seasonal talk'.

Kind regards and see you at the Arboretum!

Trish Keller OAM
Chair

“The Central Park of Canberra”

Max Bourke and Roger Hnatiuk talk to *The Canberra Times* about their submission to the ACT Government ‘**Nature in Our City**’ Inquiry

Canberra's arboretum could become a valuable piece of green space in the capital's west as Molonglo's suburbs grow, an ACT parliamentary inquiry has heard.

Friends of the National Arboretum member Max Bourke pointed to a 2012 report to the government on the Molonglo development that said residents would have less green space than the Canberra average. The report said future Molonglo residents would only have 2.4 hectares of green space per 1000 people, versus the then-Canberra average of 8.6 hectares per 1000 people.

The report also said there would be about 3300 people per square kilometre in Molonglo, compared to the then-Canberra average of about 1450 people per square kilometre. Mr Bourke told the parliamentary inquiry into Canberra's green spaces that the capital was getting hotter and drier.

"Wedges of green are going to be more significant, particularly for the people who live in Molonglo," Mr Bourke said. "The pub test in Canberra will have you understand that Canberra is getting more dense."

Speaking to *The Canberra Times*, Mr Bourke said Canberrans should watch for developers looking to slice off parts of the arboretum to accommodate the city's growth.

"A friend of mine said planning tends to let things look like there's an ice sculpture melting," Mr Bourke said. The West Basin development was a good example, he said. "[Developers] say 'We're only taking 2.4 per cent of the foreshore of the lake', but yeah, then someone else might take three per cent," Mr Bourke said. "When you add up all the per cents that we're 'only' taking ... gradually these things melt away."

The 2012 report also said there would be about 3300 people per square kilometre in Molonglo, compared to the then-Canberra average of about 1450 people per square kilometre. The submission said as the capital became more urbanised, the arboretum would become to Canberrans what Central Park was to New Yorkers.

Mr Bourke, along with a fellow member of Friends of the National Arboretum Dr Roger Hnatiuk, told the inquiry Molonglo residents might also need direct access to the arboretum. The way it's designed now, residents would have to drive all the way around to Tuggeranong Parkway to get

access. But he said direct access from the west



could be its

own problem. "Unless it's done properly, it'll become another rat run," Mr Bourke said.

Mr Bourke said when the arboretum originally opened it only predicted about 40,000 visitors per year, currently the arboretum sees about half-a-million visitors per year.

Dr Hnatiuk told Wednesday's inquiry that this unexpected growth had meant the resources were stretched. He said most staff were using demountable offices. "That isn't working well," he said.

The submission called for more support and funding for the arboretum.

Article by Finbar O'Mallon

Photo by Jamila Toderas.

The Canberra Times April 15, 2019

Central Valley zigzag gardens launch



March 28 was a beautiful sunny autumn day, a perfect setting for Scott Saddler and garden sponsors to officially launch the first three of the Zigzag Gardens in Central Valley.

First up was Garden 5, the Carpet Rose 'Apple Blossom' (*Rosa* x 'Noamel'), thanks to the

generosity of Jan Morgan, Friends Council Member and Volunteer of the Year 2018.

The second garden launched on the day was Garden 17, the Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* f. *atropupurea* 'Rose Glow') with thanks to Leon Evans and family for their generosity.



Jan Morgan unveils the plaque for her garden



Leon Evans launches Garden 17



The Friends took up the opportunity to sponsor Garden 19, Saltbush (*Rhagodia spinescens*) Cast your mind back to the December edition of the Newsletter, where we saw an excited Trish Keller planting some of the first plants in the Friends' Zigzag garden. Now it is official, and looking splendid with the silver grey foliage against the yellow pebble mulch.

Not everyone can afford to donate benches or gardens. This is an opportunity for all to contribute to this garden and, as Trish said in her speech, 'be a thread in the history of the Arboretum'. Contributions for the Friends garden are tracking well, but there is still quite a way to go. Donations large and small are all welcome.

Follow the link to the [Central Valley gardens prospectus](#) to read more and donate directly via the Friends website on the [Support Us](#) tab.



Right: Trish Keller and Scott Saddler launch Garden 19

Pictures: Mike Woolley & Mary Arnold



Hug a Tree Day

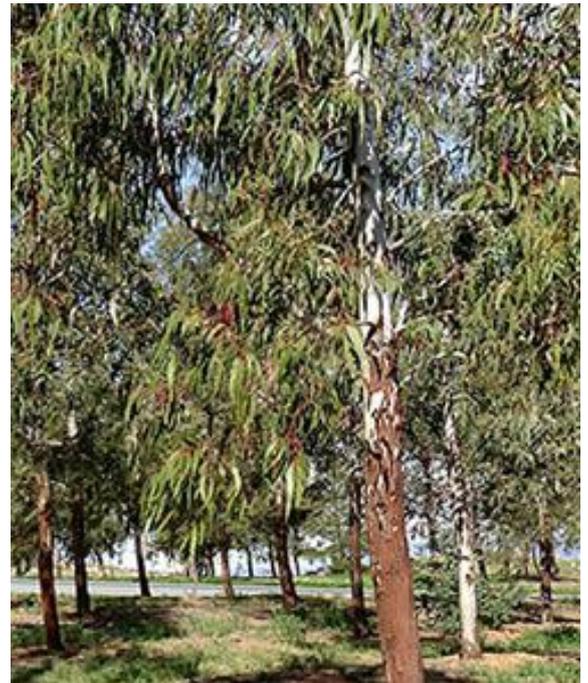
It was a classic Canberra Autumn day at the start of May when about 40 enthusiastic tree-huggers gathered under the Camden White Gums, in Forest 30, to celebrate the NAC's second Hug a Tree day as part of Canberra tree Week.

Taking care to look out for creepy crawly that might emerge from the bark we carefully selected our trees. Director Scott Saddler gave the Welcome to Country and Deb gave the count-down for a minute of mindfulness; taking

the time to celebrate the special relationship between people and trees, enjoy the sounds of the forest, the feel of the bark against skin and the simple pleasure of contact with nature.

"But down deep, at the molecular heart of life, the trees and we are essentially identical."

Carl Sagan



Tree Deficit Disorder

Coincidentally I had just come across this article in 'The Conversation':

[Hug a tree – the evidence shows it really will make you feel better](#)", discussing the benefits of trees for our wellbeing and mental health.

There is growing body of re-

search on human connection to nature and the impact of the urban disconnect. The American [Children and nature network](#) summarises research from around the world showing how exposure to nature can impact on recovery from surgery, ADHD, improved birth outcomes, anxiety and depres-

sion. Take a few minutes to read the article.

If you have children or grandchildren you might like to check the website as well before you spend some time sitting under a tree. And if you're so inclined, maybe even give it a cuddle.

And.....Plant Blindness

The phenomenon called "plant blindness" means we tend to underappreciate the flora around us and take them for granted. That can have disastrous consequences not only for the environment, but human health.

It is very unlikely anyone reading this has plant blindness, but it is

just another perspective on how important the natural world is to our health and well-being, and the key role institutions like the Arboretum can play in increasing people's awareness and appreciation of the natural world around them. Read the article by Christine Ro in the BBC online



science news magazine 'Future' website [here](#)

Arboretum Calendars travel to Sri Lanka!

By Del Da Costa

Back in February, before the dreadful bombings in Sri Lanka, Gary and I signed up for what turned out to be a wonderful Foodie Tour of Sri Lanka. What better way to experience a country than to visit family homes, see how they make their version of curries, and feast on the results of their tradition. Fortuitously, I had thrown into my suitcase some copies of the 2019 Arboretum Calendar before we left and these turned out to make wonderful Thankyou gifts.

It was a particularly happy coincidence that the front cover is a

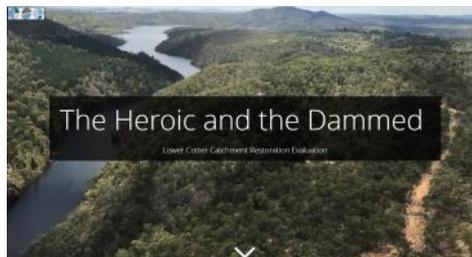
close-up of December's beautiful image of a Silky Oak, *grevillea robusta*, because these trees are planted across the terraced landscapes of the tea plantations in the Sri Lankan highlands. They serve both to conserve moisture and nitrogen in the soil and are well-suited to the tropical highland climate. So when I gave a Calendar to our Tamil hostess in her tiny house near Haputale, which is not far from Sir Thomas Lipton's original tea plantation, she was delighted to receive a calendar featuring a 'local' tree.



Commission for Sustainability and the Environment

Making the ACT Greener: Environment insight

Early in March Friends gathered for the Seasonal talk and were impressed by the passion of Kate Auty, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, as she spoke about local conservation and sustainability activities, valuable projects by ACT environmental groups and how they are contributing to environmental sustainability. She highlighted



how to get involved in diverse conservation and sustainability activities.

She talked about the importance of

effective communication of environmental issues including recent projects *The Heroic and the Dammed* on the Lower Cotter Catchment and *Unfantastic Plastic* evaluating the ACT plastic bag ban. The Commission is making innovative use of Story Maps to make their reports entertaining and accessible to a wide audience. Visit the [website](#) and see what is happening.

Carnivorous plants

Following the official business at the AGM, Friends enjoyed a wonderful presentation from Bob Little of the Australasian Carnivorous Plants Society, and Owen O'Neill from Strange World Carnivores.

We watched an entertaining short video, and learnt that there is more to this group of plants than the

Venus Fly trap. Australia is home to about one third of known species, including some of the largest and most unusual varieties.

Owen persuaded us that growing these exotic plants can be successfully achieved in our region without the need to special facilities.



Look out for more opportunities to hear from these passionate growers and see their superb specimens

Keeping in STEP

Forest 20 has been the site of much activity over the last 2 months.

On Friday 22 March we held a soiree to celebrate ten years since the planting of the first Eucalypts at STEP. We were blessed with a perfect Autumn evening for our gathering at The Clearing. About 80 guests attended, many of them people who helped with the initial planting. Chief Minister Andrew Barr came and planted a tree to mark the occasion and we presented Life Membership certificates to Cathy Robertson (founding President) and Tony Lawson to acknowledge their contributions to STEP. At the same time we took the opportunity to “open” our new shed.



Above: Soiree guests gather at The Clearing
Below: David Shorthouse, Trish Keller, Judy Smith, and Andrew Barr



Chief Minister Andrew Barr planting a *Eucalyptus melliodora*

On Thursday 2 May, Richard Milner, ecologist from ACT Parks and Conservation Service, came to STEP to explain the activity being undertaken across the fence in the GG block. Over the past few weeks, wide scrapes have been made and at regular intervals, the soil has been scarified in bands across the slope of the scrape.



Richard explained the reasoning behind the scraping away of the topsoil. The first was to remove weeds and the second was to remove the topsoil which tended to have an elevated nutrient level. As exotic grasses grow well in areas with high nutrients, these species outcompete the native grasses. By removing the richer soil, the competitive advantage of



Scrape site for sowing grasses and forbs

provided morning tea. Many thanks to all who contributed to this – it certainly adds to the quality of the experience for our visitors.

There has been considerable activity in the Bush Tucker Garden, Stage 2 work focussed around paths and plantings around an area where Aboriginal women can harvest strappy plants and teach others the art of weaving. We are so pleased to be participants in this very exciting project. Other activities planned are a trip to the Mount Annan Gardens and Seed Bank (July) , and Wattle Week walks and a Workshop for community-run regional botanic gardens (August). Our 10th year is certainly a busy one.

Judy Smith

exotic species is lessened. We believe this venture will be beneficial for STEP as it furthers the scientific interest we can offer to visitors and groups such as students from CIT.

The grasses and forbs we have planted in our Grassy Meadow are becoming well established, and some careful weeding is helping keep the competitors at bay. It is interesting to see the swathes of *Bothriochloa macra* in flower under the Eucalypts. The pink silky seed heads add a wonderful smooth texture to the view.

STEP into plein air

On Wednesday 8 May, STEP again hosted a group of artists who came to sketch and paint works inspired by the beauty of Forest 20. The 22 visitors appeared to enjoy themselves and produced some wonderful works. Megan Spiers was with us again, demonstrating and offering ideas about painting eucalypts. As in previous years, STEP volunteers



Above: Art by Robert Peresan - watercolour and ink

Below: Art by Andrew Smith - oils



TREES IN FOCUS

Fagus sylvatica

European beech Forest 80

Warm Trees 19 is rapidly approaching and as our diplomatic partner this year is the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, we are highlighting the European beech, in Forest 80, which is one of the main native European species to be found in Dutch forests.

The ancient Greek name of this genus *phagos*, is close to their word for “to eat”, *phagein*, probably reflecting its importance as an early food source. The Latin species name *sylvatica*, means “of the woods”.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

European beech is a large deciduous tree, often called the finest specimen tree available, with green or purple foliage, dense shade, colourful autumn foliage, and attractive architecture, both upright and weeping. The European beech can live more than 150 years and can grow 30-40 metres in height with a spread of 10-13 metres.



European beech, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Atropunicea', in the Groenesteeg cemetery, Leiden, Netherlands. This tree was planted around 1830

Photo: Wim Brinkerink



A weeping form of the tree in the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens showing the characteristic graceful drooping foliage.

Photo Jan Morgan

HABITAT

Fagus sylvatica is a native European tree with a wide distribution from Norway to Spain and across to Ukraine and Turkey.

It favours a humid atmosphere and well-drained soils which its roots can easily penetrate. On favourable sites, beech is widely distributed as it out-competes other tree species due to its excellent tolerance to shade.

USES

Until the iron age (1200—1000 BCE) the edible nuts provided a valuable source of nutrition. These nuts, high in protein, were roasted, and ground down for flour, as well as providing a source of cooking oil. Later the beech nuts provided valuable food for pigs, and other livestock and wildlife.

The wood has been used for centuries for fire and furniture. The first written European literature was inscribed on beech bark. In the early 19th century the oil from the tree was used for cooking and to fuel lamps.

With around 250 known uses for its wood, beech is one of the most important and diversely used trees in Europe.

Mary Arnold

A warm glow for knitters

By Jocelyn Plovits (Convenor) and Jenny Cantlon (Able Assistant)



features; meet Tiptoe in the world's largest knitted cargo bike (near Wide Brown Land), tulips of all sizes in the Cutting leading into the Village Centre and within the Centre, bicycle wheels decorating the fences of the Pod Playground with scarves, and of course, groves of trees changing their trunks to orange. Remember all the scarves are collected at the end of July, cleaned and formed into items for charities - everything in Warm Trees has two uses!

Our thanks to all the hand crafters who donated their time, their creativity and the materials. Also, our thanks to the Principal and students of the Dutch School in Canberra and to Pedal Power for contributing so many decorated wheels to enhance the display.

Photos by Mike Woolley



The knitters (and crocheters and crafts people) morning tea was a great event to celebrate the contributions from so many creative people for **Warm Trees 19**.

This year our diplomatic partner is the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and so the main themes are cycles and tulips and the main colour is orange and as you can see from the pictures, there was definitely an orange glow in the Terrace Room on Saturday.

The launch this year is on 2 July at 2.00pm in the Village Centre and all are welcome. And, throughout July, you have the chance to get out and look at all the





Native Bonsai Acquisition Prize

You are invited to enter the Native Bonsai Acquisition Prize

The winning tree will become part of the permanent National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia at the National Arboretum Canberra.

- Simply submit four photos of your bonsai
- Winner receives \$5000
- Entries close 31 July 2019
- Winner announced on the 31 August 2019
- For full competition details and for all terms and conditions visit: www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au



Brought to you by the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection of Australia



Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc

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 Lynley Rees (Treasurer)
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 Sherry McArdle-English
 Colette Mackay
 Linda Muldoon
 Jocelyn Plovits

Honorary member

Jon Stanhope AO

Patron

John Mackay AM

Contact us

via email at: friends@arboretumcanberra.org.au

Newsletter

Please send contributions to Mary Arnold
 maryarno@gmail.com

The Friends thank the ACT Government, ACTEWAGL, CanberraNet, Ginger Catering and Elect Printing for their support

Where will you take the 2019 Friends Calendar?

Follow Del's lead and take our gorgeous calendar travelling with you. The 2019 calendar is still available, and at a discounted rate! As you know it's packed with gorgeous photos and information about the Arboretum's forest species, and makes great souvenir or gift.

Share your photo with us



