

Fetherston Gardens Friends
Convenor's Report 2018
AGM, Wednesday, 1 August 2018

Fetherston Gardens have continued to thrive and attract more interest from the local and wider Canberra community through the 2017-18 Financial Year.

The Fetherston Gardens Friends (FGF) are seeing a growth in the number of locals using the gardens on a regular basis. The gardens are used by various community groups, and we are delighted to see people come back time and time again. We are seeing individuals who come to read, feed the birds, picnic, walk or just sit. We also have a growing number of group activities (which are organised) and at times we lead guided tours.

Some of these activities were:

- The Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) Guiding Conference delegates toured the Gardens on Tuesday, 17 October and Lesley Pattinson (FGF Convenor) participated in conference panel discussions;
- Curves Weston walk through the gardens on 15 November 2017. The group also spent time weeding the Herb Garden;
- CIT Bruce Horticulture students regularly attend the gardens for lessons and excursions;
- Various walking groups visit as part of their program;
- Visits by a local playgroup;
- Open Gardens Canberra tour the gardens;
- 2018 Heritage Festival Open Day event in the gardens in April - plant and book sales;
- Guided tours with various gardening clubs;
- Fetherston Ridge residents using the gardens and volunteering on our working-bee days.

We continue to work collaboratively with the ACT Government through Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) on garden restoration. TCCS have supported our ideas and the events that we host, and their commitment to the gardens and our volunteer group is unique and treasured by FGF.

Our thanks go to the following groups and individuals.

- We would particularly like to thank our ACT Urban ParkCare coordinator Rachel Tokley, who consistently gives of her time and talents to assist us in making our ideas, events and opportunities happen. She is generous and supportive, and we would not be able to function as well without her.
- Andrew Hudson (TCCS) who maintains the irrigation system, a large and complex system of water tank storage and sprinklers.
- The volunteers who support us generously with their time and effort with or without tools in hand. Some share their knowledge of having been a staff member or a student at the Horticulture College, and this is valuable and welcome. The personal support emails and encouragement we receive from time to time is wonderful for the Friends.
- Special thanks to Chris Goodrich, a volunteer, who clears our paths of leaves and twigs on a regular basis. It is a big task and is much appreciated.
- Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) for support with our finances, events and plans.
- CIT Bruce Horticulture for use of glasshouse facilities at various times for seed and cutting propagation.
- Stephen Utick for his knowledge and willingness to care for the camellias.
- Camellia Ark and Cedric Bryant for plant donations.
- The Raiders Weston Club for the use of facilities for meetings.

- Janet Lawrence, Tony Fetherston's daughter, who maintains the family's unconditional support of FGF.

The FGF Committee of six has Fetherston Gardens at heart, and thanking the team is never enough. They bring their talents and time, and together we have a happy, productive committee that focuses on our community and our goals. Thank you to the FGF Committee - Mal, Rosemary, Gina, Paulene and Louise.

Ongoing work in the gardens

The Fetherston Gardens Friends remain committed to restoring and maintaining the gardens. We can proudly say that we continue to stick to our goals of restoration, regeneration, and renewal.

We have a very committed team of volunteers who have been working in the gardens for the past 8 years. We also have many new faces from our community and beyond who join us on working-bee days (between 8-25 volunteers at each working-bee).

The garden replant continues despite a very dry summer/autumn/winter. We continue to seek out old varieties of plants to replant, and we safeguard the existing ones.

Over the last 12 months, work has continued in the following areas:

- Herb garden - looking quite full and thriving despite climatic conditions;
- The Gallipoli Garden is thriving although, we will replace some of the Rosemary plants;
- The Camellias have continued to be tended by Stephen Utick and some new varieties have been planted;
- The perennial border new plants have just survived, with some losses due to visitors walking over plants to pick flowers. We will replant here too when it rains. The new perennial plants will be divided and sold to fundraise at our events;
- The Secret Garden had some weed species we were determined to be rid of. Moth Vine and seedlings of *Nandina Domestica* had invaded and their eradication is now complete. We have a vast area to replant with natives and other old varieties previously located in this space;
- Weston Creek Rotary - The tree planting walk project is currently underway with 30 trees funded and soon to be planted by our local Rotarians. Completion date will be end 2018.

The future

FGF are always seeking ways to support our gardens and community by working collaboratively together, as we have previously with Defence Housing Australia on Fetherston Ridge.

The Village Building Company (VBC) is planning a development on the former Australian Federal Police site directly west of Fetherston Gardens. Our focus is Fetherston Gardens and our community, and we have had preliminary discussions with VBC and taken company representatives on a tour of the gardens. We are pleased to have a supportive community-minded developer to partner with over the next few years. This is an exciting opportunity to connect to our new neighbours in the development.

Thank you everyone for your support and encouragement of our ventures in Fetherston Gardens. Tony Fetherston would surely approve.

Lesley Pattinson

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