

Fetherston Gardens Friends (FGF) has continued to be a volunteer group of dedicated, committed people who desire to see the Gardens maintained for our community. Fetherston Gardens is now in its 9th year of care under the Friends. Our goals of Restoration, Regeneration and Renew continue as we develop and maintain a unique park and garden within the ACT.

We have a very committed team of volunteers and have many new faces from our community and beyond who join us on working bee days. We continue to average an attendance of between 8-25 volunteers at each working bee. Our core members attend regular working bees and many new people randomly drop in to participate and chat. We did not undertake a volunteer campaign this year but through talks, events, people visiting, CIT student visits, gardening clubs' tours and distribution of our flyer we have seen new folk express an interest in the Gardens.

We continue to see the Gardens being used by the community, local schools, playgroups, families and individuals enjoying quiet moments with a book or laptop. Dogs have continued to be an ongoing issue for park users as owners consider the gardens as a 'dog off leash' area disturbing kangaroos, native birdlife and picnics. Signage is needed and new dog signage has been sought through the ACT Government.

We have had a busy 2018-2019 with many events early in the financial year, however the Committee decided that 2019 would be one of concentration on the Gardens themselves. Some activities and involvement included the following:

- Weston Creek's 50th birthday celebrations – hosted in the gardens by WCCC. Our committee activity supported Chris of WCCC in organising this huge event for Weston Creek. We held a very successful plant stall, raising funds, engaging with the public, providing walks and stall information.
- CIT Horticulture students attended the Gardens for practical lessons, excursions and as volunteers.
- Grant funding provided new tools and equipment.
- Weston Creek Rotary Tree Walk project was completed with 30 deciduous trees funded by our local Rotarians. This collection of trees is consistent with the original Garden's Arboretum plans. Whilst planting was focussed in Spring 2018 to Autumn 2019, soil preparation and considerable care was given to our new tree collection over the past year.
- The Friends have continued to provide guided tours for various gardening clubs with Paulene Cornish regularly announcing FGF events on radio. Garden groups and individuals have provided donations to FGF for our tree planting replacement program.
- The garden replant continued despite a very dry summer/ autumn/ winter again. We continued to seek out old varieties to replant and safeguard those we can.
- The Native Garden is filling up with new plants and old pathways are being found and re-laid. We still have a vast area to replant with new and old varieties once located in this space.

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

We also wish to thank the following groups:

- Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) for support with our events and plans.
- ACT Urban Parks and Projects Coordinators Rachel Tokley, Allan McLean and more recently Brian Butler-Kemp who consistently gave of their time to assist us in the coordination of the maintenance of the Gardens and in supporting our events.
- TCCS Parks Team who assist with tree pruning, mulch delivery, rubbish removal and supporting structures within the Gardens.

- Rotary Club, Weston for their amazing and generous support in the Tree Walk project.
- Raiders Club in Weston for providing us with a space for committee meetings.
- Village Building Company for their interest in our gardens and their commitment to working with us into the future.
- CIT Horticulture, Bruce Campus for use of glasshouse facilities at various times for seed and cutting propagation of our older varieties.
- Chris Goodrich who comes and clears our paths of leaves and twigs on a regular basis. It is a big task that is much appreciated. Thanks also to Rosemary who always goes home with a bag of litter and recycling that has been left around.
- Our special thanks to all our volunteers and to those who drop in when they can, with or without tools in hand. No hard work is ever required or expected in any way.
- The shared knowledge of past CIT staff and students from this site continues to be valuable and always welcome.

Some goals and opportunities for 2019-2020

- Mulching to be completed along the top eastern ridge of the Gardens and new native screens planted.
- The Secret Garden is the big agenda item as we appear to keep on top of some weed species. It's time for old lattice removal, bamboo management, new plantings and connecting pathways.
- Garden edging re-laid where plants have lifted it or was never completed.
- Pond planting and water care.
- Continued fence line weed species removal and replanting native corridor along Heysen Street.

In seeking new opportunities, the Village Building Company's development on the old AFP site below Fetherston Gardens is now at final planning stage. The Village Building Company have been very generous with their time and discussions have confirmed that they will build toilet facilities and a connecting pathway linking the Gardens and the new development.

There is also discussion regarding tree planting and regeneration of the Heysen St plantings. We are delighted and overwhelmed to have a supportive community minded developer to partner on this project and we thank the Village Building Company for engaging with us and TCCS in making the much-needed toilet facilities a reality.

The FG Committee of six people has Fetherston Gardens at heart and thanking the team here 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 personally for your enthusiastic support for the Gardens. Thank you to the FGF committee - Mal, Rosemary, Gina, Paulene and Louise. We welcome more members and your ideas.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement of our ventures in Fetherston Gardens. I always believe Tony Fetherston would surely approve of his garden and may we always strive to maintain this very unique garden in Weston Creek.

Lesley Pattinson

Lesley Pattinson, Fetherston Gardens Friends Convenor 2019