



Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd

Year in Review 2017



Contents

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT	2
CHAIRMAN OF FRIENDS REPORT	3
PLANT GROWERS GROUP REPORT	4
2016-2017 IN FOCUS	5
Snapshot of 2017	5
Garden/Construction progress	5
Highlights	5
ART IN THE GARDEN	6
FUNDING	7
Community Support for the Gardens	9
BRANDING AND MARKETING	9
Brand Review	9
Marketing	10
FUTURE VISION OF THE GARDENS	10
2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS	11
Board Support	12

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2016/17 marked a turning point in the development of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens.

The main focus was the appointment of John Wardle Architects to design the new Visitors' Centre for the gardens. John and his team won our architecture competition against very stiff competition from some of Australia's finest architectural firms. The task ahead is to raise the funds to construct a centre, which will become the heart of the gardens, the centre of environmental education, a facility for local residents and an essential tourist attraction.

In keeping with our aspirations for the gardens we were the grateful recipient of a 2 metre tall bronze-cast leaping frog sculpture gifted by the sculptor and world renowned local artist John Olsen AO, OBE. The frog has been temporarily installed under the shade of the Eucalypts in Foundation Walk waiting for the day it will leap into the Parterre garden at the Visitors' Centre.

We continue to develop our gardens with new constructions including the Oak Rondel, the Southern Entry Garden to the native area and 200 metres of the pathway network, which will eventually link all areas of the gardens. Plantings have also continued, particularly in the winter woodland. We extended our collections to include 9 types of dwarf Cornus (dogwood) and 12 types of Sambucus (elderberry). These collections will join our existing Buxus (boxwood) and Betula (birch) collections, both of which are registered as National collections.

Over the coming months we will be working closely with the Australian and the Blue Mountains Botanic Gardens as we begin our native plantings in the eastern side of the gardens.

With increased development, our maintenance requirements have also risen. Although our monthly working bees regularly attract 30 – 40 volunteers, we have now introduced a second monthly working bee to keep up with works.

Our activities both on and off site continue to grow. Our main fundraising event of the year, the 6th Autumn Open Gardens and Plant Fair, again triumphed in its success both financially and in attracting visitors to the district and our botanic garden. Five smaller events were held as fundraisers and to bring awareness of the gardens to the community. These events, run entirely by our Friends and Volunteers, require enormous effort. Plants offered for sale are all produced by our Plant Growers' Group with help from the travelling Plant Grower's Troupe.

With thanks to the Paul Ramsay Foundation we welcomed our first paid employee for the gardens. Sara Morton-Stone joined our team in December 2016 to develop a fundraising strategy. In June this year Louise James took over from Sara, extending the role to become our Partnerships Manager.

We continue our partnership with Southern Highlands Foundation, which enables us to offer tax deductibility for donations. Through the 'My Community Saving Account' BDCU Alliance Bank continues to support our gardens.

This year we welcomed Peter Baillieu as our honorary bookkeeper to replace Sue Oberman who stepped down due to work commitments. Lucky for us Sue could not stay away for long and has now re-joined our financial team assisting Peter.

Many thanks must go to Susan Ingram and Kathy Pearson who helped with our Friends record keeping and database management.

Geoff Prosser has continued diligently as our Honorary Webmaster. Thanks to Geoff for his work and to ACEnet for sponsoring the hosting of our web site.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the unwavering commitment by the Directors of the Board. Behind the scenes this energetic, hardworking and cohesive group drive the development of the Company and the Gardens. Each Director is focused on their individual portfolios including governance, communications, grant applications, legal, site development and coordination of Friends, volunteers and visitors.

I look forward to the coming year with excitement when we will introduce our first education program into the gardens. I also look forward to hearing the laughter and chatter of the younger generations as they discover the intrigue and fascination of the gardens and the environment.

Charlotte Webb OAM
Chairman

CHAIRMAN OF FRIENDS REPORT

The past year has been a busy one for the Friends, Plant Growers Group and Volunteers. These three groups participated in 6 main events, the Hydrangea Walk, Christmas in the Garden, Autumn Garden Weekend and Plant Fair, The BGANZ Open Day, the Bluebell and Sculpture Walk and the Garden Fair at Harper's Mansion.

The success of these events was reliant on the input and dedication of our Friends and Volunteers. Consider, for example that it required 172 volunteers to run this year's Autumn Garden Weekend and Plant Fair. Add to that the work undertaken by the Plant Growers Group to produce the many thousands of Plants, which were offered for sale over the preceding months. It is an amazing effort.

And of course, there are monthly working bees, which attract from 25 to 40 Friends and volunteers every month. Much is achieved at the Working Bees with plant propagation and garden maintenance being the main goals. Of course, there is always an element of education, information sharing and social interaction over a cup of tea as well. The Working Bee program has now expanded to include the second Saturday of every month to encourage a wider demographic of, hopefully, working people and youth.

The Friends Committee, although only quite small, works exceptionally effectively and efficiently to either organise or support all our events. A huge thankyou to our current committee of Chris Blaxland, Judy Keast, Shandra Egan, Peter Scott, Kathryn Jeffrey and Richard Scott who work cohesively and enthusiastically. And to our three members who retired this year, Ian Dwyer, Susan Hand and Lyn Barrett, thank you for all your hard work and commitment.

We look forward to another fulfilling and busy year ahead.

Chris Webb
Chairman
SHBG Friends



Stephen Jones MP presenting Judy Keast with a Friends Life Membership

PLANT GROWERS GROUP REPORT

The Plant Growers (Propagators) have worked really hard again this year to make our sales events a great success. While the core group still do the bulk of the propagating, through our mentoring program we are steadily building up skills of our other volunteers so that we can ensure the sustainability of the group and its essential contribution to the Gardens.

In 2018, we will again aim to train more of our enthusiastic volunteers to propagate and grow plants for our sales. We urgently need a larger group of people to share this vital work and would warmly welcome interest to join us.

The Autumn Garden Weekend and Plant Fair in April was a huge success raising over \$60,000 in PLANT SALES alone. We had over 80 volunteers helping us over the weekend and they all enjoyed it so much that they are keen to help again next year. The atmosphere was welcoming and the quality and variety of plants outstanding. This year we implemented a new pricing and labelling system which was very effective and streamlined.

Anne and Tony Emmett kindly opened their lovely garden for us in September to have a "Bluebell Walk" This raised approximately \$5,000 in plant sales as well as takings at the gate of \$1500. Many thanks to Anne and Tony for their generosity and continued support.

We had the opportunity to have a stall at Harper's Mansion in October. The takings from this were \$5,500. This was a pleasing result considering a lot of competition from other plant stalls.

Throughout the year visiting Garden Clubs were keen to see the way our Botanic Gardens is developing and have made a welcome contribution to our sales and donations. Please contact us if your Garden Club would like to arrange a visit to the Gardens or discuss any other ways we may work together.

Our regular working bees at the gardens provide volunteers an opportunity to buy plants from time to time and providing additional funds to the Gardens.

All together our takings from plants this year has been \$75,000 with another \$1,200 raised by Les Musgrave in November selling plants at his open gardens. This is an increase of 24% over 2016 income and is a vital contribution to the development of the Gardens.

We are looking forward to continuing the work in 2018 and we are always looking for ways to do it better, for new plants to grow and new people to help us. Please contact us at info@shbg.com.au if you would like to help join the group, volunteer or to discuss other ways you may be able to support the Gardens.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the whole team for their enormous effort.

Dianne Grant
Coordinator
Plant Propagating Group



Some of the Plant Growers at Harper's Fair

2016-2017 IN FOCUS

During the past two years the Board of Directors and the Friends of the Gardens have achieved some very substantial milestones in the development of the site. The progress has not been without its challenges, the greatest of these being the need for funding from the three tiers of government – Federal, State and Local. Your directors have put in countless hours preparing applications for the many grants available to community groups such as SHBG. The progress we see at the site is testament to the success of some of these applications, donations and the fundraising efforts of the amazing band of volunteers.

Snapshot of 2017

Events held – **14**

Presentations made by board members - **7**

Press reports or mentions – **20**

Workshops and meetings attended by Board members – **53**

Grants applied for – 12, awarded - **4**

Volunteer hours – **7379 hours***

*(Conservative estimate and excludes contribution of directors' hours)

Garden/Construction progress

- 200 metres pathway due for completion
- Dry stone wall for native garden
- Shed fit out
- 'Leaping Frog' sculpture donated by John Olsen installed
- Completion of Rondel, including donated pavers, stage 2
- New information signs erected, including proposed design for the gardens and Snipe interpretation sign
- Development of the Crab Apple walk and the Winter Garden
- Donation of Sambucus collection from Julie & Craig Hulbert
- Commenced planting dwarf dogwood (Cornus) collection
- Second working bee commenced on 2nd Saturday of month



Highlights

- SHBG Ltd new constitution adopted
- Appointment of a new auditor following a tender process
- Architecture competition for Visitors Centre held
- Bore licence issued
- Registration of two collections – Buxus and Betula – with Garden Plant Conservation Society of Australia
- Partnerships Manager engaged
- UTS Shopfront Community Program prepared cost benefit analysis for Visitors Centre



Catkins of 3 types of birch in the gardens which form part of our National collection

ART IN THE GARDEN

“All gardening is landscape painting.”¹ Kate Cullity, the designer of our garden, quotes William Kent in the concept plans for SHBG. Just as the spontaneous and energetic paintings of the artist John Olsen were some of her inspiration, we will add sculptural works to provide another layer to the garden.



Two sculptures by Tony Emmett, a life member and founder of the gardens, were installed in 2017. One is nestling among the trees in the grove of birches and fits well with the shapes and scale of the trees. A second larger piece is near beds of recently planted maples. In a few years it too will be in a grove of trees.



During the year, John Olsen AO OBE offered one of his sculptures, a leaping frog that stands some 2m tall. A ceremony in October dedicated the sculpture in its temporary home. The frog will eventually move to be near the visitors' centre, and the parterre garden inspired by John's paintings.



¹ William Kent, 1685-1748, architect.

FUNDING

The Gardens development to date has been largely funded through Open Gardens and events programs - such as the highly successful Autumn Gardens event in April - plant sales, Friends subscriptions, donations (general and project related) and the generosity of local corporates and local community.

For the future development and sustainability of the Gardens a fundraising strategy has been developed to include several new initiatives to add to the existing fundraising program. These will allow the Gardens to further seek financial support from the local community, regional and national corporates, government and private sectors. Fundraising programs will include:

Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Appeal to launch in 2018 and communicate the vision of the Gardens and both the short and long-term funding requirements to ensure their success and longevity. These major funding requirements include:



Visitors Centre Building to serve as a key regional art and culture venue and enhance the overall visitors experience to the Gardens.

Education Centre to provide education programs for schools and tertiary qualifications in horticulture.



Development of Gardens infrastructure and grounds to allow the Gardens to be open regularly, enjoyed by the local community and become a feature tourist attraction.

Sponsorship and partnership opportunities to be broadened to include event sponsorships and additional long-term partnerships.

Friends program for single, household or corporate subscriptions is currently available for 1 & 3 years and will be extended to include 5-year subscription offer from next year.

Donations program will be expanded next year to include regular ongoing monthly donations and, with the upgraded functionality of the website, will become a more simplified and automated process. The three key types of donations are for the following areas:

- **General donations** for the development of the Gardens and infrastructure
- **Tax deductible donations** via The Southern Highlands Foundation
- **Specific project** and ability to donate towards a particular project/event/celebration

Features in the Garden program will be expanded from the current options of dedicating a personally inscribed brick paver or bench to include other key areas in the Gardens that require funding to progress their development, such as the native Gardens and fern gully.

Plant sales on site and through a number of outlets provide a small contribution to the total funds raised by plant sales at plant fairs and Autumn Gardens off site.

Guided tours of the Gardens program to be expanded and available to groups for a donation.

In kind donations - equipment for the gardens or specific projects e.g. from donating a feature for the children's garden, garden tools and equipment, building materials, through to providing catering for an event.

Grants target specific project

A separate but essential arm of fundraising is obtaining grants from corporate and government entities. Whilst, in general terms, fundraising is proactive, seeking a grant is a reactive activity that focuses on a particular project. Fundraising, in general, might target an identified element of the garden or it might not.



Stephen Jones MP presenting cheque to establish a retail nursery

Grants are offered to not-for-profit organisations by corporates and all three tiers of government at various times of the year. They are very competitive as there are many worthy causes seeking a share of that corporate and government money.

Not all grant opportunities suit all organisations. If we apply for a grant we must satisfy the eligibility criteria. We cannot, for example, apply for money where the criteria are targeted at flood victims, fire damaged organisations, homelessness, disability groups, sport and other such categories.

Because grants are so competitive, the success rate is quite low – for everyone. But we learn on every occasion and we listen to feedback. We do a lot of preparation for each grant application, including getting quotes, submitting DA applications with Council, seeking community support from groups, individuals, politicians, councillors and others. This preparation includes the careful selection of a project that

can be large or small and we need to consider whether a project is stand-alone or is contingent on another project proceeding first.

And, lastly, seeking a grant usually needs an amount of co-funding. In other words, it is rare that a grant provider will provide all the money for any project. Co-funding is sometimes required at a specified rate of, say 50% of the total cost of the project, or there may be no specified rate. We can put in our own money to co-fund or seek support from an individual or corporate. All co-funding helps a grant application as it shows that we have support of the community and are serious about our project.

The important message is that seeking grants is one element of fundraising and it is dependent on fundraising. These two elements of fundraising work hand in hand.



Lyn Collingridge
Director and Grants Coordinator

Funding received in 2017 from IMB to construct the Southern entrance Garden to the native area

Community Support for the Gardens

The Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Board would like to thank the following supporters for their generosity and ongoing support:

Type of Supporter	Individual/Organisation	Support provided
Open Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony & Ann Emmett • Les & Elaine Musgrave 	Funds raised donated to SHBG
Advertisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allan Mackay Autos • Highland Spray Seed • Coffee Culture • Bowral Mowers • Alderwood Nursery • Welby Garden Centre • Fitzroy Inn 	Autumn Gardens Weekend brochure 2017
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Ramsay Foundation • Wingecarribee Shire Council • IMB 	Donation to fund part time fundraising manager upgrade the amenities block construct Southern entry garden
On Site Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alderwood Nursery • Wingecarribee Council • Terra Firma Fertilisers • Turf2Trees, Michael Nichols 	Trucks, potting mix and use of truck for Autumn Garden weekend Providing mowing monthly Supply of Organic Life Fertilizer Lawn and garden bed maintenance

BRANDING AND MARKETING

Brand Review

A review of SHBG brand and marketing materials was completed at the end of 2017 and recommendations provided to refresh the brand to align more strongly with the future vision of the Gardens, develop additional marketing and fundraising materials and upgrade the website content and functionality.

Following endorsement from the Board, the final design for the refreshed logo and stage one has been completed as set out below:



The roll out of the new brand guidelines and development of new materials and website upgrade are scheduled to be completed by March 2018.

Marketing

During 2017, there has been a greater focus on diversifying and expanding the marketing channels that are used to communicate to Friends of the Gardens and the wider community regarding progress and development of the Gardens.

Newsletters and regular Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens website and Facebook updates remain at the heart of our communications. This year SHBG Instagram was created to provide a colourful addition to our social media channels. The SHBG Facebook page has seen an impressive 61% growth from January to December last year compared to a 38% growth the previous calendar year.

SHBG Website

The Website has seen a 25% increase in new users, year on year. New content and video news footage was added to the website during 2017. It is anticipated additional features such as online donations, event registrations and social media integration will be introduced in 2018.

FUTURE VISION OF THE GARDENS

The vision of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens is to be a leader in horticulture in the Southern Highlands. But the Garden will be much more - it will be a piece of art in its own right, changing with every season, a visual feast. It will be a destination of choice for locals and visitors alike and there will be something of interest for everyone, young and old.

A Visitor Centre will be the heart of the Garden. It will serve as a key regional arts and culture venue. It will be the 'go to' meeting place for locals and visitors and will be sought after as a venue for social gatherings of all kinds.

The Education Centre will focus on an education program for children to awaken their learning in the sciences, arts, botany and many other subjects offered in their school curriculum and will offer adult education in horticulture.

A 'must see' nursery, under the guidance of a horticulturalist, will display rare and desirable plants propagated specially to suit to the Highlands climate. A purchase from the nursery will be irresistible.

Garden tours will be available for garden enthusiasts, international and regional visitors, children, history buffs, photographers, bird watchers and more.

Upcoming projects for 2018/19 include:

- Completion of the Plans for the garden and the Visitor Centre
- Fit out of the retail nursery display area and shade structure
- Construction of the Education Centre and Clock tower
- Water infrastructure, including purchase of water licence and installation of bore
- Commence building fund for the Visitor centre
- Design and construct the board walk
- Planting the Southern entry garden into the Native area, and continue native plantings
- Continued planting in the winter garden



Artists impression of boardwalk over the Chain of Ponds

2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Charlotte Webb OAM

Chairman

Founding Member of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens (1999)

Director since 7 June 2013

More than 30 years' experience in the landscape industry, including landscape design, horticulture and the nursery trade. Charlotte has previously established and managed a wholesale and retail nursery, managed an exhibition garden for 18 years, while concurrently running a landscape design practice in the Southern Highlands of NSW. An avid plant collector with an interest in rare plants. A specialist landscape heritage consultant and a founding member of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens. Bachelor of Agriculture (Horticulture), Masters Heritage Conservation. OAM for service to horticulture and the community 2012. Past Secretary Australian Garden History Society Southern Highlands Branch. Past Company Secretary and Board Chairman Australian Institute of Landscape Designers and Managers Ltd.



Barry Barford

Company Secretary

Appointed 16 December 2013

Company director and a shipping and logistics specialist providing services to international aid projects. More than 25 years' experience in the maritime and aviation industries with a parallel career as a trade journalist. Later a government policy adviser and regulator for marine and air transport services and a director in the NSW Senior Executive Service, including periods as acting Director-General, for a total of 20 years. Extensive experience of board and committee membership in both public and private sectors. Graduate Diploma Corporate Director, member of the Maritime Law Association of Australia and New Zealand and member of the Rotary Club of Berrima District.



Grant Blanchard

Director

Appointed 23 November 2015, Retired December 2017

After serving in the Royal New Zealand Navy, began a career in publishing which included a period as newspaper owner. Has launched several businesses including one which became a global leader in the digital transmission of advertising between agencies and newspapers and magazines. Has been a director and owner of businesses for more than 40 years including periods in software development and as the owner and developer of a boutique accommodation and retreat centre in the Southern Highlands. Also, is a past President of Bowral Golf Club. Currently sits as a community representative on the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee to the Wingecarribee Shire Council.



Chris Blaxland

Director

Appointed 18 September 2015

Recently retired as a founding partner in a consulting firm, developing and implementing strategies, and raising venture funding for early stage biopharmaceutical and medical technology companies in the U.S. His previous experience had been in international pharmaceutical management in Australia, South Korea, The Netherlands and the United States. Chris trained as a veterinarian and practiced in Australia and the United Kingdom before joining this industry.



Lyn Collingridge

Director

Appointed 26 October 2015

Over 40 years' experience in Commonwealth and NSW public sector organisations. Several years in private law firms, specialising in superannuation and corporate law. General Counsel for 11 years in a NSW public sector organisation and one year A/CEO.

Extensive experience in policy development, compliance and corporate governance. Past director of superannuation fund trustee.

Bachelor of Arts in Administration, Bachelor of Laws, Registered Justice of the Peace and Executive member of Southern Highlands Branch of the NSW Justices Association (voluntary role).



Peter Rowe

Director

Appointed 26 October 2015

Company director and retired solicitor. A former partner of and now a consultant to a leading international law firm where he had a number of roles including head of the Australian Financial Services Group and deputy chairman of the firm's Pro Bono and Community committee. Peter has 40 years' experience in the Financial Services Sector in Australia and Asia. He is currently a director, including as chairman, of a number of companies based in each of Australia and Singapore and which have operations in those and other countries. Peter has had an association with the not-for-profit sector that exceeds 25 years.



Chris Webb

Director

Founding Member of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens (1999)

Director since 7 June 2013

Following graduation from Sydney University with a degree in Agriculture, Chris returned to manage the family farm in the Southern Highlands for the next 12 years. After obtaining his Associate Dip Landscape he became a full time Landscape Designer and Horticultural Consultant, practising in the Southern Highlands for the last 19 years.

Being the 5th generation of the Webb family in the local area he has a passion for the history of the Southern Highlands and avid interest and concern in its ongoing development. He is a founding member of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens. Chris is a Past Chairman and committee member of the Australian Garden History Society Southern Highlands branch (7 years), Past Secretary and Chairman of the NSW DFA Moss Vale Branch (4 years) and a member of the Rotary Club of Berrima District since 2001.



Board Support

Jennifer Reynolds

Board Secretary

Appointed November 2017

Long and varied career as a secretary/Executive Assistant in both advertising and music copyright fields. Until recently worked as EA to CEO at the Australasian Performing Right Association, a position held for over 21 years.

