



Southern Highlands
Botanic Gardens

Year in Review 2018



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Chairman's Report 2018

What a busy year we have had since our last Annual General Meeting with the ongoing development of the plans for the buildings and the gardens, the commencement of education programs, more construction and planting on the site and of course lots of events.

A major focus this year has been the review of our business plan, including addressing where we would like to be when fully operational and how we intend to get there. Essential to our future viability is the construction of the Visitors Centre. John Wardle Architects have now completed the Concept plan for the centre allowing us to more accurately identify the funding required to construct the building.

Our short-term goal to increase income and provide services to the community will be the construction of the Education Centre, designed by John Webb & Associates. The Development Application for the building has been approved and the building appeal will be launched next February.

Currently the main source of income generated by the botanic gardens, approximately \$65,000 for 2017/18 financial year, comes from plant sales both on and off site. To improve the opportunities for increased plant sales, and with the help of a Federal grant, the nursery has been extended to include a retail area. We will commence retail operations on a more regular basis once the Development Application for change of use of the nursery, lodged with Wingecarribee Shire Council in December 2017, has been approved.

We have held 5 public events on the site including for Earth Hour which was the first event we have held in partnership with Wingecarribee Shire Council. The Vessels of Change installation by Heidi McGeogh was a feature for this event. It received such an overwhelming response and became such a draw card for visitors that it will remain on the site until the end of 2018.

This year also saw the first event organised by an external group, a bar-b-que by the Rotary Club of Berrima District.

Local garden owners continue to generously support the Botanic Gardens. Six garden owners made their gardens available for fundraising individually or as part of our Autumn Open Garden weekend. Currently these open gardens contribute a major portion of our annual income.

Much has happened with the physical development of the site, including extending the internal pathway network, continuing to develop plantings in the Winter Woodland, planting the start of the Daphne Collection and the Crowe Camellia collection, earthworks in front of the shed to raise and level the area, commence planting in the native area, including the entry stand of the endangered *Eucalyptus macarthurii*, construct the retail area for the nursery including a new shade sail, and continue installing donated pavers.

We continue to develop education opportunities at the botanic gardens. This year we have had eager involvement with students from Bowral High and Aurora Steiner School. Once the proposed Education Centre is operational, we will be able to offer these facilities for visiting schools and groups regardless of the weather.



There has been some change to our board of directors over the past year, with Barry Barford and Grant Blanchard stepping down, and the appointment of Christine Hawkins and Gregory Freckmann.

In February this year Ross Stone took over from Louise James as Development Manager for SHBG. Hassos and Associates have been appointed as our interim bookkeepers to help our transition with accounting software and until we find new volunteers to help with the role. In June we entered into a partnership with the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) allowing us to provide tax deductibility for donations to the gardens. Through the 'My Community Saving Account' BDCU Alliance Bank continues to support our gardens.

I would like to thank two of our mainstay volunteers, Jennifer Reynolds as our Board Secretary, and Geoff Prosser our web master. My appreciation is also extended to Jeanne Villani who has taken on the role of Newsletter editor.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the valuable commitment from all our volunteers, including the Directors of the Board, the numerous members of the committees, our Plant Growers Group and our Friends which all help the ongoing development and operation of the gardens.

Charlotte Webb OAM
Chairman

Friends Committee Report

The Friends Committee has continued its focus this year on working bees, events, volunteering and its key work in organising and implementing the Autumn Garden Weekend.

The number of subscribed Friends continues to grow and this is reflected in the steady numbers who attend working bees and events. Working bees this year have been well attended with an average of 30 per session on Tuesdays and 20 on our new Wednesday working bee.



Volunteers helping out in the nursery



Volunteer's workshop



D1 Grant demonstrating snake bite procedure on Sally Gaudry

A regular information session has been introduced this year which provides a small workshop on garden and plant related issues during our morning tea break.

The Friends committee and volunteers have assisted with all events held this year as well as providing support for visiting groups by way of refreshments and guiding services.

The ongoing success and growth of the Autumn Garden Weekend and Plant Fair is dependent on the support of additional volunteers. We now require around 150 Friends and volunteers to hold the event. Consequently we are always seeking new volunteers and Friends to ensure this weekend, in particular, is a great success.



The success of the Plant Fair being held on site has led the committee to make the decision to expand its base and invite in external nurseries for the 2019 event. Our response from the invited nurseries has been positive and we anticipate this being a very successful development.



Chris Webb, Chairman SHBG Friends Committee



Plant Growers Group Report

The dedicated plant propagators have worked hard again this year to make our sales events a great success. We had about 5,000 plants ready for the Plant Fair in April and raised more than \$50,000. Plant propagating has however continued all year and plants have been sold at numerous smaller events throughout the year. This move to regular sales is an important development for the coming year.

The work of propagating started in late December and early January. We are still dependent on several expert growers who provide large numbers of plants, but Charlotte has patiently taught those at the Working Bees the propagating process.

We started by taking suitable cuttings from plants and potting them in a special propagating mix. The difficult job of keeping them adequately watered during the heat of summer then started. The Shade House was essential for this phase. When the cuttings were rooted they were separated out into single pots and potted into true potting mix. The plants continued to be repotted into larger and larger pots as they grew depending on the species. The space at the Botanic Gardens with automatic watering was not adequate to care for all the plants. Once the plants were well established, members of the group took some of them home to continue the "growing on" process.

This year we formed a "Plant Troop". This group of helpers visited the homes of some of the growers who were "growing plants on" and helped them to pot up their plants or label them as was necessary. This allowed some of our older members to remain active helping us to care for the plants without having the heavy work of potting them up.

A second Working Bee has been in operation on the third Wednesday afternoon of each month, specifically for the care of the nursery as we try to build up our stock ready for our on-site nursery. A new enclosure has been added to the Propagating area of the Gardens. We hope to move into a retail nursery operation from this area. The nursery will become a major focus of the garden as well as a major income stream. We will however need volunteers to help with the sales.

We take every opportunity to sell the plants and recently had successful sales at both the Garden History evening at the Botanic Gardens and at Les Musgrave's open garden. Our final event for the year will be a Hydrangea Sale at the Botanic Gardens linked with the family picnic day on Saturday 8th December.

We are urgently looking for new people to join the propagating group, troop and sales team. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the whole team for their enthusiasm. Although there is a lot of hard work to be done we have lots of fun doing it.

Dianne Grant, *PPG co-ordinator*



Ann Beaumont & Jenny Simons potting up seedlings



Events June 2017-June 2018

We have increased the number and frequency of events held both on and off the site. This has increased public awareness of the gardens, while providing the opportunity to raise funds and provide activities attractive to visitors and the local community.

Harpers Mansion Plant Fair

A very successful day at Harpers Mansion in Berrima, showcasing the vast array of plants grown by our enthusiastic Plant growers Group



*Leaping Frog
by John Olsen*

'Leaping Frog' unveiling

John Olsen AO OBE unveiled his Leaping Frog sculpture under the shade of the Eucalypts. The frog will eventually be relocated to the Parterre garden.

Bluebell Walk

Tony & Ann Emmett, Founding SHBG President & committee members, opened their garden 'Vine Cottage' and hosted a plant stall by our Plant growers Group



*Ann & Tony Emmett
opened their garden Vine Cottage*

Christmas Picnic and Plant Sale

For the second year, Friends, Volunteers and the local community were invited to a Christmas picnic in the garden, along with a Christmas plant sale



© Brian Rapsey | Rhapsody Pictures

Earth Hour, in conjunction with Wingecarribee Shire Council, with an evening of musical entertainment and a children's solar lantern making workshop. The main attraction for the evening was the installation of 'Vessels of Change' by local artist Heidi McGeogh

Vessels of Change by Heidi McGeogh

Photo: Brian Rapsey, Rhapsody Pictures

Autumn Open Garden & Plant Fair

The 8th annual open weekend featuring five local gardens, and the 3rd year the plant fair has been held on the SHBG site. The weekend involves approximately 150 volunteers, both during the weekend and for the many months leading up to the event

Blues in the Gardens

In support of Botanic Gardens of Australia & New Zealand (BGANZ), who initiated the international Botanic Gardens open day, we hosted a Blues concert in the gardens, featuring Pearl Noir.



Snapshot of 2017/18

- Events held – 11
- Presentations made by Board members – (me – 1, Charlotte 3)
- Press mentions – 18
- Number of workshops & meetings with board members – 91 (don't laugh! It's true)
- Grants applied for - 11, awarded – 3
- Volunteer hours – 7611 (est)
- Visits to gardens – 9 (Bowral High School, Aurora Steiner School + bus groups)
- Number of visitors to Garden for ad hoc events – 150 (approx. Bowral High + garden clubs?) CB to provide info.

Garden construction progress

- Retail nursery constructed
- Serpentine stone wall entrance constructed
- Planting the Southern entry garden into the Native area
- Planted an entry stand of Paddy's River Box, sponsored by Jenny Simons
- Planting of witch hazels for future collection
- Planting of dwarf Dogwood for future collection
- Planting of Crowe Camellia collection
- Lone Pine tree planting
- Approximately 80 Tree signs installed
- Lockers installed
- Installation of AGHS sandstone bench



The McPherson Clan who donated the Lone Pine



*Students from Bowral High planting daffodils
bred by Tony Davis*

Highlights

- Preparation of Cost Benefit Analysis for Visitor Centre
- Development of Business Plan
- Fundraising event at Bendooley Restaurant with guest speaker Charlie Albone
- Introduction of Nursery working bee
- New directors appointed to the Board
- Discussions with Council for 30-year lease
- First visits by local schools – Bowral High & Aurora Steiner Schools



Financial Report

While the 2018 Financial year concluded with revenue for the year down significantly from the previous financial year, our expenses for the same were about equal in all areas except for an increase in marketing and promotions.

The Board sees the spend in this area as a direct investment in the future, suppling future fund raising activities with a stronger awareness of ourselves and the quality of the products and events that with which we engage. We managed to finish the year with a surplus figure of just over \$47,000.00, despite the above mentioned decline in revenue.

There was a continued spend on the advancement of the infrastructure of the gardens which translates directly onto the balance sheet, leaving us at year end UP on last years equity figure by healthy increase of just under 8 per cent for the year.

Gregory Freckmann, SHBG Director

Funding

We have perennial plants, which are always a good news story. Then we have a perennial problem of funding, or more properly, the lack of funding.

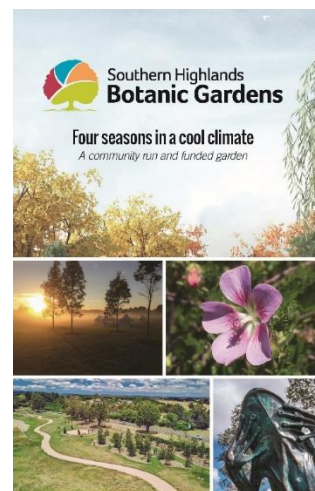
The Garden's development depends on significant money to establish a world class garden and Visitor Centre that will, hopefully, be the biggest tourist attraction in the Southern Highlands. It is a constant struggle, followed by many disappointments, with our efforts to create this community facility.

Out of 11 applications for funding during the FY 17/18, we were successful with three – and they were very small. We continue to participate in the rounds of grants offered by NSW government and other organisations and businesses. Our problem is that, as a garden, we struggle to satisfy the elements of most funding criteria, which are primarily aimed at art, sport, disability/seniors, environment and infrastructure. We are on the fringe of these topics but don't neatly fit into any one of them. We would fit into tourism, but those grants are focussed on holding an event of a major scale that will attract visitation from regions and wider afield. Our events, to date, have been small and we are not yet ready for block buster events.

Notwithstanding these set backs, we are working with new ways to raise funds and will keep trying.

Some small steps we have taken towards this end, are our new brochures that will attract attention to the Garden. One is "About Us", which briefly describes what SHBG is all about and its purpose is to increase awareness of the Garden. Another brochure is our Bequest brochure, "Leave a gift in your Will". The purpose of this brochure is obvious. We have a couple of others in the pipeline that are focussed on more ways of raising funds for the Garden or just helping out.

Other, more obscure but important, efforts we are making to raise funds include our meeting with council during the year, and council's support for our submission to issue us with a new



Gardens & Nursery Open by Appointment



New 'About Us' brochure



lease on the Garden site for 30 years. Our current lease, granted in June 2015, is for 21 years and time is slipping by with not much to show in terms of a developed garden. A new and longer lease may not sound much, but if an investor wants to make a substantial donation to the Garden, he or she often wants to know that the future of the Garden is secure and on-going. We are awaiting the approval of this submission by the Minister for Local Government, and that will be followed by the public exhibition process. It will probably not be until 2019 that we see the outcome of this submission.

We have also established a not-for-profit fund-raising account with the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal. This account allows people and organisations to make a tax-deductible donation to SHBG via FRRR. We are in the process of promoting this benefit to those who may be more inclined to donate to SHBG if they can have a tax deduction for that donation.

On a smaller scale, we continue to hold events that will raise some money. Some will be repeats of popular and successful events in the past and others will be new and very exciting.

We have had a big spending year focussed on investing in our future development. Our plans for the Visitor Centre have been further developed, our Business Plan has been a major effort to set down what donors will help achieve by giving to this community project. And we have just had a topographic survey conducted on the site. This last one doesn't



Proposed Visitor's Centre designed by John Wardle Architects

sound very exciting, but it will be critical for the development of the final plans of the Visitor Centre and the Garden.

These items, collectively, cost us a substantial amount of money, but they all play an important part in the future investment of this major undertaking.

On a brighter note, we recently did a tally of the investment in the Garden to date. Over the last eight years, we have raised nearly \$700,000 in grant money and over \$1 million in community and business support, with around \$500,000 of this latter money continuing on an annual basis.



Business Development Committee

A Business Development Committee was formed late in 2017, consisting of 3 Board Members and the Development Manager. Initially named a Funding Committee, the name was changed to encompass a broad range of activities including marketing, community and government relations.

The committee's weekly meetings have kept projects moving and facilitated communication across events, grant applications and operational matters. The presence of the Chairman at most meetings makes for full discussion and prompt decisions.

Development of a Business Plan occupied much of the year. With the support of professional advisors, a detailed plan was completed to support our approaches to potential major donors and government agencies. The development of the plan and its supporting material involved considerable refinement of the costs associated with plans for the Visitors Centre and quantity surveyor evaluations of those plans, and of the plans for further development of the gardens. The Cost-Benefit Analysis conducted for us in late 2017 by UTS students was used as the basis for projections. A central element of the process was to use hard data and avoid approximations.

The committee has initiated a number of events and programmes. For example, The Bendooley Dinner was a notable success in terms of outreach, connections with influential locals and establishment of a relationship with a well-known 'champion' who has appeal to a younger audience.

The appeal for funds to complete the retail nursery demonstrated the willingness of our stakeholders to support our projects.

Funding of \$500,000 for construction of the Education Centre is our immediate major goal. The Centre is highly desirable and should be achievable. It will represent a significant step in the development of the gardens and the services we can offer. Facilities to allow all-weather programmes for schools will increase awareness and involvement of younger families in the gardens.



Proposed Education Centre adjacent to 'The Shed'



A recurring issue is the limited numbers of 'active workers' in SHBG. We rely on a relatively small group of Friends and volunteers to arrange events, to develop the materials, and compile the grant requests. As an organisation, we need to enlarge the number of active workers – find ways to delegate to task-oriented reliable subcommittees or volunteers, and not overload the willing workers.

Community Involvement is the main theme for marketing of SHBG. We aim to increase awareness of our garden and activities in our local community. We want SHBG to be seen as a substantial community asset, to be used and enjoyed as public space as well as a source of horticultural education and art.



Volunteering isn't all about hard work

The Southern Highlands have a reputation for handsome gardens and exotic plantings. But most of these are private spaces, not accessible even to residents. There is a deplorable lack of public garden. In contrast, we see their delight when children are free to enjoy our open space, and the enthusiasm of so many of our visitors for our 15 hectare project. By increasing this community use, we enlarge our constituency and make politicians and administrators more willing to assist.

We have greatly increased our political outreach in the last year, making personal contacts with state and federal incumbents and candidates, left and right. SHBG needs government support to achieve the development of the gardens and the visitors centre.

Chris Blaxland, Committee Chairman

Development Manager's Report

Since February my time has been occupied making connections with the broader community including schools, business, government and individuals to seek their support. Community awareness will help build SHBG's profile. The result has been sponsors for events and promotion together with in kind support of fundraisers.

The current year will see a continuance of these activities and increased activity in Government lobbying and approaches to the corporates to source funding for the garden and building plans.

We are very grateful to all those volunteers, Friends and businesses that have joined us on this journey.

Ross Stone, SHBG Development Manager



Community Support for the Gardens

It would be difficult to achieve the aim and objectives of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens without community support. SHBG thanks the following supporters for their generosity.

Type of supporter	Name of supporter	Type of support
Local garden owners	Roy & Wendy Alvaro, Bellagio Heidi McGeogh & Sam Larwill Nigel Lusk & Rod Barber Belinda Bateman Patty Mouhtouris & Roger Keys Les & Elaine Musgrave	Autumn Garden weekend " " " " The Kaya weekend
Local artist	Heidi McGeogh & Sam Larwill	Artistic installation at Earth Hour
Advertisers	Highland Spray Seed Duncan Hill Property Coffee Culture Bowral Mowers Alan Mackay Autos Welby Garden Centre Alderwood Nursery	Autumn Garden weekend 2018 brochure
Sponsors	Your Event Solution Welby Garden Centre The Agency, Ben Olofsen Wilkinson Throsby & Edwards, solicitors The Bookshop Bowral Bowral Signs Mt Murray Nursery	Chelsea Flower Show Dinner with Charlie Albone
Supporters	Charlie Albone Glen Marie North Graeme Day Daren Powell	Chelsea Flower Show Dinner with Charlie Albone
Donors for raffle prizes	Centennial Vineyards Restaurant Chef in Your Kitchen, Narelle Blackadder Original London Black Cab Picnic Antique Barley Twist Fish Music The Countryman Bowral The Highlands Tour Co Portrait Commission by John Brain	Chelsea Flower Show Dinner with Charlie Albone



Type of supporter	Name of supporter	Type of support
Garden clubs	Australian Garden History Society Mittagong Garden Club Illawarra Camellia Society	Donation of garden bench Donation of tree Donation towards the camellia collection
Local arborists		Donation of chips for garden
Website services	Geoff Prosser	Website management support
Internet support	Acenet	Provides internet support for SHBG
On site maintenance	Wingecarribee Shire Council Terra Firma Fertilisers Corrective Services, NSW Government	Mowing of the gardens Supply of Organic Life Fertiliser Garden maintenance
UTS	UTS Shopfront – Final year masters students	Developed Cost Benefit Analysis for Visitor Centre

Upcoming projects for 2018/19

- Completion of the Plans for the garden and the Visitor Centre
- Construction of the Education Centre and Clock tower
- Commence retail operation for the nursery
- Water infrastructure, including purchase of water licence and installation of bore
- Commence building fund for the Visitor centre
- Continued planting in the native garden
- Construction of entry features at northern end of the gardens



2018 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, Retired May 2018



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 January 2018



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).



Gregory Freckmann

Director, Appointed 21 May 2018

Gregory comes from an extended background in financial markets starting out as a "Chalkie" in 1983.

He has detailed understanding of all types of financial instruments and has the ability to get a good understanding of any type of industry quickly. He has had in-depth exposure to a variety of segments of industry, including but not limited to, fashion production and sales, hospitality, building and the fitness industry.

He currently splits his time between working on finance and compliance for a Securities Dealer and doing compliance and business development for a Home Care Nursing service business. Gregory has been a consistent weekend visitor to the Southern Highlands since 2002 and is an avid believer in this area.



Christine Hawkins

Company Secretary, Appointed 21 May 2018

Company director and Managing Director of Cinnabar International Pty Limited, which specialises in good governance for all companies but with a focus on the not-for-profit sector. Christine's career has been in economics, finance and tax, initially with the Reserve Bank of Australia then with chartered accounting firms and investment banks. She has a long career as a company director, including as executive chairman, of companies in environment and resource management, plant biosecurity, agriculture and food, textiles and fashion, waste management and infrastructure. Christine has been Chairman of a Ministerial Council and a non-executive director of several major Commonwealth statutory corporations. She is part of the professional faculty of the Australian Institute of Company Directors for her expertise on corporate governance. Formal qualifications are a Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) and Master of Commerce degrees from the University of New South Wales, Fellow of CPA Australia and Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Current boards and non-executive committee roles include the Fred Hollows Foundation and the NSW Environment Protection Authority. Christine loves gardens and spends inordinate amounts of time wandering around gardens in the Southern Highlands, where she is now lives.





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, Director since 7 June 2013

Founding Member of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens (1999)

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), member of 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.

