



# SHBG ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



Southern Highlands  
**Botanic Gardens**

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# About SHBG

## The Garden

The Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens is one of the newest botanic gardens in Australia. Established in 2011, on a 15-hectare site located at 1 Old South Road Bowral, it is in its early stages of development.

The design of the garden was undertaken by Taylor Cullity Lethlean with an underpinning theme of a garden to reflect the seasons in a cool climate where water resources are increasingly scarce.

The design encompasses a town garden, represented by exotic plantings; a country garden, with a mix of exotic and native plantings; and a regional garden, characterised by native plantings.

Local heritage and culture are recognised in the garden design with the inclusion of a fern garden inspired by Louisa Atkinson, a botanist and artist who was born and died in the Highlands in the 1800s.

Early development has focussed on some garden beds and significant trees, together with small buildings, pathways and nursery.

Other development planned in the short term are an Education Building and maintenance shed.

## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this Land and recognise

the strength, resilience and capacity of these Aboriginal people.

The garden design features a Function Centre, a significant building designed by John Wardle Architects. The Function Centre will become the focal point for visitors and will enable small and large gatherings for both community and private functions.

The garden is open to visitors every day and can be used for recreational purposes as well as private, corporate and community events.

## Management Responsibility

The land on which the garden is situated is owned by the Wingecarribee Shire Council (WSC). The Plan of Management for the SHBG was adopted by WSC in March 2011 and, in 2015, WSC and SHBG Limited (SHBGL) entered into a 21-year lease, making SHBGL responsible for management of the garden.

Funding for the development and operation of the garden is provided through grants, donations and community fundraising. Consequently, progress on development proceeds at a speed at which funds are raised.

SHBGL is a registered charity and a not-for-profit organisation. Work to develop all infrastructure, including the garden, Education Centre, Function Centre and other minor development is reliant on significant funding.

A core purpose of a botanic garden is education. SHBG is working to expand its education programs for adults and children, within the constraints imposed by COVID-19.

SHBG continues to develop its collections for the national register.



## Chairman's Report

This year started well with increased interest in the gardens and attendance at our working bees. A fun and happy day flying kites, learning about the intricacies of tree pruning or simply celebrating Christmas in the gardens with a newly purchased hydrangea under the arm.

However, November 2019 brought home the reality of summer in Australia with the second drought in a row. To manage new plantings our Volunteers came to the rescue with a weekly watering roster, which extended right through the dreadful summer bushfires which heavily impacted on our Shire.

Not to be let off lightly, following our inaugural 'Movie in the Gardens' to raise funds for our amazingly brave local fire brigades, all further events in the gardens were cancelled due to the international Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite these ordeals, our major achievement for the year has been the installation of the All Abilities Children's playground, made possible by a \$200,000 grant from NSW Government My Community Project.

Now when you visit the gardens you hear the laughter and joy of young children both in the playground and running through the gardens looking for Teddy bears hiding in the trees from Covid-19 or trying to find the way out from the 'Jane Cush Meadow Labyrinth'.

Our nursery has risen to the challenge to replace lost revenue from cancelled fundraising events. The retail nursery now operates 3 days per week, manned by a team of keen volunteers. Our intrepid SHBG plant growers have continued to produce plants for our nursery which are not only desirable, but also sought after for their uniqueness, hardiness, and suitability for the climate or ease of care.

The new Picnic shelter, supported by a Veolia Mulwaree Trust Grant, has opened up a whole new group of visitors to the garden. With easy parking, a hazard free, easy grade gravel path the picnic shelter has become a favourite destination for less mobile visitors.

Co-operation with the community is an important ethos of the gardens. In late 2019 we undertook a

new planting in the native area in conjunction, and with the support of, the Lend Lease Foundation. This important planting area introduces visitors to the southern entrance to the eastern precinct of the gardens which features both endemic and native plants.

The education aspects of the gardens continue to develop. Following the involvement in the past few years of Bowral High Years 7 & 8, several of our volunteer vocational teachers have put together an education program. We now offer programs for stages 2 & 3 (years 3,4,5 & 6), ready for the 2021 academic year.

Horticultural education is a prime emphasis for our Botanic Gardens. Our senior education continues to thrive. From formal workshops such as the amenity tree pruning day, through to informal weekly sessions during the Tuesday Volunteer days, there is always something to learn in the gardens. SHBG is one of the few 'hands on' opportunities to learn about gardening in the Highlands from some of the best experts in the industry.

To ensure we continue to involve our local and broader community, several off-site community talks have been given, along with visits to the gardens from local and regional garden clubs. As Covid-19 restrictions eased, several garden clubs elected to hold their revived meetings in our gardens. This opportunity continues to be offered

to any group wishing to gather, while respecting the Covid-19 guidelines.

During the first half of 2020 we undertook a revision and revamp of our website, to create a more engaging and attractive site while providing greater information about the gardens and our progress to online visitors.

Some significant plantings have been undertaken in the gardens this year, including the stand of Swamp Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) donated by Bowral Garden Club and the Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) by Australian Garden History Society.

The Hornbeam fits with our philosophy of collecting members of the Betulaceae Family. This family includes our current National Collection of *Betula* (birch), of which we now have 23 types of silver birches. This collection will continue to increase in the coming years.

New plantings in the gardens include the lilac family (*Syringa*) which will form part of our next quest for national collection recognition after the successful registration this year of the Dwarf dogwood and Tony Davis Daffodil collections.

I am pleased to acknowledge our sponsors for the garden, including local business Acenet, Terra Firma Fertilisers and Seasol. Without support from companies such as these we would not be able to provide the facilities for the community currently offered.

We have achieved a remarkable amount over the 2019/2020 years, which must go down in history of one of the most difficult years for organisations and in particular not-for-profit organisations such as ours.

I feel we have come through this very difficult time in Australian history rather unscathed. Much of this has been due to the overwhelming positive attitude for our gardens by the community, our volunteers and those charged with the direction of the gardens.

Through this difficult time we have continued to be awarded grants due to the diligent work of Honorary Board Member Lyn Collingridge. I appreciate the unwavering effort Lyn puts into the development of the gardens by seeking funding when ever she can find it.

Thanks must also go to my amazing board who continue to ensure we comply with every part of the law, while endeavouring to move the gardens forward with development.

My biggest thankyou has to go to our Friends and Volunteers. Without this amazing team, our gardens over the past year may have fried up, been burnt up, and simply shut up. Instead we have expanded and welcomed a new generation into the world of gardens and nature.

**Charlotte Webb OAM**  
*Chairman*





# Strategic Goals

SHBG has adopted Vision and Mission Statements which inform all of the board's decisions and will be used to develop longer term strategic plans.

## Our Vision

To be the leader in displaying and researching both native and exotic flora of the Southern Highlands; advancing the knowledge of horticulture, conservation and sustainability to the wider community.

## Our Purpose

Our purpose is fulfilled through five strategies:

**Visibility**  
Nurture the botanic gardens as a leading facility for the protection of, research into and education on regional cool-climate flora.

**Enrichment**  
Provide social, health and recreation benefits to the community and other visitors, together with economic gains through tourism.

**Growth**  
Establish a financial and operational structure for the botanic gardens that provides for its long-term future.

**Engagement**  
Connect people with plants and provide education for the community in conservation, sustainability and environmentally responsible principles.

**Inspiration**  
Create an environment for the display of native and exotic flora of the region and its seasonal character in a setting enhanced by public art.

## Our Values

Values to which the SHBG board and staff adhere are:

- **Respect** in the way we relate with people and our environment;
- **Education** and research into exotic and native flora of the region, as a key offering to visitors;
- **Excellence** in all our activities, botanic displays, artistic and cultural experiences;
- **Inclusion** of all social groups and all interested groups, neighbours and visitors from all walks of life, young and old; and
- **Leadership** in providing visitor experiences and managing our activities according to environmentally responsible principles.

## Strategic Priorities

Subject to COVID restrictions, the strategic priorities over the next three years are to make significant progress towards:

- *Developing garden infrastructure:* Garden irrigation, carpark plan, pathway network
- *Social and recreational benefits:* Children's education programs, school holiday packages, garden workshops.
- *Growth of the organisation:* Corporate, personal and philanthropic 'giving' strategies to improve and vary methods of income.
- *Community resource:* Construction of Education Centre for community programs, progress on Function Centre design.
- *Creation of environment:* Holding an annual art exhibition, sculpture display and initiate collaborative relationship with like-minded cultural organisations.

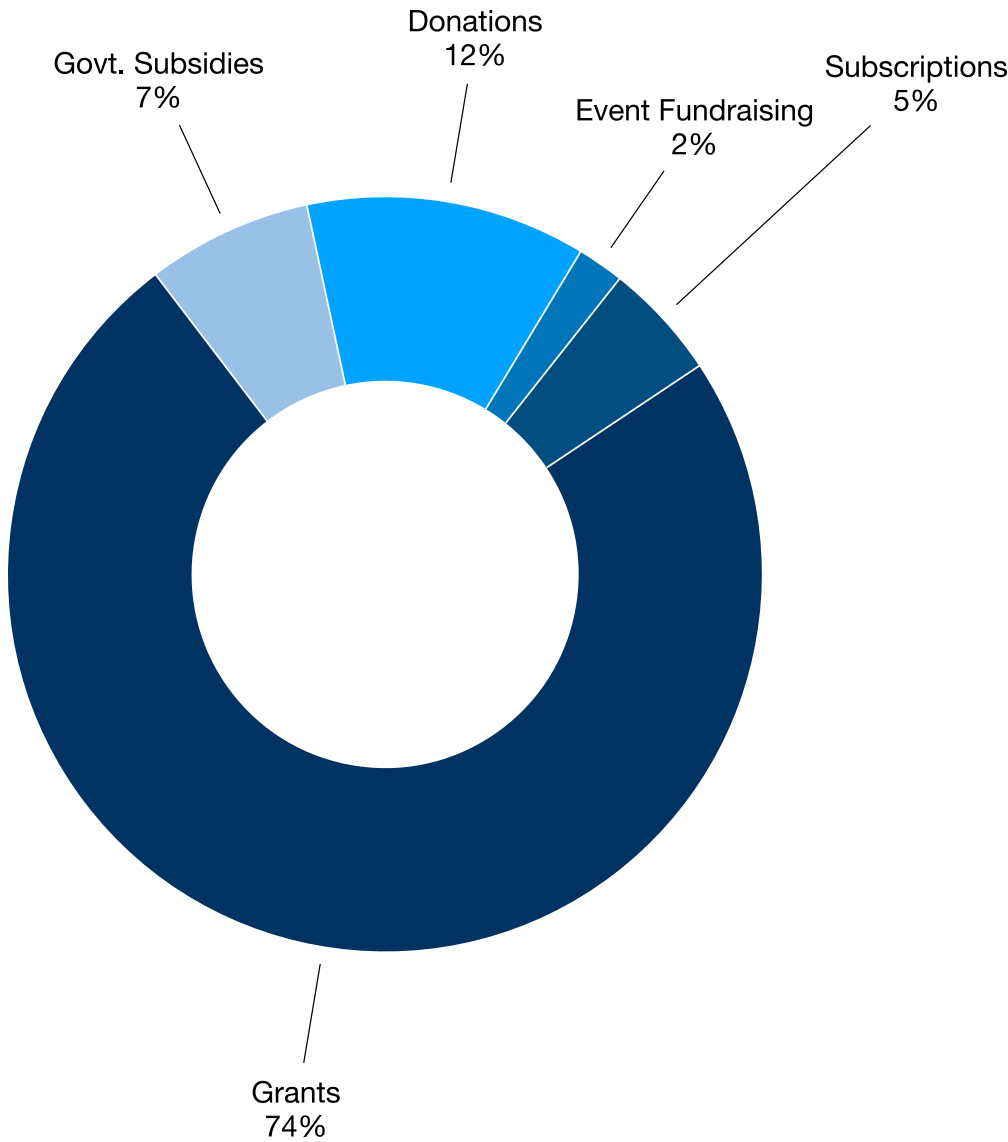
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The 2020 financial year concluded with very similar but slightly improved revenue figure as the previous financial year, being UP 8% year on year.

Even after our major fundraising event of the year was cancelled due to the limitations on numbers of people at events, and with much thanks to the government supports we were offered, the bottom line on the profit and loss was almost identical to the previous financial year, with an understanding this number was gleaned through a quite different mix of numbers. As mentioned above, while our revenue was slightly up against the previous year, our expenses for the FY2020 year were also up by an amount of 13% over the previous year, even after the limitation to the costs normally associated with

the event activity in the final quarter of FY2020. This increase is directly attributable to an increase in staffing costs as result of incurring a full 12 months with our 3 part time employees. The 2 other clear main contributors to the increase in costs were a doubling in the figure for the depreciation number, from the increase in assets built over the previous years, and the significant increase in premiums for the annual public liability insurance, due to the very welcomed opening of the playground.

And despite what was happening around us in the world, again the advancement of the infrastructure of the gardens continued in FY2020. This has led to a very solid increase in the bottom line figure of the balance sheet of almost 25% over the FY 2020, which was a notable increase over the 22% rise recorded in the previous financial year.







# Key Achievements

## Education

Our education program continues to target school children and adults.

New education packages have been created by teachers from within our volunteer group which are now available for use by visiting schools. These packages include modules which adhere to the current school syllabus for Stages 2 and 3 (Years 3,4,5 and 6), across a broad range of subjects. We anticipate welcoming schools to the gardens during 2021.

On site education for our volunteers and visitors continue, with weekly information sessions, hands on workshop and general training in both the garden and nursery.

Education outreach is undertaken with the inclusion of horticulture articles in our quarterly magazine and through talks given to local interest groups and garden clubs.

Bowral High School years 7 and 8 children visited the garden regularly during 2019 to participate in a community activity and to learn some basic garden skills from our very experienced garden and nursery volunteers.

## Community

We have increased general visitor numbers, although special interest groups have declined overall due to Covid-19 restrictions

- The number of visitors to the garden has increased due to the garden being open to the public daily from 1 July 2019. During COVID restrictions, the garden received more visitors as people sought an outdoor break from their daily routine.
- 2019 saw an increase in school visits and visiting garden clubs, they have been limited during 2020.
- Although working bees were limited during 2020, volunteers continued to look after the gardens on an individual roster system. Since the lifting of restrictions numbers attending the regular working bees continue to rise, with new volunteers arriving weekly.
- Only 4 events were held over the year, including the first 'Movie in the Gardens' in support of the local Fire Brigades following the bushfires in summer.

Figure 1: Bowral High school participants

Figure 2: Practical, hands on education sessions



## Horticulture

Four collections are now included in the National Plant Collection, registered with Plant Trust (GPCAA Inc.)

- 23 species of *Betula*, three of which are considered rare in Australia;
- 21 species of *Buxus*, one of which is thought to be endangered and two are rare.
- 8 species/cultivars of *Cornus* (Dwarf);
- 69 cultivars of Tony Davis bred Daffodils.

National Plant Collection	
Collection name	No species/cultivars
Betula	23
Buxus	22
Dwarf dogwood	8
Tony Davis bred Daffodils	69

Work has commenced establishing a new collection of species lilac (*Syringa*)

We aim to establish a collection of the *Betulaceae* family, including the birch collection. Our first *Carpinus* (Hornbeam) which is a member of *Betulaceae* has been planted this year. The tree was donated by Australian Garden History Society (AGHS), Southern Highlands, to celebrate 40 years of the Society. Six other *Carpinus* species are growing in the nursery ready for planting out in 2022.

Native collections have commenced, with a group of endemic *Acacia* (wattles) ready to be planted in spring 2020, along with the Shale woodland community which includes the endangered *Eucalyptus macarthurii* (Paddy's River Box).

Figure 3: Red stemmed red dogwood, included in the dwarf *Cornus* collection

Figure 4: Part of the *Betula* Collection

Figure 5: First *Carpinus* (Hornbeam) in the garden, donated by AGHS to celebrate their 40th birthday







fig. 6

## Infrastructure Development

Development of the garden infrastructure continues as funds become available.

Incremental development takes place by volunteers at working bees who create new garden areas to suit the seasons. During 2019/20:

- In October 2019, a small section of the native garden area was developed, with the assistance of Lend Lease volunteers. This garden is located at the south-eastern corner of the garden and includes plantings of *Eucalyptus macarthurii* and wattles as well as some smaller native shrubs, some of which were donated by Lend Lease.
- In December 2019, a bore to a depth of 200 metres was installed, resulting in good quality water at sustainable quantities. A number of grant applications for this project were not successful and SHBG's drilling licence was due to expire in January 2020. Consequently, SHBG funded this work at a cost of over \$47,000. SHBG also purchased 5 units of water allocation at a cost of \$10,000 from



fig. 7

Bong Bong Picnic Race Club. Additional funding is needed to complete the installation of pumps, underground water storage and reticulation systems.

- The SHBG playground was installed during the early COVID lockdown period, with preliminaries in December 2019. Work commenced in March 2020 and was completed in mid-June. Funding of \$200,000 was from the *My Community Project*, an NSW Government initiative assisted by the many community votes, supported this project.
- A picnic setting was installed in early 2020 with the assistance of \$8,963 funding from



fig. 8



Photo: © Veolia Mulwarree Trust

fig. 9

Veolia Mulwarree Trust. The project consists of a wheelchair accessible table and benches with a roof to protect from the worst of the weather, all secured into a concrete slab. Volunteers landscaped the area around the structure.

- Our plant nursery turned retail in mid 2020, opening to the public on three days a week, lifting the profile of SHBG as a propagator of plants. The nursery is operated by volunteers and revenue from sales supports SHBG's finances.
- A \$20,000 grant from the Federal Environmental Program helped fund the

beginning of the endemic garden. This project commenced in September 2020 with the removal of 21 radiata pines, a recognised 'environmental weed' that acidifies the soil and creates a sterile environment for flora and fauna, especially birds, including small honey eaters. This area will be replanted, over time, with native trees, shrubs and ground cover, all endemic to the site.

- Work is about to begin on a one-kilometre pathway that meanders through the garden. This project is funded with \$236,000 from Responsible Gambling, NSW Government. Following extended discussions with council, this project should commence late in 2020.

Figure 6: Lend Lease Volunteers Figure 7: Bore drilling

Figure 8: Playground under construction Figure 9: Picnic Shelter with assistance from Veolia Mulwarree Trust







## Building the organisation

Volunteers are central to the operation and maintenance of the garden. The board, Friends of the Garden, weekly working bees and SHBG events all depend on volunteer time and labour.

Despite the setbacks delivered by the COVID restrictions early in 2020, SHBG volunteers continued to come to the garden on days of working bees, despite those working bees being officially cancelled. Volunteers observed all precautions, working at appropriate physical distances throughout the garden and during the morning tea break. The garden provided a welcome physical and mental respite for many volunteers, some of whom live alone or don't have a garden of their own. Volunteer support remains strong and very much appreciated.

All employed staff are part time, funded with the assistance of The Paul Ramsay Foundation and, during the FY 2019/20 included:

- Chief Executive Officer (appointed in February 2019).

- Administration Officer (appointed in March 2019).
- Development Manager (ceased in September 2020)

A part time contracted bookkeeper is funded by SHBG.

The challenges of COVID requiring the cancellation of fundraising events, directly affecting the 'bottom line' of SHBG's accounts. JobKeeper and other government small business grants provided much needed support for retention of employees, payment of salaries and payment of some ongoing operating costs.

A major achievement during the reporting year was the restructure of the SHBG website. Effectively, the website has been updated to become more modern, more attractive and more transparent. This work was undertaken during the COVID restrictions period by the CEO and other board directors and the Development Manager. The website will require constant review and updating.

## Commercial Sustainability

Fundraising in FY 2019/20 for SHBG has been negligible due to cancellation of all events from early 2020 due to the COVID restrictions. The loss of the biggest fundraising event of the Autumn Garden Weekend in April had a severe impact on continuing operations of the garden. Consequently, day-to-day operating costs have been supported by Federal and State government stimulus funding.

Fundraising activities for 2019/20 amounted to under \$10,000, with general donations raising \$54,000. Grants received during the year amounted to \$401,000. Plant sales from the nursery raised nearly \$19,000.

Success in grant applications in late 2019 allowed SHBG to focus on some major development in the garden in FY 2019/20.

SHBG continues to make approaches to the Federal and State Governments for support in the development of this community asset. The drought of 2019 followed by severe fires, then the COVID pandemic have resulted in more and different funding activities by all levels of government. No funding is forthcoming at the time of reporting. The emphasis in our appeal is to present the garden as a significant tourist attraction, regional asset and an important community resource.

Appreciably increased visitor numbers during 2019/20 strengthen the case for a viable community venue and augur well for future commercial activities. Increased visitors are in response to the garden being accessible daily and the attraction of the playground.

## 2018 Business Plan

The Business Plan was restructured for 'due diligence' in FY2018/19 and remains a significant and useful document. The Plan provides a breakdown of costs to fully develop this botanic garden, with an Education Centre and a Function Centre, and outlines a plan of action for that development over 2-3 years once funding is available.

The Business Plan estimates:

Garden development costs of \$15 million, plus Function Centre construction costs of a further \$15 million, both of which are supported by detailed quantity surveyor cost estimates.

In the second full year of operation, SHBG will have an ongoing net operating profit of around \$188,000.

The Education Centre will generate around \$24,000 profit during its first full year of operation.

The estimated future cost of the garden development continues to be eroded as progress is made with the garden construction with the assistance of grants, particularly in 2019/20.

## 2019 Urbis Report

In September 2019, the board received a report by Urbis that provided a cost-benefit analysis identifying significant net economic and social benefits to the Southern Highlands region attributable to the potential development of SHBG.

In early 2020, the NSW Government amended the guidelines for such cost benefit analyses for organisations seeking State Government funding. Consequently, URBIS were requested to update their report, further detail of which is at page URBIS Report 2020



Photo: © Andy Toohey





## Strategy and Projects

Through our strategies and projects, SHBG continues to prepare for the future. In particular:

- We continue to work closely with other agencies, including WSC, to ensure the best outcomes for the wider community to enjoy this botanic garden;
- Following a meeting with WSC staff, SHBG made a written submission to WSC's Draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030. The submission emphasised the importance of gardens, decorative horticulture and the gardening industry contributing to the character and economy of the district.
- We continue to collaborate with other botanic gardens and like-minded groups to share ideas and expand the target audience for financial support and visitation;
- Our funding applications focus on projects involving sustainable practices and plant conservation;
- Meticulous recording of our rare daffodil collection occurred in 2019/20.
- Development of educational modules for the SHBG school education program commenced in 2019/20, together with liaison with local primary schools to engage them in the rollout of the program in early 2021.
- A campaign to raise funds for the construction of the Education Centre during 2019/20 is ongoing, with a target of \$500,000 remaining. The building will have a focal role in the delivery of the school education program, and we continue to give this project top fundraising priority.
- The SHBG website was revised and overhauled during COVID lockdown in early

2020, with the assistance of some SHBG Board members and the Development Manager. The result is a smarter, more modern website with more transparency of the operations of SHBG.

- A research and indexing project of privately-owned gardens in the Highlands featuring in the *Highlife* publication from its inception in 1998 was undertaken by two SHBG volunteers during COVID lockdown. The resulting index is a valuable commodity for SHBG and will be maintained into the future.
- All SHBG board and committee meetings from March to October 2020 were held via Zoom, enabling work to continue in an efficient manner.
- Community events ceased from March 2020, but as COVID restrictions continue to ease, planning has commenced for future events, commencing with the inaugural Teddy Bear picnic held in early October in a COVID safe manner.



## Key achievements through drought and COVID

Additional challenges faced the community during the reporting year and SHBG had its share.

The garden has no irrigation system and operates with a ring main and taps at 50 metre intervals to which hoses can be connected with sprinklers. Over the years, SHBG has heavily mulched all garden beds to reduce water evaporation and limit the amount of watering required for plants.

During the 2019 drought a watering regime was established to manage the moving of hoses and sprinklers around the garden to help new plantings become established. When water restrictions were introduced at the peak of heatwave conditions, volunteers participated in a daily watering roster using buckets. Such is the resilience and loyalty of our volunteers.

The bushfires did not directly affect SHBG. However, some valuable and rare plants owned and cared

for by volunteers at their home were brought to the SHBG nursery for safe keeping. Some volunteers were also traumatised by the threat of the fires to their homes and the need to evacuate.

COVID followed in early 2020 and impacted the whole community. All SHBG's planned events were cancelled, including the Autumn Garden Weekend and Plant Fair – our biggest fundraising annual event – and the Earth Hour event. Planning for both these events had been underway for some months.

This COVID period occurred at the same time as SHBG was planning to implement a number of projects in garden development that were being funded by grants. These projects, all being outdoors in a large open space, were not affected by the lockdown and were able to proceed as planned.

One by-product of COVID was the need to hold meetings virtually. All the board meetings and committee meetings were held via Zoom during the period of COVID restrictions.



# Conservation and Environmental Performance

## Plant Conservation

One of the most exciting projects to commence this year is the reestablishment of an area of Southern Highlands Shale Woodlands (SHSW) Endangered Ecological community. This is the vegetation which would have been found on the site prior to European settlement.

SHSW includes communities ranging from open forest to woodland and scrub though on our site it would have been predominantly woodland. Any remnant trees may now be of variable health due to clearing and disturbance. Typical trees of the community include *Eucalyptus radiata*, *Eucalyptus macarthurii*, *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, *Eucalyptus globoidea*, *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa*, *Eucalyptus quadrangulata*, *Eucalyptus amplifolia*, *Eucalyptus ovata*. Other trees include *Eucalyptus smithii*, *Eucalyptus obliqua*, *Eucalyptus fastigata*, *Eucalyptus viminalis*, *Eucalyptus elata*, *Eucalyptus punctata*, *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, *Eucalyptus mannifera* and *Eucalyptus cinerea*.

The understorey is variable with small trees including *Acacia melanoxylon*, *Acacia binervata* and *Pittosporum undulatum*, shrubs such as *Indigofera australis*, *Leucopogon juniperinus*, *Olearia microphylla* and *Bursaria spinosa*. Ground species may include *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Pteridium esculentum*, *Themeda australis*, *Dichelachne crinita* and *Microlaena stipoides*.

To commence the project to re-establish this area, endemic Eucalpyt, Acacia, Themeda and Xerophyllum seed were sourced and propagated. The resulting plants are now growing on in our nursery in readiness for planting.

The work to prepare the area has initially involved the removal of a number of *Pinus radiata* which are identified as Environmental Weeds on the WSC Environmental Weed List. These trees are renowned for acidifying the soil, inhibiting the growth of any other vegetation and providing limited or no habitat.

This project has been partly funded by a Federal Government grant.

## Environmental Considerations

SHBG incorporates sustainable environmental elements in all its designs and projects, consistent with our Vision.

### Solar panels

The Function Centre will house solar panels to limit reliance on the regional grid for heating, cooling and power.

The Education Centre, with wide verandas to provide shade and protection from summer heat, will add solar panels to improve energy efficiency.

### Greenhouse biome

The Function Centre greenhouse will act as a biome, creating a specific micro-climate resulting in minimal electricity usage.

Various technologies within the façade of the Function Centre will target internal spaces to control temperatures, including:

- Insulated 'pillow' roofing over the greenhouse area;
- Directional shades/ vents high on the northern wall; and
- A mini-trombe wall lower on that same façade (reverse brick veneer) providing cooling in summer and heating in winter.

### Geothermal system

A geothermal heat pump in the Function Centre will transfer heat to or from the ground to provide a central heating or cooling system, using the earth at all times as a heat source (in the winter) or a heat sink (in the summer).

## Sustainable resource management

SHBG's sustainability framework extends to both operational and horticultural activities.

Low water usage principles practised in the garden include heavy mulching around all trees and across garden beds, reducing evaporation and modifying soil temperature to inhibit weed growth.



### Water management

Automatic timers in the nursery are programmed to allow short blocks of watering, resulting in economic water consumption.

A recently installed bore will provide a sustainable water supply, once there is an irrigation system in place to connect to the bore. The planned irrigation system will include the installation of a 200,000-litre underground water retention tank to receive water pumped from the bore for irrigation around the garden.

### Waste management

Various waste management practices are in place or being introduced.

- Single use plastic bags are discouraged, with SHBG issuing reusable cloth-like bags with nursery purchases.
- Green waste is collected for recycling.
- Office waste and waste from events is sorted for recycling.
- The recently installed water bubbler outside the playground discourages single use plastic water bottles.
- Ceramic or BYO mugs are encouraged rather than disposables at working bee coffee breaks.
- All nursery sales are in recycled pots.



# Social Performance

## Visitation

In the 2018/19 Annual Report, SHBG reported overall visitation to the garden having increased to an estimated 6,500 visitors attending organised events and general visitors. As the gates to the inner part of the garden opened daily from July 2019 and with the installation of a 'people counter' we have been able to count visitors with more accuracy.

In 2019/20, the combination of early COVID restrictions on people's ability to travel away from home, together with the installation of the new playground, resulted in daily visitation increasing from around 10 people per day in 2018/19 to over 100 per day in 2019/20.

Estimated Visitation 2015/16 to 2019/20					
Events	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Earth Hour	na	na	500	150	cancelled
Autumn weekend	3,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	cancelled
Open garden day	200	200	100	100	cancelled
Kite Flying Day	na	na	na	300	150
Christmas event	na	320	200	500	400
Casual visitors	300	1500	900	1000	15000
Visiting garden clubs	240	300	360	360	500
Total visitors	3,740	6320	6060	6410	16050

The nursery is now open to the public three days a week. People who have turned to their own garden to work on have come to SHBG's nursery for plants propagated by the volunteers and suitable to the climate conditions of the Highlands.

This combination of factors resulted in a huge increase in visitation to SHBG, with the expectation that the warmer weather will encourage even more visitors.

The cycle path that borders three sides of the garden continues to have a constant stream of cyclists and walkers, although no count is made of these visitors passing through the garden.

## Visitor engagement highlights

SHBG's free public events were severely reduced during the year. The events held were:

- Kite Flying and children's workshop day;
- Harper's Mansion plant sale
- Christmas picnic and plant fair:

The one fundraising event held was Movie Under the Stars.

Although the proposed Sculpture competition, to be held in conjunction with Earth Hour, was cancelled the meadow Labyrinth installed by local artist Jane Cush was installed. This labyrinth will remain in the garden for the short term.



Meadow labyrinth installed by local artist Jane Cush

## Community outreach

Community engagement continues with many local garden clubs visiting the garden at least annually and funding trees and garden seats and pavers.

The Highlands community was severely impacted by the Summer 2019 bushfires with many Highlanders, including a number of SHBG volunteers, being evacuated from their homes with the assistance of the Rural Fire Service. SHBG made contact with all 19 RFS units in the Southern Highlands after the bushfires and invited them to attend our Movie under the Stars event in February 2020, with the purpose of donating the profits from the Movie event to the RFS. Their fire truck on display that night at the garden was a huge attraction for all the kids and many young-at-heart adults.

Fewer presentations took place on SHBG development and activities to members of local community groups during the year.

A regular program of Corrective Service workers provides valuable assistance in the garden. These visits ceased in April and are recommencing in October.

Community outreach is vitally important to demonstrate the support of the community when SHBG applies for grants. In past times, we have sought community support from visitors to the garden or members of the public at a stall in a shopping arcade or local market, by requesting their signature on a 'letter of support' for a particular project for which funding is being sought.

During times of COVID restrictions, fewer grants became available but when they did our approach to the community for support took on a new look. In early 2020, we emailed as many people as we could and gathered email support for grant applications. When restrictions eased, we again set up in a local shopping arcade to gather signatures on our 'letter of support'. Now, in more modern times, we have a QR code by which members of the community can register their support by scanning the QR code without any contact.



fig. 11

Figure 11: Members of Bowral Garden Club planting a group of Taxodium - Swamp Cypress





Figure 12 Board members attending the workshop at the National Arboretum, Canberra

Meetings with a number of local primary schools have occurred since restrictions have eased, with the view to engaging the schools to participate in the SHBG school education program, due to be rolled out in early 2021.

SHBG obtained a Water Access Licence in 2017 with zero access. Following discussions over a couple of years with the Bong Bong Picnic Race Club, SHBG purchased 5 units of water from BBRC.

A number of board members attended an external gathering of the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park workshop at the National Arboretum, Canberra during the year to widen the network of like-minded groups

## Volunteering

A large number of volunteers actively contribute to the development, upkeep and maintenance of the garden.

FY 2019/20 has been an unusual year with volunteer activities being severely curtailed. During the reporting period:

- Volunteers continued to attend weekly working bees, despite their cancellation, with numbers of around 25-30 each week, becoming more popular as the weather warms up and restrictions continue to ease. The result of these efforts is the glorious condition that the garden presents itself as Spring arrives.
- During the drought and heatwave conditions of late 2019, devoted volunteers operated a daily watering roster, using buckets to water during the water restrictions.
- With the easing of restrictions, volunteers operated a table in Springett's Arcade to promote the upcoming Teddy Bear Picnic and to gather signatures of the community to support our grant applications.
- Volunteer guides assist when groups visit the garden, to give a tour of the garden highlights and inform these visitors of future development plans.

- Many volunteers hold a 'working with children' clearance so they can participate with children in the garden.
- Volunteers conduct workshops for children to make and decorate their own kite before flying it in the garden at the Kite Flying day.
- Volunteers support other activities that occur in the garden by providing refreshments to attendees at workshops and preparing for events.
- The quarterly newsletter, Operculum, is contributed to, edited, designed and produced by volunteers.
- Grant applications are researched, written and submitted by volunteers in consultation with the board and relevant community entities.
- For special events, volunteers drop flyers in letterboxes and hand out flyers and brochures at shopping centres and village markets.
- Volunteers propagate and grow all plants sold in the nursery, raising \$19,000 during the reporting year.
- Every day a volunteer opens and closes the gate of the garden so that visitors can come to walk around, enjoy the picnic setting or go to the playground.
- In October 2019, Lend Lease provided a contingent of workers for one day to plant a new section of the regional native garden.





Thank you to volunteers

SHBG’s ‘thank you’ events, usually held each year in recognition of the work undertaken, and contribution made, by volunteers, have not occurred in FY2019/20.

‘Life Membership’, as a Friend of the Garden, is awarded to special individuals who volunteer their time more than others, are always there, often behind the scenes, and whose work is greatly valued. Currently there are six Life Members.

One volunteer has been appointed ‘Honorary Nursery Manager’, whose ongoing management of the SHBG nursery is so valuable.

Community Education

SHBG continues to develop education opportunities for the community, including schools, garden enthusiasts, clubs, and general visitors to the garden.

Although opportunities to undertake education during 2020 has been limited, a new school program has been developed for Primary School aged children. This program will be rolled out in 2021.

Weekly education opportunities continue during the Volunteer working bee sessions, covering topics such as plant propagation, selecting and maintaining tools for your garden, workshops on planting techniques for different soil types, dividing dahlias, etc.

The lack of adequate facilities to hold education sessions in the gardens has proven to be an issue due to the vagaries of the weather. Currently tents are erected in inclement weather to provide protection for education events. The construction of the proposed education centre will be a very welcome addition to the garden, allowing greater opportunities for education sessions.



Figure 13: Education sessions in the garden

Support

We greatly appreciate the support of our past and present donors.

We wish to particularly thank the following donors, who contributed during the FYs 2010 to 2019.

FINANCIAL YEAR	GOLD DONORS	SILVER DONORS	BRONZE DONORS
2010		Dr & Mrs A Emmett	Carino Pty Ltd Hapwell Pty Ltd Mr D McManus J & M Osborne Thompson Health Care Pty Ltd
2011			Mr R Constable Mr & Mrs J Leijer Mr R Barber & Mr N Lusk Mr D McManus Mr David Newby
2012			Mr A Schofield
2013			Dr & Mrs A Emmett Dr S M Hicks Hindmarsh Investments Pty Ltd
2014		Mr & Mrs D Willis	Ms J Lemann
2015			Dr & Mrs A Emmett Mrs J Simons
2016			Mr & Mrs F Conroy Mr & Mrs N Dubois Dr & Mrs A Emmett Dr & Mrs P Ingle Prof & Dr C Probyn
2017	The Paul Ramsay Foundation		Dr & Mrs Emmett Mr David Newby
2018		Mr & Mrs T Copes Mr & Mrs N Symonds	Dr C Blaxland Ms E Brown Mr & Mrs F Conroy Dr & Mrs E Duncan Mr P Evans Mrs S Graham Dr & Mrs P Ingle Mrs Alison Scott Mr R Shepherd Mrs P Tallents
2019	Mr & Mrs T Copes The Paul Ramsay Foundation	Dr C Blaxland Dr & Mrs A Emmett	Mrs S Alsop Mr & Mrs D Collingridge Mr P Evans Mr & Mrs C Moore Mr I Scandrett Ms J Simons The Intersection Bowral



We also wish to thank our donors who contributed during the reporting FY 2020.

GOLD DONORS	SILVER DONORS	BRONZE DONORS
Dr C Blaxland Mr & Mrs D Collingridge Mr K Cooper Mr & Mrs T Copes Mr & Mrs P Rowe	Dr & Mrs A Emmett	Mr & Mrs F Conroy Mr & Mrs R Constable Dr P Knowlden

Friends and volunteers

The Business Development Committee of the board, together with the Friends of SHBG, directs the fund-raising activities of SHBG.

The Friends focus is on the Autumn Gardens and Plant Fair weekend, our biggest fund-raising event of the year. Normally five privately owned gardens and the plant fair on the SHBG site would be our biggest event of the year usually raising more than \$100,000. But in 2020, this event could not proceed.

Volunteers continue to form the backbone of support for the garden. Working bees being held on a weekly basis have produced constant love and attention to the garden maintenance and minor development as well as a well-cared for nursery. Even during the lockdown there was no shortage of volunteers.

Plant growers’ group

The small group of skilled plant growers provide all plants for sale in the nursery, and many planted in the garden. This group has volunteered their time and expertise to train new nursery volunteers about plant propagation and preparing plants ready for sale.

The opening of the nursery on a regular weekly basis has seen an increase in the demand for plants year-round. This has now highlighted the need to increase the number of plant growers, and the quantity of plants provided to the SHBG nursery.

The only plant sale to be held during the year was at Harper’s Mansion Plant Fair in October 2019, where over \$7,000 was raised from plant sales on the day.



The team of Plant Growers



Major donations

The Paul Ramsay Foundation has generously donated \$450,000 in two tranches towards the salaries of three part-time staff of SHBG. These donations have enabled the work of the garden to become less ad hoc and to formalise the functions and activities in an orderly manner.

Local support

Other support includes Wingecarribee Shire Council. SHBG pays a peppercorn rent for the site and council mow the site on 16 occasions each year. SHBG can also apply for a refund on some council development fees due to our non-profit status.

Valuable support is also provided by the Corrective Services Division of the NSW Department of Justice, through participants of the corrective services program undertaking tasks at the garden that often requires a younger and stronger work force. Work ceased during lockdown but is beginning again in late 2020.

Sponsorship

Local businesses sponsor SHBG, including Acenet who host the SHBG website; Your Event Solution YES, with provision of discounted tents for certain events; and fertiliser companies, Terra Firma, who provides ‘Organic Life’ and Seasol International, who provides Seasol and PowerFeed.

Local garden owners

A big thank you goes to local garden owners for generously opening their private garden for the public to visit, with proceeds going to SHBG. These private garden openings are the mainstay of the SHBG Autumn Garden Weekend, with some owners going an ‘extra yard’ by donating some of the proceeds to SHBG from other group visits to their garden and selling SHBG plants on our behalf.



Photo: © Andy Toohey



## Future development

### Grants & donations

Rational planning for the development of SHBG cannot be undertaken in an environment of unreliable and uncertain funding. Efforts to raise funds for major projects are primarily through grant applications, targeted fundraising events and donations.

Grant applications made during 2019/20 (12 in total) and sought funding of of \$1.2 million and resulted in approvals for \$267,486. Three applications were fully successful, one partially successful, seven unsuccessful and we are awaiting the result of one application representing \$25,000 if successful.

Since COVID, grant opportunities reduced. So far in 2020/21, we have applied for three grants totalling \$255,000 and await those decisions.

A number of informal approaches have been made to local MPs to argue a case for COVID stimulus funding, with no success to date.

COVID support has been available to SHBG from the Federal and NSW State Governments amounting to \$71,020 during 2019/20, including JobKeeper. To be eligible for JobKeeper we needed to demonstrate a loss of 30% income in April 2020 compared with April 2019 and as April is our biggest month of the year, this test was easily met. However, SHBG was unable to meet the JobKeeper eligibility test again in September 2020 as SHBG's income in September is never as high as in April. Consequently, we did not meet the eligibility for JobKeeper from September 2020.

A funding appeal with a target of \$650,000 for the Education Centre in early 2020 still has a target of around \$500,000.

### Business Plan 2018

The SHBG Business Plan, updated in late 2018, sets out the quantity surveyor estimated costs of the major development of the garden and Function Centre.

We are working on a breakdown of projects forming the development, particularly of the garden, with a view to making it more visible specific items of garden development that could attract individual funding.

### URBIS Report 2020

An economic and social benefit analysis of SHBG for the Southern Highlands region was undertaken by URBIS, a Sydney based consultant firm in 2019. The result of that report was set out in the SHBG Annual Report for 2019.

Since the 2019 Urbis Report, the NSW Government amended the guidelines for entities undertaking a cost-benefit-analysis that would be used to seek NSW Government funding. The guidelines were changed to not include visitation from NSW residents in estimating economic and social benefits but, rather, only interstate and international visitation can be used. The cost-benefit-analysis is to estimate the benefits to the state of NSW rather than the region. Urbis delivered an updated review in July 2020 and a summary of those findings is outlined below.

#### Viability

The completed botanic gardens are estimated to produce a benefit-cost ratio of 1.4, or an expected return in economic and social benefits of \$1.40 for every \$1 invested.

#### Economic benefits

Costs of developing and operating the garden are estimated at \$36.1million over 20 years.

Benefits from economic activity from the operation of SHBG, once fully developed, are conservatively estimated at \$14.6 million over 20 years, broken down as:

- Revenue of \$12.7 million to SHBG; and
- Revenue of \$1.9 million to external operators.

#### Employment

During the construction phase of 3 years, it is estimated that 59.5 full time equivalent (FTE) employees will be supported.

Increased economic activity of SHBG over 20 years is expected to directly generate 6.7 FTE employees at SHBG and 3.4 FTE employees at external operators.

Following completion of the garden development, SHBG operations is expected to support 3.7 FTE employees in the tourism industry over 20 years



Photo: © Andy Toohey

#### Tourism

Annual tourism to SHBG following full development, not including for discrete purposes of weddings, functions, conferences and meetings, is conservatively estimated at 62,638, with 9,268 being from outside NSW.

Visitors to the Wingecarribee Shire from outside NSW who currently visit SHBG is estimated at 12,639 with additional annual visitors to SHBG expected to be 9,268, totalling annual SHBG visitors of 21,907 once fully developed.

Increased regional tourism spending by interstate and international visitors generated from a completed SHBG, is estimated to deliver \$1.5 million to the tourism industry or \$172,337 annually.

#### Social value

Key social benefits of the proposed botanic gardens development include:

- Amenity value – enjoyment of green space (associated with stress relief and relaxation);
- Health benefits – including psychological and physical from low intensity exercise;
- Education and conservation value – people learn without realising;
- Cultural/ community value – well frequented public-access events.

URBIS estimates the social value produced by a completed SHBG to result in:

- Visitor use value (for those who visit and directly derive value) - \$3.4 million annually or \$29.8 million over 20 years;
- Non-use value (for those who value an asset irrespective of their plans to use it) - \$0.5 million annually or \$4.6 million over 20 years.

Together, this represents a total of \$34.5 million in social and cultural value over 20 years.





Photo: © Andy Toohey

### SHBG priority of pursuing funds

The board has a high priority of actively lobbying prospective philanthropists, government representatives and others with a view to sourcing funds for the development of the garden. Large grant opportunities also become viable once significant co-funding has been sourced.

This work is ongoing. Once initial major funding is available, from whatever source, opportunities will widen to keep the funding snowball rolling.

### Development applications

Whilst SHBG has development approval for the concept design of the garden, it is necessary to comply with all local council requirements for development approvals in respect of all work carried out on council owned land.

When a DA application is not required, council approval for carrying out work on Council owned land is required.

### 30-Year Lease

SHBG's approach to council in August 2018 to renew the existing 21-year lease for SHBG (issued in 2015) with a lease for 30 years was rejected.

The request by SHBG was prompted by feedback from prospective donors indicating that a lease to SHBG for a longer period than 21 years would be more reassuring for donors. After initial support by council, public exhibition and discussions with the Office of Local Government, council voted to reject the request in November 2019 based on the argument that council would first need to review the SHBG Plan of Management.

The SHBG Plan of Management is due for review by 2021.

In May 2019, SHBG was issued with a five-year lease over a part of the site that will become the SHBG carpark. This section of land is an unformed road. During the five years of the lease, council resolved in February 2019 to formally close the unformed road with a view to transferring the title to SHBG in its consolidated lease of the site.

## Governance

### OVERVIEW

SHBG is a company limited by guarantee and established as a not-for-profit entity. The Constitution sets out, inter alia, the objectives of the company, the appointment of the directors, the role and responsibility of the board of directors and arrangements for meetings of members.

The members of the board have a diverse range of skills and experience in horticulture, landscape design and construction, law, finance and commercial business.

The board is committed to best practice in corporate governance. Directors meet monthly to review the performance of the organisation and to plan for its future. A comprehensive Business Plan was developed in 2018 to guide the development of the Gardens over the immediate future and has been highlighted elsewhere in this report.

With no full-time management, the directors have all been allocated specific roles relating to the operation of SHBG, in keeping with their individual skills and experience. Directors receive no remuneration for their services.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### CHARLOTTE WEBB OAM

*Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
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.



#### 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.

*"The gardens of the region were a major reason for deciding to live here. I'm not expert at gardening, but the development of SHBG has been an opportunity to learn and to participate in the creation of a community resource. That's especially satisfying now as the plantings are maturing, and so many people are enjoying this space"*





## LYN COLLINGRIDGE

**Director, Appointed 26 October 2015**

Lyn is a retired solicitor with over 40 years' experience in Commonwealth and NSW public sectors and several years in private law firms, specialising in superannuation and corporate law.

She has extensive experience in policy development, compliance and corporate governance and is a past director of superannuation fund trustee.

Lyn's formal qualifications are a 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).

'I never thought of charity work before retirement, but I love this project and its challenges. It is very personally rewarding to be part of this great community asset and I am proud to be involved.'



## GREGORY FRECKMANN

**Director, Appointed 21 May 2018**

Gregory comes from a 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 AM

**Director and Company Secretary, Appointed 21 May 2018**

Company director and Managing Director of Cinnabar International Pty Limited, which specialises effective strategy and 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, with the Reserve Bank of Australia, chartered accounting firms and investment banks. She has a long career as a company director, including as chairman of companies in environment and natural resource management, plant biosecurity, agriculture and food, textiles and fashion, and higher education. Christine has been Chairman of a Ministerial Council and a non-executive director of 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. Christine loves gardens and spends inordinate amounts of time wandering around gardens in the Southern Highlands, where she lives.

'Christine loves gardens and spends inordinate amounts of time wandering around open gardens in the Southern Highlands, where she lives. She believes that the local community will benefit forever from the natural beauty of the Botanic Gardens' large public space, where the gardens can be freely enjoyed by everybody, of all ages, every day of the year.'



## PETER ROWE

**Director, Appointed 26 October 2015**

Company director and retired solicitor. A former partner 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. Peter was a founding partner of the firm's pro bono practice. Peter has over 40 years' experience in the Financial Services Sector in Australia and Asia and recent board appointments have included companies in Australia and Singapore.

'Peter inherited his interest in gardens from his mother. A rose gown by his mother has been transplanted to his garden in the Southern Highlands. Peter has had a long commitment to pro bono and finds his role at SHBG a good fit.'



## CHRIS WEBB OAM

**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 since 1998.

Being the 5th generation of the Webb family in the local area he has a passion for the history of the Southern Highlands and an 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.



## Management and staff

Charlotte Webb was appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company on 1 February 2019 and works in that paid capacity three days a week. Charlotte remains Chairman of the company as a volunteer director, in addition to her CEO responsibilities and separate from her salaried role.

Ross Stone works two days a week as our Business Development Manager, having been appointed to that role in January 2018. Ross's contract expired in April 2020 and was extended to September 2020.

Anne Kragh was appointed as Administration Officer on 5 March 2019 and works two days each week.

With very few staff, SHBG relies heavily on volunteers for many of the day-to-day activities that are fundamental to a botanic garden. Volunteer work is organised by the CEO and volunteers are protected by the same Work Health and Safety policies and processes that protect the organisation's employees.

In addition to their board roles, the board directors also undertake work for SHBG on a voluntary basis, supporting financial management and administration, business development, marketing and applications for grant funding.



## Committees

Committees are integral to the work of SHBG and the lifeblood of its success. At board level, committees use specialist director expertise to oversee various aspects of the organisation's work, while volunteers provide skills and expertise that are essential in developing and operating the organisation.

Committees also provide social interaction for the volunteers and a way of using the amazing talents of our community to create a legacy for the Southern Highlands.

SHBG has a number of committees that have been formed to support the formal policies developed by SHBG. All committees are chaired by a board director, with membership comprising directors and may include other volunteers. All committees operate in accordance with Terms of Reference that are approved by the board. The operation and effectiveness of committees is subject to board oversight and each committee reports to the board monthly.

### Arts Committee

The Arts Committee comprises at least one director and such other members to make a committee of five. The primary role of the committee is to ensure that the SHBG Public Art Policy is properly implemented and to advise the board on the acquisition of art works to be incorporated into the garden and visitor centre. Expert Advisers assess the art work and provide advice to the committee on whether or not a work of art is to be acquired, taking into account the garden design and mission statement.

### Business Development committee

The Business Development Committee comprises three members of the Board, the Development Manager and the Chief Executive Officer/Chairman as ex-officio member. The committee is responsible for funding strategies, marketing, government relations. One member of the committee is responsible for all grant applications and the implementation of projects funded by grants. The committee initiates events and passes those on to an Events Committee for implementation. The committee meets weekly at the garden.

### Consultants and Contracts Committee

The Consultants and Contracts Committee is an ad-hoc committee with two board members and the CEO as an ex officio member when the need arises. The purpose of the committee is to oversee SHBG's procurement processes and procedures relating to major contracts for goods and services as required by SHBG. No formal activity has occurred with this committee.

### Events Committee

The Events Committee comprises two board members, the Business Development Manager and is chaired by the CEO. The Events Committee takes its lead from the Business Development Committee to plan and implement events to be held at the site of the garden or off-site. The Committee meets weekly, following the Business Development committee meeting and co-opts relevant members of the community to assist plan and coordinate events

### Friends Committee

The Friends Committee comprises five or more members and is chaired by a board director. The role of the committee is to assist the Events Committee organise fundraising events. It also raises community awareness and increases the public profile of SHBG and its plans and activities in relation to the development of the garden site. The Committee meets monthly.

### Governance Committee

The Governance Committee comprises three members of the board. It was established to review the composition of the board, the skills and experience needed to enable the board to operate effectively and in accordance with SHBG's vision and strategic objectives. The committee will also undertake regular board performance reviews.

### Succession Committee

The Succession Committee is an ad hoc committee to be appointed with a minimum of two, possibly three, board members and any external person if thought necessary. Its role is to expedite the succession planning process to meet immediate needs if, and when, the need arises and is guided by the timetable outlined in the SHBG Succession Plan. No committee appointments have needed to be made.

## Contractors

SHBG has a policy of using local contractors and service providers whenever possible.

SHBG hires local contractors to undertake work in the garden when needed, including construction of buildings and paths, laying of brick paving, erecting of fencing around the nursery, minor earth works and hole digging.

Until 2018/19, the bookkeeping duties of SHBG were undertaken by a volunteer. For a short period during 2018/19, SHBG's auditor took over those duties until arrangements were made in July 2019 for a private contractor to undertake that role.

## Risk Management

SHBG is committed to managing its risks through an integrated Risk Management Framework that covers every area of the organisation's governance, development and activities. A new framework is in development and is a live system based on input from the board, staff and volunteers.

A new Risk Policy was adopted in 2019 requiring management to incorporate risk mitigation strategies into all activities and require third parties who use our site to address risks through contracts, licences and usage agreements. Reputational and other strategic risks are regularly considered by the board in its planning.

Some of the SHBG's risks are covered by insurance, but all risks require management strategies that are monitored and reviewed regularly by the board to support the development of the garden and to ensure the efficient operation of the organisation and the site.

### Incidents

The safety of everyone visiting and using the gardens is paramount. Every incident, even a minor one, is required to be reported to a supervisor or the office and logged in the Incidents Register. This enables areas of the gardens that require work or protection to be identified, and to continuously improve the approach to ensuring the safety of everyone on the site.



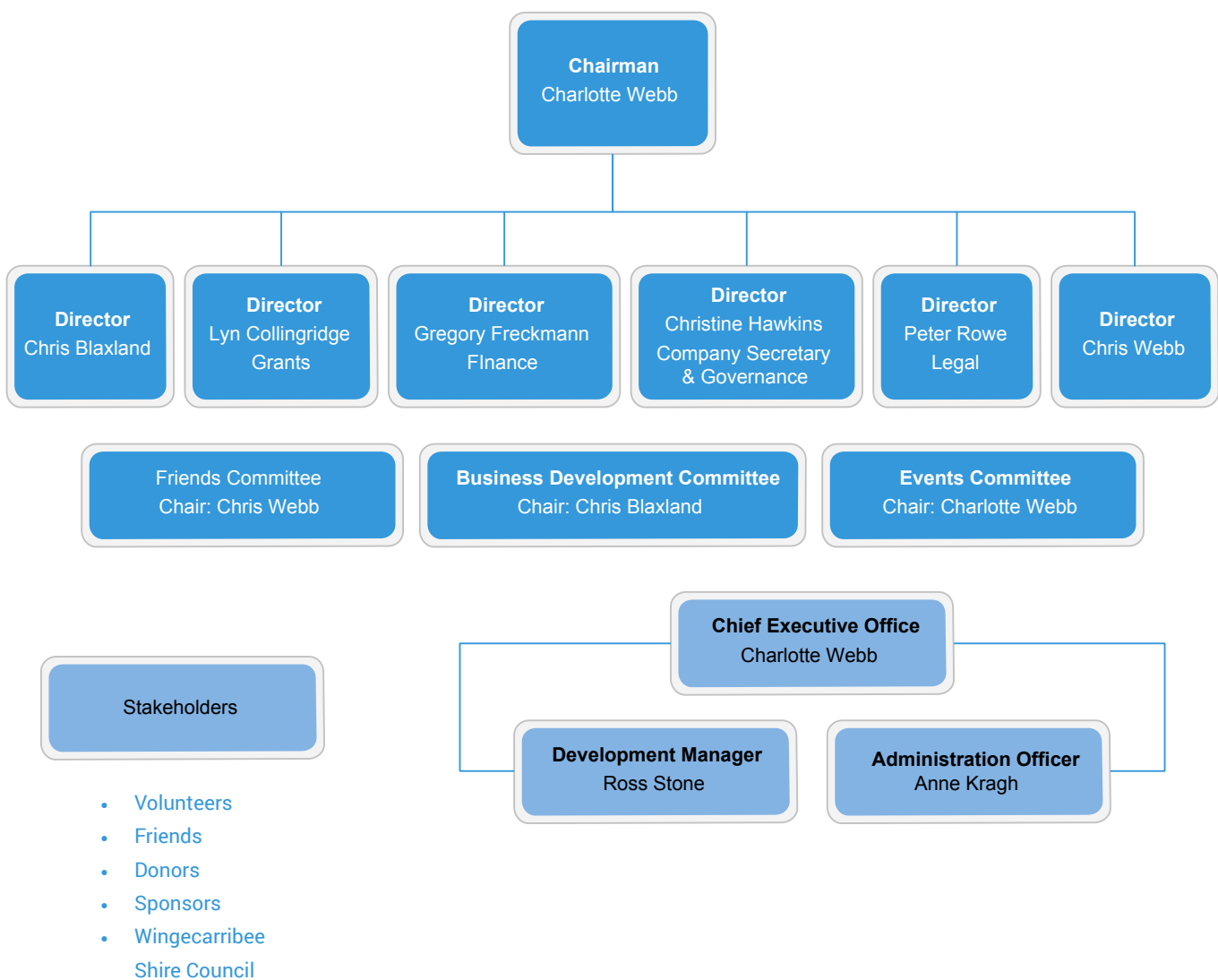
Photo: © Andy Toohey



# Organisational matters

## Organisation structure 2019/20

The following organisation chart reflects the SHBG organisation comprising board members, primary committees, staff and stakeholders during the reporting year.



## Workplace Health & Safety

SHBG is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy workplace for all employees and volunteers in compliance with all laws and regulations.

While volunteers sometimes find the paperwork intrusive, we collect information strictly in accordance with the requirements on SHBG through the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) as well as to fulfil our requirements for liability insurances maintained. All information is confidential and individual privacy is maintained.

# Financial Performance

## Revenue Streams

### Fundraising Events

SHBG is yet to commence commercial activities as part of its full-time operation. Income for the year has been derived from the following sources.

- Fundraising events were severely curtailed by COVID-19 restrictions during 2019/20, particularly with the cancellation of the major autumn fundraising annual event. Income from fundraising during 2019/20 amounted to just over \$10,000 – less than 10% of the amount raised in the previous year.
- General donations contributed nearly \$53,000 or 16% of the previous year's donations.
- A building fund appeal for the construction of the Education Centre raised approximately \$100,000, leaving a target of around \$500,000 remaining.
- Income from plant sales, contributed nearly \$19,000 in revenue compared with \$29,000 in the previous year.
- Grants received during the reporting year totalled \$401,000 with a balance of \$64,000 to be paid on completion of the respective projects.
- Income from Friends' subscriptions and interest raised around \$10,000, down from \$26,000 in the previous year.

### In-kind donations

In-kind donations cannot be quantified accurately into a dollar value but are worthy of mention. Some valuable in-kind donations include the following.

- The volume of mulch delivered by local arborists to the garden site cannot be quantified but, at a value of around \$55 per cubic metre, the dollar value would amount to many \$100,000s.
- The Southern Highlands Branch of Australian Garden History Society donated a stone

bench in October 2018, which is installed in the winter garden.

- The Mittagong Garden Club donated funds for a Crimson King maple and planted the tree in the garden in July 2018.
- Jenny Simons donated towards a number of Paddy's River Box, or Eucalyptus macarthurii, part of the endangered ecological community, Southern Highlands Shale Woodlands. This stand of 2-metre-high trees is located at the southern entrance to the gardens.
- The Southern Highlands Branch of Australian Garden History Society also provided funding towards an avenue of brilliant autumn coloured Lipstick maples, now planted along the pathway near the main entrance of the garden.
- Bowral Garden Club planted a stand of Bald cypress (Taxodium distichum) sponsored by the club. These trees are located towards the eastern end of the garden.

Other in-kind contributions to the garden are in the form of labour from:

- regular visits from the Bowral High School years 7 & 8 students.
- Corrective Services, NSW Department of Justice providing workers to spruce up the garden on frequent occasions, especially prior to an event to be held on-site.
- Members of the community who come to regular weekly working bees, which provides a constant source of labour and love to the development of the nursery and garden.



**Southern Highlands Botanic  
Gardens Ltd**

ABN 68 164 166 821

Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2020

HASSOS | CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

SYDNEY | BOWRAL

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REAL LIFE ADVICE

LIABILITY LIMITED BY A SCHEME APPROVED UNDER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS LEGISLATION



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Your directors present this report on the company for the financial year ended 30 June 2020.

## Directors

The names of the directors in office at any time during or since the end of the year are:

Charlotte Webb  
Peter Rowe  
Lyn Collingridge  
Chris Webb  
Chris Blaxland  
Christine Hawkins  
Gregory Freckmann

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

## Principal Activities

The principal activities of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens are the establishment, plantings, design and operation of a botanic garden.

## Objectives

The objective of the company is to provide a botanic garden for the purpose of:

- developing living and other collections for research and educational purposes;
- conducting and disseminating the results of scientific research;
- contributing to conservation of local and other threatened or endangered plants;
- educating and informing student and the general public about plants and plant communities;
- promoting environmental responsibility and sustainability through best practice and education;
- providing an enjoyable and inspiring environment for a wide range of recreational activities commensurate with the function of a botanic garden;
- building community capacity and social interaction through participation in horticulture;
- fostering the arts through providing a space for artistic performance and production and display of the visual arts; and
- visitors and the community.

## Members guarantee

The company is incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 and is a company limited by guarantee. If the company is wound up, the constitution states that each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$10 each towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the entity.





Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd  
ABN 68 164 166 821  
Directors Report

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**Auditors Independence Declaration**

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 307C of the Corporations Act 2001 has been included.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:

Charlotte Webb  
Director

Peter Rowe  
Director

Dated:

3/11/20



Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd  
ABN 68 164 166 821  
Auditor's Independence Declaration

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**UNDER SECTION 307C OF THE CORPORATIONS ACT 2001**

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2020 there have been :

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to the Audit; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit

Peter Hassos



**Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd**  
ABN 68 164 166 821  
**Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue	2	545,622	506,886
Distribution expenses		(627)	
Advertising and promotion		(7,645)	(9,767)
Office expenses		(3,142)	(5,890)
Other expenses		(274,902)	(229,516)
<b>Total surplus attributable to members</b>		<b>259,307</b>	<b>261,713</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd**  
ABN 68 164 166 821  
**Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash assets	3	433,929	408,585
Receivables	4	2,534	6,377
Other	6	285	
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>436,749</b>	<b>414,962</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Other financial assets	5	10	10
Property, plant and equipment	7	905,451	662,019
Intangible assets	8	9,091	
Other	6	813	813
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>915,365</b>	<b>662,842</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>1,352,114</b>	<b>1,077,804</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Payables	9	6,680	2,062
Current tax liabilities	10	21,988	16,228
Provisions	11	4,625	
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>33,294</b>	<b>18,290</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>33,294</b>	<b>18,290</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>1,318,821</b>	<b>1,059,514</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained profits		1,318,821	1,059,514
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b>1,318,821</b>	<b>1,059,514</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd

ABN 68 164 166 821

Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 30.06.2020

	Notes	Retained surpluses	Total Equity
<b>Balance at 01/07/2018</b>		797,801	797,801
Surplus for the year		261,713	261,713
<b>Balance at 30/06/2019</b>		1,059,514	1,059,514
Surplus for the year		259,307	259,307
<b>Balance at 30/06/2020</b>		1,318,821	1,318,821

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd

ABN 68 164 166 821

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Cash Flow From Operating Activities</b>		
Receipts from customers	547,400	497,956
Payments to Suppliers and employees	(245,459)	(221,799)
Interest received	2,065	2,732
Net cash from operating activities	304,006	278,889
<b>Cash Flow From Operating Activities</b>		
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(278,662)	(169,463)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	(278,661)	(169,463)
Net increase (decrease) in cash held	25,344	109,426
Cash at the beginning of the year	408,585	299,159
Cash at the end of the year	433,929	408,585

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



The financial statements cover Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens as an individual entity, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens is a company limited by guarantee.

**Note 1: Significant Accounting Policies**

The directors have prepared the financial statements on the basis that the company is a non-reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial statements. The financial statements are therefore special purpose financial statements that have been prepared in order to meet the requirements of the Corporations Act 2001.

The company is a not for profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the mandatory Australian Accounting Standards applicable to entities reporting under the Corporations Act 2001 and the significant accounting policies disclosed below, which the directors have determined are appropriate to meet the needs of members. Such accounting policies are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise.

The financial statements, except for cash flow information, have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The material accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of the statements are as follows:

**Accounting Policies**

**(a) Revenue recognition**

Revenue is recognised when it is probable that the economic benefit will flow to the company and the revenue can be reliably measured. Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable.

*Donations*

Donations are recognised when received.

*Interest*

Interest revenue is recognised as interest accrues using the effective interest method. This is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and allocating the interest income over the relevant period using the effective interest rate, which is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial assets to the net carrying amount of the financial asset.

**Note 1: Significant Accounting Policies (continued)**

**(a) Revenue recognition (continued)**

*Other revenue*

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

**(b) Income tax**

As the company is a charitable institution in terms of subsection 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, as amended, it is exempt from paying income tax.

**(c) Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

**(d) Property, plant and equipment**

Property, plant and equipment are shown at cost less depreciation.

**(e) Goods and Services Tax (GST) and other similar taxes**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the tax authority. In this case, it is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.



2020

2019

## Note 2: Revenue and Other Income

### Revenue:

Interest revenue	2,065	2,732
General Donations	52,042	307,997
Tree Donations		1,000
Nursery Appeal		34,300
Donations in kind	500	
Building fund	9,210	800
Playground	200	
Friends Donations	1,992	
Event Proceeds	10,037	51,905
Friends		4,555
Pavers	1,636	545
Autumn Garden Income		52,272
Raffle proceeds	606	3,190
Badges	200	
Clothing	473	
Catering	625	
Site Hire	455	
Sponsorship Income		455
Subscription / Membership Income	7,764	
Advertising income		2,800
Entry to gardens		1,991
Other Income	(1,790)	2,670
Plant sales	18,898	28,675
Wingecarribee Shire Council		6,000
Department of Social Services		5,000
Grant - Veolia Picnic Setting	8,148	
Playground	160,000	
Environmnet Program Natives	20,000	
Meandering Pathway	212,871	
JobKeeper subsidy	18,000	
NSW Government Grant	10,000	
Cash Boost Subsidy	11,690	
	<u>545,622</u>	<u>506,886</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

2020

2019

## Note 3: Cash assets

### Bank accounts:

- IMB Everyday Account	4,003	20,464
- SHBG Chris Webb	936	1,000
- SHBG Chris Blaxland	708	642
- SHBG Ross Stone	468	500
- SHBG Lyn Collingridge	699	500
- My Community Account - Savings	87,811	287,465
- My Community Account - Payroll	15,434	10,868
- General Account	27,707	56,487
- Appeals Account	292,790	28,547
- BDCU 777S90.4 - CharlotteW	3,074	1,812

### Other cash items:

- Cash on hand	300	300
	<u>433,929</u>	<u>408,585</u>

## Note 4: Receivables

### Current

Trade debtors	2,534	6,377
	<u>2,534</u>	<u>6,377</u>

## Note 5: Other Financial Assets

### Non-Current

### Shares in other companies - at cost

- Unlisted	10	10
	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



2020

2019

## Note 6: Other Assets

### Current

Prepayments	285	
	<u>285</u>	

### Non Current

Preliminary expenses	813	813
Less: accumulated amortisation		
	<u>813</u>	<u>813</u>

## Note 7: Property, Plant and Equipment

Buildings:		
- At cost	364,078	356,906
- Less: Accumulated depreciation	(17,174)	(13,894)
	<u>346,904</u>	<u>343,012</u>
Plant and equipment:		
- At cost	37,036	31,261
- Less: Accumulated depreciation	(18,380)	(10,957)
	<u>18,656</u>	<u>20,304</u>
Other plant and equipment:		
- At cost	420,684	164,060
- Less: Accumulated depreciation	(25,792)	(10,357)
	<u>394,892</u>	<u>153,703</u>
Other property, plant and equipment:		
- At cost	145,000	145,000
- Less: Accumulated depreciation		
	<u>145,000</u>	<u>145,000</u>
	<u>905,451</u>	<u>662,019</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

2020

2019

## Note 8: Intangible Assets

### Other intangibles:

- Water Rights - at cost	9,091	
	<u>9,091</u>	
	<u>9,091</u>	

## Note 9: Payables

### Unsecured:

- Trade creditors	6,680	2,062
	<u>6,680</u>	<u>2,062</u>
	<u>6,680</u>	<u>2,062</u>

## Note 10: Tax Liabilities

### Current

GST Payable	10,998	6,156
PAYG Withholding	10,990	10,072
	<u>21,988</u>	<u>16,228</u>

## Note 11: Provisions

### Current

Superannuation Payable	4,625	
	<u>4,625</u>	

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



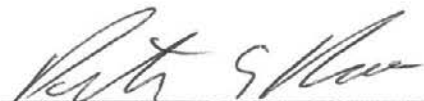
In accordance with a resolution of the directors of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, the directors declare that:

1. the financial statements and notes are in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001:
  - (a) comply with Accounting Standards described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the Corporations Regulations; and
  - (b) give a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.
2. in the directors' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.



Charlotte Webb  
Director



Peter Rowe  
Director

Dated: 3/11/20

In the opinion of the officers:

- a) the accounts give a true and fair view of all income and expenditure in respect to fundraising appeals;
- b) the statement of financial position gives a true and fair view of the state of the company with respect to fundraising appeals;
- c) the provisions of the Act, the regulations under the Act and the conditions attached to the fundraising authority have been complied with by the organisation; and
- d) the internal controls exercised by the organisation are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received and applied to the organisation from any of its fundraising appeals.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution by the directors' and is signed for and on behalf of the directors by:



Charlotte Webb (Director)



Peter Rowe (Director)

Date: 3/11/20



We have audited the financial report of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd (the Company), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

### **Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report**

The directors of the company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Corporations Act 2001 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The directors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial reports based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial reports. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the company's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### **Independence**

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001. We confirm that the independence declaration required by the Corporations Act 2001, which has been given to the directors of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of the auditor's report.

### **Basis for qualified opinion**

Cash donations and cash fundraising income are significant sources of revenue for the company. As is common for organisations of this type, it is not practicable for Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens to maintain an effective system of internal control over donations and other fundraising activities until their initial entry in the accounting records. Accordingly, as the evidence available to us regarding revenue from this source is limited, our audit procedures with respect to donations had to be restricted to the amounts recorded in the financial records. We therefore, are unable to express an opinion whether the cash donations and cash fundraising income the company obtained are complete.

### **Qualified opinion**

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the basis for qualified opinion paragraph, the financial report of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens is in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its performance for the year ended on that date;
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and the Corporations Regulations 2001;
- c) complying with Div 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

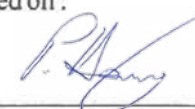
We also report that:

- a) the financial statements show a true and fair view of the financial result of fundraising appeals conducted during the year;
- b) the accounting and associated records have been properly kept during the year in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991, and the regulations; and
- c) money received as a result of fundraising appeals conducted during the year have been properly accounted for and applied in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the regulations.

### **Basis of accounting**

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purposes of fulfilling the directors financial reporting responsibilities under the Corporations Act 2001. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Signed on:



Peter Hassos

Date: 4/11/20



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Southern Highlands  
**Botanic Gardens**

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