

TAROONA NEIGHBOURHOOD GARDEN

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 27 MARCH 2023

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to begin my report by thanking the members of our Management Committee who give generously of their time and expertise, on a purely voluntary basis, and without whom the garden would not be the special place that it is. To Deirdre Brown, Margaret James, Christophe Marcant, David Coleman, Peter Lutz, Michael Asher and Mary Mansbridge, thank you very much. Nel Smit was also elected to the Management Committee at our last Annual General Meeting but stood down during the year.

We were fortunate however to retain Nel's skills as the coordinator of our compost making team, and along with her small but dedicated group, keep the compost preparation going. The team can always do with more help, so any members who would be interested in composting please contact Nel. She would love to hear from you I am sure.

The composting work can be frustrating at times and to assist the compost team the committee installed a large coloured sign on the side of the wooden waste bays, explaining in simple terms "the good, the bad and the ugly" of making compost. Immediately beside the waste bays we positioned a large Council green bin for the "bad and the ugly" along with a second bin near the side gate.

In addition it would be remiss of me not to mention the other small group of members who keep the grass mown, the garden beds repaired and maintained, the edges trimmed, the perimeter fruit trees maintained and the garbage bins put out. Thank you all. I know that these folks would always love more help, so if you are interested please let me know.

There have been a number of highlights during the year that I would like to acknowledge. Don't forget though that our monthly member's newsletter contains all the details of life in the garden and I would like to offer special thanks to our tireless Secretary, Deirdre Brown, for her work in putting the newsletters together, along with a myriad of other tasks that keep the garden functioning efficiently.

Early in the year the Management Committee responded to concerns raised by some members regarding the situation with dogs in the garden. We felt that the best way to gauge the feeling of all our members was to circulate a short survey seeking views on whether dogs should be banned or if there needed to be any form of restrictions.

The reaction from our members was wonderful. We received 32 responses, all of which were well considered and thoughtful. This was well over half our membership and we felt we were in a position to introduce a policy that would meet folks' concerns and was a fair compromise. The policy with regards to dogs in the garden now requires that dog owners install a stake within the boundary of their plot to which their dog in to be tethered on a short lead. Visitors to the garden will also be required to keep their dog on a short lead.

As I reported last year, we were extremely fortunate to receive two large grants through our local Federal MP, Andrew Wilkie. The first, for \$2900, is being used for the care and maintenance of our fruit trees and the purchase of tools and equipment needed for successful fruit tree maintenance. I must acknowledge the commitment of David Coleman in leading the small group of members who care for our fruit trees. Thank you David, and I know he would love to hear from any members who would be interested in helping in this work and at the same time learning a new skill.

The second, much larger grant, was for \$5232 for the repair, replacement and maintenance of our garden beds. As I am sure you have seen in the last week this work is well advanced and the new community beds are almost complete. This is in addition to the construction of a number of new members' beds and the repair and maintenance of others. Christophe Marcant has led this work and without his technical skills and management ability none of this work would have happened.

In addition to the work on the beds we have been extremely fortunate to have Kingborough Council assist us, at no cost, in levelling the central area between the community beds, prepare a level pathway from the lower gate and in the near future to lay crushed gravel. The genesis of this levelling was in an application we submitted to the Tasmanian Community Fund back in 2020. Bridget

Green spent many, many hours preparing this grant, which sadly was not successful.

The objective of this application was to improve accessibility and inclusion at the garden by constructing a central flat area and access pathway. We are confident that with the work of Christophe and his team and the assistance of Kingborough Council we shall soon have achieved that objective.

To prepare the access pathway we needed to move our worm farm. The farm is now located in the top corner of the garden just inside the gate, where it shares its new home with the pumpkin patch.

Thanks to the efforts of Deirdre Brown and Margaret James, we were able to secure a grant of \$500 from The Jane Goodall Foundation to enhance the corner of the garden that had been set aside for children. The aim of the project was to provide meaningful, safe and engaging activities for children. This involved the construction of a Mud Kitchen and surrounding garden beds. Thanks to the great work of Graeme Watt along with Deirdre and Margaret, the kitchen is a most popular addition to the garden.

In May, David Coleman organised a fruit tree care and maintenance workshop presented by Marcus Ragus, the head horticulturalist at the Spring Bay Mill Gardens. The event was attended by about 40 people, both garden members and neighbours and was a resounding success. We prepared notes of the workshop and these are available on the Growing Calendar page of our website.

Not all our activities went to plan sadly. We were forced to cancel our Spring Festival after the garden received over 80mm of rain in the days preceding the event. In particular I would like to thank Peter Lutz for all the work he did in preparing food for the festival only to be confronted with a sodden garden, which gave us no choice but to cancel.

The committee decided to host a BBQ/cake feast in December once the ground had dried out and we could thank all our members and supporters who have worked in the garden throughout the year.

Michael Lynch
President