

BGANZ ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

5.30pm, 8 October 2009

AGENDA ITEM 5: PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2008-09

A key achievement during the past 12 months has been the formal establishment of four Regional Groups within BGANZ. Following the necessary amendments to the BGANZ Constitution passed at the 2008 AGM, Council prepared in consultation with regional representatives the Rules under which the Regional Groups will operate. These administrative processes were completed in early 2009 and the four Regional Groups – New Zealand, Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria – legally came into effect on 1 April 2009. They have been successfully operating as informal groups for several years of course, but it is very pleasing now to see them having a formal status within BGANZ. The Regional Group Rules are available on the BGANZ website.

The New Zealand and Victorian Groups have each held well-attended meetings during the past six months. BGANZ NZ held a day-seminar entitled "Telling our stories" at Auckland Botanic Gardens in May at which speakers highlighted different ways in which we can engage with visitors to our gardens. In September the annual BGANZ Victoria Plants Forum was held in Ballarat, supported by the City of Ballarat and Ballarat Botanic Gardens, and over 130 people participated in a two-day meeting focused on "Conservation and collections". Conferences such as these provide invaluable opportunities for exchanging ideas and experiences and developing networks amongst regional and city gardens. The numbers of attendees and the wide range of gardens represented confirm the usefulness of the meetings, as well as the benefits of being a BGANZ member.

Membership has risen over the past 12 months and now totals 64 members. Thirty-seven of these are institutional (that is, garden) members, 17 are individual members, and 10 are associate members. This total is 10 more than at the last AGM, with the biggest increase (seven) being in institutional membership. Considering that there are over 120 public gardens in Australia and New Zealand, there is clearly ample scope for many more gardens and individuals to join. If you or your garden are not BGANZ members, please join straight away!

BGANZ has recently conducted an on-line survey open to both members and non-members to seek feedback about our activities, the benefits (or not) of membership, priorities for future professional development programs, and information about challenges being faced by botanic gardens. The results are still being analysed, but already it's clear that the survey has provided valuable data for Council to consider in planning BGANZ's future. Several key aspects of the survey results will be discussed at the 'future directions' workshop being held at the Congress on 9 October. I'm most grateful to the members of the small working group who designed and carried out the survey and are now analysing the results.

During the past year BGANZ has been a partner in the planning of a 'capacity-building' training course for staff from gardens in the Asia-Pacific region. Under the banner of BGANZ, the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and Botanic Gardens of Adelaide have been working with BGCI and the Singapore Botanic Gardens to organise a 15-day 'International Certificate in Botanic Gardens Management' which will be held at the Singapore Botanic Gardens next March. Course trainers will come from the organising partners, with funding provided by the partners, BGCI and philanthropic and

corporate sponsors. This is an important opportunity to provide our expertise and experience to assist the operations and development of Asia-Pacific gardens. More information about the course is available on the BGCI website.

Three issues of *The Botanic Garden* have been produced in the past year, and two issues of the New Zealand Group's newsletter. These publications are full of information and interest, and are our main means of communication with members and beyond. In fact the newsletters have a wide circulation because they are posted on the BGANZ website rather than being individually distributed and so reach many more people and places than the membership alone. An innovation starting with November's *Botanic Garden* will be themed issues – the first will deal with 'Water management in botanic gardens', followed by 'Arts and events in gardens' (March 2010) and 'Horticulture and zoos: interactions of plants and animals' (July 2010). I thank contributors to this year's issues and prospectively those who will be contributing over the next 12 months – please contact Brigitta Wimmer if you'd like to provide an article on one of these topics.

I thank Brigitta for her essential behind-the-scenes work as BGANZ's part-time Executive Officer during the past year, including her editing of *The Botanic Garden*. She's filled the role most ably after Virginia Berger's retirement last November and has kept BGANZ and Council functioning smoothly.

The two-year terms of appointment of Councillors expire at this AGM, and I'm most grateful for all the contributions made to BGANZ's progress by Councillors during this time. Under the BGANZ Constitution, Council comprises representatives elected or appointed by Regional Groups, other State gardens, and the Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens (CHABG). In accordance with the constitutional provisions, these various representatives have now been finalised for the incoming Council 2009-11.

The incoming Council has elected office-holders for the next two years, commencing after the AGM. Two Councillors are retiring – Trevor Christensen (South Australia) and Helen Paulsen (Queensland) – and I thank them both for the considerable contributions they've made to BGANZ and its activities, including Helen's leadership of the organising committee for the Mackay Congress. I welcome new Councillors Tim Entwisle (CHABG), Dale Arvidsson (Queensland) and Michael Anlezark (South Australia); Mark Webb has retired as one of the two CHABG representatives, but remains as the Western Australian representative. The other Councillors are continuing. I am honoured to have been re-elected by Council as your President; Tim Entwisle has been elected Australian Vice-President and Alan Matchett as New Zealand Vice-President, and Anne Duncan as Secretary/Treasurer and Public Officer. Your Council looks forward with enthusiasm to serving BGANZ and its membership over the next two years!

Philip Moors
President, BGANZ
October 2009