

## **BOTANIC GARDENS AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND INC.**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ALBURY, 22 OCTOBER 2011**

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- Membership at present totals 91, comprising 51 institutional (gardens), 13 associate and 27 individual memberships. This is an increase of seven members since October 2010.
- BGANZ Council prepared a Business Plan for 2009-2011 and significant progress has been made on each of the goals. Highlights include:
  - Improvements to the website, including a functional events calendar and regional network sites being updated directly by regions; functionality established for a member's-only area; and provision of a membership directory.
  - Regular monthly updates from the Executive Officer on what is happening in the world of botanic gardens.
  - Two specialist professional networks commenced: the Botanical Records Officer Network (BRON) and the Botanic Gardens Education Network (BGEN)
  - A Council working group on staff professional development in botanic gardens has been formed, a survey undertaken and a discussion paper prepared for Council to consider for implementation in 2011-12.
  - The BGANZ communications toolkit has been developed to provide tangible resources to help members improve their garden advocacy skills. The toolkit will be launched at the Congress and a copy is available to each member.
  - Initial discussions have been held with the American Public Gardens Association about developing partnership links.
- Three issues of *The Botanic Garden* were published, with themes of community gardening, gardens and tourism, and children's gardens. BGANZ New Zealand distributed two issues of its newsletter, and BGANZ Queensland issued its first newsletter.
- BGANZ Victoria held a Collections Planning Workshop at the University of Melbourne in May, and BGANZ NZ two regional meetings in Wellington (November 2010) and New Plymouth (March 2011) and a Collections Management Seminar at Dunedin Botanic Garden in September 2011.
- BGANZ NZ is represented on the recently re-structured Board of the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture; Jeremy Hawker (Christchurch BG) has taken up the position. BGANZ NZ and the RNZIH are collaborating on the NZ Plant Collections Register project.
- 2010 and 2011 brought a series of natural disasters for many BGANZ gardens. The two severe earthquakes in Christchurch not only devastated the city but also badly affected the botanic gardens, mainly through ground liquefaction; in Queensland the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens lost 400+ trees from Cyclone Ului over a 7-hour period, and several botanic gardens and their communities suffered extensive flood damage from

Cyclone Yasi, with Emerald and Townsville gardens worst hit. Several BGANZ VIC gardens were affected by floods and torrential rain at much the same time. The garden clean-ups for most of these disasters may have largely finished, but the long-term effects to the living collections and visitation will be felt for some time.

- The BGANZ QLD executive had meetings with the Minister and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation to explore relationships between BGANZ QLD and various government departments for community benefits. The Department of Primary Industry & Forestry has donated the 'Smart Gardener' training program to BGANZ QLD. This program trains volunteers to deliver simple, sustainable horticulture in a 'backyard' situation to the wider community. Smart Gardener was successfully used at the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens, providing valuable outreach for the now 'smart educated' Friends and staff. Plans are in train to seek further funding to deliver training to key botanic gardens to develop their own programs in 2012.
- The BGANZ NZ Scholarship was launched in May to support professional development and increase the collective expertise within NZ public gardens. The scholarship fund is available to enable overseas and local experts to give specialist seminars and workshops to member gardens, and to assist gardens staff undertaking professional development overseas and presenting their findings at a BGANZ seminar or conference.
- The 2013 BGANZ Congress will be hosted by Dunedin Botanic Garden in association with the BGCI World Botanic Gardens Congress. The two conferences are part of the Garden's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.
- I thank Brigitta Wimmer, our Executive Officer, and all members of the BGANZ Council for their many contributions to the organisation during 2011, and especially acknowledge the work over the past six years of retiring Council members Mark Fountain, Mark Webb, and Annette Zealley. This is also my final AGM on Council, and it has been a privilege to serve BGANZ members, the Council and Australasian botanic gardens since 2005. I wish the members and office-holders of the incoming Council continuing success in their development of BGANZ.

*Philip Moors*  
*BGANZ President*