



Website: <http://www.mckaygardens.com.au/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofMcKayGardens>

Post: Friends of the McKay Gardens, PO Box 154, Sunshine, VIC 3020

Email: contact@mckaygardens.com.au

Twitter: @McKayGardens

Heritage Garden Picnic Edition

Welcome to the 2nd Special *Heritage Garden Picnic Edition* of the Friends of the HV McKay Gardens Newsletter.

On Saturday, 25th March 2017, the Friends' Group organised a Heritage Garden Picnic to let the residents of Sunshine and others enjoy the gardens while listening to live entertainment and activities for children throughout the afternoon.

The weather, although a little humid, was good for all the activities, with not too much sun and warm temperatures. A wide range of visitors from all age groups came along with people representing the diversity of Sunshine's ethnic community - reflected in the range of music, dance and activities on show.

Once again, Speroulla Christodoulou, was the driving force behind the Picnic, organising entertainers and stall holders and arranging Council permission, insurance and logistics for the event.

Three new members joined the Friends' Group (one renewing from a previous membership) and raffles and competitions were held to promote the Gardens. Another raffle was conducted by the Sunshine Scouts who also held a sausage sizzle.



The Heritage Garden Picnic, once again, confirmed the benefits of the Gardens as a place where the local community can relax, have fun and enjoy the Gardens - as others have done for the past 100 years.

Friends of the HV McKay Gardens Committee

Catherine McDonald (President), Helen Reid (Vice-President), Speroulla Christodoulou, Ros Savio, Michelle Edwards, Robyn Flett, Melinda Mockridge, Angela Ganley, Russell Smith

Inside This Issue

Introduction	1
Organising Committee	1
Program of events	2
Entertainment tent	2
Kid's Corner	3
Fitness corner	3
Heritage tree	4
Maintaining the Gardens for the future	4



Come to the next free event

6.30-8.30pm, Tuesday 25 April 2017

Albion 'EcoLiving' Community Centre

61A Selwyn Street, Albion (in Selwyn Park)

'Voices from the HV McKay Memorial Gardens'

As part of the Australian Heritage Festival, join us to hear the oral histories of the Gardens recounted by people who worked, played and married in Australia's oldest remaining industrial gardens. Their recorded stories will echo through the auditorium as projected pictures bring their memories to life - the migrant family's wedding, the young man who enjoyed a nightcap or two with friends in the gardens after a local dance not ready to go home - and more! These stories span almost ten decades, reflecting the way we were, and are now. Life in the Gardens unearthed.

The Australian Heritage Festival is supported through funding from the Australian Government's National Trusts Partnership Program



The Program of Events

The Heritage Garden Picnic was spread over six locations in the Gardens from 12.00 noon to 4.00pm

- *The Entertainment Tent* - with music, dancing and singing by community groups
- *The KIDS Corner* - with games, competitions, activities and face-painting for kids by Fairy Caitlin
- *The FITNESS Corner* - with soccer, baseball, lacrosse, tai-chi and barefoot lawn bowls
- *The HERITAGE Tree* - with a heritage photo display, self-guided walk, and information desk
- *Community Stalls* - Friends' Group, Sunshine Scouts Sausage Sizzle, Coffee Cube, Essential Oils Man



Legless Lizards opening the Heritage Garden Picnic



Samoan Community Leadership Network performance under the leadership of Patrick Aumua

The Entertainment Tent

The entertainment tent was the focus of the musical activities of the day.



The entertainment began with music from the 'Legless Lizards' (left) with sax, guitars and drums, followed by Bush Dancing provided by Folkus and then dancing from 'Veseli-Makedonki' (the Macedonian Senior Citizens Womens Dancing Group - above).



Later Corey Snoek and Jim Power gave a performance with Fiddle and Banjo (above).





The KIDS Corner, run by Gardens' Friend, Michelle, was a great hit with kids and visitors alike! Fairy Caitlin did a wonderful job painting faces of lots of young fairies and Origami lessons were also available. Prizes, including 40 JB HiFi vouchers and special seed packs, were given for making paper planes, for guessing the number of lollies in two enormous Jars, and for the best face masks made. Everyone was kept on their toes chasing beach balls across the green lawns of the Gardens.



The FITNESS Corner began with Tai Chi lessons by the Sunshine Leisure Centre and then Junior Soccer was provided by the Innovation Hub. After lunch, Junior Baseball was sponsored by Glenn Letts from Sunshine Baseball Club, and Junior Lacrosse was demonstrated by the Footscray Lacrosse Club. The day finished with Barefoot Bowls organised by Garry from Sunshine RSL, that was held on the site of the original Lawn Bowling Green in the Gardens.



Michelle enjoying Kids' Corner!



Lawn bowling



Fairy Caitlin creating some youthful artworks



Fun for kids with bubble wands, and painting pictures



Lots of colouring and drawing to do!





The HERITAGE Tree provided a focus for information on the history of the Gardens and an extensive display of historical photos of the Gardens. Ros Savio and Helen Reid answered questions from visitors about why the Gardens were established and the challenges that have faced the Gardens over the last century - particularly in times of drought when it has been essential to keep up water to all the heritage plants and trees. The HERITAGE Tree also marked the start of the self-guided Oak Walk that let visitors find some of the significant places in history of the Gardens.



Ros Savio and Helen Reid providing information on the history of the Gardens under the Oak Tree



Fun chasing beach balls around the Gardens

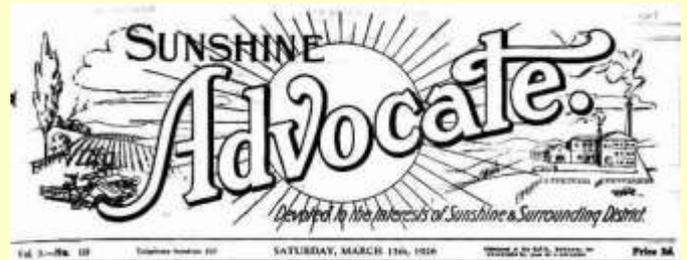


Maintaining the Gardens for the Future

A large part of the Friends' focus over the last decade has been to lobby Brimbank Council to acknowledge the unique status of the Gardens - not an ordinary community park or reserve like Buckingham Reserve or Selwyn Park that have native plantings in deep mulch that can be maintained with regular mowing and hard pruning. The HV McKay Gardens, needs special skills to preserve the heritage fabric of the space using light mulching, careful pruning, regular watering, and caring for trees and their roots by limiting heavy traffic vehicle traffic.

This financial year has seen the maintenance budget increase that has led to a new irrigation system operating and a part-time gardener overseeing care and maintenance. We are still awaiting a formalised Management Plan from Council that will let the Gardens flourish. Interestingly, these challenges are not new! An article in the *Sunshine Advocate* from 13 March 1926 (p. 5) sounds eerily familiar.

Michelle Edwards



The inspector of the Metropolitan Board of Works on Wednesday informed the Curator of the Sunshine Gardens that the use of the Garden sprinklers would have to cease forthwith. The curator naturally takes a great pride in keeping the lawns in the pink of condition, which means green in this instance, and he was much perturbed at this drastic ukase of the powers that be. However, when the inspector was asked his authority for his stern embargo on the water sprinklers, he cited the official notice of the Board of Works. The curator mildly explained that the Board of Works regulations did not apply to the Sunshine gardens, but the inspector said that was all nonsense, or words to that effect, that it applied to all gardens public or private in the metropolitan district, and that no favored individual, committee or corporation could claim exemption.

He proceeded to lay the law down with the weighty reasoning and stern frown of a High Court judge, when the curator explained that, he considered the Metropolitan Board and its regulation were ultra vires in this case at least, as the garden was watered wholly and solely from a private reservoir and had nothing whatever to do with the public water supply. This explanation was so unexpected that the inspector gasped, but it turned out to be the truth. Not only does Mr. H. V. McKay's dam provide water for the gardens, but at the recent flour mill fire it was used as the only source of fluid to cope with the conflagration. However, all's well in the Sunshine Gardens and the sprinkler still hangs high.