

Newsletter

SPRING 2018



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

Email: contact@mckaygardens.com.au

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

Twitter: @McKayGardens

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

Registration No A0050996B

News from the President

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous President, Speroulla Christodoulou, for her fantastic efforts. Speroulla has “cracked” the Festival success code and I don’t think I know anyone harder working. I would also like to thank the other members of the committee for their efforts both in the previous year and a special thank you to those members standing for positions on the committee this year. The work of the Friends could not proceed without the hard work and passion of these people. We are an eclectic but happy bunch.

Progress restoring the Gardens is expected to proceed in leaps and bounds this year, thanks to the establishment of the Strategic Management Group overseeing the implementation of the Management Plan. This is already beginning to have results with the engagement of other sections of community (Sunshine Business Association) and other sections of the Council helping to promote and protect the Gardens.

This year will also be the year of the volunteer and the Friends hope to focus on volunteer recruitment. To that end we will be offering a range of opportunities for people wishing to be engaged in activities related to the Gardens. Being actively involved in the Gardens not only connects people with the beauty of nature and the history of the region but it also brings us into contact with other members of the community, it's good for mind and body. We hope to be offering activities that our members will find enticing, and we are always looking for new ideas, so feel free to offer suggestions.

The only dark cloud on the horizon is the housing development on the old George Cross site adjacent to the Gardens. However, it is still unclear what impact this will have on the Gardens. We will keep you informed.

Looking forward to the coming year.

Catherine McDonald
President.

Inside This Issue

News from the President	1
The new Committee	1
Chaplin Reserve Development	2
Hellebores – Winter Roses, Spring cleaning!	3
The Management Plan	3
A Spring Show, A Gardens Sketch, Meetings	4



The New Committee

At the Annual General Meeting on 4 August 2018, elections were held for the Officers and Committee, with the following elected:

President: Catherine McDonald

Vice-President: Roslyn Savio

Secretary: Michelle Edwards

Treasurer: Speroulla Christodoulou

General Committee Members: Russell Smith (Newsletter); Melinda Mockridge (Media); Robyn Flett; Angela Ganley; Helen Reid



Chaplin Reserve Development

Since Chaplin Reserve, immediately to the south of the HV McKay Memorial Gardens, was rezoned to a Residential Growth Zone with a Development Plan Overlay (DPO) following the Panel Hearing last year, the developers, Sunshine City Developments Pty Ltd, have pressed on and have lodged a Development Plan (DP) with Brimbank City Council for approval. The Friends have been provided with a copy of this Plan, although it not certain whether there will be an opportunity to lodge any formal comment.

The DP, needless to say, takes full advantage of the Concept Plan which formed part of the Schedule 8 to Clause 43.04 of the DPO, the set of requirements and conditions for the new zone to be complied with when being developed. The building envelopes and height limits have been fully utilised, yielding 265 apartments and 85 townhouses. Along the Gardens boundary, called the interface, there is a height limit of 11m (3 storeys, higher elsewhere), with a set back from the boundary of 5m as required.

One of the provisions of Schedule 8 of particular interest to the Friends is the requirement for an Open Space and Landscape Plan. This is to show a 'clear delineation' between the Gardens and the site to include additional tree planting, a public path to connect to existing paths and front fences to be no higher than 1.2 m. The latter two points have been partially addressed, although a potential path link has been ignored and tree planting is limited (see later), but the clear delineation has been somewhat blurred, to the detriment of the Gardens. The existing high chain mesh fence has been removed with nothing to replace it with except intermittent concrete blocks, which show people sitting on them with their feet potentially in the Gardens' garden beds and allows people to bleed into the gardens through garden beds, etc whenever. This is unacceptable - the existing fence should be replaced with a lower chain mesh fence or similar, with openings only where there are specific path connections so the edge of the Gardens is preserved.. Furthermore, the interface for the western third of the boundary effectively becomes the road reserve of the entry road, so does not really read as an interface.

The 'additional tree planting' along the interface in front of the building envelope is located in within private property so could easily be cut down and become non-existent. The complicated mathematics set out to prove that the development has a 30% tree canopy cover is erroneous, as it would seem that the calculation of the tree canopy area includes parts of the canopies of 36 trees that overhand the surrounding streets, paths and railway lines, not the site.



Therefore there are not enough trees. (The tree species selected are also questionable as being not sufficiently robust for the site conditions and with the exception of one, unfortunately have no link to the species in the Gardens.)

The entry road, which was point of contention at the panel hearing as it had the potential to excise a small corner from the Gardens at the south west corner, seems to have been resolved so that there is now a signalised intersection to serve the development and no restrictions to the entry to the church car park. However the DP states there are conditions imposed by VicRoads, which are not stated. The road entry is comparatively narrow and uninviting, with the distant view only to the side of a townhouse, the proposed entry treatments being very low key. A suggestion to relieve potential congestion at peak times and improve visual appeal, would be to widen the road for outgoing traffic to two lanes, one to turn left and the other to turn right and stagger the alignment of the townhouses and/or turn the corner townhouses to face the street.

Generally the DP relies heavily on the HV McKay Memorial Gardens; there is no provision for bicycle paths, apart from the local road - the site utilises the South Walk paths in the Gardens to provide the site's connections to the pedestrian bridge in particular, a ridiculous proposal. Public open space is minimal with a pathetic hard paved children's playground squashed into the northeast corner, barely visible to most of the dwellings on site. Others may have other comments and/or objections, and are urged to view the DP should it be made available for public consultation. (As an aside, the important aviation fuel line is shown on the wrong location on two plans.)

Hellebores – Winter Roses

Winter rose is one of the many names given to plants in the Helleborus group.

They have attractive leathery leaves, often with spiny borders, and pretty, open, cup-shaped flowers that look a bit like single roses (hence the name) in shades of pink, maroon and cream. The Corsican hellebore produces pendent, bowl-shaped, beautiful green flowers.

Hellebores flower from late-winter to early spring. They will tolerate full sun to almost full shade. They're hardy and rarely troubled by pests and diseases, they will self-seed readily all over the garden. They grow in most conditions, but thrive in well-drained, humus-rich soil, out of direct sunlight. They can handle dry periods, which makes them ideal for use as ground covers under established trees.

Catherine McDonald



The Brimbank Gardener, Paul Frigo, has resumed his role looking after the Gardens after a short absence during which some plants suffered damage that Paul is fixing. The Spring show of bulbs has been wonderful thanks to the efforts of Brimbank Council, members of the Friends and Volunteers who participated in the bulb planting day in April.



Spring cleaning!

A new Committee member on the Friends Group, Neil Head, who is also President of the Albion and Ardeer Community Club Inc and Vice-President of the Kororoit Creek Neighbourhood House Association Inc, has been keeping a close eye on the state of the Gardens - particularly along the 'Straight Six' pathway. Neil has continued to notify the Council of broken glass bottles and other rubbish that often accumulates over the weekend, and which needs to be regularly collected. Thanks to Neil for reporting this to the Council!



The Management Plan

The Friends have continued to assist Brimbank Council in developing the long-overdue Management Plan for the Gardens, re-writing sections and attempting to inform the plan with our knowledge and the expertise we have on the Committee.

A Management Group has been set up for the Gardens and has met twice. There does not appear to be any money set aside for the 'heritage' activities outlined in the Management Plan, and the Friends remain concerned that until this is addressed the Plan cannot be effectively implemented.

The Friends have made a number of submissions to Council, including submissions on the latest budget and on the Brimbank Tourism Strategy. Individual members have also made submissions on the Budget and the Brimbank Heritage Strategy. We have given content for the Brimbank Environmental Booklet.

Melinda Mockridge

A Spring Show

Photos of Spring flowers in the Gardens in August 2018!



A Gardens Sketch

Friends' Group member, Angela Ganley's partner Simon Clark, put pen and ink to paper and produced this lovely sketch of the Presbyterian Church in the Gardens.



Meetings

Meetings of the Friends are held at 7.00pm at the Sunshine Presbyterian Church Hall, 120 Anderson Road, Sunshine every second month as follows:

2018 - 25 September, 27 November

2019 - 22 January, 26 March, 28 May, 23 July, 24 September, 26 November

Other meetings are held as required.

New members are always welcome!



The annual subscription is just \$10.00, and you can join by contacting the Secretary, Michelle at:
 Email: contact@mckaygardens.com.au
 Post: Friends of the McKay Gardens
 PO Box 154, Sunshine, VIC 3020

or by sending your name, address, phone and email with a cheque for \$10.00 payable to:
 Friends of the HV McKay Memorial Gardens c/- PO
 Box 154 Sunshine VIC 3020

or send an email and electronic funds transfer to:
Name: Friends of the McKay Memorial Gardens
Bank: Westpac; **BSB** 033-085; **Account** 385640