



## President's Report

One of the fascinating things about the Friends' nucleus of management group is that each person comes from a personal interest away from Sunshine, or even away from gardens, but drawn to it by the wealth of history that exists in Sunshine, and the history of the H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens, in particular. It's the glue that holds us together.

Recently, our founder Catherine McDonald, who has a background as tutor, lecturer, and teacher, gave an excellent lecture about some famous worldwide gardens and the management of them, comparing and studying that special thing that makes them good gardens, popular gardens, and mostly old gardens that don't change.

Catherine eventually brought us back to the McKay Gardens and the hidden treasure we have here. We learned some lessons from that lecture: one was to recognise that we are inward-looking when it comes to setting these events up and need to share them with other like-minded groups and important people. Catherine set us thinking.

As Catherine subtly pointed out, the McKay gardens themselves lack the character that is displayed by the famous gardens of Europe, and one thing we as their Friends need to develop is some ideas for how to give the gardens a character that sets them apart from others.

Once the gardens were a showcase for the head gardener's passion: the growing and raising of Chrysanthemums for exhibition. Now, we as Friends, struggle to perceive them as potentially great gardens and cannot recommend to their owner/minders, the City of Brimbank, how to rectify that.

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Perhaps what is needed is a focus on one featured plant or tree, or colour, one that isn't seen in other public gardens. Perhaps it is the lack of art, or decor. Can you put your finger on it, that missing factor? Got an opinion? Let us know.

**Helen Reid, President.**

## 'Like Us' on Facebook

You can share any items of interest with other friends on our Facebook page

Go to

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-the-McKay-Gardens/808202102530759>

## Heritage Week Lecture

On the 21st of April this year I was pleased to give a public talk as part of Heritage Week on the topic of heritage gardens. While we were few in number, the hardy souls who attended enjoyed themselves with tea and cakes (and ANZAC biscuits) afterward.



The lecture addressed the relationship between the international treaty and standards for Heritage Gardens (ICOMOS) and the different kinds of heritage gardens, the ways in which those gardens can be read historically and the issues and pressures that such gardens face.

From the very large to the very small and from the ancient to the relatively young, gardens can tell us a great deal about the culture that created them. My lecture sought to illuminate some of these connections, their relationship to our own H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens and to suggest perhaps a less parochial approach to understanding and valuing our horticultural heritage.

Extracts from the lecture will soon be available on the Friend's Facebook page.

Special thanks to Speroulla Christodoulou for assistance with the power point, our President, Helen Reid for her introduction and Roslyn Savio for the Anzac biscuits!

**Catherine McDonald**  
Vice President



## Meetings

Members, and others who are interested, are welcome to attend our meetings to plan and to discuss the gardens.

We meet in the Presbyterian Church Hall, Anderson Road, on the first Saturday of every second month, from 10:00am to 11:30am.

**REMAINING MEETINGS 2015**  
**10-11.30am SATURDAY**

**1<sup>st</sup> August**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> October**  
**5<sup>th</sup> December**

## Picnic in the Gardens

Despite the postponement to 2nd May due to inclement weather on Anzac Day, the Friends "Heritage Garden Picnic" was a fun filled, sunny event.

Scheduled to coincide with the National Trust Heritage Festival 2015 the aim was to share our pride in the gardens, and have some entertaining activities to encourage others to use the Gardens and understand their history.



1 Secretary Melinda Mockridge

Four new members signed up on the day, and there was lots of interest in the heritage talk given under the large 100 year old Oak tree which Speroulla gave regularly throughout the afternoon. Old photographs made the stories come to life and committee members continued the narration with people who wanted to know more about the history of the Gardens and Sunshine Harvester Works.

**HV McKay Gardens**  
**PICNIC**  
 120 Anderson Rd, Sunshine  
**SAT 2nd MAY**



**1pm - 4pm**

PACK A PICNIC LUNCH & A BLANKET  
 MUSIC, GAMES, PRIZES, FACE PAINTING  
[www.mckaygardens.org](http://www.mckaygardens.org)

Informal Heritage talks will be given by the Friends throughout the afternoon and self-guided heritage walks will be available

**Douglas Kay 9312 6944**

estate agent 280 Hampshire Road SUNSHINE

[ABCRealestate.com.au](http://ABCRealestate.com.au)

Many children enjoyed games and activities with one lucky child winning the paper plane throwing competition and taking home a Village Roadshow Kids Pack and others winning jars of jellybeans for guessing the correct number.

Fairy Caitlin was the star of the event, and we thank her for all her work, particularly in promoting the Picnic and making so many beautiful smaller fairies as well! Fairy Caitlin entertained the children with whimsical stories and magic tricks much to their delight.



We would like to thank Sunshine Business Association, Douglas Kay Real Estate, Independent Signs, Officeworks Maribyrnong, Bunnings Sunshine and Brimbank City Council for their contributions....

## Picnic in the Gardens... cont...

Thanks also to Ros Savio for a much improved 'Oak Walk' guide which will be very useful for other events in the future. A casual stroll around the gardens, the Oak Walk highlighted special trees, historical markers and points of interest.



Due to its success, we hope we can make the Heritage Garden Picnic an annual event with multicultural choir, craft making, food carts and many more family activities next year.

**Speroulla Christodoulou - Treasurer**  
**Melinda Mockridge - Secretary**



## Future Direction of the Gardens

The Friends now have a new council contact, Christopher Cook, the Open Space Co-ordinator in the Urban Design Department.

Christopher kindly met a number of Friends in the Gardens in April, where the irrigation project was discussed, as well as a wider vision for the Gardens.

The Friends are concerned that the existing management guidelines, prepared for the Gardens in 1994, are now sadly out of date and a new vision is required. Christopher was supportive of this, so we look forward to providing input to a new management plan in the future to ensure that the Garden's heritage values are maintained, while at the same time they provide a valuable open space resource for residents.

In the short term, however, Christopher organised a team from the Green Army to undertake some intensive maintenance work before our recent picnic day, which was most welcome. He has also promised that another four seats will be installed along the 'Straight Six' pathway in the short term and that trees recently lost due to drought and storms will be replaced. The Friends are currently preparing a plan of these, and are also hoping to include a few tree replacements for those long gone but were present in 1945, specifically along the South Walk.

*Read Christopher's introduction letter on Page 6...*

## Irrigation Update + Weed and Care Days

It is good news that Brimbank Council has confirmed that the irrigation project for the Gardens will go ahead in its entirety, having secured the appropriate finances.

However, because of delays in awarding the project to the contractor, and subsequent delays by the contractor as they complete other projects, the project will now commence in early June.

Completion is expected in August 2015 and the Gardens will remain accessible throughout the installation process. Hopefully there will not be too much damage. The council gardeners have already lifted a number of gazania plants for nursing at the depot, to be replaced after the irrigation works are completed. The same is expected to be done with the rows of lamb's ears, so they can be replaced later.



During the construction time, the Friends' Weed and Care Days will be able to continue, on the 19th June, 17th July and 21st August.

These Weed and Care Days, attended by a number of the Friends, have proved to be very beneficial to the Gardens, assisting in removal of rubbish, deadheading plants, weeding and pruning, etc and generally helping the Gardens to look more like a Garden than a park.

The gardeners from the council are often in attendance and do some of the heavier work at our request, and take away the rubbish etc, and are happy to receive suggestions about the next task they should tackle in the Gardens. So the Weed and Care Days are a joint effort between the council and the Friends.

Therefore if any new Friends have a spare hour or two on the third Friday of the month between 10am and 12 noon and would like some gentle exercise, you would be most welcome to join us!

We will also be having one our annual community planting days on a Saturday morning in September with a council BBQ, so if you can't make it on a Friday but would still like to help out, then you are invited to come to this event. We will keep you posted on the actual date.

**Roslyn Savio - Friends Member**



## Meet Christopher Cook

Our new Brimbank Council contact was kind enough to send us this introduction:

My name is Christopher Cook and I am your designated Council contact. I am a Landscape Architect with over 10 years' experience and also a qualified horticulturalist.

Prior to Brimbank, I worked in London leading the team to develop parks, open spaces and tree services. I was fortunate to work on several heritage gardens in my time over there including Southwark Park, Peckham Rye Park, Dulwich Gardens and Belair Park, which was a landscape designed by Capability Brown. These parks especially had very passionate friends groups and it was great to work with them and their passion to continually improve the landscape.

On returning to Australia I lead the Parks team in Wellington Shire where I had the opportunity to improve the Sale Botanic Gardens through several capital improvements and restructuring the service to provide a full time presence in such an important landscape. I am now fortunate enough to work at Brimbank which has a great landscape in HV MacKay and I look forward to working with you to continually improve the gardens.

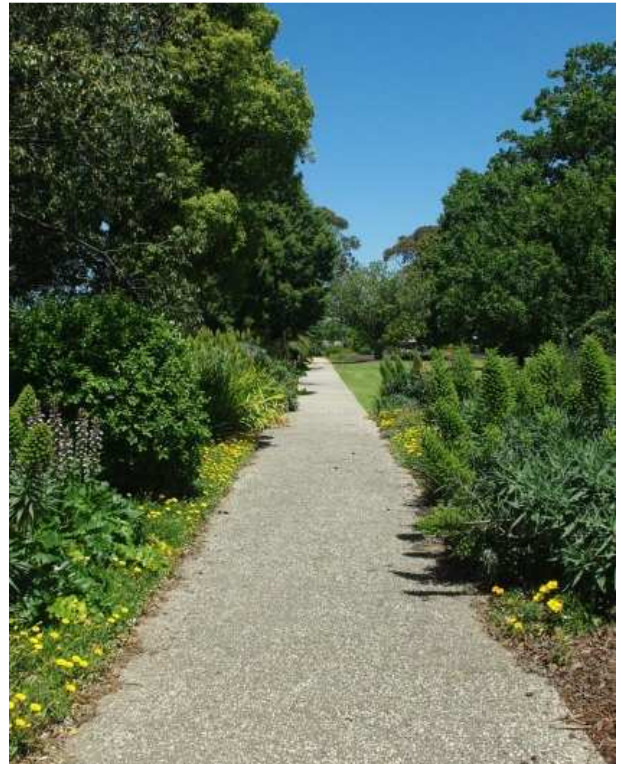
**Christopher Cook - Brimbank Council**

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### *Why not join us?*

New members are always welcome!  
The annual subscription is just \$5.00, and you can join by contacting the Secretary,  
Melinda

Mob: 0498 708 326 or Email:  
mckaygardens@bigpond.com



## Feedback appreciated

In order to plan future events in the Gardens the Committee of Friends welcome feedback about the 'Heritage Week Lecture' given by Vice President Catherine MacDonald at Visy Cares Hub on Tuesday 21st April from 6.30pm to 8.30pm, and the 'Picnic in the Gardens' held 1-4pm Saturday 2nd May.

Were these events at a convenient time for members? If you were unable to attend let us know why, and how we can improve our communication with members.

We also welcome suggestions for other events.

mckaygardens@bigpond.com

Thanks!

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