



Corymbia maculata Spotted Gum and
Macrozamia communis Burrawang



South East NSW Group

Newsletter 200

October 2023

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For your diary:

Next meeting,

November 4th

Garden visit Joan Lynch's
garden and bushland Narooma

See page 2

Future meetings

December 2nd

Latest news on Isopogons and
Petrophiles Phil Trickett and
Catriona Bate at Lesley and
Norm Hulands Moruya Garden.
Celebratory Pizza lunch.
Plant Swap

February 3rd 2024

2024 Annual General Meeting

Details on these events will be
presented in the newsletter
closer to the day.

Dear Members,

I am unable to give you a weather report this month as the weather changes every day. We have had a small amount of rain that has freshened the foliage of the plants and given us hope. There have also been fires, heat and storms, so I hope everyone has found shelter in tough times.

With all this going on nature still delights and surprises us. This group has been enjoying bushwalks and wanders, either through the monthly organised activity or with the newly formed SE walking group. Members visited Burrewarra Point during the week for a pleasant walk along the cliffs. Our youngest member has been joining in on these walks (6 months old Millie), and it is wonderful to have a spread of different generations joining in.



Cymbidium suave Burrewarra Point

Work on the **Proteaceae Project** is continuing and the plants are growing. **Our next working bee will be held on Friday 27th October.** Please contact Di if you wish to join this group as I can add you to the list and arrange for an induction to the site. This is necessary prior to joining a working bee as a new member.

The committee is due to meet soon and we will be planning for the activities next year. If you have any ideas of places to go or interesting activities, please make contact with someone from the committee. We look forward to hearing from you.

That's all for now, Di.

Next Meeting:

Saturday 4th November 2023,

Property of Joan Lynch, 660 Wagonga Scenic Drive Narooma

Arrive by 10.00 a.m. for a social morning tea, then around 10.30 a.m. Joan will lead members around part of her 100 acre forest

An introduction to her garden by Joan Lynch

First—a disclaimer. There is no GARDEN.

What we have is 100 acres of forest, mostly untouched, except for logging in the 1890's - early 1900's.

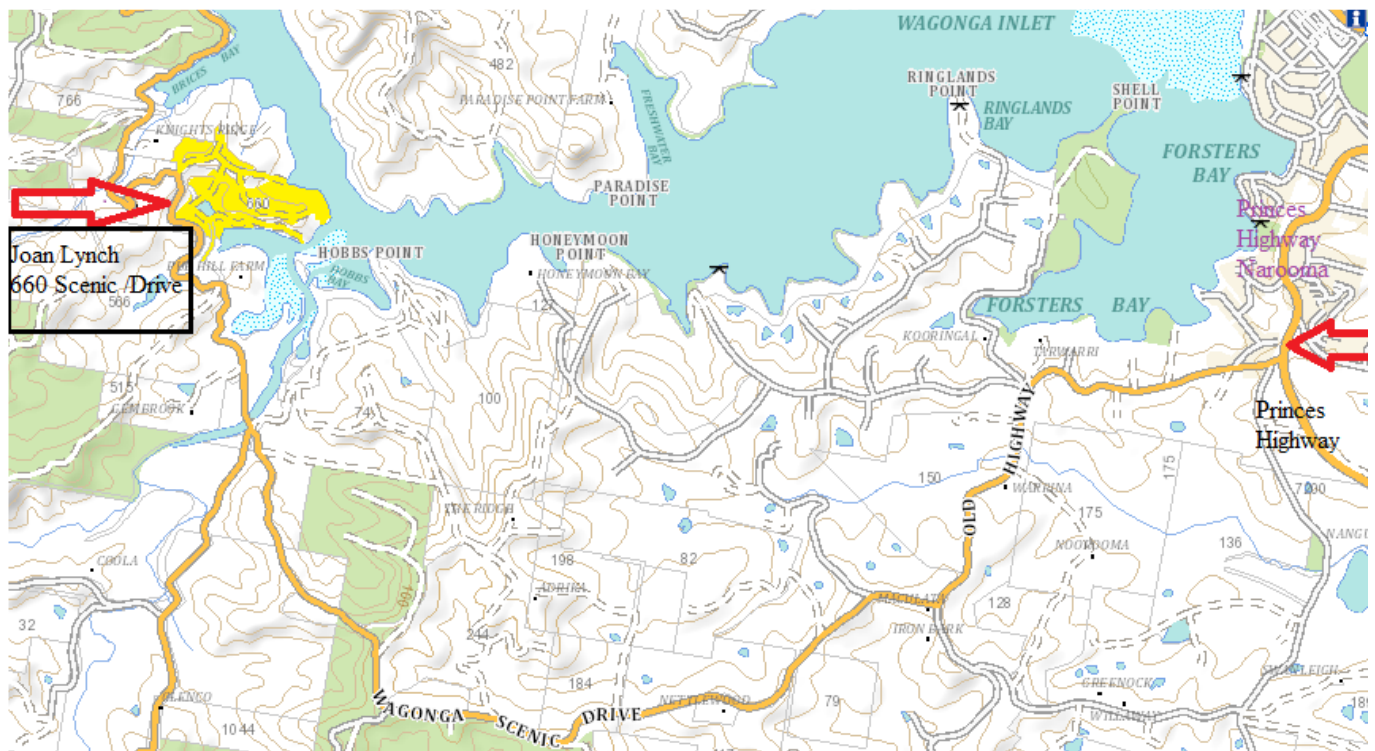
Wagonga Scenic Drive zig-zags through our land, dividing it into four sections, but we can access 50 acres that form a promontory jutting into Wagonga Inlet.

The soil is poor—being a shallow layer, setting on decomposed Ordovician shale - and steep, dropping from the 50 metre contour at our front gate to sea level on the waterfront. As it is unsuitable for clearing there remains an intact example of Wagonga Inlet flora, including quite a few different Eucalypts.

We built a house near the water and have a huge dam almost a kilometre away. A road that roughly follows the 10 metre contour above our southern shore joins the two. On our block we have identified over 100 different plants and during late spring many of those growing along our road come into flower.

So our plan is to ramble along and admire them, and see how many we can identify.

We can muster up enough chairs, so just bring lunch, wear stout shoes and don't forget the insect repellent.

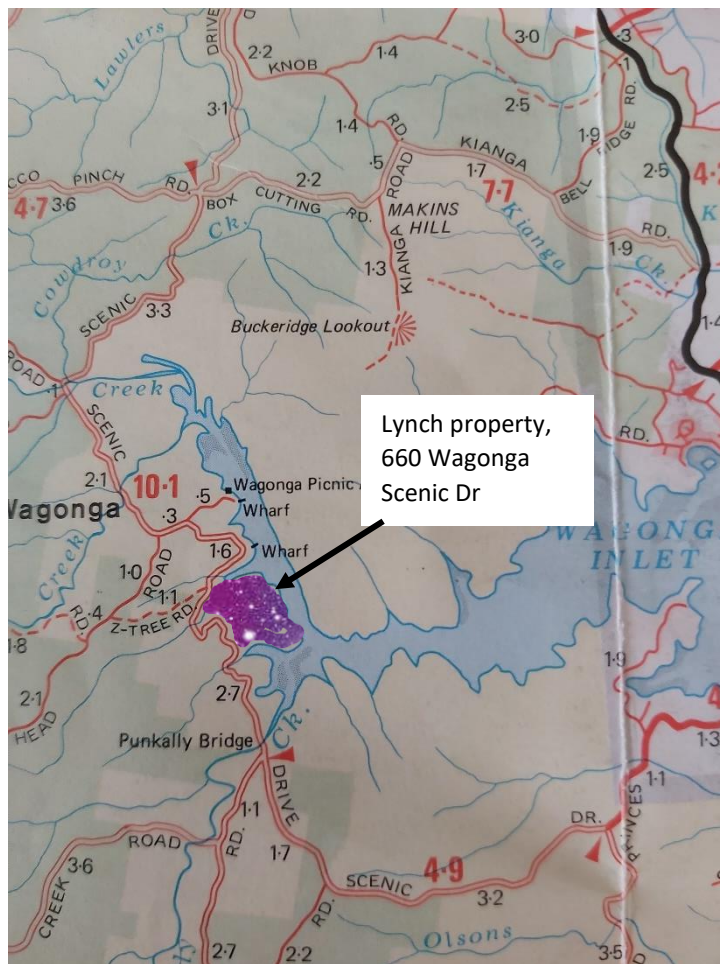


If you look at the above map of Wagonga Inlet, you will see that, from Punkally Creek (which is the southern boundary of my property) to the end, is almost a straight line. This is because it is a fault line. As a consequence there are different rocks (and hence soils and plant communities) on both side of the inlet.

HOW TO FIND US

We would usually recommend to turn west onto the Old Highway at the southern edge of Narooma, then after a couple of kilometres, turn right into Wagonga Scenic Drive (No.660 is exactly 6.6 kilometres away), cross Punkalla Bridge and find our turn-off at the second hilltop past the bridge.

However, Joan suggests the more interesting way to approach her property is to turn (right if coming from the north or left from the south) into Kianga Forest Road. For northerners it is the first turn right after Dalmeny: for southerners the first left turn after leaving Narooma. (See map next page)



The variation in vegetation is augmented by the changing altitudes which varies from close to sea level to above 100 metres. The wattles are a good example of the changes. You begin in semi-farmland but soon the roadside trees are beautiful weeping *Acacia cognata*.

At the road to the Lookout (which is worth visiting on a clear day) you **turn right into Box Cutting Road** and drive through Bodalla State Forest, through areas of juvenile eucalyptus regrowth following logging a few years ago, and roadside shrubs of *Acacia terminalis* with bipinnate leaves. Turn left into Wagonga Scenic Drive and wind downhill to Cowdroy Creek and drive through cool heavily shaded country thickly overgrown following years of heavy rain. Now the wattles are black wattle, *Acacia mearnsii* and *Acacia irrorata* (they are hard to tell apart.)

Continue on and you enter country burnt in 2020. By the time you reach Cabra Bridge the wattles are *Acacia floribunda*, a small tree with thin dark green phyllodes. You have now reached the head of the inlet and drive over Billa Bilba Creek (Grumleys Bridge) heading east.

The next landmarks are Burrimbidgee Creek (Clarksons Bridge) and Rats Head Road, now the road heads for the water. **Look out on your left for a loop road to Brices Bay Wharf** (marked with pink tape). Brices Bay was the location of a settlement called Wagonga from 1860's up to the 1920's. It is now silted up and full of oyster farms but ocean-going steamers once came up even further to Wagonga Wharf carrying supplies for the goldfields at Nerrigundah. These supplies were taken the rest of the way on horseback. There were a number of timber mills in the area and the forests were extensively logged and timber loaded onto ships and barges from a number of wharfs. All that remains of the original settlement is a cemetery across the bay from Brices Wharf. **Getting back onto Scenic Drive**, notice the presence of *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa*. It has bark for a few metres, then smooth and pale above, often with yellow or orange streaks. Sometimes the trunk is completely orange. The locals called it Monkey Gum because it was favoured by koalas.

Pass by the Z-Tree Road and roadside Agapanthus and you are now on my land. Soon you will see the signs denoting the Conservation area and just past the left-hand sign are a number of plants of the vulnerable *Haloragis exalata*. Beside the left-hand side of the road are the remains of what was once a beautiful creek with shady gum trees, Pencil Cedar, tree ferns, climbers etc. The fire and subsequent rain have left it bare and full of Arum Lilies. Restoring this creek is part of our conservation obligation.

The thick regrowth is mainly *Acacia mabellae* (with long thin leaves) and *Eucalyptus sieberi* (Silver Top Ash). **At the top of the hill, turn left to find our gate, (No. 660).** The electricity easement acted as a firebreak, so on one side the fire burnt into the top of the trees and there is heavy eucalypts and acacia regrowth, while on the house side it was just a slow-moving grass fire which took three days to move down the hill and die out. Here we have acres of *Goodenia ovata* which is now dying off.

Past the Goodenia, look out on the right for a pink taped Burrawang with two Birds Nest Ferns in its lower foliage and two male cones (which usually don't last long) trapped higher up.

The house is 700 metres from the front gate and there is plenty of parking room. 4 wheel drive vehicles will be parked on fairly rough round.

As usual you will need to bring hat, sunscreen, snacks and lunch, water and a raincoat. (To maybe encourage some badly needed rainfall.) **Be prepared is the motto.**

Last Meeting , Little Forest Plateau- Mt Bushwalker Track

Our attempted excursion to Little Forest Plateau last year was abandoned due to wet weather. Not so this time, as the day was fine, with a cool temperature and little breeze. Perfect for a stroll on the plateau. Not only were the weather gods with us, the plants were pleased to see us also, and flowers on many were prolific.

Our group of around 20 members assembled at the car park, but were not to be delayed by such frivolities as morning tea, as they were keen to get on the move. No need to rush really, as the car park area sported plants of many colours, enough indeed to keep a few engrossed as the main body moved on.

As Di mentioned in her opening, we were joined by recently joined member **Melanie Murray**, who introduced baby Millie to the pleasure of a day in the bush. It was suggested that between them they reduced the average of participants by 10 years. Let's hope for some more young members to join us.

From past visits to this area, a total of 203 plant species had been recorded, and Barry took responsibility for noting how many of these we could observe today.

This trip recorded 102 species on Barry's list, with just over 60 species flowering. Not a bad day's work. I think Barry went home with a headache, though, from trying too hard to remember every plant.

Noting the destruction of the summer 2020 fires, we appreciated the resilience of nature in such a tough environment, and encouraged by the strong regrowth of both seedling and suckering of the heathland plants.

In just a few short seasons, *Banksia ericifolia*, *Hakea teretifolia* and other tall shrubs will take over, and this current proliferation of herbs will be limited to a few track margins.

Prominent were low growing herbs *Goodenia glomerata*, *G. paniculata*, *G. bellidifolia*, *Dampiera stricta*, *Scaevola aemula* and *S. ramosissima*.

Detected by scent before finding the plant, *Marsdenia suaveolens*, a woody sub-shrub or light climber with sweetly scented white flowers, was growing among Yellow Marsh Flower, *Villarsia exaltata*, 2 species of *Patersonia*, *P. sericea* and *P. glabrata*, and the lilies *Thysanotus juncifolius*, *Thelionema umbellatum* and *Caesia vittata*.



Massed *Goodenia glomerata*, which proliferates after fires, but soon is crowded out by taller woody shrubs. A plant of seepage lines and swampy heath, Little Forest Plateau is one of its main habitats.



Yellow is such a cheery colour on a sunny day, and *Hibbertia riparia*, despite its diminutive size, is readily observed among the shrubby growth

Just a few tufts of Christmas Bells, *Blandfordia nobilis*, were noted, but as yet to flower. Representing the Kangaroo Paw family, Bloodroot *Haemodorum corymbosum* had a few remnant flowers with spent seed capsules. This plant is widespread on swampy ground of sandstone plateaux from Gosford to the Budawangs.

So many *Drosera*, with *D. pygmaea* particularly evident with its bright red basal leaves and tiny pink flowers, thrived in the seeming inhospitable moss beds along the track, where seepage maintains a little moisture, and surrounding these, carpets of Fairy Aprons, *Utricularia dichotoma* proudly displaying bright purple flowers.

Sharon Pearson kindly supplied a selection of photos from the day, some of which feature below.



We all approve of the substantial repair work undertaken by National Parks since the fires. The raised walkways provide easy access, and importantly, protect the fragile swampy heath.



Brown's Cows. It doesn't take long for plant people to spread.



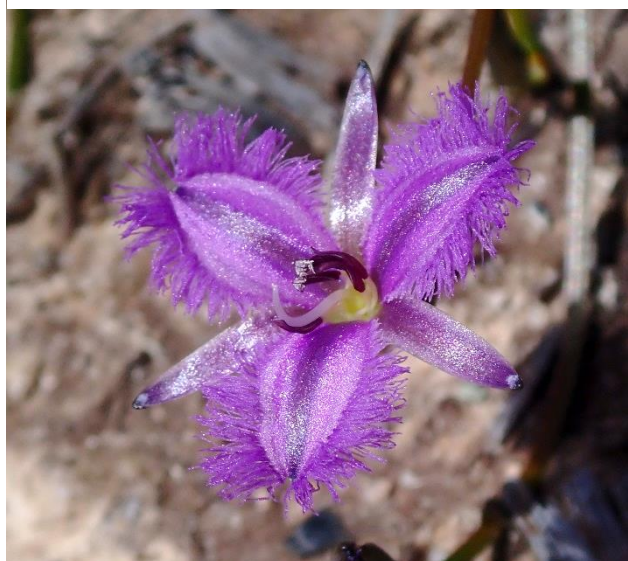
Mirbelia rubiifolia



Goodenia glomerata



Sprengelia incarnata



Thysanotus juncifolius



Melaleuca capitata

Flowers close up provide an insight into the wonder of nature



Sweetly perfumed *Sowerbaea juncea* Purple Rushlily, would make a delightful garden plant, if we could tame it. Needs reliable moisture and good drainage.



Unlike the *Sowerbaea*, the small shrub *Aotus ericoides*, Golden Pea, is a reliable garden plant, and once established copes without additional watering. As with most small woody plants, a good prune after flowering will keep it happy



No introduction necessary for the shrubby *Lambertia formosa*, Mountain Devil. This plant of heaths is readily grown in the garden, is long flowering, and can be pruned to keep it contained to any size.

In my Garden

Taste Treats for Black Cockatoos

by Leigh Murray

Occasionally, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos drop in on our gardens at Tuross and Queanbeyan, attracted by plants that they particularly fancy.

At Tuross, they've dined enthusiastically on *Banksia penicillata*, *B. ericifolia*, *Lambertia formosa* and *Hakea sericea*.



Banksia penicillata APS NSW. Alan Fairley

Banksia penicillata is the favourite.

The cockies call in every year for a feast on our one and only scruffy plant, completely ignoring the seven or so *B. integrifolia*. They've also ignored other Hakeas (eg *H. elliptica*, *H. suaveolens*).

Banksia penicillata was raised to species level in 1996, where previously it was a subspecies of *B. conferta*, from which it differs morphologically by having toothed leaves, where *B. conferta* has leaves with smooth, entire margins..

Related to *B. paludosa*, *B. penicillata* is restricted to forest and woodland in the Blue Mountains, but is a reliable but rarely grown garden plant.

At Queanbeyan, the Black-Cockatoos have shown no interest in *Hakea petiolaris*. A few cockies have nibbled on a fine-leaf *H. salicifolia* but not the normal broader leaf form.

What they do go for, big time, is the Tree Hakea, *Hakea eriantha*.

Scout birds case the joint each year. Then the mob moves in on our five large shrubs. And I do mean mob - we've had 30 birds or more on their pet bush, crunching the seeds.

Hakea eriantha is named for the woolly hairs on the flowers. Generally, it occurs on better soils at higher elevations (e.g. Gulaga Mt. Dromedary) where it grows as an upright shrub to around 4-5m high, but does grow easily in the garden with good drainage.

It's a tricky process establishing a garden for wildlife, and it's made even trickier by creatures having quite specific tastes. It is only over a long period that I'm learning what works for each garden.



Hakea eriantha, flowers and fruit.
NSW Flora Online Warren Sheather

Banksia spinulosa news

A story presented on ABC South East NSW, by James Tugwell, has received wide coverage, including on the APS NSW site, and Facebook. It was first posted on 14th October this year.



Rare purple Banksia spinulosa plant excites horticulturists as cuttings hoped to flower

[ABC South East NSW](#) / By James Tugwell

Horticulturalists are calling this purple Banksia spinulosa a "one in a billion" plant. (Supplied: Gerard Nicol)

abc.net.au/news/purple-banksia-spinulosa-native-plant-discovered-braidwood-nsw/102951088

Key points:

- A new colour variant of the plant *Banksia spinulosa* has been found near Braidwood, NSW
- There is a theory the purple colour may have been caused by conditions during Black Summer
- Horticulturists are waiting to see if cuttings of the plant will produce purple flowers

When Gerard Nicol took his dog for a walk one winter afternoon, he didn't expect to stumble upon a plant that would have horticulturists across the country giddy with excitement.

His Bombay property outside Braidwood in southern NSW is covered with thousands of *Banksia spinulosa*, commonly known as hairpin banksia, all orange, yellow or red. But just a few steps off the dirt trail, Mr Nicol saw a small shrub covered in flowers with bright purple flowers. "When you saw it amongst all the other *Banksia spinulosa*, you knew it was different," Mr Nicol said. "I knew it was something special".

Gerard Nicol stumbled upon this unusually coloured *Banksia spinulosa* while walking his dog.
(ABC South East NSW: James Tugwell)

"No one's ever seen the purple before. Within a species which has a huge amount of variance, this is probably the most extreme variant."

He posted a photo of the specimen in an online horticulture forum and was amazed at the response.

"It kind of went viral for a banksia," he said.



A game of patience

Jay Cook is nursery manager at IndigiGrow — a Sydney-based social enterprise encouraging the propagation and uptake of native species. When the Bidjigal man stumbled upon Mr Nicol's online post about the plant, his first thought was, "When are we going to go get it?"



The IndigiGrow team took 21 cuttings of the purple *Banksia spinulosa* and hope at least half will flower. (ABC South East NSW: James Tugwell)

"To be able to see a purple one of this magnitude is actually amazing," he said. "It's one in a billion. I've never seen anything like it."

"No one else has this banksia, only Gerard."

Mr Cook travelled with a team of six IndigiGrow staff to Mr Nicol's property and collected 21 cuttings of the rare plant. He said having 10 take root in the next month would be a success.



The cuttings may not flower for a year or more after they take root.

(ABC South East NSW: James Tugwell)

Even then, there is no guarantee the flowers on the cuttings will be the same rich purple colour as Mr Nicol's plant.

"It's a massive patience game," Mr Cook said.

"We have to wait for it to flower. That's probably a year down the track after they take root. It could even be two years. It's quite tricky. It gets you quite antsy, but it's also exciting to see."

"If they come out purple like we hope they do, it'll be a game changer."

Potential link to Black Summer

Registered and accredited specialist horticulturist Brent Whiter was excited when he first saw photos of Mr Nicol's plant. "It's an incredible looking flower. I've not seen it before," he said. "This is distinctly different ... it's very unusual. I don't know whether this is the only one out there".

"Mr Whiter said the cause for the variant was hard to define, but it could have been the smoke, heat or altered chemical composition of the soil after the Black Summer bushfires, or even the sun's radiation.

The plant has bright purple flowers. (Supplied: Gerard Nicol)

He said the identification of a new plant "definitely doesn't happen every day".

"This will be very popular among horticulturists," he said.

ABC South East NSW



Whilst we are on the subject of *Banksia spinulosa*, **Catriona Bate** sent this compilation of a range of *B. spinulosa* she and Phil found in a forested area of the Putty Road north west of Sydney, in July this year.

She noted that the flowers ranged from the clearest yellow through to black, demonstrating the variation found in the species.

In the Banksia Garden at ANBG, a section is devoted to *B. spinulosa* complex, noting that the flowers "vary in colour from yellow to golden orange, with black, purple, red, orange or yellow styles".

Let's hope that Gerard's purple flowered plant produces the goods.

Committee News

Dylan's suggested "walkers" group, to meet separately to our usual activities, has received interest from a couple of members. Already a couple of walks have taken place, centred around identifying flowering plants, which aims to improve our knowledge of the plants found in local bush areas. Members should contact Dylan to register their interest of joining the planned activities. Email : Dylan-morrissey@hotmail.com

Proteaceae Working Bee

Everyone is aware that the dry spell we are experiencing is not only affecting our garden plants, but the available food for wildlife is quickly diminishing, meaning plantings are under even more pressure.

Our next working bee will be on **Friday 27th October** with watering and plant protection on the list of jobs. **Keep the diary free !**

If you can't make the working bees but would be interested in **helping out with the spring/summer watering** occasionally, please let me know. We can work out a time that suits you and go through the process. The watering days need to be during the week.

Thanks everyone for your support and I hope to see you at one of our sessions
Di Clark 0402 555 330

Plant Swap

Earlier this year, the Committee proposed, and advertised, that the group would hold a Plant Swap. It is confirmed that this will be **included in the December meeting activities**. Group members are encouraged to bring along any Australian plants they have propagated, and exchange with other members. You might have noticed over recent times that the range of plants commercially available has shrunk somewhat, but in our gardens there is sure to be some old time favourites which you grow. Please take the opportunity over the spring growing season to grow some excess plants to share the joy of growing Australian plants.

Annual General Meeting

Members will note that our Annual General Meeting is planned for February 3rd 2024.

The current committee is seeking support from other members to join, to bring new ideas and enthusiasm, and ensure our group remains vibrant and relevant.

Please give this some consideration. Feel free to discuss options with President Di, or any existing committee member. Contact details are on last page

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