



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2018

2017 AGM AND END-OF YEAR FUNCTION

This was held at Raina Emerson's home on Denny's Lane on a day when the heavens had opened. A good cross-section of members attended and some apologies were received.

Reports from the president and the treasurer were presented. The first of these summed up the events and activities of the year; the second report detailed income and expenditure for the year to December 2. As of that date we had just over \$3,700 in the bank account.

Copies of either report can be obtained by getting in touch with either Bob or myself.

Election of office-bearers was the first task. All the positions were filled by nomination with the exception of one which required a show of hands.

Office bearers for 2018 are Tim Hayes - President, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster; Bob Galland - Secretary; Jen Ashwell - Treasurer and Propagation Coordinator; Pauline Husen - Newsletter Assistant; Stephanie Murphy - Wetlands Gardens Coordinator. Also elected to the committee were Sandra Hooke and Peter Wauchope. Peter is a new member and was member of the Hawkesbury APS group for a considerable time. At a meeting of the new committee in January, Sandra was appointed Membership Officer and Peter as Propagation Assistant.

Determining the activities for 2018 was the first task in General Business. Places suggested for walks included reserves, national parks, private properties and the sites of planting projects.

Plant propagation and supply of plants to the Wetlands continued in 2017. The attendance at propagation sessions and working bees was less than hoped for and efforts will continue this year to encourage greater participation. In a similar vein, it is hoped that involvement in the Wetlands Gardens project - involvement on planting and weeding days will also be boosted. A good proportion of the wetlands gardens plants damaged by the heavy frosts have shown excellent signs of recovery but some replacements will be needed.

Following the emphatic success of the talks program in July 2017, vigorous discussion took place on how to follow up. Quite a few activities were mentioned with most related to soils and plant suitability.

Our own Group web page was set up in July but further work needs to be done. Newsletters will not be put on the site until some time after they have been emailed out allowing some time for revision if necessary. Our selling list is also to go on the site and buyers can contact Jen.

Stephanie updated the group on the progress of the raffle of the wetlands watercolour painting. Books of ten tickets at \$5 each are being sold and a complimentary postcard-size print comes with each ticket. Each member present took away a book of tickets to be sold. For anybody who has not had the opportunity to participate yet, Stephanie can be contacted at stephmurph@gmail.com.

Plant sales will be confined to two days again this year, Australia Day and Riversdale later in the year. Advertising plants for sale in the local paper was considered and again, articles describing some of our walks could again figure in our local publications.

Contact with the Southern Highlands APS Group was recommended following some suggestions to that effect arising from the receipt of some propagation material from some of our northern neighbours last year.

Purchase of a camera will be investigated. Most of our photos come from Pauline. There are times when Pauline cannot be present on our outings. In addition, there are times when members gardens or properties present excellent photo opportunities; this camera could be borrowed for such an occasion. Whether the cameras that come with mobile phones provide sufficient quality will be considered. Good-quality photos would also be useful for our web page.

A suggestion was made by new member, Peter, that we survey members to obtain a list of what has succeeded in their gardens. Jen's garden is the best known because of the propagation activities but others are far less well known. The survey form is being put together at present.

Following our deliberations, we tucked into a delicious community lunch and had an opportunity to have a chat. A number of members did a short tour of the property after lunch when the rain had subsided somewhat. Many thanks to Raina and family for their welcome and the preparation involved.

WARATAHS AT BACK ARM

While chatting with Sandra at the lunch, she flicked through her camera files to reveal a *Telopea speciosissima*. At first I thought, "nice photo" and asked where it was growing. I was taken aback with Sandra's answer - "our (Tony & Sandra) place at Back Arm". Really? Sandra tells the story:

'The plant was given to me as a present. It was bought as a medium sized, grown on, potted plant (from a well-known hardware chain in Goulburn). Its label said frost tolerant! I generally have more success with tube stock, so was anxious that it this one would grow, as many of the advanced (and more expensive plants) had not grown. Our soil is not particularly fertile, stony with quartz and shale and hygroscopic. Clay not far down.

Planted in early January 2014 and just under the cover of a medium sized eucalypt - to protect it from our very severe frosts, I did not do anything special to the hole except make it bigger than I usually would. We are, altitude wise, quite high at 820metres. It was guarded to protect it from the animals, with a light mulch of eucalyptus leaf litter.

It started to grow. I had read that it didn't like to be too wet but also didn't like to be subjected to prolonged dry periods. Where it is planted it gets run-off when it rains. It tried to flower in Oct that year but the flower was small and not well developed. The next spring it tried again. More flowers but still not well developed. As I had read that if the flowers were removed it would encourage more bushy growth I cut these.

Where I have cut them, there have been no shoots for over 12 months but they are slowly developing now. I haven't removed the flowers this year.



There is much conflicting information on the internet about how to grow waratahs, but most is either from coastal locations or Sydney sandstone soils. All said to keep it weeded and lightly mulched. My thinking was that maybe it needed some fertilizer to produce better flowers. I read that it liked blood and bone! Tentatively I did use a small amount sprinkled around its drip line, but have since learned that I was taking a risk. Another fertilizer more suited to natives (Bush Tucker from Hudson) was recommended.

Something worked. Perhaps the fertilizer, but we have also had small amounts of rain throughout the year. This year the plant has doubled in size and had three well formed flowers -as in the photo, and is now growing so well that it is quickly outgrowing its mesh guard and will need a fence around it. I think the wallabies would love it if they could get to it!

Thanks, Sandra for that. It would not be surprising if some other members tried to emulate your achievements!

PROGRAM

Sat Feb 3	Propagation
Thu Feb 15	Propagation
Sat Mar 3	Walk - Dingo Dell
Thu Mar 15	Propagation
Sun Mar 18	Propagation
Wed Mar 28	Wetlands Garden Maintenance
Sat Apr 7	Walk - Bush Bottom
Thu Apr 19	Propagation
Fri - Sun May 4 - 6	Walks - Nature Reserves near Griffith
Sat Jun 2	McCormack property (Crookwell) and Laggan Nature Reserve
Sat July 7	Forum/presentation: Soil Improvement/ Plant Selection - speakers tba
Sat Aug 4	Walk - Little Forest Road
Sat Sept 1	Walk - Nattai National Park
Thu Sept 13	Propagation
Sun Sept 16	Propagation
Sat Oct 6	Walk - Nadgigomar West Nature Reserve
Wed Oct 24	Wetlands Garden Maintenance
Sun - Tue Nov 11 - 13	Walks - Nature Reserves near Mudgee

MEMBERSHIP

Each time the journal Native Plants arrives in the letterbox, I look for the section listing new APS members and where they are from. It was very pleasing in the most recent edition to read of four new members from Goulburn as well as names from Tallong, Bannister and Bungonia. Our two most recent members are Peter Wauchope (already mentioned) and Jennifer Lamb. Jennifer is well known locally for her directorship of the Art gallery for many years. Jennifer is actually re-joining the group as she was a member in the early days of our group but had to relinquish that membership to pursue her interest in the arts. So it's a 'welcome back' to Jennifer.

FINALLY

An account of our Australia day stall will be in the next newsletter. The two overnight trips in the program are new for us - we realise they will not suit all. For those who can come, there will be a taste of inland flora.

Many thanks to Sandra for her article; she has another in the pipeline as well - dealing with a daisy bush that grows naturally on the property. Articles of this kind are most welcome - so if you feel you have had some success or an interesting garden plant - pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard, please.