

70 years

The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc.

Annual Report – 30 June 2020



Our Motto

‘Friendship Through Gardens’

Affiliate members of The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc. are extending the culture of gardening into the wider community throughout Australia by:

- ◆ actively promoting, contributing and participating in community-based horticultural activities
- ◆ contributing to and participating in activities assisting Botanic Gardens and other similar institutions
- ◆ assisting in extending the knowledge of the skills of horticulture to the benefit of the whole community
- ◆ assisting community charities both by gift and personal effort
- ◆ assisting in the education of kindred organisations in matters relevant to horticulture and gardening and educating the public in the protection and conservation of our natural resources
- ◆ promoting and encouraging areas of floral art
- ◆ learning new aspects of gardening while enjoying the friendship of fellow gardeners.

ABN 74 058 867 744

www.gardenclubs.org.au

Founder President: Margaret Davis, MBE, OAM

Cover: The implications on gardeners of the four seasonal cycle of spring, summer, autumn and winter is often depicted in literary texts which use the seasons as a domain for interrogating the interface between nature and culture. Particular seasons are associated with particular human activities, ageing, emotions, psychological states, and literary genres. One can ask is it nature or culture that has shaped our responses to and expectations for each season?

THE ORGANISATION OF THE GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA INC. as at 30 June 2020

President	George Hoad
Vice President	David Lambert
Vice President	Lorraine Emerson
Secretary	Jo Saxon-Keith
Treasurer	Frances Cairns
Archivist	Margaret Watts
Awards	Elizabeth Dobson
Calendar, Annual Photographic Competition	Paul Lucas
Director of Zones	Glenys Bruun
Functions, Events	George Hoad
Assistant Functions, Events	Lorraine Emerson
Governance, Social Media	Greg Ruckert
Insurance Officer	Greg Lane
Judges' Registrar	Jeanette Chown
Membership Secretary	Deirdre McLoughlin
National Gardening Week	George Hoad
Newsletter, Bulletin	Suzanne Bushell
<i>Our Gardens Magazine Committee:</i>	
Advertising Coordinator	Kim Peterson
Editorial & Horticultural Consultant	Judy Horton
Club news	Carolyn Dawes
Diary Dates	Phil Waite
Distribution	David Lambert
Proofing	Virginia Fischer
Subscriptions	Rob Horton
Planning, Annual General Meeting	John Kitt
Public Officer	Frances Cairns
Remembrance Driveway	Ken Bradley
Web Administrator	Eric Bateman
Proofing	Janice Graham
Committee Member	Lindy Bonser



Overview

There can be no doubt that the complex and difficult circumstances that we all face in individual clubs and The Garden Clubs of Australia (GCA) organisation as a whole are testing. Many of the contributions contained in this Annual Report for 2019–2020 have made this very clear.

However, within this collection of reports of our various activities and services lie the fragile shoots of better times ahead and the GCA Committee is determined to support each and every one of our Affiliates in whatever way we can. We are determined that the GCA will grow.

As members of our “Garden Clubs”, we face the prospect of a declining membership as our friends, whose company we have cherished for so long, may now show a decline in enthusiasm for participation in club activities. We must make new efforts to retain them, be innovative and attract new members through the creative areas that the appeal of gardening has for so many.

If the numbers of Affiliates and their individual members is any guide, the GCA has never been stronger. A curious assessment given what the whole of Australia currently grapples with.

‘Friendship’ has been our focus for 70 years and while we must never allow this to diminish within our organisation, the difficulties we all have managed well for almost the whole of 2020 is proof that we can be creative, optimistic and risk-taking in our individual clubs, and the GCA Committee will join you in ensuring that we nourish the new starts that are being made.

John Kitt



Report from the President



The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc. (GCA) Committee herein presents its various reports for its 70th year to record GCA's activities and the progress made in the past twelve months to 30 June 2020.

Looking back over the past twelve months, we as gardeners and as a nation have certainly faced a number of challenges: the remorseless drought, the devastating bushfires, followed closely by the COVID-19 health crisis. The bushfires that raged over last summer impacted a number of our Affiliates in all States. Club members in NSW were particularly affected with some seeing the loss of both house and garden. My own village in Northern NSW lost three homes and a number of well-established gardens were impacted. The healing process still goes on and the GCA's thoughts and good wishes go out to all the affected members and their communities. Combined, these events have had an enormous impact on most Australians but we are a resilient and optimistic bunch, particularly we gardeners: Why else do we plant bulbs and seeds for the next season? Why else do we plant a tree that we'll never see into maturity?

In 2020, the GCA celebrates its 70th birthday – a milestone in the life of our organisation well worth celebrating! Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, many of the planned activities have been postponed or cancelled. Ironically, thanks to coronavirus, gardening has never been more popular. Nurseries are reporting a booming trade; and garden clubs are getting new membership enquiries, with many from younger enthusiasts – this alone is certainly worth celebrating!

The past twelve months have been, as ever, a particularly busy and productive period, for the Committee and me. We have a few new faces on Committee and continue to have representation from all Australian States/Territories. Committee Members represent a cross section of individuals drawn from a diverse range of gardening and horticultural interests, residing in both regional and metropolitan settings. All Committee positions are voluntary and are elected at our AGM each year from nominations received from our Affiliates.

The national committee meets six times each year, usually in the Sydney CBD, but due to the COVID-19 lockdown, this was not possible in the earlier part of 2020. Like so many other organisations, we were compelled to embrace technology and have conducted several meetings via video conferencing. These have proven to be quite effective and will no doubt become part of the norm in future, ultimately saving the GCA money and the Committee Members' transit time. Most of the GCA's sub-committees, plus a large number of Affiliates, also met using video conferencing. Apart from our usual agenda items, special tasks undertaken this year include further work on implementing the upgrade of our website, amendments to the GCA Constitution, succession planning for the Committee and the design of a new GCA logo.



GCA committee members were invited to attend a number of Affiliate events throughout the year including anniversary celebrations, open gardens, friendship and zone days. Over the past year, I have had the great pleasure of attending events held in Queensland, South Australia and numerous events across New South Wales. I would very much like to extend my thanks for the hospitality and friendship shown on these visits by the club committees, the members and the local communities. Visiting Affiliate clubs gives me and fellow committee members a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a chat over a cuppa, discuss local issues and listen to any concerns that Affiliate clubs and members may have. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings and travel in 2020, many such events were cancelled or postponed.

Membership of the GCA continues to rise steadily with the number of Affiliates at around 734, representing over 48 000 individual members. As in previous years, the number of community gardens seeking affiliation continues to grow, along with traditional gardening clubs, horticultural societies and species clubs. Unfortunately, we also lose a small number of Affiliates each year. This is usually as a result of the club closing due to dwindling membership and advancing years.

The GCA continues to offer our Affiliates a wide range of benefits and services. Apart from our comprehensive and competitively-priced insurance package, the GCA also offers a National Register of Judges and judges' courses, annual awards, our annual glossy calendar and popular photographic competition. GCA's quarterly magazine *Our Gardens* continues to be well received by our Affiliates and subscribers. Editor Judy Horton and the magazine's dedicated production team are to be commended on maintaining a high standard, consistently producing a quality publication.

The upgrade of the GCA website continues to progress, which will eventually enable and facilitate a greater range of functions and much greater interaction between Affiliates and the GCA. Our Facebook presence has been enhanced, which has led to a much greater interface with our Affiliates.

GCA's 2019 biennial Convention was deemed a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by the three hundred gardeners who attended. Held on Norfolk Island, it was hosted by the Norfolk Island Garden Club, assisted by the Norfolk Island Travel Centre. Over the five days, we certainly enjoyed the conventions motto of *Gardening Norfolk Island -style: Convicts, Community and Coral*, with magnificent locations, great gardens, wonderful guest speakers, fabulous food and the warm camaraderie that arises when old friends come together. Congratulations to the organising committee and all concerned. Planning and preparations are well underway for the next GCA Convention to be held in Townsville, Queensland in September 2021.

Ken Bradley, Immediate Past President, continues to represent the GCA on the Remembrance Driveway Council which the organisation that our founder, Margaret Davis, instigated in the early 1950s. The Remembrance Driveway commemorates all those who served in the Australian Defence Forces in World War II and subsequent



wars or who have served since then in defence of the nation's interests in operational theatres around the world. The Remembrance Driveway links Sydney and Canberra, incorporating a network of parks, plantations, and road-side rest areas, particularly those dedicated to VC recipients, providing a living memorial. In recognition of our continued links with the Remembrance Driveway Council, the GCA donated \$5000 towards a funding appeal by the organisation.

National Gardening Week, now in its fourth year, continues to gain recognition, not only by Affiliate clubs but is slowly gaining traction in the broader community. The focus of National Gardening Week for 2020 is on trees. Over the last few years, the devastating drought followed by ravaging bushfires, has taken a great toll on our native flora. We have lost much but nature has a way of healing and regenerating, and with a helping hand from us, we can all be part of that renewal process. We are encouraging every garden club, school, community group, local council, etc., to plant a single tree, plant a pair or plant a small forest. I am currently undertaking the next step in the development and growth of National Gardening Week, which is the formation of a national committee to progress the event and see it established as a truly national annual event.

I would very much like to thank all the members of the Management Committee, the Magazine Committee and various Sub-Committees, for the outstanding service they have given the GCA over the past year.

Due to changes in the GCA Constitution, Committee Members are now only entitled to serve for a maximum term of six years at any one time. This year will see the retirement of six committee members, which includes a few very long-serving members. A very big thank you Jeanette Chown, Glenys Bruun, David Lambert, Deirdre Mcloughlin and Judy Horton for your many years of dedicated service to the GCA. I would also like to thank Monika Ross and David Gemmell who retired from Committee earlier this year.

I will also be retiring at this AGM as GCA President and from the GCA Committee. Over the last five years, I have had the great honour of serving the GCA as President, a role I have enjoyed enormously and hopefully have achieved some of the goals I set for myself back in 2015: to raise the profile of the GCA, to facilitate greater communication within the organisation and to uphold our motto of 'Friendship through Gardens'. I wish the new Committee and the next President every success and offer my ongoing support.

Happy gardening to one and all.

George Hoad

President of The Garden Clubs of Australia
Member, Killabakh Garden Club



Honorary Treasurer's Report

1. During the financial year, the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation in March 2020. There has been an impact on GCA finances as the outbreak and the response of governments in dealing with the pandemic is interfering with general activity levels within the community, the economy and the operation of the GCA. This will carry through to the next financial year also.
2. The financial records of the GCA for the 2019/20 year have been audited by National Audits Group and they have produced a financial report for that period (refer pp. 9–10 below) based on conditions existing as at 30 June 2020. During the process of their audit work, no additional matters came to their attention requiring further comment.
3. The loss of GCA funds, after providing for income tax, amounted to \$4290.77 – compared to the loss of \$1673.82 year ending 30 June 2019. President George Hoad and Treasurer Frances Cairns signed off on the report.
4. The audit of the GCA accounts was carried out in accordance with auditor independence requirements as set out in the Associations Incorporations Act 2009 (NSW) and there was no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.
5. Income for the year was \$235,589 which was an increase of \$7749 over the 2018/19 year. This increase is represented mainly by Insurance, *Our Gardens* magazine advertising and GCA's share of the profit from the 2019 Norfolk Island Convention.
6. On the downside, the expenditure was increased by \$13,784. The total for 2019/20 year was \$236,839. This increase is due mainly to legal fees, printing costs and web designer fees.
7. Whilst it has been a challenge settling into the intricate Treasurer's role, I have enjoyed communicating with affiliates through emails and phone calls during the twelve-month period.

Frances Cairns

treasurer@gardenclubs.org.au

Member of Albion Park Garden Club



THE GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED
ABN 74 058 867 744

STATEMENT OF INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
INCOME			
OTHER INCOME			
Insurance certificate		93,880	87,651
Interest received		8,497	8,805
Magazine advertising income		27,855	22,191
Magazine subscriptions		55,151	55,665
Judges School		-	846
Affiliation fees		43,551	42,760
Events income		2,482	3,123
AGM		-	3,709
Convention income		3,581	-
Other Income		-	2,000
Gross profit from trading		592	1,090
		<u>235,589</u>	<u>227,840</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Auditors' remuneration		7,000	8,546
Accounting Fees		1,396	-
AWC Expenses		93	804
Bank charges		514	493
Calendar		132	118
Courier Charges		68	-
Donations		5,000	5,000
Filing Fees		99	-
Hardware expenses		-	17
Insurance		64,659	62,612
Internet and telephone		130	25
Information Day		-	2,357
Judges - Badges		525	927
Legal Fees		14,059	-
Magazines - printing, postage		68,170	66,804
Meeting expenses		4,574	10,304
Postage		2,998	1,019
Photo Competition Prizes		1,686	867
Planning Books & Communication		1,406	-
Printing and photocopying		10,371	1,891
Repairs & Maintenance		50	-
Software expenses		1,250	1,979
Subscriptions - RHS		46	-
Sundry Expenses		369	765
Storage Fees		260	198
Travelling expenses		37,967	51,341
Website Designer Fees		10,448	2,510
Zone expenses		3,569	4,478
		<u>236,839</u>	<u>223,055</u>
Profit (Loss) before income tax		(1,250)	4,785
Income tax expense	2	(3,041)	(6,459)
(Loss) after income tax		(4,291)	(1,674)



THE GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED
ABN 74 058 867 744

STATEMENT OF INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year		140,467	142,141
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year		<u>136,176</u>	<u>140,467</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

THE GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED
ABN 74 058 867 744

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	455,259	461,010
Inventories	4	1,203	1,820
Provision for taxes	6	1,638	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>458,100</u>	<u>462,830</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Plant and equipment	5	-	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>458,100</u>	<u>462,830</u>
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provision for taxes	6	-	439
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>-</u>	<u>439</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>-</u>	<u>439</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>458,100</u>	<u>462,391</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Retained earnings	7	136,176	140,467
Members' Capital		321,924	321,924
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		<u>458,100</u>	<u>462,391</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements



Awards Committee Report

GCA Awards: Awards were made in five (5) categories. They were announced at the AGM held at the Paradise Hotel, Norfolk Island on 16 October 2019. Winners details were published in *Our Gardens*, Summer 2019/20 and on the website. The criteria for each award along with details are listed on the website: www.gardenclubs.org.au

The awards presented by the President of the GCA, Mr George Hoad.

- **The President of the GCA Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to Gardening &/or Horticulture:** David Maher – Tamworth Cottage Gardeners Inc.
- **Margaret Davis Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to The Garden Clubs of Australia:** Noeline Hughes – Nambour Garden Club Inc.
- **Eleanor McLeod Award of Outstanding Service by an Affiliated Club to the Local Community:** Tumbarumba & District Garden Club Inc.
- **Doris Killian Award for Outstanding Service by an Individual to the Community:** Laurel Asimus – Buderim Garden Club.
- **Gwendy Handsford Award for Outstanding Service by a Member of an Affiliated Club to the Environment:** Not Awarded
- **Young Gardener of the Year Award for Outstanding Contribution to Gardening/Horticulture – age limit 30 years as of 30 June:** Not Awarded.
- **Joan O'Brien Award for Achieving Excellence by an Individual in Floral Art:** Gayle Carroll – Launceston Horticultural Society.

Ann Williams Clark Medallion: Since its inception in 2011, 185 Ann Williams Clark Medallions have been awarded, including 27 this financial year. It is worth noting that no nominations were received during the three months of the COVID-19 lockdown

The Ann Williams Clark Medallion enables Affiliates to acknowledge the contribution or contributions that a member makes to the club or society. The concept of this medallion is beginning to be part of many Affiliates' annual presentations.

The nomination form is available on the GCA website: www.gardenclubs.org.au
Applications can be made at any time – one nomination per club per calendar year is permitted.

Elizabeth Dobson

GCA Awards Coordinator

President of The Stirling and Hills Garden Club Inc. South Australia



Calendar Competition Report

The lovely **2021 “Beautiful Gardens of Australia” Calendar** is being enthusiastically purchased by many members and magazine subscribers. The continued wide range of members who entered and the variety of scenes and flowers they imaginatively photographed all over Australia meant that it was again hard to choose the images eventually selected as the winners.

Bartel Calendars are generously continuing to support the production of the **2022 GCA Calendar**. It will be an ideal gift for giving to relatives and friends both throughout Australia and particularly overseas and for Clubs to consider providing a copy as a prize for a variety of activities on their meeting nights until early in 2021.

Members are encouraged to submit Australian Garden Scenes and photos of plants, etc. taken in Australia for the 2022 Calendar. Entry details are on the GCA website or email: photocomp@gardenclubs.org.au

The incentive is a total of \$1,300 in prize money for those images chosen for the main Month pages. Images chosen as “fillers” in the date pages do not attract a monetary prize, but the photographers have the pleasure of their image and name published in the Calendar. Members, or magazine subscribers, can submit as many digital images taken in Australia as they wish, with no entry cost.

The closing date for entries is 15 February 2021.

Paul Lucas

Annual Calendar Coordinator

Report from Director of Zones

This year, the GCA. celebrates its 70th Birthday due to the foresight of Margaret Davis, our founder. Margaret has had many plants named after her over those memorable years – my favourite being the Camellia ‘Margaret Davis’. I am able to show off some of those beautiful flowers as my two shrubs are in bloom at the present time.

The interest in gardening has escalated over those years due to the formation of like-minded societies in the gardening world. The GCA is climbing towards 50 000 members due to our large band of volunteers promoting “Friendship through Gardens”. We do not have a Head Office to the surprise of many – we just work from our home office table or our dining table.

Communication has improved due to the computer age. The transition has proved somewhat challenging, but we are working our way through the technicalities and soon hope to have all of our secretaries computer-literate in the future and referring queries, etc. to the website. Emails have enabled our Committees to achieve almost immediate contact and enable us to solve any difficulties we may encounter. However, we must remember that sitting in front of a computer does not grow a



garden. The knowledge, friendships, ideas, enthusiasm and joy are what we gain from belonging to our clubs no matter how small. Activities that show human kindness, sharing, wellness and getting on with one's fellow humans are the bonuses. Combining all cultures and the education of up and coming generations. Yes, we have come a long way from when Georgina Molloy from Western Australia sent seeds to Joseph Banks in lead boxes to England – the beginning of our Nation of Gardeners from the 1800s. A very important exercise for mind and body.

I find that the sharing of newsletters is a great benefit to all clubs, sharing ideas, photos and gardening methods. 'Come and Share' days really add interest to club activities at very little cost – sharing ideas, magazines and cuttings are a major benefit towards achieving new members. No matter how small a club, you are all our bread and butter to keep the GCA operating.

Our Committee Members travel long distances throughout Australia in order to familiarise the GCA with the operation of clubs in our 58 zones. If anyone is interested in becoming a Zone Coordinator for the Zones that have a vacancy, please contact me for information.

Our Gardens magazine continues to be published by our band of volunteer publishing gurus – four issues per year for \$15 is real value and creates pride when members have their gardens featured.

Our insurance scheme covers folk up to 100 years of age and is continually changing to meet the requirements of Clubs. The Awards, Calendars and Photo competitions have continued to create interest in the doings of Clubs and Members. We thank Zone

Coordinators for promoting their activities to the Clubs as, without their input, we would not have a successful operation.

The GCA continues to flourish as a large, enthusiastic and successful organisation creating and supporting an interest in gardening, thus furthering our knowledge in this field and we are continually being told that gardening improves our health and outlook on life from this beneficial and enjoyable pastime. Knowledge shared is knowledge gained.

Glenys Bruun

Member Nambour Garden Club, Caboolture Garden Club, Perennial Poppies Group

Functions/Events Report

GCA's 2019 biennial convention, held on Norfolk Island and hosted by the Norfolk Island Garden Club, was a great success with approximately 300 gardeners attending. The relaxed island atmosphere and glorious weather added to the pleasure of the week-long event. *Gardening Norfolk Island-style: Convicts, Community and Coral* was the motto and we gardeners were not disappointed with the colourful tropical



gardens, guest speakers, delicious food and the numerous optional extras on offer. The natural beauty of the island makes it a perfect destination for gardeners, rich in unique flora and fauna. The Farewell Fish Fry on the cliff top, with the setting sun as a backdrop, was the perfect end to a fantastic week. Congratulations to the Organising Committee, the local garden club, Norfolk Island Travel Centre and all concerned.

Planning and preparations are well underway for the next GCA biennial Convention to be held in Townsville, Queensland in September 2021. I was invited by the Organising Committee to visit Townsville in February 2020 where I had a chance to investigate suitable venues, view private gardens for potential visits and generally check on the progress that the Committee is making for the event. I came away completely satisfied that the 2021 Convention is in good hands and that we will be enjoying another great week of gardens, fun and friendship. Committee members Lorraine Emerson and Frances Cairns have been invited to visit Townsville later this year to see firsthand the progress in planning and an opportunity to see the gardens in spring.

A number of local GCA Zone Friendship Days were also held across the country, organised by Zone Coordinators and/or individual clubs. I was invited to many of these and, as always, find they are a great way for Affiliates to socialise, exchange ideas and discuss matters of concern, coming together under the umbrella of 'Friendship Through Gardens'. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, many of the events planned for 2020 were cancelled or postponed. I would encourage clubs and Zone Coordinators to consider hosting a Friendship Day, as the benefits to individual clubs and members are enormous. Don't hesitate to contact the GCA for advice in organising such an event.

George Hoad

President of The Garden Clubs of Australia

Member, Killabakh Garden Club

Insurance Report

I took over this role in May 2020. While this role was vacant, other Committee Members shared the load at the busiest insurance time of the year – Members' renewals. We thank those Committee Members for their extra effort.

I believe some insurance certificates posted this year were not received. Communication between GCA and Affiliates relies on accurate contact details. Please keep your club address, post and electronic, up-to-date so that information can get to the correct location as soon as possible. This will assist in avoiding the scramble that occurs when the certificate is needed urgently by leasing bodies for contract renewals.

We have had three claims this year. Affiliate Committees should be aware of the type



and nature of cover by referring to the Product Disclosure Statements located on the GCA website. These are your first step to understanding your cover. The wide nature of questions that I have received in a short time since taking on this role illustrates most have not checked or realised that these documents exist.

Greg Lane, Insurance Officer

Judges' Registrar Report

Since succeeding from Robyn Simpson (big shoes to fill) as Judges' Registrar last October, judging has been very quiet. Most of the Garden Shows, Garden Competitions and Zone Days have been cancelled because of Drought, Fire and, of course, COVID-19.

There are 31 GCA registered judges and soon they will receive their paperwork to re-register for the 2021–2022 period. **So please re-register**, it will start blooming again soon.

This is my last report for the GCA. I have been on the Committee for 20 years writing reports as President, Sales and Judges Registrar. In that time I feel that I have made a positive contribution to the GCA and working in a harmonious and enjoyable atmosphere with the Committee. It is time for me to leave, but I'm staying on as Zone Coordinator and a Judge.

Jeanette Chown

Magazine Committee Report

Our Gardens magazine is maintaining its popularity and its solid subscription base. This is of increasing importance when so many publications are under threat. The latest issue published is #85.

Our Gardens Content: All contributors are volunteers, many of them members of garden clubs who willingly share their garden stories with readers. We are grateful to all of these contributors because, without them, the magazine wouldn't exist. We particularly appreciate the generosity of long-term regular contributors Peta Trahar and Hazel King who write for every issue.

Our Gardens Advertising: Advertising Officer Kim Peterson has done a wonderful job, especially in this difficult year when much advertising was cancelled. She has maintained good relationships with all our advertisers and has made sure that those who are pulling out due to COVID-19 cancellations, etc. feel welcome to come back again. Without advertising, we could not continue publication.

Our Gardens Subscriptions: Rob Horton, Subscriptions Officer, has sent personal letters or emails to all subscribers at renewal time and has achieved excellent results. Subscription levels are steady, no mean feat in this economically stressed time. A



number of clubs purchase subscriptions for their entire membership or give subscriptions as gifts to speakers, etc. Such activities help maintain our good subscription numbers and we would encourage all clubs to seek out similar opportunities.

Our Gardens Proofing: Virginia Fischer, Proofreader, meticulously picks up errors and makes sure that *Our Gardens* maintains a professional degree of accuracy. Virginia is currently studying horticulture.

Our Gardens Club News: After many years, Carolyn Dawes has retired from two of her three positions with the magazine. Fortunately, she has agreed to continue for the time being as Club News Editor. Her skills and experience are much valued and appreciated.

Our Gardens Production: David Lambert has taken over the role of Production Coordinator. David liaises with the mailing house to ensure that the magazines are delivered as required and in accordance with the various lists supplied from the various parts of the organisation.

Our Gardens Photo Competition: Paul Lucas, Photo Competition Coordinator, supplies beautiful photos that enhance each issue. Thanks to the many talented photographers, too.

Our Gardens Editor: Judy Horton works closely with our longstanding designer Dan Bowen from ProArt. Judy is keen to have as many parts of Australia as possible represented in each issue and welcomes contributions from all GCA Affiliates.

Our Gardens Finance: Frances Cairns, GCA Treasurer, has handled all the accounts involved with the magazine. We are grateful to her for accuracy and dedication. She is particularly busy each quarter at subscription renewal time.

On behalf of the magazine team we thank all the GCA clubs and members who subscribe to and support the magazine. We are proud of its contribution to gardening information in Australia and hope that GCA members will continue to promote and support it.

Judy Horton, Editor *Our Gardens*

Membership Secretary Report

I am pleased to report that the membership of the GCA continues to grow with widespread interest across the country and as at 30 June 2020, there are 734 Affiliates, (full details listed) with an insured total of 51 508.

Membership role involves care and updating of database records, responding to enquiries, phone, mail, email and, on request, forwarding affiliation information as to requirements and process. Since 30 June 2019, 40 enquires have been received, application forms emailed out and requirements attended to. The follow-up,



attention to the necessary paperwork and working closely with a diverse group of individuals, with a common focus, is the beginning of our gardening friendship and reward.

I urge all Affiliates to give close attention to the importance of notifying change of details, either referring to the GCA Annual Schedule, making contact with a Zone Coordinator or *Our Gardens* magazine. Prompt attention to all challenges throughout the year require caring attention and it is important to remember that the various areas of GCA, insurance, treasury, magazine all rely on our database records. I thank Glenys Bruun, David Lambert, David Gemmell, Rob Horton, Frances Cairns and Greg Lane for their constant support and huge effort.

National Gardening Week is now firmly placed on the calendar. Do use this as a further opportunity to celebrate gardening, inspiring the community and especially taking the chance to encourage gardening for all ages. Schools in the local community are a special way of reaching out to our community and touching the hearts of young gardeners.

Our large gardening family is guided by our President, George, whose passion and care has been stamped far and wide, enthusiastically travelling long distances to attend celebrations, events and meetings, always spreading the word of GCA and bringing extra joy with a song or two – a sincere thank you, George, from our large family. It is particularly important that the Committee of GCA works earnestly for the ongoing growth of GCA. The difficulties of this year have impacted all; however, we must take the chance to use our gardening world as a beacon for inner contentment remembering that “in Joy or Sadness, garden specimens are our constant Friends”. I hope you will always encourage “to plant the love of planting” and always remember to enthusiastically spread the word of GCA.

Please see the table on p. 15 below.

Deirdre McLoughlin

Vice President, Goulburn Garden Club



State/ Territory	New Affiliates	Resignations
ACT	Canberra Seed Savers Cooperative	
NSW	Bangalow & District Garden Club Kurrajong Volunteer Gardeners Inc. Lennox Community Garden Inc. Waterloo Resident Market Garden Inc & Future Planning Centre Campbelltown Community Garden Bally's Patch Community Garden Inc. Forbes Riverside Community Garden Inc. Woonona Community Garden Artarmon Parklands Community Garden Inc. Hambly Street Verge Garden	Gosford District Garden Competition Inc. Salvia Association of Australia Inc. Manning Organic Garden Group Wilford L.A.N.E. Project Inc. Wingello Garden Initiative Waterloo Resident Market Garden Inc & Future Planning Centre
NT		Gove Community Garden Inc.
QLD	Redland Organic Growers Inc. Middlemount Community Gardeners Inc.	
SA	Loxton Garden Club Inc	Rocky River Garden Club
TAS	Latrobe Garden Club Launceston Bonsai Society Inc. The Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens	
VIC	Echuca Horticultural Society Inc. Urban Planters Moreland Inc.	Hurstbridge Sow & Grow Garden Club Inc. Mediterranean Garden Society
WA	Inglewood/Mt Lawley Community Garden Wanneroo & Northern Suburbs Community Garden Stella Violets West Leederville Community Garden Inc.	



Photography Competition Report

The Competition continues to be enthusiastically supported by many members and magazine subscribers. As usual, the range of images submitted is varied and excellent quality and indicate the enthusiasm the entrants have for taking garden-related **photographs around the world**.

Photos of a random selection of the images submitted have been included in the GCA *Our Gardens* magazine throughout the 2020 year.

Members and magazine subscribers are encouraged to consider entering the **14th Annual Photography Competition in 2020** as the total prize pool valued at around \$1,400 is one of the largest for any Australian Photographic Competition organised by a non-profit organisation, where there is no entry fee.

The prizes are from the GCA and our wonderful sponsors Seasol International, Neutrog Australia, Yates, Richgro, and Organic Crop Protectants. The entry form is available on the GCA website at www.gardenclubs.org.au or can be obtained by emailing photocomp@gardenclubs.org.au

Remember that your children and grandchildren can enter the Junior Section.
All entries close on 1 October 2020.

The 2020 Competition winners will be announced in the Autumn, issue 88, of the *Our Gardens* magazine and a further random selection of the excellent 2020 images will be shown as usual in each issue of the *Our Gardens* magazine during 2021.

Paul Lucas

Annual Photography Competition Coordinator

Planning Sub-Committee Report

This financial year has been a particularly busy one for the Planning Sub-Committee with the redevelopment of the GCA Constitution. The recent postal vote in which members endorsed change so strongly will allow the GCA to move forward both in restructuring our management and the provision of additional services to members. At the time of writing, we await the approval of New South Wales Fair Trading before any implementation can begin.

Earlier in the year, we produced an *Implementation Plan for 2019 – 2020* which mapped specific targets derived from our *Strategic Plan* which was approved at the end of the previous year. However, the disruption of members' activities this year due to COVID-19 will mean that not all objectives can be achieved.

Major discussion papers have been produced to outline possible options in the directions that the GCA might take in 2021. These are background papers designed to assist the Committee Members make informed choices for the future. Further



work is in progress to identify the skills needed by a reduced Committee to manage our association which, encouragingly, continues to grow.

The Planning Sub-Committee seeks to give more precise direction to the services of the GCA. This objective is not always met with initial universal support, although members would be aware of growth in our Facebook presence, the regular newsletter provided to members and the progress being made on our website.

We acknowledge that, while these developments are positive, there has been little consultation with members in developing new services. It is the Planning Sub-Committee's intention to redress this and to seek your input into GCA operations at all levels.

John Kitt

Member, Lenah Valley Garden Club

Remembrance Driveway Report

The living memorial along the 300 km highway between Sydney and Canberra was established in 1954. The Driveway commemorates the Australians who served in World War II and now also remembers all those who served in the Australian Defence Forces in subsequent conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

The Remembrance Driveway was the first project of the GCA and was conceived by Mrs Margaret Davis MBE OAM – the Founding President.

The Remembrance Driveway Committee (RDC) of volunteers works closely with Transport for NSW (ex RMS) to maintain the Memorial along the current Hume Motorway in NSW and with Transport Canberra City Services (TCCS) on the Federal Highway in ACT. There are 23 rest stops dedicated to Victoria Cross recipients to remind the public of the purpose of the Driveway. The rest stops provide an opportunity for drivers to refresh and therefore contribute to safety on the highway. The current President of the RDC is Air Commodore Ian Scott AO and there is representation from the RSL, War Widows Guild, GCA, Transport for NSW, TCCS and several individuals with specialised skills.

Upkeep of the Berrima groves and their plaques on the by-passed old Hume highway is now the responsibility of the Berrima Residents Association allowing RDC to concentrate on its projects along the current motorway.

The identified site to be dedicated for the Keith Payne VC (Vietnam) rest stop awaits the protracted completion of a major reconstruction of an existing servo.

A current project, subject to funding, is to update the citation signs at the rest stops to a contemporary standard to attract public awareness.

A competition held in 2019 resulted in an appropriate memorial design for Valour



Park in the ACT to honour the four VC recipients from the Afghanistan conflict. Fund-raising for this project has been severely impacted by the ongoing virus pandemic.

RD Committee's legal right to raise funds throughout Australia was improved by creating a new company structure *Remembrance Driveway Council* – a company limited by guarantee.

Ken Bradley

RDC Hon. Secretary and GCA representative
Member, Kulnura & District Garden Club

Social Media Report

2019/2020 has been an exciting year for The Garden Clubs of Australia's social media presence. With Suzanne Bushell's assistance, we have dramatically increased our efforts to bring the GCA family together.

We now have the following Facebook pages:

- Garden Clubs of Australia
- Garden Clubs of Australia – Club activities
- Garden Clubs of Australia – Garden Gossip
- Garden Clubs of Australia – Community Gardens
- Garden Clubs of Australia – Zone Coordinators.

In the start, we worked hard to achieve a state where the pages are self-perpetuating and that is now the case with several of them. We are catering to the needs of all our members.

We now have approximately a third of our clubs posting on and sharing other club's activities. I have been posting videos on these pages and have received particularly good feedback.

We also have an Instagram page, although we have not been working that. Though not endorsed by the GCA, there is also a Facebook page for The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc AGM & Biennial Convention 2021.

Early this year (2020), the GCA bought its own copy of *Zoom* software. This has been shared with member clubs and some have even used it to hold their AGM.

Greg Ruckert

President, Liliun and Bulb Society of South Australia

Web Administrator Report

The GCA website in general has not operated up to expectations with a change to the use of WordPress and change of controls in email administration.



GCA Home Page: The layout of the GCA website Home Page is in transition. Changes proposed by Greg Ruckert and approved by the GCA Committee to convert the structure will facilitate a new look and access to information. The layout will be based on the importance of information and the ability of GCA Affiliates to directly input change of details when positions and contact details change, such as newly-elected Committee members of their respective clubs. The lifting of other limitations will ensure that the website is clearer and defined for smaller devices as many users now use iPhones and iPads.

This Home Page has been a wealth of information and was used to advantage for the President's messages and, in particular, with messages to communicate our support of the many Affiliates in many regions of Australia affected by the bushfire crisis, including our President's hometown in the North Coast of NSW.

The loss of Monika Ross as our Secretary and David Gemmell as Insurance Officer during the year caused contact detail problems and I wish them good health in their future gardening endeavours.

The website included many of the photos submitted for the Photographic Competition and it certainly enhanced the website.

Diary Dates:

1. Many Diary Dates were cancelled as our Affiliates went with the ebb and flow of their respective State/Territory controlled decisions on COVID-19 effects.
2. A number of clubs have resumed activities and, of course, observing social distancing but unsure of its application for more general public events. Therefore, our Affiliates are flexible with notification of events and mindful of public concerns and attitudes.
3. The entry of data has been flexible to reflect the ongoing situation.

Locate a Club:

1. 'Find a Club' was renamed to 'Locate a Club' and provided a separate Menu listing for that important list of Affiliated Clubs in their respective State/Territory. NSW remains divided into separate areas; however, this may change to an A-Z listing. All other States and Territories are listed A-Z.
2. The intervention of COVID-19 has caused much consternation with the almost daily changes to social restrictions and initial lockdowns affecting club activities.
3. The relevant Facebook and website links to Affiliated GCA clubs are very important as they allow prospective members to link directly to clubs providing detail of location and events that are proceeding or forecasted by them.
4. The Membership Secretary provides the data, updating changes in the Locate a Club pages. Thank you, Deidre, for the timely provision of information against great personal odds and you will be missed by me. However, this should change with the new structure of the website.



Photographic and Calendar Competition: Congratulations to Paul Lucas on his management of these pages over the last six years. His innovation, information and judgement in the immediate future is going to be hard to replace and I wish Paul all of the accolades he deserves in a very busy gardening club involvement.

Web Links: Many communications complementing the Links Page have been received with an increasing interest being placed on links to 'Kid's Gardening' websites.

Our Gardens Magazine: Feedback from Affiliated GCA clubs has been invaluable in their courteous appreciation of the GCA's flagship magazine. The support from Judy Horton as the Editor of *Our Gardens* has been outstanding and it is just a bonus for Judy to be continuing the quality produced in the editing and production of this beautiful quarterly publication. I would suggest that publishing popular articles from the archives of previous *Our Gardens* issues would increase the interest and an initiative to Affiliated GCA clubs to submit and share their own experiences. I estimate that it provides an insight to casual web visitors to the GCA website of the quality information, articles and photos that have been previously published.

Readings: This was an important addition to the web pages as it provides informative articles across the sector of general gardening topics to assist our Affiliates in the diversity of the world we live in. Congratulations to John Kitt in providing the material during the year.

Annual General Meeting 2019: What a wonderful experience Norfolk Island was as a venue for this biannual event! The gardening community on the Island was extraordinary and, as an attending member, it was a happening never to be forgotten. Our President, George Hoad, as event coordinator, with the Norfolk Island Garden Club performed admirably and provided all of the Affiliates attending with memories that will be cherished for a long time to come. The AGM event in Townsville next year will no doubt provide another diverse venue showing the wonderful array of Affiliate locations within the GCA family to enjoy and benefit from.

General:

With the pending changes to the GCA website, I would like to suggest that:

- a. Affiliated GCA clubs be encouraged to send in digital images of the events of their activities which therefore can be shared with other Affiliated GCA clubs around Australia in these dynamic times.
- b. as some Affiliated Clubs decrease with volunteers in the website and/or Facebook areas, I would encourage more of them to forward information to the GCA for assistance in producing pdfs when preparing events as required.
- c. the History Page will be an exciting addition.
- d. Zone Coordinators be encouraged to foster the use of the GCA website in their respective districts with articles on their respective interactions with the respective clubs in their zones.



George Hoad will no longer be President of the GCA as his term has to be finalised at this year's AGM. No better ambassador could we find. His popularity and regard here in WA and no doubt with all GCA Affiliates he visited around Australia has done so much to bring our organisation onto the national stage. George's initiative to introduce the National Gardening Week is perhaps his everlasting contribution to share 'Friendship through Gardens'.

I would also like to thank the GCA Committee members for their patience and support in my role as Web Administrator during this past year and I look forward to using a more sophisticated and flexible website for our Affiliates in 2020-2021.

Eric Bateman



