



Wentworth Falls Garden Club Inc. Affiliated with The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc.

WFGC President's Annual Report 2019-2020

"The best laid schemes o' mice an' men/ Gang aft a-gley." Robert Burns certainly got that one right in his poem *To a Mouse* as far as 2020 is concerned. Our plans have definitely gone astray recently. Looking back over the last Garden Club year our usual activities have been curtailed by the emergence of the COVID-19 virus and pandemic.

Membership numbers continued to be strong this year having maintained 130 in all. We were able to fulfill our meeting plans from July to December 2019 and mean attendance at meetings for the year was 76. For the first three months of this year it was 74. Jane Stockel brought us up to date with all things in garden design in July, showing magnificent pictures of the Chelsea Flower Show and bringing her linen collection for us to see and maybe purchase something special. In August Mary Moody entertained us with stories of her years on *Gardening Australia* and many other tales besides.

The last three speakers for the year were very garden-focused. David Kennedy introduced us to his new garden enterprise, *Highfields*, at Little Hartley. He always brings a varied selection of plants for purchase too. Lloyd Sharp spoke about 'Edible Heritage Plants', which was a real encouragement for the vegetable gardeners among us. It was all about irises in November. Dianna van Gaal gave us valuable information about raising and caring for irises, which can be found on our website in the Garden Tips section.

Our Christmas lunch at the Heritage Hotel in Katoomba was a very special occasion. Bushfire smoke hid the view of Mt Solitary and the Jamison Valley but it could not dampen the Christmas spirit. A wonderful meal and excellent service encouraged us to book again and we hope to repeat the experience this December.

The dreadful summer of bushfires continued into January and our speaker, Peta Trahar, was unable to leave her Bilpin property, which was under threat, to speak to us. Jackie Anstis of the Nepean and Blue Mountains Herb Society stepped in at very short notice thankfully and spoke about some of the uses of medicinal herbs. Robin Bible has great depth of knowledge on her special subject and gave us a fascinating talk in February on geraniums and pelargoniums and their care. Little did we know at the March meeting that Judy Horton was to be our last speaker for this year. Her talk on the 'History of the Backyard' was most informative.

It was clear by then that we could hold no further meetings, neither committee nor general meetings, due to the spread of the Corona virus and State Health regulations. We have been keeping in touch with members by continuing with a monthly newsletter. Each month a member has kindly come forward to share with us their gardening philosophy, progress and pictures of their garden and

produce in a *My Garden* article. The committee has been able to meet again since early June, socially distancing and wearing masks, as we negotiate how to organise an online AGM, delayed until September rather than in July, as usual.

After filling the role of President for three years it is now time for me to step down. It has been a most enjoyable experience made possible by this very hardworking committee. My thanks go to them for making all their portfolios run smoothly and providing such a happy atmosphere for our members in which to enjoy all things gardening. We have also recorded what things need to be done in each committee role so when a new member takes over there are guidelines to follow. Thanks also go to all the non-committee members who volunteer at General Meetings and provide extra hands-on assistance. We couldn't run our meetings successfully without you.

Barry Butler has decided it is time for him to retire from the committee. He has been an active member since 2005 and in those fifteen years has been a mainstay of the club. He has convened the library and been opening up the hall and keeping the lights and heating on as well as organising and recording membership, which is a time-consuming task in itself. We will miss his advice, his reliability and his humour. Thank you so much Barry. We look forward to seeing you at General Meetings in the future.

Best wishes to the new committee and all our members. I hope to see you on the other side of this shut down. In the mean time, enjoy your gardens. We will be back!

Carol

Carol Conway