

PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

Presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Wentworth Falls Garden Club Inc on Thursday 14th July, 2016.

Today marks the end of two happy years as President of this club. It's a role that has helped me make lots of friends and acquaintances up here in the mountains and there is nothing like being able to say hello to one or two familiar faces when you are feeling a bit lonely or down in the dumps. I have happily nominated to have a third year as President and, if elected today, this will be my last year as our constitution only allows a three-year term. I believe that many of the garden clubs have the same stipulation. It works well on two counts: firstly, when you put your hand up to take on this role, you know you can't be stuck with it for 20 years, and by the same token it gives the members a totally different person with different ideas and style to carry the club forward. Some of our present committee have chosen to be there for a number of years, and two of them were new to the committee last year so we have both fresh and interesting ideas coupled with some long-standing history. Each and every one of them needs to be acknowledged for their huge and vital role in the running of this club.

We happen to have three of our members who are part of the Leura Gardens Festival committee and one of these is a GCA committee member. This means the chain of communication is always open. We are affiliated with Garden Clubs of Australia and are part of an Australia-wide network of like-minded gardeners. As a minimum, this affiliation gives us our insurances, but it also produces the quarterly "Our Gardens" magazine, which is a beautiful publication that we as a club subscribe to and which is always available to you in our library.

A representative few of us attend zone meetings three times per year. It's a great excuse to catch up with other garden club committee members, and in the past it was an essential way of resource and information sharing. However, with websites and the efficiency of email the role of these zone meetings is now being reassessed.

Our own website works well. We find the general public are using it as we get enquiries from prospective members through the website. We post our meeting minutes, info sheets, monthly rosters etc on the website so that you as members can also use it when you need to. It is one of those things that the more we use it, then the more we use it, if you know what I mean!

We introduced our club email address about 12 months ago (to be found on our website if any of you need to contact one of us and don't have details), and whilst we are extremely conscious of not bombarding the members with emails, we have found it very useful. All of our membership details, our finances, our

newsletters, miscellaneous publications, rosters, trip plans etc are done electronically. All of the committee are computer literate and this makes our lives so much simpler. We seem to be making good use of the technology that is available to us.

One of the ongoing problems that many of the clubs report is a lack of helpers and, in fact, a couple of clubs are having serious problems with getting people to put their hands up. We don't! It is a bit embarrassing because I can sincerely say that our club does not have these issues. After the zone meeting last Saturday I thought about why we are OK and I think one of the reasons is a matter of critical mass. By this I mean that we have the right number of members. It hovers around the 130 mark and I think that we are numerous enough to be able to share the load, so that we don't feel that everything falls on only a couple of shoulders. I also think it's a situation where the more people volunteer, the more volunteers we get. I will not name names because I will leave people out, but this year I was particularly aware of the value-adding by members from which we also benefit hugely. Six of our committee members have family members who are helpers behind the scenes. And we have teams of people who contribute to morning tea, hall set-up, plant stall, guest speakers, trips and library.

The biggest disasters we faced this year occurred when one of the guest speakers left his workplace too late to arrive on time – but he very readily came up two months later and what a great speaker he was – and no June meeting due to Council overbooking: you all got sick of me reminding you about this but it was a time for the committee and all of the helpers associated with a general meeting to have a bit of a welcome break. So not so serious!!

If you aren't an active part of the working crew, you are an integral part of this club because you attend meetings and create a friendly and supportive atmosphere. I know that many of you are also actively involved in other clubs and projects – too many to name but such dedication and drive contributes hugely to an active community of which Wentworth Falls Garden Club is a part.

Thank you,
Celeste Shadie.