



## CAMPERDOWN BOTANIC GARDENS AND ARBORETUM TRUST INC

Newsletter no 13

Autumn 2016

### Kiwi plants in the spotlight

We are very pleased to have Sydney heritage landscape specialist Stuart Read to give our next talk. Stuart will be in Camperdown on Saturday 16 April to speak about the introduction of New Zealand plants into Australian gardens.

New Zealand plants have a special place in the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum. Everyone who visits, and certainly every child, will have admired or climbed on the *Olearia paniculata* (below). It's known in New Zealand as Akiraho, but it isn't common enough to have a common name here. A more well-known Kiwi is the Cabbage Tree (*Cordyline australis*). Some huge old ones grow around our picnic shelter. These are just two species in our growing collection of plants from across The Ditch.

**Stuart Read**  
**Theatre Royal, Camperdown**  
**Saturday 16 April**  
**2.00 pm**



Above: Stuart Read hosted a tour of Guilfoyle sites in Sydney for the Australian Garden History Society.



Above: Children enjoy the Akiraho tree (*Olearia paniculata*), one of the special New Zealand plants in our garden.



Above: New Zealand Cabbage Trees (*Cordyline australis*) are a feature of our garden.



## The threat is not dead yet

Just before our VCAT appeal was due to be heard against Council's decision to allow 10 new structures in the caravan park, we were offered a deal. The permit application would be withdrawn if we would withdraw our appeal. We agreed, and the building proposal was off.

This turnaround came after the necessary heritage permit had been rejected. Eight of the proposed structures were knocked back, and a permit issued only for two amenity buildings – with stringent conditions.

**Heritage Victoria assessed the proposal as having a significant impact on the site, no net benefit to the heritage values of the place, and a detrimental impact on the arboretum.**

Trust members and keen onlookers from the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, and the Australian Garden History Society were relieved to hear this decision. However, the applicants will make an appeal to the Heritage Council. It will be heard in Camperdown in June. We are confident the decision will be affirmed and the proposal rejected.

This whole unpleasant exercise has brought to light the need for a better understanding of the site, its values and significance. It has also focused attention on just what it means for a place to have the highest level of protection by listing on the Victorian Heritage Register.

This episode has also revealed Corangamite Shire Council's privatisation agenda. While identifying pieces of land in the Shire that are 'surplus to requirements', Council officers have – without any public discussion – decided that our historic botanic garden and arboretum site should be parcelled up and leased or licenced to private interests.

It is true that the place has had minimal resources put in over many years and shows obvious signs of that neglect, but this was precisely why the CBGA Trust was started – to help turn that around!

A 20-year lease of 15 hectares on the western slope to the caravan park proprietors was averted at the December 2015 Council meeting. But it remains apparent that Council intends to retain only the 1.2 hectare fenced botanic garden. Instead of a caravan park in a botanic garden and arboretum, we can expect to have only the small botanic garden spoiled by an ever-expanding 'holiday park' business.

Where is the pride in this special place and enthusiasm for its future? Health and wellbeing are important issues for our local population, and there is plenty of talk about the need to attract more visitors and new residents to the region. We should be investing in our most significant public park and botanic garden as we attempt to meet these challenges.

Rather than having to devote our energies and funds to deflecting plans for the destruction of this place, we should be getting on with appreciating and improving it.



Above: The take-over of the front entrance and drive, and overflow parking, are just some of the ways the caravan park business is being allowed to spoil what should be a beautiful public park.

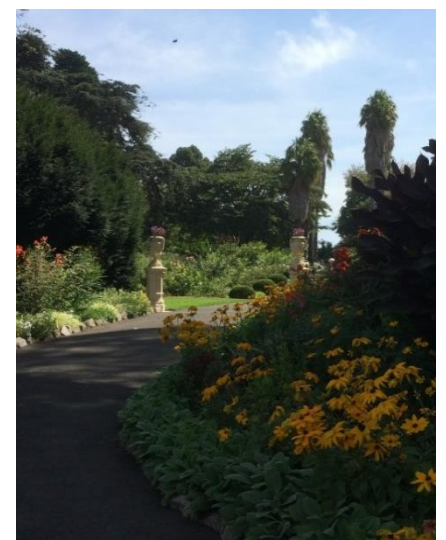
## Conservation Management Plan

In June 2015 Council finally announced funding for a Conservation Management Plan for the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum site. A CMP is a vital first step for informing future uses and development of a heritage place. However, progress has been slow. It is now April 2016 and the steering committee has met only once. The specialist heritage consulting firm Context has been engaged, but no 'steering' of the project has been happening. Leases, licences and caravan park developments are all being prematurely considered, while the CMP is on the backburner.

## Friends conference hosted by Geelong

The Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens will hold its annual conference at Geelong from 29 April to 1 May. The theme is: **Geelong – Regional Relevance: botanic environments and their survival in a time of global warming.** The program is packed with interesting speakers and activities, and something to interest all garden lovers. See the conference program at <http://www.friendsgbg.org.au/aafbg-conference/program>

Two of our committee members are looking forward to attending. The CBGA Trust is a member of the AAFBG. It is an active network of Friends groups, which supports and encourages the appreciation of botanic gardens and parks in both regional and metropolitan areas across Australia.



Right: Autumn display in the perennial border at Geelong Botanic Gardens.



## BGANZ executive to meet in Camperdown

Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) will hold its Victorian executive meeting in Camperdown on 11 May. BGANZ is the peak body representing botanic gardens and arboreta throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Victorian chair, John Arnott (right) horticulture manager at Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, and former director at Geelong, said the group was looking forward to the visit.



'Most of us are familiar with other South West botanic gardens, particularly at Warrnambool and Colac but many haven't had the opportunity to have a look at Camperdown'.

BGANZ holds regular forums and conferences to share information and promote the interests of botanic gardens and arboreta, from large capital cities to small regional towns.



Above: A BGANZ forum at Werribee Park in March 2016.



Above: BGANZ members at Wollongong Botanic Gardens during for the bi-annual conference in November 2015.



### What's growing?

#### Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*)

One of the tallest trees in the world, the Redwood from California can grow to over 100 metres. The single specimen at the centre of our garden is one of a number of conifers dating from the 1800s. Two more grow in our Arboretum.

In the Otways there is a plantation (below) dating from the 1930s, where visitors can experience the cathedral-like atmosphere of a forest of these magnificent trees.





## Working bees

In 2016, working bees will continue on the second Sunday of the month, with a 9.00 am start.

Autumn is a good time for planting – when we get some rain – and we have dozens of new plants to go in. There is a good supply of tools in the potting shed and everyone is welcome.

We finish up with morning tea in the picnic shelter.

It's a good way to do your bit to help keep the Gardens looking good and have a pleasant social Sunday morning as well.



Above: Leon Morrissey gets ready for some autumn raking.

## Dates to remember

Sunday 10 April	9 am Working bee
Saturday 16 April	2 pm Public talk by Stuart Read
29 April – 1 May	AAFBG conference in Geelong
8 May	9 am Working bee

## What's growing?

### Silver Plectranthus (*Plectranthus argentatus*)

With its velvety leaves and delicate spikes of pale lilac flowers, the Silver Plectranthus is a beautiful ground-cover beneath the Norfolk Pine near the entrance to the Gardens. It's an easy plant to propagate from cuttings, grows quickly and thrives in shade.

There are around 350 species in the genus *Plectranthus*, most from the Southern Hemisphere. This one is a rainforest plant from the border of New South Wales and Queensland.



## Warrnambool's 150th

A fabulous *Night in the Gardens* was celebrated by 300 people on 19 March at Warrnambool. It was one of several events to mark their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A photo competition and well restoration are also planned.

Colac Botanic Gardens celebrated their 150<sup>th</sup> last year with the publication of a book about the history of the Gardens, a renovated rose arbour and a special floral display bed (see below).

In 2019 it will be 150 years since the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum was first reserved as a public park. Now is a good time to start thinking about how we will celebrate.



Photo: [www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2015/01/21/4165911.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2015/01/21/4165911.htm)