Garden Clubs OF AUSTRALIA

The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc.

Annual Report 30 June 2021

Photos above by David Clode.

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

Front and back covers: Spectacular tropical Townsville will be the location for the 2022 GCA Biennial National Convention in September, hosted by the Townsville & District Garden Club Inc. Immerse yourself in the wonders of North Queensland's unspoilt rainforest, the Great Barrier Reef and endless summery days. Grateful thanks to Shirley Haslam and members of the Townsville & District Garden Club Inc. for their photos on the covers. Contact Shirley Haslam for more Convention information: **perfect2021@gmail.com** or 0438 253 312

THE ORGANISATION OF THE GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA INC. as at 30 June 2021

President	Lorraine Emerson	president@gardenclubs.org.au
Vice President and Planning	John Kitt	planning@gardenclubs.org.au
Secretary	Jo Saxon-Keith	secretary@gardenclubs.org.au
Treasurer	Frances Cairns	treasurer@gardenclubs.org.au
Awards	Elizabeth Dobson	awards@gardenclubs.org.au
Calendar Competition and Photographic Competition	Paul Lucas	photocomp@gardenclubs.org.au calendar@gardenclubs.org.au
Communications and *Bulletin*	Lynne Faux	communications@gardenclubs.org.au
Director of Zones North Eastern (covering QLD, NSW & ACT) and Facebook Administration	Paul McQueen	nedirectorzones@gardenclubs.org.au gcafacebook@gardenclubs.org.au
Director of Zones South Western (covering VIC, TAS, SA, WA & Norfolk Island)	Heather Pryor	swdirectorzones@gardenclubs.org.au
Insurance Officer	Eric Bateman	insurance@gardenclubs.org.au
Membership Secretary	Jacqui Bateman	membership@gardenclubs.org.au
National Gardening Week Ambassador	George Hoad AM	ghoad@internode.on.net
***Our Gardens* Magazine Committee:**		
Advertising Coordinator	Kim Peterson	
Editorial & Horticultural Consultant	Judy Horton OAM	editor@gardenclubs.org.au
Club news	Carolyn Dawes	
Diary Dates	Wendy Whitham	
Distribution coordinator	David Lambert	
Proofing and Finance	Virginia Fischer	
Subscriptions	Rob Horton	
Public Officer	Frances Cairns	treasurer@gardenclubs.org.au
Remembrance Driveway	Ken Bradley	
Web Administrator	Eric Bateman	webadmin@gardenclubs.org.au

Overview

There can be no doubt that the complex and difficult circumstances we all have faced in individual clubs and within the GCA organisation have been testing. Many of the contributions contained in this Annual Report for 2020–2021 have made this very clear.

However, within this collection of reports of our various activities and services lies 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 and attract new members through creative inspiration and the appeal that gardening has for so many.

However, if the numbers of Affiliates and their individual members are any guide, The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc. has never been stronger. Community gardens have expanded in size and in numbers across the nation. This particular shoot is not fragile; we are excited to see so much happening in this area of gardening.

"Friendship" has been our focus for 71 years and we must never allow this to diminish within our organisation. The difficulties we all have managed well for almost the whole of 2020 and into 2021 are 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
Vice President

Report from the President

At the Annual General Meeting of The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc. (GCA) in 2020, conducted for the first time in its history by *Zoom*, members resolved to adopt an amended Constitution, which, in line with national best practice for Not-For-Profit organisations, resulted in the reduction in the number of Committee Members to no more than twelve. Consequently, a number of our long-serving members retired, including the President at the time, George Hoad AM, Vice President David Lambert, Director of Zones Glenys Bruun, Judges' Registrar Jeanette Chown and Membership Secretary Deirdre McLoughlin. We thank them for their long collective service to the GCA and wish them well for their continued gardening activities.

Five committee members were not returned at the AGM: Lindy Bonser, Suzanne Bushell, Janice Graham, Greg Lane and Greg Ruckert. We thank them also for their contributions to the GCA Committee.

The past twelve months have been difficult for our Affiliates and for the GCA. The COVID pandemic has curtailed many normal activities across Australia and, at this time, we are all only just beginning to see our lives as members of the largest gardening organisation in Australia return to normal. However, this has also been a period when Australians rediscovered the pleasures of gardening. Activity in the vegetable garden has exploded across the nation and, as will be reported later in this summary, there has been unprecedented growth in Community Gardens GCA membership. We welcome these gardeners as we do with all Affiliates, and we are working to provide the services you would expect from us.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of calendar year 2021, membership of the GCA has continued to grow. Despite the difficult times, our membership currently stands at 758 Affiliates, an increase of 24, while individual membership of Affiliates has increased by 4000 to over 52 000 gardeners.

The National Committee has met on six occasions during the year, four of which have been by video conferencing. It has taken this Committee time to adjust to these processes but with a view to managing the GCA's affairs in a more cost-effective manner, we will be continuing these arrangements into the future.

Moving from an emphasis on portfolio management by Committee Members to one of corporate and collective responsibility has not been without its tensions. These were expected and we continue to work through processes to ensure that we meet the needs of our Affiliates, expand our services and deliver value for money for membership of the GCA.

Our National Gardening Week program during the past year, which was to focus on trees (following the disasters of fires and drought in much of Australia) was not able to deliver what we had hoped. Of course, COVID-19 also limited activities. In 2021–2022, under the leadership of our National Gardening Week Ambassador, George Hoad AM, we will encourage gardeners to REST, RELAX and RECUPERATE and prepare for more exciting developments in 2023.

We look forward with considerable anticipation to the National Convention of the GCA to be held in Townsville, Queensland in September 2022. This will be the first time we have gathered as an organisation in North Queensland. The Townsville and District Garden Club Inc has worked tirelessly on developing presentations and activities to make this a memorable event for all attendees. Tropical gardening has its own features and challenges and no doubt we will all learn

from the program offered and, of course, experience the legendary hospitality of North Queenslanders.

The significant development from the GCA perspective of 2020–2021 has been the appointment, by the GCA Committee, of two Directors of Zones: one to support clubs in Queensland, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory, while the other supports Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Norfolk Island. In the spirit of "Friendship through Gardening", both Directors are working assiduously to improve relationships between the GCA and Zones, and between Zones themselves with the development and launch of revised handbook to assist Zone Coordinators with their responsibilities. On behalf of the GCA Committee, I would like to congratulate both Heather Pryor and Paul McQueen on the progress they have made under difficult circumstances. We have confidence that the two Zones and their respective Zone Coordinators will be a positive force in Australian gardening into the future.

Similarly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the GCA Executive, all Committee Members and all Zone Coordinators for their contribution and tireless efforts in advancing the interests of GCA Affiliates and their members.

Lorraine Emerson
President of The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc.

Honorary Treasurer's Report

- As might be expected following a year of such disruption and difficulty, the GCA had a financial loss of $32 839 for the financial year 2020/2021. A deficit was predicted in my 2020 AGM report. The 2020/2021 year has seen the continuance of the global pandemic, along with floods, wind and electrical storms throughout Australia resulting in financial hardships for many. During this time, our resilience has been tested and the GCA Committee has endeavoured to keep the organisation running as smoothly as possible. You may feel stuck at home during lockdowns, but really you are safer at home. The thrust now is to become fully vaccinated in order to climb out of it.
- The financial records of the GCA for the 2020/21 year have been audited by National Audits Group and they have produced a financial report for that period (refer to pages below) based on conditions existing at 30 June 2021. During the process of their audit work, they identified Revenue recognition as a medium risk management issue. The problem is that the GCA calendar year is January to December as opposed to the financial year July to June. As the Auditors need to comply with Accounting Standards, Corporations Law and Association Regulations, a proportion of revenue now needs to be deferred to the following year as Revenue in advance.
- The loss of GCA funds, after providing for income tax, amounted to $34 001 – compared to the loss of $4291 year ending 30 June 2020. President Lorraine Emerson and Treasurer Frances signed off on the report.
- 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 were no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

- Income for the year was $202 009 which was a decrease of $33 580 over the 2019/20 year. This decrease is represented by the reduction in *Our Gardens* advertising and Affiliation fees. As many garden events were cancelled due to COVID restrictions, there were fewer advertisements and Affiliation fees were reduced from $75 per annum to $40 to assist Affiliates with their depleted finances. This decision was made by the Committee in view of the healthy bank balance held by GCA.
- Adding to the increase in the financial loss for 2020/21, although expenditure for the year decreased from the previous year by $1991, more was spent on Zones, software, printing and badges due to the change in Committee structure, change in GCA logo and the extra thrust in supporting Zone Coordinators and developing new Zones.
- The disruption to finances and operations has been brought about by COVID-19 and outside of our control. It was not expected that we would be in the second year of the pandemic. With constantly changing regulations and restrictions, it has been difficult for most Affiliates to continue their clubs in ways familiar to them and it is uncertain how much longer this will continue.

Frances Cairns
Hon. Treasurer

National Audits Group
Authorised Audit Company No: 325055

THE GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA INC
ABN: 74 058 867 744

AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

We declare that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2021 there have been no contraventions of:

(i) the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Associations Incorporations Act 2009 (NSW)* in relation to the audit; and

(ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

National Audits Group Pty Ltd
Authorised Audit Company

Didarul Khan
Registered Company Auditor

Dated : 3 September 2021

THE GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED
ABN 74 058 867 744

STATEMENT OF INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

	Note	2021 $	2020 $
INCOME			
OTHER INCOME			
Insurance certificate		96,858	93,880
Interest received		4,592	8,497
Magazine advertising income		23,200	27,855
Magazine subscriptions		55,155	55,151
Affiliation fees		20,468	43,551
Events income		2,442	2,482
Convention income		-	3,581
Gross profit from trading		(706)	592
		202,009	235,589
EXPENDITURE			
Auditors' remuneration		5,200	7,000
Accounting Fees		4,000	1,396
AWC Expenses		628	93
Badges and Gifts - Committee Members		3,222	-
Bank charges		591	514
Calendar		898	132
Courier Charges		22	68
Donations		-	5,000
Filing Fees		47	99
Hardware expenses		3,344	-
Insurance		66,579	64,659
Internet and telephone		1,382	130
Judges - Badges		-	525
Legal Fees		6,423	14,059
Magazines - printing, postage		72,909	68,170
Meeting expenses		3,173	4,574
Postage		1,621	2,998
Photo Competition Prizes		2,700	1,686
Planning Books & Communication		125	1,406
Printing and photocopying		13,701	10,371
Promotions		447	-
Repairs & Maintenance		45	50
Software expenses		2,269	1,250
Subscriptions - RHS		46	46
Sundry Expenses		74	369
Storage Fees		113	260
Travelling expenses		30,549	37,967
Website Designer Fees		5,860	10,448
Zone expenses		8,880	3,569
		234,848	236,839
Profit (loss) before income tax		(32,839)	(1,250)
Income tax expense	2	(1,162)	(3,041)
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year		136,176	140,467
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year		102,175	136,176

THE GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED
ABN 74 058 867 744

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

	Note	2021 $	2020 $
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	422,499	455,259
Inventories	4	397	1,203
Provision for taxes	5	5,637	1,638
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		428,533	458,100
TOTAL ASSETS		428,533	458,100
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Other Current Liabilities		4,434	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		4,434	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES		4,434	-
NET ASSETS		424,099	458,100
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Retained earnings	6	102,175	136,176
Members' Capital		321,924	321,924
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		424,099	458,100

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Awards Committee Report

GCA Awards
Awards were made in seven categories. They were announced at the AGM held on 29 September 2020 via Zoom. Winners' details were published in *Our Gardens Summer 2020–21* and on the website. The criteria for each award along with details are listed on the GCA website: www.gardenclubs.org.au

President of GCA Award for outstanding contribution by an individual to gardening/ horticulture:
Co-Winners: George L Thomson – Naracoorte Garden Club, SA and
Charles Smith – Scamander Garden Club, TAS

Margaret Davis Award for outstanding service by an individual to The Garden Clubs of Australia Inc.
Winner: Dot Kite – Killcare Heights Garden Club, NSW

Eleanor McLeod Award for outstanding service by an Affiliated Club to the community.
Winner: Millaa Millaa Garden Club, QLD

Doris Killian Award for outstanding service by an individual to the community.
Winner: Suzanne Zwar – SE Branch of The Rose Society of SA

Young Gardener of the Year Award for outstanding contribution to gardening/ horticulture by a young gardener.
Winner: Rebekah Trevor – Nominated by Sunshine Coast Bromeliad Society Inc., QLD

Gwendy Hansford Award for outstanding service by an individual or club to the environment.
Winner: Ron Fauntleroy – Peel Region Orchid Society, WA

Joan O'Brien Award for achieving excellence by an individual in floral art.
Winner: Gaye Ellis – Scamander Garden Club, TAS

Ann Williams Clark Medallion (pictured right)
Since its inception in 2011, 207 Ann Williams Clark Medallions have been awarded, including 22 this year. The Ann Williams Clark Medallion enables Affiliates to acknowledge the contribution that a member makes to the club or society. The concept of awarding this medallion is part of many Affiliates' annual presentations. The nomination form is available on the GCA website. Applications can be made at any time, however, one nomination per club per calendar year is permitted.

Elizabeth Dobson
Awards Coordinator

Calendar Competition

The lovely **2022 Calendar** is selling well. The continued wide range of members who entered the **2022 Calendar** competition and the variety of scenes and flowers they imaginatively photographed all over Australia meant that it was again difficult to choose the images eventually selected as the **2022 Calendar** winners.

The Calendar is an ideal gift for giving to relatives and friends both throughout Australia and particularly overseas; and for Affiliates to consider providing as a gift to guest speakers or as a prize for activities on their meeting nights until early in 2022.

Members and magazine subscribers are encouraged to submit Australian garden scenes and photos of plants, etc. taken in Australia for the 2023 Calendar.

The simple 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 being published in the Calendar.

Members and magazine subscribers can submit as many digital images taken in Australia as they wish, **with no entry fee**.

The closing date for 2023 Calendar entries is 15 February 2022.

Paul Lucas
Annual Calendar Competition Coordinator

Communications Report

This is the first report to the membership on the activities undertaken under the banner of Communications. The objective of this role is to aggregate the information that we need to share with Affiliates so that there is a unified source and distribution of details to be readily available to all. At present, the role involves the publication of the *Bulletin*, which is distributed after each Committee meeting, and an involvement with the Directors of Zones in managing the GCA Facebook Page. No doubt this will expand as we progress.

Much of our interaction with Affiliates is conducted by email, although there is a small number of Affiliates without this facility. In preparing the distribution of information, we are assuming that Affiliates will forward copies to their members who have email accounts and, where necessary, printed copies at meetings.

The role of Communications cannot be successful without your support and cooperation. Please assist us in this way.

Lynne Faux
Communications Officer

Director of Zones North Eastern Report

This report covers my first year in the position of Director of Zones North Eastern (NE). Originally the national zones were covered by one person, Glenys Bruun, but after the elections in late 2020, the new National Committee decided that the Directorship needed to be split into two units to adequately cover continental Australia. We now have Joint Directors of Zones. The South Western Director of Zones is Heather Pryor who covers Affiliates located in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory. The North Eastern Director of Zones is myself, Paul McQueen, and I cover Affiliates located in Queensland, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory. The new system has worked extremely well during the past year.

North Eastern Zone Management

It was evident, from many of the Zone Coordinators' feedback, that some people struggled with the position when they first started. They indicated a need for an improvement in the initial training, and suggested that a handbook was urgently required. This type of guidebook would help new Zone Coordinators to get a better idea of what was being expected of them in their new role. However, such a handbook needed to be a basic 101 guide.

From the Directorship point of view, we realised the importance of this document in the training of new Zone Coordinators. The GCA National Committee regards the Zone Coordinator roles as the most important groupings within the Association. Zone Coordinators are our ambassadors and liaison people who build and strengthen the ties between the GCA and Affiliates. Therefore, trainees need to be provided with an indepth description of the job requirements. Following Committee review, the final version of the Handbook is now published and will be launched at the 2021 National Convention.

There is a requirement for feedback from our Affiliates. Creating the new role of Affiliate Coordinator should help bridge and strengthen the gaps while increasing the information flow in a two-way fashion between Affiliates, Zone Coordinators and joint Directors. It is encouraging that Affiliate Coordinators have started to be appointed by Affiliate Committees.

During last year, 11 Zone Coordinators either resigned or retired leaving 110 Affiliates not serviced by a Zone Coordinator. There are currently 22 Zones serviced by a Zone Coordinator covering 306 Affiliates while 4 Zone Coordinators service more than one Zone, totalling 83 Affiliates.

A considerable amount of work is required to recruit new Zone Coordinators and to reorganise Zones so that the role is manageable.

The issues currently being addressed are:

- Improving our service to our Affiliates
- Improving the communication between the various Coordinator levels
- Addressing size of Zones and distances to travel within Zones
- Increasing Zone Coordinator numbers
- Recruiting Affiliate Coordinators
- Getting the experienced Zone Coordinators to act as mentors.

The above issues maybe slow and frustrating to resolve, however, the joint Directors of Zones feel improvements are achievable. The path into the future must be conducted as a cohesive unit. Positive conversations with positive contributions and input from all levels of our Association will help resolve these issues quickly.

Dr Paul McQueen
North Eastern Director of Zones

Director of Zones South Western Report

As mentioned in the report of the North Eastern Director of Zones, Dr Paul McQueen, the task of working on the newly split national Zones has been challenging. My role is to care and cooperate with all GCA Zones in Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Norfolk Island. As you can see, this covers a large part of our wonderful country.

The initial Zone Coordinators' Survey, sent out to all current Zone Coordinators, returned some interesting results and joint Director of Zones, Dr Paul McQueen, and I are working on assisting Zone Coordinators to resolve some of the issues they face.

My initial priority is to get to know the Zone Coordinators personally, but the COVID-19 outbreak has made interstate travel more difficult than usual. This challenge is more relevant as I live in Tasmania and every interstate trip is an 'overseas' one - and Tasmania has been rather strict with its border controls. However, the internet has proven to be a great asset and communication has not necessarily been 'face-to-face', but it has still been important.

Like the NE area, there are a number of Zones in the SW area that do not have a current Zone Coordinator and/or an active Zone Coordinator and my No. 1 priority is to get those Zones back up in running order. I ask those Affiliates who do not have a current Zone Coordinator to please start a conversation with me about this, so that we can work together to make things better. We are all on the same team, with the same goals, after all.

Paul Mc Queen and I have been working for several months on the creation of a new *Handbook for New and Current Zone Coordinators*. This new publication will set out responsibilities, give ideas, support and encourage current Zone Coordinators to be more proactive.

During the last year, several Zone Coordinators have resigned or retired:

- Robyn Russell, North East and North West Tasmania
- Beryl Crabb, Mid-North and Yorke, SA
- Margaret Wright, Perth Southern, WA.

On behalf of the GCA, I wish to recognise the many years of service that these Zone Coordinators have provided for the betterment of their respective Zones and the Affiliate members in their Zones.

I am also delighted to advise that a new Zone Coordinator has been appointed:
Kathy Farr, North East and North West Tasmania.

The following two Zones do not currently have a Zone Coordinator and I would encourage

affiliated club members in those Zones to contact me to consider taking on this important and rewarding role:

Geelong/Bellarine Peninsular, VIC Perth Southern, WA.

As with so many things in life, one tends to 'get out of life' what one 'puts into life' and the role of a GCA Zone Coordinator can be as complicated, rewarding and involved as you want to make it. The best way to achieve 'Friendship through Gardens' is to get involved. I encourage you all to do so.

Heather Pryor
South Western Director of Zones

Insurance Report

There was minimal activity with Insurance matters at the end of 2020 mainly due to the restrictions placed on many of our Affiliates in the Eastern States with a limited number of members able to meet in one place. As a result, Zoom emerged as a convenient software tool to enable meetings. It also served the GCA Committee in meeting regularly as members are from all over Australia.

At the beginning of the renewal period, Affiliate secretaries received numerous forms to process and update but returns were very limited in that period.

However, as February progressed, many Affiliates were meeting for the first time and started to fulfil this requirement by sending in their respective Insured Member forms (GCA Form 2) resulting in a flood of paperwork to process and update records. Contributing to that factor was that many of our Affiliates found that AGMs scheduled for 2020 had to be held and a resultant change in contact details. Committee members had moved on (without notifying previous email access) and information for the GCA database had in some cases not been updated for several years. This resulted in the Membership Secretary working overtime to bring the GCA database up-to-date with so many changes rolling in. There was a lot of mid-night oil burnt entering changes. I commend Jacqui for her dedication to the task.

Time was of the essence and it was getting close to the **new Insurance period 30 April 2021 to 30 April 2022**. The normal delivery of the Insurance Certificates would have meant posting them out to all Affiliates. Given that there was a time constraint approaching with the renewed Insurance year, extremely slow postal delivery time experienced with Australia Post (e.g., one letter from Tasmania took 14 days for its arrival to Perth), it was decided that email was the quickest way to provide Affiliates with their account information and Certificates. Accounts were forwarded in the third week of April and then the Certificates of Currency were sent to the respective Affiliates once payment had been confirmed. All were processed extremely professionally with the aid of our Secretarial Agency and the wonderful work of our Treasurer, Frances Cairns.

Our Membership Secretary inducted over 20 new garden groups and there were many enquiries concerning insurance provisions as Affiliated Clubs' newly appointed Committee members wished to know details related to them were answered by phone and email. The

co-location of our Membership Secretary with me was a distinct advantage when these phone enquiries and emails were received resulting in immediate response, teamwork and cooperation.

Our broker, Trident Insurance's Account Manager Belinda Caunt, has been phenomenal in support of providing answers to more particular questions posed by Affiliates. Belinda processed claims and provided new Affiliates promptly with their respective Certificates of Currency. Based in Perth, it is very convenient to be able to converse with a GCA Insurance Officer face to face after a seven-year successful business relationship conducted at a distance.

For those attending the Townsville Convention, they will be able to meet and talk to Belinda and ask questions as she is one of the guest presenters on the day of the AGM.

It is important that the GCA is more effective in the having our Affiliates know of the coverage that their Certificates of Currency provide regarding the two separate policies we provide, defining the difference between Public Liability cover and Volunteer Workers (their insured members) cover as well as understanding how a gardening activity applies to them within their realm of gardening and the responsibilities they have to visitors. The policies are excellent and there are several other separate policies that cover circumstances that Affiliates should know about.

In the meantime, I recommend that Secretaries/Treasurers visit **https://gardenclubs.org.au/member-affiliation/** and **https://gardenclubs.org.au/gca-insurance/** on the GCA's website for information and answers.

Eric Bateman
Insurance Officer

Magazine Committee Report

As in so many other parts of life, 2020-21 was a difficult year for the *Our Gardens* magazine team. Despite many challenges, we are proud that the magazine has maintained its consistently high standard.

This year we have introduced two exciting changes to the way we run subscriptions to *Our Gardens:* we are offering digital subscriptions and an individual subscribers' lucky draw book prize.

The magazine's content continues to cover varied topics, such as individual plant groups, garden history, pest and disease updates and, most popular of all, individual gardener's stories. Every attempt is made to include contributions from all parts of Australia but, as we are dependent on voluntary contributions, if your area isn't represented, the answer lies in the hands of your local clubs and members!

Our Gardens Advertising - Advertising Officer Kim Peterson has continued to do a wonderful job, especially as we went into our second COVID-affected year. Display advertising has been returning to pre-COVID levels but classified advertising has reduced, no doubt reflecting the hard times suffered by some smaller suppliers plus the increasing use of the internet for

sales.

Our Gardens Subscriptions – Rob Horton, Subscriptions Officer, reports that club subscriptions are down slightly for this year. It is likely that this drop is caused by the fact that many clubs didn't meet for much of 2020. Pleasingly, individual subscriptions have continued to increase.

Our Gardens Proofing – Virginia Fischer had continued to fulfil the important role of proof-reader, thus helping to maintain the magazine's high standard.

Our Gardens Club News – Thanks go to Carolyn Dawes who has worked on *Our Gardens* for many years and has continued to coordinate club information as Club News Editor.

Our Gardens Diary Dates – Sadly Phil Waite had to retire from the position of Diary Dates Editor for personal reasons. We have welcomed Wendy Whitham to fill that position and thank both Phil and Wendy for their help and hard work.

Our Gardens Production – David Lambert, Production Coordinator, continues to carry out the vital role of coordinating the magazine printing and distribution.

Our Gardens Photographic Competition – Retiring Photographic Competition Coordinator, Paul Lucas, has coordinated the photo entries that enhance each issue. The photos are beautiful and at least one graced the cover of the magazine through the year.

Our Gardens Finance – Special thanks are due to Frances Cairns, retiring GCA Treasurer, who has handled the accounts involved with the magazine with accuracy and attention to detail.

Throughout the year the magazine team held online meetings to keep us all in touch. Thanks to all the members of the magazine committee for their hard work. Thanks, too, to the GCA Committee, Affiliates, members and individuals who subscribe to and support the magazine and to Dan Bowen from ProArt who has been designing the magazine for more than 20 years.

Judy Horton
Editor *Our Gardens* Magazine

Membership Report

The COVID-19 pandemic effect greatly influenced the activities of many of The Garden Clubs of Australia's (GCA) Affiliates, particularly in NSW and Victoria. However, the transition into 2021, and a return of confidence to conduct meetings, heralded increased activities with many Affiliates conducting AGMs and changing Committee members. The Membership Secretary's function is to update the GCA database, provide accurate information. This, in turn, creates considerable administration, reports to Committee and induction of new Affiliates.

Community Gardens: The social effect of COVID-19 has influenced people's attitude to participating in gardening activities, growing vegetables that multi-density housing and smaller properties do not allow. Groups formed for this purpose are increasing community involvement across Australia and seeking security and independent support for their members. The GCA's reputation in providing a reliable, economic, comprehensive and cost-effective

insurance along with a proven reputation has been a significant asset. I am delighted to report that the membership of the GCA stands at 756 Affiliates, with more new Affiliates joining (full details listed) despite restrictions.

My Role: Membership role comprises the maintenance of database records, responding to enquiries, phone, mail, email and, on request, forwarding affiliation information as to requirements and processes to our prospective new Affiliates to the GCA.

Since November 2020, many, many enquires both by phone and email have been received, application forms emailed out and duties attended 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 a personal pleasure. Being co-located with the Insurance Officer has been a distinct advantage in providing accurate and immediate information to our Affiliates.

Accuracy: I urge all Affiliates to give close attention to the importance of notifying change of details. Information is readily available either by referring to the GCA Annual Schedule, by making contact with a Zone Coordinator or in *Our Gardens* magazine. Prompt attention to all changes throughout the year requires detailed attention. It is important to remember that the various areas of GCA, Insurance, Treasury and Magazine subscriptions all rely on the database records that Affiliates provide.

Bonding: 'Friendship through Gardens' is a worthy motto as I have found how wonderful gardening people are no matter where they are in Australia. I thank them for their patience, cooperation, generosity of spirit and intent to bring gardening happiness to their respective members.

I take pleasure in welcoming the GCA's Affiliates into the family of the clubs, societies, groups, etc who seek our support and share our values.

The table below lists the debutant Affiliates along with a small number of Affiliates who have chosen to leave due to the dynamics of the pandemic. However, should they wish to re-connect with the GCA, it is a seamless exercise. Farewell to those Affiliates who have resigned and the GCA Committee wishes the best for you and your members in your future gardening undertakings.

Jacqui Bateman
Membership Officer

Welcome to New Affiliates 2020–2021	Farewells
Chadstone Food Forest Inc. – Zone: Melbourne East/ Mornington Peninsula (VIC) Ormeau and District Garden Club – Zone: Brisbane South (QLD) Cudmirrah Berrara Community Food Garden Inc. – Zone: South Coast (NSW) Robertson Garden Club Inc. – Zone: Highlands (NSW) Leeman Green Head Community Garden – Zone: Perth North (WA) Logan City Garden Club – Zone: South Queensland (QLD) Mount Crosby Garden Club Inc. – Zone: South Queensland (QLD) Punch Park Garden Inc. – Zone: Sydney Inner West (NSW) Baldivis Community Garden – Zone: Perth Southern (WA) Market Garden Park Community Garden – Zone: Sydney North Districts (NSW) Beachmere Community Garden Inc. – Zone: Sunshine Coast (QLD) Gardening Mob Inc. – Zone: Melbourne East/Mornington Peninsular (VIC) Victoria Park Community Garden Association Inc. – Zone: Perth North (WA) Gordon Garden Network – Zone: Ballarat Bendigo (VIC) Golden Beach Community Garden Inc. – Zone: Sunshine Coast (QLD) Mediterranean Gardening Margaret River – Zone: Perth South (WA) Oaklands Street Community Gardens Inc. – Zone: South Queensland (QLD) Mitchelton and Districts Garden Club Inc. – Zone: North Queensland (QLD) Rhodes Community Garden Inc. – Zone: Blue Mountains (NSW) Maryborough Horticultural Society – Zone: Central/Central South Queensland (QLD) Cobargo Community Garden – Zone: Far South Coast (NSW) Chiswick Community Gardeners – Zone: Sydney Inner West (NSW) Lakelands Community Garden Inc. – Zone: Perth South (WA) Mylor Garden Club – Zone: Adelaide and Southern Districts No 2 (SA)	Westside Floral Design Club, SA 20/10/2020 Sorell & District Garden Club Inc., TAS 20/10/2020 Cooma Garden Club Inc., NSW 30/11/2020 Heywood and District Garden Club Inc., VIC 30/11/2020 Howlong Garden Club Inc., NSW 04/12/2020 Graduates Garden Club Mk11 Inc., NSW 08/12/2020 Finch Hatton Community Garden, QLD 28/04/2021 Permaculture Sydney West, NSW 30/04/2021 Como West Community Garden, VIC 1/05/2021.

National Gardening Week Report

It really doesn't need reporting that National Gardening Week in 2020 was unable to be celebrated by many Affiliates across the country. Yet there were some Affiliates who were able to arrange limited events and we thank them for their enthusiasm and commitment.

The major news for the year is the appointment of Immediate Past President George Hoad AM as the GCA Ambassador for National Gardening Week for at least the next two years. As many Affiliates would know, it was George who initiated National Gardening Week in Australia in 2017 and the event has a growing presence in the gardening calendar.

The GCA thanks George for his very sensible recommendation to focus the coming celebration on the keywords: REST, RELAX and RECUPERATION. Many of us will follow his lead and concentrate our efforts on our own gardens. However, I am sure that many Affiliates will have special gatherings.

National Gardening Week provides the opportunity for us all to raise the profile of the GCA both locally and nationally and we would hope that creative ideas might develop in the coming year to be embraced by gardeners everywhere in achieving this objective.

John Kitt
Vice President

Photographic 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 they indicate the enthusiasm that 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's *Our Gardens* magazine throughout the 2021 year.

Members and magazine subscribers are encouraged to consider entering the **15th Annual Photography Competition in 2021** as the total prize pool (valued at around $1400) 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 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, grandchildren and even great grandchildren can enter the Junior Section. **All entries close on 1 October 2021**.

The 2021 Competition winners will be announced in the Autumn, Issue 92, of the "*Our Gardens*" magazine and a further random selection of excellent 2021 images will be shown as usual in each issue of the *Our Gardens* magazine during 2022.

Paul Lucas
Annual Photographic Competition Coordinator

Planning Committee Report

By its very nature, planning is future-oriented but the circumstances of this last year have depressed our options for the introduction of additional services. While we have achieved a restructured Committee for the GCA, the future focus must be on additional services for our Affiliates.

The appointment of joint Directors of Zones has been a significant change but their ability to engage with Zone Coordinators and their clubs has been limited by our national circumstances. Nevertheless, in these most difficult of circumstances, growth is already becoming apparent.

The reduction in Committee numbers has highlighted the need for greater efficiencies in our processes; while the inability to meet physically as a committee for most of the year has presented some difficulties. However, our greater use of technology to maintain our operation has produced greater financial efficiencies for the GCA.

The Committee has commenced a program of professional development so that we all have a clear understanding of best practices in managing a not-for-profit organisation such as ours.

George Hoad AM, our Immediate Past President, has been appointed as our National Garden Week Ambassador. He will represent the GCA at public gardening events across Australia promoting both National Gardening Week and membership of garden clubs.

A new Operational Plan will be developed soon so that progress can be made on our longer-term objectives from the beginning of the new financial year. This will be circulated to Affiliates before its consideration by the Committee to allow all members to respond to the plans.

John Kitt
Planning Officer

Remembrance Driveway Report for 2021

The living memorial along the 300 km highway between Sydney and Canberra was established when the Queen planted trees at each end of the Driveway in 1954 and commemorates the Australians who served in World War II and also remembers all those who served in the Australian Defence Forces in subsequent wars 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. Mrs Davis indicated the intent of the project by saying “the driveway would not be merely an unbroken line of trees, but would be specially designed with avenues, groves and small parks to enhance the existing beauties of the landscape along the Hume Highway”.

The Remembrance Driveway Council (RDC) of volunteers works closely with Transport for NSW (ex RMS) who maintain the Memorials along the Hume Motorway in NSW, and with Transport Canberra City Services along the Federal Highway in ACT. There are 23 rest stops

dedicated to Victoria Cross recipients as examples 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 Brigadier Mick Burgess and there is representation from the RSL, War Widows Guild, GCA, TrNSW and several individuals with specialised skills.

Two GCA gardeners, Judy Keast (a former GCA Committee Member) together with myself are active participants. A national design competition resulted in an appropriate memorial planned for Valour Park in the ACT to honour the four VC recipients from the Afghanistan conflict. The development application for the construction of this memorial has been submitted and fundraising is ongoing.

The planned rest stop sites, one for Keith Payne VC and one requiring a rededication for Edward Kenna VC, await the completion of a major reconstruction of the existing servos on both sides of the Hume Motorway. It is expected construction on these sites will commence near the end of 2021. In conjunction with this upgrade, contemporary versions of the signage associated with the dedications will be introduced and all existing signage along the Driveway will eventually be upgraded as funds become available.

Investigations have commenced to find a suitable dedication site to honour a much-delayed recipient of the VC, the WW2 sailor, Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean VC.

Ken Bradley – RDC Hon Secretary, and GCA representative
Member – Kulnura & District Garden Club

Web Administrator Report

The year 2020–2021 started with the website locked and awaiting matters to be resolved to complete the move to a new Web Host, G9.

After many delays, the website was able to function with a sense of normalcy and many details brought up-to-date. The web host provided control over email addresses with the extension @gardenclubs.org.au and Committee members were using this method to communicate within the structure and with the public.

There were images accompanying the emails (- see example at right), bearing the GCA's new logo and there was a clear sense of a new approach. President Lorraine Emerson directed the contents of the Home Page and many other changes were directed by proof-reader Elizabeth Dobson. Elizabeth has been appointed the new Web Administrator for the year 2021–2022.

The website has been underused during the year due to the effects of the pandemic and no doubt will return to normal as we get on top of the COVID-19 threat.

- I urge Affiliates to use the Diary Dates to promote their activities and visits to help other Affiliated members to participate.
- There is a lot of information on each of the pages and we have some brilliant photog-

raphers within the gardening circle who submit to the photographic competition.

- The *Our Gardens* magazine page is a conduit to the excellence of that publication which competes with other magazines but shows our Affiliates and their work around Australia.
- There are many Readings (Resources Page) available to be downloaded and many other pages that provide information.

I started in 2015 after the Convention in Orange and, due to the change in the GCA Constitution, my service to the GCA is at an end with the Convention in Townsville. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank our former President George Hoad who, in my opinion, contributed so much to the functioning and popularity of our Affiliates being part of the GCA. There are also many others, Paul Lucas among them, on the Committee over that time who have been so supportive. In late 2020, I was also asked to participate as Insurance Officer so it has been a very stimulating year.

The GCA's motto *Friendship through Gardens* has been so true throughout my six years in this role.

At the Townsville Convention I hope to meet with the many Affiliated members with whom I have spoken over the last 12 months.

Eric Bateman
Web Administrator