



The Friends of Warrnambool Botanic Gardens Inc.

A0032902E

The Friends is an independent incorporated group whose main purpose is the preservation and promotion of our heritage-listed gardens. Warrnambool Botanic Gardens are a lovely, well-preserved example of a design by William Guilfoyle, a famous landscaper and botanist who is acknowledged as the architect of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne as well as other important gardens around Victoria.

The Friends group was formed in 1989 as an initiative of the Premier Town Promotion Board. In the early days the group was very hands-on, propagating and planting and so on. Since the appointment of a full-time Curator in 2005 the Friends role has become more about aid and promotion of the Gardens. The Friends have always worked co-operatively with the Warrnambool City Council.

The Friends encourage use of the Gardens by visitors and locals. To this end they maintain a website and a printed information brochure; they conduct guided tours of the Gardens; they provide special days for children and adults to enjoy activities in the Gardens.

The Friends have been responsible for improvements and restoration, big and small, things that are outside the general operational budget. For example, the Friends have helped to restore the sun dial, the canon and the well. Amongst other things the Friends provided funding to produce name plates for our important trees and were also able to fund an interactive tree database to enhance visitor experience and raise awareness of the Garden's botanical significance. Over the years the Friends have also been able to purchase extra seating and picnic tables and even some rare or exotic plants. In 2018 the Friends were granted State government funding to design and build the nature-based play space, a very much-loved and well-utilised area on the northern boundary. All efforts are managed with the support of government grants, funds from charitable foundations and the support of many local service and community groups as well as many volunteers.

There are currently around 140 members of the Friends. A membership is really acknowledgement that one appreciates the Gardens and to ensure that they are valued into the future. The Friends keep members abreast of what is happening in the Gardens and also provide a community for those who are interested in gardens and gardening.