

FBGA President's Report March 2017

I am always glad when the festive season is over and the normal daily routine returns. But there is also a good side to this time; there are no meetings to attend. My biggest concern over the festive season is filling all the gaps in the Visitor Information Centre. I am happy to report that we managed it very well, as always. I'd like to thank the VIC volunteers very much for volunteering at such a busy time.

In December I took part in a four day trip to Kangaroo Island with Dr. Jenny Guerin from the Botanic Garden Seed Centre, one horticultural trainee and one more volunteer, to collect seeds from rare and endangered plants. This was my second big trip with Jenny or Dan Duval from the Seed Centre. The day starts at the crack of dawn and finishes long after sunset. Their knowledge and dedication is second to none and these trips always remind me of the importance of their work.

On Tuesday the 3rd of January I attended a meeting to plan for the flowering of the Titan Arum in the Bicentennial Conservatory in the very near future. The plant had different ideas, and the flower started to open up the very same afternoon. There was no time for the Friends to get organized, but we had no problems getting volunteers handing out pamphlets, managing the visitors and collecting donations. On that Tuesday the Bicentennial Conservatory was open until 11.30pm and some volunteers attended until 11pm. We had 4700 visitors over two days. On behalf of the Friends, I invited His Excellency the Governor and his wife to view the flower, an offer which they accepted. The Friends Growing Group also set up a stall and sold some plants. I'd like to thank all the Friends who volunteered on such short notice.

On 16th & 23rd January the Friends took part in the Botanic Gardens' School Holiday Program. We did our usual workshop creating "critters" out of natural materials; seedpods, leaves, cones, etc. These workshops are getting very popular and soon we will be running out of room.



The first general meeting, on the 7th of February 2017, was not well attended. I am still blaming the earthmoving activities in front of the Goodman Building for the poor attendance. We had two excellent guest speakers. The first speaker was the Director of the Botanic Gardens of South Australia, Dr. Lucy Southerland. Lucy spoke about the importance of collecting and storing seeds, not just from South Australian plants or Australian plants but from plants from all over the world. She explained the role the Botanic Gardens Seed Bank plays in preserving South Australian seeds. The second speaker of the evening was last year's Gwen Thomas Scholarship recipient, Nikko Menzel. Nikko gave us, with enthusiasm and passion, a power point presentation of his trip to the Edinburgh Botanic Garden in Scotland.

The summer months are almost over and the weather has been very kind to us. Even though we had a few heat waves, we also had some good rain. All three Botanic Gardens are looking extremely well for this time of year and I urge you to visit and enjoy a walk or picnic in one of our beautiful green spaces.

Bodo Jensen