



Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Advisory Board

Council and Community working towards a shared vision



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Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Vision Statement

To be recognised by the community, our visitors and the wider botanical and horticultural fraternities as a responsible repository of Australian plants, particularly those of the surrounding bioregion.

Our Mission

We are committed to manage and operate the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens to display, preserve, research and interpret the botanical and horticultural values of the regional flora in a facility that enhances public enjoyment while increasing knowledge of and cultural links to the plant kingdom.

Principal Objectives

- To work towards key aims of sustainability, conservation and education about flora under guidelines adopted by Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) and Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI);
- To identify and promote the potential of the regional flora in ornamental horticulture;
- To propagate and grow threatened flora for its preservation and research;
- To establish themed displays that increase knowledge and appreciation of plants through cultivation, research and interpretation;
- To engage and be recognised by the community, our visitors and the wider botanical and horticultural fraternities for botanical & horticultural excellence;
- To identify and where feasible and/or appropriate, incorporate specific environments that do not occur on the Lagoons site as annexes in order to provide optimum opportunity for research and development;
- To establish and maintain an invaluable community facility that enhances lifestyle and assists in establishing a strong 'sense of place' through the use of regional plant species.



Mt Blackwood Holly *Graptophyllum ilicifolium* – the inspiration for the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens logo

The Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens (MRBG) is managed and funded by Mackay Regional Council. Charged with displaying, trialling and researching horticulturally suitable flora and conserving rare and threatened species from the Central Queensland Coast bioregion, Australia and around the globe. The MRBG covers 51.4 hectares and includes the Lagoons - a significant feasting area for the traditional owners the Yuibera people, as well as the young city's first water supply for European settlers. As the Mackay region's premier parkland, the MRBG is part of the Bluewater Trail and features lifestyle infrastructure including extensive pedestrian and cycle paths, cultural themed precincts, the Meadowlands Amphitheatre and the Lagoons Cafe & Gallery.

An Advisory Board, identified in the MRBG Master Plan 2010, has been established in 2014 to provide strategic planning advice and Council/community involvement in the ongoing design and development of the MRBG as a facility for residents and visitors to enjoy, be educated and engaged with and be involved with the many activities on offer. Membership is by recommendation and invitation is approved by Mackay Regional Council.

Terms of Reference

Council has appointed the Advisory Board as a working group to coordinate the ongoing planning and development process for the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens – principally to plan and document the consolidation of Stages 1 & 2; and plan and document the basic and future structure of Meadowlands.

Members are invited to participate for 2 years, upon which membership will be reviewed.

Aims

The primary role of the Advisory Board is to provide a forum for Mackay Regional Council and the local community to input into the planning, design, development and ongoing management of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens.

Objectives

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to provide or source the necessary input, information sourcing, appropriate research and specialised advice to develop a project management and implementation plan for the continuing establishment of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens over the next twenty years.

The principal responsibilities and tasks include:

- Community consultation to identify aspirations that may integrate with the MRBG Master Plan
- Tourism opportunities and future proofing trends
- Recreational access balanced with core botanic and horticultural roles
- Financial planning & sourcing sponsorship opportunities
- Living Collection Management Plan
- Herbarium Collection Management Plan
- Scope for the Gardens Friends program
- Relevant Reference Group interaction
- Botanic, scientific, educational and recreational context
- Identification of research opportunities
- 20 Year Capital Plan
- 10 Year Development Plan
- Design Development Process
- Council Corporate Plan and policy integration
- Providing an Annual and Mid-year Progress Report to Council

Advisory Board Membership 2014/15



Cr Theresa Morgan (Chair) was a registered nurse of almost three decades and now enjoys liaising between community members and key stakeholders to maintain and preserve the region's natural environment as Portfolio Councillor for Mackay Regional Council's Parks and Environment program. Theresa also is chairperson of the Natural Environment Advisory Committee, Council's Sustainable Futures Advisory Committee and Visual Amenities Working Group.



Gerard Carlyon is the Mackay Regional Council Director of Community and Client Services. His diverse role covers the program areas of Parks and Environment, Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre & Events, Community Lifestyle, Property Services and Corporate Communications and Marketing. Gerard had an extensive career working with the State Government in a diverse range of areas including Tourism and Regional Development and Emergency Services.



Pete Owens is the Manager of Parks and Environment at Mackay Regional Council. Recently relocating to Mackay, Pete has more than 20 years of experience with Queensland local government, with roles undertaken with Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Logan City Councils. He has previously managed environmental planning and catchment management programs and has experience with natural resources management initiatives. Pete has particular interest in waterway management and landscape-scale planning.



Dale Arvidsson has been Curator of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens since 2008. Commencing at the botanic gardens 4 months after the official opening in May, 2003, Dale has a passion for the conservation and applied use of local native flora and education on the importance of the role botanic gardens play in conserving, researching and the promotion of threatened species. Dale is an active volunteer Gardens Friend and also participates in the Sustainable Futures Advisory Committee and Horticultural Reference Group. Dale's vision is to see the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens become one of the leading botanic gardens in Oceania.



Lawrie Smith has designed more than a dozen major botanic gardens in Australia and overseas, as well as Roma Street Parkland, World Expo 88 and the Australian gardens at two international landscape and horticultural expositions. He has been the principal landscape architect for the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens as well as botanic gardens in Townsville, Airlie Beach, Gladstone, Bundaberg, Maroochy, Gold Coast and Darwin. Lawrie has received many awards including being appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2004 for services to landscape architecture.



Tracie Harvison is a qualified landscape architect and urban planner who has recently joined the Parks and Environment Team at Mackay Regional Council. Tracie has worked predominately in the private sector and at the University of New South Wales within the City Futures Research Centre. Her commercial research focused on the adaptation of the built environment for climate change and extreme weather events, while her own research examined the impact of 'salutogenic' or health-promoting environments on older persons. She also has a long standing passion for landscape history and heritage conservation.



Robert Ryan is Mackay Regional Council's Senior Co-ordinator Community Programs. He currently leads a team of professionals who work with community members, special interest groups and organisations to build the capacity of the community. The program focus includes Indigenous and Multicultural Cultural communities, Sport and Recreation, Seniors, Youth, Artists and Arts workers, Homelessness and Disability issues. In his role, Robert also oversees four local Museums, the Sister Cities Youth Ambassador program and administers Council's Community Grants program.



Onno van Es is the Assistant Director Development Services from Mackay Regional Council. Onno is recognised for nurturing healthy partnerships across government jurisdictions and securing significant resources for healthy community infrastructure, through the creation of the award winning \$30 million Bluewater Trail and \$12.7 million Bluewater Lagoon projects. The Bluewater Trail won the 2010 National Heart Foundation Local Government Award, while the Bluewater Lagoon has won numerous awards and is widely acknowledged as Australia's most successful lagoon-style aquatic facility.



Stephen Schwer is the General Manager of Mackay Tourism and is passionate about environmentally sustainable tourism. He has worked in the tourism industry for a number of years and has assisted in eco-tourism business development in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. The new leisure tourism brand for The Mackay Region highlights unspoilt natural environments and so preserving this whilst offering sustainable tourism activities is key to the growth of tourism in the area. It is Stephen's hope that, with the growth of the botanic gardens, small businesses will be inspired to develop tourism activities onsite.



Dr Bill McWhinney is President of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Friends Association Inc. (The Gardens Friends) a position he has held for the last eight years. Bill McWhinney is currently Principal of MEM & Associates Pty Ltd, a small specialised engineering consultancy which he has operated since 1993 following almost 29 years employment with the Sugar Research Institute in Mackay. He has been closely involved with the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens as a volunteer since its establishment. Bill and his wife Robin are both active local residents volunteering with the botanic gardens and hold a long standing interest in the development of the Lagoons site into one of Mackay's most loved open space areas.



Irene Champion is a well-known local identity. A self-taught botanist held in high regard in the world of botany, Irene was the inaugural winner of the Mackay Region Australia Day Environmental Achievement Award in 2013 for her role in conserving Mackay's flora. A member of the Society for Growing Australian Plants Mackay Branch (SGAP Mackay) for over 30 years, Irene was one of the first members of SGAP Mackay to lobby the then Mackay City Council to commence with the development of a regional botanic gardens. Irene and SGAP Mackay operate the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Herbarium under a Memorandum of Understanding.



Meryl Ritchie is a local flora identity who has collected seed and grown the majority of bioregional flora held in the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens living collection since the project first commenced with SGAP Mackay in 1993. A member of the International Plant Propagators Society (IPPS) and holding horticultural qualifications, Meryl was with the first members of SGAP Mackay to campaign for development of a regional botanic gardens. Meryl was SGAP Mackay's propagation leader for 20 years and brings to the Board a wealth of local flora knowledge and the propagation techniques required to furnish the botanic gardens with a further 300,000 bioregional native plants.



Dr Judith Wake is a Lecturer and since 2010 has been Head of Applied and Environmental Science Programs at the Central Queensland University, Mackay Campus. Judith's area of expertise and interests include the water quality monitoring and management, mangrove ecosystem health, rehabilitation of disturbed mangrove ecosystems, relationship between farm management practices and water quality and the significance of bushland remnants to arboreal mammals, PAM fluorometry, herbicide and nutrient sampling in sediment and water. Judith is working with the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens on the Lagoons Catchment Management Plan.

Advisory Board meetings will occur at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Meeting Room bimonthly on the 2nd Tuesday from 1:30-3:30pm:

2014

- December 9

2015

- February 10
- April 21
- June 9
- August 11
- October 13
- December 8

2016

- February 9
- April 12
- June 14

Then meeting quarterly from August 2016:

- August 9
- December 13

Accurate as of December 3, 2014
Botanic Gardens and flora images supplied by Creative Shots Photo Club and the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

For further information, contact

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