



FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS

Newsletter April 2025

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Dear Member,

Apologies for the delay in this Newsletter usually scheduled to coincide with our March members meeting. There has been a lot happening in the Gardens and many improvements to report.

An important improvement includes the repair and repainting of the 1989 reconstructed Fountain. The Fountain is a copy of the 1888 Fountain, the base of which remains near the Murray Street entrance. The peeling paint and mould has been power pressured clean and painted. Internally a water sealant paint has been applied which will make future cleaning easier. These works were identified in the annual Garden Walk conducted on 9 July 2024.



Fountain and Plaque photographs, 16 July 2024

Unfortunately, the Information Sign was recently vandalised. The sign has an anti-graffiti coating and the paint will be removed by Council.



23 April 2025

Path and brick drain works:

On Wednesday 23 April I attended a site meeting (as the FOVG rep) with Dominic Mazza, Coordinator Parks and Open Space and Marella Stow, Open Space Planner, and Adam De Zoete, Gardener to discuss path and spoon drain works. The main objective of the path works is to remove trip hazards. The asphalt path is uneven, potholed, fragmented and provides potential trip hazards. The proposed works over the next few months will include removal of bricks, lifting and resetting bricks and asphalt path repairs.



Asphalt path and brick drain photographs 23 April 2025



Also discussed was the waterlogging which has been a major problem for many years in the south east corner of the gardens. A drainage plan of the lawn area shows the four drainage pits. Only the two central concrete covered pits are currently visible.

The two pits to the west and importantly the east where the lawn is severely waterlogged are not visible and presumably this is a reason why the lawn is poorly drained. Council will investigate the existing system, clean out the pits and expand the drainage system if required.

A new pit will be installed in the brick gutter to drain the water near the bins. A pit to the east which has a drain from the bed to the east, will be cleaned and repaired.

Victoria Gardens Volunteers:

The Garden Volunteer program recommenced on 23rd November 2024 and a total of four sessions have been conducted to date, with more days scheduled over the next 2 months. These working bees have been well supported by Council and the head gardener Adam De Zoete. Thank you to the Friends who have been able to attend these working bees. The key objectives of the volunteer program are:

- Community contribution to the maintenance of Victoria Gardens
- Promoting community involvement with Friends of Victoria Gardens
- Developing an ongoing relationship between local Council gardeners and community members.

On average seven Friends have participated in the working bees under the direction of the gardener Adam De Zoete. The garden works have been mostly garden maintenance, weed removal, bed preparation and planting of annuals, pruning and mulching. We finish each session with morning tea. The following photographs show some of the Friends Garden works.

23 November 2024



14 December 2024



15 February 2025



12 April 2025



The following poster (prepared by Sarah Jardine and Brendon Gray) is displayed at each gardening session to promote our activity and the FOVG. The next working bee will be conducted on **Saturday 10th May at 9.00am, and then on 14th June.**

All new Volunteers are welcome.



Garden News:

The Gardens have come through summer in good condition. This is despite a very extended dry period and temperatures well above average. Last Thursday 24th April was the hottest day at 26.8°C ever recorded for this date. While on Sunday 13th April the temperature reached 31.8°C which was the warmest April day since 1 April 2014.

In February 45.2mm rain fell, (average 48mm), March 40.4mm (average 50.1mm), which included 18mm on 17 March, but only 8.2mm rain has fallen in April, the average is 57.3mm.

On Sunday 20th April the local RSL branch held an ANZAC service in the Gardens.



Plant News:



An interesting plant introduced into the Gardens as part of the RSL Memorial upgrade works in 2014 was ***Alcantarea imperialis***. A robust lithophytic species of bromeliad in the family Bromeliaceae. This species is endemic to Brazil.

Alcantarea imperialis 'Rubra', the variety planted in the Gardens, has a large rosette shape growing to about 1.5m tall and wide. The thick broad leaves are greenish grey with maroon undersides. The reddish colour turns a deeper colour in colder (frost-free) climates. The Alcantarea Rubra is a hardy plant that tolerates a variety of climatic conditions.

It does well in containers or planted in the ground. Its large size and colour makes it an amazing feature plant. This plant grows for 10-20 years, after which it will produce a large red flower spike growing up to 3 m in height, filled with small, fragrant yellow flowers.

The flower spike will last for about a year, but after that the mother plant will die. Many offshoots or "pups" will grow to enable the continued growth of the plant.

Garden Inspection:

The **Annual Garden Inspection** with Council staff will be conducted on **Tuesday 3rd June 2025 10:00 am – 11:00 am**, meeting at the High Street entrance.

This annual event has been conducted since 2015 and is a valuable activity to identify garden maintenance and improvement projects for the following year. It is also an opportunity to meet with Council managers, the arborist and gardeners. All members of the Friends are invited to participate in the inspection. If you are unable to attend but have matters you want raised with Council, please email the Friends at info.fovg@gmail.com or contact John Hawker on 0438 510 522.

Other Meetings and Events:

Date: Sunday 6th July 2025
Meeting: AGM and General Meeting
Time: 3.00pm – 4.00pm followed by afternoon tea
Location: 7 Gertrude Street, Windsor.

Sunday 9th November 2025, General Meeting at 3.00pm

Sunday 7th December 2025, the Christmas Party 3.00-5.30pm in Victoria Gardens.