

# **Sustainable Gardening Australia (SGA)**



# President's Report

## Our vision

A healthy, biodiverse planet and vibrant, sustainable communities.

## Our principal purpose

To encourage, educate and enable home and professional gardeners to adopt sustainable gardening practices to protect or enhance the natural environment or a significant aspect of it.



The past year has been one of challenge and change from both external and internal events. The most significant have been the changes in staffing with the need to replace our Training and Learning Manager and Masterclass Coordinator. An initial appointment of a Communications Manager lasted only 3 months, necessitating recruitment of a replacement. These changes have, however, brought new inspiration and skills to SGA which have proven beneficial.

The year has also been notable because, after many years of work, SGA's web app *WiseGardening - Choices to Protect You and the Planet*, on safety of garden pesticides and herbicides, has been launched. It is now available on PCs and mobile phones.

The Green Gardening Professionals (GGPs) has continued to grow in spite of the effects of COVID-19. While member numbers have stabilized, there have been encouraging increases in the number of subscribers to monthly email updates. Details of the year's progress are on the following pages.

SGA continues to have an important presence in the area of sustainability but works in an increasingly difficult situation. There has been a decline in volunteers - a trend which has been affecting other not-for-profits over recent years, but which seems to have been increased by disruptions caused by COVID-19. SGA is also facing increased competition from other providers of education in sustainable gardening through webinars, workshops, websites, social media, TV shows, videos and from some sections of the gardening industry.

Eight philanthropic organisations have been approached for grants to fund either new training developments or a modification of WiseGardening to be specific for bees. However, no application was successful. Approaches to nine commercial businesses for sponsorship have been made, also without success. Without such extra funding, SGA will be in a challenging financial situation. The best future funding opportunities seem to be in developing projects which work in partnership with other organisations, with on-ground groups and individuals and with a focus on building healthy, climate-resilient communities, especially in the context of increasing lack of food security.

Finally, I want to thank all those who have supported SGA this year - our members (through either contributions to activities or through membership fees), Friends of SGA, (FOSGA), staff, volunteers, donors, consultant web developer, IT adviser and Board members.

Sharron Pfueller, President.

# Engaging the Community

Fundamental to achieving SGA's goals and to its viability is its capacity to attract readers, Friends, Members and volunteers. This year, there have been increases in newsletter subscribers, both *Cuttings* and *Flourish*, with opening rates of near or greater than 50% - well above global averages. There have also been increased numbers of members paying to join and in numbers of Friends of SGA. However, fewer people view the website, Facebook has had mixed success while Instagram has increased in popularity.

## Website

Maximum website usage was in mid-April 2020 in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and has declined since. In parallel, the average unique web page views have also declined. The most frequently read topics were companion planting, finger limes, cucumbers and the site's front page.

## Cuttings Free Monthly Newsletter

Subscriptions continued to show a significant increase this year as they have done for several years.

## YouTube

As in previous years, views of existing videos increased slightly.

## Social Media

The global trend for declining Facebook engagement has been defied by SGA with the number of followers increasing by 3,000 and a slight increase in Likes. Instagram followers increased by 1300, similar to the previous year, as global preferences tend towards visual images.

## Friends of SGA (FOSGA) and Paying Members

Interest in joining Friends of SGA or becoming a paying member continued to grow. This was possibly driven by SGA's increasing webinar offerings for which members and Friends of SGA are eligible for discounted fees. Annual subscription fees for Friends of SGA was increased to \$30.

## 2021—2022 Statistics

**New web site articles**  
8

**Website users**  
Decreased from 1,054,531  
to 836,316

**Average unique web page views per month**  
Decreased from 147,708 to  
107,806

**Cuttings Subscribers**  
Increased from 8,960 to  
9712

**Facebook**  
**Likes**  
Increased from 19,925 to  
20,000  
**Users**  
Decreased from 21,843 to  
24,151

**Instagram Followers**  
Increased from 4,077 to  
5,323

**Friends of SGA**  
Increased from 250 to 288

**Paying Members**  
Increased from 11 to 12



# Training and Learning

This year has been busy with the departure of Richard Rowe, Training and Learning Manager, and Nicole Griffiths, Master-class Coordinator, and recruitment of two new staff, Teresa Day and Catherine Fallon.

In contrast to the 2020-2021 where training was all delivered by webinar, there has been a slow transition to a mix of workshop and webinar delivery. A total of 80 community education events were delivered to 2452 keen individuals wanting to learn how to garden more sustainably. These were comprised of 47 webinars for local government and other organisations with attendance of 1454 individuals and 24 face-to-face workshops with attendance of 486. There were 512 attendees at our 9 Masterclasses.

## Workshops/Webinars for External Clients

As well as our sustainable gardening education service to local government, we are increasingly providing workshops and webinars for a wider variety of organisations such as neighbourhood houses, local indigenous nurseries, libraries, corporates, large businesses and community groups such as gardening clubs.

The most popular topics have been related to biodiversity, comprising 36% of bookings. There has been a significant increase in the popularity of gardening for climate change, representing 18% of bookings, compared to 11% the previous year. Food gardening bookings represented 33% and garden design 13% respectively.

## New Content

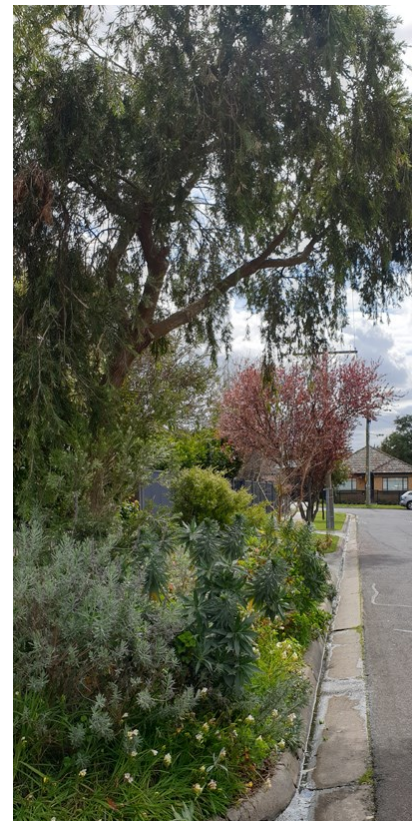
Three new topics have been developed to build the content of the *Gardening for Climate Action* program. They are *Healthy Soil, Healthy Planet – Role of garden soil in climate action*, *Urban Greening & Cooling – Gardeners Role in Cooling Their Patch* and *Nature Strip Planting (aka Verge Gardening)*. The nature strip planting presentation was written as part of the launch of a nature strip planting program for Monash City Council, which has proven to be the most popular talk of the year with 142 attendees. Gardening in and for the community is becoming an increasingly popular topic for many gardeners.

## Master Classes

All masterclasses have been delivered online enabling strong attendance from all over Australia. The most popular class on *Connected Open Spaces* reached our capacity ceiling of 120 attendees.

## Looking Ahead

On the basis of some research by volunteer Elena Kalnin on topics of interest to our existing clients, the Training & Learning Team has created a list of priority topics for future development. Market research conducted by Sheridan Winter revealed potential new clients and has enabled SGA to work with four new organisations in New South Wales and a further four in regional Victoria. The ability to deliver webinars bodes well for expanding SGA's reach regionally and interstate, but the lack of presence on the ground is still an issue for many clients in those areas.



# Green Gardening Professionals (GGPs)

COVID-19 has continued to have impacts on our GGP volunteers and members. Reduced volunteer hours provided a challenge along with the inability to hold regular face-to-face meetings which provide useful member contact. GGPs have, however gained a number of interstate and rural members who are accessing live-streamed Zoom meetings and the Industry Video Library. Nevertheless, although many GGP members faced restrictions on their businesses and employment, membership renewals and new memberships were in line with the previous year.

With the regular Update emails and messages going to an increasing number of professionals in the gardening/horticultural industry the GGP program contributes to making positive change in gardening practice at homes and in public places. Gardening professionals have the capacity to demonstrate their learning in their work and home lives every day.

## Peer Evening Presentations

Peer Evening presentations have been live-streamed (and some pre-recorded), then loaded into the Industry Library on the SGA website for members to access. Topics have included soils, native grasslands and *Gardening for Good* at Werribee Park. We have now had over 60 different speakers for the program.

## Website

The Industry Library has had another 6 password -protected recordings added for member access bringing the total to 31 online presentations.

## Social Media

Due to limited resources the GGP Facebook and Instagram pages have been posting sporadically. More efficient monthly scheduling has now started and post reach and interactions should improve.

## Monthly Update Emails

Subscriber numbers have again increased for our Monthly Update emails. Content such as event information, articles, website updates and book reviews are now being sent out to over 3,500 subscribers.

## People

Continued impacts of COVID-19 and retirement of several long-term volunteers have had major effects on our productive capacity.

## 2021 - 2022 Statistics

### Members

115—the same as in the previous year

### Business Members

2 with a total of 17 staff

### Peer Evenings

8

### Live-streamed Presentations

8

### Industry Video Library

6 (now 31 in total) password protected videos

### GGP Update Emails

10

### Update Email Subscribers

Increased from 3207 to 3527

## WiseGardening - Choices to Protect You and the Planet

To help make safe garden chemical choices, SGA has, this year, launched *WiseGardening - Choices to Protect You and the Planet*, an Australia-first guide to risks and safety of garden chemical products to address garden pests and disease. It uses publicly available, scientific information from university and government sources on the risks of garden chemical products for humans, bees, birds, fish and other aquatic life, frogs and earthworms. *WiseGardening* rates products on the basis of publicly available scientific data on their ingredients' properties and on other product features.

Initiated over 20 years ago, the launch of *WiseGardening* has resulted from collaboration of many volunteers and organisations. We are especially indebted to Dr. Colin Allison and to our consultant web developer, Jonathan Hinson at *Snugsite*.

## Donations

This year, donations of \$9206 were received. They were largely from two focused requests to our supporters and have been a valuable addition to SGA finances. They have been an important supplement to joining fees from *Friends of SGA* and paying Members.

## Information Technology

The SGA server, which is accessed via the remote desktop, has been updated. Microsoft Office 365 has also been updated so that each user must have their own licensed version. This has reduced the cost for the number of users SGA has. These processes have been assisted by the consultant, Kai Howells, whom we now engage in the absence of a suitable volunteer.

## Impact of North East Link

For 5 years, plans for the Victorian government's North East Link road building project have been developing. Although construction has started in the Bulleen area, there is still uncertainty about the impacts of the project on *Bulleen Art and Garden* which provides SGA's office space. Although the nursery will remain, details of exact losses of space have yet to be clarified.

# Board of SGA Incorporated

This year has seen the departure from the Board of Wen Cheng and Deb Nette. We are sorry to lose them, thank them for their inputs and wish them well in the future. We are pleased to welcome Anna Beesley.



**Dr. Sharron Pfueller**  
President

Retired Monash University  
researcher/educator and  
environmentalist



**Bruce Plain**  
Vice-President

Director of Bulleen Art &  
Garden and environmen-  
talist



**Peter Howey**  
Treasurer and Secretary  
Small business owner, gar-  
den centre financial advisor



**Dr. Greg Moore**  
Retired Head of Burnley  
College, University of Mel-  
bourne, horticulturalist  
and educator



**Anna Beesley**  
Lawyer and horticulturalist



**Simon Branson**  
Landscape and  
small business owner



**Chris Williams**  
Honorary Fellow at the Burnley  
Campus of the University of  
Melbourne specialising in urban  
agriculture



# Our Team

We have seen the departures of 2 very valued staff: Richard Rowe and Nicole Griffiths who have moved on to new horizons. Richard, as Training and Learning Manager since 2014, led the way in creating presentations on 30 topics for local government and other external organisations. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns he also pioneered webinar-based training - an initiative which has kept SGA afloat when face-to-face workshops were not possible. Nicole Griffiths assisted in our training program since 2017 and coordinated SGA's masterclasses which have also transitioned to webinars. Webinars have allowed greater attendance, greater reach across Australia and increased income for SGA. We are very grateful for the knowledge, skills and dedication these two brought to SGA and wish them both well in the future!

We are pleased to welcome Teresa Day as Training and Learning Manager and Catherine Fallon as Masterclass Coordinator.

In June 2021, SGA employed a communications manager, Angie Plummer, to take over some of the work that our volunteer CEO had been doing. After 3 months, Angie moved on and, in October, we employed Tillie Priestley in her role.

All new staff have grasped their roles enthusiastically, bringing innovation and new skills to our organization.



**Richard Rowe**

Training and Learning Manager  
until September 2022



**Teresa Day**

Training and Learning Manager from  
August 2022



**Nicole Griffiths**

Master Class Coordinator until March  
2022



**Maree Kiefer**

Industry and Member Liaison  
Officer



**Tillie Priestley**

Communications Manager



**Catherine Fallon**

Master Class Coordinator from April

## Patron

Environmental scientist,  
researcher and TV presenter  
gardener



**Josh Byrne**

## Our Volunteers

Petrina Adams  
Colin Allison  
Adrienne Crabb  
Stan Close  
Gabrielle Miller

Michelle Dyason  
Megan Hallowes  
Maree Kiefer  
Sharron Pfueller  
Jeffrey Phuah

Bruce Plain  
Meredith Plain  
Richard Rowe  
Allison Styger  
Isobel Brownbill

**A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL!**



# SGA Foundation

## Financial Report

### Profit & Loss Statement

July 2021—June 2022

#### Income

Donations	\$9,206
Friends of SGA income	\$7,683
Training income	\$44,096
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$60,984</b>

#### Cost Of Sales

Friends of SGA expenses	\$208
Training expenses	\$5,978
Wise Gardening expenses	\$7,713
<b>Total Cost Of Sales</b>	<b>\$13,899</b>

**Gross Profit** **\$47,085**

#### Expenses

Accounting software	\$673
Bank charges	\$10
Computer expenses	\$880
Insurance	\$1,810
Superannuation expense	\$5,786
Telephone	\$586
Wages & salaries	\$59,591
Website expenses	\$3,553
Work cover insurance	\$1,135
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$74,022</b>

**Operating Loss** **\$26,937**

#### Plus Other Income

Interest income	\$94
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$94</b>

**Net Loss** **\$26,843**

### Balance Sheet

As of June 2022

#### Banking

Foundation bank account	\$5,609
Foundation Savings account	\$26,350
Gift Fund bank account	\$10,541
Gift Fund Saver Account	\$45,098
<b>Total Banking</b>	<b>\$87,598</b>

#### Current Assets

Cash on hand	\$100
Prepaid Insurance	\$2,052
Accounts receivable	\$4,040
SGA Inc Loan Account	\$6,027
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$12,219</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$99,817</b>

#### Liabilities

##### Current Liabilities

Accounts payable	\$756
GST collected	\$1,403
GST paid	-\$276
PAYG withholdings payab	\$2,482
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$4,365</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$4,365</b>

**Net Assets** **\$95,452**

#### Equity

Current year earnings	-\$26,843
<b>Total Current Earnings</b>	<b>-\$26,843</b>
<b>Retained Earnings</b>	
Retained earnings	122,195
<b>Total Retained Earnings</b>	<b>\$122,195</b>
Settlement Capital	\$100
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$95,452</b>

# SGA Inc. Financial report

## Profit & Loss Statement July 2021—June 2022

### Income

Green Gardening Profes Subscr	\$7,843
SGA voting membership	\$909
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$8,752</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$8,752</b>

### Expenses

Accounting software	\$324
Advertising	\$228
Insurance	\$1,646
Superannuation	\$1,574
Wages & Salaries	\$15,740
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$19,513</b>

**Operating Loss** **\$10,761**

### Other Income

Interest Received	\$36
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$36</b>

**Net Loss** **\$10,725**

## Balance Sheet As of June 2022

### Assets

<b>Banking</b>	
Bank Aust access account	\$10,077
High Interest Account	\$30,074
<b>Total Banking</b>	<b>\$40,152</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Prepaid Insurance	\$584
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$584</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$40,736</b>

### Liabilities

<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
GST Collected	\$294
GST Paid	(\$8)
PAYG Withholdings Payable	\$956
SGA Foundation Loan	\$6,027
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$7,269</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$7,269</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$33,467</b>

### Equity

<b>Current Earnings</b>	
Current Year Earnings	(\$10,725)
<b>Total Current Earnings</b>	<b>(\$10,725)</b>
<b>Retained Earnings</b>	
Retained Earnings	\$44,192
<b>Total Retained Earnings</b>	<b>\$44,192</b>
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$33,467</b>

## Sustainable Gardening Australia (SGA) Foundation

ABN 47 508 099 142

Trustee:

## Sustainable Gardening Australia (SGA) Incorporated

ABN 49 895 542 709

6 Manningham Road West,  
Bulleen, Victoria, 3105  
P: 03 8850 3050

Email: [info@sgaonline.org.au](mailto:info@sgaonline.org.au)