

BEELARONG COMMUNITY FARM

To encourage, educate, share and nurture interest in sustainable living by creating a vibrant community farm within an urban environment.



SUMMER NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017



Time to relax: the Christmas decorations are in place for morning tea.

Festive fun at the farm

As we prepare for Christmas 2017, it is time to celebrate a remarkable year of achievement at Beelalong Community Farm. Record levels of membership are only part of the story. The list of new features is long

indeed, starting with the much-loved chooks, new compost bins, more solar panels and raised beds in the area. There have been some growing pains, but we can all agree that the farm is now in terrific shape. The hot

summer months are here and it is a good idea now to tidy and mulch your beds so the weeds are kept at bay. So, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. and let's make 2018 yet another year to remember



Pat McGrath sprouts wonderful reindeer antlers as the tinsel goes up.



WE OPEN WEDNESDAYS

9am - 12 noon. Join volunteers who work together in the community garden every Wednesday, including Dec 27 and Jan 3. The shed will be closed on weekends for the festive break and re-open on January 6-7. Weekend hours are Saturdays 8am - 11am and Sundays 2pm-5pm

OUR PEOPLE

President : Richard Holden;
Treasurer: Lorraine Holden; Secretary: David Costello; Committee: Paula Kennedy, Jane Reid

TASKS

Education, farm phone: Jean Burke; Community Garden: Lorraine Holden; Worm farms: Pat McGrath, Kevin Melican; Fruit fly traps: Jocelyn Abrahams; Tractor: John O'Donnell; Herb Spiral: Susan Weedon -Fick; Plumbing: Bob McConachie; Website-Facebook: Celine Friche; Solar panels: James Taylor; Morning tea: Pat McGrath, Jean Burke, Helen Paynter; Food Forest: Kevin Melican; Thompson Fafangian; Newsletters, rat baiting: David Costello; Composting: Heather O'Donnell, David Costello; Jam making, boundary garden: Dorothea Schafer; Seeds: Bernice Hardie; Allotments: Lorraine Holden; Mowing: Chris Courtney; Barry Muller; Passionfruit: Leona Olling; Citrus: Lorraine Holden; Chooks: Anthony Saber

Spring clean for the farm



We are all ears: an attentive audience at the Beelalong Annual General Meeting on December 10.

This is an edited version of the President's Report delivered by Richard Holden to the Beelalong Community Farm AGM on December 10

Let me comment on the membership, the financial status, and the state of the Farm today and thereby provide a healthy focus on the positive changes and activities of more recent times at the Farm.

Firstly, membership numbers currently sit at 159, with people on the waiting list for plots, this is a significant increase in the last six months due to the increased activity of members particularly on weekends and the new Sunday open days.

This activity attracts people to the farm, but it is the welcome and the subsequent farm tours that convince them to join our community. Well done and once

again thank you very much.

Secondly, our financial status is very strong with some positive changes implemented and managed by our Treasurer. We have moved to Xero, a computer based application that provides a professional level of financial management with easy cash flow reporting, expense

There is a renewed sense of enjoyment and engagement across the farm

management and budget planning. With Lorraine's expertise in this area the last three months have all been cash flow positive, a sign of good fiscal management.

Additionally, Lorraine has estab-

lished a separate account for grants monies as previously these amounts went into the operating account. This allowed for incorrect reporting especially when grants from one financial year were carried over and not spent until the next year, hence wrongly inflating the available operating account and budget forecasting.

I have left the most important part till last, the state of the farm today, and the enjoyment the members get back for their involvement and volunteer commitment. The farm feels and looks like it has had a spring clean.

The food forest is re-vitalised and set up for a productive harvest, the new composting bins have been constructed and working as part of the Council program which has had a side

Spring clean for the farm

benefit of also attracting new members. The grant for a new mulcher has been well spent and it has become an important part of the compost cycle.

We have secured a substantial donation of new sleepers from QR and started to upgrade old plots, and added four new community gardens.

The construction of eleven raised garden beds saw them all leased out even before they were completed and we now have fresh eggs from the chicken run which has become a major attraction for the local families especially on weekends.

Don't think we have run out of projects, John O'Donnell and Kevin Melican have presented me with a list of work they have planned for the next few months, so busy times ahead.

Lastly, the feedback that we re-



Shoulders to the wheel: Richard and Lorraine Holden.

ceive from members echoes these changes. There is a renewed sense of enjoyment and engagement across the farm with greater involvement in the

community gardens and support for the many projects that have come to fruition over the last six months.

I have enjoyed immensely the opportunity to be part of Beelarong Farm, to work with you on the day to day jobs and on the larger projects, and I thank you for making Lorraine and I feel welcome and part of this amazing community.

Beelarong Farm feels like a place where you can really stretch out, enjoy social contact with a wonderful group of people and go home feeling rewarded and refreshed.

These things are the real rewards for all your amazing efforts over the past year, and I thank each and every one of you for your contribution to Beelarong Farm.

I am sure that 2018 will be an even bigger and better year.



Some of the poppies made by the Beelarong ladies

Poppies bloom at Beelarong

A wonderful group of ladies from our Knit 'n Natter, Crochet 'n Chatter group returned to Beelarong Farm recently with their beautiful poppies which will be sent to the 5000 Poppies Group. They will be used in the Canberra War Memorial Gardens next year to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One.

This was an absolutely stunning effort by our ladies. Between us

we made 481 poppies. Keep those needles and crochet hooks working. We have until June next year to make more! This 5000 Poppies Project project is a community tribute of respect and remembrance to our servicemen and women, their families and their communities. It has been a four year labour of love for many thousands of people with well over a million hours of volunteer labour.

It's happy birthday to us



Happy achievers (left to right) Kara Cook, Shayne Sutton, Di Ferguson, Di Farmer and Leona Olling.



Marion Forrest with the amazing 20th birthday cake baked and iced by Juanita Muller.

By Celine Friche

It was good catching up with new and older members of the farm at the 20th Anniversary celebrations on November 12. The sun was shining, the cakes delicious, the singing and music very pleasing and everyone had a good time.

Thank you to all who have been supporting us over the last 20 years, we couldn't have made it without you!

Di Ferguson was awarded life membership to thank her for her support of the farm. Leona Olling was awarded life membership to thank her for all her work and commitment to-

wards the farm. She has been a member of Beelarong since the beginning. Her work on a grant submission back in '97 resulted in the wooden tool shed we still use today.

Her contribution to Beelarong's success continues to this day, running her very popular chutney workshops and looking after the passionfruit.

The crowd was entertained by the Sing for Joy Chorus followed by Roo Friend on guitar. Farm pioneers Mal Causer and Nick Wilson joined in the fun along with local MP Di Farmer, Cr Shayne Sutton and Morningside BCC candidate Kara Cook.

Let's meet our artful dabbler

By David Costello

Beelarong identity Di Ferguson describes herself as a bit of a dabbler.

“I have dabbled in painting, photography, pottery and making scarecrows,” she says. “I have always been interested in art and if something interesting comes along, I will try it.”

Evidence of Di's creative flair can be found around Beelarong, from the sunflower mural on the hayshed (painted along with artistic mentor Di Lloyd), the vines on the rotunda and, of course, the iconic Costa scarecrow who stands watch at the farm and has proved a hit at the at the last couple of Morningside Festivals.

She has been a great contributor in many areas of the farm. Since joining up in 2001, Di has served a term on the committee for 1 year, assisted with workshops, spoken to students at Balmoral State High School and worked tirelessly in the kitchen on Wednesdays to provide morning tea for hungry gardeners. She has recruited her son, singer-songwriter Mark Ferguson, to play at Beelarong events.

And that's not the end of it. She was co-ordinator of the stall at the Morningside Festival for several years. Di also admits to being the phantom person who places sunflower post cards on



Mural Magic: Di Ferguson with the sunflowers on the hayshed.

several local bill boards to provide publicity for the farm.

“The farm gives me much pleasure and I try to spread the word, where we are and what we represent to anyone who cares to listen to me,” she says. “The farm community is a great bunch of people.”

Di's tireless efforts were recognized at the Beelarong 20th birthday celebrations in November where she was presented with life membership.

She has given much to the farm, thanks to her many talents and positive personality. And she says the farm has given much to her too. When she first came to

Beelarong, Di was grieving after the death of partner and soul-mate Dean Daddow. He shared many of her interests and they had been together for 27 years.

“I was hit for six,” she says. “I think Beelarong saved me in the beginning. Being outdoors, I loved the people here. It really was a place of healing for me.”

Di is also one of those people who has a connection to the old days when Bulimba, Balmoral and Morningside were gritty working-class suburbs and the trams ran up and down Riding Rd. There were no trendy eateries and boutiques back in the 1940s when Di was growing up in the Bilyana Street house

Let's meet our artful dabbler

where she still lives today.

“It could be pretty rough back then,” she says. “There were workers from the abattoir, painters and dockers and wharfies at the Balmoral Hotel. I always avoided the establishment.”

Still, Di remembers a happy childhood. Her dad, Tom Dodds did a bit of everything, working on the river ferries and as a motor mechanic. There were fruit trees and bantam chooks in the backyard. His wife, Jean, was an expert seamstress who could make a woman's dress in one day.

“I delivered the dresses, which were wrapped in brown paper, to people's homes,” Di says. “I couldn't come home straight away. I had to wait a while and collect the payments for the dresses.”

Those were the days when kids could explore the neighbourhood without parental supervision. Di and her brother Tom would hang out at their



Just like the real thing: Di with her hairy Costa.

friends' houses, build cubbies on vacant blocks and then wander home for dinner.

She has fond memories of Christmas parties at the Bulimba Army Barracks in Apollo Rd where Santa sometimes arrived in a boat or a helicopter. And then there were swim-

ming lessons at a makeshift saltwater pool at Colmslie.

“We used to call it Tahiti,” Di says. “It was opposite where the Fish Factory is now and I think it was a submarine base in the war. It had chicken wire at one end to stop sharks coming in from the river.”

Di attended Morning-side State School and then went to the brand-new Balmoral State High, walking up Fifth Avenue and across the hills through bushland that was later carved up into suburban blocks. After completing her Junior Certificate, Di landed a job in the crockery department at the McWhirters Store in Fortitude Valley. Then she worked for many years in admin for Getinge, a Swedish medical technology and engineering company.

After retirement, Di was an enthusiastic volunteer at the Queensland Potters Association and a regular visitor to the Clem Jones Home for the Aged and Disabled at Bulimba where she and her beloved golden retriever Bonnie gave comfort to the residents

As a long-term Beelarrong member, Di is impressed by the rapid growth of membership and facilities this year.

“With so many new people and young people, we get a lot of enthusiasm and new ideas,” she says.

New loo now almost in view



Now that is what I call a cheque! Di Lloyd and Jean Burke hold a cheque for grant funds that will allow us to upgrade our beloved Windy Loo in the coming year.

Beelarong has been very successful in recent times when applying for grants to upgrade the farm. This year, we have received funds to install new solar

panels and to buy a heavy-duty mulcher. Plans for the Windy Loo project are being formulated and you will hear more about that next year.



Our chook of the season

IT'S time to meet Crystal, our Summer Chook of the Season. This demure White Leghorn hen (pictured) is the youngest of the Beelarong brood at a tender nine months of age. Chicken chief Anthony Saber says that Crystal is super friendly.

"She follows me around all the time and wants to be picked up more than once," he says.

"Like all the hens here she is completely tame."

Anthony says Crystal has different coloured eyes, with one orange and the other a kind of pale yellow. For the record, Crystal isn't just a pretty face. She manages to lay five or so white eggs each week. The hen project has been a great success. Thanks again, to Anthony and his helpers.



Look what we did: a happy group of workshop attendees shows off the jams they are taking home.

Workshop fun for everyone

We're very excited about the 2018 upcoming classes at Beelarong and we welcome some new facilitators

These include our very own secretary, David Costello, who will be demonstrating Balinese cooking and making kimchi while our treasurer Lorraine Holden will be showing us how to create Thai curry pastes.

Other great classes will be our pasta and passata classes later in the year. We'll also have our usual jam and chutney making classes, pizza in the cob oven and children's classes.

We are also looking for members to come forward and present classes in their areas of expertise. It could be art, maybe yoga, whatever takes your fancy. If you have any other suggestions for classes or are able to facilitate a class or workshop please contact us at info@beelarong.org.au with details. Here is an update on the program for next year.

Bees and the buzz in the hive

Sunday 4th February from 2pm to 4pm. Booking fee \$25; \$20 concession and Beelarong members. Would you like to see bees at work in an observation

hive? For this event Lisa Kelly from Three Fat Bees is bringing along her Observation Hive where you can see the bees in action through glass. Lisa is a self taught apiarist with over 50 hives. During this talk she will share her knowledge of the interesting and exciting world and life of bees. We will have honey from Lisa's hives for sale. Afternoon tea is included

Booking essential via <https://www.trybooking.com/340337>

Cooking pizza in the cob oven

Sunday 11th February from 2pm to 4pm. Booking fee \$25; \$20 for concession and Beelarong

Workshop fun for everyone

members. Come along and be exposed to the hands-on satisfaction of not only making a delicious pizza, including the dough, but the joy of cooking in our cob oven. Bring along a smile, an apron and a hearty appetite and we will supply the rest. Work up an appetite with a guided tour of the farm. Numbers are limited so book early. Booking essential via <https://www.trybooking.com/340339>

We have some exciting new workshops coming up in 2018, as well as the perennial favourites, as part of Brisbane City Council's GOLD program suitable for Seniors 50 years and over. Booking is essential. Cost for the GOLD program workshops \$5. For more information contact Education Officer, Jean Burke on 0412 699 082 or email education@beelarong.org.au

Tuesday 20th February

Jam making using seasonal fruits 9:30am - 11:30am

Tuesday 6th March

Cooking Chutney 9am - 11am

Thursday 8th March

Cob Oven Cooking 9:30am - 11:30am. Cob oven cooking with damper and scones, and demonstrating lemon butter

Sunday 11th March

Balinese Cooking 11am-1pm



Happy children with their own Beelarong bugs to play with.

Sunday 25th March

Make your own Thai Curry Paste 2-4pm

Monday 26th March

Natural Planter, using natural and recycled hessian, and planting it up 9:30am - 11:30am

Monday 9th April

Egg Carton Greenhouse 9:30am - 11:30am for Kids and Seniors

Thursday 12th April

Terrific Terrariums 9:30am - 11:30am for Kids and Seniors

Tuesday 17th April

Sauerkraut making 9:30am - 11:30am

Tuesday 24th April

Cooking with Cucumbers 9:30am - 11:30am

Tuesday 1st May

Cooking Chutney 9am - 11am

Thursday 17th May

Kokedama making (Japanese moss balls) 9:30am - 11:30am

Monday 21st May

Pasta Making 9:30am - 11:30am

Tuesday 22nd May

Kimchi Making 9:30am - 11:30am

Monday 4th June

Gnocchi Making 9:30am - 11:30am

Thursday 7th June

A Hand full of Fun 9:30am - 11:30am. Make a Plaster of Paris hand and fill it with succulents to make an interesting presentation. The hand can be decorated to use as a dish to hold jewellery.