

President's Report 2017 Cultivate NSW

The organisational objectives of Cultivate NSW have remained largely the same over the lifetime of the Society. Currently these objectives are summarised into 4 distinct areas:

1. Raise awareness of the health benefits and enhanced wellbeing through interaction with gardens and connection of people and plants
2. Promote services and programs in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture
3. Provide education and training through professional development, accredited courses and development of a pathway towards a career in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture
4. Support for a network of people working, volunteering or interested in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture through newsletters and events

The Committee agreed to focus on 3 priorities during the year to address the objectives above. These included

- * building a **digital presence** through our website and social media
- * developing a **nationally accredited course** in Therapeutic Horticulture and
- * providing informative and inspirational **events** for everyone interested in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture

The outworking of these priorities and how they relate to our Society objectives is detailed below.

1. Raising Awareness

As a member of the Horticultural Media Association, I firmly believe that media in all its forms can be a powerful ally in getting the word out for Cultivate NSW. Over the last 12 months this has included:

- * Regular radio interviews on The Gardeners' Breakfast show on OCR FM community radio station, South West Victoria
- * Press articles in Bankstown Torch local newspaper, Camden Advertiser local newspaper, House of Wellness (national magazine with 1 million readership), MINDFOOD magazine, Hort Journal industry magazine, Greenworld industry magazine, Sunday Life Magazine (SMH), Thrive UK newsletter
- * Podcast - interview with The Wellbeing Garden by Cath Manuel
- * Social media posts on Facebook (600 likes) and Instagram (535 followers)
- * Guest speaker at Ingleburn Horticulture & Garden Club, Neami National Healthy Living Workshop for sustainability & mental health workers, Access to Leisure Workshop (Diversional Therapy Australia)

Many thanks and a special mention goes to Jo Aquilina from Therapeutic Gardens Australia who has put in countless hours promoting Cultivate NSW through social media, developing our profile and achieving good momentum in the digital space.

2. Promoting Services & Programs

There has been considerable unpaid work done on the Cultivate NSW website to upgrade it's look and usability. A more effective website now gives details for people searching the internet about training courses, starting or running a program, working in S&TH and where someone can volunteer. Current events and news pages keep people informed and fact sheets have been listed so they are more easily accessed.

These changes have helped to reduce the volume of emails attended to by the Admin Manager.

Additional listings for Corporate sponsors has now been included on the website. Digital exposure is a valuable tool in attracting support and finance from other associations and businesses working in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture. This has also helped Cultivate NSW establish good working relationships and partnerships with other organisations.

Special thanks goes to our Corporate sponsors: Therapeutic Gardens Australia, Vegepod, VegTrug (Takasho), DesignWell, OzBreed, Kevin Heinze Grow, Veggie Lady, Ryde TAFE Students Fund, Connection 2 Nature, TAFE NSW.

3. Education & Training

Our Cultivate NSW member, Daniel Rosenbaum, conducted a Botanical Art workshop at the Telopea Centre. While enrolment numbers were low, enthusiasm was high.

Alzheimers NSW was funded to run 3 seminars on Living With Dementia in Hunter region with 370 delegates attending. These were held in June 2017 and included Dr Theresa Scott presenting on the therapeutic benefits of gardens. This was a great opportunity for Cultivate NSW to make connections with general public and with associations like Alzheimers AUS and Community Greening.

TAFE NSW has now completed 5 short courses with a Statement of Attainment in Therapeutic Horticulture. Cultivate NSW is continuing to work with TAFE NSW to develop a Certificate II in Therapeutic Horticulture.

The demand for accredited training and appropriate pathways to a career in Social & Therapeutic Horticulture highlights the need for a national body to guide people, standardise practice and endorse programs. Cultivate has been an active proponent in the establishment of this new national body, Therapeutic Horticulture Australia Inc. THA Inc. has been registered with ASIC and is now a legal entity in all states of Australia. Charitable status is still pending and awaiting approval from ACNC.

4. Supporting a Network

The highlight event of 2016 was the first Sydney based Therapeutic Landscapes Conference last October with international guest speaker Anna Baker Cresswell from HighGround UK and Dr Theresa Scott from University of Queensland. The conference was highly successful with around 150 delegates from all over the country reporting very positive feedback. The conference highlighted programs from around Sydney and beyond.

2017 has seen a few smaller events designed to introduce topics, programs and interaction between attendees. These included Veggie Gardening in Pots presentation at Telopea Centre as part of the Garden ReLeaf program raising awareness and funds for BeyondBlue; Collectors Plant Fair in April and the new Secret Garden open day in May.

Cultivate NSW also took a stand at the ATSA Independent Living Expo to increase our presence among NDIS participants and occupational therapists. Vegepod kindly assisted with a donation of a small Vegepod that was presented to Liverpool Hospital Brain Injury Unit after the expo.

Promoting events and improving communications with interested people has been achieved through a monthly e-newsletter. The move to an electronic newsletter has meant more frequent, timely and cheaper information share. It has also helped Cultivate NSW build relationships with organisations like Royal Rehab, Alzheimers NSW, Diversional Therapy Australia and HTSA when promoting their events.

The Future for Cultivate NSW

I must again thank our Admin Manager, Kait Gotham, for her help and support and consistent efforts in keeping on top of our administration needs. She has been a crucial person in ensuring Cultivate NSW keeps operating in the absence of a Society Secretary from within the committee.

Currently, the management committee positions of Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are vacant, making future operation difficult. The weight of executive responsibility is likely to be better

handled by a national committee of a national body rather than smaller individual state associations. It is Cultivate NSW Committee's recommendation that urgent consideration be given by members to transition Cultivate NSW over to a national body with a larger base to draw on for a volunteer management committee.

An extra ordinary meeting is to be scheduled before the end of the year to discuss the options presented through the establishment of Therapeutic Horticulture Australia Inc. and the on-going work of Cultivate NSW to be conducted through them.

Toni Salter
President

