



# Society for Growing Australian Plants Cairns Branch

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April 2026

## March Highlights

For those who missed last month's AGM and General Meeting, here is a brief summary of the outcomes.

Due to our Constitution's three-year limit for the president position, Stuart was unable to stand this year. The new Committee is:

- President: Tony Roberts
- Vice President: Sandy Watts
- Treasurer: Val Carnie
- Secretary: Tony Roberts
- Newsletter Editor: Sandy Watts
- Publicity: Rachel Platte
- Library: Coralie Uebergang
- Web: Tony Roberts

As the new President, I would like to thank outgoing members Stuart, Rob and Pauline for their hard work and diligence, that resulted in a successful year, the sharing of much knowledge and fabulous newsletters. Val continues on as the Treasurer for a tenth successive year, as a result our finances are very healthy, thanks Val. Sandy bravely took on the roles of Vice President and Newsletter Editor, Rachel, Publicity and Coralie kindly remained on as Librarian. Thank you to all, we hope to bring members an enjoyable year of botanising and slow walks in the forest.

A minor constitutional amendment was made to correct a timing inconsistency between the AGM date, fee notices, and the payment due date. In addition, the group agreed to rename to Native Plants Queensland Cairns Branch, effective 1 July, aligning with other state branches.

Tony

President	Tony Roberts
Vice President	Sandy Watts
Treasurer	Val Carnie
Secretary	Tony Roberts

Publicity	Rachel Platte
Webmaster	Tony Roberts
Newsletter	Sandy Watts
Librarian	Coralie Uebergang

## Next Excursion

SGAP Cairns  
19 April, 10am  
Speewah Conservation Park  
Smiths Track, Speewah  
Park at the first carpark, near  
the Djina-wu Track entrance.  
Bring a chair!

rsvp:  
secretary@sgapcairns.org.au

NPQ Tablelands  
26 April  
Chilagoe  
Contact Peter Radke for more  
information.  
pandaradke@gmail.com

## Upcoming Excursions

May: Babinda Boulders  
June: Irvinebank / Stannery Hills  
July: Cooktown  
August: Harvey Creek  
September: Daintree  
October: Cattana Wetlands  
November: Mason St  
December: Christmas party,  
Edge Hill Bowls Club

## SGAP Library

Explore items available for  
loan [here](#).

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# SGAP Cairns, President's Report 2025 - 2026

## Introduction

We started off the year with an existential dilemma: do we have the energy and resources to maintain the Cairns Branch beyond 2025? The branch's average age is rapidly increasing, and not everyone has the energy to visit the more out-of-the-way places that we once did. Suggested solutions started off well, with about 20 attending an evening talk at Stratford, and new members joining. However, attendance fell off later in the year. With significant time away and other work pressures, I was not present to promote and lead the solutions posed in the earlier half of the year.

March's Annual General Meeting was held in the airconditioned comfort of the Mulgrave History Museum. It was a wet day, and there were plenty of puddles in the car park to leap over on our way to the building's entrance. Surrounded by exhibits of early logging and sugar cane farming, we elected our new committee for the period March 2025-March 2026:

- President: Stuart Worboys
- Vice President: Rob Jago
- Secretary: Tony Roberts
- Treasurer: Val Carnie
- Webmaster: Tony Roberts
- Librarian: Coralie Stuart
- Newsletter Editor: Pauline Lawie

Our group continues due in no small part to the dedication and attention to detail of its committee. Thanks to Val Carnie for keeping an eye on our finances, and working her waythrough the labyrinthine bureaucracy of the Westpac Bank to ensure our accounts are properly documented. Pauline Lawie continues her role as Newsletter Editor, and presents a neat compilation of news and articles each month. Tony Roberts continues with his webmaster responsibilities and keeps me in check with much needed reminders of my responsibilities. He has also taken on an educational role, preparing excellent articles for the newsletter and leading plant identification discussions in our field excursions. Thanks to Coralie Uebergang for looking after our library, and Rob Jago for taking on the position of Vice President.

## Excursions

**April 2025:** Our April meeting was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> at Stratford Library, a change from normal procedures. Following our meeting, I spoke about the Australian Tropical Herbarium's project conducting vegetation mapping of the islands in the Great Barrier Reef park. The following Sunday, a small group met at Emerald Creek Falls car park for the long winding walk up to the falls. There was an abundance of wildflowers hiding in the long grass, and at the falls we came across a curious outlier – a specimen of Orania Palm (*Oraniopsis appendiculata*), presumably growing from a seed washed down from the high mountain rainforests of the Lamb Range.

**May 2025:** Mulgrave Landcare Coordinator, Rachel Platte, organised our excursion to a forest rehabilitation site at the end of Ross Road, Deeral. We poked around the plantings, and Rachel led us into the mangroves to explain the different species. Following on from that, I gave a short tutorial on the use of the iNaturalist app.

**June 2025:** Our June meeting was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> at Stratford Library Meeting Room. Our speaker, Rachel Platte, gave an excellent presentation on mangroves and their importance for coastal biodiversity. Our June excursion took us to the biodiversity hotspot in the rainforest west of Mount Bartle Frere. We joined with members of the Tablelands group to walk to the Stockwellias, arguably the largest trees in the Wet Tropics. These rare trees, relatives of the eucalypts, are over 40 metres tall, and two or more metres in diameter, with buttress spreading many metres from the impressive trunks. We admired, we photographed, and Tablelands members shared stories of their visits in years before.

**July 2025:** A team of six from Tablelands and Cairns Branches attended our annual working bee at Cooktown Botanic Gardens. After a day's work on Saturday, we were treated to a barbecue dinner by gardens coordinator Nikko Menzel and his family. The next day we travelled out along the Elim Beach Road to inspect the colourful and unusual flora growing in the woodlands and dunefields of the area.

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# SGAP Cairns, President's Report 2025 - 2026, cont

**August 2025:** Our August meeting was held at the Cairns City Library Meeting Room, a change of venue from the preferred location at Stratford. Barry Muir spoke to a small group of attendees about "Our Fungal Friends". The excursion on the following Sunday was to member Patsy Penny's property at East Russell. After lunch with homemade coffee and cake, Patsy led a tour around the family's tree plantings, and patches of lowland rainforest. In a rare zoological distraction, a family of cassowaries was spotted.

**September 2025:** September's excursion was to Goomboora Park, Brinsmead. A small but enthusiastic group enjoyed the beautiful sunny day. After lunch, instead of inspecting the plantings on the former cane paddock as has been done previously, the group strolled across the bridge and along beside the creek enjoying the ambience and beautiful tall trees. After lunch, there was a walk following Freshwater Creek upstream along the bike path.

**October 2025:** Only a few turned out for our planned meeting on 9 October at Stratford Community Hall. Our speaker had to cancel due to a death in his family. The excursion to

Cattana Wetlands was significantly more successful. Armed with a copy of Sharren Wong's handy 'Walking Guide to the Trees of Cattana Wetlands' a small group ambled around the Kingfisher Pool in a neat circuit. Tony stopped every now and then to point out interesting plants and explain the features that could be used to identify them.

**November 2025:** A change of scenery! With the tropical heat increasing, a gallery visit was scheduled. Members met for coffee and cake at Perrotas Cafe, then proceeded to the gallery to view the exhibitions: "Tania Major. Kowanyama – When Rain Falls, When Earth Sleeps" and "Fred Williams. Weipa Series – Collection in Focus".

**December 2025:** For the early starters, Charles Clarke and Cadel Boyce gave a short tour of the Cairns Botanic Gardens, where they gave an overview of the new gardens Master Plan. After the tour, we proceeded to the well-attended Christmas breakup was held at Edge Hill Bowls Club. Plants and sweet snacks provided by the members were raffled. As the number of prizes exceeded the number of attendees, no one went home empty handed.



*Oraniopsis appendiculata* on Mount Lewis © [tanetahi](#)

## 2026 Membership Fees

2026 membership fees are now due.

To become a member of SGAP, you must pay a Branch fee of \$10 per household, in addition to the regional NPQ fee.

Branch fees can be paid via direct transfer (BSB: 034-167 Account No.: 850 790). Details for regional fees are available on the [NPQ website](#).