



Australia - New Zealand Region Director's Report on 2024

for WBFF AGM 20 March 2025, Karjat, India

The Australia-New Zealand Region maintains a membership of some 50 Bonsai Clubs in Australia and 18 Clubs in New Zealand. In both countries, activity remains strong. The national associations - the AABC in Australia and the NZBA in New Zealand with their individual member clubs, have continued the important face to face bonsai training and educational activities. Bonsai instructors from overseas together with activities using local demonstrators from the AABC Visiting Tutor Programme (VTP) and the NZBA Demonstrator Travel Grant Scheme (DTG) are utilised.



Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs Ltd



The AABC held its 36th National Bonsai Convention in Brisbane, Queensland from 17 – 20 May. Convention attendance numbers were satisfying for this year's Convention. There were 182 registrants from across Australia with 10 from New Zealand and 2 international guests. While registration numbers were below average, however after the COVID pandemic it was great to see people again travelling and coming to a convention. There was a large display of 89 bonsai together with 44 suiseki. Koji Hiramatsu from Japan and Martin Walters from New Zealand were the headline demonstrators ably assisted by local bonsai artists, including our WBFF Emeritus Chairman Lindsay Bebb and his wife Glen. On a sad note, Lindsay and Glen announced that this event would be their last public demonstration. Lindsay will now concentrate his time making more bonsai stands and daiza.



Emeritus WBFF Chairman Lindsay Bebb and Glen Bebb with their Japanese Black Pine in foyer of the Convention venue and demonstrating on a Camellia for their last public demonstration.

It was unfortunate that we were not able to hold the WBFF AGM in Australia due to accommodation issues due to a large sporting event over the same weekend. However, I was delighted to be able to present on behalf of our WBFF Chairman, several awards.

The award for outstanding bonsai, as judged by Koji Hiramatsu, went to a young bonsai artist for his Japanese Black Pine. He received a certificate and a boxed gold plated pair of bonsai cutters kindly donated by Kim Sae Won, WBFF Chairman.



WBFF Chairman's Award for an Outstanding Bonsai – a Japanese Black Pine awarded to Mr Beau Pett



There were 44 suiseki included in the exhibition display. Nigel Atkinson, a recognised suiseki collector from Western Australia judged a fine yamagata-ishi as the outstanding suiseki on display. The suiseki was collected by Selby Simpson who also carved the daiza.



WBFF Chairman's Award for an Outstanding Suiseki - a yamagata-ishi awarded to Selby Simpson



The WBFF Chairman also provided a special award to the 2024 AABC Convention Convenor, Mr Tony Bebb. The Bonsai Society of Queensland further recognised Tony's many years of service by awarding him with Life Membership of the Society and presented him with a scroll.



***** The photographs from the AABC 2024 Convention were provided by Patrick Hoelscher, of Pat Hoelscher Photography Studio, Brisbane Queensland.**

The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA)

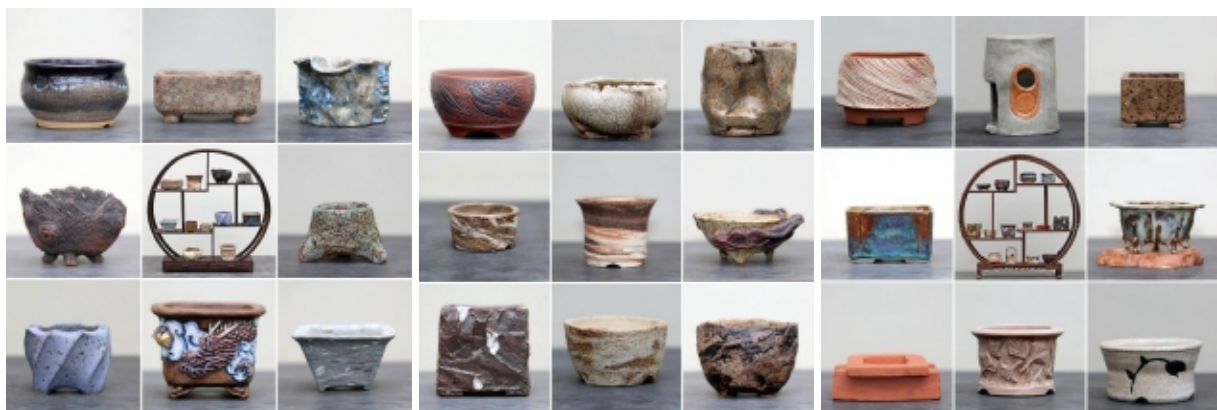
The NBPCA located in Canberra, is an integral element of the National Arboretum Canberra (NAC) and continues to be a major showcase for bonsai in Australian. The Collection is a WBF Cooperation Centre.



In April, Lindsay Bebb, WBF Chairman Emeritus, and myself attended 'Bonsai Reshaped 2024', a highlight of the calendar year at the NBPCA which featured international artists Marija Hajdic from Croatia and Morten Albek from Denmark. The theme was 'Big & Small' with both professional artists carrying the legacy of the bonsai masters into the future whilst developing and exploring the boundaries of bonsai through bonsai beginner and intermediate half-day workshops. A feature of the event was 'Bonsai After Dark', a night under the lights of the Village Centre where Marija demonstrated on a very large elm tree and Morten showcased his renowned shohin bonsai skills on several smaller junipers and a native Australian Melaleuca.

The Canberra Bonsai Society, provided a stunning display of Shohin Bonsai - an exquisite celebration of this ancient art form in miniature.

During the night, the NBPCA 2024 Shohin Bonsai Pot Acquisition entries were displayed. This exhibition was aligned with the visit by Morten Albek, a renowned shohin artist. These pots made by potters from around Australia will remain on display at the NBPCA.



The Artist in Residence program allows bonsai artists from across Australia to share knowledge and techniques with NBPCA staff and volunteers in an exchange of ideas and mutual learning. Two placements for the program in 2024 were announced during the 'Bonsai Reshaped' event.

The WBF World Bonsai Day banner was again featured at the Arboretum site during the weekend of World Bonsai Day 2024 in May.



New Zealand Bonsai Association

The New Zealand Bonsai Association's 18 member clubs provide their members with access to a wide range of benefits, including a welcoming community of bonsai practitioners around the country, access to workshops with national and international demonstrators at national conventions, and a quarterly magazine.

The 2024 NZ National Bonsai Convention was held from 15 -16 June and was hosted by the Auckland Bonsai Society. The featured Special Guest artist was Mauro Stemberger, on his first visit to New Zealand. Mauro was on stage for two days of demonstrations, working on extraordinary New Zealand material and hosted two days of intensive workshops. Local demonstrators including Martin Walters also demonstrated and conducted workshops. An exhibition of New Zealand's best bonsai and suiseki were on display.



Mauro Stemberger



Martin Walters





Other Activities by NZ Clubs

DRAGON BONSAI DAY

23 Mar Saturday 9:30am - 4:00pm **FREE EVENT**
Mt Eden War Memorial Hall, 489 Dominion Road, Mount Eden, Auckland

9:30AM OPEN SHOW+MARKET/10:00AM VIP TOUR/11:00AM CULTURAL PERFORMANCE/1:00PM BONSAI WORKSHOP/4:00PM CLOSE
 Organiser Auckland Bonsai/Penjing Art Centre Trust
 Support New Zealand Chinese Bonsai Society Inc. Albany Chinese Association



FREE BONSAI DEMONSTRATION
 An introduction to Bonsai by Sandra

Saturday April 6th 1.30 – 3pm
 (Bring your own Bonsai if you would like advice)

KAIMAI Garden Center
 KAIMAI GARDEN CENTRE
 SH 27 Northern Boundary of Matamata Township
 OPEN DAILY - 9am to 5pm
 07 888 8140



Club members at a pot making workshop



Frank Kelly

Frank Kelly
Director, Australia-New Zealand Region
5 March 2025