



Cowra Japanese Garden & Cultural Centre Limited  
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28<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

Mr Philip Mitchell

President,

National Federation of Australia Japan Societies &

Australia Japan Society of NSW

Dear Philip,

I am writing, as a courtesy, to inform you on the situation at the Cowra Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre, that very important link between Australia and Japan, and to seek the assistance of your members.

Unfortunately, the Garden and Cultural Centre has been forced to close to the public due to Government restrictions on domestic travel and social distancing guidelines as a result of the Covid-19 virus.

As a result, we have lost our only source of income.

Whilst the length of closure is uncertain, it is possible that the Garden will be closed for several months and longer. Even after the Garden is allowed to reopen, and domestic travel restrictions relaxed, we expect that it will be many months before visitor numbers return to a viable level.

The likely result will be, that without further assistance, we will have exhausted all our cash reserves by September and be facing a bleak future.

The Cowra Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre opened in 1979. Designed by renowned Japanese landscape architect Ken Nakajima, who worked with Don Kibbler AM ORS, and other prominent citizens of Cowra, the Garden is a lasting testimony to peace and a living expression of the Australian-Japan relationship.

Together with the Cowra Japanese War Cemetery and the Cowra P.O.W Breakout Site, it represents the most important cultural link between Australia and Japan.

The Garden is entirely funded by public admission charges. Approximately 40,000 visitors are welcomed each year. For the past 40 years, this income, together with Gift Shop sales, has been sufficient to cover operating costs and host major events such as the annual Sakura Matsuri Cherry Blossom Festival each September.

Capital expenditures have been supported in the past by generous donations, including by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Saburo Nagakura Foundation, Expo 70 Osaka, Cowra Shire Council, many Japanese Corporations, and a recent Australian Government grant to replace the Cultural Centre rooves with Japanese tiles.

As a not-for-profit organisation, the Garden is also indebted to the NSW Government and the Japanese Embassy in Australia for ongoing assistance.

We are seeking donations to cover basic maintenance costs until at least September 2020 and to relaunch the Garden for the Cherry Blossom Festival (Sakura Matsuri) on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

The Australian Government is assisting with limited wage support through its Job Keeper program, but other costs for the coming months and for relaunching are estimated to be \$200,000.

Despite their reduced paid hours, all our staff have volunteered to continue to care for The Garden by working as long as necessary, because of their loyalty and commitment to this iconic Garden.

The Board, comprising members from the community, and representatives of the State Government and Cowra Council, are all volunteers.

The Garden is seeking to raise \$200,000 to ensure its survival during this crisis. All Donations to the Garden Public Fund are Tax Deductible

Public Fund Trustees are:

Mr Don Kibbler AM ORS

Mr Bill West, Mayor, Cowra Shire Council (2008-present)

Mr Nick Greiner AC, former NSW Premier (1988-1992)

**Donations may be made via the Go Fund Me link below**

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/jc3be-a-cause-i-care-about-needs-help>

or directly to the Garden. Please contact the Garden Manager, Mr Shane Budge, [manager@cowragarden.com.au](mailto:manager@cowragarden.com.au) for details.

We would be most grateful for any support that your members may be able to offer by way of donation and sharing the above Go Fund Me link with as many contacts in Australia and Japan as possible.

Please be assured that both the Board and staff are continuing to explore all opportunities for funding through all levels of Government to ensure the integrity of the Gardens is preserved and in good condition for the eventual reopening.

We are doing all in our power to ensure that this “Jewell in the Crown” of the unique Cowra - Japan relationship survives through these difficult times.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Griffiths". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the bottom.

Bob Griffiths.

Chairman.