

# Jenny Bates



Jenny was elected as the inaugural President of the Lochiel Park Community Garden, a role she has now held for more than 10 years. Jenny's enthusiasm, leadership and commitment has been an inspiration to the membership and to meeting their aims to grow fruit and vegetables in a sustainable way and also to build community by working together in the garden. In 2023, Jenny was nominated for her valuable contribution to the community as part of the Campbelltown Councils Australia Day Awards.

## Early Life

Jenny was born in Mackay Queensland and lived with her parents and brother on a remote dairy farm. Jenny remembers that she had an isolated early life and that she was the only girl in her class and one of eleven children in the whole primary school. She boarded at school in Brisbane during her secondary school years. This was followed by studying for a Bachelor of Science at the University of Brisbane. Jenny is philosophical about missing out on a close family life during her childhood: 'it was just what you did when you lived in the country'. Jenny qualified as a medical scientist and worked in various hospital laboratories in Brisbane. Her husband Bevan was offered a post-doctoral position at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the United States where they lived for 18 months. Returning to Melbourne, Jenny worked in a hospital laboratory before starting their family, then a microbiology laboratory after another short stay in the USA.

In the late 1980s Bevan's work brought them to Adelaide. It was during this time that Jenny developed her interest in environmental issues and gardening. A career change managing volunteers led to Jenny completing a Diploma of Counselling and working for Lifeline, training and managing volunteers and phone support workers. She then worked for the Northern Domestic Violence Service for five years before retiring.

## Connections to Campbelltown

Jenny and Bevan moved to Campbelltown in 2011, among the original residents in the award winning Lochiel Park Green Village. This provided the opportunity to put their interest in sustainable building into practice. The Village also provides opportunities for community interaction, building the sense of belonging that Jenny believes complements the integration of housing with the natural surroundings, resulting in enhanced wellbeing and better environmental outcomes.

## Community Garden

The Community Garden was outlined in the original plans for the Village and following community meetings and workshops, a committee was formed. Jenny was elected the inaugural President, a role she continues to hold. The aims of the garden are to enable members to grow fruit, vegetables and other foods in a sustainable way, to sharing information with the community in various ways and to ensure the community garden becomes a focal point in the community. The garden grew from the first plantings of



sunflowers and herbs and was opened by the then Premier, Mike Rann, in April 2011. The garden now flourishes with 32 individual plots growing fruit trees, vegetables and flowers, communal areas and storage sheds. The Jenny Pavilion in the community garden was named in her honour in 2021.

Jenny sees one of her roles as a mentor and educator, sharing her knowledge through one-on-one conversations, working bees, presentations at workshops and the like, learning a lot in the process! She has also been a member of the working group and judging panel the Campbelltown 'Love my garden' competitions. She regularly assists with Friends of Lochiel Park working bees – planting, weeding and mulching, and helped establish the gardens around the Ripples Art Shed.

### **Artistic Endeavours**

Jenny is interested in technique and understanding how to do things, particularly those that have a purpose. Sustainability and ecology meet these requirements however Jenny is also a talented textile artist. She completed Certificates 3 and 4 in Visual Arts in 2017 and is a member of the textile group 'The Tree of us+1'. The group works on collaborative principles, providing encouragement, challenges and continual learning to each other. Jenny's love of colour and design are reflected in her beautiful art quilts which also form parts of larger group works. They have exhibited at galleries around rural South Australia, and the Australasian Quilt Convention in Brisbane in 2022. She also helped organise several local and Australia-wide textile art exhibitions and shown her work at some of these.

As a member of the Ripples Community Arts organisation, Jenny participates in ceramics and textile art groups, and was involved in the 'Drainwaves' mosaic project at Lochiel Park. She has also exhibited at their South Australia Living Artists (SALA). Jenny also designed and supervised the construction of the mosaic milestones for the Lochiel Parkrun course, installed in 2019.

### **Words of wisdom**

Jenny believes that the 'wisdom of crowds' is critical to successful community activities and that the group working together leads to better outcomes for all. As she says 'no one person has all the answers' and her wisdom is reflected in the high regard she is held within her community.

***"The wisdom of crowds is critical to achieving successful community activities, no one person has all the answers"***