

HRIA 16TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025 – TOOWOOMBA, QUEENSLAND

Friday 17th to Monday 20th of October, 2025

The Heritage Roses in Australia 16th National Conference will feature a programme packed with garden visits, friendship and of course roses. The Conference will be based in picturesque Toowoomba, the Garden City, renowned for its beautiful parks and gardens, and home of the State Rose Garden of Queensland.

Over the four days of the Conference, delegates will visit 13 gardens – the State Rose Garden, historic homesteads, landscaped beauties, plant lover's paradises and members' personal heritage rose gardens, throughout the Darling Downs and beyond.

ITINERARY

Day 1 Friday – Brisbane to Toowoomba

'Rosevale Homestead', Samsonvale

Friday morning buses will pick up delegates in Toowoomba and at the Brisbane Airport (approx. 10.30 am) before heading to Samsonvale on the north-western edge of Brisbane to visit the beautiful heritage rose garden of Leonie and Terry Kearney. Leonie has an extensive collection of heritage roses and a particular love of Polyanthas. She runs a small nursery on site selling cutting grown roses and perennials. Visitors will also be welcome to view Terry's amazing collection of memorabilia from the 1950's and 60's.

Welcome Dinner, Burke and Wills Hotel, Toowoomba

Registration completion; Co-ordinator's meeting; Dinner; Flower arranging demonstration by Marian Crambrook.

Day 2 Saturday – Toowoomba and North

Toowoomba sits in the crater of an extinct volcano and is blessed with rich, red volcanic soil, acidic in pH, in which most plants will grow happily. Today we will start here before traveling north along the escarpment to Highfields and then dipping over the eastern edge to Ravensborne, an area associated with timber plantations.

State Rose Garden, Newtown Park, Toowoomba

The State Rose Garden boasts 2,200 roses including sections dedicated to former local breeder Frank Riethmuller, Alister Clark and a heritage rose bed featuring 180 roses, some of which were came from the HRIA Collection at David Ruston's in Renmark. There is also a Trial Garden for new roses bred by Australian and overseas growers. We thank the Friends of the State Rose Garden for hosting our morning tea Saturday morning.

Ashley and Marie McEwan, Highfields

Covering 2 1/2 acres (1.1 ha) on a sloping site, this is a typical Toowoomba mountain-climate garden with maples, conifers and English-type perennials. The McEwans created the Springs Garden Nursery of over 5 acres (2.2 ha), which attracts many visitors and will be the venue for our Farewell drinks Monday night.

'Emaho', Ravensbourne

This 40 acre (16 ha) tree farm is the home of James and Barbara McGeogh. Their garden features a crab-apple walk under planted with azaleas, a Japanese themed area with huge wisteria arbour and majestic pond, and an English cottage styled culinary and medicinal herb garden. James is a landscaper with several international credits including Disney Singapore and is currently engaged in projects in Dubai. James is a guest speaker for our Gala Dinner tonight and will tell us about his involvement in these world class projects.

Biennial General Meeting, Burke and Wills Hotel, Toowoomba

Gala Dinner, Burke and Wills Hotel, Toowoomba

Dinner; Awards Presentations; Guest Speakers: James McGeogh and Annette Russell

Day 3 Sunday – Southern Downs

Heading South from Toowoomba a little under an hour to Allora. Allora is a rich farming area boasting wide expanses of broad acre crops. At this time of year, cereal winter crops are in the final stage of ripening. Warwick has a slightly cooler climate and is known as The Rose and Rodeo City. It is home to many fine, historic sandstone buildings. Killarney, set on the edge of the Great Dividing Range, has rolling green hills and valleys and offers picture postcard views and some of the region's best scenic country drives. The climate is cooler here with a higher rainfall which once supported a thriving timber industry.

'Rivoli Farm', Allora

'Rivoli Farm', situated just outside Allora, belongs to the Kenny family. The garden, designed by Clint Kenny, featured in the ABC's series 'Dream Garden', has grown and matured since the programme aired nine years ago. The homestead was built as a doctor's surgery and hospital in 1889 in Brisbane and was shifted to this site in 1980. This garden is sure to delight with its thoughtful plantings.

Warwick Historical Society, Warwick

The Warwick Historical Society's installation of a heritage rose garden makes it the perfect stop for morning tea today.

Sue Hoffman's Garden, Killarney

Sue Hoffman's lovely formal English type garden is set on a sloping site with tremendous views across the hills and dales. Sue has many conifers and a formal parterre garden with that definite English feel. She has maples, pin oaks, a glorious red cedar and a huge bush house filled with native staghorns and elkhorns, and to top it all off, she has numerous roses as well.

'Melrose', Killarney

'Melrose' on the edge of Killarney promises to be special. Peter Lindor bought the property more than 15 years ago and has developed it into a large entertainment and wedding venue. The homestead was built in the 1800's, but everything else Peter has created. There is a chapel, blacksmith shop, Roman arch, a sensory garden for the visually impaired. The expansive lawns are complemented by walkways and 150 trees and 300 roses. We thank 'Melrose' for hosting our lunch on Sunday.

Annette Russell's Garden, Killarney

Annette has been a passionate gardener since childhood and has developed a love affair with roses. The garden showcases 185 roses from a wide range of groups - Species, Damasks, Albas, Centifolia, Portland, Bourbon, Hybrid Perpetual, Noisette, Polyantha, Rugosa, Tea, Hybrid Tea, Floribunda, David Austin, Modern Shrub, Climbers and Ramblers. Two of her previous gardens, "Granite Gardens" at Thorndale on the Granite Belt and "Coolibah Gardens" in Charleville, South Western Queensland were in the Australian Open Garden Scheme. We will be delighted to have Annette share her experiences in the garden with us at the Gala Dinner on Saturday night.

Day 4 Monday – Eastern Downs

Somewhat confusingly, the Eastern Downs lies west of Toowoomba, since Toowoomba sits on top of the Great Dividing Range at the very eastern edge of the Darling Downs. Again today we will travel through some of Australia and the world's richest agricultural land where preparations for harvest will be in full swing. We will start in the gently rolling hills in the Cambooya and Southbrook districts before moving out on to the plains. The soil in all of these areas is rich black clay, very fertile but also very difficult, becoming water logged in the wet and cracking wide open in the dry.

'Harrow', Cambooya

Historic 'Harrow' homestead has all the features you would expect in a homestead garden - wide lawns, many shade trees and a huge lagoon give the garden an air of peace and tranquility. The garden has previously been opened under the Australian Open Garden Scheme, but is no longer opened to the public.

Julie Lack's Garden, Southbrook

Secluded among hills at the head of Linthorpe Valley, Julie's large cottage style garden covers half an acre and features over 100 different roses. Heritage roses predominate, particularly Teas and Chinas, and are complemented by plantings of a variety of perennials. Much of the garden was lost to the severe drought in the 2010's, but she has now replanted fresh roses and perennials and they are establishing themselves amongst those tenacious enough to survive the drought. Julie also rears heritage chicken breeds.

'Condamine Plains', Condamine Plains

Out onto the fertile, heavy black soil plains and broad acre crops. Hamish Bligh and his young family are the fifth generation of Blighs to own the homestead. All generations of Blighs have loved trees and Hamish and his family are no different. 'Condamine Plains' and 'Bostocks' have been opened under the Gardens of the Downs scheme.

'Yarran', Jondaryn

On the top of a hill, high enough not to suffer severe frost, sits 'Yarran'. This is a lovely garden with open views to the south across the plains to Pittsworth and south east to Toowoomba. Margaret Duff has created this garden, a plants-woman's paradise, and it's filled with absolutely everything. You will love 'Yarran'.

Farewell, Kingfisher Café, Toowoomba

Kingfisher Café at Springs Garden World to enjoy some local prize winning Stanthorpe wine and charcuterie boards as we say a long goodbye to our rose friends.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

Grown on its own roots, **Kathleen** proved to be a tough drought survivor in Julie Lack's garden.

Julie is delighted to welcome the ever blooming **Le Vesuve** back to her garden.

Looking over roses established from the HRIA collection at the State Rose Garden.

'Harrow' homestead

The idyllic lagoon at 'Harrow'.

Spectacular views are a feature of 'Yarran'.

A bed of roses and perennials at 'Yarran'.

Albertine creates a wall of bloom in Annette Russell's garden.

Leonie has a special interest in Polyanthas **Gay Vista** and **Lois's Seedling**

Sally Holmes overlooking the dam at Leonie's

Roses line the pathways in Leonie's garden