

MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT – 12 April, 2021

Preserving Cloudehill Gardens for Future Generations

The Diggers Foundation is very pleased to announce that the world class Cloudehill Gardens in Olinda will be preserved for future generations of garden lovers. Cloudehill creators Jeremy and Valerie Francis have guaranteed its preservation by signing a contract for its eventual transfer to the Diggers Foundation.

“We are delighted that Jeremy will continue to manage the garden as he has for nearly 30 years and oversee its ongoing development,” Clive Blazey, Founder of the Diggers Foundation said. “Very little at the garden will change apart from the eventual ownership and long-term preservation, which is pleasing for both Jeremy and I and the many thousands of garden visitors who relish its beauty,” Clive added.

Jeremy and Clive have been garden friends since the Diggers Club set up a garden shop at Cloudehill in 2014 and share concern over the preservation of leading Australian gardens. Both Clive and Jeremy are thrilled that now Cloudehill, one of Australia’s internationally-acclaimed gardens, will remain open to the public for generations of garden visitors to enjoy.

The seeds of the Diggers Foundation were sown nearly 40 years ago with the acquisition of historic Heronswood in 1983 by the Blazey family as their home and the headquarters of the fledgling Diggers Club. Clive reflects, “When you are lucky enough to be a custodian of a place like Heronswood or Cloudehill, you realise that precious historic houses and gardens should never be traded like real estate, but should be preserved for all to enjoy.”

In 1996 Tommy Garnett’s unique Garden of St Erth was bought by the Blazey family to ensure Tommy’s legacy would continue and be preserved as the second garden for Diggers. Cloudehill will be the third garden that the Diggers Foundation will own, giving access to three of Australia’s finest gardens to Diggers Club members for free and other public visitors for a small fee which assists with upkeep.

“Because the preservation of Australia’s finest historic gardens gets no funding support from Government, the Diggers Foundation has emerged as a focused garden charity, in a similar tradition to the Royal Horticultural Society in the UK,” says Clive.

The Diggers Club now has over 80,000 members Australia wide and is best known for its campaigns against GMO seeds and its success in rescuing heirloom seeds. In 2011, the Blazey Family gifted The Diggers Club and its gardens to the charitable Diggers Foundation – a bequest estimated at over \$15 million dollars - in order to ensure the Diggers legacy would continue and their historic gardens would be preserved. Profits from the Diggers Club now go to the Foundation and are combined with public donations and bequests to continue their work in preserving historic gardens and heirloom seeds.

Clive & Penny Blazey, Val & Jeremy Francis and Diggers Foundation CEO Tim Sansom available for comment and photo opps in the garden. Please phone Donna Morabito on 0410 326 837 or email media@diggers.com.au to arrange. High res garden images also available on request.