

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 4th October, 2018

Stroll Gondwanaland ... discover plants sought by early plant hunters ... relax by a tranquil lake.

Next weekend, take the whole family to experience what Gondwanaland might have looked like in a very special Open Gardens for Epilepsy event.

Gondwanaland was a supercontinent that existed about 550 million years ago. As it gradually broke up, it created Australia and around two-thirds of today's continental area.

Kerry and Harry van den Berg, owners of Woodbank Rare Plants, have spent the last four years restoring the garden to its original plantings by Ken Gillanders, OAM.

"Woodbank is essentially a woodland garden in the tradition of the early plant hunters with a strong focus on Gondwanaland species such as Nothofagus and Eucryphias(leatherwoods)," said Kerry.

"The garden is laid out around 3 small lakes, with lawns and gravel pathways providing easy access. It has many rare and beautiful plants collected by Ken on his local and overseas expeditions."

Kerry and Harry heard about Open Gardens for Epilepsy through Blooming Tasmania and decided to open their own garden to help improve awareness about epilepsy in their community and raise funds for Epilepsy Tasmania.

Epilepsy is a chronic disorder of the brain that is characterised by recurrent seizures and **affects around 100,000 Tasmanians**. Epilepsy can develop at any age and is not contagious.

Woodbank Rare Plants will host its Open Garden for Epilepsy event from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday October 13th and Sunday 14th at 2040 Huon Road, Longley.

Entry is \$10.00 per person, children are free, and profits go to Epilepsy Tasmania.

Tea and coffee is provided and Fairy Frothy van will sell espresso coffee and treats and Rotary will hold a sausage sizzle on Sunday.

- ENDS -

MORE INFORMATION:

Claire Burnet 0448 585 947
www.epilepsytasmania.org.au

SPOKESPERSON:

- Kerry van den Berg - Woodbank Rare Plants.

ABOUT EPILEPSY

Epilepsy is a chronic disorder of the brain that affects people worldwide. It is characterised by recurrent seizures, which are brief episodes of involuntary movement that may involve a part of the body (partial) or the entire body (generalised), and are sometimes accompanied by loss of consciousness and even incontinence. Characteristics of seizures vary and depend on where in the brain the disturbance first starts, and how far it spreads.

Epilepsy can develop at any age regardless of ethnicity or gender. One in 10 people experience a seizure during their life, and one in 25 Australians (20,000 Tasmanians) will go on to develop epilepsy (2 or more unprovoked seizures).

Epilepsy is not contagious. The most common type of epilepsy (affecting 6 out of 10 people with the disorder) is called idiopathic epilepsy and has no identifiable cause. The known causes of secondary epilepsy include a severe head injury, a stroke, an infection of the brain, or a brain tumour.

Up to 70% of people with epilepsy can be successfully treated (i.e. their seizures completely controlled) with anti-epileptic drugs.

Epilepsy is one of the world's oldest recognised conditions, with written records dating back to 4000 BC. Fear, misunderstanding, discrimination and social stigma have surrounded epilepsy for centuries. This stigma continues in many countries today and can impact on the quality of life for people with the disorder and their families.

In Tasmania, epilepsy remains widely misunderstood with **51% of Tasmanians experiencing discrimination as a result of their condition within the last 12 months.** The most common place for discrimination is the workplace, followed closely by educational environments.

Only one third of Tasmanians with epilepsy drive their own car. The remainder are forced to rely on public transport or taxis, the cost of which is often prohibitive given that **55% are on low incomes (half of these below the poverty line)**, due in part to heightened medical expenses, and an inability of many to work full-time.

People with seizures tend to have more physical problems such as fractures and bruising from injuries related to seizures and epilepsy is **up to eight times more common in people with other health conditions** such as depression, dementia, heart disease and arthritis - further affecting seizure outcome and quality of life.

The risk of premature death in people with epilepsy is up to 3 times higher than the general population, with the highest rates found in low and middle-income countries and rural versus urban areas.

ABOUT EPILEPSY TASMANIA

Epilepsy Tasmania is a not-for-profit community organisation improving the quality of life of Tasmanians with epilepsy, and those around them, through education, coordination and support.

Epilepsy Tasmania is committed to bringing epilepsy out of the shadows, and break down the stigma and discrimination associated with epilepsy in Tasmania. Its overarching aim is to increase opportunities for those living with or affected by epilepsy and it will not be satisfied until Tasmanian children with epilepsy are receiving a good education, and Tasmanian adults are able to gain and maintain regular employment.

Its statewide services and support includes:



Workplace training.



Telephone peer support service.



Assurance that your donation will help Tasmanians affected by epilepsy.



In partnership with Blooming Tasmania to raise awareness of epilepsy within a relaxed environment.

**EDUCATE ME,
INCLUDE ME**

Smart Schools resources and training.

**KNOW ME,
SUPPORT ME**

Disability resources and training.

**UNDERSTAND ME,
SUPPORT ME**

Epilepsy in later years resources and training.