

# CLIVIA SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES 2024 WINTER NEWSLETTER ISSUE # 024

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#### **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

On June the 16<sup>th</sup> I managed to muddle through the Society's first Zoom meeting - I am sure that it will not be the last. The extraordinary meeting was conducted to sanction/pass the amendment to our constitution for the president of the society to hold the position for a maximum of 4 consecutive years. I would like to thank all the members who took the time to vote and for your support. Eighteen votes were received - all voting in favour of the resolution. While it is my honour to serve as your president, I am hopeful that we can find a new president next year.

Our congratulations must go to Peter Hey for his ABC Gardening Australia Show appearance on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June. I feel that the exposure generated by Peter and Costa will help tremendously with the promotion of Clivia. I would also like to mention that several of our members, and or their partners, are recovering or dealing with ongoing health issues. I would like to let you know that our thoughts are with you, and we wish you all well.

A big thank you to Adrian Bligh for his commitment and efforts with Facebook, Instagram and the relaunching of the Newsletter.

I would like to thank those members who have also contributed their articles for inclusion in this issue.

Our main event for the year is quickly approaching and will be upon us before we know it. For the success of the 2024 Spring Show, it is important to promote the event. I ask that members do their best to distribute the Flyers. We will be posting on Facebook, Community Notice Boards and with other exposure to social media.

A big thankyou to our Patron Sandra Ross, her family and the team at Garden Clinic for their ongoing support and encouragement. They are to include an article on Clivia care, with input from Ken Smith and Peter Hey, and will also advertise our upcoming show. Judy Horton from Gardening Clubs Australia is to include the show in their diary and will promote on their Facebook page closer to the event.

Please give some thought as to how else we can spread the word about our Show.

Happy gardening and hope you are enjoying your interspecific blooms.

John Layton Clivia Society of NSW Inc President



## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Dear Members,

We are pleased to report that our membership now stands at 50 members. A warm welcome to our newest member, Erika Faust from Western Australia. Additionally, Ken Russell will be hosting an open day for our members this year, with dates to be announced shortly. We are also pleased to inform you that we have received our current Public Liability Insurance certificate from Garden Clubs Australia, valid from 30/04/2024 to 30/04/2025.

Thank you for your continued support.

Regards

Ray Sidoti Clivia Society of NSW Inc Secretary

# TREASURER'S REPORT

Dear Members,

Our ANZ Cheque a/c 012318 285703753 has \$6,039.99 and our Investment a/c has \$8,000.30 as of the 8th July 2024.

Regards

Peter Hey Clivia Society of NSW Inc. Treasurer



## **PATRONS MESSAGE**

#### **Endorsement by Sandra Ross**

I am fortunate to have a spacious garden in Sydney, where I have been gardening for forty years. We bought this beautiful old garden in 1984, and it came with many treasured plants, including a deep burnished orange Belgian clivia.

Over the years, we expanded our collection to include lemon, cream, peach, and green varieties. They thrive in our shaded garden, proving to be tough and trouble-free. I also planted some in pots to bring into the courtyard as they bloom.

#### Clearly, I love clivias!

If you share this passion, I highly recommend joining the NSW Clivia Society. Attend their annual show at Thornleigh Community Centre on 7-8 September 2024, where you'll be amazed by the extraordinary colours and bi-colours available.

#### See you there!



Sandra Ross in Portugal May 2023



#### **MEET THE NEW EDITOR - ADRIAN BLIGH**

In 1986, my father retired, and we moved from Greenacre to Wingham on the Mid-North Coast, settling on a 15-acre property. His retirement plan was to be self-sufficient and generate additional income through a market garden, cultivating citrus, stone fruit, vegetables, passion fruit, and kiwi fruit. We also raised poultry, including peacocks, ducks, pheasants, guinea fowls, turkeys, along with sheep, goats, and cows for both milking and beef.

Working alongside my father after school and on weekends, I developed a fondness for plants. This early exposure, combined with encouragement from our neighbours-who were nurserymen growing Australian native plants, palms, cycads, orchids, bromeliads, and clivia-cemented my passion for horticulture. At the age of 13, I began growing and selling plants to local growers and at Saturday plant markets.

As part of my HSC, I studied horticulture at Taree TAFE. After leaving school, I gained an apprenticeship in Queensland, working in an advanced palm and cycad nursery around Proserpine and Airlie Beach. Realising the climate was not suitable for me, I sought opportunities further south. In 1994, I secured an apprenticeship with Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens in the Blue Mountains, continuing my horticultural studies at Richmond TAFE under the guidance of Ken Smith. I later completed a Diploma in Horticulture, enhancing my expertise in the field.

At Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens, my main areas of focus were the South African sections, including Proteaceae, succulents, and bulb collections, as well as Chinese Alpine plant collections. In 1998, I was invited by Guan Kaiyun, the director of the Kunming Institute of Botany in China, to assist their staff in constructing a Protea Garden and serve as one of many landscape consultants for their Alpine and Subtropical glasshouses at the 1999 Horticultural Expo site. This opportunity included multiple wild collecting trips for plants and seeds to landscape the glasshouses and bring back to Mount Tomah.

Following this, I gained invaluable experience at Kew Botanic Gardens in London and the Eden Project in Cornwall. In 2005, I won the Friends of the Botanic Gardens Scholarship, which allowed me to study and collect South African flora for two months. During this period, I had the privilege of working at various National Botanic Gardens, including Kirstenbosch, Karoo Desert, Harold Porter, Free State, Walter Sisulu, and Hantam. These experiences significantly enhanced my knowledge and skills in horticulture, particularly in the cultivation and conservation of South African plants.

In late 2005 and early 2006, I redesigned the South African Flora Rock Gardens and Woodlands at Mount Tomah to reflect my vision of their natural habitat. Due to personal reasons, I resigned from my position in late 2006 and ventured into new opportunities. For the next 17 years, I managed the landscapes and facilities contracts for Parramatta Park and Western Sydney



Parklands with two different contracting companies. After being made redundant in 2022, I became a sole trader, offering garden, lawn, and home maintenance services, and working as a support worker for aged care and NDIS clients.

Throughout my career, I have maintained a passion for various plant groups, from Heritage Roses, Camellias, Palms, Cycads, Aroids, Hippeastrums, and Haemanthus to Clivias. For over 20 years, I have been collecting and breeding Clivias, particularly C. miniata and C.miniata Striata. Over the last 6 years, I have expanded my collection by purchasing seeds and plants from other growers, and exploring interspecific, Akebono's, Light of Buddhas, and Tigers plants. I am drawn to unique variations, including variegations, small, large, and deformed plants and flowers.

Joining the Clivia Society has been a long-time goal, which I finally achieved last year. After attending a few meetings, I took on several roles during the AGM to actively contribute to the Clivia Society of NSW Inc. I am dedicated to revitalising the Society through social media, relaunching the newsletter, and encouraging members to share photos and articles to keep the members engaged and thriving.



Spot and I at Huisrivierpas South Africa, seed collecting.

Adrian Bligh Clivia Society of NSW Inc. Editor



# FROM OUR MEMBERS: INSIGHTS, UPDATES & IMAGES

Please forward any insights, updates, and images, along with your permission to publish, directly to the Editor at clivia.nsw.editor@gmail.com. Your contributions will be featured in the next available newsletter.





Left & Right: Green Imp Left: C. nobilis





Left: C. robusta



Right: C. gardenii





C.gardenii

C.gardenii









C.gardenii

C.miniatx caulescens

C.minigard







'Welkom Bubbles x Green Ivory'







# Field Notes: The Art of Cultivating Clivia in Anshan, China

#### Shuting Jin

On a recent trip to China, I was able to convince my partner and a few relatives, none of whom were much interested in clivias, to go with me on a day trip to Anshan, one of China's top clivia-growing cities. Clivias, with their glossy green foliage and flowers in striking shades of orange and red, are a welcome sight during the winter months and are a popular gift during the Lunar New Year celebrations.



A plant-seller at a neighbourhood market in Shenyang, China. A few striata seedlings, a compact orange, and a nice yellow are amongst her wares.

Post-COVID, the exodus of foreign nationals has left many challenges; Google Maps is banned, and Baidu, the Chinese navigation app, is only available in Chinese. Instead, relying on local knowledge, we were pointed to the Anshan Jintian Huashen Junzilan Professional Cooperative.

Established in 2008, it is the largest clivia producer in Anshan, making sales of about 500,000 plants annually. Liang Han Qi, the nursery's director, explained their focus on clivia seedling production for the wholesale market and the development and evaluation of new technologies for flowering plant production. types and stages of growth.





Mr. Liang holding a young clivia inside one of his greenhouses.



A greenhouse filled with mature Chinese broadleaf clivias for seed production at the Anshan Jintian Huashen





A greenhouse filled with mature Chinese broadleaf clivias for seed production at the Anshan Jintian Huashen Junzilan Professional Cooperative.



Two of Mr. Liang's seedling greenhouses with one-year-old (left)



Three-year-old (right) seedlings

In Anshan, where winter temperatures can plummet to -28 °C, greenhouses offer frost and weather protection, preventing unsightly blemishes on the plants. Mr. Liang supplements daylight with blue LEDs, extending the light period by three hours to optimise growth. His choice of substrate--a mix of coarse ~40 mm peat chunks and perlite imported from Jiffy in Holland--is tailored to retain moisture without being overly wet, reducing watering costs.



Mr. Liang favours Japanese-made plastic nursery pots with slits rather than holes for drainage for his older seedlings and mature plants; he explains that the slits prevent roots from poking out of the pot, promote branching for healthier root systems, and reduce the tendency for roots to curl around the pot.





Mr. Liang shows the 40 mm coarse peat substrate in which many of his seedlings grow.



A Japanese-designed nursery pot with slit-like openings that prevent the roots of young seedlings from pushing out of the pot.



Mr. Liang grows a variety of clivia types, from the popular orange-flowered broadleaf plants favoured for Lunar New Year gifts to ultra-compact Light of Buddha and striata varieties favoured by hobbyists. Emphasising the importance of symmetrical and beautiful foliage to Chinese buyers, Mr. Liang notes that the long wait to select for flower characteristics can be commercially impractical in China.



Some beautiful and very compact striata plants. The leaves are very broad and relatively symmetrical in comparison to some Australian varieties.





Broadleaf Light of Buddha and striata seedlings amongst Mr. Liang's stock.



The seedlings that Mr. Liang produces are sold wholesale at one, two, or three years of age to be grown on until they reach retail size. They are then sold in nurseries or online on websites such as Temu, often finding homes as seasonal decorations during Chinese New Year. Many of these potted clivia are subsequently discarded after flowering is finished, similar to poinsettias after Christmas in Western countries.



Young seedlings are prepared for shipping. They are wrapped with paper and placed upside down into their trays to prevent root rot.





An attractive striata seedling which will sell for a higher price than an unvariegated plant

For those planning on traveling to China to see clivias, March and April are the ideal times, as these months are when major clivia festivals are held in Changchun and Anshan. It is well worth the trip to see firsthand the differences and similarities compared to clivia cultivation in Australia.

**Shuting Jin** 

Member



#### **COLISHAW'S CLIVIAS**

#### **Michael Barret**

When I started to collect clivia I would hear plants being referred to as a "Cowlishaw" and later upon asking "what is a Cowlishaw" was told that

Cowlishaw was an early Australian hybridiser. Fascinated by the unusual name and clivia in history, I was intrigued to discover more. Fortunately, when I began my investigations I had the good fortune to easily discover a sustainable body of work by Grieg Russell on his clivia archive pages, and also the digital chat of a now defunct Yahoo group, Ozclivia, dating to around 2005. In addition to these sources, the Clivia Society Register is searchable by keyword, and simply entering Cowlishaw found a number of results. I followed up on these leads with conversations with a number of helpful clivia growers. My efforts in preparing my talk for the February meeting was to add interpretation, collect images of Cowlishaw plants from a variety of sources and any other material related to him. I structured my presentation into three parts: Cowlishaw's background and collecting nature, Cowlishaw's writings and later interpretations by others, and finally a compilation of images of clivia featuring the reference, Cowlishaw.

George Keith Cowlishaw was born in 1901 to a newly federated nation, Australia. Cowlishaw's family had wealth and position in Sydney society. He is recorded as sitting his solicitors exam but not practicing law (Russell). Instead he led a gentleman's existence due to pastoral and residential investments. In 1931 Cowlishaw suffered a family tragedy, losing his mother and sister in a motor accident. Later that year he married Bonnie Smith and the couple had four daughters. Cowlishaw was active on committees and in public office. He was an alderman and was elected Mayor of Mosman City Council 1941-1945. He and his family resided at a grand mansion built originally for his grandmother, named Telopea, circa 1885, located at Military road, Mosman. At some time the family moved to Cowan road, St Ives where they remained until after Cowlishaw's death. Cowlishaw is also recorded as serving as secretary and president of the Royal Horticultural Society of NSW. Cowlishaw passed away in 1983, aged 82 years. As a young man, Cowlishaw "worked" in a stamp dealer on Saturday mornings, but one may guess this was a mentoring experience, and set the path for him building more specialised collections later in life. Subsequent to his passing, his significant collection of early Australian books and paintings and extensive collection of gardening books was auctioned by Sotheby's in 1984. The State Library of Victoria holds a copy of this catalogue. Upon viewing this catalogue it is evident that Cowlishaw was a keen and disciplined collector of a variety of Information and aesthetic material. Cowlishaw's collecting nature also extended to a wide variety of plant types. He was known to have collected and authored material concerning palms, slipper orchids, crinum, narcissus and clivia.



Cowlishaw authored two very similar articles on clivia, but in essence the 1934 text was reworked and published in the 1935 Yearbook of the American Amaryllis Society (now Herbertia), titled "Notes on Amaryllid activities in Australia". This article by Cowlishaw covers a variety of amaryllis, including crinum, nerine and hippeastrums. In discussing clivia, the dialogue is in two sections, both of which contain information regarding either general cultural aspects, or a retrospective analysis of Cowlishaw's hybridisation program and results. As to the cultural care of clivia, Cowlishaw notes their general hardiness in the Sydney climate, their ability to flower well pot-bound, seed ripening, germination and their habit of offsetting. When Cowlishaw directs his discussion to his hybridisation program, ambiguity ensues for the modern reader as to whether or not Cowlishaw truly was dealing with IN-TERspecific or INTRAspecific hybrids. Cowlishaw writes,

A number of hybrid forms were imported from England, and from them the Clivias sold today were derived. There are practically no pure C. nobilis or C. miniata to be had in the trade today. The few which exist are to be found in old gardens.

C. cyrthanthiflorum (sic) is also scarce. This is a so called hybrid of a reputed parentage, C. nobilis x C. miniata. I have raised hundreds of this cross and have never had a seedling yet with flowers in narrow drooping umbels as in C. cyrthanthiflorum (sic). It only survives in old gardens today (p.47).

Thus Cowlishaw creates for the contemporary clivia enthusiast the environment of ambiguity as to what species were the source material with which he began his hybridization program. It is this ambiguity that leads to conflicting deliberations by Russell and Morris, which will be discussed later in this text. A brief summary of what Cowlishaw wrote is useful to recount here.

Cowlishaw was writing in 1934 and reflecting back to the beginnings of his hybridization program starting in 1920. He details the reciprocal crossing of several nobilis and one or two miniata. From these crossings, he raised 73 seedlings, with the first flowering in 1925, and overall the flowers were larger than the original material. Cowlishaw considered these to be ugly when compared to the plants he later possessed, noting the "very narrow perianth segments" (p.48). However, Cowlishaw selected the best to intercross to create his F2s. Among these robust F2 plants, some grew to flowering in four years in Sydney's favourable climate and were again considered an improvement on the parents. Cowlishaw wrote how he was delighted with the quality of some of these plants, describing some as "remarkable". From 300 seedlings, he chose 25 of exceptional merit. Indeed Cowlishaw describes a desirable clivia as follows:

Among them were to be found the perfectly symmetrical flower, with large broad overlapping perianth segments, all of the same size, and with nicely rounded and reflexed tips..... The best of this batch had a head of flower standing last season 32 inches high, and was composed of 23 perfect flowers in a globular head. The individual flowers were 5 inches across, perfectly round and reflexed. It has caused no little comment when exhibited at the R.H. S. Show in August during the past three years (p.49).



Cowlishaw then describes how he "selfed"(sic) the F2 generation. As discovered by contemporary growers, Cowlishaw mentions that the berry of the self- pollinated flowers often contains only a couple of seed. Cowlishaw seemed under-impressed with the results, describing them as dwarf plants that offset readily. Cowlishaw then comments on these plants having, "pendulous starry flowers all much alike.... Many of the others of this batch reverted to the starry form of C. nobilis, and one can hardly tell them from the original plant from which they sprung" (p.49).

Thus the reader is taken full circle in the hybridizing program with "selfed" (sic) seedlings throwing back to unimproved source material. However it is the use of the term pendulous that provides conflicting interpretations to the writings by Cowlishaw. Morris and Russell take conflicting views on the original plants used by Cowlishaw in his program. Each author argues a well thought-out case, both being highly persuasive. A brief overview will be given of each case.

Morris, writing in Herbertia, comments that Cowlishaw used two different miniata hybrids, one unimproved that Cowlishaw mistakes for C. nobilis, and an improved wider petal miniata. Morris contends that modern miniata, selected over 150 years, are not interspecific hybrids at all, but simply miniata crossed with miniata. Morris makes five points to explain his rejection of Cowlishaw actually having interpecific plants. These are, 1. the lack of producing even one cyrtanthiflora and the noted scarcity of noblis generally, even though 2.Cowlishaw begins with more noblis than miniata, 3. the increased size of the F1 flowers, 4. the "too rapid" improvement of F2, and 5. finally the unlikely possibility of the "selfed' seedlings of F3 being only identical to the original nobilis. In closing, Morris commends Cowlishaw for writing about clivia, and notes the distinct lack of material referring to clivia in Herbertia.

Russell's investigations on Cowlishaw stemmed from an address by Ken Smith on "Clivias in Australia" which was presented at the 3rd International Clivia Conference of 2006. Russell rejected Smith's assertion that Cowlishaw had improved miniata from Veitch Nursery. Russell argues that the nursery ceased trading in 1913.

Additionally, it is worth noting the overall decline in clivia production at this time, on the eve of World War 1. Also Russell argues that Cowlishaw did not have miniata from the highly regarded Veitch Nursery, as this material with narrow petals seems totally unimproved, and not an improved miniata.

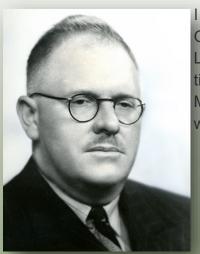
Russell then focuses his argument on the descriptive terms used by Cowlishaw and Morris's lack of appreciation for the imagery. For Russell, the particular concern is Morris's lack of appreciation for the term "pendulous". Russell contends that in no way would miniata x miniata produce pendulous flowers. Russell then attempts to establish Cowlishaw as an intelligent and passionate plantsman who would be well able to distinguish between nobilis and miniata.

It is well feasible that amongst Cowlishaw's plant library there would have been botanical drawings of the two species. Russell cites an example from the Sydney Morning Herald, 1911, where the difference between the two species is discussed. Rather, Russell suggests that Cowlishaw was using a minata and a clivia hybrid with "tubular flowers", perhaps a Clivia x cyrtanthiflora.

Regrettably, after Cowlishaw's death any notes on his hybridization of clivia were discarded as these were deemed of little value (Glover, Yahoo Oz clivia posting). One consideration as to the nature of the crossings, is the lack of any mention of out-of- season flowering. As detailed by Marriott (2010), interspecific clivia can provide flowers outside of the usual spring flowering of miniata. Even if there was only one interspecific type involved in the cross, it seems quite an oversight by Cowlishaw that in the 10 years after the F1 flowers there were not some late summer bursts of flowers, regardless of the micro climate of Mosman or St Ives.

Subsequent to Cowlishaw's passing, Ken Smith went to the old St Ives home where he obtained both offsets and seeds. He posted on Yahoo Oz clivia that he shared this material with Morris, Keith Hammett and others. This material is therefore genuine Cowlishaw hybrids, as there is a provenance. Another intriguing link to primary plant material is that of Cowlishaw plants from Waratha Nursery and Ian Sinclair. Oral history accounts that Sinclair had plants directly from Cowlishaw, in particular, 'Cowlishaw Giant Orange'. This clivia, with a larger flower and larger umbel, has been used to produce many Cowlishaw x hybrid plants. In documenting other Cowlishaw clivia, there are a number of plants where an unspecified Cowlishaw clivia has been used as a berry or pollen parent. As such, there is a weaker case to describe them as a Cowlishaw hybrid, but rather a clivia descended in part from Cowlishaw material.

In conclusion, it is impossible to ever know what plants Cowlishaw used in his early hybridization program. It may be argued that he was always looking for improved plants to add to his personal collection, perhaps like many of us at MCG. Certainly we are indebted to him for documenting clivia in Australia, and inspiring some to dedicate themselves to breeding the better, widely accessible plants that we enjoy today.



G.K.Cowlishaw 1940s

I wish to acknowledge and thank personal communications from Grieg Russell, Ray Sidoti, Jeanne Marten, Di Matthews, Ken Smith, Linda Richards, Gary Kitchen and Helen Marriott in preparing this article. I am indebted to Donna Braye, Local Studies Librarian, Mosman Library, for her assistance in obtaining and reproducing, with permission, the image of Mr. Cowlishaw.



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Left: Kobi Right: Benji

Both 'Kobi' and 'Benji' hybrids have been bred using Cowlishaw's C. miniata genes.



#### **CLIVIA SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP**

#### Lisa Fox

Members new to the Clivia world may not be aware there is a Clivia Society based in South Africa established in 1992. The Society exists to facilitate the common interests of Clubs through the publication of a Yearbook and quarterly Newsletters, the registration of named cultivars, development of judging criteria and fostering research on Clivia.

The Clivia Society website is a wealth of knowledge with all Yearbooks and Clivia News available online (with the exception of the most recent 12 months), documents relating to judging standards and colour classification, cultivation notes, galleries of photographs from the annual Virtual Show, information on shows and events, and the Clivia Register.

Membership is offered to individuals who wish to join and receive the Yearbook publication mailed to you, as well as three digital Clivia News per year. More information on joining the Clivia Society is available on the following page -

https://www.cliviamarket.com/clivia-society-australian-membership

**Clivia Society Links** 

Clivia Society website - https://cliviasociety.com/

Clivia Society Publications - https://cliviasociety.com/publications/

Clivia Register - https://cliviasociety.com/clivia-register/clivia-register-list/

#### Some Winners of Clivia Society 2021 Virtual Show







#### DATES TO REMEMBER

#### **MEETINGS AND SHOW DATES FOR 2024**

VENUE: All meetings and the show will be held at Thornleigh Community Centre Thornleigh corner of Phyllis and Central Ave Thornleigh.

#### **REMAINING MEETINGS FOR 2024**

- MEETING 03/08/2024 12 NOON-4 PM
- MEETING 09/11/2024 12 NOON-4 PM

#### **SHOW DATES FOR 2024**

- \* FRIDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER FROM 10 AM TO SET UP
- SATURDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 8 AM-4 PM
- \* SUNDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 8 AM-4 PM

#### **NEXT NEWSLETTER ISSUE #025**

Release Date 19th October 2024

#### Calling All Members!

If you have any insights, updates, or images of your spring flowering Clivia's, we would love to see them! Additionally, if you have any wholesome recipes you would like to share with fellow members, please send them our way. Your contributions help make our society vibrant and engaging.

Please forward any of the above mentioned, along with your permission to publish, directly to the Editor at clivia.nsw.editor@gmail.com. Your contributions will be featured in the next available newsletter.



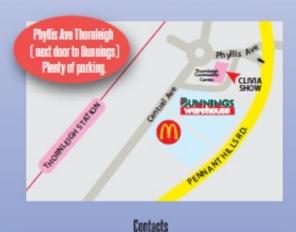
# DATES TO REMEMBER CONT'D





The Clivia Society of NSW Inc. began in 2013 with a small group of enthusiasts working together in developing and exploring their shared interest. Many members have travelled extensively within and outside of Australia networking with other likeminded people.

We invite you to attend our Spring Show to discover the many different forms and colours and the latest developments in the world of Clivias.



# President John Layton 0417 258 812 Secretary Ray Sidoti 0413 089 639 Treesurer Peter Hey 0408 113 457

For programmes & updates see our facebook page

elivia society of nsw inc



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# **YOUR NOTES**