

# Picture grabs attention



**WINNER:** Kevin Stokes' first place photograph *Feather Flower*. **INSET:** Chairman Kevin Stokes at the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens

By **CHRYSTAL BRAND**

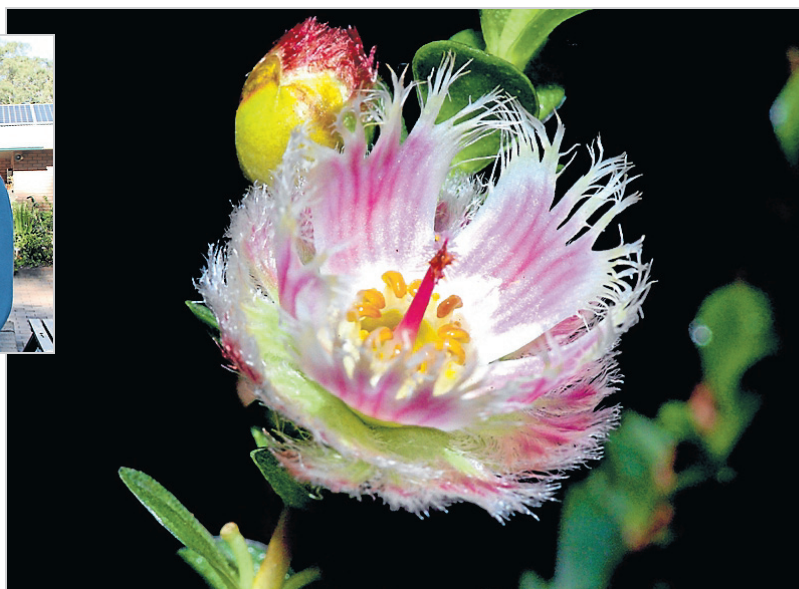
PHOTOGRAPHERS from across the Hunter Region became one with nature last month.

The Hunter Region Botanic Gardens held the 11th instalment of their annual photography competition in September with the images on display this month.

Toronto resident Kevin Stokes entered his image of a *Verticordia ovalifolia*, better known as a feather flower, and won the electronic digital imaging section.

He said it was hard to choose what photos to enter, so he chose the ones he liked the most and best fit the criteria.

As chairman for the gardens, Mr Stokes worked to change the



competition to make it more accessible for photographers to enter.

He said one of the changes was renaming the competition to The Bruce Stephenson Photography Prize, to honour Mr Stephenson, a long-time volunteer.

The competition provided the gardens with a big display.

"The competition provides an avenue for people to display their photos and in turn raise awareness of the gardens and the work we do here," he said.

Since 1985 Mr Stokes has seen the gardens go from an

unmaintained property to housing 18 themed gardens ranging from succulents to grevilleas.

Mr Stokes said they had collected plants for specimens and it was an ongoing process to document and photograph them.

He said the photographs provided by guests and volunteers helped keep a record of the large collection of plants, not only in the gardens but from all over the Hunter.

A total of 57 prints and 10 digital images of mostly Australian plants were submitted and can be viewed or bought in the gardens' gallery.

# Willing to speak up

By **CHRYSTAL BRAND**

RESEARCH shows Australian young women are more upfront about their health than their grandmothers were.

The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health started in 1996 and has been ongoing.

Deputy director of the study, Associate Professor Deb Loxton, said it would determine the cause and effect between social and lifestyle changes in women's health.

She said the study showed women aged from 18 to 23 in 2013 had changed a lot from their counterparts in 1996.

Results showed a 13 per cent increase in participants being obese or overweight, and an increase in psychological stress.

Professor Loxton said this generation was more aware of their health, and also more likely to seek help.

"Young women today have a higher awareness and are more willing to talk about their mental and physical health," Professor Loxton said.

She said results of the study were used as evidence for women's



**CLOSE LOOK:** Associate Professor Deb Loxton, deputy director of the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health.

health policy and were part of more than 500 collaborations with researchers who analysed the data.

"We want to hopefully improve women's health services and, in turn women's health, through the data we collect in this study," she said.

Professor Loxton said the study was comprised of three age cohorts; women aged 18 to 23, 45 to 50 and 70 to 75.

These groups were surveyed every three years from 1996 to 2012, when a new cohort of more than 15,000 young women aged 18 to 23 were added.

■ To find out more go to [alswh.org.au](http://alswh.org.au).



**John Hall**  
Managing Director

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*John Hall*



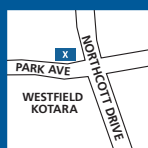
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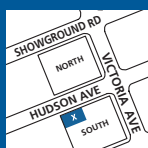
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