



Friends of the National Botanic Gardens Inc.

GPO Box 1777, Canberra ACT 2601 · ABN 57 096 639 836

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Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Parliament House
Canberra
Parkes ACT 2600

Inquiry into Canberra's National Institutions: Submission from the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens Inc, Canberra

The Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (Friends) welcome this opportunity to make a submission in relation to the Parliamentary Inquiry on Canberra's National Institutions. This submission will outline the activities undertaken by the Friends in support of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG).

Introduction

Australian National Botanic Gardens

The ANBG was declared a reserve on 17 September 1991 under the *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975* (NPWC Act), which was replaced by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) Act in July 2000.

The ANBG, Australia's living national collection, was the first botanic garden and research institution in Australia to specialise in native flora, with a mission to inspire, inform and connect people to Australian flora. The ANBG has made an important contribution to increasing the knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Australia's unique plant heritage and landscapes. The plant collection is a genetic 'safe deposit box' for the many species threatened in their natural environment. The Gardens and the Herbarium are also an invaluable resource for plant research and conservation.

Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens

The Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens Inc was formed in 1990 as a community support group for the Gardens and currently has 1,700 memberships comprising 2,300 individual members, mainly from Canberra and the region. The Friends, a non-profit community organisation, incorporated under the ACT Associations Incorporations Act 1991, support the Gardens in many ways, by providing assistance in-kind and through fundraising. The Objectives and Purposes of the Friends are set out in Attachment A.



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Supporting the living national collection

In-kind support

Members of the Friends volunteer in many capacities around the ANBG, including in highly visible front-of-house roles in the Visitor Centre and as volunteer guides. The guides provide twice-daily tours and booked walks, as well as electric vehicle tours twice daily on weekends and public holidays, with additional tours during school holidays and also booked tours. The guides' contribution is underpinned by a strong focus on professional development.

Members of the Friends also participate in research at the National Seed Bank, which is home to a large and ever-increasing collection of Australian native seeds, and in particular holds significant collections from Australian alpine and Southern NSW tableland grassland communities.

Raising money for the Gardens

The Friends raise funds for projects around the Gardens, many of which would not otherwise receive funding. We do not pay for staff and other administrative costs.

In 2004 the Friends established a Public Fund within the Register of Environmental Organisations (REO) to provide tax deductibility for donations. The Public Fund of the Friends of the ANBG allocates fund to ANBG projects in line with the Objects in its trust deed ([Attachment B](#)).

Over the years the Friends have contributed just over \$1 million in funds for projects at the Gardens, including some \$204,000 from the Public Fund; our largest single contribution to date is the underwriting of the new Paperbark Treehouse launched in November 2017. We have now started working on our contribution to the 50th anniversary of the Gardens in 2020 with a substantial commitment to the new banksia garden. The Friends expect also to make further financial commitments to the 50th anniversary over the next few months.

The major source of the funds we contribute are derived from membership receipts (expected to reach \$100,000 in 2017-18), as well as income from activities such as lunchtime talks, native plant sales, and annual photographic and botanic art exhibitions. The Friends have also in recent years secured some corporate sponsorship for the annual Summer Sounds concerts program and a major botanical guides conference held in 2017.



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The contribution of the Friends around the Gardens

In financially supporting the Gardens (as demonstrated by the examples mentioned in Attachment C) the Friends try to spread our support across as wide a range as possible of the Gardens' role and functions: horticulture, scientific research, aesthetic and visitor experience.

Some projects are large and very visible to the public, whereas some others are small but no less important to the mission of the ANBG, for example, regular purchases of books for the ANBG Library, or the donation of artworks from the annual exhibitions of our thriving botanic art and photographic groups.

The ANBG as a national institution

The ANBG is a national and international attraction as well as a highly-regarded scientific institution. With more than 6,500 species planted over 35 hectares, it is the only place in the world containing such diversity of Australian native plants in the one location.

The ANBG makes a strong contribution to science through the work of the Biodiversity Science Section of Parks Australia. For example, the Executive Director of the ANBG and the Director of the BSS were both heavily involved - as Chair of the Advisory Committee and as a member of the Working Group respectively – in the preparation of the recent Academy of Science report, *Discovering Biodiversity: A decadal plan for taxonomy and biosystematics in Australia and New Zealand 2018-2027*.

The Gardens are also an increasingly popular destination for visitors to Canberra, as well as locals, with 495,280 front gate visitors recorded in the 2017 calendar year, an increase of 14 per cent over the previous five-year average. School groups form an important part of the visitor cohort, reflecting the education role of the ANBG.



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The ANBG's mobilising funding from a variety of sources

Following the launch of its new Master Plan in 2015 the ANBG has been successfully mobilized funds from a variety of sources, government and private sector, for major projects in the 2015 Master Plan – the Ian Potter Conservatory and the National Seed Bank. The Friends are delighted to see this flow of funds into the ANBG.

Lesley Jackman

President

7 May 2018



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Attachment A

Purposes and Objectives of the Friends of the ANBG

The Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens is established for the purpose of supporting the Gardens:

- (a) in the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment through the collection and maintenance of a significant collection of Australian native flora and related material;
- (b) in research into and display of the diversity and conservation values of Australian plants, their ecological and geographic distribution and their horticultural values;
- (c) in providing information and education to the community about growing, studying, conserving and promoting Australian plants through, but not limited to, lectures, workshops and guided tours.

The objectives of the Friends shall be to:

- (d) increase community awareness and knowledge of the scientific, educational, conservation, aesthetic and recreational functions of the Gardens;
- (e) promote and support the continued development and maintenance of the Gardens;
- (f) encourage the use and enjoyment of the Gardens by the community; and
- (g) all such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of these objectives.



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Attachment B

The Objects of the Public Fund of the Friends of the ANBG

The Trust is established and must be maintained exclusively for public charitable purposes in Australia, being the purposes of providing money, property or benefits to:

- (a) support the Gardens:
 - (i) in the protection and enhancement of the natural environment through the conservation of a significant collection of the Australian native flora;
 - (ii) in research into and display of the diversity of plant life, its ecological and geographic distribution and its horticultural values; and
 - (iii) in providing information and education to the community about growing, studying and promoting Australian plants through lectures, workshops and guided tours.
- (b) increase community awareness of the scientific, education, conservation and recreation functions of the Gardens;
- (c) promote the continued development of the Gardens;
- (d) serve as a link to encourage the use and enjoyment of the Gardens by the community;
- (e) raise money for its objectives.

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Attachment C

Selected projects funded by the Friends, including the Public Fund of the Friends

Recent

Paperbark Treehouse *
Threatened Species Project
Stereo Display Microscope for the Visitor Centre
Lichen Digitisation Project *
Rainforest Species collection *

Horticulture projects

Ferns and palms for the rainforest gully
Redevelopment of the Ellis Rowan Garden
Re-location of a mature bottle tree to the front entrance of the Gardens
Macrozamia for the main concourse
Redevelopment of the asteraceae garden

Scientific and research projects

Alpine plants research project in conjunction with the ANBG and the Australian National University
Signs for the Climate Watch Trail
Equipment for the National Seed Bank *

Aesthetic projects

Red Centre Garden artwork – our Centenary of Canberra gift to the ANBG
Friends Cascade, near the Visitor Centre
Rainforest Gully fogging system
Sundial in Rock Garden
Rock Garden shelter *

Visitor Experience

Flora Explorer electrically-powered people mover
Crosbie Morrison Ampitheatre Shelter – to mark the 40th anniversary of the opening of the Gardens and the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Friends
Birds of the ANBG booklet
Aboriginal Plant Use Trail *
Bubbler and water bottle-filling station
Upgrading of the theatrette audio-visual system

*denotes Public Fund involvement

More information about the Friends financial support to the ANBG may be found at
[www.friendsanbg.org.au/activities_financial support](http://www.friendsanbg.org.au/activities_financial%20support)