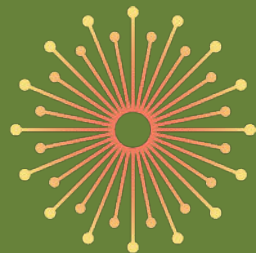


GROWING VICTORIA'S BOTANIC GARDENS

Collective
Impact Report



Botanic
Gardens
AUS & NZ



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BGANZ acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia and New Zealand and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.



Executive Summary

The Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grants program is an initiative of the Victorian Government to enhance the botanic gardens across Victoria.

Botanic gardens are living green arks, providing refuge and protection of the world's plant biodiversity, and are critical green spaces for educating and connecting communities to nature. By supporting the growth and sustainability of botanic gardens, the investment has significantly contributed to the overarching goals of Victoria's state Biodiversity Conservation Strategy: increasing Victorian's value of nature and ensuring Victoria's natural environment is healthy. The grants program allocated \$3.9 million to fund 42 projects across 29 individual botanic gardens and arboreta over two funding rounds in 2019 and 2020. The funding enabled the development of tools and training for climate change adaptation strategies for botanic gardens, the uplifting of systems for plant conservation, the growing and maintenance of valuable plant collections, the improvement of amenities and accessibility for communities and support of local tourism development.



Propagating the endangered Floodplain Violet *Viola betonicifolia* subsp. *novaguineensis*. Credit Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton.



A range of environmental, community, heritage and economic benefits have been provided for the Victorian and wider Australian community. These include:

Environmental benefits: The grants have resulted in more community green spaces, increased capacity to safeguard Victorian rare and threatened plant species, and greater community awareness of the value of plants in Victoria.

Social and community benefits: Gardens play a vital role in regional communities as a place of well-being and social inclusion. The grants were able to significantly boost and improve accessibility and visitor amenities to meet community needs. Several projects focused on the use and conservation of indigenous plants by collaborating with First Nations communities and their knowledge, building stronger links between traditional owner groups and gardens.

Heritage benefits: Of the 29 grant recipient gardens, 18 (62%) were established in the latter half of the 19th century and are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. Funding through this program supported the maintenance of ageing infrastructure, and renewal of living collections and heritage interpretation, preventing deterioration and ensuring the continued existence of Victoria's heritage and identity.

Economic benefits: Around 30 million people nationwide visit botanic gardens annually, boosting local and international tourism. This also contributes to job creation in urban and regional areas. By uplifting botanic gardens and increasing their tourism value, the grants program has strengthened regional and state economies.

The direct benefit to Victoria's botanic gardens was in 5 key areas:

- Living Collections and Landscape Development
- Infrastructure Projects
- Interpretation and Community Education Projects
- Water Security, Irrigation Efficiency and Climate Adaptation
- Living Collections, Masterplanning and Strategic Planning.

Highlights of outcomes under these 5 areas follow in the report. Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) and all its Victorian members would like to thank the Victorian Government and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) staff for this exceptional program. The investment to Victoria's green infrastructure – its botanic gardens – has had profound positive impacts for the industry and for the state.

Cassandra Nichols, Chief Executive Officer
Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand

Collective Impacts: Highlights



Living Collections and Landscape Development Projects

Living collections are a cornerstone of botanic gardens and are crucial for several reasons, contributing to the gardens' roles in conservation, education, research and public engagement. They play a vital role in conserving rare, endangered, and threatened plant species, acting as living insurance collections that help to safeguard genetic diversity that might otherwise be lost. They also serve as sites for the propagation and reintroduction of species into their natural habitats, provide living references for scientific studies and serve as research hubs for significant environmental issues including climate adaptation and biosecurity.

The living collections and landscape components of a garden are also critical to public engagement and education. They are what makes a garden aesthetically pleasing, which draws visitors.

The grants program facilitated significant advancements in landscape and living collections developments across the state, focusing on aspects of conservation, cultural significance, heritage tree management, climate adaptation, future resilience and sustainability projects.

The Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grants program provided support for:

- the establishment and opening of two entirely new botanic gardens
- 8 major landscape development projects with associated living collections
- the planting of specimen trees and general enhancement planting programs at 9 botanic gardens
- 40,420 plantings across all gardens
- 781 plant species added to living collections
- 112 rare and threatened species added to living collections
- 375 Victorian taxa added to living collections
- 26 gardens (over 50% of the BGANZ Victoria network) moving to a cutting-edge digital plant record keeping system, supporting greater involvement in plant conservation projects.

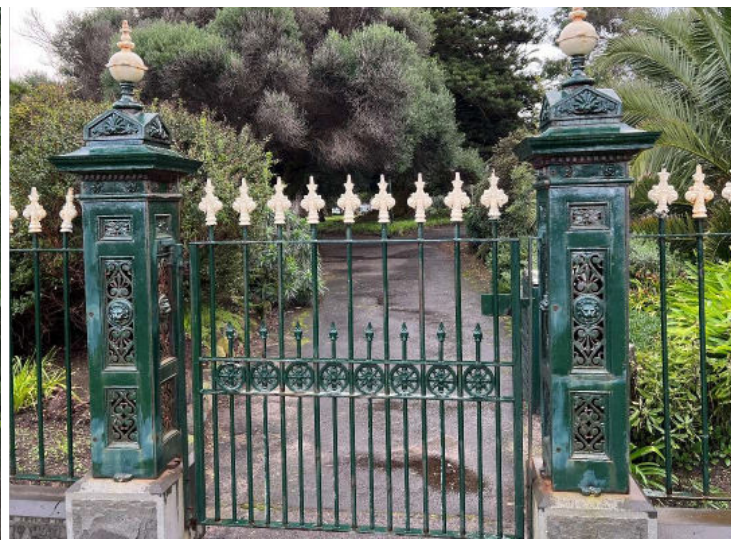


Infrastructure Projects

Developing and managing botanic gardens' infrastructure is vital to their core functions, visitor experience and community value, and ensures long term sustainability. Infrastructure includes everything from the glass houses and nurseries necessary for conservation and research, to pathways, seating, interpretive centres and visitor amenities, and more. Many Victorian botanic gardens are heritage sites and face challenges from ageing infrastructure. The Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grants program funded projects to improve visitor access with better pathways, enhance fencing and restore heritage assets. Additionally, new nature-based play spaces were built in several gardens.

The Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grants program provided support for:

- enhanced accessibility-focused improvements at 12 gardens across the state
- 10 major pathway restoration programs
- 6,903 metres of pathway upgrades/improvements
- pathway lighting projects at 3 regional gardens
- 8 restoration projects of significant built heritage assets
- improvements to visitor amenities (visitor centres, seating and picnic facilities) at 12 gardens.



Interpretation and Community Education Projects

Interpretation plays a vital role in botanic gardens by linking the garden with its visitors, enriching their experience, attracting diverse audiences, sparking curiosity about plants, adding meaning to collections and fostering public support. Effective interpretation goes beyond simply sharing information – it actively engages visitors, helping them understand and connect with what they see. It should reveal new insights or encourage deeper thinking about plants, objects or concepts, making the experience more interactive and thought-provoking. The grants assisted gardens in significantly enhancing their visitor experiences through signage and plant labelling projects.

The Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grants program provided support for:

- interpretive and educational signage installed at 10 botanic gardens
- 79 major interpretation panels installed across all gardens
- 255 plant identification labels installed at 3 botanic gardens.



Water Security, Irrigation Efficiency and Climate Adaptation Projects

Enhancing irrigation efficiencies greatly improves the health and resilience of plant collections, as well as the overall presentation of gardens at landscape scales. Additionally, water-efficient systems reduce the environmental impact of the garden by minimising water consumption, which is especially important in regions facing water scarcity. Efficient irrigation also reduces costs for the garden. The grants program funded a range of recycled water and irrigation projects to decrease potable water use and enhance irrigation efficiency.

The Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grants program provided support for:

- 5 water security/supply projects across the state supporting long term sustainable water supply for garden irrigation and amenities
- 9 major irrigation projects
- 5 irrigation projects targeted at building climate resilience for heritage trees listed on the Victorian National Trust Heritage Register
- the development of a climate-ready garden in northern Victoria.



Climate Ready Gardens: Thriving Through Change

Climate Ready Gardens: Taking Action

Thursday 13 February | Euroa Community Conference Centre and Online

Climate Ready Gardens: 2-day Design Course

Thursday 6 March and Thursday 13 March | 4-7pm
Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre

Wednesday 26 March and Wednesday 2 April | 10am-1pm
Euroa Community Conference Centre

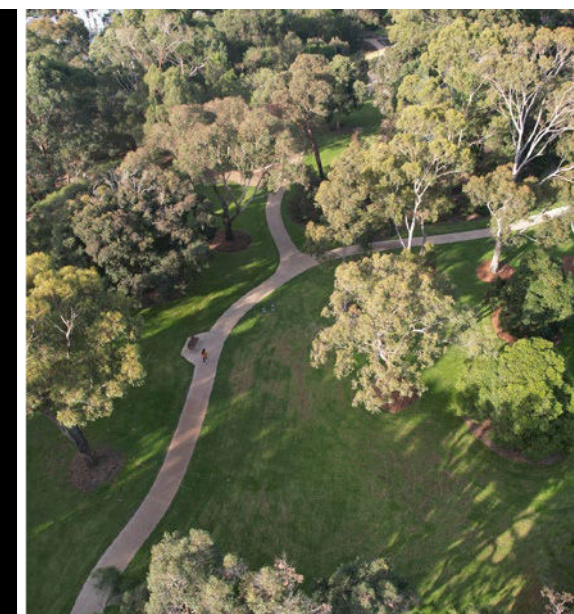
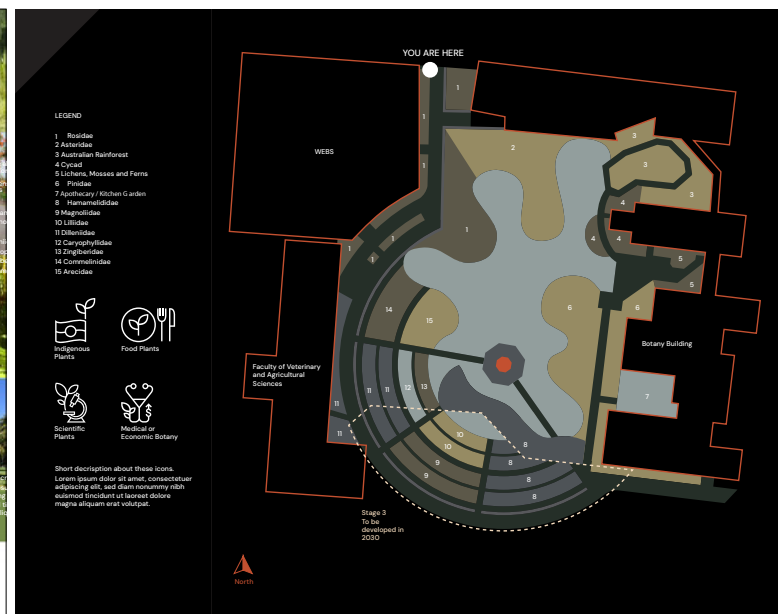
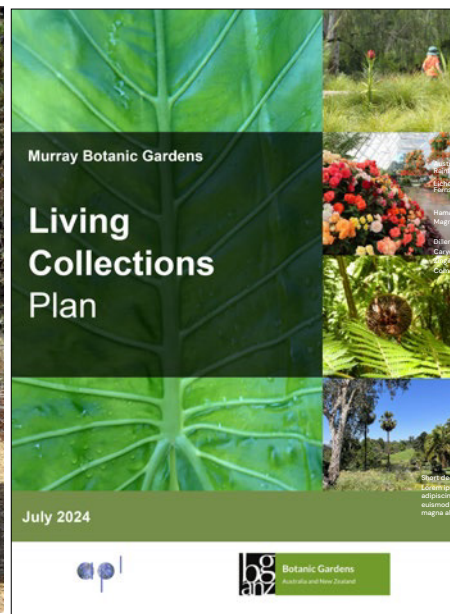
Living Collections, Masterplanning and other Strategic Planning Projects

Actively managed and curated plant collections are the defining characteristic of a botanic garden, setting them apart from other public parks and gardens. Like art galleries or zoos, botanic gardens serve purposes beyond public recreation and enjoyment. They function as scientific, horticultural and cultural resources where people can grow, learn about, study and conserve plants. While many botanic gardens also serve as recreational spaces, they play a vital role in plant conservation and public education through their plant collections.

A suite of strategic planning documents guides the planning and management of our gardens, and these are critical to becoming an internationally accredited botanic garden. Several grant recipients have utilised the Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grants program to develop a range of planning activities and associated documentation.

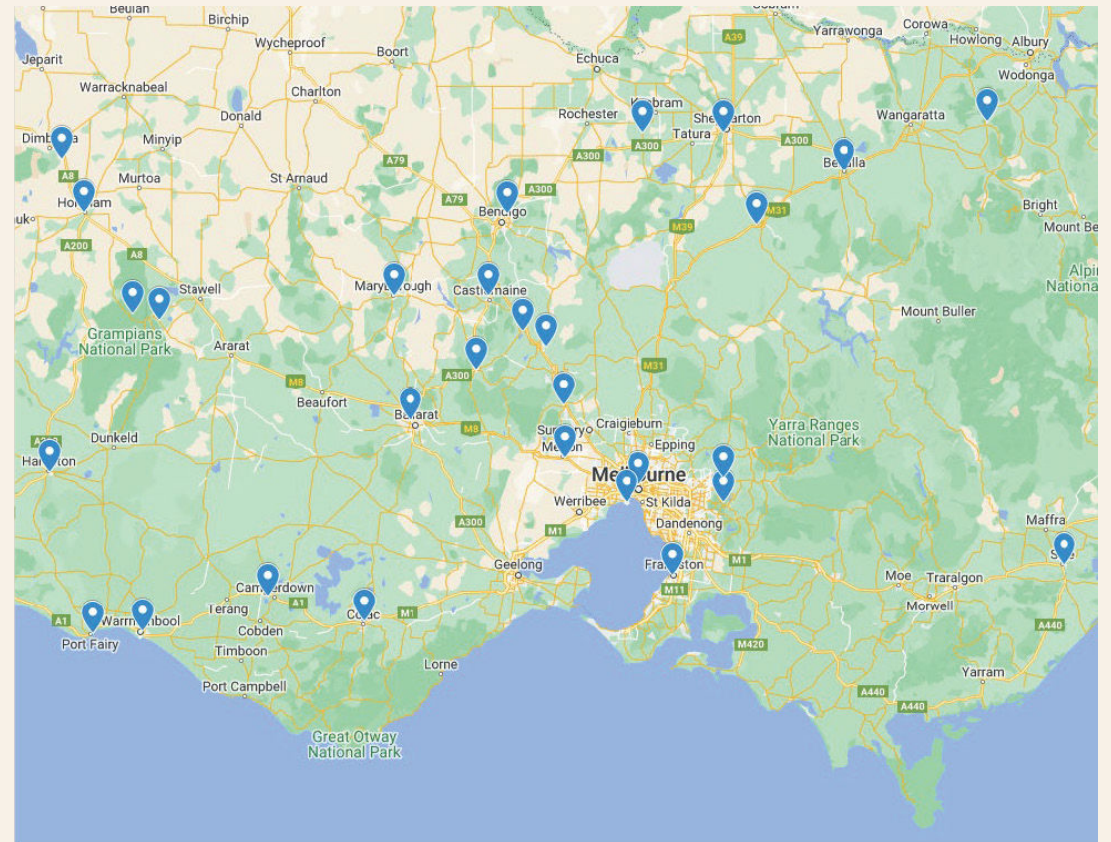
The Growing Victoria's Botanic Gardens grants program provided support for:

- the development of a Climate Change and Sustainability Analysis, a Living Collections Plan, a Tree Succession Plan and an Interpretation Plan
- 2 Conservation and Site Heritage Management Plans
- a Conservation (Threatened Species) Management Plan
- design development for 2 major playground and community precincts
- design development for the restoration of heritage entrance gates
- development of a digital Living Collections Toolkit to assist gardens in creating their Living Collections Strategic Plan or to assess their existing living collections.



Grant recipients

- Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton
- Ballarat Botanical Gardens
- Benalla Botanical Gardens
- Bendigo Botanic Gardens
- Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum
- Castlemaine Botanical Garden
- Colac Botanic Gardens
- Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens
- Euroa Arboretum
- Gargarro Botanic Garden
- George Pentland Botanic Gardens
- Gisborne Botanic Garden
- Grampians Flora Botanic Gardens
- Hamilton Botanic Gardens
- Horsham Botanical Gardens
- Karwarra Australian Native Botanic Garden
- Kyneton Botanic Gardens
- Malmsbury Botanic Gardens
- Melton Botanic Garden
- Phillips Botanical Gardens
- Port Fairy Botanic Gardens
- Queen Victoria Park
- Sale Botanic Gardens
- The System Garden, University of Melbourne
- Wail Arboretum and Nursery
- Grampians/Gariwerd Endemic Botanic Garden, WAMA
- Williamstown Botanic Gardens
- Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens
- Warrnambool Botanic Gardens



Acknowledgments

Image credits

Cover: Indigenous wetland plantings Larni Garingilang, Bendigo Botanic Gardens. Credit City of Greater Bendigo.

p 4. L – R. Welcome Circle, Daank Walking Trail, Euroa Arboretum. Credit Euroa Arboretum; Flood recovery signage, Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton. Credit Friends of Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton; Ballarat Botanical Gardens Fernery restoration. Credit Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

p 5. Cloud Forest Garden, Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens. Credit Andrea Proctor.

p 6. L – R: Gargarro Botanic Garden. Credit Gargarro Botanic Garden; Cloud Forest Garden, Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens. Credit Andrea Proctor. Indigenous plantings Larni Garingilang, Bendigo Botanic Gardens. Credit City of Greater Bendigo.

p 7. L – R. Raised boardwalk, Warrnambool Botanic Gardens. Credit John Sheely; Restored Heritage Gates, Port Fairy Botanic Gardens. Credit Moyne Shire Council; Visitor Centre Larni Garingilang, Bendigo Botanic Gardens. Credit City of Greater Bendigo.

p 8. L – R. Systems Garden signage, University of Melbourne. Credit Virginia McNally; Care for the Rare signage, Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton. Credit Friends of Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton; Signage, Daank Walking Trail, Euroa Arboretum. Credit Euroa Arboretum.

p 9. L – R. Heritage trees enhanced through installation of targeted automated irrigation system, Kyneton Botanic Gardens. Credit Andrea Proctor; Water tanks in the Karwarra Australian Native Garden Kalorama. Credit Yarra Ranges Council; Climate Ready Gardens event promotion, Euroa Arboretum. Credit Euroa Arboretum.

p 10. L – R. New nature play space, Melton Botanic Garden. Credit Melton City Council; Sample Living Collections Plan cover, BGANZ Living Collections Toolkit. Credit Andrea Proctor; Sample page from Melbourne University Systems Garden Interpretation Plan. Credit Studio Unfold; Newly designed primary access pathway system, George Pentland Botanic Gardens. Credit Frankston City Council.

Authors

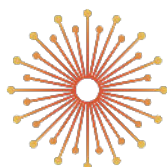
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Editorial

Rebecca Harcourt

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Thank you to the Victorian Government, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action for investing in Victoria's botanic gardens.



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