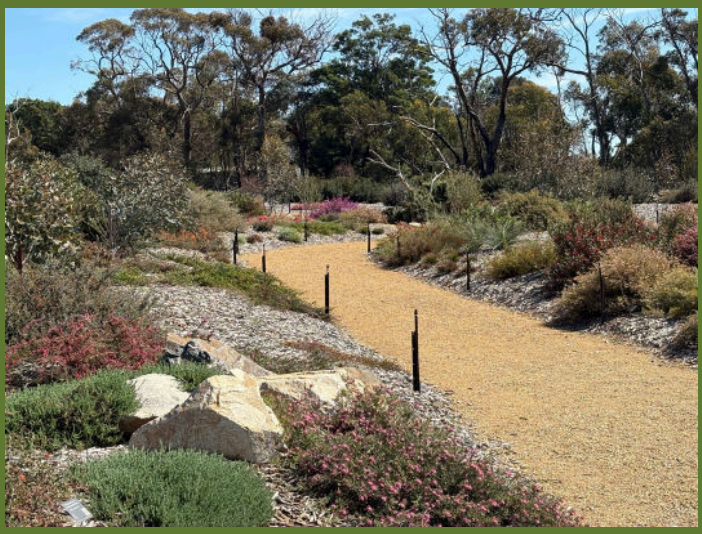
Winner
2025 Partnership Award

Botanic Gardens AUS & NZ

‘Grampians/Gariwerd Endemic Botanic Garden’
WAMA Foundation



Award Overview
This award recognises collaborative projects that achieve excellent results and deliver value to all partner organisations. The Grampians/Gariwerd Endemic Botanic Garden was developed to showcase more than 70 endemic species from one of Victoria’s key biodiversity hotspots, where over 30% of the State’s native flora occurs. Many of these species have small geographic ranges and are listed as rare, endangered, or critically endangered, with climate change and wildfires posing increasing risks.

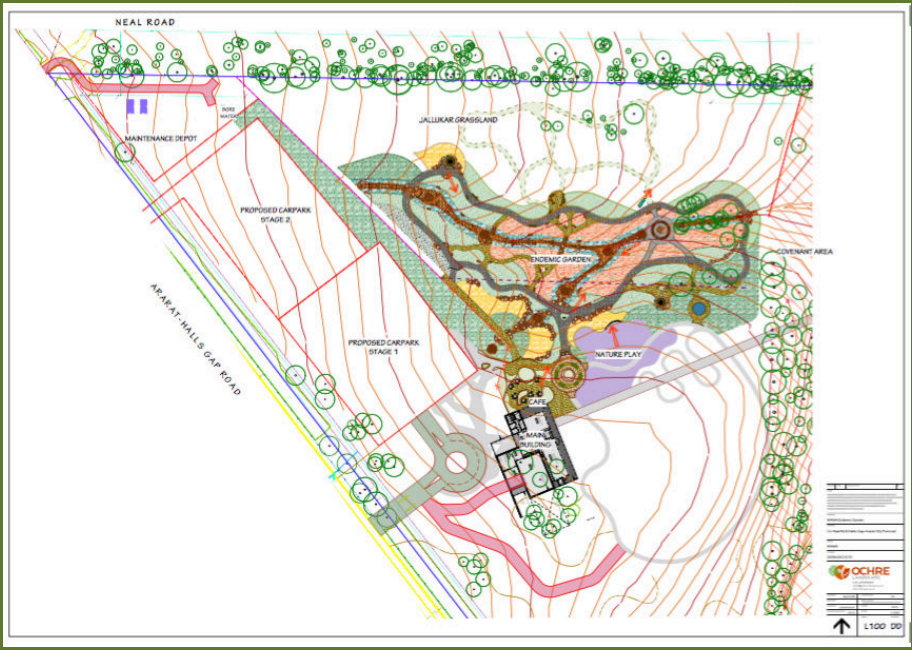
Located on the eastern side of the Grampians/Gariwerd National Park, the garden was created through a partnership between the WAMA Foundation, the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV), the Victorian Department of Environment, and the Pomonal Community Nursery. Funding of $48,000 from the State Government’s “Growing Victoria’s Regional Botanic Gardens Program” supported Stage 1 construction (¾ hectare), commenced in 2022 and completed in 2023. The project involved sourcing and propagating local provenance material, supported by research, field knowledge, and plant collecting in challenging terrain.

Effective Collaboration

The partnership is built on clear roles, shared decision-making, and mutual respect. Under guidance from RBGV, the WAMA Foundation became a BGANZ member and used the knowledge gained to commission key planning documents, including a Soil Assessment Report, Collections Policy, Landscape Plan, and planting schedule. At the same time, RBGV Cranbourne Gardens was establishing a complementary collection of Grampians plants and drew on WAMA's local expertise to locate and propagate them. Collecting trips in the National Park documented the location of wild provenance species. Tip-cuttings were delivered to the RBGV nursery and volunteers at the Pomonal Community Nursery for propagation. A meta-collection across WAMA and RBGV provides long-term security for rare and threatened species. The State Government funded construction, and despite a two-year Covid interruption, the project was delivered on time and on budget.

Clear Purpose and Objectives

The partnership aligned closely with each organisation's purpose. The WAMA Foundation's long-term vision is to create a National Centre for Environmental Art, surrounded by natural bushland and a botanic garden that celebrates the flora and fauna of the Grampians. This aligns with RBGV's scientific and conservation priorities and the Department of Environment's goals. The partnership enabled creation of a regional botanic garden that delivers environmental, educational, and cultural value, while providing RBGV with a meta-collection and helping the State Government achieve its regional gardens program outcomes.



Demonstrated Impact on Partners

The partnership strengthened each organisation. RBGV mentored WAMA through the planning and establishment of a new regional botanic garden. Working together, the partners sourced and propagated plants, combining RBGV's scientific processes with local field knowledge. WAMA volunteers assisted with locating remote plant colonies for collection, as well as the propagation and planting. Through BGANZ, WAMA accessed State Government funding that made construction possible. The project became shovel-ready due to the preparatory work led with RBGV, ensuring Stage 1 could proceed when funding was available.

Innovation and Value-Add

The Endemic Garden now contains around 540 plants and 56 species, including about 36 that occur only in the Grampians/Gariwerd region. This ex-situ collection is a significant contribution to biodiversity conservation. Plant sourcing combined herbarium records, RBGV research, and local botanical knowledge. Propagation was carried out by RBGV Cranbourne Gardens and volunteers at the Pomonal Community Nursery, with tubestock donated to WAMA at low cost. Excess plants are shared with the nearby Halls Gap Botanic Garden, supporting conservation across the region.

Sustainability and Longevity
As of July 2025, the WAMA Foundation opened a public multi-functional site, including an art gallery, café, education space, remnant bushland, an ephemeral wetland, biodiversity corridors, and reconstructed grassland. Visitor revenue will support ongoing operations and future expansion of the botanic garden. A full-time Site Supervisor was appointed in late 2022 to oversee the 16-hectare property and maintain the collection. Following major bushfires in 2024, the ex-situ collection may be vital for future restoration of endemic species in the National Park.

Replicability and Scalability
The project demonstrates a partnership model common across regional botanic gardens, where collaboration with RBGV and BGANZ builds capacity and supports long-term outcomes. Access to community nurseries and shared volunteer networks allowed WAMA to pool expertise and resources. Because volunteers often support multiple environmental groups, the project highlights how coordinated efforts can strengthen outcomes across a whole region and provide a replicable approach for other communities.

Conclusion
The Grampians/Gariwerd Endemic Botanic Garden shows how a strong partnership can protect rare species, strengthen regional capacity, and deliver lasting environmental and community value. By combining scientific expertise, local knowledge, and government investment, the project achieved outcomes none of the partners could have delivered alone.