

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES**

### **REVIEW OF THE *HERITAGE ACT 1977***

**Hearing – 17 August 2021**

#### **Supplementary question to Mr George Salouros, Royal Botanic Garden Sydney**

1. The Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) Sydney is an ideal institution to be classed as a Heritage Tourism site. Could you suggest any Heritage Tourism initiatives that could be applied to the RBG?

#### **Answer from Mr George Salouros, Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, 16 September 2021**

Outside the period of COVID-19 travel restrictions, the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney is one of the top ten most visited destinations in Australia for international visitors. A 2018 report by Deloitte Access Economics estimated an annual tourism-related contribution of \$104 million to the NSW economy associated with the Garden.

Operating as a botanic garden for more than 200 years, our stewardship of this space is informed by many thousands of years of the rich cultural heritage of the land's traditional custodians, and the heritage of this site is core to the tourism value and offerings of the Garden. The Royal Botanic Garden Sydney and The Domain are also much more than just tourism. The Garden is home to Australia's oldest continuous scientific institution, and The Domain is a highly valued public space and venue for tourists, CBD workers and residents from across Sydney and beyond.

In response to the question the Garden already undertakes heritage tourism. Tourism initiatives and attractions within the Garden and Domain include Aboriginal Cultural Tours and food experiences, a priceless horticultural living collection, public events and activations such as concerts in the Domain, exhibitions and attractions at The Calyx, Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour and much more. To class the Garden as Heritage Tourism Site would fail to realise that space is much more. Heritage tourism is a subset of the total tourism experience and can include cultural experiences that are active, dynamic and emerging, and that take place – whether they are sporting events such as the Mother's Day Classic, Christmas carols, Open Air Cinema, New Year's Eve celebrations and festivals

A nuanced and unique approach to heritage conservation is therefore required in order to manage our diverse range of purposes – from horticulture, education and science to tourism and public space activations.