

SOCIAL Performance

Did you know...

The Royal Botanic Garden Sydney is the 9th highest visited destination in Australia for international tourists!

Visitation

In 2017-18 we saw record visitation again across all Gardens, boosted by an engaging program of events and cultural activities, increased tourist numbers into Sydney and investment in upgrading facilities and services.

There was an increase in visitor numbers across all sites with 4% for the Royal Botanic Garden, 7% for the Australian Botanic Garden and 16% for the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden.

	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Royal Botanic Garden Sydney (RBGS)	5,437,902	5,222,464	4,997,670	3,885,643	3,977,031
Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan	441,325	409,697	395,597	336,768	331,032
Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah (BMBG)	226,033	195,379	201,438	188,910	158,512

Serving the community

During 2017-18 we delivered the Vivid Garden Light Walk at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney — a 23-day festival attracting 415,664 visitors from Friday 25 May – Saturday 16 July 2018. The festival celebrated its 10th Year of Creativity with a number of installations forming part of the Sydney CBD Light Walk, 20 of which were featured in the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Visitation, participation, media reach, institutional partnerships, community awareness and stakeholder satisfaction were key measures and were achieved beyond expectations through a broad program of engagement.

Visitor engagement highlights for the 2017-18

Royal Botanic Garden Sydney:

- **‘Connected Garden’** — launched with over 90 key stakeholders and project partners attending, showcasing the WiFi, smart nodes, Garden app and new website
- **Victoria Lodge** — launched for public consultation with the interior transformed with interpretation and imagery on the history of Royal Botanic Garden Sydney
- **The Calyx** — ‘All About Flowers’ and ‘Pollination’ exhibitions featuring marketing campaigns that delivered across all channels with significant growth in the free display offering:
 - Visitation to The Calyx increased by 290%
FY16/17: 65,096 visitors
FY17/18: 253,881 visitors

- successful delivery of an integrated campaign for the ‘All About Flowers’ plant sale which resulted in over \$40,000 raised in sales and 3,300 visitors

- **Tomato Festival Sydney** — this event was successfully marketed, produced and delivered, resulting in a 9.4% increase in visitation to 39,600, an increase in sponsors (with Harris Farm Markets returning for a second year), and an expanded program and focus on engaging content across social media platforms with a new ‘meet the makers’ video series
- **Vital Science** — engagement rolled out across all three Gardens, highlighting the vital importance of plant science to life on Earth, including a popular podcast series featuring our scientists and their ground-breaking work
- **VIVID Sydney** featured a ‘Vital Science’ engagement theme throughout our new food and beverage offerings. The event recorded an increase of 4% in attendance rates
- **Improved Signage** — featuring constantly evolving and improved key signage for promotional and wayfinding, including new wayfinding for PlantClinic, the replacement of rusted foreshore walk wayfinding poles, the replacement of operational signs at 14 perimeter gates, updating of old branded signage and new ENE. HUB banners
- **What’s On seasonal campaigns** — quarterly content campaigns were delivered featuring new creative, imagery, videos, signage, stories and multilingual guides helping to drive record visitation and ticket sales:
 - the annual Easter Egg Hunt was not only sold out but an additional day was added to the program

- Science Week recorded record visitation/participation
- an expanded program for Garden Art Month lead to sold-out workshops and children's program
- over 1,750 visitors were recorded at the Margaret Flockton exhibition
- record visitation and sales were also recorded for 'Botanica'
- a new website landing page for 'What's On' improved visitor experience, with 26.8k page views
- support of both the pictorial Water Stories exhibition and International Museum Day through signage and digital engagement

Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan:

- a new tour product for visitors (launched halfway through the year) was delivered to over 300 visitors
- a new packaged venue hire product increased the revenue for Bowden Centre
- AnnanROMA recorded steady visitation and new sponsors Camden Council and Campbelltown Council
- Carols in the Garden delivered a 3% increase in visitation
- a new ticketed event for Valentine's Day resulted in 300 visitors
- new high-visibility entry signage was installed at the Narellan Road and Mount Annan Drive gates.

Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah:

- 30th Birthday Celebrations — a month long celebration of theatre, art, installations and performances which culminated in a two-day festival featuring over 50 artists a day in a harmonious blending of nature and culture which was supported by local and Sydney media (including Sydney Weekender and the Sydney Morning Herald) reaching 500,000 readers and attracting over 3,000 visitors
- Eco Certificate & Low Carbon Living — continued our Eco Certificate and this year received a Gold Rating for Low Carbon Living
- new food & beverage offerings – continued to work closely with our new lessees on marketing, events, venue hire
- Gondwana Garden Family Day/Science Week event attracting over 1,800 people and extensive local and national social and media coverage
- Wedding Open Day – working closely with our new food & beverage lessee's we created an event working with local businesses to attract bookings, resulting in doubling visitation (to 1,000) and in direct bookings on the day
- improved signage – constantly evolving and improving key signage for wayfinding
- What's On seasonal campaigns – quarterly content campaigns were delivered featuring new creative, imagery, brochures, social content leading to a 16%

growth in visitation year-on-year and sell-out workshops and events including our first ever Easter Egg Hunt, a sold-out NERD Alert school program and a doubling in frequency of our Bird Walk & Talks in order to meet demand

- exhibitions – we host regular exhibitions in addition to artist meet-and-greets throughout the year supporting the local artist community
- tourism – we continue to work closely with local tourism groups, council, Destination NSW and Tourism Australia to drive visitation to the region.

Digital engagement and communications

As a national icon, international tourism drawcard and local destination, news coverage is key to ensuring our visitors are well informed about what our three Gardens and the Domain have to offer. During 2017-18 there was a continued focus on growing and improving how we communicate, particularly through digital channels. Highlights include:

- development of a new interactive app for the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney in English and Mandarin
- implementation of a social media strategy, growing the social community by 40% on 2016-17
- delivery of a new website for the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney
- a 32% increase in sessions for the Royal Botanic Garden, Australian Botanic Garden and Blue Mountains Botanic Garden websites (1,385,061 in 2017/18 versus 1,050,553 in 2016/17)
- a 29% increase in page views across three websites (3,644,677 in 2017/18 versus 2,835,278 in 2016/17)
- 119 formal written pieces of customer feedback received and responded to
- featuring in more than 3,700 unique news stories with a media reach of more than 678 million people.



Volunteering

A large number of volunteers — at the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, in addition to Foundation & Friends of the Botanic Gardens (Foundation & Friends) — actively contribute to enhancing visitor experiences, assist in conservation and environmental projects, and conduct income-generating programs.

During the reporting period:

- we had 650 volunteers in 32 programs across the Trust (18 programs) and Foundation & Friends (11 programs), and corporate volunteers also assisted through our sponsorship program
- one new program was established for Calyx volunteers to enhance visitor engagement
- volunteers contributed 49,852 hours of volunteer work to the organisation equating to more than \$1,683 million of in-kind value (with \$19,000 in income generated from Trust volunteer programs from guided walks for community groups and inbound tour companies)
- more than 74,000 visitors were assisted by volunteers at the two information booths in the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney (staffed by volunteers from the Trust and Foundation & Friends) and at special events such as New Year's Eve, the Tomato Festival, exhibitions including Margaret Flockton and the Victoria Lodge Exhibition, and Latitude 23 Glass House
- volunteer guides showcased the three Gardens including PlantBank and the Calyx to more than 8,700 visitors with a combination of paid and free-guided tours
- volunteer guides developed several specialty walks to complement Foundation & Friends programs and special walks for members during 'VIVID Sydney'
- National Herbarium of NSW volunteers mounted 7,290 plant specimens and data-checked 1,716 specimens
- library volunteers archived and digitised the Garden's historic collection of photographs and assisted with preparing library displays for special events
- science volunteers assisted scientific staff with fieldwork and research
- the Honorary Research Associates contributed to plant research
- bush regeneration volunteers improved an area of five hectares at the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan by treating and removing all significant weeds from the site

- a new group of volunteers was recruited and trained for the Calyx to enhance visitor engagement (Calyx volunteers had 6,747 interactions with visitors over 299 shifts)
- Foundation & Friends volunteers were instrumental in delivering fundraising projects including Growing Friends plant propagation and sales, 'Botanica', 'Artisans in the Gardens' and commercial catering
- Talking Friends went outside the Garden walls and delivered talks to a range of community groups.

Annual Volunteer Recognition

The annual recognition and 'thank you' to volunteers was held at the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden on 9 November to coincide with the Garden's 30th birthday celebrations.

Forty-six volunteers were awarded recognition certificates for their years of service to the Gardens — one 35 years' service, one 30 years' service, two 25 years' service, six for 20 years' service, twenty-four for 15 years' service and seven for 10 years' service.

Volunteer Guide Flora Deverell was recognised for her 35 years' services to the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney in the 'Volunteer of the Year' Awards.

Community and education programs

Our renewed focus on growing community engagement through our programs delivered 25% growth on the previous year across the combined experiences. During the 2017-18 financial year, the Community & Education Programs team engaged a record 140,874 participants in innovative programs focusing on plants, their science and conservation, and the vital role they play in our lives.

Key achievements within the reporting period were:

- 37,546 school students attended excursions resulting in approximately 15% increase on 2016-17
- 2,974 students attended the successful 'Biological Diversity' program for Year 11 Biology students – an ongoing partnership with the Australian Museum and Taronga Zoo, refreshed against the new Australian Curriculum
- 1,746 metropolitan and regional students engaged in interactive video-conferenced lessons funded through our Principal Partnership with HSBC Bank Australia
- 3,627 domestic and overseas tourists engaged in the Aboriginal Heritage Tour and our unique cultural experiences — Aboriginal Art; Bush Tucker and Aboriginal weaving
- 44,473 participants took part in our regular school holiday activities and exciting range of community programs and events including popular new experiences in the Calyx – a growth of 69% on 2017-18
- The Calyx was used extensively as an educational backdrop during the year, attracting 4,816 school children and 7,211 members of the broader community for a range of activities, including the very popular astronomy events
- 11,000 people enjoyed Egg Hunt events at all three Garden sites this year with the continued support of Darrell Lea
- 23,000 people attended science-focused events held at all three sites — with funding provided by the federal Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and the Inspiring Australia initiative, supported by both the Australian and NSW Governments as part of Sydney Science Festival in National Science Week
- the 'RUOK? Conversation Convoy' stopped in to the Gardens on 1 September on their way around Australia (an early media launch was followed by a youth event for 300 students from local high schools)
- 250 community members attended this year's National Sorry Day event at the Australia Botanic Garden's Stolen Generations Memorial organised in collaboration with Liverpool and Campbelltown Councils.

Community & education programs statistics

Program	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Formal School Program Participants	37,546	32,204	18,240	14,205
Digital Learning	1,746	2,573	2,615	1,345
Aboriginal Program Participants	12,320	13,953	8,135	6,034
Community Program Participants	44,473	26,387	10,883	7,792

Community outreach

Our outreach program Community Greening is a partnership between the Trust and the NSW Government Department of Family & Community Services (FACS). This successful program facilitates the establishment of community gardens primarily in FACS housing estates.

'Community Greening' is the name for a range of activities to promote communal garden projects undertaken by the two organisations. By promoting communal gardening in social housing communities and on nearby locations, a significant contribution to improved social cohesion, crime reduction and public health in both urban and regional New South Wales is made.

The program has created 411 Community Greening projects since it started in 2001. Some 6,866 social housing tenants participated in the program in 2017-18.

Highlights for the financial year included:

- \$3.3M of funding was received from the NSW Government Department of Family & Community Services for the continuation of Community Greening for the next five years
- a three-year grant of \$429,454 was secured from the Australian Government Department of Social Services to run a Master Gardener Volunteer and Leadership program that will provide meaningful, sustainable, outdoor training opportunities for individuals in low socio-economic areas, allowing the Trust to continue the pilot initiative trialed in 2016/17

- the outcomes of the research program with Western Sydney University to assess the impacts of the Community Greening program were presented in May 2018, demonstrating very successful outcomes from the program.

Youth Community Greening program

Youth Community Greening is an environmental education program targeting disadvantaged urban and regional youth (2-25 years).

The program celebrated its 10th anniversary this year and has created 354 Youth Community Greening projects since it started in 2008. Some 13,164 students and youth participated in the program in 2017-18.

Highlights for the financial year included:

- additional funding from the John T Reid Charitable Trusts enabled 12 habitat gardens to be created in schools supporting threatened species — from Howlong in the south, to Baradine in the west and Inverell in the north — and an iBook was created as part of this project to enable all schools to access the resource
- support of over \$210,000 from Bloomberg, The Neilson Foundation and several individual donors was secured for the ongoing provision of Youth Community Greening.

Community Greening Participation Statistics

Program	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Community Greening participants	6,866	5,157	5,082	5,129
Youth Community Greening Participants	13,164	11,327	11,903	11,833
TOTAL	20,030	16,484	16,985	16,962

Venue management

A range of heritage buildings and outdoor areas (such as the Domain) across our sites are made available for community, charitable and ticketed events. In addition, we also facilitate a range of activities including weddings, team building activities, picnics, sports, film and photography shoots.

Some 918,017 patrons attended public events at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney and the Domain in 2017-18 including:

- charity events such as Run 2 Cure, Mother's Day Classic, and Soar and Roar,
- free public events such as Carols in the Domain (open free public event) and Opera in the Domain (open free public event)
- popular cultural, running and music events.

These events deliver upon the varied and diverse community expectations for use of our green spaces and enable us meet our social obligations set out under the Act and the NSW Government's commitment to diversity of experiences in public spaces.

Events such as these also raise valuable funds that are reinvested back into the management and maintenance

CATEGORY	PARTICIPATION #
General ground hire (picnics, weddings, etc)	47,233
Indoor venues	10,558
Public events	860, 226 Includes: Tomato Festival stats of 39,600 Vivid 415,664, NYE 26,000
TOTAL	918,017

Gardens-produced community events

During 2017-18 we managed many successful community events including:

Tomato Festival at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney

- this free event attracted an estimated 39,600 people – an increase on the previous year of 9%
- the festival featured a wide variety of produce stalls and information stands (providing information on tomatoes and their importance throughout history), cooking demonstrations, a mandala created by staff, film screenings in The Caylx and a major dining event (The Longest Tomato Lunch which drew 480 patrons and extended across both Saturday and Sunday).

AnnanROMA

The popular annual food, wine and entertainment festival at the Australian Botanic Garden attracted 11,275 patrons to this free one-day event.

Christmas Carols at the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan

The popular annual event drew 7,390 visitors to a successful and enjoyable evening in the Garden.

Various events at Blue Mountains Botanic Garden

The Garden continued to provide engaging visitor events and exhibitions including the popular Waratah Festival and Daffodi Festival.

See more online at
rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au



Support

The BGCP Development (Development) team and the Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens (Foundation and Friends)* focus on securing funds to ensure the Gardens can continue to deliver world-class science, horticulture, education and recreation.

Highlights for 2017-18

Thanks to the patronage of our generous supporters, we exceeded our target for the Rainforest Conservation Project end of financial year appeal, receiving funds to continue the fight to preserve our precious rainforest species, many of which are on the brink of extinction. The combined funds of \$290K raised by the Development team and the Foundation and Friends will allow our scientists to continue their vital work on discovering the best ways to grow and store rainforest seeds for future conservation purposes. This includes the purchase of a differential scanning calorimeter, which will enable the Gardens' scientists to remain at the forefront of international rainforest conservation.

In addition, the Development team secured much needed funds for Community Greening and Youth Community Greening, including a significant five year investment from the NSW Government Department of Family & Community Services and a generous grant from the Australian Government Department of Social Services. These funds will allow our staff to continue to share their horticultural expertise with social housing communities and disadvantaged young people, and extend the reach and impact of our community outreach programs throughout New South Wales.

We also would like to make a special mention to the volunteers of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust and the Foundation and Friends who continue to enthusiastically support our science and horticulture programs, run tours and events, operate our information booths and visitor centres, and propagate plants from the living collection to sell at the Growing Friends nurseries.

Finally, we would like to thank all the corporate partners, trusts and foundations and individual donors who have generously provided funding for our science, horticulture and education programs throughout the year. We would like to particularly acknowledge and thank corporate partners HSBC Bank Australia, Bloomberg and TransGrid for renewing their long-term support.

**Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens Ltd (Foundation and Friends) is a not-for-profit membership-based organisation which serves as an important link between the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust and the community, and promotes, supports and contributes to the development of the Gardens.*



Our Thanks

We greatly appreciate the support of our past and present donors, including generous commitments by those who have made a bequest provision in the future.

We extend our sincerest thanks to the Foundation & Friends for their unwavering commitment and recognise the support, both financial and in-kind, provided by our many corporate partners and members of our Corporate Club.

Major Donors

Ruth Armytage AM; Estate of Clive and Lorna Backhouse; Roslyn Baker; Greg Bell and Myra Bell; Beswick Family Fund; the late James O Fairfax AC; John B Fairfax AO; Tim Fairfax AC; Estate of Elizabeth Helen Gainey; Douglas Jackson and Tim Jackson; Jamoca Foundation; Estate of Stephen Victor Jupp; Barry Kinnaird; Dr Geoffrey Long and Dr Ann Long; Estate of Helen Lyons; Estate of Nancy Malfanti; Susan Maple-Brown AM and the late Robert Maple-Brown AO; Tony Maxwell and Robyn Godlee; The Neilson Foundation; Geoffrey O'Connor and Rachel O'Connor; Pace Foundation; Estate of Cliffina Thersey Rathborne; Estate of Miss Beryl Raymer; Dr Jan Roberts and Prof Ken Roberts AM; Dr Alex Robertson and the late Dorothy Robertson; Tieck Family; Sally White OAM; Mary Whitton; Colin Wilson; Anonymous.

Donors

Family of LCDR (Ret'd) and Mrs David Joseph Angus; Geraldine Arnott and Christopher Arnott OAM; Simone Arnott and the late Robert Arnott; Clive Austin AM and Patricia Austin; The Australian 49ers Association Inc; Clive Blazey; Estate of Herbert Born; The Centenary Foundation – Scott Family Bequest; Helen Clift; Robert Constable and Janet Constable; Jim Cotis and Patricia Wason; Jennifer Crivelli; Shaneen Crouch and the late Michael Crouch AC; Dr Ian Daly and Diana Daly; Prof Noel Dan AM and Adrienne Dan; Sir Roderick Deane and Lady Gillian Deane; Anne De Salis and Martin Barge; Helen Devenish-Mearns; Julie Drew; Eleanor Dunn; Jerry Ellis AO and Ann Ellis; Estate of the late Margaret Esson; Family Frank Foundation; Raoul de Ferranti and Dr Marilyn Sleigh; Dr Dorothy Forster; The Hon Justice Peter Richard Garling RFD and Jane Garling; Gibbard family; Robert Golik, René Golik and Michelle Golik; the late Neville Grace; Greatorex Foundation; David Groves and Kathryn Groves; Georgina Grubb; His Honour Judge Stephen Hanley SC and Pauline David; Hansen family and Staikos Family; Dr Alistair Hay; David Healey; Estate of Paul Albin Herzberg; Dr F Max Hooper and Tess Hooper; Dr Keith Lethlean and Dr Heather Johnston; Liv-Better Foundation; Loh Family; Jenny Lourey; Mrs J Ludowici; Lysicrates Foundation; Marita MacMahon Ball; Pauline Markwell and Dr Shann Turnbull; Adele McDonald; Ian McLachlan and the late Helen McLachlan; Rosemary Millar;

Moore Family Philanthropic Foundation Limited; Mundango Abroad; Estate of Jian Kun Niu; Patricia Novikoff; Proud family; Noriko Sakagami; Mark and Ruth Sampson; Family of Caterina Scarcella née Gallico; Johanna Schmeling; John Siemon and Robynne Siemon; Alice Simpson and Robbie Feyder; Brenda Skinner; Estate of Lois Stewart; Prof Colin Sullivan AO and Janette Sullivan; Elisabeth Thilo (née Lobl); Dr Ron Thomson; Edward Vellacott and Morna Vellacott; Dr Richard Walsh and Sue Walsh; Nell White and the late James White; Estate of Paul Victor Willoughby; Jill Wran AM; Yeend Family; Anonymous.

Charitable, Government and Research Grants

Arcadia Fund; Australian Academy of Science; Australian Biological Resources Study; Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy – Threatened Species Projects; Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science; Australian Government Department of Social Services; Australian National Botanic Gardens/NSW Environmental Trust; Australian Research Council; Australian Seed Bank Partnership/Royal Botanic Gardens Kew – Millennium Seed Bank; Bush Blitz – Australian Biological Resources Study; Corella Fund; Eucalypt Australia; Hermon Slade Foundation; Inspiring Australia; John T Reid Charitable Trusts; National Science Foundation (China); NSW Environmental Trust; Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW Government – Newcastle; Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW Government – Saving Our Species; Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation.

Principal Partner

HSBC Bank Australia.

Major Partners

AGL; Bloomberg LP; NSW Government Department of Family & Community Services; South 32; TransGrid.

Partners

Alpine Nurseries; Campbelltown Catholic Club; Corrs Chambers Westgarth; Distillery Botanica; Eden Garden Centers; Northcote Pottery; NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment; Oasis Horticulture; Oceanic Bio; Plantmark; Proteaflora; Ramm Landscape; Toolijooa Environmental Restoration; Tyrrell's Wines; The University of Sydney; Vegepod; Yates.

Corporate Club

AMP Capital; Flowers Across Sydney; KPMG; People & Culture Strategies; Printzone; Trippas White Group; Tropical Plant Rentals; the University of New South Wales.