

# Annual Report

2023-2024



Royal  
Botanic  
Gardens  
Victoria



### **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our two Gardens are situated: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong/Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and acknowledge their continued custodianship and deep spiritual connection to these lands and waters. We honour the strength and richness of over 60,000 years of continuous Aboriginal culture and recognise the vital role of future generations as stewards of culture and Country.

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### Responsible Body Declaration

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I am pleased to present the Royal Botanic Gardens Board's Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2024.

**Penny Fowler AM**  
Chair  
Royal Botanic Gardens Board  
12 September 2024

# Chair and Director and Chief Executive Report

This report showcases our unwavering commitment to excellence in horticulture, scientific research, education, and community engagement over the past year. It also acknowledges that the past year has been a period of transition, with the setting of a refreshed strategic direction through the development of a new 5-year Corporate Plan, and the appointment of a new Director and Chief Executive.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to donors, supporters, and partners, whose passion for nature and dedication to conservation drive our success. We would also like to acknowledge the Victorian Government and officers of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and Steve Dimopoulos MP for his enthusiastic and hands-on support since assuming responsibility for our portfolio.

Over the past year our Melbourne and Cranbourne sites welcomed over 1.7 million visitors, reflecting the important role that we play within our communities and the broad appeal of our gardens. We also databased 29,120 invaluable plant specimens from the State Botanical Collection, coupled with scientific research, publication and targeted reintroduction of rare or threatened plant species, reinforcing our leadership in global plant science and conservation.

At the core of our mission is the belief that engaging with nature fosters well-being and inspires action to protect our natural world. As a result, we were proud to offer a variety of inclusive, free and low-cost programs designed to encourage people of all abilities and interests to experience the wonders of nature. Our flagship event, *Lightscape 2023*, attracted 235,000 audience members who enjoyed the beauty of Melbourne Gardens by night. This event not only supported the local economy but also amplified Aboriginal culture, art and storytelling through the work of several First Peoples artists.

Throughout the year, we welcomed over 40,000 Victorian students to engage in our diverse array of cultural, science, geography, and nature play programs. With the generous support of the Department of Education and the Victorian Catholic Education Authority, we continued to invest in educational innovation, developing new curriculum-based programs such as the Biomimicry STEM Program, Growing Beyond Earth Citizen Science Initiative, Young Botanists Art Series, and the Raising Rarity School Conservation Program. Additionally, philanthropic contributions enabled us to extend our reach, offering free programs and transportation to more than 1,500 students from regional, low socio-economic, and CALD communities through the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Nurtured by Nature Access Fund.

As a world-leading botanical organisation, we have made significant strides in landscape investment and strategic partnerships within the tourism, health, and cultural sectors. Our participation in the Australian Tourism Exchange facilitated the development of new collaborative partnerships, leading to a 67% increase in The Explorer bus bookings, 3,000 new cruise ship visitors and cross-promotions with various hotels, cultural, and tourism attractions. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria was also honoured to be rated the #1 Tourist Attraction in Melbourne and recognised as one of the top 1% of must-visit attractions globally by TripAdvisor.

Our continued commitment to plant conservation and enhancing visitor experience was evident through the development of new landscapes and plant collections, generously supported by philanthropic funding. This includes the Australian Drylands Project Stage One, which showcases a climate-suited palette of plants and associated storytelling, the new City Gate entrance, the restoration of the historic Rose Pavilion, and the reimagined Dry Riverbed landscape at Cranbourne Gardens. We were thrilled that our new wayfinding and interpretation system won the Communication Design Award at the 2023 Victorian Premier's Design Awards.



We are proud to have launched our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan with Elders and Traditional Custodians at both Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens and to have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. A range of programs are delivered by and for First Peoples including NAIDOC and Bush Playgroup programs, schools programs and the Aboriginal Heritage Walk providing opportunities for reflection, healing, and learning.

Our dedication to sharing plant knowledge and discovery has led to the expansion of the Living Collections and the State Botanical Collection, including ongoing databasing. The Collection remains an authoritative resource for the identification and study of Victoria's flora, supporting biodiversity conservation activities and research projects.

Our botanists and horticulturists have played a crucial role in supporting the objectives of Biodiversity 2037 through their work in bushfire recovery and seed banking of rare species. These conservation programs continue to protect many rare and threatened plants, maintaining our reputation as a global leader in botanical and horticultural knowledge.

We sincerely thank the efforts of our dedicated and knowledgeable staff, supported by highly engaged volunteers as the foundation of our achievements. As we look forward to the coming year, we anticipate a period of measured growth and renewed energy, guided by a new management team and Corporate Plan. With innovative programs and projects already underway, we are confident Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria will continue to support and nurture plants, people, place, and planet.

**Penny Fowler AM**  
Chair

**Chris Russell**  
Director & Chief Executive

# YEAR IN REVIEW



## Awards and highlights



#1 tourist attraction in Melbourne by TripAdvisor

235,000

people were delighted by *Lightscape*

40,000

students participated in learning programs

160

wild collected taxa introduced at Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens

29,000

State Botanical Collection specimens databased

16

rare or threatened species collected and banked into our Seedbank

1,741,064

people visited both Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens



critically endangered *Caladenia robinsonii* (Frankston Spider-orchid) planted as part of our Orchid Conservation Program



opened the new 'City Gate' at Melbourne Gardens



won the Communication Design Award at the Victorian Premier's Design Awards



signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation



assembled the most comprehensive 'tree of life' ever together with 279 scientists around the globe

# Vision, Mission and Objectives





## Our Vision

**Life is sustained and enriched by plants.**

Our vision is a flourishing community and healthy planet, sustained and enriched by plants. Through iconic landscapes, horticultural excellence, world-leading engagement programs and scientific eminence, we will make an enduring contribution to this vision. Plants, along with fungi and algae, are fundamental to life on Earth. They provide the air we breathe, the food we eat, many of the medicines that heal us, and habitat and shelter for our planet's wildlife. They give our lives meaning and inspiration. We prosper and our planet benefits when we understand, appreciate and protect plants for their life-giving qualities. The actions we all take should be based on our knowledge and respect for plants and the natural world.

## Our Mission

**Safeguarding plants for the wellbeing of people and the planet.**

Our mission underscores our commitment to evidence-based social, scientific, educational and economic benefit for the state. In this way, we are an influencer, communicator, collaborator, and catalyst for behavioural change, both within Victoria and beyond, through our extensive international networks.



## Our Charter

### **Under the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991 (the Act)*, the objectives of our organisation are:**

- To conserve, protect and improve the Botanic Gardens and managed land and their collections of living plants
- To increase public knowledge and awareness of plants and plant communities
- To conserve and enhance the State Botanical Collection and National Herbarium of Victoria
- To provide for the use of the Botanic Gardens for education, public enjoyment and tourism
- To provide for the use of the State Botanical Collection or plants or plant specimens at the Botanic Gardens or managed land for scientific or reference purposes, consistent with accepted international practice
- To provide for the carrying out of and contribution to research into biodiversity and the conservation of biodiversity

## Our Organisational Culture

Organisational culture arises from the shared beliefs, behavioural expectations and practices that govern how people approach their work and interact with each other. At Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, we're clear about the culture we wish to have, and this is reflected through our four values, which underpin the way we act and behave:

**Creative** – we are inventive and enthusiastic. Our curiosity allows us to find considered solutions to challenges. We use our resources wisely and draw upon our collective intelligence to answer questions. We have a joyful, positive and respectful approach that is expressed with a good sense of humour. Our inclusive and engaging style helps us to learn and share our knowledge in new and interesting ways.

**Open** – we make time to listen, learn and be clear. To help us achieve our vision we listen to each other and the community. We are friendly and respectful of different perspectives. We solve problems together because supporting and learning from each other results in better work. We share our knowledge because it helps people inside and outside our organisation to understand the importance of safeguarding plants for the wellbeing of people and the planet.

**Brave** – we have the courage to change things. We have the confidence to challenge established ways of thinking if it improves our collective understanding of plants. We embrace our responsibility to protect plants and biodiversity. We have the courage to try new things, and we help each other as we make these changes. We are positive, so we turn challenges into opportunities. We lead the way to inspire confidence and enthusiasm in others.

**Remarkable** – we leave a lasting impression. We create experiences and special places that help everyone to learn and see the world differently. Whether our actions are big or small, they inspire people to think and act. We seek out knowledge and apply our learning because we believe in the importance of plants and our planet. We do things that are different and exciting if they help us achieve our vision. We are proud of our past and passionate about our future.

## Our Organisational Performance

We recognise that a great organisational achievement is supported by a number of underlying elements, all of which influence how we perform as an organisation. These include:

- A clear strategy and goals so our people can immediately see and understand what Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is aiming to achieve
- Appropriate planning frameworks and mechanisms that are inclusive of staff, ensuring our people influence and contribute to the future direction of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- Strong systems and processes to support our people to be their best
- Empowering leadership skills and behaviours that engage and involve people



# Our Organisation

## Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

### Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

Established in 1846, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (Melbourne Gardens) has been an iconic Victorian attraction for 177 years. This heritage-listed landscape is loved by generations of Victorians, as well as visitors from interstate and overseas.

Located less than 3km from the CBD, Melbourne Gardens is an important green sanctuary and resource for learning, conservation, science, and horticulture. The site extends over 38 hectares and houses a collection of 7,500 plant species from around the world and Australia, including many that are rare or threatened in the wild. It is also home to more than 8,000 trees, some that have stood since before the Gardens were established, and many of which are mature, providing a unique and important tree Collection for the State.

Within Melbourne Gardens can also be found the National Herbarium of Victoria, the ark for Victoria's flora, where scientific laboratories and the Victorian Conservation Seedbank are based, together with the irreplaceable State Botanical Collection. Here the science division works to further our knowledge of plant life and how to conserve it.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is also the proud steward of the Melbourne Observatory site, established in 1862 to map the southern skies for the first time and serve as a scientific research institution for Melbourne. The Observatory closed its working operations in 1945 and is now opened for tours and research purposes.



## Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne (Cranbourne Gardens) is a 363-hectare site in the burgeoning south-east of Melbourne offering both a natural bushland experience alongside the Australian Garden, an award-winning, contemporary botanic garden celebrating the beauty and diversity of Australian landscapes and flora, and featuring more than 100,000 plants representing 1,900 different taxa.

Approximately two-thirds of the Cranbourne Gardens is high conservation value vegetation with more than 450 indigenous plant species found in the bushland areas. Parts of the bushland provide important social amenity to the growing surrounding population through 10km of walking tracks, 6km of cycling tracks, a lookout tower, picturesque shelters, barbecues and playgrounds whilst other areas are actively managed as a conservation zone.

Through pest plant and animal management, fire management, and flora and fauna species conservation programs, we are committed to protecting and enhancing the natural values of this increasingly vital piece of remnant vegetation.



## Scientific research

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is the Victorian Government's primary centre for botanical studies, including plant identification, systematics, classification and bioinformatics. Research areas encompass biodiversity, classification, evolution, genomics, biogeography, molecular systematics, conservation, and horticulture.

The Board of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is custodian to the irreplaceable State Botanical Collection, Australia's largest and richest herbarium collection, founded in 1853 and housed in the National Herbarium of Victoria at Melbourne Gardens. This Collection is an invaluable resource of approximately 1.5 million dried specimens of plants, fungi and algae from across Australia and from abroad.

Historically significant, the State Botanical Collection is one of the world's premier resources for scientific research. It is used by the global scientific community and by the horticultural and biosecurity industries, providing data on climate change and the environmental health of Victoria, for enhanced biodiversity, improved agriculture, and biopharma innovation.

The State Botanical Collection contains the oldest and most comprehensive botanical library in Australia, which includes a varied and valuable collection of botanical art. Sitting alongside the State Botanical Collection is the Victorian Conservation Seedbank, an 'insurance policy' against extinction for some of Victoria's rarest and most threatened plant species.



### Engagement

Three-time winner of the best Major Tourism Attraction category for the Victorian Tourism Industry Awards, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria welcomes almost 2 million visitors across our two sites each year. Our programs and events attract a diverse range of visitors through innovative engagement programs that promote inclusive nature-based experiences for individuals and community wellbeing. With programming throughout the year such as *Lightscape*, our flagship winter program, and our regular learning, creative, interpretation and tourism programs, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to focus our engagement on creating a deepened connection with, understanding of, and care for nature.

### Governance

The Royal Botanic Gardens Board is a statutory authority established under the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991*. The *Royal Botanic Gardens Regulations 2014* make provision for the care, protection, management and improvement of the Melbourne Gardens, the Cranbourne Gardens and the National Herbarium of Victoria. As the current Regulations sunset in October 2024, new Regulations will come into force in late 2024.

The responsible Ministers for the period from 1 July 2023 to 1 October 2023 were Minister for Environment the Hon Ingrid Stitt MP and from 2 October 2023 to 30 June 2024 S the Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos.

The Board comprises a maximum of seven members, including a Chair and a Deputy Chair, who are appointed by the Governor-in-Council on the recommendation of the Minister. Appointed Board members have a diversity of knowledge and expertise in the fields of financial and business management, science, law, tourism, architecture, the disability sector and marketing. The members are appointed for a term not exceeding four years but are eligible for re-appointment. A quorum of the Board is four members.

The Board oversees the governance of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and may delegate its functions and powers to a committee of the Board, the Director and Chief Executive, any of the Board's members, or any of its employees. The Director and Chief Executive has responsibility for the day-to-day management and control of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. A new Board term commenced on 1 October 2023. We wish to express our grateful thanks to those Board members who left the Board during the reporting period.



## Board Members 1 October 2023 – 30 June 2024



**Penny Fowler AM GAICD, BBus**  
*Chair – Appointed 1 October 2023*  
*First Appointed to the Board 8 April 2014*

Previously Deputy Chair (appointed 9 April 2016, reappointed 9 April 2020), and Board Member (appointed 8 April 2014, reappointed 9 April 2020), Penny Fowler has a Bachelor of Business (Marketing) and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a CEW member. She has also been a member of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria since 2014 and is currently the Chair. She is also Chair of the Herald and Weekly Times and the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal. In addition, Penny is also Chair of The National Portrait Gallery, a board member of Tourism Australia, Tech Mahindra and is on the Advisory Boards of Visy and the Bank of Melbourne Foundation.



**Jason Hay MBA, GAICD**  
*Deputy Chair – Appointed 1 October 2023*

Jason Hay is Regional Manager at ISPT, a property fund management company. He is also a local School Councillor. Jason previously held senior management positions with Coles Australia, including National Property Manager – Coles Express and Portfolio Manager of Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. Prior to that he spent time working in London for EA Shaw Chartered Surveyors and Foxtons. Jason was previously Partnerships Director and board member at GLOBE (Gay and Lesbian Organisation of Business and Enterprise) and a committee member of Melbourne Frontrunners Running Club (an international LGBTIQ+ running club). He holds a Master of Business Administration (Executive) and Certificate IV in Real Estate and has completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course.



**Damian Holmes AILA, RLA**  
*Appointed 1 October 2023*

Damian Holmes is Chief Technical Officer at ASPECT Studios, an international design practice. He is also founder and editor of the World Landscape Architecture website. Damian has extensive experience as a Registered Landscape Architect including previous roles in DLC and BAU, both based in Shanghai, China, and UMA, based in Calgary, Canada. He is a former member of the International Federation of Landscape Architects' Advisory Circle and was a sessional tutor at RMIT University. Damian holds a Master of Landscape Architecture, a Postgraduate Diploma in Urban Design and Planning (Landscape Architecture), a Bachelor of Applied Science (Horticulture) and is a member of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.



**Peter Langkamp OAM, PhD, FAICD**  
*Appointed 1 October 2023*

Peter Langkamp is Chair of The Disability Trust and of ermha365 and OC Connections (both subsidiary entities specialising in mental health and disability service provision). He is a member of the General Advisory Standing Committee of .au Domain Administration Limited. He is also a non-executive director of Residential Care Rights 'Elder Rights Advocacy' and has more than 15 years' experience as a non-executive director, having previously served on the boards of Karingal St Laurence 'genU', Wellways, Forticom Group, Carers Australia and Yooralla, where he also served as President and Chair respectively. Peter has significant executive level experience with prior CEO and senior executive roles with Callista Software Services, Loyalty Pacific 'FlyBuys', Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, Accenture, National Disability Insurance Agency, Axiom, NRMA, Shell Australia and NAB. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Agriculture Science, Bachelor of Agriculture Science and Graduate Diploma in Accounting and Finance and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



**Felicia Mariani GAICD**  
*Appointed 1 October 2023*

Felicia Mariani is Chief Executive Officer and Company Secretary of the Victorian Tourism Industry Council. She is also a non-executive director of the Australian Tourism Industry Council and RSPCA Tasmania. Felicia has a strong background in tourism and marketing with prior roles, including Director of Marketing at Tourism Victoria, Managing Director at Australian Tourism Industry Council, Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Tasmania and General Manager, Tourism Sydney. She was previously a non-executive director of the Monash Gallery of Art and Cultural Attractions of Australia. Felicia has completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course and is a member of the Australian Marketing Institute.



**Arianne Rose BSc LLB, GCertFinPlanning, FAICD**  
*Appointed 1 October 2023*

Arianne Rose was Chairperson of the Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council from 2018 to 2022, board member 2016 to 2018, and was previously a non-executive director of Canopy nature-based solutions, Greening Australia, the Architects Registration Board of Victoria and Melbourne Polytechnic. She is currently a member of the Architects Registration Board of Victoria Tribunal Panel. Arianne holds extensive experience in law and governance, having held company secretary and general counsel roles with VicTrack and Bopple Management Limited. She also holds a Graduate Certificate in Financial Planning, a Bachelor of Law and a Bachelor of Science and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



**Christine Wyatt MEnvS, BRTP (Hons), GAICD**  
*Appointed to the Board 30 November 2021*

Christine Wyatt is an independent adviser and non-executive director with substantial corporate and public sector executive leadership and expertise in urban planning, environmental management, infrastructure delivery and governance. She is currently the Deputy Chair of the Suburban Rail Loop Authority and Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation, and is a Board member of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority. Previously, Christine held the position of Deputy Secretary Planning with two Victorian State Government departments. Before joining the public service, she was a senior executive leading planning and environmental services with global consulting engineering firms, working with public and private organisations across Australia and internationally. Christine holds a Masters of Environmental Studies and a Bachelor of Town and Regional Planning, both from the University of Melbourne. She is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

## Board Members 1 July 2023 – 30 September 2023

Chris Trotman (Chair) B.Bus (Acc),  
Grad Dip Ed (Health) MoE, GAICD

Penny Fowler AM GAICD, BBus  
(Deputy Chair)  
Please refer to details on the previous  
page.

Prof Tony Bacic FAA

Gillian Hund OAM B Ed, Grad Dip  
Spec Ed, MA Social Investment and  
Philanthropy

Christine Wyatt MEnvS, BRTP  
(Hons), GAICD

Please refer to details above.

## Board Attendance 2023–24

The Board meets formally at least six times a year or more frequently as required.

Board member	Number of meetings eligible	Number of meetings attended
Penny Fowler (Chair)	9	8
Jason Hay (Deputy Chair)	7	7
Damian Holmes	7	7
Peter Langkamp	7	7
Felicia Mariani	7	7
Arianne Rose	7	7
Christine Wyatt	9	9
Chris Trotman (immediate Past Chair)	2	2
Tony Bacic	2	2
Gillian Hund	2	2

## Board Committees

Board members participate in one or more Board Committees. During the 2023–24 year, the following Committees were in place:

- Audit, Risk and Finance Committee
- Remuneration Committee

### Audit Risk and Finance Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent oversight and monitoring of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's performance, risk management, internal controls and compliance framework, and its reporting obligations under the *Financial Management Act 1994*. It oversees the financial reporting process and financial performance of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. The Committee consists of six members, appointed by the Board, including four Board members and one external member.

**Members:** Christine Wyatt (Committee Chair), Peter Langkamp, Felicia Mariani, Arianne Rose, Penny Fowler (Ex-officio) and Chris Russell (Ex-officio).

**External Member:**  
Rochelle Wrigglesworth.

### Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee is responsible for advising the Board that Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria complies with executive remuneration requirements, setting the Director and Chief Executive's performance measures and reviewing the performance of the Director and Chief Executive. The Remuneration Committee consists of three members, appointed by the Board.

**Members:** Jason Hay (Committee Chair), Damian Holmes and Penny Fowler.



## Executive Team as at 30 June 2024

### Director and Chief Executive

**Chris Russell BSc (Hons), Grad Dip Land Rehab**

Responsible for leadership and overall management of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, including achievement of horticulture, land management and science objectives as well as the development and delivery of stimulating and impactful programs and events, major projects, fundraising and financial management. Chris was Acting Director and Chief Executive from 5 February 2024 before assuming the role on 1 July 2024. Prior to this he was Executive Director of Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne from 2001, overseeing the development of the award-winning Australian Garden and sustainable management of conservation areas. He is a current Board member of Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand Ltd (BGANZ) and previous Deputy Chair of Casey Cardinia Tourism.

### Executive Director Science

**Professor David Cantrill PhD, BSc (Hons)**

Responsible for directing research into plant biodiversity, systematics, and conservation and management of the State Botanical Collection. This entails statutory responsibility under the *Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Act 1991* and the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981*. Professor Cantrill worked as a senior research scientist in Europe for 15 years, first for the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge and later at the Swedish Museum of Natural History in Stockholm. He has published more than 130 scientific articles; is Chief Editor for *Grana*, an international journal for pollen studies; and sits on several international editorial and scientific advisory boards. His research interests focus on integrating information from fossil and living floras to understanding the origins of patterns of diversity in the southern hemisphere. He holds an honorary professorship with the School of BioSciences at The University of Melbourne. Professor Cantrill has been Executive Director Science since 2006.

### Acting Executive Director Corporate Services

**Alice Molan BSc, Grad Cert (cross-sector partnerships)**

Alice is currently responsible for the Corporate Services functions across Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, including Finance, Governance, IS and People and Culture, as well as overseeing the Gardens Development, Marketing and Communications teams and retail business, and providing secretariat support to the Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation. With more than 15 years' experience leading teams in environmental not-for-profits and in major cultural institutions in Melbourne, Alice brings a wealth of experience across fundraising, sponsorship, marketing, stakeholder engagement, and business development. Alice is passionate about connecting people to the valuable work of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria through impactful marketing and meaningful relationships. Alice has been Acting Executive Director Corporate Services since January 2024.



**Acting Executive Director Melbourne Gardens**

**Clare Hart BA, Grad Cert Arb, Cert IV Hort**

Clare is currently responsible for the leadership, development and management of Melbourne Gardens, including horticultural planning and operations, landscape design, management and development of living plant collections, and nursery operations. Clare is also responsible for arboriculture and management of site facilities and infrastructure and provides strategic direction for the implementation of Master Plan, Integrated Water Management and Landscape Succession projects at Melbourne Gardens and leads the secretariat for the Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens. She has been working in the industry for the past 27 years, in areas of horticulture and arboriculture including nursery management, garden design, botanic gardens, local government, and horticulture media. Her experience extends to strategic and operational management of public open space including parks, botanic gardens and conservation areas. Clare has been Acting Executive Director Melbourne Gardens since April 2024.

**Acting Executive Director Cranbourne Gardens**

**Kevin Alexander Cert of Business Management, BPark Management, MPolitics and Policy**

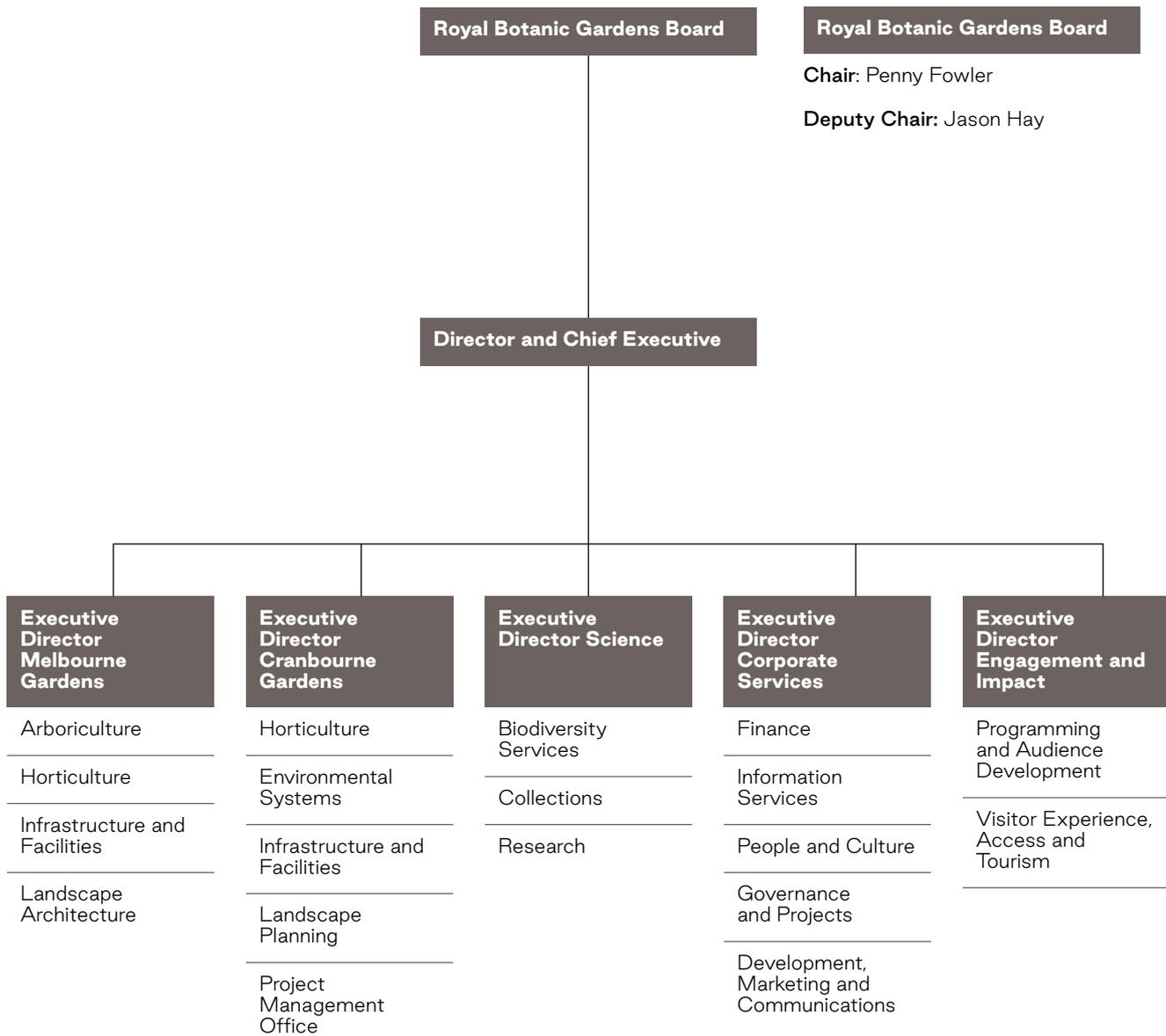
Currently responsible for the leadership, management and operation of Cranbourne Gardens; encompassing the Australian Garden and Conservation Zone in accordance with the sites Master Plan via traditional horticultural planning and operations, natural areas research and management, establishment of conservation horticulture outreach programs, and the ongoing maintenance and renewal of Cranbourne Gardens’ built assets. Kevin is also responsible for delivering the organisation’s major capital works program, strategic input into land-use planning and key relationship management across the outer southeast region. Prior to joining Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Kevin had 20 years’ experience in open space management and infrastructure service delivery management within Victorian Local Government authorities. Kevin holds a Certificate of Business Management, a Bachelor of Park Management and a Masters in Politics and Policy. Kevin has been Acting Executive Director Cranbourne Gardens since February 2024.

**Acting Executive Director Engagement and Impact**

**Émer Harrington**

Émer Harrington is Acting Executive Director, Engagement and Impact, leading the Programming and Audience Development and Visitor Experience Access and Tourism teams in creating, curating and delivering innovative and impactful programs and experiences for diverse audiences at Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens. Émer oversees the commissioning, programming and delivery of programs and events with independent and established creatives, companies and festivals and scientific and environmental experts from around the world together with celebrating and profiling the work of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and its expert staff. With a career spanning 35 years, Émer is a highly respected leader, collaborator and change agent in Melbourne’s cultural sector. Many of her projects have attracted significant philanthropic, corporate and government funding, highly successful commercial outcomes, excellent evaluation results and won a number of awards, most recently the 2023 Victorian Premier’s Design Awards Communication Category for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria’s new wayfinding, digital mapping and interpretation system. Émer has been Acting Executive Director Engagement and Impact since April 2024.

## Organisational Structure





# Our Performance



## Visitation

Visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne and Cranbourne			
Sites	Target	Actual	Comments
Total (BP3)	2.3 million	1,741,064	Visitation to both Gardens was impacted by a soft international tourism market coupled with unseasonal weather in spring. In addition, Cranbourne Gardens saw extensive roadworks at both entrances that significantly affected access for over half the year.

## State Botanical Collection

Specimens curated in the State Botanical Collection		
Target	Actual	Comments
20,000	29,120	This target was exceeded with support from philanthropic sector to curate the Global Collection.



## Performance Measures (Annual Business Plan)

Performance Measures	Unit of Measures	Target	Actual
Visitors to Melbourne Gardens	Number	1,915,000	1,516,025
Visitors to Cranbourne Gardens	Number	385,000	225,039
Total visitors	Number	2,300,000	1,741,064
Participation in Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria-led programs, tours, events and interpretation	Number	310,000	605,000
Increase in the number of curated specimens in State Botanical Collection	Number	20,000	29,120
Visitors to RBG website and social media followers (combined figure)	Number	699,000	769,000
Increase in climate-suited taxa in Melbourne Gardens and Cranbourne Gardens comprising a majority of wild provenance	Number	60, of which 75% are of wild provenance	120 climate suited taxa, 75% wild collected for living collections at MG  70 wild collected taxa in living collections at CG
Increase in tied and untied revenue through donations and corporate partnerships	Amount	\$700,000	\$425,000
Increase in the usage of eFlora products	Number	6,798 for HortFlora 108,694 for VicFlora	21,344 for HortFlora 277,330 for VicFlora
Increase in citations to peer reviewed publications	Number	2,895	2,895
Increase science communications across diverse platforms from 142 unique items	Percentage	10% increase	160 science articles across mainstream and digital media
Development and implementation of Sustainability Framework	Number	Seven FRD24D environmental impact indicators	All seven FRD24D office-based and non-office based environmental impact indicators
Increase Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's contribution to the protection of Victoria's biodiversity	Increase banked threatened species		Increased banked threatened species by 10 taxa

# Our Goals and Achievements



## Pillar 1

### People – Engaged communities

Over the next three years, we will seek to reach a broader, more diverse range of visitors through innovative engagement programs that promote inclusive nature-based experiences for individual and community wellbeing. We will focus our efforts on creating a deepened connection with and understanding of nature, and on advocating for the role individuals play in acting for nature (Goal 1, Victorians value nature, *Biodiversity 2037*, Department of Environment Land Water and Planning).

Through our Diversity, Inclusion and Access Plan and first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, we commit to fostering an accessible and socially inclusive environment for and with the community. We will work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to foster reconciliation, respect and understanding, particularly in relation to Aboriginal people’s deep cultural connection with and knowledge of plants and the living environment.

To deliver on our goal of engaging with communities, over the next three years we will:

- Invest more in our digital presence and strategy to reach and attract new audiences
- Expand our range of nature and science-based programs
- Be inclusive and meet the needs of a wide and diverse cross-section of the community



### **Lightscape**

*Lightscape 2023* built on the success of its first year with more than 235,000 audience members traversing a 2.2km journey of light and sound through the iconic Melbourne Gardens. Featuring luminous walkways and vistas, vibrant bursts of colour and large-scale installations, the event also provided the opportunity to amplify First Peoples culture, art and storytelling by presenting, in light form, the work of a number of First Peoples artists. *Lightscape* also provided important revenue generation and growth of visitation and awareness of the Gardens to new audiences.

*The Royal Botanic Gardens are a major asset to Victoria and the current Lightscape event highlights their extraordinary value. The dazzling display demonstrates how we are gradually encompassing the rich and diverse culture of Indigenous Australians. Letter to the Editor, The Age, August 2023.*



### Social and Cultural Impact

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to develop, curate and offer a range of free and low-cost programs to Victorians and 1,741,064 visitors; including live, self-guided, print, audio and digital programs.

Regular wellbeing and nature focused programs including Forest Therapy, Harp Meditations, Botany Bootcamp, as well as First Peoples NAIDOC and Bush Playgroup programs at Cranbourne Gardens provided audiences with opportunities to pause, heal and learn while families engaged in a celebration of all things nature play at regular school holidays programs, *Bees* by Polyglot Theatre at the Woodland Picnic Area Nature Playground and the return of the ever popular families program *Botanica, A Village among the Oaks* in Melbourne Gardens. Guided tours of the Melbourne Observatory returned with the very popular *Stellar Nights* as well as regular staff and volunteer-led tours and programs.

Creative programs included regular summer staples, Australian Shakespeare Company's and Moonlight Cinema's seasons. The Metro Tunnel Creative Program continued to present artworks on a range of hoardings throughout the city by three artists commissioned to create artwork in response to the State Botanical Collection and included cyanotype photographic workshops with featured artist, Diana Wells.

The 2023 National Science Week partnership program with Royal Society of Victoria and Inspiring Victoria included a presentation on Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's bushfire recovery work.

With support from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's Melbourne Strategic Assessment program, the Southern Brown Bandicoot Outreach Officer continued to support engagement with bandicoot communities throughout the Local Government Areas of City of Casey and Cardinia. Engagement activities included a range of face-to-face presentations at local school and community groups as well as specially organised events such as tree-planting days. Online engagement materials were developed and specialist webinars were hosted addressing issues such as the impact of baiting on bandicoot populations. Across this year the Southern Brown Bandicoot Officer engaged more than 4,000 community members.

A feature event for developing Southern Brown Bandicoot awareness was the Big Bandicoot Backyard families program where more than 1,800 people engaged with the giant bandicoot sculpture, enjoyed bandicoot themed performances from artists, *Born in a Taxi*, and interactive guided walks and art and science activities.



### Partnerships

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria worked in partnership with Zoos Victoria to release 28 Pookila at Cranbourne Gardens, in a joint effort to protect the endangered native mouse species. The Pookilas were specially bred at Melbourne Zoo and Moonlit Sanctuary as part of the Victorian Pookila Conservation Breeding and Reintroduction Program. The Victorian Pookila Conservation Breeding and Reintroduction Program is a joint project between the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Gippsland Water, Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, and our partners in Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to partner with global sustainable development agency ARUP. The partnership developed a new program with the Shared Value Project called Symbiosis: Learning from and designing with Nature. This half day workshop used mycellium's potential as a building material to facilitate discussion and thinking of nature as a stakeholder in corporate decision making. In addition, the partnership presented Building for a Nature-Positive Future, a panel presentation featuring ARUP and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria experts as part of Melbourne Design Week,

Also featured in Melbourne Design Week was Animal Crossings a guided tour of the Road Ecology actions in place at Cranbourne Gardens. It was led by conservation experts and introduced the emerging field of designing roads for wildlife.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to program work in partnership with local festivals, including two science themed events for Victorian Seniors Festival and the highly successful Great Local Picnic, one of the feature events of the Sustainable Living Festival celebrating local food, sustainability and zero waste. Ori-GIN Story: The Garden in Your Glass was also part of Melbourne Food and Wine Festival.



### **Learning and Participation**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria welcomed more than 40,000 students to its two Gardens including more than 800 students through the Nurtured by Nature Access Fund, 200 through the school partnership program and 25,000 through our general suite of cultural, science, geography and nature-play excursion programs. Our education programs are supported by key education partners, the Department of Education and the Victorian Catholic Education Authority.

This year, our partnership with the Department of Education expanded to include funding for the new Resilience by Nature: Health and Wellbeing project, a program designed to support student leadership and health and wellbeing through full-day conferences at Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens, as well as the development of a range of teaching and learning resources.

We also continued to deliver upon the Department of Education funded Victorian Challenge and Enrichment Series program through offering our Designed by Nature program to more than 1,000 high-ability students across the year. This included onsite visits to Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens, as well as outreach programs at regional botanic gardens and online webinars.

The Raising Rarity Schools Outreach pilot program was able to expand to include six schools, including a regional hub in Gippsland thanks to support from the Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation. All schools are growing a locally threatened species and will be collecting seed across the year to help support the conservation of some of our most threatened plant species.

The Growing Beyond Earth Australia pilot program that launched in 2023 was also expanded in 2024 with seven schools now taking part in the Australian program. As part of the program students test different species under varying growing conditions to assess their potential for being grown in space. This program is a collaboration between Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, the Latrobe Institute for Agriculture and Food, Melbourne Archdiocese of Catholic Schools and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Florida, USA.



### **Learning Outreach to Regional Botanic Gardens**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to deliver its regional outreach learning program through the ongoing support from the Department of Education and Marian & E.H. Flack Trust. The program utilised the extensive network of gardens across the state to bring science, STEM and sustainability programs to students in regional areas. Across the year, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria delivered programs for regional students in Geelong, Ballarat, Sale, Kyneton and Bendigo Botanic Gardens. These programs reduced the geographical and financial barriers regional students often face to participation in extension specialist learning opportunities.

### **Access and Inclusivity**

More than 1,500 students were provided with philanthropically funded financial assistance to experience workshops at both Gardens, as well as four school partnership programs, providing our schools with the opportunity to participate in term-long, deep-dive nature-based programs both on-site at the Gardens and in their own schools, facilitated by the Garden's Learning Facilitators.

Visual stories and relaxed sessions were also incorporated into the presentations for *Botanica*, *Bees* and *Lightscape* with several community outreach and service organisation groups being hosted at *Lightscape*.



## Pillar 2

### Place – Vibrant places

Over the next three years, we will seek to sustainably increase new and repeat visitation to both our sites by investing in the activation and improvement of our iconic landscapes. Conditional on the current COVID-19 environment, we will pursue a program of events to engage the general public through creative site interpretation, public talks and exhibitions, and in improvements to visitor amenity and interpretation.

As a world-leading botanic organisation, we pledge to maintain and enhance our beautiful displays and gardens so that there is always something new to stimulate the senses and delight domestic and international visitors.

To deliver on our goal of creating vibrant places, over the next three years we will:

- Create opportunities to drive repeat visitation at both gardens in order to promote deeper community engagement and learning
- Invest in and showcase our contemporary and heritage landscapes, buildings, collections and their interpretation to support increased visitation and positive visitor experience
- Expand our strategically aligned partnerships with the tourism, health and cultural sectors and with the community more broadly



### **Victorian Premier's Design Award (Communication Design)**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's new wayfinding and interpretation system designed to the International Indigenous Design Charter and introduced in 2022–23 won the Communication Design category at the prestigious 2023 Victorian Premier's Design Awards.

This new system increased site legibility and connection to place and Country for visitors to both Gardens, with more than 45,000 people accessing the digital interactive map across both sites, and almost 12,000 digging deeper into the stories of the Living Collections across the year.

The project also received two merit awards at the 2023 Australian Graphic Design Association Awards and is included in an Australian Research Council research project evaluating the application of the International Indigenous Design Charter across various design projects.

Digital content continued to share the stories of the Gardens with more than 5,500 visitors enjoying Sonica Botanica and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria with Storytowns, an audio guide travel app on the Metro Trains series, with Melbourne Gardens being a featured location for South Yarra Station and Cranbourne Gardens featuring for Cranbourne Station.



### **Tourism**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to be a sought-after destination for tourists with the Gardens experiencing an increase in tourist interest and program participation.

In addition to increased attendances, we have continued to develop collaborative partnerships with organisations such as The Shrine of Remembrance and The Terrace Cafe to create engaging tourism experiences. We have also worked closely with cruise companies resulting in 3,000 cruise customers taking walking tours at Melbourne Gardens this year. Staff also attended the Australian Tourism Exchange which resulted in renewed relationships with inbound tour operators.



The new City Gate entrance. Funded by Lady Primrose Potter, pictured here with Andrew Laidlaw Landscape Architect

### Major Capital Projects

This year's capital works program delivered new garden precincts, boardwalks, entrance gates and signage across both sites. Heritage buildings have been restored at Melbourne Gardens, and a key public building expanded at Cranbourne Gardens.

In Melbourne Gardens the Australian Drylands project stage one has been completed and has elevated this southeast corner of the Gardens to showcase a new climate suited palette of plants and added a richness to the story telling of plant adaption in a changing landscape. This space responds to the impacts that climate change is having on the Australian landscape and includes themed gathering spaces amongst the trees. This project was funded by the Edward Wilson Trust and donors Rosemary Simpson and Jane Edmansson.

Adjacent to the Australian Drylands is the Meadows project, a research project developed in partnership with the University of Melbourne. This project has seen the establishment of three native flowering meadows with each meadow using a different planting method as well as creating a natural exclusion zone around mature eucalypts and adds to the overall amenity of Eucalypt Lawn. The Meadow project was made possible through the support of Mrs Joan Darling and James and Annabel Montgomery.

At the opposite corner of Melbourne Gardens sits the new City Gate entrance. Funded by Lady Primrose Potter shown in picture above with Andrew Laidlaw, the entrance features striking new steel gates and feature landscaping that make a strong statement for this important connection between the Gardens and the Kings Domain parkland.

Several important heritage buildings within Melbourne Gardens have been restored, in particular the Rose Pavilion underwent a full heritage restoration thanks to the Portland House Foundation. In addition, remedial works were undertaken across a range of other heritage-listed buildings including the Herbarium.

Cranbourne Garden's Eco-tourism program concluded this year. The final projects delivered under this program included the new western entrance which features a sealed road, signage and automatic gate to better welcome visitors, and a wildlife underpass to protect our native fauna. New boardwalks were built in the Stringybark and Gondwana gardens, and the Ian Potter Lakeside Kiosk was extended to create a new learning program space and a sheltered dining area for kiosk patrons.



### **New Partnership and Business Opportunities**

Throughout the year, the Garden's successfully renewed several key sponsorships. Notable renewals include Red Energy's major sponsorship of *Lightscape*, the official partnership with Maxwell & Williams, a silver sponsorship with Interflora, and a bronze sponsorship with Neutrog. Additionally, Melbourne Airport joined as a new partner, sponsoring educational programs for schools in lower socio-economic areas.



### Pillar 3

#### Plants – Sharing plant knowledge and discovery

Over the next three years, we will focus our efforts on the most urgent conservation needs of Australia's rare and threatened flora. We will continue to support plant salvage work via scientific field work to aid conservation of rare and threatened plants.

To maintain the organisation's reputation as one of the world's leading botanical institutions and centre of plant knowledge, we will support effective research translation and communications, so that key discoveries, research and programs can be promoted to scientific, government and public audiences.

We will improve the way we conduct, support and communicate botanical research and its outcomes. In particular, we will increase access to information held within the corpus of the State Botanical Collection so that it remains the authoritative resource for information and identification of the flora of Victoria through curation, digitisation, databasing and provision of electronic and controlled access maintenance of online floras (*VicFlora*, *HortFlora*) – including any holdings of cultural significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To deliver on our goal of sharing plant knowledge and discovery, over the next three years we will:

- Improve how we translate our research and expertise within the broader community, making Gardens' research more engaging and influential in society
- Expand Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's role as a catalyst and hub for plant biodiversity and conservation research
- Adopt innovative approaches to increase visitor engagement with the natural world

## Knowledge and discovery highlights



40

research papers were published



2,500

orchid seedlings were propagated and supplied for translocation back into nature



51%

of Victoria's threatened plants are protected in the Victorian Conservation Seedbank



11,626

specimens were mounted and prepared for digitisation



15,096

specimens were databased from the Global Collection



3,368

citations to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria scientific publications



35,000+

images now available through VicFlora



421

A user-friendly key for the identification of Victoria's 421 moss species was launched



277,330

unique sessions on VicFlora



Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Science was launched on both Instagram and X channels



796

items added to the library catalogue



104,631

pages contributed to Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL), the second largest contribution in Australia



12,333

of Ferdinand von Mueller's letters made available online via the von Mueller Correspondence Project website.



1,520

images added to Canto



150

curated library tours delivered to over 150 people



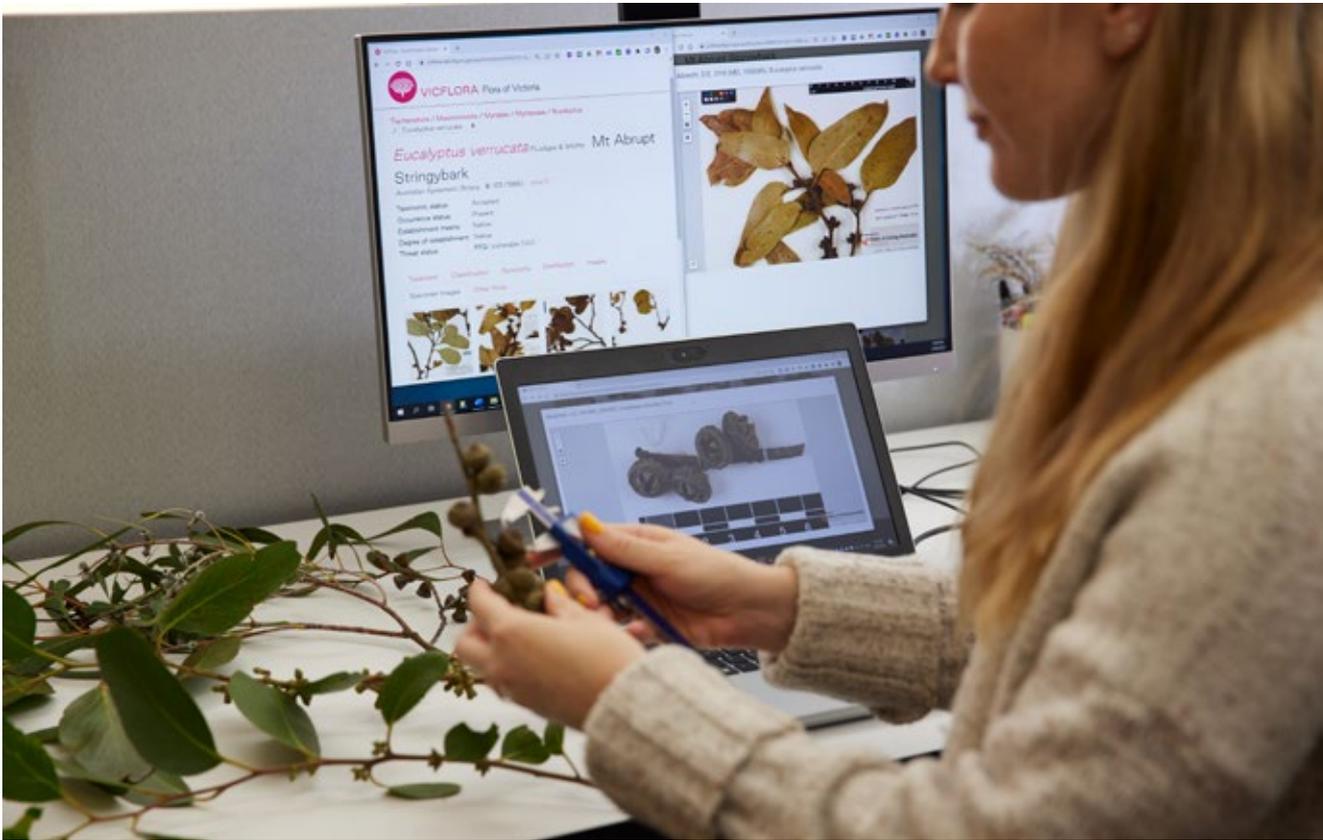
204

research visits hosted by the Collections Team



31

tours of the Collection delivered to 258 people



### Increase in use of VicFlora

VicFlora continues to increase species coverage, with the addition of interactive keys covering various plant groups, including a valuable and much-needed illustrated key to the moss species of Victoria. The addition of more than 1,500 images to the Flora has increased coverage to more than 35,000 images, reducing the number of taxa for which no images are available. Moreover, a grant-funded botanical art studentship resulted in the generation of 50 botanical plates illustrating 32 species of native Victorian liverworts. These have been integrated into the State Botanical Collection and digitised for upload to VicFlora, improving the hitherto poorly supported identification of this often-overlooked group of plants. Usage of VicFlora saw 277,330 sessions recorded over the 2023–24 financial year. This total was ahead of target and particularly respectable given the change in Google’s search algorithms that saw VicFlora disappear from that site for some months, causing organic user traffic to crash, picking up again after urgent remedial works to meet Google’s revised criteria.

### Application of Research

The depth and breadth of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria science continued to increase, reflecting the relevance and applicability of our work. Knowledge of biodiversity was increased by description of new species of peas, fungi, rhododendrons and tropical pitcher plants, and collaboration on global classifications of fungi and fungus-like taxa, and caesalpinoid legumes. Insights into pollination biology, germination requirements, and mycorrhizal associates of rare orchids informed practical efforts for their conservation. Studies of the phylogeography of dominant Australian plant groups provided insights into their evolutionary history of hybridisation and introgression (eudesmid eucalypts), and the biogeography of different regions across the continent (wattles). Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria also coordinated consideration of international proposals to conserve or reject names of fungi, along with assessment of lists of names for protection, in the lead up to the Nomenclature Section of the International Botanical Congress in Madrid, in June this year.

### Databasing the Global Collection

To allow greater access to the scientific and historically important information from the Global Collection (the non-Australian component of the State Botanical Collection), 15,096 specimens were databased this year. Over the past year, the project team have focused on databasing the non-Australian algae specimens that have been mounted and commenced work on the historically significant fungi from the Sonder herbarium.



### Mounting specimens

As the working tools of botanists, herbarium specimens need to withstand repeated handling and close inspection. To improve the accessibility of the herbarium collection, 8,607 plant, algae and fungi specimens were mounted by staff and volunteers this year. A variety of techniques are used to carefully conserve and protect the specimens so they can support scientific research for generations to come. As well as using traditional methods, Collections staff developed specialised methods to better conserve delicate slime mould, lichen, fungi and bryophyte collections.

### Genomics of Australian plants

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to lead this national collaborative project to develop genomics resources and capacity in the plant sciences research community with our research focused on genomics of *Lachnagrostis*, *Eremophila* and *Olearia*. At a finer scale, genetic data and tools are being used to inform work on the classification and conservation of eucalypts, grevilleas, daisies, wattles, grasses, *Teucrium* and *Ajuga*. A major highlight was the publication of the most comprehensive 'tree of life' of flowering plants in the world's most prestigious scientific journal, *Nature*. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria scientists contributed to a global team of 279 scientists, led by Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, which used 1.8 billion letters of genetic data from more than 9,500 species to give an unprecedented insight into flowering plant relationships and evolution.

### Understanding fungal diversity and function

Our mycologists and bioinformaticians have collaborated with scientists from the Arthur Rylah Institute for Biodiversity Research on a ground-breaking analysis of the soil microbiome across the state of Victoria. Over the past year, more than 100 sites were sampled, at two soil depths, and fungi and bacteria were assessed with a metabarcoding approach, using ribosomal DNA markers. Sequences were generated by the Australian Microbiome (AM) and resulted in 113 million fungal sequences and 44 million bacterial sequences. Bioinformatic analysis yielded 2,794 fungal species and 838 different types of bacteria. Some of the fungal sequences matched known mushroom species, but the majority were unknown species, probably of microfungi that are yet to be collected and described. The high number of potentially new species uncovered emphasises the utility of the metabarcoding approach for increasing understanding of diversity and improving management of the largely hidden fungal diversity of Victorian soils.



### **Advancing knowledge of fungal diversity and ecology**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria participated in the making of several films featuring fungi. Voice over about fungi was provided for the biopic *The Giants* that weaves together the life of environmental campaigner Bob Brown and the ecology of the giant trees of Tasmania. For the iMax film *Fungi Web of Life*, featuring Merlin Sheldrake 'on a quest to find an incredibly precious blue mushroom, against the backdrop of Tasmania's ancient Tarkine rainforest', Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria advised on the script and visited the set in the Tarkine to meet Sheldrake and assist with shot selection of fungi. This film, which has a global release, is narrated by Bjork and features amazing time lapse photography of fungi by Steve Axford. *Fungi Web of Life* has an accompanying set of six lesson plans created by Jess Pelow (Back to Earth Science inc.) with advice from Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and images by Axford. The plans guide exploration of the world of fungi through outdoor activities, scientific experiments, group simulations and creative activities. The plans align with the Next

Generation Science Standards (US), but the concepts are universal. These cinematic outreach activities are an opportunity to spread awareness of the diversity and ecological roles of fungi to a wide audience and introduce into general parlance the fungi-specific terminology of hyphae, mycelium and sporing body.



## Pillar 4

### Planet – Conservation action

Over the next three years, we will expand the role Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria plays in shaping how people value, perceive, and care for the environment and adapt to climate change. To do this, we will lead by example, especially in the area of environmental sustainability. We will continue with the growth of the Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens and share important knowledge that will allow botanic gardens around the world to develop strategies to adapt and protect their collections from this threat.

We are in the strong position to raise public awareness of the importance of conservation and environmental sustainability through innovative site interpretation, indoor and outdoor exhibitions, educational programs and major events. We will continue to develop communications and programs that lead to an understanding of the threats and consequences of loss of biodiversity (such as the loss of plant and fungi species, as well as the habitat of the Southern Brown Bandicoot and other wildlife) and foster a greater appreciation of the need to preserve natural habitats.

To deliver on our goal of conservation action, over the next three years we will:

- Develop, refine and communicate our strategic responses to major biodiversity and conservation matters (i.e. climate change, land use changes, invasive species and individual action)
- Improve and promote our approach and outcomes in environmental sustainability across all areas of the organisation
- Further extend our international support, capacity building and partnerships consistent with our mission (i.e. scientific and conservation collaboration with Timor Leste, Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens, contributions to Botanic Gardens Conservation International and the International Association of Botanic Gardens, 7th Global Botanic Gardens Congress in 2022)



### Leading beyond boundaries

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to hold the secretariat for the Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens (CCABG). The CCABG supports a global membership of 500 gardens and associated organisations and promotes the exchange of information and collaboration to facilitate landscape adaptation under climate change. The CCABG will continue to develop strong connections with Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

Melbourne Gardens Horticulture continues to exchange knowledge, information and plant material via three global conservation consortia: the Global Conservation Consortium for Cycads, Oaks and more recently Conifers. Horticulture staff co-chair the Australian chapter of the Global Conservation Consortia for Cycads and continue to achieve strong conservation objectives including listing Australian cycads on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

### Sustainability Outcomes

The Working Wetlands project continued to reduce the reliance on potable water through storm water capture and treatment. The recycled water offset for 2023–24 is 42%; 53 ML of stormwater was treated to support irrigation requirements for the Melbourne Gardens living plant collections.

The total volume of green waste recycled at Melbourne Gardens was approximately 4,700 m<sup>3</sup> and this converts to approximately 940 m<sup>3</sup> mulch produced on site, closing the loop on the need to purchase mulch and supporting biosecurity outcomes through the reduction of imported material.

Melbourne Gardens Nursery produced 7,662 tubes, including 790 for the Nature Fund project working with the Science team.

Melbourne Gardens fleet continues to transition to electric and improve our environmental footprint with the procurement of an electric sweeper.

### Landscape succession highlights

- The total number of unique taxa in Melbourne Gardens Living Collections is 7,426, with 52% now future climate suited
- The Australian Drylands landscape project contributed 343 new species, which were sourced and collected from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia
- Successful importation of exceptional seed (acorns) from North America included *Quercus emoryi*, *Quercus engelmannii*, *Quercus gravesii* and *Quercus dumosa*. All species were germinated at Melbourne Gardens Nursery to support Oak, North American Drylands and Grey Garden collections and excess stock distributed to Sydney, Adelaide and other Victorian botanic gardens to support *ex situ* conservation and metacollection outcomes
- Establishment of cycad metacollection with Montgomery Botanical Center, Florida and Botanic Gardens of Sydney



### **Victorian Conservation Seedbank**

The Seedbank team made collections of 16 rare or threatened species this year, exceeding the target of 10, along with a further four re-collections of species already held in insufficient quantities. The Seedbank now holds 900 taxa out of approximately 1,770 state and federally listed threatened species, and 1,526 taxa in total across 2,254 separate collections. In addition to this, the sporebank holds 31 fern species across 44 separate collections in our ultra-cold freezer. The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria orchid conservation program banked seed for more than 250 accessions from 36 species of orchid, while further germination trials and propagation were completed for 18 orchid species, generating important data along with plant material that will support any future conservation actions.

### **Seed research supporting conservation aims and traditional owners**

The processing of new seed collections saw germination testing completed for 30 new collections, as well as additional accession, including four manna gum seed collections made on Gunditjmarra Country with Windamara's Budj Bim Rangers and staff from Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. These collections will be held for long-term conservation of manna gum diversity in the Victorian Conservation Seedbank (VCS). A further existing 101 seedbank collections were re-tested over the past 12 months, helping to assess seed longevity in long-term storage, and to inform recollection intervals. Additional detailed research has been conducted to characterise the dormancy and germination requirements for a range of endangered species, including several species of *Viola* which show an extraordinary diversity of dormancy types, as well as a concerning decline in seed viability since collection. Some successful germination of several endangered *Grevillea* species was achieved, along with testing of the critically endangered *Leiocarpa gatesii* to generate

valuable conservation management data. While vital dormancy studies were made for 10 collections of the endangered Adamson's Blown grass (*Lachnagrostis adamsonii*) and other closely related taxa to result in a better understanding of seed ripening and the impact of seed storage conditions on germinability.



### **Conservation genetics supporting conservation actions**

The Conservation Genetics team made seven extended multi-day fieldtrips to collect samples for ongoing projects. Collections included 1,555 samples for the Nature Fund project across nine target taxa. This work was part of a broader Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria collaboration, involving the collection of seeds and cuttings from across the state to reduce the extinction risk of threatened flora. Field collections have resulted in the addition of 25 specimens to the State Botanical Collection. Results from genetic analyses are being used to assist on ground management activities as well as guiding sampling for *ex situ* collections, such as the VCS and the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria living collection conservation holdings. The team submitted 10 grant applications this year and were successful in gaining seven to date (more than \$750,000). Three additional reports were completed for the Bushfire Conservation Genetics project and two manuscripts from the Bushfire Conservation Genetics project have been submitted with more in preparation.

### **Showcasing the Collection**

Over the past year, the Science team have showcased the State Botanical Collection and Victorian Conservation Seedbank to more than 30 tour groups, helping promote and connect people with our Science and inspire them to action. The tour groups have included diverse audiences, including Victorian Traditional Owner natural resource management groups, librarians, museum staff, historians, artists, secondary and tertiary students, community groups and conference attendees.



### Living plant conservation collections

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Orchid conservation program led reintroductions of nearly 2,500 individual orchids, comprising the following critically endangered and endangered orchid species which were introduced back into the wild: 273 *Caladenia audasii*, 1,005 *Caladenia robinsonii*, 217 *Caladenia colorata*, 164 *Caladenia formosa*. Further, the program supplied program partners Nillumbik Shire and DEECA with 400 *Caladenia amoena* and Botanic Gardens of Sydney, Mount Annan with 400 critically endangered *Thelymitra adorata* for reintroduction programs. The *ex situ* living plant collection in the Orchid Conservation Program at Cranbourne currently holds 98 threatened species (either *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* or *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* listed).

Translocation demographic data was collected on more than 30 wild and translocated populations of endangered orchids to improve future management and translocations of threatened species under a changing climate. Genetic samples were collected for analysis in collaborations with Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and Botanic Gardens of Sydney geneticists for 10 species of endangered orchids, to inform future reintroductions. The program currently safeguards an *ex situ* living collection of more than 30,000 individuals and more than 200 species, including 87 species of state and nationally threatened orchid. The program lead scientist was awarded the Eureka Prize for Botanical excellence in August 2023 for her work in orchid conservation.

### Raising Rarity

The Raising Rarity team, in collaboration with the City of Melbourne and the University of Melbourne, developed a threatened plant living collection plan and selection tool, which was launched in late 2023, enabling greater uptake of rare and threatened species plantings as part of amenity horticulture.

# Our Supporters



## Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria

Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria was established in May 2001 to provide the Gardens with a vital source of income from the investment of bequests, seat dedications as well as support for the Director's Circle, the Gardens' annual giving program. The Foundation is structured as a public ancillary fund, has Deductible Gift Recipient (Item 2) status and is endorsed as an Income Tax Exempt Fund.

### Maud Gibson Trust

Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria Ltd is also Trustee of the Maud Gibson Trust, a public ancillary fund, which is required to make annual distributions to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. The Trust was established in 1945 with a donation from Miss Maud Gibson for the maintenance, development, or otherwise for the benefit of, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

### From the Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria Chair

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Foundation was established by Melbourne philanthropist Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC more than 20 years ago. This Foundation established in-perpetuity funding for the Gardens, to allow it to flourish beyond the Victorian Government's critical funding and public donation income streams. Today, the Foundation manages a pool of capital for the Gardens' benefit, providing long-term sustainable funding for many projects and initiatives at the Gardens. The Foundation works closely with the Gardens to understand the priority funding areas and support the most important of these, with a focus on those that are both top priorities and which would not otherwise receive funding from other sources.

The vision for the Foundation reflects this rich philanthropic history and our vision for the future:

*Our treasured and iconic Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, nurtured by philanthropy, and sustained through responsible financial stewardship.*

The Foundation's mission flows from this:

*To establish, strengthen and honour donor relationships; raise and steward funds ethically and responsibly; and distribute critical funding to secure the future of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.*

The Foundation was fortunate to receive three bequests over the year 2023–24, which help grow the corpus and underpin critical long-term funding to the Gardens. We are enormously grateful for this support:

- The Estate of Maria-Jose Nascimento Herpe \$30,000
- The Estate of Mildred Daryl Laphorne \$168.84
- The Estate of Jack Reid \$7,000 (this estate has also made distributions to the Foundation in previous years)

The Foundation carries a great sense of privilege when we hear that someone has chosen to leave a bequest to the Gardens and we recognise the responsibility to the generosity of our supporters and their families. We understand the importance of the responsible management of the corpus, in line with our long-term objectives to provide sustainable support to the Gardens within an acceptable risk tolerance and consistent with our investment policy.

We are deeply appreciative of the donors who have supported the Gardens through the Director's Circle and the Seat Dedication program, and we have had the pleasure to meet donors at the Gardens' events during the year. There are currently 236 Director's Circle members and 219 people who have current seat dedications in the Gardens. Both programs provide important funding to the Foundation which, in turn, contributes to the Foundation's long-term support of the Gardens through our annual distributions.

During 2023–24, the Foundation distributed a total of \$513,765 in funding to the Gardens to the following priority projects:

- Global Collection
- Discoveries in the Royal Grevillea species complex
- Promoting the Art of Botanical Illustration
- Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens relaunch
- Gate House Lodge repairs
- Leadership development program
- Mobility scooters
- Tour Guide headset systems
- Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria business development

In addition, the Foundation distributed \$97,000 funding to the following projects via tied sub-funds:

- Jim Willis Studentships
- Pauline Ladiges PhD fellowship

The Maud Gibson Trust distributed \$51,070 in support of the following projects at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria during the year:

- Elisabeth Murdoch Scholarships for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Staff
- Cranbourne and Melbourne staff attendance at the 8th Global Botanic Gardens Congress
- Care for the Rare
- Tropical Mountain Plant Science Project
- Australian Drylands

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to provide a place of beauty and connection to nature to the thousands of people who visit. The Foundation is honoured to contribute to the Gardens' important work in horticulture, science and learning and to provide sustainable support for future generations.



I would like to extend my deep appreciation for the generous contributions made by the Foundation Directors, the Maud Gibson Committee and Advisory Panel members throughout the year in support of the Foundation and the Maud Gibson Trust for the ultimate benefit of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

I would like to welcome Penny Fowler AM as Chair of Royal Botanic Gardens Board and Chris Russell as Director and Chief Executive. The Foundation and our donors have admired Chris Russell's contributions to the development of the Australian Garden at Cranbourne Gardens, and we look forward to working together in the years ahead.

**Farren Williams**  
Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation  
Chair

**Members of the Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria Ltd Board (Trustee of the Foundation and Maud Gibson Trust):**

- Ms Farren Williams (Chair), Mar 2018 – current
- Mr Ian Wong (Chair Finance and Audit Committee), Mar 2018 – current
- Mr Chris Russell (Company Secretary), 2024 – Current
- Ms Alice Sidhu, Feb 2019 – current
- Ms Michelle Varcoe, Nov 2018 – current
- Ms Kathryn Kings, Aug 2021 – current
- Ms Jan Robins, Aug 2021 – current
- Mr Cameron Bertalli, 2023 – current

**Maud Gibson Trust Committee:**

- Penny Woodward (Chair 2023) – Advisory Panel 2014–19  
Committee Deputy Chair 2020–23, Chair 2023 – current
- George Howson (Treasurer) – Committee 2000 – current
- Chris Russell (Director and Chief Executive Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria), 2024 – current
- Professor Ian Woodrow – Committee 2014 – current
- Jill Burness – Committee 2023 – current

**Maud Gibson Trust Advisory Panel:**

- Millie Ross
- Brian Snape AM
- Kate Walsh
- Rodger Elliott AM (Committee 1992–23, Deputy Chair 2005–19, Chair 2020–23)

## **Donor Stewardship**

### **Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Donors**

#### **Thank you**

We are grateful to the following donors for their support of \$1,000 or more during 2023–24.

#### **Director's Circle Donors 2024**

##### **Groundbreakers \$20,000 – \$49,999**

John Calvert–Jones AM and Janet Calvert–Jones AO  
The Hon David Habersberger KC and Pam Habersberger  
Betsy Polasek  
Anonymous – 1

#### **Director's Circle Donors 2024**

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#### **Director's Circle Donors 2024**

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Peter Wetenhall and Joanna Horgan  
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Lyn Williams AM  
Jennifer Wolcott and Rudi Michelson  
Ian Wong and Dr Gillian Wong  
Anonymous – 1

#### **Seat Dedicators 2024**

Dr Vicki Arbes-Dupuy and William  
Robertson  
Dianne Berlin  
Cameron Bertalli  
Gerard Brown  
John Calvert-Jones AM and Janet  
Calvert-Jones AO  
Robin Clements  
Alan Colman  
Clive Dawes  
Yvonne Deutsher  
Derrick Friedman  
Helen Gibson  
Dominic Lowe and Suellen Lee  
Ken Mahlab and Eve Mahlab AO  
Carey Mallet  
Matthew McKnight and Jenny Blake  
Rebecca Norris  
Geoff Pell  
Michael Ryssenbeek  
Bob and Madeleine Santamaria  
The Searby Family  
Jane Tynan  
Peter Waite

Bruce Walker and Pauline Caldwell  
Roxanne Watts  
John Woodman  
Marius Yianni  
Josette Zwicky  
Anonymous – 1

#### **Perennial Gardeners 2024 Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Bequest Society**

Angela Armstrong  
Graeme Baker  
Paul Barnett  
Meg Bentley  
Nat Bijayendrayodhin  
Mark and Tamara Boldiston  
Hazel Brentnall  
Susan Broadbent  
Elsie Carter  
Rosemary Cotter  
Jill Dawson  
Lorna Downey  
Sebastien Dunn  
Richard Farrar  
Diana Gibson  
William Graham  
Rob Grant  
Pam Habersberger  
Professor Roderick Home AM  
Elizabeth Howcroft  
Gillian Hund OAM  
Peter Jopling AM KC  
Zara Kimpton OAM  
Lori Kravos  
Justin and Kath Nunan  
C & T Park Endowment  
John and Bridget Patrick  
Elizabeth Roberts  
Mark Robertson OAM and Anne  
Robertson  
Dr Paul Rosen and Gay Rosen  
Maria and Martin Ryan  
Professor Arthur Shulkes and Merrill  
Shulkes  
Nell & Hermon Slade Trust  
Libby and Moray Skilling  
The late Richard Smallwood AO and  
Carol Smallwood  
Alexandra Stalder  
Charles Tegner  
Jenny and Noel Turnbull  
Clive Weeks AO and Helen Weeks  
Anonymous – 8

#### **Bequests realised in 2024**

The Estate of Maria-Jose Nascimento  
Herpe  
The Estate of Jasmine Cicely Brunner  
The Estate of Hariclia Withers  
The Estate of Mildred Daryl Lapthorne

#### **Donors 2024**

##### **Supporters who gave \$100,000 – \$1,000,000 to the Gardens**

Joan Darling  
Nola Foster  
Jamie and Annabel Montgomery  
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust  
Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens  
Melbourne Trust Fund  
Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation  
Victoria  
The Edward Wilson Estate

##### **Supporters who gave \$50,000 – \$99,999 to the Gardens**

Alan (AGL) Shaw Endowment  
Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic  
Gardens Victoria  
Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation  
Helen Gibson  
Maud Gibson Trust  
Dr Phil Moors AO and Dr Debbie  
Moors  
Rosemary Simpson  
Anonymous – 1

##### **Supporters who gave \$10,000 – \$49,999 to the Gardens**

Department of Industry, Innovation and  
Science, Australian Heritage Grant  
The Calvert-Jones Foundation  
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Sandra and Alex Ivory  
The Stuart Leslie Foundation  
Brian Little  
The Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation  
Wendy Olenick  
Betsy and Ollie Polasek Endowment  
Runaboard Fund  
Geoff Steinicke  
Anonymous – 1

**Supporters who gave \$1,000 – \$9,999 to the Gardens**

Judy and Gary Backhouse  
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Alexandra Stalder  
Christine Stott  
Charles Tegner  
Jenny and Noel Turnbull  
Clive Weeks AO and Helen Weeks  
Angela Westacott  
Anonymous – 8

**Corporate Partners and Sponsors**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria would like to acknowledge corporate partners for their continued support. These included Red Energy’s Major sponsorship of the *Lightscape* event, Official Partner Maxwell & Williams, Platinum sponsor Interflora, Bronze Sponsor Neutrog. Melbourne Airport also came onboard and sponsored various schools learning programs.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria acknowledges our corporate partners and thanks them for their ongoing support.

**LIGHTSCAPE PRESENTING PARTNER**



**OFFICIAL PARTNER**



**EDUCATION PARTNER**



**SILVER SPONSOR**



**BRONZE SPONSOR**



### **Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.**

This year the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne approved grants of \$171,857 to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria through its Trust Fund. This represented \$104,071 for the Global Collection, \$20,000 for the Helen McClellan Research Grant, \$16,860 for scholarships for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria staff, \$17,072 for replacement of guttering and downpipes at Observatory Gate Lodge and \$7,854 for new plant tables for the Growing Friends nursery.

The Friends hosted a wonderful schedule of face-to-face events, workshops, rambles, talks and walks, whilst maintaining some online talks to enable a broader audience. The Friends also provided a rich program of botanical art classes and workshops and master classes from our own art tutors and also local and international artists. The Friends hosted two exhibitions: the Acacia Exhibition of the Whirlies work at Cranbourne and an Oak Exhibition at the Visitors Centre at Melbourne Gardens. The spring and autumn plant sales were well attended and raised a total of \$52,548 with 35 new members joining during the sales. The Growing Friends have also maintained steady sales on Fridays when their nursery is open to the public. The Plant Craft Cottage hosted craft groups and workshops specialising in crafts that utilise natural materials and attracted many local, interstate and international visitors. The Plant Craft Cottage is also part of the annual Open House Melbourne which also attracts many visitors both local and international tourists from across Australia and beyond.

### **Cranbourne Friends, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.**

A full return to in-person activities reassured the Cranbourne Friends Committee that its members value the personal connections and opportunities to volunteer their time and expertise in their chosen areas of interest.

Membership remained steadily buoyant at around 700, and a project is underway to introduce promotional poster material in the gardens precinct to let our visitors know Cranbourne is supported by a keen Friends group.

Our Growing Friends nursery continued its excellent work in plant production and sales. Other interest groups maintained their small cohorts of active members, giving pleasure, engagement and contributions to revenue through their workshops and sales of creative products. We were pleased to have a new member rise to championing and re-forming our botanical weaving group after some years in abeyance. The focus was on providing indigenous-led workshops to build enthusiasm for an ongoing regular meeting group.

The Cranbourne Friends funded the cost of installing a new irrigation system for the redesigned Dry River Bed garden and to fund plants for the spring 2023 planting. This garden has needed a deep dive full scale renovation due to the presence of a fungal pathogen, *Armillaria*. In spring, many Friends and garden volunteers enjoyed the opportunity to assist in the planting of 3,100 herbaceous species and grasses into the new Dry River Bed garden.

We also devoted funds to the works installing a deck/boardwalk within the Stringybark Garden to better protect the ancient *Xanthorrhoeas* and *Kingias*. The Friends contribution has assisted with much needed soil remediation and also several additional large grass trees to further enhance this precinct.

Cranbourne Friends launched a time-limited fundraising appeal in 2023 to enhance plant labelling throughout the gardens. This call out to members raised 50% of our target of \$25,000 to update the database and produce approximately 500 labels in phase one of this vital element of curating the garden's plant collections. The Friends' coffers made up the shortfall and plan to offer a similar opportunity every two years.

Event highlights included:

The Acacia Project – a botanical art exhibition successfully organised in conjunction with Melbourne Friends and the Whirlies, in September 2023. Dr Daniel Murphy, the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Senior Research Scientist in Molecular Systematics, opened the exhibition with an address that provided insight into the complex world of acacias. We were left with a great appreciation of the critical scientific work of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

The year also provided many tours and excursions to the Otways, Lake Mountain, Mt Baw Baw, and possibly the last of many grand tours to Sicily was completed in May 2024. Monthly open-house talks were enjoyed in person and online, with some presented by members and Cranbourne staff. We are fortunate to have such mutual support from the Gardens staff and enjoy our relationship with them.

### **Research Partners**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria acknowledges the following organisations and individuals for supporting or collaborating with the activities of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Science Division in 2023–24:

Alpine Garden Society Victorian Group, Atlas of Living Australia (CSIRO), Austin Health, Australasian Native Orchid Society Victorian Branch, Australasian Systematic Botany Society, Australian Biological Resources Study, The Australian National University, Australian Network for Plant Conservation, Australian Pacific Science Foundation, Australian Research Council, Australian Seed Bank Partnership, Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL), Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG), BioPlatforms Australia, Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium of South Australia, State Key Laboratory of Mycology – Institute of Microbiology – Chinese Academy of Sciences, Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria (CHAH), Curtin University, Cybec Foundation, Deakin University, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (Victorian Government), Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Victorian Government),

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (Australian Government), Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc., Global Partnerships, Seedcorn Fund, Griffith University, Herbarium Information Standards Committee (HISCOM), Hermon Slade Foundation, Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation, The Ian Potter Foundation, International Carnivorous Plant Society, Inc. (USA), International Commission on the Taxonomy of Fungi, James Cook University, Joint Genome Institute (United States Department of Energy), J.T Reid Charitable Trusts, La Trobe University, Local Land Services Murray, The Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (Germany), Managers of Australasian Herbarium Collections (MAHC), Maud Gibson Trust, The Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation (USA), National Gallery of Victoria, Nell and Hermon Slade Trust, Nillumbik Shire, Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW Government), Phillip Island Nature Parks, Project Platypus Association Inc., Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Foundation, Specify Collections Consortium, Taxonomy Australia, The Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species, Trust for Nature, ENVITE Environment, Bairnsdale & District Field Naturalists Club, Friends of the Grampians Gariwerd, Halls Gap Botanic Gardens, The University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of the Ryukyus (Japan), Wandooon Estate Aboriginal Corporation, Wimmera Catchment Management Authority and Zoos Victoria.

#### **Volunteers and associates**

Volunteers and Honorary Associates worked across Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in a variety of roles at Cranbourne Gardens, Melbourne Gardens, the National Herbarium of Victoria and the Engagement and Impact Division. Working in partnership with staff, they welcomed visitors, guided tourists, supported science, planted, and propagated, and provided important knowledge and skills. Over the year volunteers and associates contributed almost 27,242 hours to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, making a significant contribution to the organisation.

## **Science Division Volunteer programs**

### **Orchid Conservation Program**

Our wonderful eight orchid conservation program volunteers onsite and 30 community volunteers in the field this year have undertaken a fantastic 2,475 hours of seed cleaning and storage, seed viability counting, seedling flasking, deflasking, repotting the *ex situ* orchid conservation collection and assisting with large scale conservation translocations of plants into the wild of *Caladenia robinsonii*, *Caladenia audasii*, *Caladenia colorata* and *Caladenia formosa*. The volunteer work helping conserve our rare and threatened orchids is invaluable. We wish to thank those onsite volunteers: Eve Almond, Lynda Entwisle, Brian Lawrence, Charles Young, Jenny Raven, Mike Wicks, Andrew Cosby and Neil Freestone.

### **Victorian Conservation Seedbank**

Cameron Monaco, Amy Loebmann, Sally Neeser, Lyle Lawrence, Bob Hare, Georg Armstrong, Candice Farrugia-Roberts, Jade Lohrey, Tamar Orly and Poornima Thihani.

### **Collections Branch**

Marina Albert, Jayne Anderson, Ruth Ault, Bud Batrouney, Lorraine Box, Margaret Brookes, Robyn Brownscombe, Sally Bufe, Ian Cullen, Sandra Cumbari, Allan Davey, Berys Dixon-Scheirich, Sally Edwards, Stephanie Everett, Francis Faul, Alison Foster, Joshua Harris, Cheryl Heinze, Wendy Hopkins, Lib Howcroft, Vicki Jaeger, Carly King, Janne Lade, Jannetje Lay, Catherine Mann, Alexander McCall, Cameron Monaco, Catherine Mostafa, Jen Murphy, Bernard O'Kane, Lynsey Poore, Eve Recht, Justin Rhodes, Melinda Rochford, Jennifer Ross, Judy Ryan, Roslyn Savio, Dianne Sekeres, Rosemary Spencer, Anna Stephens, Catherine Taylor, Bob Thomas, Sophie Thompson, Catherine Trinca, Helen Trueman, Wey Yao Wong, Catherine Bortolussi.

## **Library**

The library hosted four library student internships in the past 12 months, contributing 280 hours of work. The project work involved digitising items from the collection of botanical art held in the library. These digital collections will be publicly available on the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria website.

### **Honorary Associates**

Honorary Associates are appointed on the recommendation of the Chief Botanist and Executive Director Science for a fixed term of up to three years, with the option of reappointment by mutual agreement. They are individuals with expertise in areas that supplement or complement Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria employees. They have contributed greatly to the achievements of the organisation through their research on various angiosperm plant families, as well as bryophytes, fungi, lichens, and algae, or by curating the specimens held in the State Botanical Collection. Others contributed to the State Botanical Collection by collecting specimens, including undescribed plants and fungi, from areas that employees are unable to survey. The library also benefits from the input of several Honorary Associates to the Mueller Correspondence Project. The Gardens acknowledges these Honorary Associates: Dr Michael Amor, Dr Bronwyn Ayre, Mrs Margaret Brookes, Dr Austin Brown, Dr Michelle Casanova, Mr Ian Clarke, Dr Thomas Darragh, Dr Marinus de Jager, Dr Rachel Fowler, Professor David Guest, Dr Bee Gunn, Professor Rod Home, Dr Gerry Kraft, Dr Teresa Lebel, Dr Graeme Lorimer, Dr Sara Maroske, Ms Peta McDonald, Dr Todd McLay, Mr John Miller, Dr Josephine Milne, Ms Mali Moir, Dr Ryan Phillips, Mr Kevin Rule, Dr Roger Spencer, Mr Ray Thomas, Mr Neville Walsh and Mr Wey Wong.

### **Learning Partners**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria gratefully acknowledges its funding partners in support of learning and participation programs for primary and secondary school students in Victoria. For specific grants and collaborations, the Gardens acknowledges: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and The Marian & E.H. Flack Trust.

### **Engagement and Impact Volunteers**

#### **The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden Volunteers**

Anne Ada, Moira Bainbridge, Mary Becker, Lesley Blow, Deborah Boyd, Lorraine Brock, Jan Brown, Jenni Eaton, Lea Levy, Anna Malone, Claire McGoldrick, Susan Moloney, Arlene Mou, Donna Osbourne, Emily Sale, Merienne Shortridge, Sue Smith, Vanessa Tome silva and Julie Troschke.

#### **Gardens Ambassadors (Melbourne Gardens)**

Dianne Allen, Billy Atkin, Marie Banic, Carmel Bateman, Deborah Boyd, Judy Cain, Geraldine Callister, Yi-An Chen, Susanne Clarke, Dianne Costelloe, Rosemary Cotter, Rose Davey, Berys Dixon, Carole Drysdale, Archie ETTY, Suzannah Goodwin-Dorning, Stephen Grover, Veronica Harrison, Angela Herd, Tess Holderness, Wendy Hopkins, Judith Hughes, Karlene Lang, Lea Levy, Judy MacWilliams, Dennis Manz, Marian Mc Lean, Claire McGoldrick, Arlene Mou, Angela Nasso, Sue O'Brien, Sandia Rose, Emily Sale, Ann Scott, Christine Stott, Paul Taylor, Vanessa Tome silva, Libby Tronson and Joan Zheng.

#### **National Disability Support Volunteers**

Jakub Mardon and Billy Moore.

#### **Garden Ambassadors (Cranbourne Gardens)**

Margaret Barnes, Derek de Korte, John Steward, Roger Watts, Brian Cole, Johan de Bree, Christine Kenyon, Eva Kowal, Ray Turner, Linda Lee, Lauris McInerney, Sue Tatton, Anne Adams, Pamela Binks, Ron Deane, Alexander Mack Fenwick, Barrie Gallacher, Nancy Leonard, Peter McGrath, Sue Spicer, Jean Wallis, Peter Cowley, Phil Jackson, Sharon Start, Deidre Narzisi, Julie Thompson, Alan Watts, Shelley Lloyd, Alexander Packett, Andrew Cosby, Tess Holderness, Eileen Blake, Shelley Lai. Louise Anderson and Mandy Horton.

#### **Voluntary Guides (Melbourne Gardens)**

Anne Ada, Marie Banic, Jill Bartlett, Carmel Bateman, Bud Batrouney, Doris Berry, Sue Broadbent, Geraldine Callister, Pamela Carder, Liz Cooper, Rosemary Cotter, David Forbes, Jenny Happell, Virginia Heywood, Judith Hughes, Marg Kerr, Judy MacWilliams, Dennis Manz, Georgina Mountford, Rosemary O'Brien, Sue O'Brien, Anne Peterson, Kathryn Pile, David Plant, Lynsey Poore, Helen Pyman, Maggie Richards, Sandia Rose, Louise Sexton, Carole Spillane, Paul Taylor, Catherine Trinca, Robin Viney, Chris Wallis, Mary Ward, Mali Wilson and Joan Zheng.

### **Melbourne Gardens Volunteers**

#### **Horticulture Volunteers**

Meg Bentley – Lamiaceae and Salvia expert

Jenny Happell – Camellia expert.

#### **Mapping of Living Collection Assets**

Alison Rice.

#### **Horticulture Internship Program**

Genevieve Fryer

Anna Brookes

Anja Burij

Poornima Thihani

Grace McKenzie

Della Turner.

### **Cranbourne Gardens Volunteers**

#### **Nursery Volunteers**

Nancy Leonard

Peter McGrath

Pam Binks

Amanda Ford

Melissa Pertzelt

Gillian Jervis

Tess Holderness

Jan Coles

Eva Campi

#### **Landscape Volunteers**

(called Friends in the Gardens: FIGs)

Christine Kenyon (Co-ordinator)

Sue Gilbert

Wendy Herauville

Bill Jones

Barrie Gallacher

Susan Delaney

Linda Jones

Tony Anderson

Leanne Ganey

Andrea Hunt

Francesca Scuderi.

#### **Natural Areas Volunteers**

Allan Gillies

Babu Bhattarai

Brian Abbott

Dave Cundall

Dawn Neylan

Jai Slatter-Bloom

Leonard Gardner

Michael Cook

Michelle Curtain

Mike Paterson

Liam Martin

Tony Anderson.



# Financial Overview



## Revenue Generation and Budgetary Objectives

The income of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is primarily annual recurrent and project specific funding from the Victorian Government, supplemented by income generated through grants, donations, fund generating programs, retail and other business operations and investment. The annual recurrent budget is allocated to salaries, operating costs and minor capital works.

The 2023–24 deliverables reflected a continuation of work already commenced and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria carefully balanced our priorities against our budget capacity and commitment to being financially responsible and sustainable.

The main budgetary objectives of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in 2023–24 were to:

- Maintain and improve both Melbourne Gardens and Cranbourne Gardens
- Pursue scientific research on Australian flora and improve the curation and storage of the State Botanical Collection
- Deliver on bushfire recovery targets including seed and spore banking, germination and storage testing, and assessment of genetic diversity of threatened Victorian flora
- Manage living collections to increase their conservation significance and climate resilience
- Expand Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's role as a centre of excellence for plant biodiversity and conservation research

- Continue to expand our digital offering to increase audience engagement and accessibility on site and online
- Curate and deliver successful partnership programming to maximise sector and industry engagement with Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- Deliver a range of impactful Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria-led nature engagement programs and projects for visitors of all ages
- Apply the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Interpretation and Storytelling Framework to new programming to increase visitor engagement with the natural world
- Finalise the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan and investigate actions towards A Treaty Ready Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- Deliver on capital work projects including prioritising masterplan and landscape succession projects at Melbourne Gardens: City Gate and Australian Drylands, and Cranbourne Gardens: Western Access Entry, and invest in landscapes and built form to support increased visitation and positive visitor experience
- Submit a new business case to safeguard the State Botanical Collection
- Deliver the second year of the 2022–23 State Budget funding commitments to remediate the National Herbarium building

## Income from Government

During 2023–24, annual funding provided by the Parks and Reserves Trust Account (PRTA) was applied to achieve the Board's main strategic objectives as outlined in the Annual Business Plan 2023–24. It was also used to support delivery of priority elements of the Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens master plans and enable repair or replacement of critical infrastructure including maintenance of garden paths, boardwalks and kerbs.

On 24 June 2024, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria received \$3.0 million supplementary funding sourced from the PRTA to further support the management of the botanical gardens, conservation activities, visitor activities and educational programs.

## Financial results for 2023–24

(\$ thousand)

	2023–24	2022–23	Change
	\$	\$	\$
Government and other grants			
Parks and reserves trust account grants	25,894	21,869	4,025
Other Victorian government grants	3,534	7,350	(3,816)
Commonwealth government grants	629	228	401
Other grants	585	314	271
Philanthropic and other donations	2,650	2,882	(232)
Other income	9,847	8,650	1,197
Total Expenses	(39,518)	(37,107)	(2,411)
Net result	3,621	4,186	(565)

### Comparison of Financial Performance and Position

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Board's net result of transactions of \$3.6 million for the financial year ended 30 June 2024, \$0.6 million lower than in 2022–23, mainly reflecting an increase in operating costs to support additional maintenance works on buildings, paths, unplanned water infrastructure repair, and an emergency sewer replacement. Both total income and expenses from transactions have steadily increased over the past three years and the net result from transactions has been relatively consistent during these periods.

Specifically, the major movements in the organisation's revenue and expenses included:

- Additional PRTA supplementary funding of \$3.0 million to further support Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's core activities
- Other Victorian government grants reduced by \$3.8 million due to reduction in spend delivering capital related projects when compared to the prior year where income is recognised progressively as the asset is constructed for the remaining project deliverables under the Cranbourne Eco-

Tourism initiative which was jointly funded by Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) in June 2021

- Increased revenue from income generating activities including education, tours and retail sales
- Increased interest income aligned to the bank interest rates and delays in expenditure activities
- Received insurance refunds of \$0.4 million mainly related to replacement of street sweeper at Melbourne Gardens
- Increased employee benefit expenses recognising annual escalation in line with the *Royal Botanic Gardens Enterprise Agreement 2021* and increased employment of staff over the financial year mainly to support program delivery
- Increased operating expenditure, predominantly relating to delivery of additional building and maintenance costs under the Eco-Tourism, Critical Asset Works and Safeguarding the State Botanical Collection initiatives

The major movements in the organisation's financial position include:

- Increased cash and deposit balances following additional PRTA supplementary funding received in June 2024. This was partially offset by capital expenditure relating to Cranbourne Eco-Tourism and Critical Asset Works initiative where funding was received in the prior years
- Increase in total assets following capitalisation of built assets, including building and infrastructure items under the Eco-Tourism project
- Decrease in total liabilities due to reduction in contract liabilities following delivery of works funded from the Eco-Tourism project, thereby reducing funds outstanding to be recognised associated with delivery
- Contributed capital of \$2.4 million was received in August 2023 from DEECA relating to the Safeguarding the State Botanical Collection state budget initiative

There were no events occurring after the balance date which may significantly affect the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria's operations in subsequent reporting periods.

## Five-year comparison of financial results

(\$ thousand)

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income from government	30,057	29,761	26,999	23,776	30,981
Total revenue and income from transactions	43,139	41,293	39,699	37,029	29,725
Total expenses from transactions	(39,518)	(37,107)	(35,207)	(33,239)	(30,870)
Net result from transactions	3,621	4,186	4,493	3,790	(1,146)
Net result for the period	3,479	4,196	2,003	3,837	(964)
Net cash flow from operating activities	4,091	3,194	5,860	4,181	6,786
Total assets	1,041,593	1,038,279	964,101	683,291	677,842
Total liabilities	7,326	9,888	14,105	8,587	6,486

# Financial Statements



# ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS BOARD FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## How this report is structured

The Royal Botanic Gardens Board (the Board) has presented its audited general-purpose financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2024 in the following structure to provide users with information about the Board's stewardship of the resources entrusted to it.

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## DECLARATION IN THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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The attached financial statements for the Royal Botanic Gardens Board (the Board) have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards including interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2024 and financial position of the Board at 30 June 2024.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 12 September 2024.



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Penny Fowler  
Chair  
Royal Botanic Gardens Board

Melbourne  
12 September 2024



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Chris Russell  
Director and Chief Executive  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Melbourne  
12 September 2024



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Varun Saigal  
Interim Chief Finance Officer  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Melbourne  
12 September 2024

## Comprehensive operating statement <sup>(a)</sup>

For the financial year ended 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Revenue and income from transactions</b>			
Grants	2.2.1	30,642	29,761
Donations	2.2.2	2,650	2,882
Sale of goods and services	2.2.3	2,208	2,021
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	2.2.4	1,389	1,562
Interest	2.2.5	1,292	883
Other income	2.2.6	4,958	4,184
<b>Total revenue and income from transactions</b>		<b>43,139</b>	<b>41,293</b>
<b>Expenses from transactions</b>			
Employee benefit expenses	3.1.1	(22,884)	(21,915)
Depreciation	4.1.1	(3,735)	(3,470)
Interest expense	6.1	(26)	(2)
Other operating expenses	3.2	(12,873)	(11,720)
<b>Total expenses from transactions</b>		<b>(39,518)</b>	<b>(37,107)</b>
<b>Net result from transactions (net operating balance)</b>		<b>3,621</b>	<b>4,186</b>
<b>Other economic flows included in net result</b>			
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets (b)	8.2	(160)	25
Other loss from economic flows (c)	8.2	18	(15)
<b>Total other economic flows included in net result</b>		<b>(142)</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Net result</b>		<b>3,479</b>	<b>4,196</b>
<b>Other economic flows - other comprehensive income:</b>			
<b>Items that will not be reclassified to net result</b>			
Changes in physical asset revaluation surplus	8.3	(19)	73,234
<b>Total other economic flows - other comprehensive income</b>		<b>(19)</b>	<b>73,234</b>
<b>Comprehensive result</b>		<b>3,460</b>	<b>77,430</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

(b) 'Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets' includes disposals of all physical assets.

(c) Other loss from economic flows due to changes in bond rates for leave provisions.

## Balance sheet <sup>(a)</sup>

As at 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Financial assets</b>			
Cash and deposits	6.3	22,399	20,929
Receivables	5.1	696	291
<b>Total financial assets</b>		<b>23,095</b>	<b>21,220</b>
<b>Non-financial assets</b>			
Inventories	5.4	247	116
Other non-financial assets	5.5	362	187
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	1,017,889	1,016,756
<b>Total non-financial assets</b>		<b>1,018,498</b>	<b>1,017,059</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>1,041,593</b>	<b>1,038,279</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Payables	5.2	1,666	1,738
Contract liabilities	5.3	628	3,142
Borrowings	6.1	409	356
Employee related provisions	3.1.2	4,624	4,651
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>7,327</b>	<b>9,887</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>1,034,266</b>	<b>1,028,392</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Accumulated surplus		29,615	26,136
Physical asset revaluation surplus	8.3	910,343	910,362
Contributed capital		94,308	91,894
<b>Net worth</b>		<b>1,034,266</b>	<b>1,028,392</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Note:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

## Cash flow statement <sup>(a)</sup>

For the financial year ended 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
<b>Receipts</b>			
Receipts from government		27,510	24,571
Receipts from other entities		8,519	8,059
Goods and Services Tax received from the ATO <sup>(b)</sup>		851	682
Interest received		1,292	883
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>38,172</b>	<b>34,195</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(34,077)	(30,956)
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(4)	(45)
<b>Total payments</b>		<b>(34,081)</b>	<b>(31,001)</b>
<b>Net cash flows from operating activities</b>	6.3.1	<b>4,091</b>	<b>3,194</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Sale of non-financial assets		190	56
Purchases of non-financial assets		(5,279)	(4,675)
<b>Net cash flows (used in) investing activities</b>		<b>(5,089)</b>	<b>(4,619)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Owner contributions by State Government – appropriation for capital expenditure purposes		2,414	966
Proceeds from borrowings		262	90
Repayment of borrowings and principal portion of lease liabilities <sup>(c)</sup>		(208)	(193)
<b>Net cash flows from financing activities</b>		<b>2,468</b>	<b>863</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>1,470</b>	<b>(562)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year		20,929	21,490
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of financial year</b>	6.3	<b>22,399</b>	<b>20,929</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

(b) Goods and Services Tax received from the ATO is presented on a net basis.

(c) The Board has recognised cash payments for the principal portion of lease payments as financing activities; cash payments for the interest portion as operating activities consistent with the presentation of interest payments for leases and low-value assets as operating activities.

## Statement of changes in equity <sup>(a)</sup>

For the financial year ended 30 June 2024

	Physical asset revaluation surplus \$'000	Accumulated surplus \$'000	Contributed capital \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>Balance at 1 July 2022</b>	837,128	21,940	90,928	949,996
Net result for the year	-	4,196	-	4,196
Other comprehensive income for the year	73,234	-	-	73,234
Capital contributions	-	-	966	966
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>910,362</b>	<b>26,136</b>	<b>91,894</b>	<b>1,028,392</b>
Net result for the year	-	3,479	-	3,479
Other comprehensive income for the year	(19)	-	-	(19)
Capital contributions	-	-	2,414	2,414
<b>Balance at 30 June 2024</b>	<b>910,343</b>	<b>29,615</b>	<b>94,308</b>	<b>1,034,266</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

## 1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

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The Royal Botanic Gardens Board (the Board) is a Statutory Authority of the State of Victoria, established pursuant to the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991*.

Its principal address is:

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria  
Birdwood Avenue  
Melbourne VIC 3004

A description of the nature of its operations and its principal activities is included in the Report of operations, which does not form part of these financial statements.

### **Basis of preparation**

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the note associated with the item measured on a different basis.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in preparing these financial statements whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Consistent with the requirements of AASB 1004 Contributions, contributions by owners (that is, contributed capital and its repayment) are treated as equity transactions and, therefore, do not form part of the income and expenses of the Board.

Additions to net assets which have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of contributions to or distributions by owners have also been designated as contributions by owners.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in applying AAS that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates are disclosed in the notes under the heading 'Significant judgements or estimates'.

The financial statements cover the Board as an individual reporting entity which administers the operations of the Melbourne Gardens and the Cranbourne Gardens.

All amounts in the financial statements have been rounded to the \$1,000 unless otherwise stated.

### **Compliance Information**

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the FMA and applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AASs) which include Interpretations, issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). In particular, they are presented in a manner consistent with the requirements of AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

Where appropriate, those AAS's paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities have been applied. Accounting policies selected and applied in these financial statements ensure that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

## 2. FUNDING DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

### Introduction

The Board's overall objective is to nurture an understanding of the scientific, environmental, social, economic, cultural and spiritual importance of plants to our existence, and provide our community with opportunities to prosper from a deep connection with plants.

To enable the Board to fulfil its objective, it receives income from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account, supplemented by income generated through grants, donations, programs, business operations and investment.

#### *Significant judgement : Grants revenue*

The Board has made judgement on the recognition of grant revenue as income of not-for-profit entities where they do not contain sufficiently specific performance obligations. Income from grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations and accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers is recognised when the Board satisfies the performance obligation. Income from grants without specific performance obligations are recognised progressively as the project is completed or when the Board gains control of the funds.

### Structure

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### 2.1 Summary of revenue and income that funds the delivery of our services

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Grants	2.2.1	30,642	29,761
Donations	2.2.2	2,650	2,882
Sale of goods and services	2.2.3	2,208	2,021
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	2.2.4	1,389	1,562
Interest	2.2.5	1,292	883
Other income	2.2.6	4,958	4,184
<b>Total revenue and income from transactions</b>		<b>43,139</b>	<b>41,293</b>

Revenue and income that fund delivery of the Board's services are accounted for consistently with the requirement of the relevant accounting standards disclosed in the following notes.

### 2.2 Income and revenue from transactions

#### 2.2.1 Grants

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Income recognised as income of not-for-profit entities</b>		
Parks and Reserves Trust Account grants	25,894	21,869
Other specific purpose grants	2,531	6,180
<b>Income recognised as revenue from contracts with customers</b>		
Other specific purpose grants	2,217	1,712
<b>Total grants</b>	<b>30,642</b>	<b>29,761</b>

**Parks and Reserves Trust Account Grant.** The annual Parks and Reserves Trust Account grant received from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action is recognised as income of not-for-profit entities in accordance with AASB1058. As there are not any specific performance obligations, the income is therefore recognised when the Board gains control over the funds. The Parks and Reserves Trust Account derives its funding from the rate levied on metropolitan properties under the provisions of the *Water Industry Act 1994* and is provided to the Board for the purposes of conservation, recreation, leisure and tourism within the metropolitan area.

Income from grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations are accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers in accordance with AASB15. Revenue is recognised when the Board satisfies the performance obligation by providing the relevant services. This is recognised based on the consideration specified in the funding agreement and to the extent that it is highly probable a significant reversal of the revenue will not occur. Consideration received in advance of recognising the associated revenue from the customer is recorded as a contract liability (Note 5.3). Where the performance obligations is satisfied but not yet billed, a contract asset is recorded. The Board does not have any contract assets.

Income from grants to construct the capital items are recognised progressively as the asset is constructed. This aligns with the Board's obligation to construct the asset. The progressive percentage costs incurred is used to recognise income because this most closely reflects the construction progress as costs are incurred as the works are done.

### 2.2.2 Donations

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Donations	2,650	2,882
<b>Total donations</b>	<b>2,650</b>	<b>2,882</b>

The Board is deemed to have control when the funds are received from the provider.

### 2.2.3 Sale of goods and services

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Sale of goods	1,227	1,174
Rendering of services	980	847
<b>Total sale of goods and services</b>	<b>2,208</b>	<b>2,021</b>

The sale of goods and services are transactions that the Board has determined to be classified as revenue from contracts with customers in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*.

#### Performance obligations and revenue recognition policies

Revenue from the rendering of services is recognised at a point in time when the performance obligation is satisfied when the service is completed and over time when the customer simultaneously received and consumes the services at it is provided. Revenue is measured based on the consideration specified in the contract with the customer.

Sale of goods are recognised as revenue at a point in time when the goods are delivered and have been accepted by the customer.

Consideration received in advance of recognising the associated revenue from the customer is recorded as a contract liability (Note 5.3). Where the performance obligations is satisfied but not yet billed, a contract asset is recorded. The Board does not have any contract assets.

#### 2.2.4 Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration recognised as income

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Building improvements at fair value	-	616
Voluntary Services	1,389	946
<b>Total fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration recognised as income</b>	<b>1,389</b>	<b>1,562</b>

In accordance with AASB 1058, contributions of resources provided for free of charge or for nominal consideration are recognised at their fair value when the recipient obtains control over the resources, irrespective of whether restrictions or conditions are imposed over the use of the contributions.

**Voluntary services:** Contributions in the form of services are only recognised when a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would have been purchased if not donated.

Volunteers mainly relate to guides, science research and collection of species.

#### 2.2.5 Interest income

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Interest from financial assets not at fair value through profit and loss</b>		
Interest on bank deposits	1,292	883
<b>Total interest</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>883</b>

Interest income includes interest received on bank term deposits and other investments. Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method, which allocates the interest over the relevant period.

#### 2.2.6 Other income

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Events	2,604	2,292
Rental income	1,523	1,443
Royalties	96	88
Other	735	362
<b>Total other income</b>	<b>4,958</b>	<b>4,184</b>

**Royalties** are recognised when received or receivable in accordance with the substance of the licensing agreement.

**Rental income** in relation to leasing of the Board's assets i.e. café spaces is recognised when received or receivable under the terms of the lease agreement.

Leases mainly relate to the provision of event management, catering and functions in the Gardens, with lease terms generally of 5 years and an option to extend for a further 5 years.

All lease agreements of 5 years and option to extend for a further 5 years contain market review clauses in the event that the Board or lessee exercises its option to renew. The lessees do not have an option to purchase the leased asset at the expiry of the lease period.

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Non-cancellable lease receivables</b>		
Not longer than one year	526	957
Longer than one year and not longer than five years	842	1,227
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,368</b>	<b>2,184</b>

### 3. THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

#### Introduction

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by the Board in delivering services. In Section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the costs associated with provision of services are recorded.

#### Structure

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services.....	72
3.2 Other operating expenses.....	75

#### 3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Employee benefit expenses	3.1.1	22,884	21,915
Other operating expenses	3.2	12,873	11,720
<b>Total expenses incurred in delivery of services</b>		<b>35,757</b>	<b>33,635</b>

##### 3.1.1 Employee benefits and related expenses in the Comprehensive operating statement

		2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Salaries and wages		17,296	16,657
Superannuation	3.1.3	2,055	1,897
Annual and long service leave		2,016	2,017
Termination benefits		125	83
Other on-costs		1,392	1,261
<b>Total employee expenses</b>		<b>22,884</b>	<b>21,915</b>

Employee expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, termination payments and WorkCover premiums.

The amount recognised in the Comprehensive operating statement in relation to superannuation is employer contributions for members of both defined benefit and defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period. The Board does not recognise any defined benefit liabilities because it has no legal or constructive obligation to pay future benefits relating to its employees. Instead, the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) discloses in its annual financial statements the net defined benefit cost related to the members of these plans as an administered liability (on behalf of the State as sponsoring employer).

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated before normal retirement date, or when an employee accepts an offer of benefits in exchange for the termination of employment. Termination benefits are recognised when the Board is demonstrably committed to terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal or providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy.

### 3.1.2 Employee benefits and related expenses in the balance Sheet

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave (LSL) for services rendered to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Current provisions</b>		
<b>Annual Leave</b>		
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months	1,335	1,444
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months	192	109
<b>Long service leave</b>		
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months	351	340
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months	1,532	1,610
<b>Provision for on-costs</b>		
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months	327	327
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months	333	303
<b>Total current provisions for employee benefits</b>	<b>4,070</b>	<b>4,133</b>
<b>Non-current provisions</b>		
Employee benefits	465	440
On-costs	90	77
<b>Total non-current provisions for employee benefits</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>517</b>
<b>Total provisions for employee benefits</b>	<b>4,624</b>	<b>4,651</b>

#### Reconciliation of movement in on-cost provision

	2024 \$'000
<b>Opening balance</b>	707
Additional provision recognised	362
Reductions arising from payments / other sacrifice of future economic benefits	(316)
Unwind of discount and effect of changes in the discount rate	(3)
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>750</b>
Current	660
Non-current	90

**Wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave:** Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and on-costs) are recognised as part of the employee benefit provision as current liabilities, because the Board does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of these liabilities.

The liability for salaries and wages is recognised in the balance sheet at remuneration rates which are current at the reporting date. As the Board expects the liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, they are measured at undiscounted amounts.

The annual leave liability is classified as a current liability and measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid, as the Board does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the Comprehensive operating statement as it is taken.

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax and workers compensation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred.

**Unconditional LSL** is disclosed as a current liability, even where the Board does not expect to settle the liability within 12 months, because it will not have the unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement should an employee take leave within 12 months.

The components of this current LSL liability are measured at:

- undiscounted value – if the Board expects to wholly settle within 12 months; or
- present value – if the Board does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

**Conditional LSL** is disclosed as a non-current liability. There is a conditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement until the employee has completed the requisite years of service. This non-current LSL is measured at present value.

Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of non-current LSL liability is recognised as a transaction, except to the extent that a gain or loss arises due to changes in bond interest rates for which it is then recognised as an 'other economic flow' in the net result.

### 3.1.3 Superannuation contributions

Employees of the Board are entitled to receive superannuation benefits and the Board contributes to both defined benefit and defined contribution plans. The defined benefit plan(s) provides benefits based on years of service and final average salary.

However, superannuation contributions paid or payable for the reporting period are included as part of employee benefits in the Comprehensive operating statement of the Board.

	Paid Contribution for the year 2024 \$'000	Paid Contribution for the year 2023 \$'000	Contribution outstanding at year-end 2024 \$'000	Contribution outstanding at year-end 2023 \$'000
<b>Defined benefit plans <sup>(a)</sup></b>				
State Superannuation Fund	87	86	1	4
<b>Defined contribution plans</b>				
Aware Super	771	714	5	31
Australian Super	234	192	2	8
UniSuper	130	115	1	4
Other	818	710	6	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,040</b>	<b>1,817</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>80</b>

Note:

(a) The basis for determining the level of contributions is determined by the various actuaries of the defined benefit superannuation plans.

### 3.2 Other operating expenses

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Supplies and services</b>		
Contract costs	2,782	1,844
Garden and office equipment and supplies	1,253	1,093
Non-financial assets hire, maintenance and operational costs	1,723	2,750
Consultancies and professional services	2,224	1,467
Cleaning and waste disposal costs	912	762
Water charges	366	398
Advertising and promotion	371	335
Motor vehicle expenses	129	176
Computer expenses	664	572
Travel expenses	156	145
Staff training and development	126	228
Insurance costs	395	253
Postage and communication expenses	91	80
Books, periodicals and subscriptions	181	144
Legal costs	79	62
Security	160	194
Catering costs	152	116
Other	482	522
	<b>12,246</b>	<b>11,142</b>
Cost of goods sold	609	560
Lease rental expenses (low value assets)	18	18
<b>Total other operating expenses</b>	<b>12,873</b>	<b>11,720</b>

**Other operating expenses** generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations.

**Supplies and services** are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

The following lease payments are recognised on a straight-line basis:

- Short-term leases – leases with a term less than 12 months; and
- Low value leases – leases with the underlying asset's fair value (when new, regardless of the age of the asset being leased) is no more than \$10,000 and are listed in Note 6.2.

Variable lease payments that are not included in the measurement of the lease liability (i.e. variable lease payments that do not depend on an index or a rate and which are not, in substance fixed) such as those based on performance or usage of the underlying asset, are recognised in the Comprehensive operating statement (except for payments which has been included in the carrying amount of another asset) in the period in which the event or condition that triggers those payments occur.

**Operating rental expenses** payments are recognised on a straight line basis over the lease term, except where another systematic basis is more representative of the time pattern of the benefits derived from the use of the leased asset.

**Cost of goods sold:** When inventories are sold, the carrying amount of those inventories shall be recognised as an expense in the period in which the related income is recognised. The amount of any write down of inventories to net realisable value and all losses of inventories are recognised as an expense in the period the write down or loss occurs.

The amount of any reversal of any write down of inventories, arising from an increase in net realisable value, shall be recognised as a reduction in the amount of inventories recognised as an expense in the period in which the reversal occurs.

## 4. KEY ASSETS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT SERVICE DELIVERY

### Introduction

The Board controls infrastructure, property, plant and equipment that are utilised in fulfilling its objectives and conducting its activities. They represent the resources that have been entrusted to the Board to be utilised for delivery of those services.

### Structure

4.1 Total property, plant and equipment.....76

### 4.1 Total property, plant and equipment

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Land at fair value	491,100	491,100
	491,100	491,100
Buildings at fair value	41,616	40,026
Less accumulated depreciation	(3,009)	(1,947)
	38,607	38,079
Infrastructure at fair value	74,546	71,380
Less accumulated depreciation	(5,326)	(3,496)
	69,220	67,884
Plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value	10,106	9,878
Less accumulated depreciation	(5,836)	(5,650)
	4,270	4,228
Cultural assets at fair value	414,522	414,276
	414,522	414,276
Assets under construction at cost	170	1,189
	170	1,189
<b>Total property, plant and equipment</b>	<b>1,017,889</b>	<b>1,016,756</b>

The following tables are subsets of plant and equipment by right-of-use assets

#### 4.1.(a) Total right-of-use assets: vehicles

	Gross carrying amount  2024 \$'000	Accumulated depreciation  2024 \$'000	Net carrying amount  2024 \$'000	Gross carrying amount  2023 \$'000	Accumulated depreciation  2023 \$'000	Net carrying amount  2023 \$'000
Vehicles	732	(253)	479	817	(315)	503
<b>Net carrying amount</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>(253)</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>(315)</b>	<b>503</b>

	Gross carrying amount  2024 \$'000	Accumulated depreciation  2024 \$'000	Net carrying amount  2024 \$'000
<b>Opening balance - 1 July 2023</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>(315)</b>	<b>502</b>
Additions	262	-	262
Disposals	(295)	122	(173)
Transfer to other VPS Entity	(52)	4	(48)
Depreciation	-	(65)	(65)
<b>Closing balance - 30 June 2024</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>(254)</b>	<b>479</b>

**Initial recognition:** Items of property, plant and equipment are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition.

The cost of constructed non-financial physical assets includes the cost of all material used in construction, direct labour on the project and an appropriate proportion of variable and fixed overheads.

#### Right-of-use asset acquired by lessees - Initial measurement

The Board recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentive received; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred, and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

**Subsequent measurement:** Property, plant and equipment (PPE) as well as right-of-use assets under leases are subsequently measured at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Fair value is determined with regard to the asset's highest and best use (considering legal or physical restrictions imposed on the asset, public announcements or commitments made in relation to the intended use of the asset) and is summarised on the following page by asset category.

#### Right-of-use asset – Subsequent measurement

The Board depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight-line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The right-of-use assets are also subject to revaluation.

In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any and adjusted for certain remeasurements of the lease liability.

**Specialised land and specialised buildings:** The market approach is also used for specialised land, although is adjusted for the community service obligation (CSO) to reflect the specialised nature of the land being valued.

The CSO adjustment reflects the valuer's assessment of the impact of restrictions associated with an asset to the extent that the CSO adjustment is also equally applicable to market participants.

For the majority of the Board's specialised buildings, the current replacement cost method is used, adjusting for the associated depreciation.

**Infrastructure** are valued using the current replacement cost method. This cost generally represents the replacement cost of the building/component after applying depreciation rates on a useful life basis. However, for some heritage and iconic assets, the cost may be the reproduction cost rather than the replacement cost if those assets' service potential could only be replaced by reproducing them with the same materials.

Infrastructure mainly relates to various buildings, pavilions, workshops, iron picket fencings and gates.

**Cultural assets** are valued using the market approach, whereby assets are compared to recent comparable sales or sales of comparable assets that are considered to have nominal value. The State Botanical Collection is valued using a direct replacement cost approach.

Cultural assets mainly relates to the State Botanical Collection which is the collection of botanical specimens; paintings, photographs and drawings and other artistic material; and documents of all kinds located at the National Herbarium of Victoria.

**Vehicles** are valued using the current replacement cost method. The Board acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by experienced fleet managers in the Board who set relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

**Plant and equipment** are valued at fair value and are specialised in use (such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern) is determined using the current replacement cost method.

Refer to Note 7.2 for additional information on fair value determination of property, plant and equipment.

#### Impairment of Property, Plant and Equipment

The recoverable amount of primarily non-cash-generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity, is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under *AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

#### 4.1.1 Depreciation

##### Charge for the period

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Buildings	1,062	1,000
Infrastructure	1,832	1,755
Plant, equipment and vehicles	776	710
Vehicles - right-of-use assets	65	5
<b>Total depreciation</b>	<b>3,735</b>	<b>3,470</b>

All infrastructure assets, buildings and plant and equipment that have finite useful lives, are depreciated. The exceptions to this rule include items such as assets held for sale, land and cultural assets.

Depreciation is generally calculated on a straight line basis, at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life. Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table below:

Asset	Useful Life
Buildings	5 to 100
Infrastructure	5 to 50
Plant, equipment and vehicles	4 to 50
Vehicles - right-of-use assets	3 to 5

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustments made where appropriate.

Right-of-use assets are generally depreciated over the shorter of the asset's useful life and the lease term. Where the Board obtains ownership of the underlying leased asset or if the cost of the right-of-use asset reflects that the entity will exercise a purchase option, the entity depreciates the right-of-use asset over its useful life.

**Indefinite life assets:** Land and core cultural assets, which are considered to have an indefinite life, are not depreciated. Depreciation is not recognised in respect of these assets because their service potential has not, in any material sense, been consumed during the reporting period.

#### 4.1.2 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amount of property, plant and equipment <sup>(a)</sup>

2024	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure	Plant, equipment and vehicles	Cultural assets	Assets under construction	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Opening balance</b>	<b>491,100</b>	<b>38,079</b>	<b>67,884</b>	<b>4,227</b>	<b>414,277</b>	<b>1,188</b>	<b>1,016,756</b>
Additions	-	667	1,496	1,151	7	1,958	5,279
Disposals	-	-	(21)	(342)	-	-	(363)
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers <sup>(b)</sup>	-	923	1,693	123	238	(2,977)	-
Transfer to other VPS Entity	-	-	-	(48)	-	-	(48)
Depreciation	-	(1,062)	(1,832)	(841)	-	-	(3,735)
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>491,100</b>	<b>38,607</b>	<b>69,220</b>	<b>4,270</b>	<b>414,522</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>1,017,889</b>

Note:

(a) Fair value assessments have been performed for all classes of assets in this purpose group and the decision was made that movements were not material (less than or equal to 10 per cent) for a full revaluation.

The next scheduled full revaluation for this purpose group will be conducted in 2026.

(b) Transfers balances represent amounts transferred between asset classes.

2023	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure	Plant, equipment and vehicles	Cultural assets	Assets under construction	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Opening balance</b>	<b>491,100</b>	<b>37,372</b>	<b>66,848</b>	<b>3,943</b>	<b>341,031</b>	<b>1,463</b>	<b>941,757</b>
Additions	-	1,156	542	557	12	3,023	5,290
Disposals	-	-	-	(32)	-	(23)	(55)
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	73,234	-	73,234
Transfers <sup>(b)</sup>	-	551	2,250	474	-	(3,275)	-
Depreciation	-	(1,000)	(1,756)	(715)	-	-	(3,470)
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>491,100</b>	<b>38,079</b>	<b>67,884</b>	<b>4,227</b>	<b>414,277</b>	<b>1,188</b>	<b>1,016,756</b>

Note:

(a) Fair value assessments have been performed for all classes of assets in this purpose group and the decision was made movements were material (greater than or equal to 10 per cent) for a full revaluation relating to Cultural assets, specifically relating to the State Botanical Collection. The next scheduled full revaluation for this purpose group will be conducted in 2026.

(b) Transfers balances represent amounts transferred between asset classes.

## 5. OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

### Introduction

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the Board's operations.

### Structure

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5.5 Other non-financial assets.....	81

### 5.1 Receivables

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Contractual</b>		
Sales of goods and services	403	111
Accrued donations income	190	25
	<b>593</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Statutory</b>		
Net GST input tax credit recoverable	103	155
	<b>103</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Total receivables</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>291</b>
<i>Represented by</i>		
Current receivables	<b>696</b>	<b>291</b>

**Contractual receivables** are classified as financial instruments and categorised as 'financial assets at amortised costs'. They are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. The Board holds the contractual receivables with the objective to collect the contractual cash flows and therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

**Statutory receivables** do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment), but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes. The Board applies AASB 9 for initial measurement of the statutory receivables and as a result, statutory receivables are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction cost.

Details about the Board's impairment policies, the Board's exposure to credit risk, and the calculation of the loss allowance are set out in Note 7.1.3.

### 5.2 Payables

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Contractual</b>		
Supplies and services	1,508	1,581
Other payables	10	27
	<b>1,518</b>	<b>1,608</b>
<b>Statutory</b>		
Taxes payable	148.0	130
	<b>148.0</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Total payables</b>	<b>1,666</b>	<b>1,738</b>
<i>Represented by</i>		
Current payables	<b>1,666</b>	<b>1,738</b>

Payables consist of:

- **contractual payables**, classified as financial instruments and measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Board prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid,
- **statutory payables**, that are recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables, but are not classified as financial instruments and not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost, because they do not arise from contracts.

Payables for supplies and services have an average credit period of 30 days.

**Maturity analysis of contractual payables** <sup>(a)</sup>

2024	Carrying amount \$'000	Nominal amount \$'000	Maturity dates				
			Less than 1 month \$'000	1- 3 months \$'000	3 months - 1 year \$'000	1 - 5 years \$'000	More than 5 years \$'000
			Supplies and services	1,508	1,508	1,508	-
Other payables	10	10	8	2	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

2023	Carrying amount \$'000	Nominal amount \$'000	Maturity dates				
			Less than 1 month \$'000	1- 3 months \$'000	3 months - 1 year \$'000	1 - 5 years \$'000	More than 5 years \$'000
			Supplies and services	1,581	1,581	1,581	-
Other payables	27	27	26	1	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,608</b>	<b>1,608</b>	<b>1,607</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Note:

(a) Maturity analysis is presented using the contractual undiscounted cash flows.

**5.3 Contract liabilities**

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Contract liabilities</b>		
Opening balance brought forward	3,142	8,306
Add: Grant consideration received in the reporting period for performance obligations yet to be completed	-	990
Less: Grant revenue recognised for performance obligations completed in the reporting period	(2,531)	(6,180)
Other contract liabilities	17	26
<b>Total contract liabilities</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>3,142</b>
<i>Represented by</i>		
Current contract liabilities <sup>(a)</sup>	628	3,142

Contract liabilities include consideration received in advance by the Board completing performance obligations within the specific grant agreements. Revenue is recognised as the obligations are completed.

Note:

(a) Current contract liabilities includes capital grants though they have been recognised in line with AASB 1058.

## 5.4 Inventories

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Current inventories</b>		
<b>Inventories held for sale:</b>		
At cost	247	116
<b>Total inventories</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>116</b>

Inventories include goods held for sale in the ordinary course of business operations and are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

## 5.5 Other non-financial assets

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Current other assets</b>		
Prepayments	362	187
<b>Total other assets</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>187</b>

Other non-financial assets include prepayments which represent payments made in advance of receipt of goods or services or the payments made for services covering a term extending beyond that financial accounting period.

## 6. HOW WE FINANCED OUR OPERATIONS

### Introduction

This section provides information on the sources of finance utilised by the Board during its operations, along with interest expenses (the cost of borrowings) and other information related to the financing activities of the Board.

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments (such as borrowings and cash balances). Notes 7.1 and 7.2 provide additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

### Structure

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### 6.1 Borrowings

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Current borrowings</b>		
Lease liabilities <sup>(a)</sup>	182	106
<b>Total current borrowings</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Non-current borrowings</b>		
Lease liabilities <sup>(a)</sup>	227	250
<b>Total non-current borrowings</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Total borrowings</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>356</b>

#### Note

(a) Secured by the assets leased. Leases liabilities are effectively secured as the rights to the leased assets revert to the lessor in the event of default.

Borrowings refer to interest bearing liabilities which are lease liabilities that relate to motor vehicles leased through the VicFleet.

Borrowings are classified as financial instruments. The Board classifies its interest bearing liabilities as financial liabilities at amortised cost subsequent to initial recognition.

During the current and prior year, there were no defaults and breaches.

#### The maturity analysis of borrowings

2024	Carrying amount \$'000	Nominal amount \$'000	Maturity dates				
			Less than 1 month \$'000	1- 3 months \$'000	3 months - 1 year \$'000	1 - 5 years \$'000	More than 5 years \$'000
Lease liabilities	409	428	80	50	60	238	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>-</b>

2023	Carrying amount \$'000	Nominal amount \$'000	Maturity dates				
			Less than 1 month \$'000	1- 3 months \$'000	3 months - 1 year \$'000	1 - 5 years \$'000	More than 5 years \$'000
Lease liabilities	356	365	53	11	48	253	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>-</b>

## Interest expense

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Interest on lease liabilities	26	2
<b>Total interest expense</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>

'Interest expense' includes costs incurred in connection with the borrowing of funds and includes the interest component of finance lease repayments.

Interest expense is recognised in the period in which it is incurred.

The Board recognises borrowing costs immediately as an expense, even where it is directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of a qualifying asset.

## 6.2 Leases

Information about leases for which the Board is a lessee is presented below.

### *The Board leasing activities*

The Board leases motor vehicles with terms generally of 3 - 5 years. Additionally, the Board leases office equipment which are low value assets that have not been included in lease liabilities.

#### 6.2.1 Right-of-use Assets

Right of use assets are presented in note 4.1(a).

#### 6.2.2 Amounts recognised in the Comprehensive operating statement

The following amounts are recognised in the Comprehensive operating statement relating to leases:

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Interest expense on lease liabilities	26	2
Expenses relating to leases of low-value assets	18	18
<b>Total amount recognised in the comprehensive operating statement</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>

#### 6.2.3 Amounts recognised in the Cash flow statement

The following amounts are recognised in the Cash flow statement for the year ending 30 June 2023 relating to leases:

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Total cash (inflow)/outflow for leases</b>	<b>(54)</b>	<b>103</b>

For any new contracts entered into, the Board considers whether a contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'. To apply this definition the Board assesses whether the contract meets three key evaluations.

- Whether the contract contains an identified asset, which is either explicitly identified in the contract or implicitly specified by being identified at the time the asset is made available to the Board and for which the supplier does not have substantive substitution rights;
- Whether the Board has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the identified asset throughout the period of use, considering its rights within the defined scope of the contract and the Board has the right to direct the use of the identified asset throughout the period of use; and
- Whether the Board has the right to take decisions in respect of 'how and for what purpose' the asset is used throughout the period of use.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

### Separation of lease and non-lease components

At inception or on reassessment of a contract that contains a lease component, the lessee is required to separate out and account separately for non-lease components within a lease contract and exclude these amounts when determining the lease liability and right-of-use asset amount.

### Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

#### *Lease Liability - initial measurement*

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease if that rate is readily determinable or the Board incremental borrowing rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- fixed payments (including in-substance fixed payments) less any lease incentive receivable;
- variable payments based on an index or rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- payments arising from purchase and termination options reasonably certain to be exercised.

#### *Lease Liability - subsequent measurement*

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification, or if there are changes in-substance fixed payments.

When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset, or profit and loss if the right-of-use asset is already reduced to zero.

#### *Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets*

The Board has elected to account for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets using the practical expedients. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

#### *Below market / Peppercorn lease*

Right-of-use assets under leases at significantly below-market terms and conditions that are entered into principally to enable the Board to further its objectives, are initially and subsequently measured at cost.

These right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter of the lease term and the estimated useful lives of the assets.

#### *Presentation of right-of-use assets and lease liabilities*

The Board presents right-of-use assets as 'property plant and equipment' unless they meet the definition of investment property, in which case they are disclosed as 'investment property' in the balance sheet. Lease liabilities are presented as 'borrowings' in the balance sheet.

## 6.3 Cash flow information and balances

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand and cash at bank, deposits at call and those highly liquid investments with an original maturity of three months or less, which are held for the purpose of meeting short-term cash commitments rather than for investment purposes, and which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

	2024	2023
	\$'000	\$'000
Total cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet	22,399	20,929
<b>Balance as per cash flow statement</b>	<b>22,399</b>	<b>20,929</b>

### 6.3.1 Reconciliation of the net result for the period to net cash flows from operating activities

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Net result for the period</b>	3,479	4,197
Non-cash movements		
Loss/(gain) on sale or disposal of non-current assets	160	(25)
Loss on revaluation of non-current asset	19	-
Depreciation of non-current assets	3,735	3,470
Building improvements received free of charge	-	(616)
Other non-cash movements	22	62
<b>Movements in assets and liabilities</b>		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	(405)	162
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	(131)	16
(Increase)/decrease in other non-financial assets	(175)	43
(Decrease)/increase in payables	(72)	1,158
(Decrease) in contract liabilities	(2,514)	(5,163)
(Decrease) in provisions	(27)	(110)
<b>Net cash flows from operating activities</b>	<b>4,091</b>	<b>3,194</b>

## 6.4 Commitments for expenditure

Commitments for future expenditure include operating and capital commitments arising from contracts. These commitments are recorded below at their nominal value and inclusive of GST. Where it is considered appropriate and provides additional relevant information to users, the net present values of significant individual projects are stated. These future expenditures cease to be disclosed as commitments once the related liabilities are recognised in the Balance sheet.

### 6.4.1 Total commitments payable

Nominal amounts 2024	Less than 1 year \$'000	1-5 Years \$'000	5+ Years \$'000	Total \$'000
Capital expenditure commitments payable	107	-	-	107
Other commitments payable	1,733	948	-	2,681
Less GST recoverable	-	-	-	(279)
<b>Total commitments (exclusive of GST)</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,509</b>
Nominal amounts 2023	Less than 1 year \$'000	1-5 Years \$'000	5+ Years \$'000	Total \$'000
Capital expenditure commitments payable	248	-	-	248
Other commitments payable	2,698	168	-	2,866
Less GST recoverable	-	-	-	(283)
<b>Total commitments (exclusive of GST)</b>	<b>2,946</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,831</b>

## 7. RISKS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

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### Introduction

The Board is exposed to risk from its activities and outside factors. In addition, it is often necessary to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information (including exposures to financial risks), as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for the Board relates mainly to fair value determination.

### Structure

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### 7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

#### Introduction

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Due to the nature of the Board's activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statute rather than a contract (for example taxes). Such assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments in AASB 132 *Financial Instruments: Presentation*.

#### Categories of financial assets

##### Financial assets at amortised cost

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met and the assets are not designated as fair value through net results:

- the assets are held by the Board to collect the contractual cash flows; and
- the assets' contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The Board recognises the following assets in this category:

- cash and deposits; and
- receivables (excluding statutory receivables).

##### Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income

These assets are initially recognised at fair value with subsequent change in fair value in other comprehensive income.

#### Categories of financial liabilities

**Financial liabilities at amortised cost** are initially recognised on the date they are originated. They are initially measured at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method. The Board recognises the following liabilities in this category:

- payables (excluding statutory payables); and
- borrowings (including lease liabilities).

**Derecognition of financial assets:** A financial asset (or, where applicable, a part of a financial asset or part of a group of similar financial assets) is derecognised when:

- the rights to receive cash flows from the asset have expired; or
- the Board has transferred the rights to receive cash flows from the asset and either:
  - has transferred substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset; or
  - has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset, but has transferred control of the asset.

Where the Board has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards or transferred control, the asset is recognised to the extent of the Board's continuing involvement in the asset.

**Derecognition of financial liabilities:** A financial liability is derecognised when the obligation under the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires.

When an existing financial liability is replaced by another from the same lender on substantially different terms, or the terms of an existing liability are substantially modified, such an exchange or modification is treated as a derecognition of the original liability and the recognition of a new liability. The difference in the respective carrying amounts is recognised as an 'other economic flow' in the comprehensive operating statement.

### 7.1.1 Financial instruments: Categorisation

	Cash and deposits	Financial assets at amortised cost	Financial liabilities at amortised cost	Cash and deposits	Financial assets at amortised cost	Financial liabilities at amortised cost
	2024 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>						
Cash and deposits	22,399	-	-	20,929	-	-
Receivables at amortised cost						
Sale of goods and services	-	403	-	-	111	-
Accrued donations income	-	190	-	-	25	-
<b>Total <sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>22,399</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20,929</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>						
Supplies and services payables	-	-	1,508	-	-	1,581
Other payables	-	-	10	-	-	27
Lease liabilities	-	-	409	-	-	356
<b>Total <sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,927</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,964</b>

Note:

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory receivables (i.e. GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable).

### 7.1.2 Net holding gain/(loss) on financial instruments

	Interest income/(expense)	
	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>		
Financial assets at amortised cost	1,292	883
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>883</b>
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>		
Financial liabilities at amortised cost	(26)	(2)
<b>Total contractual financial liabilities</b>	<b>(26)</b>	<b>(2)</b>

The net holding gains or losses disclosed above are determined as follows:

- for cash and cash equivalents and financial assets at amortised cost, the net gain or loss is calculated by taking the movement in interest income minus any impairment recognised in the net result.
- for financial liabilities measured at amortised cost, the net gain or loss is equal to the interest expense incurred during the reporting period.

### 7.1.3 Financial risk management objectives and policies

As a whole, the Board's financial risk management program seeks to manage these risks and the associated volatility of its financial performance. Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, with respect to each class of financial asset and financial liability, are disclosed in Note 7.2 to the financial statements.

The main purpose in holding financial instruments is to prudentially manage the Board's financial risks within the requirements of the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991* and the government's policy parameters.

The Board's main financial risks include credit risk, liquidity risk and interest rate risk. The Board manages these financial risks in accordance with its financial risk management policy.

The Board uses different methods to measure and manage the different risks to which it is exposed. Primary responsibility for the identification and management of financial risks rests with the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board.

### Financial instruments - credit risk

Credit risk refers to the possibility that a borrower will default on its financial obligations as and when they fall due. The Board's exposure to credit risk arises from the potential default of a counter party on their contractual obligations resulting in financial loss to the Board. Credit risk is measured at fair value and is monitored on a regular basis.

Credit risk associated with the Board's contractual financial assets is minimal, especially in relation to its sale of goods and services receivables due to the adoption of stringent credit establishment and collection policies and procedures. In addition, the Board does not engage in hedging for its contractual financial assets and mainly obtains contractual financial assets that are on fixed interest, except for cash and deposits, which are mainly cash at bank. As with the policy for debtors, the Board's policy is to only deal with banks with high credit ratings.

Provision of impairment for contractual financial assets is recognised when there is objective evidence that the Board will not be able to collect a receivable. Objective evidence includes financial difficulties of the debtor, default payments, debts which are more than 60 days overdue, and changes in debtor credit ratings.

Contract financial assets are written off against the carrying amount when there is no reasonable expectation of recovery. Bad debt written off by mutual consent is classified as a transaction expense. Bad debt written off following a unilateral decision is recognised as other economic flows in the net result.

The carrying amount of contractual financial assets recorded in the financial statements represents the Board's maximum exposure to credit risk without taking account of the value of any collateral obtained.

There has been no material change to the Board's credit risk profile in 2023-24.

### Contractual receivables at amortised cost

The Board applies AASB 9 simplified approach for all contractual receivables to measure expected credit losses using a lifetime expected loss allowance based on the assumptions about risk of default and expected loss rates. The Board has grouped contractual receivables on shared credit risk characteristics and days past due and selected the expected credit loss rate based on the Board's past history and existing market conditions, as well as forward looking estimates at the end of the financial year.

On this basis, the Board determines the closing loss allowance at end of the financial year as follows:

2024	Current	Less than 1 month	1 - 3 months	3 months - 1 year	1 - 5 years	Total
Expected loss rate (%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Gross carrying amount of contracted receivables	505	19	21	48	-	593
Loss allowance	-	-	-	-	-	-

2023	Current	Less than 1 month	1 - 3 months	3 months - 1 year	1 - 5 years	Total
Expected loss rate (%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Gross carrying amount of contracted receivables	119	2	14	1	-	136
Loss allowance	-	-	-	-	-	-

Contractual receivables are written off when there is no reasonable expectation of recovery and impairment losses are classified as a transaction expense. Subsequent recoveries of amounts previously written off are credited against the same line item.

In prior years, a provision for doubtful debts is recognised when there is objective evidence that the debts may not be collected and bad debts are written off when identified. A provision is made for estimated irrecoverable amounts from the sale of goods when there is objective evidence that an individual receivable is impaired. Bad debts are considered as written off by mutual consent.

### Statutory receivables at amortised cost

The Board's non-contractual receivables arising from statutory requirements are not financial instruments. However, they are nevertheless recognised and measured in accordance with AASB 9 requirements as if those receivables are financial instruments.

The Board's statutory receivables are considered to have low credit risk, taking into account the counterparty's credit rating, risk of default and capacity to meet contractual cash flow obligations in the near term. As a result, the loss allowance recognised for these financial assets during the period was limited to 12 months' expected losses. No loss allowance has been recognised.

### Financial instruments - liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Board would be unable to meet its financial obligations as and when they fall due. The Board's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed in the face of the balance sheet. The Board continuously manages risk through monitoring future cash flows and maturities planning to ensure adequate holding of high quality liquid assets and dealing in highly liquid markets.

The Board's exposure to liquidity risk is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk. Cash for unexpected events is generally sourced from its cash and deposits balance.

### Financial instruments - market risk

The Board's exposures to market risk are primarily through interest rate risk.

The Board's sensitivity to market risk is determined based on past performance, future expectations and economic forecasts and, accordingly, the Board believes that a movement of 100 basis points is reasonably possible over the next 12 months.

### Financial instruments - interest rate risk

Fair value interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Board does not hold any interest bearing financial instruments that are measured at fair value and therefore has no exposure to fair value interest rate risk.

Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates.

The Board has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits and finance lease liabilities that are at a floating rate.

The Board manages this risk by mainly undertaking fixed rate or non-interest bearing financial instruments with relatively even maturity profiles, with only insignificant amounts of financial instruments at a floating rate. Management has concluded for cash at bank, as financial assets can be left at floating rate without necessarily exposing the Board to significant bad risk. Movements in interest rates are monitored on a daily basis by Management.

The carrying amounts of financial assets and financial liabilities that are exposed to interest rates are as follows:

2024	Weighted average effective interest rate %	Carrying amount <sup>(a)</sup> \$'000	Interest rate exposure		
			Fixed interest rate	Variable interest rate	Non-interest bearing
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Financial assets</b>					
Cash and deposits	4.41	22,399	-	22,351	48
Sale of goods and services receivable	-	403	-	-	403
Accrued donations income receivable	-	190	-	-	190
		<b>22,992</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>22,351</b>	<b>641</b>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>					
Supplies and services payables	-	1,508	-	-	1,508
Other payables	-	10	-	-	10
Lease liabilities	2.91	409	409	-	-
		<b>1,927</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,518</b>

2023	Weighted average effective interest rate %	Carrying amount <sup>(a)</sup> \$'000	Interest rate exposure		
			Fixed interest rate	Variable interest rate	Non-interest bearing
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Financial assets</b>					
Cash and deposits	3.08	20,929	-	20,899	29
Sale of goods and services receivable	-	111	-	-	111
Accrued donations income receivable	-	25	-	-	25
		<b>21,065</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20,899</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>					
Supplies and services payables	-	1,581	-	-	1,581
Other payables	-	27	-	-	27
Lease liabilities	2.85	356	356	-	-
		<b>1,964</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,608</b>

Note:

(a) The carrying amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. GST input tax credit recoverable and GST payable).

The Board's sensitivity to possible movements in interest rates is as follows:

	Carrying amount		+100 basis points		-100 basis points	
			Net result		Net result	
	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>						
Cash and deposits <sup>(a)</sup>	22,399	20,929	224	209	(224)	(209)
	<b>22,399</b>	<b>20,929</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>(224)</b>	<b>(209)</b>
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>						
Borrowings <sup>(b)</sup>	409	356	4	4	(4)	(4)
	<b>409</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(4)</b>

Notes:

(a) Cash and deposits include a deposit of \$22,350,992 (2023: \$20,899,143) that is exposed to floating rates movements. Sensitivities to these movements are calculated as follows:

- 2024:  $\$22,350,992 \times 0.01 = \$223,510$  and  $\$22,350,992 \times 0.01 = \$223,510$ ; and
- 2023:  $\$20,899,143 \times 0.01 = \$208,991$  and  $\$20,899,143 \times 0.01 = \$208,991$ .

(b) Borrowings include finance lease liabilities that are exposed to movements in interest rates. Sensitivities to these movements are calculated as follows:

- 2024:  $\$409,119 \times 0.01 = \$4,091$  and  $\$409,119 \times 0.01 = \$4,091$ ; and
- 2023:  $\$355,516 \times 0.01 = \$3,555$  and  $\$355,516 \times 0.01 = \$3,555$ .

## 7.2 Fair value determination

This section sets out information on how the Board determined fair value for financial reporting purposes. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

The following assets and liabilities are carried at fair value:

- financial assets and liabilities at fair value through operating results;
- available for sale financial assets; and
- land, buildings, plant and equipment.

The Board determines the policies and procedures for determining fair values for both financial and non-financial assets and liabilities as required.

### Fair value hierarchy

In determining fair values a number of inputs are used. To increase consistency and comparability in the financial statements, these inputs are categorised into three levels, also known as the fair value hierarchy. The levels are as follows:

- Level 1 - quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;
- Level 2 - valuation technique for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
- Level 3 - valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

The Board determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by reassessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

The Valuer-General Victoria (VGV) is the Board's independent valuation agency and monitors changes in the fair value of each asset and liability through relevant data sources to determine whether revaluation is required.

### How this section is structured

For those assets and liabilities for which fair values are determined, the following disclosures are provided:

- carrying amount and the fair value (which would be the same for those assets measured at fair value);
- which level of the fair value hierarchy was used to determine the fair value; and
- in respect of those assets and liabilities subject to fair value determination using Level 3 inputs:
  - a reconciliation of the movements in fair values from the beginning of the year to the end; and
  - details of significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value determination.

This section is divided between disclosures in connection with fair value determination for financial instruments (refer to Note 7.2.1) and non-financial physical assets (refer to Note 7.2.2).

### 7.2.1 Fair value determination of financial assets and liabilities

The fair values and net fair values of financial assets and liabilities are determined as follows:

- Level 1 – the fair value of financial instruments with standard terms and conditions and traded in active liquid markets are determined with reference to quoted market prices.
- Level 2 – the fair value is determined using inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the financial asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 – the fair value is determined in accordance with generally accepted pricing models based on discounted cash flow analysis using unobservable market inputs.

The Board currently holds a range of financial instruments that are recorded in the financial statements where the carrying amounts approximate of fair value, due to their short term nature or with the expectation that they will be paid in full by the end of the 2023-24 reporting period.

These financial instruments include:

Financial assets	Financial liabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash and deposits</li> <li>• Receivables:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sale of goods and services</li> <li>- Accrued donations income</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payables:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supplies and services</li> <li>- Other payables</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lease liabilities</li> </ul>

Where the fair value of the financial instruments is different from the carrying amounts, the following information has been included to disclose the difference.

	Carrying amount	Fair value	Carrying amount	Fair value
	2024	2024	2023	2023
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Financial liabilities</b>				
Lease liabilities	409	409	356	356
	<b>409</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>356</b>

## 7.2.2 Fair value determination of non-financial physical assets

The fair value measurement hierarchy for assets at the end of the reporting period is as follows:

	Carrying amount		Fair value measurement using: <sup>(a)</sup>			
			Level 2		Level 3	
	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Land</b>						
Specialised land	491,100	491,100	-	-	491,100	491,100
	<b>491,100</b>	<b>491,100</b>	-	-	<b>491,100</b>	<b>491,100</b>
<b>Buildings</b>						
Specialised buildings	20,478	20,448	-	-	20,478	20,448
Heritage assets	18,129	17,631	-	-	18,129	17,631
	<b>38,607</b>	<b>38,079</b>	-	-	<b>38,607</b>	<b>38,079</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>						
Specialised infrastructure	67,654	66,278	-	-	67,654	66,278
Heritage assets	1,566	1,606	-	-	1,566	1,606
	<b>69,220</b>	<b>67,884</b>	-	-	<b>69,220</b>	<b>67,884</b>
<b>Plant, equipment and vehicles</b>						
Plant and equipment	3,234	3,250	-	-	3,234	3,250
Vehicles <sup>(b)</sup>	1,036	978	-	-	1,036	978
	<b>4,270</b>	<b>4,228</b>	-	-	<b>4,270</b>	<b>4,228</b>
<b>Cultural assets</b>						
Antiques and artwork	13,215	12,969	13,215	12,969	-	-
Specialised cultural assets	401,307	401,307	-	-	401,307	401,307
	<b>414,522</b>	<b>414,276</b>	<b>13,215</b>	<b>12,969</b>	<b>401,307</b>	<b>401,307</b>

Notes:

(a) Classified in accordance with the fair value hierarchy. The Board does not hold any assets classified as Level 1 assets for the reporting periods ended 30 June 2024 and 30 June 2023.

(b) Vehicles are categorised as Level 3 assets as fair value of the vehicles is estimated based on the current replacement cost.

There have been no transfers between levels during the period.

### Non-specialised antiques and artworks

Non-specialised antiques and artworks are valued using the market approach. Under this valuation method, valuation of the assets is determined by a comparison to similar examples of the artist's work in existence throughout Australia and research on prices paid for similar examples offered at auction or through art galleries in recent years. An independent valuation of antiques and artwork was undertaken by the Valuer-General Victoria to determine their fair value at 30 June 2021.

### Specialised land and buildings

The market approach is also used for specialised land, although it is adjusted for the community service obligation (CSO) to reflect the specialised nature of the land being valued.

The CSO adjustment reflects the valuer's assessment of the impact of restrictions associated with an asset to the extent that is also equally applicable to market participants. This approach is in light of the highest and best use consideration required for fair value measurement, and takes into account the use of the asset that is physically possible, legally permissible, and financially feasible. As adjustments of CSO are considered as significant unobservable inputs, specialised land is classified as a Level 3 asset.

For the majority of the Board's specialised land and buildings, the current replacement cost method is used, adjusting for the associated depreciations. As depreciation adjustments are considered significant unobservable inputs in nature, specialised buildings are classified as Level 3 fair value measurements.

An independent valuation of the Board's specialised buildings was performed by the Valuer-General Victoria. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2021.

### Specialised cultural assets

Specialised cultural assets, including the State Botanical Collection, are valued using replacement cost method. Replacement costs are costs to replace the current service capacity of the asset. The method used calculates a unit cost per sample unit that is then scaled up to each collection.

An independent valuation of the Board's specialised cultural assets was performed by the Valuer-General Victoria. The valuation was performed using the replacement cost approach. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2021.

An management revaluation of the Board's specialised cultural assets was performed as the movement exceeded 10%. The effective date of the revaluation was 30 June 2023.

### Infrastructure assets

Infrastructure assets are valued using the current replacement cost method. This cost represents the replacement cost of the building/component after applying depreciation rates on a useful life basis. Replacement costs are costs to replace the current service capacity of the asset.

Where it has not been possible to examine hidden works such as structural frames and floors, the use of reasonable materials and methods of construction have been assumed, bearing in mind the age and nature of the building. The estimated cost of reconstruction, including structural services and finishes, also factors in any heritage classifications as applicable.

An independent valuation of the Board's infrastructure assets was performed by the Valuer-General Victoria. The valuation was performed based on the current replacement cost of the assets. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2021.

### Vehicles

Vehicles are valued using the current replacement cost method. The Board acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed under finance leasing arrangements with DTF and Westpac Bank. Depreciation rates used reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

### Right-of-use assets

Right-of-use assets are revalued according to FRD 103 *Non-financial physical assets*. The Board applies the revaluation model to right-of-use assets. After initial recognition the right-of-use asset is carried at revalued amount, being its fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. The fair value of right-of-use assets are linked to the lease payments. The Board assesses the current lease payments under the lease contract to approximate current market rentals in comparison to equivalent properties that would be paid in the current market. The fair value of the leased assets are determined with reference to the amounts that will have to be paid to replace the current service capacity of the asset.

### Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment is held at fair value. When plant and equipment is specialised in use, such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern, fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method.

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2024.

For all assets measured at fair value, the current use is considered the highest and best use.

### Significant valuation uncertainty

The Board's assets relating to property, plant and equipment were independently valued by the Valuer General Victoria (VGV) as at 30 June 2021. At this date, significant valuation uncertainty exists due to impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and government response is having on markets used to value the Board's assets. This means the value of assets assessed at the balance date, may change significantly and unexpectedly over a relatively short period of time.

The reconciliation of Level 3 fair value is as follows:

2024	Specialised land \$'000	Buildings \$'000	Vehicles \$'000	Plant and equipment \$'000	Infrastructure \$'000	Specialised Cultural \$'000
<b>Opening balance</b>	491,100	38,079	978	3,250	67,884	401,307
Purchases/(sales)	-	1,590	284	648	3,168	-
Transfers in/(out)	-	-	(48)	-	-	-
<i>Gains or losses recognised in net result:</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	-	(1,062)	(178)	(663)	(1,832)	-
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>491,100</b>	<b>38,607</b>	<b>1,036</b>	<b>3,235</b>	<b>69,220</b>	<b>401,307</b>

2023	Specialised land \$'000	Buildings \$'000	Vehicles \$'000	Plant and equipment \$'000	Infrastructure \$'000	Specialised Cultural \$'000
<b>Opening balance</b>	491,100	37,372	1,001	2,942	66,848	328,073
Purchases/(sales)	-	1,707	87	913	2,792	-
<i>Gains or losses recognised in net result:</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	-	(1,000)	(110)	(605)	(1,756)	-
<i>Gains or losses recognised in other economic flows - other comprehensive income:</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-	73,234
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>491,100</b>	<b>38,079</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>3,250</b>	<b>67,884</b>	<b>401,307</b>

A description of significant unobservable inputs to Level 3 valuations is as follows:

Asset Category	Valuation technique	Significant unobservable inputs	Range (weighted average)	Sensitivity of fair value measurement to changes in significant unobservable inputs
Specialised Land	• Market approach	Community Service Obligation (CSO) adjustment	70% <sup>(a)</sup>	A significant increase or decrease in the CSO adjustment would result in a significantly lower (higher) fair value.
Buildings (specialised and heritage)	• Current Replacement Cost	Useful life, remaining useful life and depreciation rate	\$5,300 - \$10,000,000 per unit (\$460,000 per unit)	A significant increase or decrease in direct cost per square metre adjustment would result in a significantly higher or lower fair value
		Useful life of buildings	5-100 years (33 years)	A significant increase or decrease in the estimated useful life of the asset would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.
Vehicles	• Current Replacement Cost	Cost per unit	\$500 - \$177,000 per unit (\$29,000 per unit)	A significant increase or decrease in direct cost per square metre adjustment would result in a significantly higher or lower fair value
		Useful life of vehicles	5 - 8 years (7 years)	A significant increase or decrease in the estimated useful life of the asset would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.
Plant and Equipment	• Current Replacement Cost	Cost per unit	\$475 - \$339,000 per unit (\$8,500 per unit)	A significant increase or decrease in the estimated useful life of the asset would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.
		Useful life of plant and equipment	4 - 50 years (6 years)	A significant increase or decrease in the estimated useful life of the asset would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.
Infrastructure (specialised and heritage)	• Current Replacement Cost <sup>(b)</sup>	Cost per unit	\$1,400 - \$4,600,000 per unit (\$305,000 per unit)	A significant increase or decrease in the estimated useful life of the asset would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.
		Useful life of infrastructure assets	10 to 50 years (36 years)	A significant increase or decrease in the estimated useful life of the asset would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.
Specialised Cultural Assets	• Current Replacement Cost <sup>(b)</sup>	Costs of reinstating the collection per unit	\$0 - \$1,755 per unit	A significant increase or decrease in the costs of replacement would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.
		Size of collections	1,500,000 - 1,600,000	A significant increase or decrease in the size of the collection would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.
Right-of-use assets	• Current Replacement Cost	Cost per unit	\$16,000 - \$84,000 per unit (\$46,000 per unit)	A significant increase or decrease in the estimated useful life of the asset would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.
		Useful life of right-of-use assets	3 - 5 years (4 years)	A significant increase or decrease in the estimated useful life of the asset would result in a significantly higher or lower valuation.

Notes:

(a) CSO adjustment of 70 per cent were applied to reduce the market approach value for the Royal Botanic Gardens specialised land.

(b) For some infrastructure heritage assets and specialised cultural assets, cost may be the reproduction cost of the asset rather than the replacement cost if their service potential could only be replaced by reproducing them with the same materials.

Significant unobservable inputs have remained unchanged since June 2021.

### **7.3 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities**

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet but are disclosed and, if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value.

#### **Contingent assets**

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the entity.

The Board has nil contingent assets at June 2024 (nil: June 2023)

#### **Contingent liabilities**

Contingent Liabilities are:

- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the entity; or
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because:
  - it is probably that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligations; or
  - the amount of the obligations cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet and are classified as either quantifiable or non-quantifiable. If quantifiable, contingent liabilities are measured at nominal value inclusive of GST payable.

The Board has nil contingent liabilities at June 2024 (nil: June 2023)

## 8. OTHER DISCLOSURES

### Introduction

This section includes additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise, for the understanding of this financial report.

### Structure

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### 8.1 Ex gratia expenses

Ex gratia expenses are the voluntary payments of money or other non-monetary benefit (e.g. a write off) that are not made either to acquire goods, services or other benefits for the entity or to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability of or claim against the entity.

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Deed of release ex gratia payment <sup>(a)</sup>	123	71
<b>Total ex gratia expenses <sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>123</b>	<b>71</b>

- Notes:
- (a) The total for ex gratia expenses is also presented in salaries and wages expenses of Note 3.1.1 Employee benefits in the comprehensive operating statement.
- (b) Includes ex gratia expense for an individual item that is greater than \$5,000.

### 8.2 Other economic flows included in net result

Other economic flows are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows include the gains or losses from:

- the revaluation of the present value of the long service leave liability due to changes in the bond interest rates
- write down of inventory.

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets</b>		
Net (loss)/gain on disposal of property, plant and equipment <sup>(a)</sup>	(154)	27
Write down of inventory	(6)	(2)
<b>Total net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets</b>	<b>(160)</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows</b>		
Net gain/(loss) arising from revaluation of long service leave liability <sup>(b)</sup>	18	(15)
<b>Total other gains/(losses) from other economic flows</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>(15)</b>

- Notes:
- (a) Includes disposal of street sweeper which was involved in a fire on 27 September 2023 with an independent assessment concluding the vehicle was no longer viable to repair, and disposal of amphibious harvester with the cost to maintain no longer financially viable with vehicle traded-in and replaced.
- (b) Revaluation gain/(loss) due to changes in bond rates.

### 8.3 Reserves

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Physical asset revaluation surplus</b> <sup>(a)</sup>		
Balance at beginning of financial year	910,362	837,128
Revaluation (decrements)/increments	(19)	73,234
<b>Balance at end of financial year</b>	<b>910,343</b>	<b>910,362</b>
<b>Net change in reserves</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>73,234</b>

Note:

(a) *The physical asset revaluation surplus arises on the revaluation of cultural assets, infrastructure, land and buildings.*

### 8.4 Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994 (FMA)*, the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period:

#### Names

The persons who held the positions of Minister, Governing Board and Accountable Officer of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board are as follows:

#### Minister

Minister for Environment	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	2 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Minister for Environment	The Hon. Ingrid Stitt MP	1 July 2023 to 1 October 2023

#### Governing Board

Chair	Mrs Penny Fowler AM	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Deputy Chair		1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023
Chair	Ms Chris Trotman	1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023
Deputy Chair	Mr Jason Hay	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Ms Christine Wyatt	1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Mr Damian Holmes	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Mr Peter Langkamp OAM	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Ms Felicia Mariani	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Ms Arianne Rose	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Professor Antony Bacic	1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023
Member	Ms Gillian Hund OAM	1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023

#### Accountable Officer <sup>(a)</sup>

Acting Director and Chief Executive	Mr Chris Russell	2 February 2024 to 30 June 2024
Director and Chief Executive	Mr David Harland	12 September 2023 to 8 May 2024
Acting Director and Chief Executive	Ms Fiona McLaughlin	4 August 2023 to 11 September 2023
Director and Chief Executive	Professor Tim Entwisle	1 July 2023 to 3 August 2023

#### Responsible person

	2024 No.	2023 No.
\$0-\$9,999	9	6
\$10,000-\$19,999	1	1
	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

Note:

(a) *David Harland commenced as Director and Chief Executive on 12 September 2023 and vacated the role on 8 May 2024. Chris Russell commenced as Acting Director and Chief Executive on 2 February 2024 and was appointed as the Director and Chief Executive on 1 July 2024.*

## 8.5 Remuneration of executives

The number of executive officers, other than Ministers and accountable officers, and their total remuneration during the reporting period are shown in the table below. Total annualised employee equivalents provides a measure of full-time equivalent executive officers over the reporting period.

Remuneration comprises employee benefits (as defined in AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*) in all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by the entity, or on behalf of the entity, in exchange for services rendered. Accordingly, remuneration is determined on an accrual basis and is disclosed in the following categories.

**Short-term employee benefits** include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

**Post-employment benefits** include pensions and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment is ceased.

**Other long-term benefits** include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

**Termination benefits** include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

Remuneration was paid to executives during the reporting period as follows:

	2024	2023
	\$'000	\$'000
Short-term employee benefits	776	854
Post-employment benefits	79	87
Other long-term benefits	10	49
Termination benefits	-	71
<b>Total remuneration</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>1,061</b>
Total number of executives	4	5
<b>Total annualised employee equivalents <sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>

Note (a): Annualised employee equivalent is based on the time fraction worked over the reporting period.

## 8.6 Related parties

The Board is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.

Related parties of the Board include:

- all key management personnel and their close family members and personal business interests (controlled entities, joint ventures and entities they have significant influence over);
- all Cabinet Ministers and their close family members; and
- all Departments and public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of state consolidated financial statements.

All related party transactions have been entered into on an arm's-length basis.

### Significant transactions with government-related entities

The Board received grant funding from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action of \$29.2 million (2023 - \$29.0 million) and the Department of Education and Training Victoria \$0.2 million (2023 - \$0.1 million) during the reporting period.

Key management personnel (KMP) of the Board include the Portfolio Ministers, the Hon Ingrid Stitt (until 1 October 2023) and Steve Dimopoulos MP (from 2 October 2023), the members of the governing board and the Director and Chief Executive.

### Remuneration of key management personnel

The compensation detailed below excludes the salaries and benefits the Portfolio Minister receives. The Minister's remuneration and allowances are set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Short-term employee benefits	1,110	1,207
Post-employment benefits	111	118
Other long-term benefits	10	56
Termination benefits	123	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,354</b>	<b>1,452</b>

### Transactions and balances with key management personnel and other related parties

Given the breadth and depth of State government activities, related parties transact with the Victorian public sector in a manner consistent with other members of the public, e.g. stamp duty and other government fees and charges. Further employment of processes within the Victorian public sector occur on terms and conditions consistent with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and Codes of Conduct and Standards issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. Procurement processes occur on terms and conditions consistent with the Victorian Government Procurement Board requirements.

Outside of normal citizen type transactions with the Board, there were no related party transactions that involved key management personnel, their close family members and their personal business interests. No provision has been required, nor any expense recognised, for impairment of receivables from related parties.

### 8.7 Remuneration of auditors

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
<b>Victorian Auditor-General's Office</b>		
Audit of the financial statements <sup>(a)</sup>	33	32
<b>Total remuneration of auditors</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>

Note:

(a): The Victorian Auditor-General's Office is prohibited from providing non-audit services.

### 8.8 Subsequent Events

There were no significant events occurring after the balance date which will have a material impact on the information disclosed in the financial statements.

### 8.9 Other accounting policies

#### Contribution by owners

Consistent with the requirements of AASB 1004 *Contributions*, contributions by owners (that is, contributed capital and its repayment) are treated as equity transactions and, therefore, do not form part of the income and expenses of the Board.

Additions to net assets that have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of contributions to or distributions by owners have also been designated as contributions by owners.

## 8.10 Australian Accounting Standards issued that are not yet effective

Certain new and revised accounting standards have been issued but are not effective for the 2023-24 reporting period. These accounting standards have not been applied to the Financial Statements. The Board is reviewing its existing policies and assessing the potential implications of these accounting standards which includes:

- **AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities**

This Standard amends AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* by adding authoritative implementation guidance and illustrative examples for fair value measurements of non-financial assets of not-for-profit public sector entities not held primarily for their ability to generate net cash inflows.

The Standard specifies when entities need to consider if an asset's highest and best use differs from its current use. It also clarifies when an asset's use is considered financially feasible.

The Standard also specifies when an entity shall use its own assumptions and data to develop unobservable inputs. It also clarifies when these assumptions and judgements shall be adjusted.

The Standard provides guidance on the application of the cost approach to fair value, including the nature of costs to be included in the reference asset and identification of economic obsolescence.

These amendments are applicable for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024.

The Board is in the process of analysing the impacts of this Standard. However, it is not anticipated to have a material impact.

- **AASB 17 Insurance Contracts**

This Standard replaces AASB 4 *Insurance Contracts*, AASB 1023 *General Insurance Contracts* and AASB 1038 *Life Insurance Contracts* for not-for-profit public sector entities for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2026.

The Board is in the process of analysing the impacts of this Standard. However, it is not anticipated to have a material impact.

- **AASB 2022-8 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Insurance Contracts: Consequential Amendments**

AASB 2022-8 makes consequential amendments to other Australian Accounting Standards so that public sector entities are permitted to continue to apply AASB 4 and AASB 1023 to annual periods before 1 July 2026.

- **AASB 2022-9 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Insurance Contracts in the Public Sector**

This Standard amends AASB 17 to make public sector-related modifications (for example, it specifies the pre-requisites, indicators and other considerations in identifying arrangements that fall within the scope of AASB 17 in a public sector context). This Standard applies for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2026.

- Several other amending standards have been issued that apply to future reporting periods. These standards are considered to have limited impact on the Board's reporting.

## 8.11 Glossary of technical terms

The following is a summary of the major technical terms used in this report.

**Borrowings** refers to interest-bearing liabilities mainly from public borrowings raised through finance leases.

**Commitments** include those operating, capital and other outsourcing commitments arising from non-cancellable contractual or statutory sources.

**Comprehensive result** is the amount included in the operating statement representing total change in net worth other than transactions with owners as owners.

**Depreciation** is an expense that arises from the consumption through wear or time of a produced physical asset. This expense is classified as a 'transaction' and so reduces the 'net result from transaction'.

**Effective interest method** is the method used to calculate the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected useful life of the financial asset or, where appropriate, a shorter period.

**Employee benefits expenses** include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, redundancy payments and defined benefit superannuation plans and defined contribution superannuation plans.

**Finance lease** is a lease that transfers substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an underlying asset.

**Ex gratia expenses** mean the voluntary payment of money or other non-monetary benefit (e.g. a write off) that is not made either to acquire goods, services or other benefits for the entity or to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability or claim against the entity.

**Financial asset** is any asset that is:

- cash;
- an equity instrument of another entity;
- a contractual right:
  - to receive cash or another financial asset from another entity; or
  - to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially favourable to the entity; or
- a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:
  - a non-derivative for which the entity is or may be obliged to receive a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments; or
  - a derivative that will or may be settled other than by the exchange of a fixed amount of cash or another financial asset for a fixed number of the entity's own equity instruments.

**Financial instrument** is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

**Financial liability** is any liability that is:

(a) a contractual obligation:

- to deliver cash or another financial asset to another entity; or
- to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially unfavourable to the entity.

(b) a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:

- a non-derivative for which the entity is or may be obliged to deliver a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments; or
- a derivative that will or may be settled other than by the exchange of a fixed amount of cash or another financial asset for a fixed number of the entity's own equity instruments. For this purpose, the entity's own equity instruments do not include instruments that are themselves contracts for the future receipt or delivery of the entity's own equity instruments.

**Financial statements** comprises:

- a balance sheet as at the end of the period;
- a comprehensive operating statement for the period;
- a statement of changes in equity for the period;
- a cash flow statement for the period;
- notes, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information;
- comparative information in respect of the preceding period as specified in paragraph 38 of AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements*; and

- a statement of financial position as at the beginning of the preceding period when an entity applies an accounting policy retrospectively or makes a retrospective restatement of items in its financial statements, or when it reclassifies items in its financial statements in accordance with paragraph 41 of AASB 101.

**General government sector** comprises all government Boards, offices and other bodies engaged in providing services free of charge or at prices significantly below their cost of production. General government services include those that are mainly non-market in nature, those that are largely for collective consumption by the community and those that involve the transfer or redistribution of income. These services are financed mainly through taxes, or other compulsory levies and user charges.

**Infrastructure systems** provide essential services used in the delivery of final services or products. They are generally a complex interconnected network of individual assets and mainly include sewage systems and water storage and supply systems.

**Interest expense** represents costs incurred in connection with borrowings. It includes interest on loans and interest components of finance lease repayments.

**Interest income** includes interest received on bank term deposits and other investments.

**Leases** are rights conveyed in a contract, or part of a contract, the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration.

**Net acquisition of non-financial assets** (from transactions) are purchases (and other acquisitions) of non-financial assets less sales (or disposals) of non-financial assets less depreciation plus changes in inventories and other movements in non-financial assets. Includes only those increases or decreases in non-financial assets resulting from transactions and therefore excludes write-offs, impairment write-downs and revaluations.

**Net financial worth** is equal to financial assets minus liabilities. It is a broader measure than net debt as it incorporates provisions made (such as superannuation, but excluding depreciation and bad debts) as well as holdings of equity. Net financial worth includes all classes of financial assets and liabilities, only some of which are included in net debt.

**Net operating balance** or **net result from transactions** is a key fiscal aggregate and is revenue from transactions minus expenses from transactions. It is a summary measure of the ongoing sustainability of operations. It excludes gains and losses resulting from changes in price levels and other changes in the volume of assets. It is the component of the change in net worth that is due to transactions and can be attributed directly to government policies.

**Net result** is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those classified as 'other non-owner movements in equity'.

**Net worth** is calculated as assets less liabilities, which is an economic measure of wealth.

**Non-financial assets** are all assets that are not financial assets. It includes inventories, land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment, and cultural and heritage assets.

**Operating result** is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those that are classified as 'other non-owner movements in equity'. Refer also to 'net result'.

**Other economic flows included in net result** are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. In simple terms, other economic flows are changes arising from market re-measurements. They include gains and losses from disposals, revaluations and impairments of non-current physical and intangible assets; fair value changes of financial instruments and agricultural assets; and depletion of natural assets (non-produced) from their use or removal.

**Other economic flows – other comprehensive income** comprises items (including reclassification adjustments) that are not recognised in net result as required or permitted by other Australian Accounting Standards. They include changes in physical asset revaluation surplus.

**Payables** includes short and long-term trade debt and accounts payable, grants, taxes and interest payable.

**Receivables** include amounts owing from short and long-term trade credit and accounts receivable and interest receivable.

**Sale of goods and services** refers to income from the direct provision of goods and services and includes fees and charges for services rendered and sales of goods and services.

**Supplies and services** generally represent cost of goods sold and the day-to-day running costs, including maintenance costs, incurred in the normal operations of the Board.

**Transactions** are those economic flows that are considered to arise as a result of policy decisions, usually an interaction between two entities by mutual agreement. They also include flows within an entity such as depreciation where the owner is simultaneously acting as the owner of the depreciating asset and as the consumer of the service provided by the asset. Taxation is regarded as mutually agreed interactions between the government and taxpayers. Transactions can be in kind (e.g. assets provided/given free of charge or for nominal consideration) or where the final consideration is cash. In simple terms, transactions arise from the policy decisions of the Government.

## 8.12 Style conventions

Figures in the tables and in the text have been rounded. Discrepancies in tables between totals and sums of components reflect rounding. Percentage variations in all tables are based on the underlying unrounded amounts.

The notation used in the tables is as follows:

-	zero, or
(xxx)	negative
200x	year
200x-0x	year period.

The financial statements and notes are presented based on the illustration in the 2023-24 Model Report for Victorian Government Boards. The presentation of other disclosures is generally consistent with the other disclosures made in earlier publications of the Board's annual reports.



# Independent Auditor's Report

## To the Board of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board

**Opinion** I have audited the financial report of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board (the authority) which comprises the:

- balance sheet as at 30 June 2024
- comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended
- statement of changes in equity for the year then ended
- cash flow statement for the year then ended
- notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies
- declaration in the financial statements.

In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the authority as at 30 June 2024 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the *Financial Management Act 1994* and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.

**Basis for Opinion** I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report.

My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975*. My staff and I are independent of the authority in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

**Board's responsibilities for the financial report** The Board of the authority is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Financial Management Act 1994*, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.

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**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report**

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the authority's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the authority to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

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Paul Martin

*as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria*

MELBOURNE  
20 September 2024

# OUR PEOPLE





## Public Sector Values and Employment Principles

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria adopts policies and practices that are consistent with the *Public Administration Act 2004*. The organisation is committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing employees. The Gardens' policies and practices are consistent with the Victorian Public Sector Commission's (VPSC) employment standards and provide for fair treatment, career opportunities and the early resolution of workplace issues. The organisation has trained its employees on how to avoid conflicts of interest, how to respond to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality, how to address and manage misconduct and information regarding Public Interest Disclosures. Employees also receive training in workplace behaviour which focuses on supporting a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying along with the VPSC Code of Conduct and expectations of being a Public Sector Employee. Line managers have also received training on obligations of Positive Duty under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.

## Strategy and Direction

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria actively engages with staff and stakeholders to develop a robust and contemporary platform for the wellbeing of staff and volunteers. We commit to best practice for wellbeing, inclusion and recognising diversity through the following:

- Implementation of the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Ongoing commitment as a Child Safe organisation
- Continued implementation of initiatives in the four-year Gender Equality Action Plan 2022
- Promoting and implementing Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter
- Implementing our Occupational Health and Safety Strategy 2022–24
- A consultative approach to development of the next Corporate Plan

## Leadership skills and behaviours

- Positive Duty Training for managers to highlight the legislative requirement to take preventative strategic action to identify and prevent as well as eliminate both potential and existing inappropriate workplace and work-related behaviour
- Ongoing Executive Performance Planning processes to reflect the Gardens' commitment to leadership
- Development and delivery of a modular Leadership Development Training course for frontline managers to enhance their line management capabilities
- A range of tailored training modules specifically for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria leaders, including mental health awareness and managing challenging situations

## Workforce inclusion

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has policies and procedures in place and activities underway to meet its obligations and support a diverse and inclusive workplace. This year we developed and published the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–26 which is both an opportunity and an invitation for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff,

and stakeholders. We also refreshed our Equal Opportunity Contact Officer network and trained our first cohort of employee Mental Health First Aid Officers.

Our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2022 continued to be rolled out with the support of employees and the union and seeks to remove barriers for employees of all genders and intersectional disadvantage

to achieve equality in all aspects of employment. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria submitted a progress report in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* within the required timeframes. The following table outlines Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's actual progress against some of the major strategies during 2023–24.

Gender Equality Action Plan Measure	Target	Actual Progress 2023–24
Audit all fixed term positions in consultation with staff and the Union	Dec 23	Work commenced and ongoing to ensure we meet purpose of GEAP strategy and also new Federal Legislation limiting the use of fixed-term contracts from 6 December 23.
Deliver Appropriate Workplace Behaviour training to all staff every two years	Dec 24	Completed June 2024
Finalise a Positive Duty Plan, in consultation with Union, and roll out to all employees outlining our obligations under the <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i> and our commitment to preventing and eliminating sexual harassment in the workplace.	June 23	Completed August 2023

## Child safety

Child safety continued to be a priority at the Gardens with all new staff and volunteers required to complete all elements of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Child Safe Program. All incidents relating to the safety or wellbeing of children and young people continued to be overseen and managed through the Child Safety incident reporting mechanisms. No formal investigation was required or launched during this year.

## Comparative workforce data

### Summary of employment levels as of June 2023–24 and June 2022–23

Employees have been correctly classified in the workforce data collections.

	Ongoing Employees					Fixed term, Fixed task and Casual	
	Total Headcount (includes Ongoing, Fixed term, Fixed task and Casual)	Number (Headcount)	Full-time (Headcount)	Part-time (Headcount)	FTE	Headcount	FTE
June 2022–23	234	164	118	46	147.40	70	49.27
June 2023–24	246	180	127	53	159.68	66	39.43

**Details of employment levels re: gender, age, and classification**

	June 2024			June 2023		
	Total Headcount (includes Ongoing, Fixed term, Fixed task and Casual)	Ongoing	Fixed term, fixed task and casual	Total Headcount (includes Ongoing, Fixed term, Fixed task & Casual)	Ongoing  Number (Headcount)	Fixed term, Fixed task and Casual  Headcount
	246			234		
<b>Gender</b>						
Men	96	78	18	93	71	22
Women	147	100	47	138	91	47
Self-Described	3	2	1	3	2	1
<b>Age</b>						
Under 25	8	0	8	8	2	6
25–34	55	35	20	43	22	21
35–44	53	38	15	55	35	20
45–54	76	60	16	70	57	13
55–64	42	38	4	46	40	6
Over 64	12	9	3	12	8	4
<b>Classification</b>						
Staff	191	129	62	177	115	62
Line Manager	37	35	2	37	34	3
Branch Manager	16	16	0	15	15	0
Executives	2	0	2	5	0	5

**Notes:**

- All figures reflect employment levels and FTE count during the last full pay period in June of each year
- Excluded are those employees on leave without pay or absent on secondment, or casuals who were not paid in the final pay period and employee and employees on work cover leave
- Ongoing employees include people engaged on an open-ended contract of employment
- FTE means Full-time staff equivalent
- Classification is based on previous years reporting and is as follows:
  - Staff includes all employees other than those who have line management responsibilities
  - Line manager refers to an employee who supervises staff but does not manage a Branch function
  - Branch Manager is responsible for a function within an organisational division
  - Executives are employed under the VPSC PEER policy

## Executive Data

### Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period:

### Minister

The persons who held the positions of Minister, Governing Board and Accountable Officer of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria are as follows:

Minister		
Minister for Environment	The Hon Ingrid Stitt MP	1 July 2023 to 1 October 2023
Minister for Environment	Steve Dimopoulos MP	2 October 2023 to 30 June 2024

### Governing Board

A new term of the Board commenced on 1 October 2023, with Christine Trotman, Gillian Hund and Tony Bacic concluding their service to the Board on 30 September 2023.

Chair	Penny Fowler AM	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Deputy Chair		1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023
Deputy Chair	Jason Hay	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Damian Holmes	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Peter Langkamp OAM	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Felicia Mariani	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Arianne Rose	1 October 2023 to 30 June 2024
Member	Christine Wyatt	1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024
Chair	Chris Trotman	1 July 2023 to 30 September 2024
Member	Gillian Hund OAM	1 July 2023 to 30 September 2024
Member	Tony Bacic	1 July 2023 to 30 September 2024

Accountable Officer		
Acting Director and Chief Executive	Mr Chris Russell	2 February 2024 to 30 June 2024
Director and Chief Executive	Mr David Harland	12 September 2023 to 8 May 2024
Acting Director and Chief Executive	Ms Fiona McLaughlin	4 August 2023 to 11 September 2023
Director and Chief Executive	Professor Tim Entwisle	1 July 2023 to 3 August 2023

An executive is defined as a person employed as an executive under Part 3 of the *Public Administration Act 2004* or a person to whom the Victorian Government's Public Entity Executive Remuneration Policy applies. All figures reflect employment levels at the last full pay period in June of the current and corresponding previous reporting year.

The definition of SES does not include a statutory office holder or an Accountable Officer.

The following table discloses the SES of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria for 30 June 2024, broken down by gender.

Class	No.	Var.	No.		All	Women	Men	Self-described
SES3	0	0	0	0	0	0	n	n
SES2	0	0	0	0	0	0	n	n
SES1	2	0	0	0	2	0	n	n
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>n</b>

The number of executives in the report of operations is based on the number of executive positions that are occupied at the end of the financial year. Note 9.8 in the financial statements lists the actual number of SES and the total remuneration paid to SES over the course of the reporting period. The financial statements note does not include the Accountable Officer, nor does it distinguish between executive levels or disclose separations. Separations are executives who have left the Department during the relevant reporting period.

#### Reconciliation Action Plan

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria launched its first Innovate: Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2024–26 in February 2024. Unlike the first Reflect RAP, this Innovate RAP was co-developed with the Traditional Owners for each of our Garden's two sites, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Peoples. Since February this year, from the 58 deliverables outlined in this plan, by the deliverables that were required to be finalised by 30 June 2024, 30 are on track, three are not on track and 10 are not started, nine have been achieved and an additional one has also been finalised that is not yet due until next year.

Since this plan's launch, the following actions have been achieved:

- Cultural Deficit Discourse training by First Peoples' Murri Matters consultancy has begun to be rolled out to staff, to build organisational cultural competency and cultural safety
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Appreciation eLearning module undertaken by all staff for the second time
- All-staff National Reconciliation Week film screenings of First Peoples' education film *Occupation: Native* and bush food inspired afternoon tea
- Attaining the 2024 Victorian Premier Design Award for the co-developed wayfinding, interpretation and signage with the Traditional Owners of the Garden's site

### Occupational Health and Safety

The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne site was the venue of the second *Lightscape* event commencing at the end FY2022-23 (from June 2023 through to August 2023). Identification of hazards and risk assessments were carried out jointly with the event partners, with hazards identified, reported and mitigated accordingly.

The total number of incidents reported in FY2023-24 was 299 incidents (43 incidents reported during *Lightscape*), compared to 254 incidents (29 incidents reported during *Lightscape*) of the previous financial year.

Of the total incidents reported, 94 (31.4%) were employee related, with 46 (48.9%) of the employee related incidents being for injury. The remainder of employee related incidents were for near misses, property/equipment damage and report only incidents.

The increase in employee-related incidents can be attributed to active staff participation in reporting minor injuries. Line managers also played an important role in preventing injuries by encouraging staff to report injuries and actively managing risks.

There were three Lost Time Injuries (LTI) reported in FY2023-24 compared to five in the previous year. The LTIs reported were for musculoskeletal injury on lower back, shoulder and elbow.

There were three Medical Time Injuries (MTI) reported in FY2023-24 compared to two in the previous year. MTIs reported were for musculoskeletal injuries involving lower back and elbow. Line Managers worked with staff on restricted duties to develop return-to-work plans with reference to the medical certificate of capacity advice which has played an important role in employee rehabilitation/recovery back to pre-injury employment capacity.

There were 40 employee First Aid Injuries (FAI) reported in FY2023-24 compared to 29 in FY2022-23. There were no Mental Health incidents reported in FY2023-24 compared to one in FY2022-23.

The number of Worker Injury claims in FY2023-24 was seven compared to eight in the previous year. Two of these claims were from incidents registered in FY2022-23 but injury claims were reported and submitted late by the employee. Table and data below are claims registered by WorkSafe Agent (DXC Private Limited) by date of injury for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria summary report. Claim submission is made only when the medical and lost time injury reaches the employers liability of \$855 and or 10 days of lost time. Some injuries are submitted months before submission dates and may fall between financial year periods.

Claim Year	Total Claims	Total Incurred Cost	Average Incurred Cost	Time Lost Claims	Time Lost Claims Incurred Cost	Time Lost Claims Average Incurred Cost
2018/19	5	\$9,422.57	\$1,884.51	4	\$6,825.14	\$1,706.29
2019/20	2	\$11,204.32	\$5,602.16	1	\$7,085.54	\$7,085.54
2020/21	11	\$43,766.52	\$3,978.77	7	\$22,141.58	\$3,163.08
2021/22	3	\$7,436.87	\$2,478.96	1	\$3,560.27	\$3,560.27
2022/23	8	\$419,560.03	\$52,445.00	7	\$409,224.90	\$58,460.70
2023/24	7	\$56,972.06	\$8,138.87	7	\$56,972.06	\$8,138.87

Please note: Any claims received or changed from minor to standard in the previous three months will not have a Statistical Case Estimation (SCE) calculated, therefore incurred costs may be understated.

Standard claim open at time of report writing = Two (2)

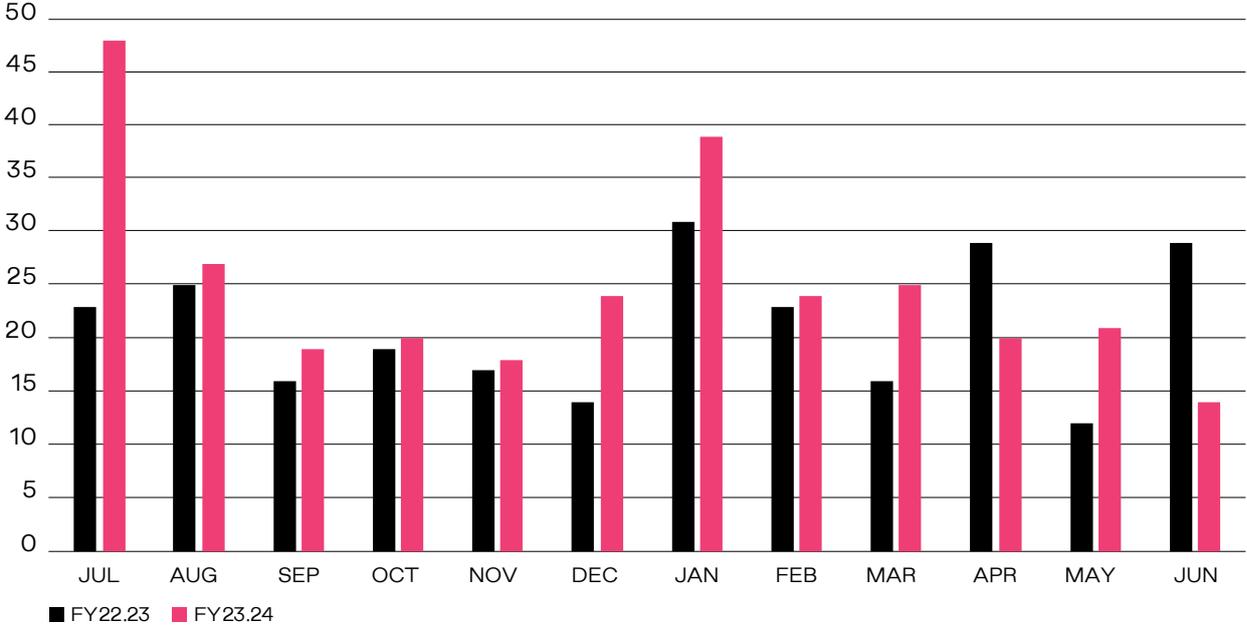
Minor claim open at time of report writing = Nil

There were nine WorkSafe notifiable incidents reported in FY2023-24 compared to three reported the previous year. All notifiable incidents were reported to WorkSafe within the required reporting period and were closed with no further investigations required.

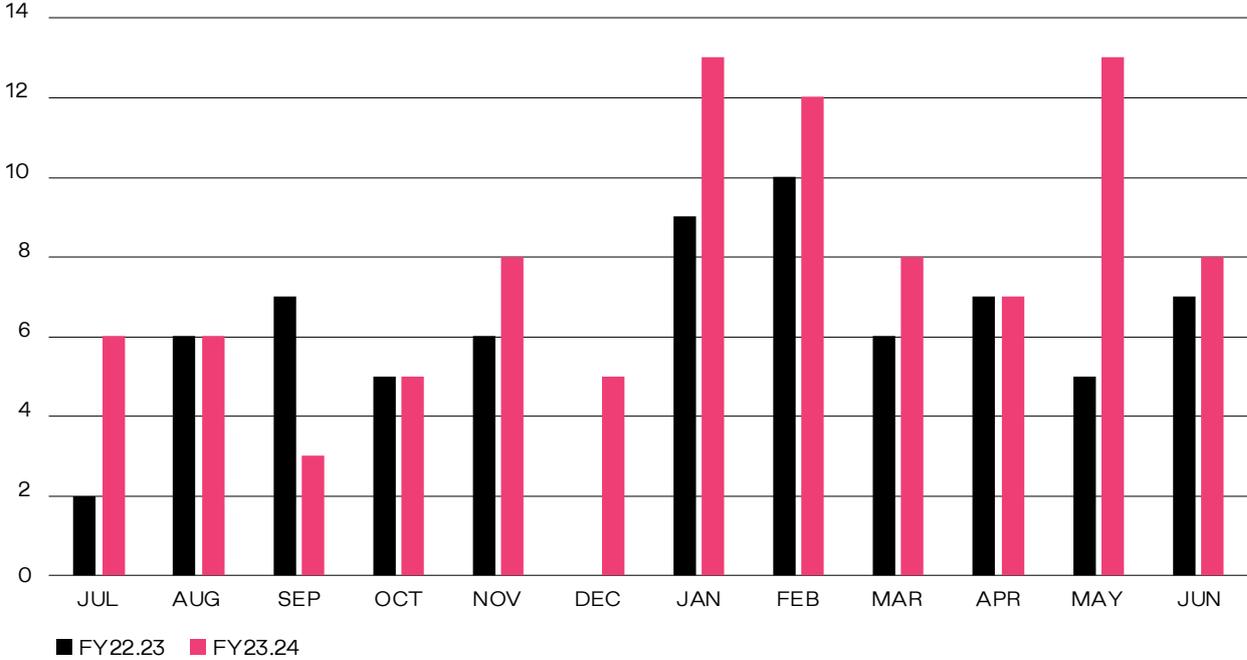
Hazard Hunt scheduling and planning processes were improved through the use of new tools within the Microsoft environment.

All First Aid Officer certifications are current and up to date. First Aid Officers and Health and Safety Representatives posters are readily available on the OHS page on the Intranet.

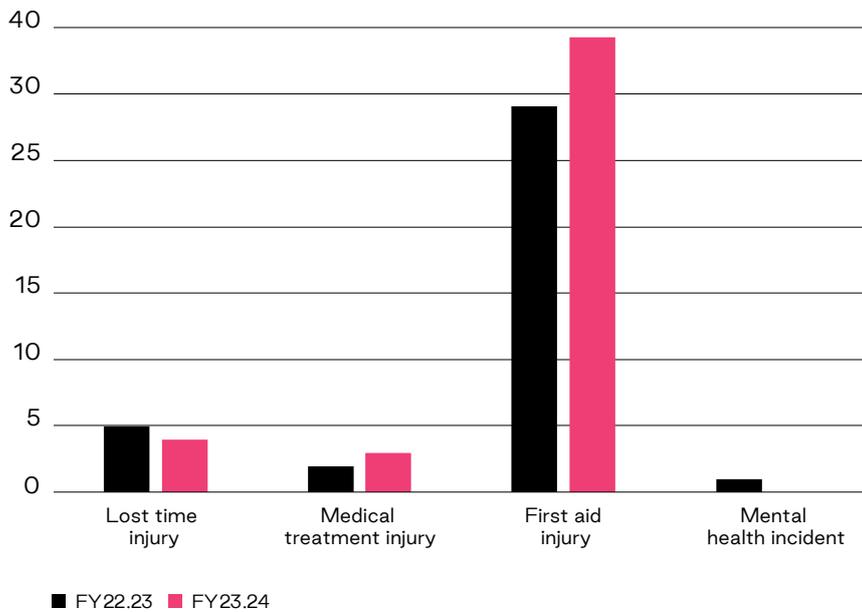
**Total incidents reported last 2 financial years**



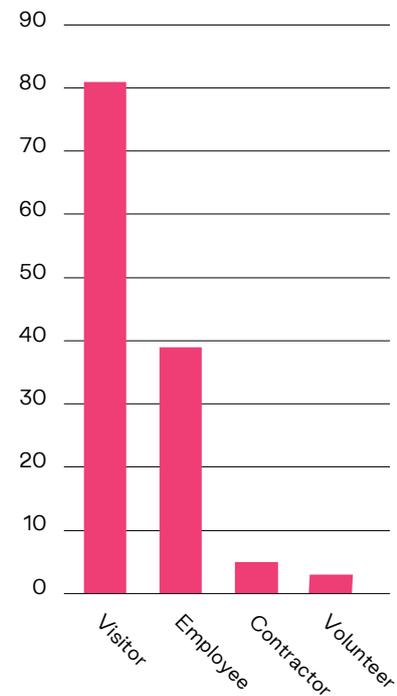
**Total employee incidents reported last 2 financial years**



### Total employee injury type by financial years



### First aid injury totals FY2023/24 by groups



### Workcover Injury Claims 2023/24

#### Employee injury area and compensation submission in FY2023/24

Areas of injury submitted with Worker Injury Claims includes strains and sprains to hand/finger, shoulder, lower back, lower leg, elbow.

Three claims for shoulder/strain

Two claims for lower leg/bruised

One claim for neck and shoulder/strained

One claim for lower arm/strain

One claim for elbow/strain

One claim for lower back/strain

One claim for hand and finger/puncture.

#### Worker Injury claims by body location

Neck = 1

Shoulder = 3

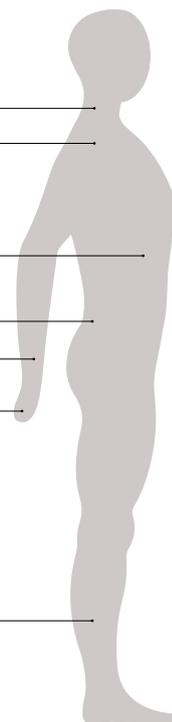
Elbow = 1

Lower Back = 1

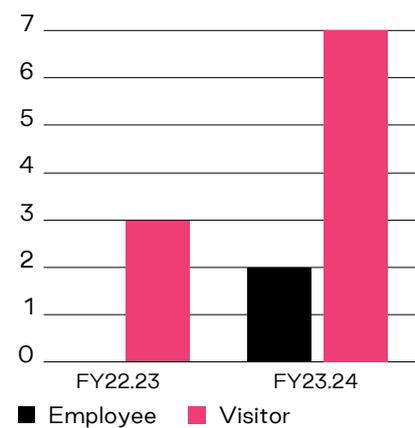
Lower Arm = 1

Finger = 1

Lower Leg = 2



### Total notifiable incidents by financial year



## Lead Indicators

### Planning and Consultation (FY2023/24)

	Planned	Held
OHS Committee meetings	4	4
OHS Working Group (management) meetings	8	8

#### Definitions of injury type

**Lost Time Injuries (LTI)** A Lost Time Injury is defined as an occurrence that resulted in a fatality, permanent disability or time lost from work of one day/shift or more (SafeWork Australia)

#### Medical Treatment Injuries (MTI)

Medical Treatment Injury is work-related injury or illness which results in the worker seeking medical attention from a health professional (e.g. doctor) without losing time off work for the whole day.

#### First Aid Treatment Injury (FAI)

A First Aid Treatment Injury (FAI) is an injury that requires a single first aid treatment involving only minor injuries, for example minor scratches, burns, cuts and so forth, which do not ordinarily require medical care.

#### Medical Health Incident (MHI)

Work-related stress resulting in the physical and psychological response of an employee who perceives that the demands of their work or workplace environment exceed their ability or resources to cope. (WorkSafe Victoria)

# OTHER DISCLOSURES



## Government Advertising Expenditure

Nil reports

## Consultancy Expenditure

In 2023–24 there were four consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were \$10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2023–24 in relation to these consultancies was \$137,604 (excl. GST).

Details of Individual consultancies:

In 2023–24 no consultants were engaged where the total fees payable to individual consultants were less than \$10,000.

Consultant	Purpose of Consultancy	Start Date	End Date	Total Approved Fee (exc. GST)	Expenditure 2023–24 (excl. GST)	Future Expenditure (excl. GST)
CT Management	Independent Building Compliance Assessment and advice to support Strategic and Operational requirements	15/4/2024	14/7/2024	24,464	15,300	9,164
Future Foods	Development of a Food and Event Strategy to support Melbourne Hospitality Masterplan	8/9/2023	20/3/2024	31,900	31,900	
Realm Studios	Development of Cranbourne Southern Grasslands Landscape Plan	1/5/2024	31/7/2024	57,054	19,304	37,750
Terra Firma	Business Analyst Services in support of Business Systems Review	8/5/2023	25/10/2023	104,700	71,100	
<b>Total</b>				<b>218,118</b>	<b>137,604</b>	<b>46,914</b>

## Reviews and Studies Expenditure

Name of the review and division or third-party responsible	Reasons for review/study	Terms of reference/scope	Anticipated outcomes	Cost for the year (exc. GST)	Final cost if completed	Publicly available (Y/N and URL)
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Organisational Structure Review Bendelta	To provide recommendations for a structure that better allows Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to deliver against its strategic objectives	Review the current organisational structure Provide recommendations for a revised structure moving forward including: Leadership levels Organisation of business functions Emphasis on efficiency	Report outlining proposed organisational structure and recommendations for implementation	n/a	\$98,500	N
TreePlotter Audit	To assess the value of trees	Tree valuation and environmental data quantification	All trees at Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens assessed for dollar and data value	\$8,000	n/a	N
Lightening Oak assessment Internal	Ensure Lightening Oak tree remains safe	Assess tree support system and recommend any required reinforcements	Lightening Oak tree is well managed for its ongoing health and visitor safety	\$10,000	n/a	N
Soil Chemistry Testing Internal	Test soil chemistry to understand premium growing conditions	Soil tested across both Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens to determine management actions for optimum growing conditions	Optimum growing conditions ensured across both Gardens		\$10,000	N

## Information and Communication Technology Expenditure

For the 2023–24 reporting period, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria had a total ICT Expenditure of \$1,990,844.

All operational ICT expenditure	ICT expenditure related to projects to create or enhance ICT capabilities		
Business as Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure	Non-Business as Usual (non-BAU) ICT expenditure	Operational Expenditure	Capital Expenditure
(Total)	(Total = Operational expenditure and capital expenditure)		
\$1,990,844	\$32,109	\$1,857,426	\$101,309

## Major Contracts

During 2023–24, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not enter into any contracts valued at over \$10 million.

## Disclosure of Procurement Complaints

Under the Governance Policy of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB), Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria must disclose any formal complaints relating to the procurement of goods and services received through its procurement complaints management system.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria received no formal complaints through its procurement complaints management system in 2023–24.

## Local Jobs First – Victorian Industry Participation Policy statement

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* introduced in August 2018 brings together the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) and Major Project Skills Guarantee (MPSG) policy which were previously administered separately.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is required to apply the Local Jobs first policy in all projects valued at \$3 million or more in Metropolitan Melbourne or for statewide projects, or \$1 million or more for projects in regional Victoria.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria had no projects valued at \$3 million or more in Metropolitan Melbourne or for statewide projects, or \$1 million or more for projects in regional Victoria during the reporting period.

## Establishing Legislation

The *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991* was not amended in 2023–24.

## Legislative Compliance

### Financial Management Act 1994

Full details of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's compliance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* are outlined in the section 'Financial Management' and in the Disclosure Index.

### Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* allows the public a right of access to documents held by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. The purpose of the Freedom of Information Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers and other bodies subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. This comprises documents both created by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria or supplied to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, microfiche, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings and videotapes. Information about the type of material produced by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is available on Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's website under the Part II Information Statement.

The Freedom of Information Act allows Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include cabinet documents; some internal working documents; law enforcement documents; documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice; personal information about other people; and information provided to a department in confidence and information that is confidential under another Act.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, the Freedom of Information processing time for requests received is 30 calendar days. However, when external consultation is required under s29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 34 or 35, a 15-day automatic extension applies. Processing time may also be extended by periods of up to 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. With the applicant's agreement this may occur any number of times. However, obtaining an applicant's agreement for an extension cannot occur after the expiry of the timeframe for deciding a request.

If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision made by the Department, under section 49A of the Freedom of Information Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

### Making a request

Access to documents can also be obtained through a written request to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Freedom of Information team, as detailed in s17 of the Freedom of Information Act.

When making a Freedom of Information request, applicants should ensure requests are in writing, clearly identify what types of material/documents are being sought and be accompanied by the application fee to be a valid request. An application fee of \$32.70 applies. Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large, and the search for material, time consuming.

Requests for documents in the possession of the Royal Botanic Gardens should be addressed to:

Freedom of Information (FOI) Officer  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria  
Private Bag 2000  
South Yarra, VIC 3141

Enquiries can be made to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's FOI Office via email at [foi@rbg.vic.gov.au](mailto:foi@rbg.vic.gov.au).

### **Freedom of Information statistics/timeliness**

During 2023–24, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria received one Freedom of Information application from the general public. The application was later withdrawn with no formal decision required.

### **Competitive Neutrality Policy**

Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to remove any advantage arising solely from their government ownership if it is not in the public interest where services compete, or potentially compete with the private sector. Government businesses are required to cost and price these services as if they were privately owned. Competitive neutrality policy supports fair competition between public and private businesses and provides government businesses with a tool to enhance decisions on resource allocation. This policy does not override other policy objectives of government and focuses on efficiency in the provision of service. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to comply with the requirements of the Competitive Neutrality Policy.

### **DataVic Access Policy**

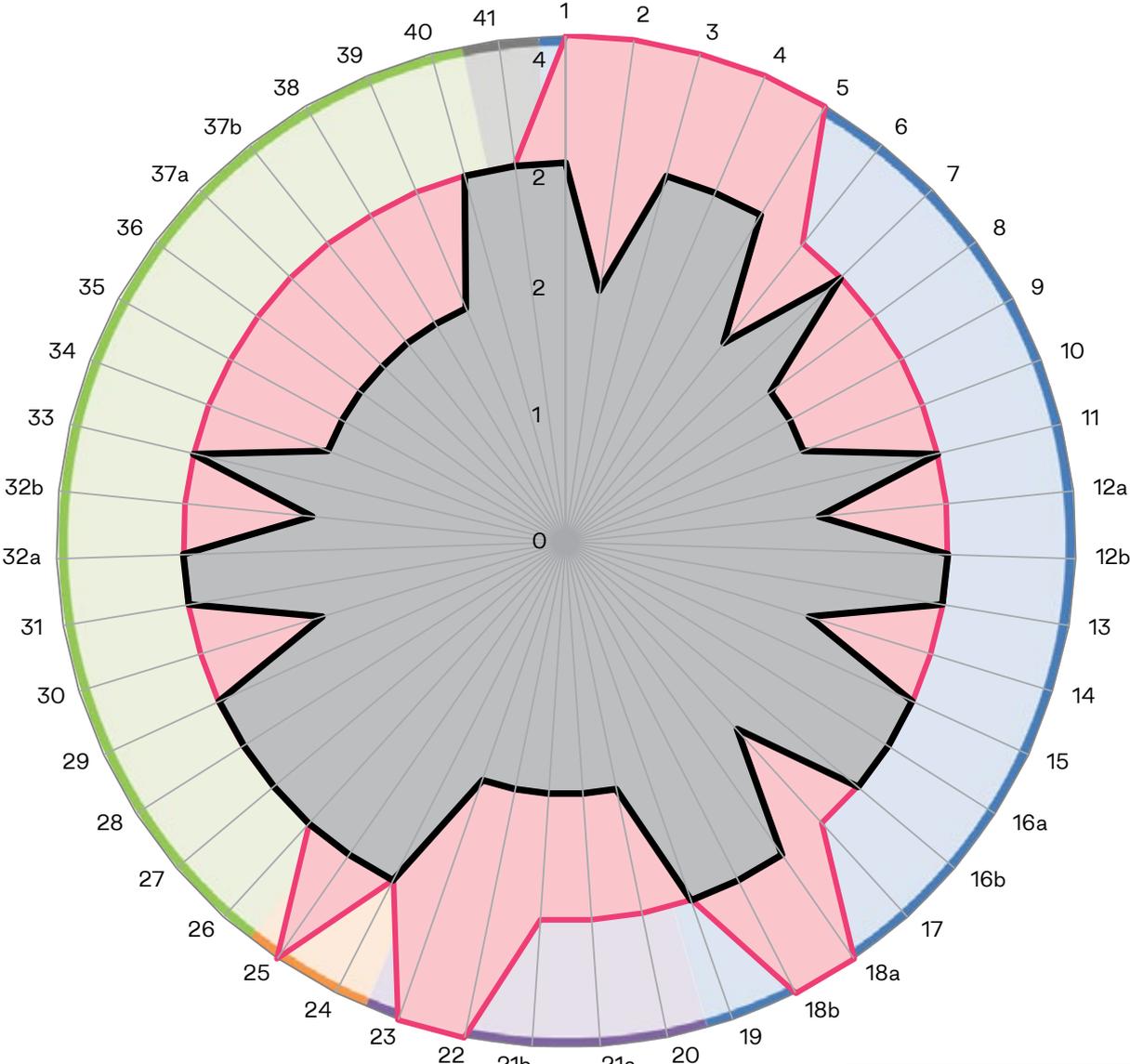
Consistent with the DataVic Access Policy issued by the Victorian Government in 2012, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria will make available relevant data sets at [www.data.vic.gov.au](http://www.data.vic.gov.au) in electronic readable format.

### **Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF) Maturity Assessment**

The following sections summarise the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's assessment of maturity against the requirements of the Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF). The AMAF is a non-prescriptive, devolved accountability model of asset management that requires compliance with 41 mandatory requirements. These requirements can be found on the Department of Treasury and Finance website.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's target maturity rating is 'competence' meaning systems and processes fully in place, consistently applied and systematically meeting the AMAF requirement, including a continuous improvement process to expand system performance above AMAF minimum requirements.

# Asset Management Maturity Assessment



■ Target ■ Overall

Legend	
Status	Scale
Not Applicable	N/A
Innocence	0
Awareness	1
Developing	2
Competence	3
Optimising	4
Unassessed	U/A

## **Leadership and Accountability (requirement 1–19)**

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has met its target maturity level in some of these requirements within this category. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not comply with some requirements in the areas of allocating asset management responsibility, monitoring asset performance and other requirements. There is no material non-compliance reported in this category. A plan for improvement is in place to improve the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's maturity rating in these areas, mainly to increase the effectiveness of application since the system status is considered competent for all these requirements.

## **Planning (requirements 20–23)**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has not met its target maturity in this category. There is no material non-compliance reported in this category. A plan for improvement is in place to improve the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's maturity rating in these areas, mainly to increase the effectiveness of application since the system status is considered competent for all these requirements.

## **Acquisition (requirement 24 and 25)**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has met its target maturity level in most of these requirements within this category. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not reach an optimal maturity rating in acquisition and processing. There is no material non-compliance reported in this category. Even though compliant, a plan for improvement is in place to improve the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's maturity rating in these areas.

## **Operation (requirement 26–40)**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has met its target maturity level in most of these requirements within this category. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not comply with some requirements in the areas of information management, record keeping and other requirements. There is no material non-compliance

reported in this category. A plan for improvement is in place to improve the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's maturity rating in these areas, mainly to increase the effectiveness of application since the system status is considered competent for all these requirements.

## **Disposal (requirement 41)**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has met its target maturity level in this category.

## **Compliance with the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012**

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* protects people who report improper conduct and corruption in the Victorian public sector (whistle-blowers). Those protections include keeping the identity of the person reporting improper conduct confidential and protecting them from reprisals including bullying, harassment or legal action.

## **What is a 'Public Interest Disclosure'?**

A public interest disclosure is a complaint or allegation made about corrupt conduct, improper conduct or detrimental action by a public officer or a public body. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is a public body for the purposes of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*.

## **What are Improper or Corrupt Conduct and Detrimental Action?**

Improper conduct is defined in the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* to mean:

- Corrupt conduct, or conduct of a public officer or body that constitutes: a criminal offence
- Serious professional misconduct
- Dishonest performance of public functions
- Intentional or reckless breach of public trust
- Intentional or reckless misuse of information

- Substantial mismanagement of public resources
- Substantial risk to the health or safety of one or more persons,
- Substantial risk to the environment

The conduct of any person that:

- Adversely affects the honest performance by a public officer or public body of their functions
- Is intended to adversely affect the effective performance by a public officer or public body of their functions for the benefit of themselves or another person (for example resulting in the person obtaining a licence, permit or approval, appointment, financial benefit or other direct or indirect monetary or proprietary gain)

The conduct must be a serious breach of an established professional code of conduct and/or other serious departures from the person's professional responsibilities. Less serious or trivial conduct is excluded from the definition of improper conduct.

Corrupt conduct is dishonest activity in which an employee or Board member acts contrary to the interest of that body and abuses their position of trust in order to achieve personal gain or advantage for themselves or for another person or entity.

Corrupt conduct can include:

- taking or offering bribes
- dishonesty using influence
- committing fraud, theft or embezzlement
- misusing information or material acquired at work
- conspiring or attempting to engage in the above corrupt activity

Corruption can occur through:

- improper or unlawful actions by public officers or public bodies
- failure of public officers or public bodies to act
- actions of private individuals who try to improperly influence public sector functions or decisions

Detrimental action or reprisal means action taken against a person who has made a Public Interest Disclosure, including action causing injury, loss or damage, intimidation or harassment, or discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to a person's employment, career, profession, trade or business. It includes the taking of disciplinary action.

### How do I make a 'Public Interest Disclosure'?

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is not permitted to receive disclosures made under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*. Therefore, if you wish to make a disclosure about Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, its employees, or Board members, you will need to make that disclosure directly to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) via the contact details provided on this page. Royal Botanic Gardens Board, or any of its officers are not able to receive public interest disclosures.

### How can I access the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria's procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action?

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has established procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure about the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria or its employees. Access the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's procedures at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria website: <https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/about-us/policies/>

### Contacts

Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator,  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria:

Erin Kelly  
Acting Manager Governance  
Royal Botanic Gardens  
Private Bag 2000  
South Yarra VIC 3141  
Phone: (03) 9252 2438  
Email: [erin.kelly@rbg.vic.gov.au](mailto:erin.kelly@rbg.vic.gov.au)

### Independent Broad-Based Anti-corruption Commission

Website: [ibac.vic.gov.au](http://ibac.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 735 135 (10 am – 4 pm, Monday – Friday, excluding public holidays)

Email: please see the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

### Compliance with Other Legislation

#### Disclosure of Emergency Procurement

In 2023–24 Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria activated Emergency Procurement on one occasion in accordance with the requirements of government policy and accompanying guidelines. One new contract, valued below \$100,000 (GST inclusive), was awarded in connection with the emergency. Details of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's emergency procurements are shown in the following table.

Nature of Emergency	Date of activation	Summary of goods and services procured under new contracts	Total spend on goods and services in response to the emergency	Number of new contracts awarded valued at \$100 000 (incl. GST) or more.
Plumbing leak	11 April 2024	Crack in existing sewer pit repaired and sewer pit disconnected to prevent further risk of contamination to water system. New pit installed at the site.	\$59,972.92	0

### Disclosure of procurement complaints

Under the Governance Policy of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB), Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria must disclose any formal complaints relating to the procurement of goods and services received through its procurement complaints management system.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria received no formal complaints through its procurement complaints management system in 2023–24.

### Social Procurement Framework

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria recognises that it plays a key role in advancing social and sustainable outcomes for Victorians and is fully committed to supporting the Government's directions under the Social Procurement Framework. This is reflected in the second year of delivery of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's first Social Procurement Strategy 2023–26 (SPS), which provides an organisation-wide approach to how we deliver social and sustainable outcomes.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has prioritised four social and sustainable objectives of the Social Procurement Framework for the term of our initial SPS:

1. Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people
  - Purchasing from Victorian Aboriginal businesses
  - Employment of Victorian Aboriginal people by suppliers to the Victorian Government

## 2. Environmentally sustainable outputs

- Project-specific requirements to use sustainable resources and to manage waste and pollution
- Use of recycled content in construction

## 3. Environmentally sustainable business practices

- Adoption of sustainable business practices by suppliers to the Victorian Government

## 4. Implementation of the Climate Change Policy Objectives

- Project-specific requirements to minimise greenhouse gas emissions
- Procurement of outputs that are resilient against the impacts of climate change

### Achievements

This year's reporting continues to focus on the first identified priority objective set out in its SPS. Over the term of the Strategy, future reporting will expand to all four objectives.

Objective One: Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people

- Total number of Victorian Aboriginal people employed by Victorian Government suppliers on Victorian Government contracts: 59
- Number of Victorian Aboriginal businesses engaged: 32
- Total expenditure with Victorian Aboriginal businesses (excl. GST): \$222,165

Additional achievements include:

- Employment of an additional four First Peoples staff, which more than doubles the three First Peoples staff employed in 2022-23, making a total of seven
- Presentation of artworks and music compositions by 12 Victorian and 10 interstate First Peoples artists featured in *Lightscape 2024* which equates to a total of \$30,368 (excl. GST) direct investment to First Peoples
- Sales of First Nations products or products designed by First Peoples was sourced from six suppliers to the value of \$99,846 (excl. GST). Three of the six suppliers were Supply Nation or Kinaway certified and made up \$23,927 (excl. GST) from the total First Peoples' direct and indirect retail spendings
- Provided \$14,990 in-kind support for a grant-funded project on reclaiming First Peoples' food plant knowledge from the Garden's Herbarium archives in partnership with Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation and the University of Melbourne
- Afforded Aboriginal Heritage Walk public tours to 121 First Peoples at no-cost, and 24 First Peoples at a discount-cost, to the total value of \$5,320

### **Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria – Memorandum of Understanding between Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and the Gardens – Supporting Treaty, Truth-Telling and Self-Determination**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and the Traditional Owners of our Melbourne Gardens site, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Peoples, executed a Memorandum of Understanding between its two organisations in February 2024. This is the first of its kind formalised partnership agreement that either organisation has executed and outlines the way in which the organisations will work together to progress and support treaty, truth-telling and self-determination through several projects and initiatives. This includes exploring opportunities for benefit sharing such as First Peoples' employment, traineeships, contracting, work experience and internships.

This has been realised through several engagement initiatives including regular engagement of:

- Numerous Elders to undertake Welcome to Country and cultural ceremonies
- Cultural educators to train and guide Garden's staff, Board, learning and tourism teams in Wurundjeri specific cultural protocols, customs, truth-telling and knowledge sharing etiquettes
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artists to develop artwork for the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Innovate RAP and visual and audio works for the Garden's Red Energy sponsored *Lightscape* public art installation event
- Key Wurundjeri Elders and staff in cultural guidance and co-development of a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Gardens and Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) new 'Wurundjeri Biik Garden' featured in the 2024 MIFGS

### Impact of the engagement

A total of 22 Traditional Owners were engaged through the above listed projects, which equates to a total of \$41,412 in financial payment directly to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and/or directly to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artists. Apart from this direct financial remuneration, the various internal and external projects greatly increased Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria staff and visitors' knowledge and understanding of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Peoples' culture, history, and views on caring for plants and Country. This partnership also allowed Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to further strengthen our relationships with Traditional Owners of our Melbourne sites and form a strong foundation to continue making progress in our reconciliation journey.

## Environmental Reporting

### Environmental Sustainability Reporting Context

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is committed to play its role in the state-wide transition to net-zero emissions and climate resilience by 2045, better manage exposure to climate-related risk and meet responsibilities in reducing its environmental impacts. This commitment is reflected by the way in which we continue to report beyond our required disclosure under Financial Reporting Directive FRD24E, on our ongoing performance in managing and reducing the environmental impacts of our activities. By continuing to improve on environmental reporting methodologies we are also able to continue to improve in our environmental sustainability practices.

### Reporting boundary for environmental data

Our reporting boundary remains within the Gardens' two sites, Melbourne and Cranbourne, with data collated for each and then calculated together for the purpose of this report. It currently does not include environmental impacts produced by tenants or event contractors that the Garden's host or partner with at each site, nor any environmental impacts associated with work that we do outside of our site's boundary, such as remote scientific field work.

### Reporting period

The tables below capture environmental reporting data from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 and 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. This is the fourth year in a row that reporting has been undertaken in line with FRD24E Departmental standards and methodologies. This allows for a more accurate analysis of where we are making progress and where we need to undertake more work to reduce greenhouse gas emission.

### Reporting updates

This year, being the second reporting year against the updated FRD24E compared to previous FRD24D requirements, means that there have still been some adjustments in the accuracy of data. This is reflected in how last year's figures have changed on average by approximately 1% compared to what was previously reported, as better data has become available. Notably, the difference in figures for FY2021-22 compared to this year's report are less than 1% for electricity and LPG, 2% for water and 6% for gas.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to report on seven of the nine FRD24E indicators, some in more depth than others. As we continue to evolve our internal processes, so too will our data collation methodology and analysis evolve.

### Climate-related Risk Disclosure Statement

Climate change existing and forecast impacts include increases in average temperatures with more frequent hot weather, shifting rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and more frequent bushfires. This will impact the natural environment that the Garden's manage, notably impact on the composition of the Gardens' two sites living collections, as well as the environment that the Garden's undertakes its plant, algae, fungi and seed collection and surveying across Australia. It will also impact on the Garden's two sites cultural values, recreation, education and cultural event opportunities, commercial operations and built assets managed by the Gardens.

Specifically, this will include:

- Hotter drier temperatures and storm impacts leading to loss of plant species, amenities, changing visitation patterns, and staff and visitor safety
- Increased flood impacts involving coastal storm surge, land-form erosion, inundation, and asset damage

- Increased bushfire impacts and risks on the landscapes of the Gardens' two sites and various plant, algae and fungi ecosystems across Australia that our work extend to
- Increased biosecurity and ecosystem stress from new and emerging pest plants, animals and diseases
- Reduced water use impacting on the composition of Gardens' living collections
- Increased deployment of human and financial resources for emergency response and recovery operations
- Increased economic costs and loss in organisational effectiveness

This situation will require ongoing awareness, adaptation, innovation, planning and implementation of appropriate and flexible climate adaptation and resilience strategies.

### Climate-related Risk Governance

The Executive and Board continue to lead on the Gardens risk management framework, which includes quarterly risk management reporting via Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Strategic risk register. The strategic risk register comprises of 16 identified risks, including a stand-alone climate risk. It also incorporates climate risk as a key driver to several other strategic risks. The Gardens operational risk register also highlights several climate change related risks, such as disruption caused by natural-disaster and compromised emergency readiness. This register is reviewed quarterly by the Senior Leadership Group and the Risk Planning and Review Group, and annually by the Gardens Board and the Audit Risk and Finance Committee. This includes assessing information on the challenges and actions to manage the effects of climate change related initiatives.

The Board and Executive Team have also endorsed the formation of a Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Environmental Sustainability Working Group to oversee the development of an Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Environmental Sustainability Plan and subsequent policies and guidelines.

### **Climate-related Risk Strategy**

The Gardens continues to build on its understanding of climate-related risk and potential impacts via several strategies.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Corporate Plan 2021–24 addresses the effects of climate change primarily via one of the four organisational pillars of 'planet – conservation action'. This pillar highlights our conservation action by committing to:

- Develop, refine and communicate our strategic response to major biodiversity and conservation matters such as climate change, land use change, invasive species and individual action
- Improve and promote our approach and outcomes in environmental sustainability across all areas of the organisation
- Further extend our internal support, capacity building and partnerships in our scientific and conservation work and work that we undertake with the Climate Change Alliance of the Botanic Gardens

The Melbourne Gardens Master Plan 2020–40 is the third Master Plan for the Melbourne site which identifies the strategic direction and key goals it aims to achieve by 2040. The plan identifies climate change risk as a key driver for instigating key strategic project priorities.

The Cranbourne Gardens Master Plan 2016–26 like the Melbourne Master Plan sets the strategic direction and site-specific goals to achieve by 2026. This plan identifies incorporating climate change responses in all its collections, garden composition, and operational planning and management.

The Landscape Succession Strategy Melbourne Gardens 2016–36 is a first of its kind climate adaptation strategy for a botanical landscape that focuses on adaptation and resilience in relation to the Gardens collections and garden composition. This strategy provides a framework to protect Melbourne Gardens by transitioning the Garden's plantings and composition to the projected climate and environmental conditions of 2090.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Science Strategy 2022–31 identifies two from its three strategic goals the need for protection of plants, algae and fungi against extinction and to innovate and inspire by applying new ideas and techniques to address the climate and biodiversity crises.

### **Climate-related Risk Management**

The Gardens has considered the effects of climate change outcomes such as weather extremes, bushfires and flooding as a factor in planning risk management as identified in the following strategic risks:

Strategic risks:

- SR-01 The State Botanical Collection is not maintained/safeguarded
- SR-02 Risk of physical or mental harm to the public and external stakeholders due to our physical operating environment
- SR-03 Risk of physical or mental harm to our employees due to our physical operating environment
- SR-07 Harm caused or threat to the sustainability of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Living Collections
- SR-09 Unsustainable financial structure and operations in the long term
- SR16 Climate risk

Operational risks: Climate change has also been identified as a key driver in numerous operational risks, with appropriate controls implemented to manage each of these risks.

Shared risk management: The Gardens' risk management framework incorporates policies and procedures that guide the management of the Garden's identified risks, including climate change, emergency risks, site specific and State and Australia wide shared risks.

### **Climate-related metrics and targets – mitigation**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's emission reduction goal is in line with Victorian Government's target of achieving net zero emissions by 2045. Attaining this goal is supported by the introduction of the following, but not limited to, range of actions:

- As of February 2024, all new building and construction projects include environmental sustainability design principles and product specifications in project brief and tender documentation
- The Social Procurement Strategy 2023–25 outlines two environmental sustainability targets to guide environmentally sustainable and responsible procurement across all areas of our operations
- By the end of 2024 establish an Environmental Sustainability Working Group to prioritise the development of an Environmental Sustainability Plan and subsequent guidelines and processes
- Swap over all new fleet vehicles and machinery to zero or low emission models
- Continue to upgrade light bulbs to LED across both Garden sites
- Continual improvement of greenhouse gas emissions reporting

## Environmental Performance Report

### Greenhouse gas emission

Greenhouse gas emissions are broken down into emissions 'scopes' consistent with national and international reporting standards. Scope one emissions are from sources that the Gardens owns or controls, such as fossil fuels generated by our machinery. Scope two emissions are indirect emissions from the Gardens use of electricity from the grid. Scope three emissions are indirect emissions from sources the Gardens does not control but does influence such as corporate air travel, waste and water.

#### Scope one

The Garden's scope one greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 22% from last year and by 32% from 2021-22. This year's significant reduction in scope one greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to the reduction of the Garden's vehicle fleet numbers, particularly petrol vehicles.

#### Scope two

Total scope two greenhouse gas emissions have slightly increased by 2% this year compared to 7% increase last year. The continuation of several capital works programs is seen to have contributed to the increase in the last year. Another contributing factor is the exclusion of Green Power offset figures in this year's calculations, compared to their inclusion last year. The rationale for currently excluding public event Green Power offsets is to ensure that we are consistent with our approach. Therefore, the Gardens will continue excluding all partner and tenant greenhouse gas emissions until a comprehensive monitoring system for such activities can be implemented. Currently the Gardens have no way to measure power generated by other event project partners.

#### Scope three

Total scope three greenhouse gas emissions have remained almost the same as last year, with a minor decrease of 2% compared to 2022-23. The increase in emissions of 13% this year compared to 2021-22 figures is primarily due to an increase in public waste and other indirect emissions that increased with various business operation activities post COVID-19 restrictions.

#### Net greenhouse gas emissions

Total net greenhouse gas emissions this year have increased by 6% compared to 2022-23 and by 2% compared to 2021-22 figures due to the above listed factors. The Gardens is aiming to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions through a combination of different initiatives, from increased use of solar power and 100% LED light installation, to acquisition of no or all low emission vehicles and machinery.

Indicator	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
<b>G1 Total scope one (direct) greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO2-e]</b>	<b>304.08</b>	<b>379.97</b>	<b>420.07</b>
<b>G2 Total scope two (indirect electricity) greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO2-e]</b>	<b>956.53</b>	<b>934.09</b>	<b>890.21</b>
<b>G3 Total scope three (other indirect) greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO2-e]</b>	<b>844.41</b>	<b>862.70</b>	<b>744.16</b>
<b>GreenPower offset [MWh]</b>		<b>-211.67</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>G(Opt) Net greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO2-e]</b>	<b>2,105.02</b>	<b>1,974.62</b>	<b>2,054.44</b>

## Electricity production and consumption

Total electricity consumption was higher this year by seven per cent from 2022–23 figures, and by 23% from 2021–22 figures. The main reason for this year's increase is due to a reduction in the amount of total energy offset. For a consistent reporting approach, this year the purchased Green Power from a major annual Melbourne Gardens Red Energy sponsored public event *Lightscape* has not been included, until the Gardens set up monitoring systems that allow for measuring greenhouse gas emissions from all its event partners and tenants. The increase in electricity use from 2021–22 figures can be attributed to an increase of staff, visitation and typical business onsite activities resuming after COVID–19 restrictions.

The total electricity generated by solar power continued to increase, with this year's rise of 10% compared to 2022–23 figures, and by 83% from 2020–21 figures. This is due to the solar generated water plant at Cranbourne Gardens being in its second full year of operations and no longer needing to be run off mains power.

The Garden continues to implement a range of energy efficiency initiatives to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions in other ways, such as installation of LED lighting with each new light replacement to reduce power consumption.

Indicator	2023–24	2022–23	2021–22
<b>EL1 Total electricity consumption [MWh]</b>	<b>1,591.49</b>	<b>1,483.86</b>	<b>1,268.34</b>
Purchased	1,454.31	1,359.76	1,219.06
Self-generated	137.18	124.10	49.29
<b>EL2 On site–electricity generated [MWh]</b>	<b>137.62</b>	<b>124.70</b>	<b>56.93</b>
Total Consumption behind–the–meter [MWh] – Solar Electricity	137.18	124.10	49.29
Total Electricity exported [MWh] – Solar Electricity	0.44	0.60	7.65
<b>EL3 On–site installed generation capacity [MW] – Solar System</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.14</b>
<b>EL4 Total electricity offsets [MWh]</b>	<b>273.41</b>	<b>467.30</b>	<b>226.62</b>
GreenPower	–	211.67	–
RPP (Renewable Power Percentage in the grid)	273.41	255.64	226.62

## Stationary fuel use

Despite the increase in the consumption of electricity use, this year's greenhouse gas emissions from stationary energy fuel consumption were down by 28% compared to 2022-23 figures and 40% compared

to 2021-22 figures. This can be attributed to a significant decrease in the use of natural gas by 36% from last year as the gradual switch from natural gas to sustainable power sources continues. On the other hand,

there has been a significant increase in LPG use by 60% compared to 2022-23 figures, due to the Cranbourne Gardens taking on the running LPG costs for new tenants.

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
<b>F1 Total fuels used in buildings [MJ]</b>	<b>4,287,446.80</b>	<b>5,742,052.20</b>	<b>6,500,428.50</b>
Natural gas	3,820,723.70	5,474,105.50	6,137,341.80
LPG	430,037.80	231,269.00	363,086.70
Diesel	36,685.30	36,677.70	-
<b>F2 Greenhouse gas emissions from stationary fuel consumption [Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-e]</b>	<b>225.52</b>	<b>298.67</b>	<b>338.26</b>
Natural gas	196.88	282.08	316.26
LPG	26.06	14.01	22.00
Diesel	2.58	2.57	-

## Transportation

Vehicle fleet for both our sites comprises of a total of 55 vehicles, for on-road (13) and off-road (42) use. 2% of these are hybrid, 43% electric, 48% diesel and 31% petrol. Since 2022-23, there has been a reduction from 60 to 55 vehicles, with three of the five removed vehicles being petrol and an increase of electric vehicles from 15 to 18 compared to last year.

Total energy used in transport remained relatively like the previous year, with a slight decrease of 3% compared to 2022-23 figures. Though there has been a significant increase of 84% for vehicle kms travelled this year from 2022-23 figures, the actual total greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle fleet have reduced by 87% this year from last year.

The Gardens is committed to replacing shared passenger vehicle fleet and machinery to 100% zero emission vehicles over time, and currently undertake this every time an old vehicle requires to be replaced. This is reflected in:

- how the Gardens no longer stocks any petrol on-road vehicles compared to five in 2022-23 and six in 2021-22
- the recent purchase of a new electric sweeper for the Melbourne Gardens that is projected to reduce tail pipe emissions by 1,653.6 kgs of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum.

Commercial air travel has decreased again this year from 2022-23 figures by 14%, and from 2021-22 figures by 57%. This can be attributed to fewer flights due to ongoing budgetary restrictions.

Indicator	2023-24	%	2022-23	%	2021-22	%
<b>Number and proportion of vehicles</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>On-Road Vehicles</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>56</b>
Electric	-	-	8	26	8	24
Hybrid	1	2	2	6	1	3
Diesel	12	22	16	52	18	55
Petrol	-	-	5	16	6	18
<b>Off-Road Vehicles</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>44</b>
Electric	18	43	7	24	4	15
Hybrid	-	-	-	-	-	-
Diesel	11	26	11	38	11	42
Petrol	13	31	11	38	11	42

Indicator	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Petrol	229,270.20	224,813.00	245,545.30
Diesel	895,647.70	938,721.10	926,041.40
<b>T1 Total energy used in transportation (vehicle fleet) [MJ]</b>	<b>1,124,917.90</b>	<b>1,163,534.10</b>	<b>1,171,586.70</b>
Petrol	15.50	15.20	16.60
Diesel	63.06	66.10	65.20
<b>T3 Total Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation (vehicle fleet) [tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-e]</b>	<b>78.57</b>	<b>81.30</b>	<b>81.80</b>
<b>T4 Total distance travelled by commercial air travel (passenger km travelled for business)</b>	<b>87,236.06</b>	<b>100,668.06</b>	<b>156,462.00</b>
<b>T(opt 1) Total vehicle travel associated with entity operations [1,000km]</b>	<b>190.62</b>	<b>77.47</b>	-
<b>T(opt2) Greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle fleet [tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-e per 1,000kms]</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>1.05</b>	-

## Total energy use

Total energy from fuels used by the Gardens this year has decreased by 24% from 2022–23 and by 35% from 2021–22 figures. This is driven by mainly a decrease in stationary fuel use. Total energy usage from electricity rose by 7% from last year for reasons identified in other parts of this report. Renewable energy has

decreased by 36% since 2022–23 and non-renewable energy use by 4% during the same period. This can be attributed to the reduction in energy use per unit of FTE by 11% and energy per unit of floor space by 10% compared to last year as hybrid working from home arrangements continue.

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
<b>E1 Total energy usage from fuels, including stationary fuels (F1) and transport fuels (T1) [MJ]</b>	<b>5,412,364.70</b>	<b>6,905,586.30</b>	<b>7,672,015.20</b>
<b>E2 Total energy usage from electricity [MJ]</b>	<b>5,729,358.38</b>	<b>5,341,903.29</b>	<b>4,566,038.93</b>
<b>E3 Total energy usage segmented by renewable and non-renewable sources [MJ]</b>			
Renewable	1,478,121.13	2,129,051.01	993,272.19
Non-renewable (E1 + E2 – E3 Renewable)	10,157,446.45	10,565,199.78	11,422,211.64
<b>E4 Units of Stationary Energy used normalised: (F1+E2)/normaliser</b>			
Energy per unit of FRD FTE [MJ/FRD FTE]	50,307.90	56,355.28	54,247.39
Energy per unit of floor space [MJ/m <sup>2</sup> ]	673.71	745.48	744.30
Energy per unit of Visitors [MJ/Visitors]	5.75	5.54	6.24

## Sustainable procurement

The Gardens delivers on its sustainable procurement objectives through the implementation of its Social Procurement Strategy 2023–26, in line with the Victorian Government Framework. Details of the Garden's Social Procurement actions are outlined in the relevant section of the Annual Report.

## Water use

Water quality and water conservation continue to be a high priority across Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria both sites. The total units of water consumed decreased by 3% from 2022–23 figures and by 18% from 2021–22 figures. This can be accounted for the increase in the use of reused water generated for the second year in a row by the Cranbourne Gardens water treatment plant. Though the treated water use decreased by only 3% compared to 2022–23 figures, potable water use was down by 33% and alternative supply consumption up by 65% from last year.

This shift can also be attributed to an increase in alternative supply water consumption from the Working Wetlands project at Melbourne Gardens, with a water offset of 42% for 2023–24. In addition, 53 ML of stormwater was treated to support irrigation requirements for the Melbourne Gardens living plant collection. The Gardens are investigating further opportunities for the expansion of the Working Wetlands project.

	2023–24	2022–23	2021–22
<b>W1 Total units of metered water consumed by water source (kl)</b>			
Potable water [kL]	79,010.84	110,555.52	130,323.52
Alternate supply consumption [kL]	53,000.00	26,902.00	54,234.00
Reused water [kL]	29,981.00	29,000.00	8,537.00
<b>Total units of water consumed [kL]</b>	<b>161,991.84</b>	<b>166,457.52</b>	<b>193,094.52</b>
<b>W2 Units of metered water consumed normalised by FTE, headcount or other</b>			
Water per unit of FRD FTE [kL/FRD]	813.58	846.34	946.54
Water per unit of floor space [kL/m2]	10.90	11.20	12.99
Water per unit of Visitors [kL/Visitors]	0.09	0.08	0.11

## Waste and Recycling

Total waste to landfill figures increased by 8% compared to 2022-23 figures. The main contributor to this increase is the 22% increase of public waste to landfill compared to last year. This in part may be due to an increase in waste generated by visitors and public events at the Melbourne Gardens. Cranbourne Gardens continues to have a public 'take your rubbish home' policy, with public bins only provided in the public toilets and café.

The total volume of green waste recycled at Melbourne Gardens was approximately 4,700m<sup>3</sup> and this converts to approximately 940m<sup>3</sup> mulch produced on site, closing the loop on the need to purchase mulch and support biosecurity outcomes through the reduction of important materials.

Staff kitchen minimum waste, composting and recycling continues across both sites, as does recycling of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria uniforms, toner cartridge, e-waste and batteries. Efforts to eliminate single use plastic also continue..

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
<b>WR1 Total units of waste disposed of by waste stream and disposal method [kg]</b>			
Landfill (total)	330,816.00	305,545.00	221,978.00
General Waste	275,140.00	260,975.00	161,138.00
Public Waste to Landfill	55,676.00	44,570.00	60,840.00
Recycling/recovery (disposal)	1,001,585.00	1,132,255.00	712,759.60
Cardboard and Paper	5,520.00	8,950.00	17,213.20
Commingled Recycling	3,125.00	5,544.00	57,429.20
Green Waste converted to mulch	990,640.00	1,092,621.00	472,697.20
Soil	2,300.00	25,140.00	165,420.00
Total units of waste disposed [kg]	1,332,401.00	1,437,800.00	934,737.60
<b>WR1 Total units of waste disposed of by waste stream and disposal method %</b>			
General Waste	24.83%	21.25%	23.75%
Recycling/recovery (disposal)			
Cardboard and Paper	0.41%	0.62%	1.84%
Commingled Recycling	0.23%	0.39%	6.14%
Green Waste converted to mulch	74.35%	75.99%	50.57%
Soil	0.17%	1.75%	17.70%

## Royal Botanic Gardens Board Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

I, Penny Fowler, on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has no Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Instructions.



**Penny Fowler**  
**Chairperson**  
**Royal Botanic Gardens Board**

12 September 2024

## Compliance with the Building Act 1993

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria owns and maintains more than 50 buildings and shelters across its two sites and is therefore required to include a statement on its compliance with the provisions of the *Building Act 1993*.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has the following mechanisms in place to ensure conformity with building standards:

- A Building Surveyor is appointed to assess any works that involve alterations, additions, or structural repair to a building and a Building Permit issued where deemed necessary
- All consultants and contractors engaged to work on Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria buildings are vetted to ensure they hold the appropriate licenses and registration

The following mechanisms are in place for inspection, reporting, scheduling, and carrying out rectification works on existing buildings:

- Routine and scheduled maintenance audits and reporting
- Ongoing routine and responsive servicing and repair
- All essential safety measure inspections undertaken by a registered Building Surveyor with compliance issues being responded to and progressed as required

Major works (greater than \$50,000) were conducted at Melbourne Gardens as follows:

- Nursery Lodge roof replacement
- Main Observatory Building partial roof replacement
- Great Melbourne Telescope House pillar reinstallation
- Melbourne Drylands Landscape and Meadows
- City Gate development
- Rose Pavilion restoration
- Herbarium lift upgrade.
- Herbarium basement air conditioning upgrade
- Moonlight Cinema container platform
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage installation.

Major works (greater than \$50,000) were conducted at Cranbourne Gardens as follows:

- Western entrance
- Stringybark boardwalk
- Ponding platform
- Gondwana Boardwalk
- Dry Riverbed irrigation and planting
- IPLP Kiosk extension
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage installation

There were nine building permits and 13 certificates of final completion issued for projects this year, as follows:

- Rose Pavilion refurbishment – building permit and certificate of final completion issued
- City Gate pillars – building permit and certificate of final completion issued
- Moonlight Cinema container platform – building permit and certificate of final completion issued
- Herbarium mechanical upgrade – building permit issued (only)
- Herbarium lift upgrade – building permit and certificate of final completion issued
- Herbarium basement air conditioning upgrade – building permit and certificate of final completion issued
- Observatory House Loft floor upgrade – building permit and certificate of final completion issued
- Gondwana boardwalk – building permit and certificate of final completion issued
- Gardens House servants quarters – building permit issued (only)
- Terrace roof upgrade – certificate of final completion issued (only)
- Stringybark boardwalk – certificate of final completion issued (only)
- Ian Potter Lakeside Kiosk extension – certificate of final completion issued (only)
- GMT pillars installation – certificate of final completion issued (only)
- Works yard gantry installation – certificate of final completion issued (only).

### **Buildings of non-conformity**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has undertaken building conformity and essential safety measure inspections throughout the site. Several non-conformities were identified within the heritage listed building infrastructure at Melbourne Gardens, including non-compliant or absence of access ramps, and non-compliant exit thresholds. These will be addressed through the planned asset upgrade program.

There were no emergency and building orders issued during the reporting period.

### **Additional information available on request**

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance, details in respect of the items listed below have been retained by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and are available in full on request, subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act:

- a. Details of publications produced by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria about itself, and how these can be obtained
- b. Details of any major external reviews carried out on Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- c. Details of major research and development activities undertaken by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- d. Details of major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to develop community awareness of the entity and its services
- e. Details of changes in prices, fees, charges, rates and levies charged
- f. A statement on industrial relations within Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- g. A statement of completion of declarations of pecuniary interests by relevant officers
- h. All contractors engaged, services provided, and expenditure committed for each engagement (in addition to the information included in Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Annual Report)
- i. Details of overseas visits undertaken by senior officers

The information is available on request from:

Freedom of Information Officer  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria  
Phone: (03) 9252 2300  
Email: [foi@rbg.vic.gov.au](mailto:foi@rbg.vic.gov.au)

Additional information included in the Annual Report:

Details in respect to the following items have been included in Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Annual Report on pages indicated below:

- j. Assessments and measures undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees (page 112)
- k. A list of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's major committees and the purpose of each committee (page 17)

Information that is not applicable to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria:

- l. A declaration of shares held by senior officers (no shares have been issued in Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria)

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#### Acronyms:

FRD	Financial Reporting Direction
MRO	Model Report of Operations
SD	Standing Direction









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