



Annual Report

2024–25



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 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 2025.

Penny Fowler AM

Chair

Royal Botanic Gardens Board

17 September 2025

Chair and Director and Chief Executive Report

This Annual Report reflects a year of renewal, resilience, and impact for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, as we continued our vital work to protect biodiversity, share plant knowledge, and inspire communities through deeper connections with nature.

The 2024–25 financial year marked a period of meaningful transition, shaped by the implementation of a refreshed organisational structure, a new Corporate Plan, and a sharpened focus on operational stability, inclusivity, and long-term financial sustainability. With key leadership positions now filled and internal systems strengthened, we have laid a strong foundation for the future—guided by a unified strategy and a clear set of goals.

We are deeply grateful to our donors, supporters, and partners, whose passion for the Gardens and commitment to conservation continue to drive our success. We thank the Government for their ongoing commitment to us; in particular, we thank our Minister, the Hon Steve Dimopoulos MP for his enthusiastic and ongoing support.

Across the year, more than two million people visited our two iconic Gardens—an increase of 20% from the previous year—driven by improved landscapes, innovative marketing, and vibrant programming. Notably, Cranbourne Gardens was named in The New York Times’ list of *The 25 Gardens You Must See*, significantly raising its national and international profile.

High-impact programs including *Lightscape*, *Live at the Gardens*, and *The World’s Longest Brunch* attracted over 700,000 attendees, generating substantial earned income and cementing our reputation as a leading cultural destination. *Lightscape* was recognised with the Gold Award at the Victorian Tourism Awards and Bronze at the Australian Tourism Awards. Meanwhile, the introduction of *Lightfall* to Cranbourne Gardens opened the experience to a broader audience of over 35,000, providing a spectacular after-dark event to our community in the south-east. The 20th anniversary of The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden was another standout in the event calendar.

Enhancements to our landscapes and amenities further supported our role as a social, scientific, and tourism icon. The appointment of the Darling Group as the new hospitality operator at The Observatory has elevated the visitor experience with a fresh, contemporary dining offer. Upgrades to The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden have made it more welcoming for families, and vital works at the National Herbarium of Victoria have helped safeguard the State Botanical Collection (SBC).

With support from government, trusts, foundations, and donors, we expanded the reach of our learning and engagement programs. More than 45,000 students took part in learning experiences across both Gardens, including over 1,000 through the *Nurtured by Nature Access Fund*. Additionally, 190 schools participated in the *Raising Rarity* conservation education program—ensuring that nature-based learning is accessible to all Victorian students, regardless of background.



We proudly advanced our commitment to inclusion through the second year of implementation of our *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–26* and engagement and partnerships with over 100 First Peoples collaborators and businesses.

A key milestone was the culturally significant joint planting of the ‘Warun’ Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) with the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) at our Melbourne site. This event, along with Wurundjeri and Bunurong-specific cultural training delivered by Traditional Owners to all staff and Board, further deepened our reconciliation and truth-telling commitments.

Culturally rich programs such as *Bush Playgroup*, NAIDOC Week celebrations, and First Peoples-led contributions to *Lightscape* created meaningful opportunities for reflection, connection, and healing.

Our Science and Research teams continued to make a global impact. This year, they described 17 new taxa, published 53 peer-reviewed papers, and databased over 13,000 new specimens for the State Botanical Collection (SBC). We reached a significant milestone of 126,500 verified fungal specimens—making Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria the country’s largest contributor of fungal records in Australia. This achievement was made possible through support from the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) and our philanthropic community. Volunteers mounted nearly 14,000 Herbarium specimens (a 74% increase), while VicFlora attracted more than 272,000 user sessions, supporting land managers, educators, and researchers across the state.

Our scientific expertise was especially critical in response to major bushfires in Gariwerd (Grampians), Little Desert, and Alpine National Parks. Working alongside the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), our teams identified at-risk species, securing over \$370,000 in funding for recovery and increasing various nurseries’ capacity to ensure long-term ecological resilience.

We also assisted the establishment of two new conservation collections in WAMA and Mallacoota.

Throughout the year, we have delivered outcomes that protect biodiversity, foster community connection, and raise the profile of botanical excellence in Victoria and beyond. These achievements would not be possible without the tireless contributions of our staff and volunteers, whose dedication and generosity remain at the heart of everything we do.

As we look ahead, we are energised by the opportunities that lie before us—to innovate, conserve, and engage—with a continued commitment to ensuring that the Gardens remain a place of learning, world-leading science, beauty, and wellbeing for generations to come.

Penny Fowler AM
Chair

Chris Russell
Director and Chief Executive

Year in Review



Awards and highlights

2M

people visited the Gardens

45K

students participated
in learning programs

700K

people enjoyed the
Gardens' programming



2 new conservation
collections established



2 major tourism awards
for *Lightscape*

17

new taxa described



53 peer-reviewed
papers published



13,000 new botanical specimens
databased for the SBC



126,500 verified
fungal specimens



14,000 Herbarium specimens
mounted by volunteers

Vision, Purpose, and Charter





Our Vision

A world that values the beauty, wonder, and importance of nature.

Our Purpose

To champion the role of plants and botanic gardens for the wellbeing of people and the planet.

Our Charter

Under the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991* (the RBG 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 conserve and enhance the SBC and National Herbarium of Victoria.
- To provide for the use of the SBC or plants or plant specimens at the Botanic Gardens or managed land for scientific or reference purposes, consistent with accepted international practice.
- To increase public knowledge and awareness of plants and plant communities.
- To provide for the use of the Botanic Gardens for education, public enjoyment and tourism.
- 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 are 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 embrace innovation and change.

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 – be curious.

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 179 years. This heritage-listed landscape is loved by generations of Victorians, as well as visitors from interstate and overseas.

Located less than three kilometres from the Central Business District, 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.

The National Herbarium of Victoria is the cornerstone of our scientific mission and the foundation of Victoria's environmental leadership. Within Melbourne Gardens sits this extraordinary asset, home to the irreplaceable SBC and the Victorian Conservation Seedbank. The ark for Victoria's flora, the Herbarium safeguards more than 1.56 million specimens that underpin research, conservation, land management, and biosecurity. Here, our Science Division advances critical knowledge about plant life and its preservation—knowledge that directly supports biodiversity, climate resilience, and the future of Victoria's environment and communities.

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 a natural bushland experience alongside the Australian Garden—an award-winning, contemporary botanic garden celebrating the beauty and diversity of Australian landscapes and flora, featuring more than 100,000 plants representing 1,900 different taxa.

Approximately two-thirds of 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 amenities to the growing surrounding population through 10 kilometres of walking tracks, 6 kilometres of cycling tracks, a lookout tower, picturesque shelters, barbecues, and playgrounds, while 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 Victoria's scientific engine for understanding and protecting the plant world. As the Government's primary centre for botanical studies, our research spans biodiversity, genomics, climate resilience, and horticulture. This work informs land management, agriculture, conservation and health innovation.

Founded in 1853 and now holding 1.56 million specimens of plants, fungi, and algae, the SBC is more than a library of dried plants; it is the evidence base that guides biosecurity responses, supports First Peoples' land stewardship, and underpins environmental decisions that affect every Victorian.

Its global significance cannot be overstated. Used daily by scientists, government, and industry worldwide, the SBC helps detect invasive pests, track the impacts of climate change, improve agriculture, and inspire breakthroughs in biopharma. Without it, we would lack the historical record and scientific insight needed to safeguard biodiversity and support Victoria's economy.

Alongside the SBC sits the Victorian Conservation Seedbank, an insurance policy against extinction. By securing the genetic future of Victoria's rarest and most threatened plants, the Seedbank gives communities, policymakers, and industry the tools to restore ecosystems, protect food security, and ensure our natural heritage endures for generations to come.



Engagement

Three-time Gold Award for Major Tourism Attraction in the Victorian Tourism Awards and winner of Major Tourism Attractions in the Australian Tourism Awards, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria welcomes two million visitors across our two sites each year. Our programs, events, and storytelling attract a diverse range of visitors through innovative engagement that promotes the conservation work of the organisation, inclusive nature-based experiences for individuals, and community cohesion and 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 both nature and each other.

Governance

The Royal Botanic Gardens Board is a statutory authority established under the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991*. The *Royal Botanic Gardens Regulations* make provision for the care, protection, management, and improvement of Melbourne Gardens, Cranbourne Gardens, and the National Herbarium of Victoria. New Regulations came into force on 15 October 2024.

The responsible Minister for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 was the Hon Steve Dimopoulos MP, Minister for Environment.

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.

Board Members

1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025



Penny Fowler AM, BBus, GAICD

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 (GAICD) and a Chief Executive Women member. She has been a member of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board 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 Chair of Tourism Australia and a Council Member of the National Gallery of Australia. Penny is a Board member of Tech Mahindra and 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 Asset Manager at IFM Investors, a global institutional investor and asset management company. Jason has previously held senior management positions at ISPT, Fort Street Real Estate Capital (a boutique funds manager), the Coles Group, and Coles Express. Jason has also spent time working in London at EA Shaw Chartered Surveyors and Foxtons. Jason currently sits on the Property Council of Australia's Retail Committee and was previously the Partnerships Director and a Board member at GLOBE (Gay and Lesbian Organisation of Business and Enterprise). 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 the Founder and Editor of the World Landscape Architecture website. He was previously the Chief Technical Officer at ASPECT Studios, an international design practice. Damian has extensive experience as a Registered Landscape Architect, including previous roles in Australia, China, and Canada. He is a member of the International Federation of Landscape Architects and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. Damian holds a Master of Landscape Architecture, a Postgraduate Diploma in Urban Design and Planning (Landscape Architecture), and a Bachelor of Applied Science (Horticulture).



Peter Langkamp OAM, PhD, FAICD

Appointed 1 October 2023

Peter Langkamp is Chair of The Disability Trust (and 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 Elder Rights Australia 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 Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and senior executive roles with Callista Software Services, Loyalty Pacific 'FlyBuys', Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, Accenture, National Disability Insurance Agency, Acxiom, National Roads and Motorists Association Limited, Shell Australia, and National Australia Bank. 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 has been CEO and Company Secretary of the Victorian Tourism Industry Council (departing that position on 4 July 2025). She is Vice President and Deputy Chair of RSPCA Tasmania.

Felicia has a strong background in tourism and marketing with a significant track record of government relations and strategic communication. Her prior roles have included Director of Marketing at Tourism Victoria, Managing Director at Australian Tourism Export Council, CEO of Tourism Tasmania, and General Manager of Tourism Sydney. She was previously a non-executive director of the Australian Tourism Industry Council and 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 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 was a Board member of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority Board until November 2024. 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 Master of Environmental Studies and a Bachelor of Town and Regional Planning, both from the University of Melbourne. She is also a GAICD.

Board Attendance 2024–25

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)	7	7
Jason Hay (Deputy Chair)	7	7
Damian Holmes	7	6
Peter Langkamp	7	6
Felicia Mariani	7	6
Arianne Rose	7	7
Christine Wyatt	7	7

Board Committees

Board members participate in one or more Board Committees. During the 2024–25 year, the following Committees were in place:

- Audit, Risk and Finance Committee
- Remuneration Committee

Audit, Risk and Finance Committee

The Audit, Risk and Finance 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* (FM Act). 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 2025

Director and Chief Executive

Chris Russell BSc (Hons), Grad Dip Land Rehab

Responsible for overall strategic leadership and 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. Chris is an inclusive leader, passionate about the role of botanic gardens in fostering a world that values nature as the foundation of life on the planet. He is a previous Board member of Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand Ltd (BGANZ) and Deputy Chair of Casey Cardinia Tourism.

Chief Operating Officer Corporate Services

Virginie Hoareau, BCom, CPA, MBA, GAICD

Responsible for providing strategic leadership across the corporate and operational functions of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, with responsibility for finance, information and communication technology, people and culture, infrastructure, governance, and risk. With over 20 years' experience in financial management, operations, and organisational transformation, Virginie has held senior leadership roles across higher education, research, media and communications, and the not-for-profit sector.

Virginie was previously Executive Director at Deakin University's Research Portfolio, Chief Financial Officer at the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, and General Manager of a newly established research institute. She brings deep expertise in financial strategy, operational excellence, and stakeholder engagement, with a strong track record of leading major transformation initiatives and managing complex budgets.

A GAICD, Virginie has also contributed as a non-executive director, drawing on her governance and finance experience to support purpose-driven organisations. She is a values-led leader, passionate about creating sustainable impact, building collaborative cultures, and enabling high-performing teams to thrive.

Executive Director Commercial and External Relations

Alice Molan, BSc, Grad Cert (Cross-Sector Partnerships)

Responsible for the strategic oversight of commercial, philanthropic and external relations functions of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Alice is an accomplished leader with over 20 years' experience driving strategic growth, stakeholder engagement, and operational excellence in public and not-for-profit organisations. She leads diverse teams across revenue generation, marketing and communications, and commercial operations. Alice is known for delivering strong financial outcomes, cultivating high-value partnerships, and navigating complex stakeholder environments with empathy and clarity. Her leadership has resulted in increased fundraising, revitalised commercial performance, and greater public engagement. With deep expertise in strategy, communication, and relationship management, Alice is passionate about advancing the mission and impact of purpose-driven organisations through innovation, collaboration, and thoughtful stewardship.



Executive Director Science
Professor David Cantrill, PhD,
BSc (Hons)

Responsible for directing research into plant biodiversity, systematics, and conservation and management of the SBC. This entails statutory responsibility under the RBG Act and the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981*. David 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. David has been Executive Director Science since 2006.

Executive Director Experience
and Engagement
Émer Harrington, BA (Hons)

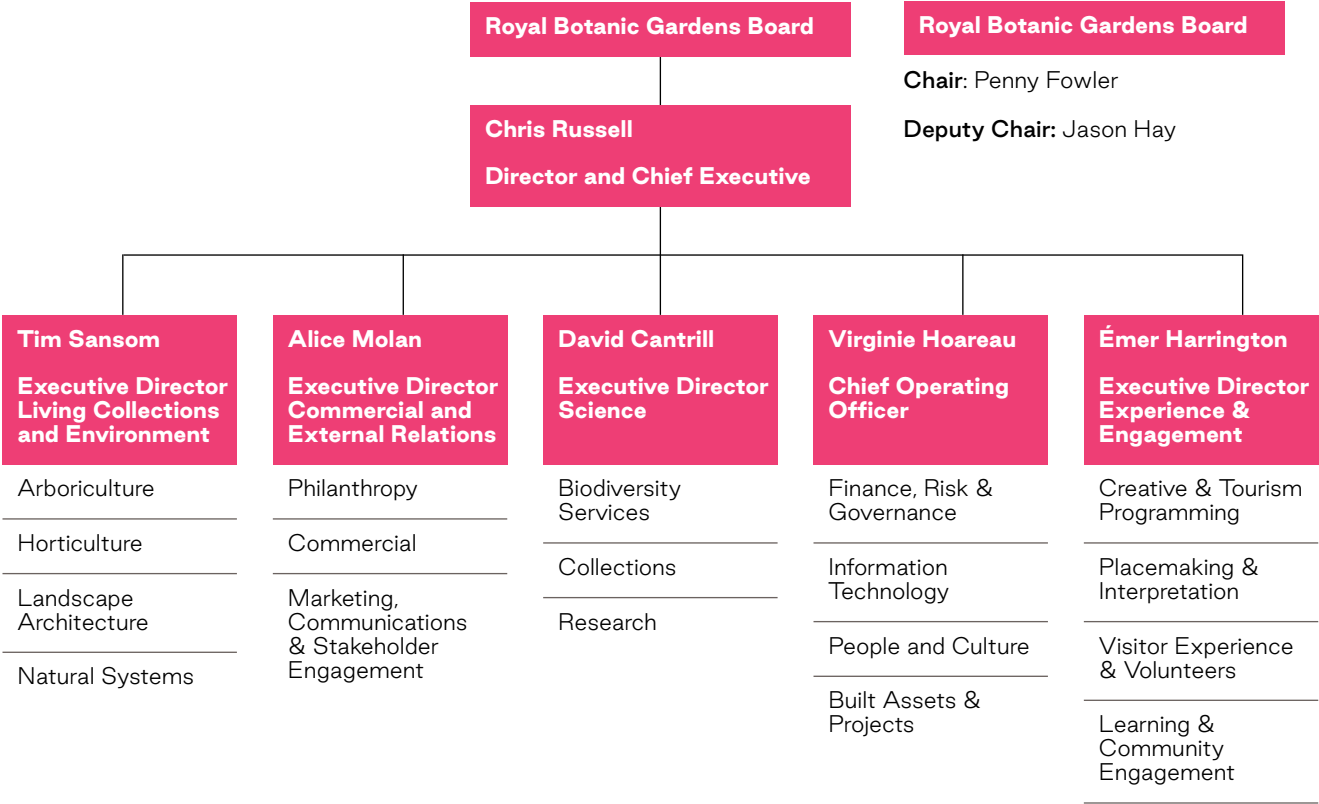
Responsible for providing strategic leadership across the visitor experience and engagement functions of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria with responsibility for visitor experience, creative and tourism programming, placemaking and interpretation, learning and community engagement, and creating innovative and impactful programs and experiences for diverse audiences. Émer was Acting Executive Director Engagement and Impact from April 2024 before assuming this role on 12 June 2025. Prior to this, she was Head of Programming and Audience Development since July 2017.

Émer is a highly respected leader, collaborator, and change agent in Melbourne’s cultural sector, with over 35 years in Australian and international companies. 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 a 2024 Victorian Tourism Gold Award for *Lightscape* and a Victorian Premier’s Design Award 2023 for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria’s new wayfinding, digital mapping, and interpretation system.

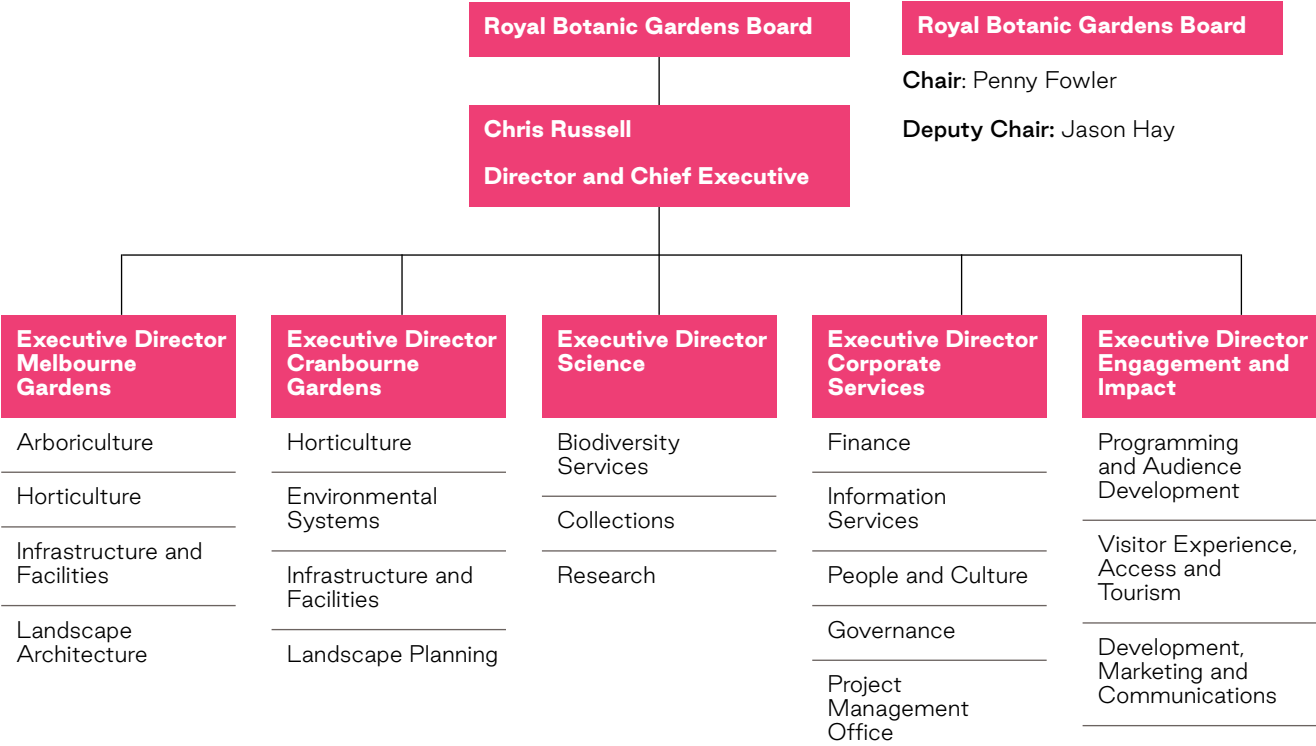
Executive Director Living
Collections and Environment
Tim Sansom, BAppSc, GradDipHort

Responsible for providing strategic leadership for the creation and stewardship of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria’s world-class gardens, landscapes, and natural areas. Tim has over 30 years’ experience in horticulture, ecological restoration, and organisational leadership across the not-for-profit, commercial, and community sectors. He was previously Group CEO of The Diggers Club and The Diggers Foundation, Manager – Communications and Horticulture at Plants Management Australia, and General Manager of the Australian Ecosystems nursery. Tim brings a deep understanding of garden design, plant production, ecological management, and public education, and is passionate about advancing environmental sustainability through landscape leadership. He maintains long-standing involvement with industry organisations including the International Plant Propagators Society, the Nursery and Garden Industry of Victoria, and the Global Gardens of Peace.

Organisational Structure 15 March 2025 to 30 June 2025



Organisational Structure 1 July 2024 to 15 March 2025



Kevin Alexander, Acting Executive Director, Cranbourne Gardens (1 July 2024 – 13 April 2025)

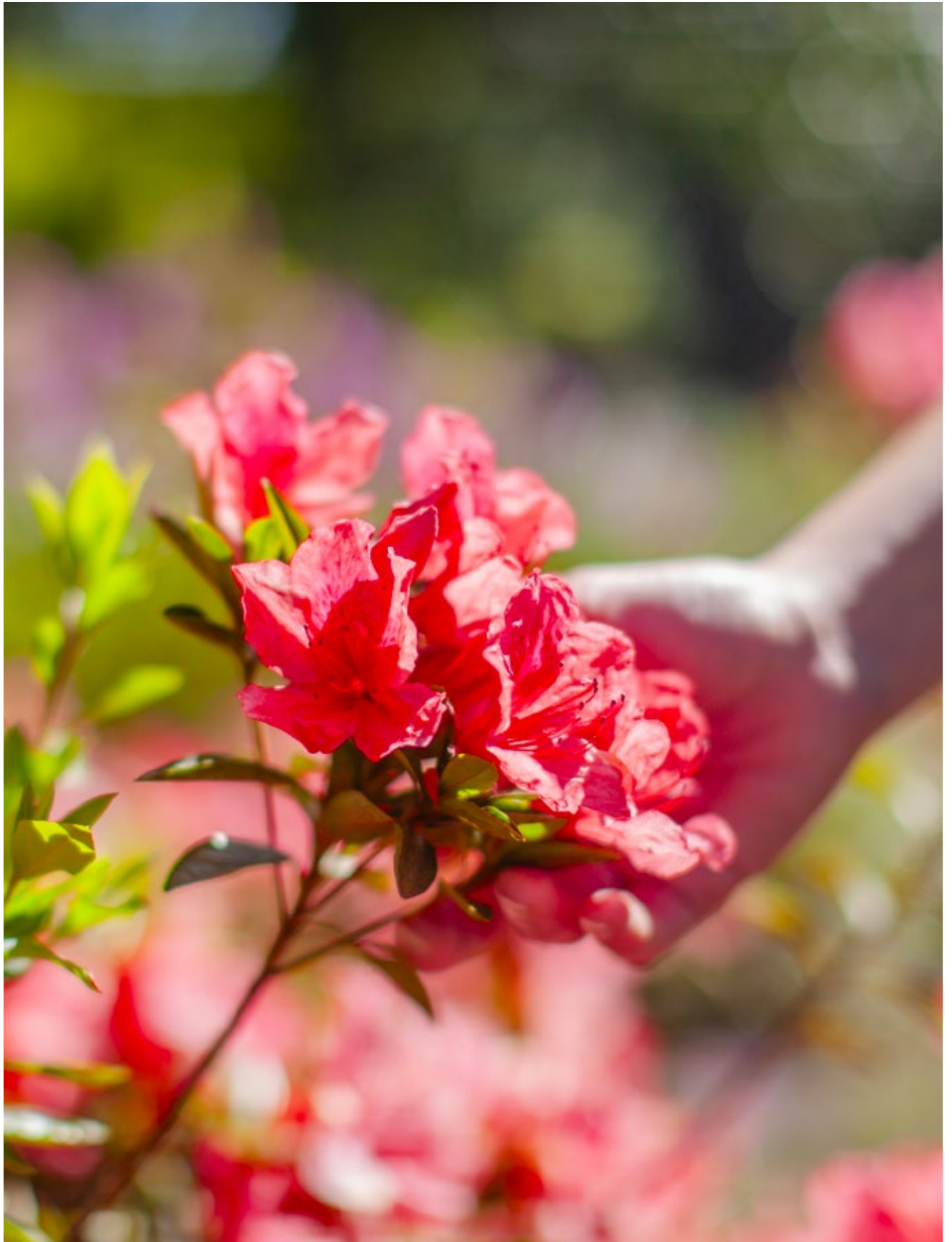
Alice Molan, Acting Executive Director, Corporate Services (1 July 2024 – 13 April 2025)

Émer Harrington, Acting Executive Director Engagement and Impact (1 July 2024 – 13 April 2025)

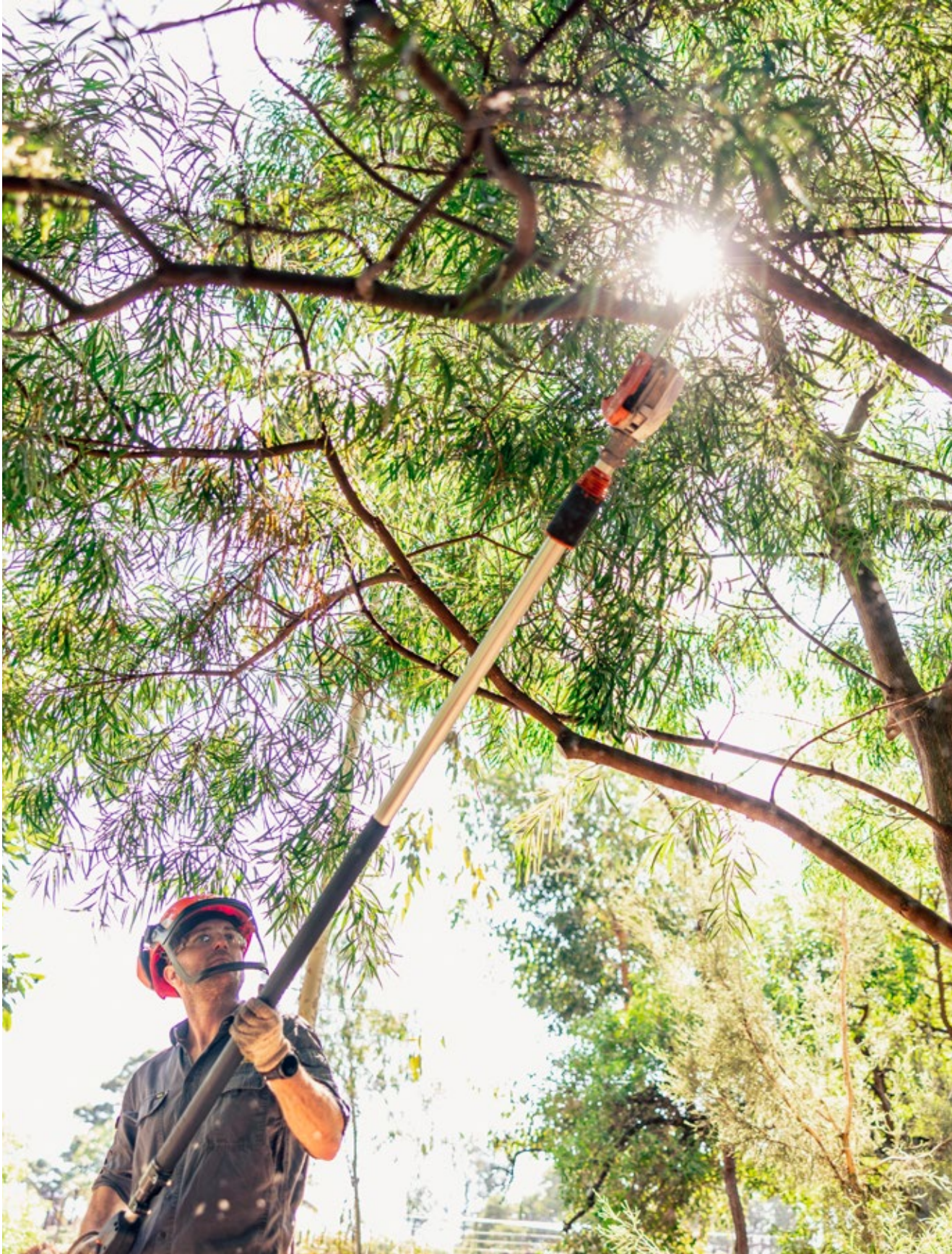
Thank You to Acting Executive Directors July 2024 to April 2025

Clare Hart, Acting Executive Director, Melbourne Gardens (1 July 2024 – 11 August 2024 and 28 October 2024 – 13 April 2025)

Charles Carroll, Acting Executive Director, Melbourne Gardens (12 August 2024 – 27 October 2024)



Our Performance



Visitation

Visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne and Cranbourne		
Target	Actual	Comments
2.3 million	2.0 million	The variance in overall visitation was primarily driven by reduced attendance at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, where ongoing roadworks on the South Gippsland Highway impacted access to the main entrance. In contrast, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne performed close to expectations, with visitation only 3% below target.

State Botanical Collection

Specimens curated in the SBC		
Target	Actual	Comments
20,000	24,779	A higher number of specimens than anticipated was curated due to the receipt of a data mobilisation grant from the ALA, which has supported an additional Database Officer position.

Performance Measures (Corporate Plan 2025–29)

Action	Performance Measure	Actual
Develop and deliver engaging and distinctive learning programs	35,000 school student attendances	42,978
Deliver vibrant and impactful programming experiences	400,000 attendances	708,909
Maintain and enhance <i>Lightscape</i> at Melbourne Gardens	80% positive response in evaluation	93%
Develop and deliver <i>Lightfall</i> at Cranbourne Gardens	25,000 attendances	35,319
Improve our knowledge of flora and fungi through the description of new taxa	10 taxa described by staff per annum	17
Science team publish research in peer-reviewed journals that are cited	42 published papers	53
Accelerate curation of the SBC by expanding the Herbarium Volunteer Program to reduce critical bottlenecks in the curation process	A 50% increase in the number of specimens physically curated, from baseline of 8,000 annually to 12,000 in 2024–25	13,931
Engage with First Peoples, Traditional Owners, artists, creatives, and collaborators to deliver First Peoples storytelling through interpretation, programs, and events	Four First Peoples artists engaged in <i>Lightscape</i>	22
Complete The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden 20th Anniversary refurbishment and interpretation and deliver program of events	Project complete and successful program of events delivered	Target action completed



Our Strategic Objectives and Achievements

Engagement

Inspire and enrich communities through connection with the natural world

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria captivated, inspired, and engaged new and existing audiences this year, amplifying our impact and deepening audience connection to the natural world, scientific research, and our two Gardens. Through a range of experiences and support from partnerships, trusts, foundations, and donors, our work reached over 700,000 participation attendances.

Highlight Programs

This year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden, which sees around 300,000 visitors annually. Its immersive landscape design includes a bamboo forest, fountains, a kitchen garden, lookout tower, mazes, and flowing water features. The anniversary celebrations included upgrades to infrastructure and planting, new wayfinding, and a suite of interpretation co-developed with young people. A weekend ‘birthday party’ event featured nature-based activities, performances by Polyglot Theatre and Born in a Taxi, and an exhibition telling the story of this special garden. Ardeer South Primary School students created an episode of *Sonica Botanica* with sound artist Patrick Cronin, and Thornbury Primary School students created illustrations for new interpretive plant labels.

Lightscape 2024 attracted over 150,000 people to Melbourne Gardens after dark. Featuring a range of lighting and large-scale installations, it presented artworks by 22 First Peoples artists, highlighting First Peoples culture, art, and storytelling. The event won a Gold Award at the Victorian Tourism Awards (Major Festivals and Events) and a Bronze Award at the Australian Tourism Awards.

Lightfall at Cranbourne Gardens attracted over 35,000 visitors during its two-week season and received a very positive response from media and audiences, while *Live at the Gardens* in November and March was a standout success, celebrating contemporary music under the stars. The sold-out event, *World’s Longest Brunch*, in partnership with Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, featured celebrity chef Julia Busuttil Nishimura and catering partner Curtis Stone Events and delivered a promenade event across three highlight destinations in Melbourne Gardens, which sold out almost as soon as it went on sale

Collaboration continues with local video game producers Weird Flex Studio on the development of *Bee Major*, with events in Melbourne International Games Week and Melbourne Design Week attracting diverse and highly engaged audiences.

Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens remain popular destinations with tourists, with growing interest from a diverse range of visitors. The Garden Explorer and volunteer-led tours ensure strong engagement. In addition to building on attendances, we continue to strengthen our tourism partnerships.



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 visitors, including live, self-guided, print, audio, and digital programs.

Our partnership with the National Sustainable Living Festival continued to thrive with *Costa's Picnic Extravaganza*, a day filled with music, creativity, and sustainability featuring Costa, dirtgirl, and Formidable Vegetable in a dynamic variety show. *Nature Obituary* by Janenne Willis provided a reflective space focused on ecological grief, care, and connection. The 2024 National Science Week partnership with the Royal Society of Victoria and Inspiring Victoria included *Botanical Time Capsules* and *Raising Rarity Revealed*.

Regular wellbeing and nature-focused programs, such as Forest Therapy and Harp Meditations in Melbourne Gardens, together with nature play days and the Gardens' First Peoples NAIDOC and *Bush Playgroup* programs in Cranbourne Gardens, provided audiences with opportunities to pause, heal, and learn. The Marrung Mob gathering at Cranbourne Gardens supported the cultural engagement of First Peoples students from 20 local primary and secondary schools, connecting them to Country and building relationships between teachers of First Peoples students.

Southern Brown Bandicoot engagement activities continued this year with face-to-face and online events. The DEECA Melbourne Strategic Assessment program has continued its support of the Southern Brown Bandicoot Outreach Officer with a commitment to a further five-year agreement. A new Community Engagement Strategy and theory of change evaluation model are now in place for delivery across 2025–30.

Building on the success of 2024's *Wurundjeri biik baan* garden, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria co-presented an exhibition garden at Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2025. Water stories were shared by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and co-interpreted for *Wurundjeri biik baan*, which depicted the importance of swamps, waterways, plants, and animals to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture.

More than 1,000 students were provided with philanthropically funded financial assistance to experience workshops at both Gardens. Visual stories and relaxed sessions were incorporated into the presentations for *Lightscape* and *Lightfall*, with several community outreach and service organisation groups being hosted at *Lightscape*.



Learning and Community Engagement

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria engaged over 45,000 students in our suite of First Peoples, science, geography, and nature-based programs with the support of education partners, the Department of Education (DoE), and the Victorian Catholic Education Authority.

DoE-funded programs *Resilience by Nature: Health and Wellbeing Project* (Strategic Partnerships Program) and *Designed by Nature* (Victorian Challenge and Enrichment Series) included onsite and outreach programs at regional botanic gardens and online webinars, while *Young Botanists* brought art and science together for the very young with artists, Gardens experts, and First Peoples storytelling.

The *Raising Rarity Schools Outreach* program expanded to 11 schools with the continued support from The Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation and City of Casey. All schools are growing a locally threatened species and will collect scientific data and seeds to help support the conservation of some of Victoria's most threatened plant species.

Growing Beyond Earth for Australian Schools expanded to 36 schools in a continued collaboration between Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, the ARC Plants for Space (La Trobe University), and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Florida, USA. With additional funding from the Toyota Community Trust and Melbourne Airport, the program has expanded across the state to include 13 additional Melbourne metropolitan schools, 15 regional Victorian schools, and two interstate schools (South Australia and Tasmania).

Regional outreach learning programs continued through the ongoing support from the DoE and The Marian and E.H. Flack Trust. Working with the extensive network of botanic gardens across the state to bring science, STEM, conservation, and sustainability programs to students in regional areas, programs were delivered for regional students in Geelong, Ballarat, Sale, and Bendigo Botanic Gardens and the surrounding regions. These programs reduced the geographical and financial barriers regional students often face to participation in extension specialist learning opportunities.



Knowledge

Grow and share information to enable effective stewardship of biodiversity

In early 2025, major bushfires swept through Gariwerd (Grampians), Little Desert, and Alpine National Parks, threatening over 100 endemic plant species. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria staff supported DEECA's Rapid Response teams by rapidly identifying priority threatened species for survey, salvage, and genetic work, drawing critically on verified records in the SBC. This enabled the proposal of effective, evidence-based interventions and helped secure \$243,748 in federal funding for recovery efforts, along with \$128,000 to grow Traditional Owner nursery capacity—supporting both biodiversity and local communities. Gardens researchers contributed to a Nature paper demonstrating that prescribed burning does not prevent megafire damage and may worsen biodiversity loss, providing critical evidence to inform public fire management policy.

In 2024, Gardens scientists played key roles at two major international events—the International Botanical Congress in Madrid and the International Mycological Congress in Maastricht—where global naming rules for plants and fungi were debated and updated. Dr Tom May helped lead these discussions as Secretary of the Fungal Nomenclature Bureau and contributed to a landmark publication revising fungal classification worldwide. Closer to home, Gardens researchers advanced critical projects in plant and fungal science. A major review

redefined the important fungal group *Rhizoctonia*, and work is underway to improve national fungal species lists using DNA and type specimens. Plant scientists finalised studies on the *Teucrium* genus, led conservation research on *Senecio* and *Grevillea*, and published findings on threatened plants such as *Craspedia* and native peas. Together, these efforts support stronger conservation planning.

More than 126,500 fungal specimens are now databased, making Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria the nation's largest contributor of verified fungal records, thanks to philanthropic and ALA support. The Herbarium Volunteer Program mounted nearly 14,000 specimens this year—a 74% increase—while VicFlora served over 272,000 user sessions, with expanded illustration coverage enhancing its value to educators, land managers, and researchers. The Victorian Conservation Seedbank made critical pre-fire collections of rare Gariwerd (Grampians) endemics, some of which now face imminent loss in the wild, safeguarding these species for future restoration. The Seedbank now holds 1,546 taxa across 2,293 collections. These achievements reinforce the Gardens' role in protecting biodiversity, strengthening community knowledge and resilience, and ensuring the long-term benefits of botanical science for all Victorians.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria plays a pivotal role in the administration of the *Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens*, which was

successfully relaunched at the 8th Global Botanic Gardens Congress held in Singapore in August 2024. The work of the CCABG, in particular the Climate Assessment Tool, was referenced in multiple presentations as a pioneering tool that has generated further ideas, research, and actions in climate adaptation of botanic landscapes. The CCABG has also generated new interest in the broader landscape sector with development of important relationships with the Royal Horticultural Society (UK) and the World Monuments Fund. The CCABG has increased its membership and supports a base of over 500 botanic gardens, arboreta, and public landscape managers across the globe.

Our Natural Systems team partnered with Zoos Victoria and Moonlit Sanctuary to introduce 25 additional Pookila (formerly New Holland Mouse) into Cranbourne Bushland, joining the 28 individuals initially introduced in May 2024. These native mice are the captive bred offspring of individuals sourced from the five remaining wild populations in Victoria and will comprise a genetically diverse insurance population and a source for other introductions elsewhere in the state as part of the national Pookila recovery efforts. Building on our habitat stewardship at Cranbourne Gardens, we have successfully initiated a three-year ecological corridor restoration project focusing on repairing wetland habitats at Wylies Creek, supported by the Federal Government's *Urban Rivers and Catchments Program*.



Place

Enhance our Gardens and assets and partner with Traditional Owners to help people connect to Country

In 2025, Melbourne Gardens unveiled the new Australian Drylands precinct to support our *Landscape Succession Strategy 2016–36*, preparing for a projected future climate that will likely be 3% warmer and 15% drier than today. Covering 2,500 m² near Domain Gate, the garden features native species from Queensland, New South Wales (NSW), and Western Australia, many new to the living collection. Key plants include Western Australian plants that naturally occur in hotter climates, including Pineapple Bush (*Dasypogon bromeliifolius*) and Woody Pear (*Xylomelum occidentale*).

The Australian Drylands project is a working example of Melbourne Gardens' Landscape Succession Strategy and reinforces our understanding of climate adaptation so we can better protect our native flora. A new suite of interpretation offers a deeper exploration of changes to plants, people, and the planet with a strong First Peoples perspective and includes poems commissioned by Wiradjuri poet Associate Professor Jeanine Leane and a new episode of *Sonica Botanica*.



Major Capital Projects

Asset renewal and remediation was the key driver of most major projects completed this year.

A highlight of this year's program was the collection of works completed at The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden to coincide with its 20-year anniversary since opening. A new decorative water bottle filling station was installed for the thousands of school children who visit the garden each year, along with a dedicated bag storage unit. The Discovery Shelter had a major renovation and a brand-new signage suite with bright, engaging interpretation materials completed the upgrade.

Critical remediation works at the Herbarium continued throughout the year. The mechanical services system received a major overhaul with the upgrade of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning plant, and installation of a new building control management system (BCMS) and mechanical services switchboard. The fire indicator panel and Very Early Smoke Detection Apparatus (VESDA) system were replaced, and fire sprinkler heads replaced and repositioned to better service the current building layout. Electrical safety switches and lighting were upgraded to meet current standards and achieve improved energy efficiency. Finally, works to improve stormwater drainage around the base of the building and repairs to deteriorated external features were also completed.

While these works have been essential to protect the building and safeguard the SBC, they are interim measures only. They do not address the fundamental issue of limited capacity, underscoring the critical need for a new facility to house and future-proof the Herbarium and its collections.

The historic Gardens House complex has several outbuildings, including the Servants' Quarters and a small outhouse, both of which were renovated this year. Capital works at Cranbourne Gardens focused on improving operations and security. The bulk storage area was reconfigured to improve waste management and plant hygiene practices. Several security cameras were installed following a spate of break-ins, and a telecommunications tower constructed to provide better phone and Wi-Fi services across the site.



Growth

Build a resilient and financially sustainable business

Marketing, Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

The team contributed to year-on-year visitation growth through targeted campaigns, compelling storytelling, and strategic partnerships. Event and tour participation rose year on year, supported by a summer visitation campaign across traditional and digital channels. Social media followers steadily increased, with standout social posts featuring Novak Djokovic (107,000 views), Joanna Lumley (73,000), and The Olympics (29,000) contributing to that growth. National media coverage of science grew with highlights including ABC TV’s seedbank feature, The Guardian’s bushfire recovery story, and global coverage (The Age, Forbes, Yahoo) of a newly described carnivorous plant, positioning the organisation as a horticultural and scientific leader. Another international highlight was having Cranbourne Gardens included in a list of *The 25 Gardens You Must See* by The New York Times, which saw a sharp rise in visitation. Additionally, the

team supported Reconciliation Action Plan objectives through First Peoples-led content and radio interviews during NAIDOC Week and contributed to improved wayfinding via collaborations with the City of Melbourne and ANZAC Station.

Retail

The 2024–25 financial year marked the Gardens’ most successful retail performance to date, with revenue from our Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens shops increasing by 12.7% compared to the previous year.

Retail operations delivered a standout pop-up shop during *Lightfall* at Cranbourne Gardens, enhancing the audience experience and driving strong sales. The implementation of data-driven buying strategies contributed to notable improvements in average transaction value, while maintaining a robust gross profit margin.

The Observatory

This year, Melbourne Gardens welcomed a new café operator for the site formerly known as Jardin Tan. Following a public tender process, renowned Melbourne hospitality group the Darling Group was appointed and has transformed the space into The Observatory—a European-style, all-day eatery and versatile events venue. The Observatory brings a fresh and vibrant dining experience to the Gardens, complementing the natural beauty of the surroundings and enhancing the visitor experience.



Operations

Strengthen our operational performance

This year was one of transition for the organisation as we undertook an organisational review to align our structure for continued horticultural and scientific excellence and prepare for measured growth. Much of the operational focus was on creating a more stable footing for the future by filling critical positions, reviewing our systems, and making targeted changes, all while working to deliver on a demanding operational agenda.

We implemented a new Stakeholder Management and Advocacy Framework and invested in in-house leadership training to build and enhance management capability across the organisation. We continued progressing our *Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–26* (GEAP), completing several key actions, while also identifying longer-term areas of focus including onsite contractor behavioural compliance and workforce classification updates. We also laid the foundation for a positive Enterprise Agreement negotiation.

A major focus this year was the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Retail Management System (RMS) project. Following a program health check, the project is progressing well and we are working towards implementation later this year, which will deliver modern, integrated systems to support efficiency, data-driven decision making, and improved customer experiences.

We began laying the groundwork for our Environment and Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) this year, bringing together a dedicated working group, engaging expert support, and running a series of workshops to help shape a draft plan by 2025. We progressed actions under the *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–26* (RAP) while maintaining strong engagement with statewide First Peoples initiatives and Treaty processes to ensure alignment with contemporary reform.

Our Supporters





Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria extends its deepest gratitude to our donors for their unwavering support and generosity throughout the year. Philanthropic contributions have been instrumental in helping the Gardens advance our vision of a world that values the beauty, wonder, and importance of nature.

Thanks to donor support, we have been able to deliver impactful education programs, expand our scientific impact, and enhance our landscapes for the benefit of all visitors. The generosity of donors to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria allows us to nurture the next generation of environmental stewards, protect biodiversity, and create meaningful experiences for thousands of students, researchers, and garden lovers.

This year, philanthropic support to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has enabled us to:

- Support the next generation of arborists through a scholarship for an arboriculture trainee, providing hands-on experience across Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens.
- Improve global scientific access by databasing 10,000 specimens from the Global Collection, making them available to researchers and scientists worldwide.
- Expand nature-based learning by enabling 190 school groups to participate in immersive educational programs through the *Nurtured by Nature* Access Fund.
- Grow conservation education by developing and delivering the *Raising Rarity* conservation education program to 11 schools across two bioregional hubs.
- Inspire sustainable gardening through the re-design of the How-to Garden at Cranbourne Gardens, showcasing the beauty and practicality of Australian native plants.
- Restore and protect native landscapes with the initiation of a five-year rehabilitation program along Wylies Creek and the creation of a landscape plan for the Southern Grasslands to improve visitor access to Cranbourne Gardens.
- Support plant regeneration after the Gariwerd (Grampians) bushfires event through the collection of seed from plants most at risk of local extinction.

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, and 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 also serves as Trustee of the Maud Gibson Trust, a public ancillary fund established in 1945 through a generous donation from Miss Maud Gibson. The Trust is dedicated to supporting the maintenance, development, and overall benefit of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. In accordance with its obligations, the Trust makes annual distributions to the Gardens, ensuring ongoing investment in our vital work.



From the Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria Chair

The Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria 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 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:

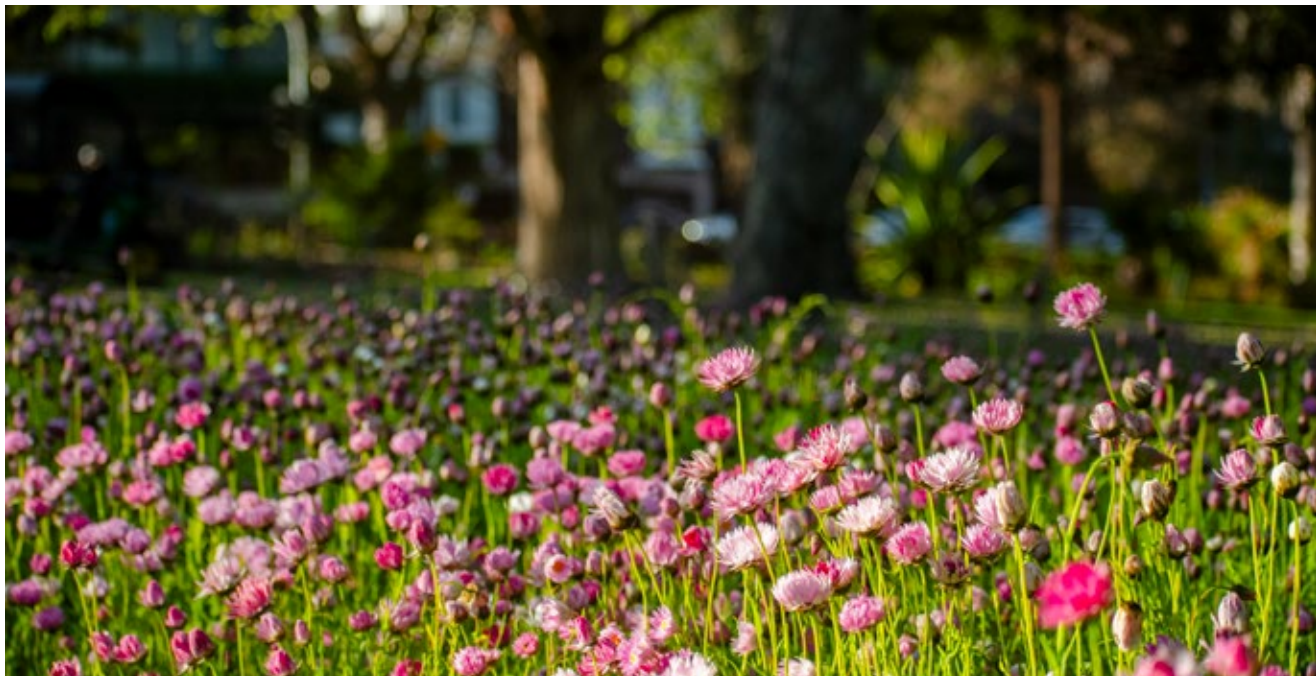
Our treasured and iconic Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, nurtured by philanthropy, and sustained through responsible financial stewardship.

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.

During the year, several of our donors confirmed that they are leaving a bequest via their estates. We feel enormous gratitude when we hear that someone has chosen to leave a bequest to the Foundation to support the Gardens beyond their lifetime and we recognise the responsibility that comes with honouring this.

We are deeply appreciative of the passionate community of donors who have supported the Foundation through the Director’s Circle and the Seat Dedication program, and we have had the pleasure to meet with many of these donors at the Gardens’ events during the year. There are currently 203 people who are Director’s Circle members and 206 people who have seat dedications in the Gardens. Both programs provide important funding to the Foundation which, in turn, contributes to the long-term support of the Gardens through our annual distributions for priority needs.



During 2024–25, the Foundation distributed a total of \$591,895 in funding to the Gardens to the following priority projects:

- Investigating the Diverse Twiggy Daisy Bush
- The Global Collection
- *Lightfall* at Cranbourne Gardens
- Slingsby Performance
- Leadership Development Program
- Security Cameras at Cranbourne Gardens
- Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Business Development

In addition, the Foundation distributed \$114,000 in funding to the following projects via tied sub-funds:

- Jim Willis Studentships
- Pauline Ladiges PhD Fellowship

The Maud Gibson Trust distributed \$51,098 in support of the following projects at the Gardens during the year:

- Elisabeth Murdoch Scholarships for Gardens Staff
- Concept Development for the Trig Point Tower
- The Global Collection

To the many thousands of people who visit each year, the Gardens provide a treasured place of beauty and connection to nature, solace and respite in times of loss and despair, celebration and joy with loved ones and friends, and learning and curiosity sparking for students of all ages. The Foundation is honoured to contribute to the Gardens' important work in horticulture, science, and learning and to provide sustainable support to benefit current and future generations.

I would like to extend my deep appreciation for the generous contributions made by the Foundation Directors, the Maud Gibson Trust 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.

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):

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

Maud Gibson Trust Committee:

- Penny Woodward (Chair), Advisory Panel 2014 – 2019, Committee Deputy Chair 2020 – 2023, Chair 2023 – current
- George Howson (Treasurer), 2000 – current
- Chris Russell (Director and Chief Executive Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria), 2024 – current
- Jill Burness, 2023 – current
- Professor Ian Woodrow, 2014 – 2024
- Professor Mike Bayly, 2025 – current

Maud Gibson Trust Advisory Panel:

- Kate Walsh, 2021 – current
- Millie Ross, 2016 – 2025
- Neville Walsh, 2024 – current

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 2024–25.

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Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust under the *Urban Rivers and Catchments Program*
 Brian and Virginia McNamee Foundation
 Nola Foster
 Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Trust Fund
 The Gidleigh Foundation
 The Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation
 Dr Ian Ross and Margaret Ross AM
 Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria

Supporters Who Gave \$50,000 – \$99,999 to the Gardens

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 Betsy and Ollie Polasek Endowment
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Elizabeth Tudor AM
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Brooke Young
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Janet Calvert–Jones AO
The Hon David Habersberger KC and
Pam Habersberger
Betsy Polasek

Guardians \$5,000 – \$19,999

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Cameron Bertalli
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Jill Harrison OAM DSJ
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Barbara Higgins and Jim Higgins
Chris Howard

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Belinda Langdon
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David Lawson and Belinda Lawson
Nichola Lefroy and Sam Riggall
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 Paul Wheelton AM and
 Angela Wheelton OAM
 Farren Williams
 Lyn Williams AM
 Jennifer Wolcott and Rudi Michelson
 Ian Wong and Dr Gillian Wong
 Michael Yencken
 Anonymous – 5

Seat Dedicators 2025

Lisa Barry
 Meg Bentley
 Dr Susan Blackburn
 Professor David Chandler
 Jenny Darling
 Bryce Ferguson
 Justin Guy
 Dr Christine Healy OAM and
 Gareth Sansom
 Belle Jerusalem
 Sarah Keating
 Charlotte Keating
 Amanda McColl
 Helen Nicolay
 Mima Piccolo
 Lulu Pinkus
 Margot Ross
 Madeleine Ross
 William Ross
 Christina Ross
 Caroline Ryan
 Alison Stieven-Taylor
 Susan Syme

Perennial Gardeners 2025

Angela Armstrong
 Graeme Baker
 Paul Barnett
 Meg Bentley
 Nat Bijayendrayodhin
 Tamara Boldiston and Mark Boldiston
 Hazel Brentnall
 Elsie Carter
 Roger Chao
 Rosemary Cotter
 Lorna Downey
 Sebastien Dunn
 Judy Dunster
 Megan Dwyer
 Richard Farrar
 Rob Grant
 Shirley Hallows
 Virginia Henry
 Barbara Higgins
 Professor Roderick W Home AM
 Elizabeth Howcroft
 Gillian Hund OAM
 Peter Jopling AM KC
 Zara Kimpton OAM
 Lori Kravos
 Janet Lilley
 Dr Patrice Raselli Marriott
 Angela Matkovic and Peter Matkovic
 John Mifsud
 Anne Miller
 Dr Phil Moors AO
 Justin Nunan
 Rosemary O'Brien
 David Plant OAM
 Betsy Polasek
 Misha Prusa
 Damian and Lisa Robertson
 Sonja Roglic
 Professor Arthur Shulkes and
 Merrill Shulkes
 Ann Sprague
 Kathy Watson
 Anonymous – 19

Bequests Realised in 2025

The Estate of the Late
 Frank van Straten
 The Estate of the Late
 Linda Anne White

Corporate Partners and Sponsors

Corporate Partnerships play a vital role in helping Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to deliver exceptional experiences and outcomes across our Gardens. Throughout the year, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria successfully renewed several key sponsorships, reinforcing the strength and value of our corporate relationships. Notable renewals included:

- **Red Energy** as Presenting Partner of *Lightscape* and Major Partner of *Lightfall* and *Live at the Gardens* (November)
- **Maxwell & Williams** as an Official Partner
- **Interflora** as a Silver Sponsor
- **Neutrog** as a Bronze Sponsor

We were also pleased to welcome Melbourne Airport as a new partner, supporting educational programs for schools in lower socio-economic areas. Additionally, STIHL provided valuable in-kind support through the provision of power tools, enhancing our operational capabilities.

LIGHTSCAPE PRESENTING PARTNER



OFFICIAL PARTNER



SILVER SPONSOR



BRONZE SPONSOR



Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

Each year the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne come together as a passionate community who share the love for our Gardens.

This year, the Friends are proud to approve grants to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria of \$182,075 through our Trust Fund. This represents the following grants:

General Purpose Grant	\$6,000
The Helen McLelland Research Grant (year two of a three-year grant to Dr Megan Hirst and Dr Tara Hopley)	\$20,000
Botanical art purchase from The Art of Botanical Illustration exhibition for the SBC	\$5,000
Growing Friends' Nursery upgrade	\$18,540
Gardens Staff Scholarships	\$14,200
Sharwood Travel Scholarship	\$1,200

Our major two-year commitment of \$117,135 is part of a \$270,000 project to restore heritage arbours and arches

This Annual Report reflects on our achievements and the energy our members bring to the Gardens. Our calendar is brimming with events tailored to suit everyone. Throughout the year, our Plant Craft Cottage hosts lively programs of hands-on workshops that draw on traditional practice of plant-based crafts. Walks and talks are regularly keeping members up to date with projects in Melbourne Gardens and providing knowledge from experts. Our very successful *Botanical Art* program, overseen by some of Australia's finest artists, continues to attract students as we build towards next year's The Art of Botanical Illustration exhibition. The Growing Friends, who run the plant nursery, continue to provide wonderful plants, sourced from Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne to our members and wider community. The Friday openings are proving most

successful, and our biannual Plant Sales are reflecting the appreciation of rare and interesting stock that is professionally propagated.

We look forward to another year of growth and community connection, while supporting our wonderful Botanic Gardens.

Cranbourne Friends, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

This year, membership remained steadily buoyant at around 670, and the Friends continue to attract new members, particularly through plant sales. We are in need of more active volunteers who want to get involved as well as better administrative processes, to ensure that our committee continues to operate efficiently and in a way that enhances the Friends' Group's operation and relations with Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

The Growing Friends' Nursery continued its excellent work in plant production and sales, although we have now moved to having two large plant sales per year rather than three. The Gardens' renovated kiosk at the north end of the Australian Garden now provides a stunning, practical, and weatherproof new location for plant sales and other activities. A training arrangement established with Wilson Botanic Park in Berwick led to their volunteers being trained by the Growing Friends, a beneficial outreach activity.

The regular efforts of the Friends in the Gardens group continue to ensure that their 'beautifying and detailing' activities, in support of the work of the horticulture teams, help to keep the Australian Garden looking terrific.

Other special interest groups maintained their small cohorts of active members, giving pleasure, engagement, and contributions to revenue through their workshops and sales of creative products. A Weaving group has now been re-established, which has added to the options available to members; because it meets on a Sunday it attracts younger members unavailable during the week.

In 2024-25, the Cranbourne Friends funded staff development including travel to the 8th Global Botanic Gardens Congress in Singapore, plus the cost of additional security cameras, following a number of thefts

at the Gardens. Further projects the Friends are funding include improvements to the Gardens' nursery, with more space needed for collected wild plants and research material and the concept plan for vital changes to the Kids' Backyard and Rockpool Waterway area.

Event highlights included a heavily supported presentation by the legendary Leon Costermans; his work describing the link between geology and which native plants grow where is fascinating. The *Raising Rarity* team also showed the Friends their achievements in research and through a Gippsland schools' program. This year the Friends offered tours to Falls Creek and Gariwerd (Grampians), and a trip to Kangaroo Island will take place shortly. 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 2024-25:

Alpine Garden Society Victorian Group, Atlas of Living Australia (CSIRO), Austin Health, Australasian Native Orchid Society Victorian Branch, Australian Seed Bank Partnership, Australasian Systematic Botany Society, Australian Biological Resources Study, Australian Flora Foundation, Australian Desert Expeditions, The Australian National University, Australian Network for Plant Conservation, Australian Pacific Science Foundation, Australian Research Council, Australian Seed Bank Partnership, Bairnsdale and District Field Naturalists Club, Biodiversity Heritage Library, Biodiversity Information Standards, 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, 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), Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (Tasmanian Government), ENVITE Environment, Faculty of Tropical Forestry, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (Malaysia), Forest Research Centre (Malaysia), Friends of the Grampians Gariwerd, Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc., Global Partnerships, Seedcorn Fund, Griffith University, GHD Group Pty. Ltd., Halls Gap Botanic Gardens, Harvard University (USA), Hermon Slade Foundation, Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation, Herbarium Information Standards Committee, 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), John T Reid Charitable Trusts, La Trobe University, Local Land Services Murray, The Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (Germany), Managers of Australasian Herbarium Collections, Maud Gibson Trust, The Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation (USA), National Gallery of Victoria, The Nell and Hermon Slade Trust, Nillumbik Shire, Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW Government), Palawan State University (Philippines), Philippines Taxonomic Initiative Inc. (Philippines), Phillip Island Nature Parks, Project Platypus Association Inc., Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Sabah Forestry Department (Malaysia), Sandakan Herbarium (Malaysia), Society for the Protection of Underground Networks, Southern Cross University, Specify Collections Consortium, Taxonomy Australia, The Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species, Trust for Nature, The University of Florida (USA), The University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of Oxford (United Kingdom), University of the Ryukyus (Japan), Wandoo Estate Aboriginal Corporation, Wetland Revival Trust, Wettenhall Environmental Trust, Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, Zoos Victoria.

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 organisation acknowledges: Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, City of Casey, Collier Charitable Fund, Department of Education, DEECA, Melbourne Airport, The Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation, The Marian and E.H. Flack Trust, Toyota Community Trust.

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 Experience and Engagement Divisions. 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 contributed almost 21,523 hours to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, making a significant contribution to the organisation. This does not include the numerous additional hours contributed by our numerous Honorary Associates.

Cranbourne Bird Survey Volunteers

Pat Bingham, Sue Charles, Liz and Peter Gower, Dawn Neylan.

Orchid Conservation Program

Our wonderful 14 orchid conservation program volunteers onsite this year have undertaken a fantastic 1,614 hours of seed cleaning and storage, seed viability counting, seedling flasking, deflasking, and repotting the *ex-situ* orchid conservation collection. The volunteer work helping conserve our rare and threatened orchids is invaluable. We wish to thank those onsite volunteers: Eve Almond, Mike and Cathy Beamish, Sharon Berry, Andrew Cocks, Andrew Cosby, Neil Freestone, Brian Lawrence, Karen McGregor, Jenny Raven, Russell Wadsworth, April Whitmore, Mike Wicks, Charles Young.

Victorian Conservation Seedbank

Jayne Anderson, Finbar Brown, Kevin Chen, James Christie, Evie Cowling, Aaron Grimes, Bob Hare, Joshua Harris, June Huang, Oliver Jaeger, Cameron Monaro, Mandy Wong, Alex Martin, Poornima Thihani, Karen Zeng.

Collections Branch

Marina Albert, Jayne Anderson, Ruth Ault, Bud Batrouney, Catherine Bortolussi, Lorraine Box, Margaret Brookes, Robyn Brownscombe, Sally Bufe, Nicki Burridge, Karen Christensen, Liz Cooper, Ian Cullen, Sandra Cumbari, Allan Davey, Berys Dixon, Adeline Dotchin, Sally Edwards, Fran Faul, Josh Harris, Cheryl Heinze, Luca Hopkins, Wendy Hopkins, Elizabeth Howcroft, Vicki Jaeger, Gillian Jervis, Gurleen Kaur, Carly King, Marysia Kozak, Jein Ku, Chaithra Kudalguthu, Tessa Kum, Sandy Kumar, Janne Lade, Jannie Lay, James Lidsey, Charli Lincke, Cathy Mann, Cam Monaco, Catherine Mostafa, Jen Murphy, Bernie O'Kane, Julia Petreski, Lynsey Poore, Caroline Radisich, Eve Recht, Melinda Rochford, Judy Ryan, Yvonne Sanders, Heather Sandford, Ros Savio, Fen Saxon Kron, Dianne Sekeres, Ro Spencer, Cathy Taylor, Bob Thomas, Sophie Thompson, Cathy Trinca, Helen Trueman, Wey Wong, Rosemary Young.

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 SBC. Others contributed to the SBC 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, Margaret Brookes, Dr Austin Brown, Dr Martin Burd, Dr Michelle Casanova, Dr Thomas Darragh, Dr Marinus de

Jager, Dr Matthew Dell, Professor Tim Entwisle, Professor David Guest, Dr Bee Gunn, Professor Rod Home, Dr Gerry Kraft, Dr Teresa Lebel, Dr Graeme Lorimer, Dr Sara Maroske, Peta McDonald, Dr Todd McLay, John Miller, Dr Josephine Milne, Mali Moir, Dr Ryan Phillips, Kevin Rule, Dr Ian Sluiter, Dr Roger Spencer, Ray Thomas, Neville Walsh, Wey Wong.

Experience and Engagement Volunteers

The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden Volunteers

Anne Ada, Moira Bainbridge, Lesley Blow, Deborah Boyd, Lorraine Brock, Jan Brown, Jenni Eaton, Lea Levy, Claire McGoldrick, Susan Moloney, Arlene Mou, Donna Osbourne, Emily Sale, Sue Smith, Julie Troschke.

Gardens Ambassadors (Melbourne Gardens)

Dianne Allen, Marie Banic, Carmel Bateman, Deborah Boyd, Judy Cain, Geraldine Callister,

Susanne Clarke, Dianne Costelloe, Rosemary Cotter, Rose Davey, Berys Dixon, Carole Drysdale, Suzannah Goodwin-Dorning, Stephen Grover, Veronica Harrison, Angela Herd, Tess Holderness, Judith Hughes, Karlene Lang, Lea Levy, Judy MacWilliams, Dennis Manz, Marian McLean, Claire McGoldrick, Emily Sale, Ann Scott, Christine Stott, Libby Tronson, Joan Zheng.

National Disability Support Volunteers

Jakub Mardon and Billy Moore.

Gardens Ambassadors (Cranbourne Gardens)

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

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, Joan Zheng.

Living Collections Volunteers

Horticulture Volunteers (Melbourne Gardens)

Meg Bentley – *Lamiaceae* spps and *Salvia* spps expert and Jenny Happell – *Camellia* expert.

Nursery Volunteers (Cranbourne Gardens)

Eight Nursery volunteers completed approximately 680 hours of assistance in the Nursery this year over one-day-per-week sessions. We wish to thank these volunteers: Jan Coles, Amanda Ford, Gillian Jervis, Nancy Leonard, Joash Long, Peter McGrath, Amber Perryman.

Mapping of Living Collection Assets

Alison Rice.

Horticulture Internship Program

Ellen Cousins, Katie Fraser, Bryony Kelly, Jasper Lee, Marlena Mende, Charlotte Piochon, Mandy Wong.

Landscape Volunteers (called Friends in the Gardens: FiGs)

FiGs (Cranbourne) – Five volunteers on average have contributed 23 sessions this year, with three hours of work per session for a total of 345 hours of work. This work covers weeding, raking, planting, and other general horticultural maintenance tasks across the Australian Garden landscapes. We would like to thank: Tony Anderson, Susan Delaney, Barrie Gallacher, Leanne Ganey, Sue Gilbert, Wendy Herauville, Andrea Hunt, Bill Jones, Linda Jones, Christine Kenyon, Dennise Rossetti, Otilene Santos, Francesca Scuderi, James Sinneman, Maurie Spano, Graeme Stewart, Callen Wheeler.

Natural Areas Volunteers (Cranbourne)

Fantastic effort from our volunteers in 2024–25, contributing an impressive 830 hours. The volunteer team assisted in a variety of tasks including weed management, litter collection, revegetation, as well as fencing and fence repairs. The team also supported ongoing ecological monitoring through monthly bird surveys and koala scat surveys, along with some hands-on work in plant propagation. A huge thank you to the following volunteers: Brian Abbott, Tony Anderson, Babu Bhattarai, David and Kay Cole, Michael Cook, Dave Cundall, Michelle Curtain, Len Gardner, Allan Gillies, Liam Martin, Norm Mortlock, Dawn Neyland, Mike Paterson, James Tharle.

Financial Overview



Revenue Generation and Budgetary Objectives

In 2024–25, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to strengthen its financial sustainability through a diversified revenue strategy aligned with our strategic objectives. High-impact programming—including *Lightscape*, *Lightfall*, *Live at the Gardens*, and *The World's Longest Brunch*—attracted over 185,000 visitors and generated significant earned income, while elevating the Gardens' cultural profile.

Retail operations achieved record performance, with a 12.7% increase in revenue, supported by data-driven buying strategies and successful pop-up activations.

The launch of The Observatory added a new premium hospitality offering to Melbourne Gardens, enhancing site appeal and commercial viability. Strategic partnerships with philanthropic foundations, government departments, and education authorities underpinned program delivery and expansion, and renewed focus on corporate sponsorships reinforced our brand alignment and provided additional financial support for flagship initiatives.

Our budget priorities in 2024–25 focused on stabilising operations, investing in digital infrastructure, and advancing inclusive programming. In line with these budget objectives, we are actively managing the delivery of the ERP and RMS which will enhance financial oversight and strengthen operational efficiency.

Throughout 2024–25 we remained focused on further developing relationships with donors and maximising expenditure of philanthropic contributions to deliver high-impact education and conservation programs, such as the *Raising Rarity* conservation education initiative and the *Nurtured by Nature* Access Fund, which supported over 190 school groups to engage and learn.

Capital investments progressed across key projects such as the Herbarium capacity and critical remediation works, Australian Drylands Learning Hub scoping, and landscape rehabilitation at Cranbourne Gardens. These efforts reflect a strategic commitment to value for money, transparency, and long-term asset stewardship.

Income from Government

During 2024–25, annual funding provided by the Parks and Reserves Trust Account (PRTA) played a pivotal role in advancing the Board's strategic objectives as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2025–29. This essential funding drove delivery of priority initiatives across Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens—focusing on enhancing visitor engagement and accessibility, deepening cultural and community connections, and elevating environmental sustainability outcomes.

The PRTA resources further supported the ongoing implementation of Master Plan elements at both Gardens, with targeted investment in the maintenance of critical assets including the Herbarium. These works included the repair and replacement of infrastructure, such as garden paths, kerbs, and public amenities—ensuring that both sites remain safe, resilient, and welcoming destinations for all.

Financial Results for 2024–25

(\$ thousand)

	2024–25	2023–24	Change
	\$	\$	\$
Government and other grants			
PRTA grants	23,213	25,894	(2,681)
Other Victorian government grants	1,739	3,534	(1,795)
Commonwealth Government grants	736	629	107
Other grants	369	585	(216)
Philanthropic and other donations	3,431	2,650	781
Other income	8,284	9,847	(1,563)
Total Expenses	(41,341)	(39,518)	(1,823)
Net result	(3,569)	3,621	(7,190)

Comparison of Financial Performance and Position

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria recorded a net deficit of \$3.6 million for the financial year ended 30 June 2025, a decline of \$7.2 million compared to the prior year. This result reflects a shift in operational priorities, increased investment in infrastructure and programming, and a recalibration of income streams following a peak in 2023–24.

Total expenses increased by \$1.8 million, driven by expanded programming, infrastructure renewal, and digital transformation initiatives. Total revenue declined by \$5.4 million, largely due to reduced government grant income and lower other income following one-off insurance refunds and interest earnings in the prior year.

Key movements in revenue and expenses included:

- The PRTA funding decreased by \$2.7 million, reflecting the completion of several capital works and a return to baseline funding levels.
- Other Victorian Government grants declined by \$1.8 million, due to reduced capital project activity following the completion of major deliverables last financial year.
- Philanthropic and donation income increased by \$0.8 million, supported by strengthened donor engagement and targeted fundraising for education and conservation programs such as *Raising Rarity* and the *Nurtured by Nature* Access Fund.
- Other income declined in 2024–25, reflecting the absence of one-off items that boosted prior year's result—such as insurance refunds and elevated interest earnings. The fall was compounded by softer performance in commercial programming, most notably Lightscape, which did not meet revenue expectations. While retail operations and other public events—including cinema and music—performed strongly, they were not sufficient to offset the shortfall.
- Expenses rose by \$1.8 million, reflecting increased staffing to support expanded programming, investment in digital infrastructure (ERP and RMS and continued delivery of capital works including the Herbarium redevelopment and landscape rehabilitation.
- Increased expenses also reflect annual escalation of employee benefit expenses in line with the *Royal Botanic Gardens Enterprise Agreement 2021*.

Key movements in the financial position include:

- Net cash flow from operating activities was negative (\$0.7 million), due to timing of grant receipts and increased expenditure on strategic initiatives.
- The organisation continued to invest in strategically significant capital projects, including:
 - Stage 1 Herbarium remediation
 - Australian Drylands Learning Hub scoping
 - Landscape rehabilitation at Cranbourne Gardens
- Delays in the delivery of some capital works—due to timing, funding dependencies, and procurement—resulted in a \$963,000 favourable variance to budget. These works are expected to progress in 2025–26.
- Total assets remained stable at \$1.038 billion, with capitalisation of new infrastructure offsetting depreciation and reduced cash holdings.
- Total liabilities decreased slightly to \$7.0 million, reflecting the completion of contract obligations tied to prior year capital funding.
- In 2024–25, the organisation received \$1.448 million in contributed capital from DEECA to support the Safeguarding Victoria's Critical Seed and Botanical Collection initiative. This funding enabled targeted investment in infrastructure and conservation efforts to protect and enhance the state's botanical assets.
- No events occurred after balance date that are expected to materially affect the organisation's operations in subsequent reporting periods.

Five-Year Comparison of Financial Results

(\$ thousand)

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income from government	25,688	30,057	29,761	26,999	23,776
Total revenue and income from transactions	37,772	43,139	41,293	39,699	37,029
Total expenses from transactions	(41,341)	(39,518)	(37,107)	(35,207)	(33,239)
Net result from transactions	(3,569)	3,621	4,186	4,493	3,790
Net result for the period	(3,659)	3,479	4,196	2,003	3,837
Net cash flow from operating activities	(689)	4,091	3,194	5,860	4,181
Total assets	1,038,194	1,041,593	1,038,279	964,101	683,291
Total liabilities	7,000	7,326	9,888	14,105	8,587

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 2025 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

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 Minister for Finance 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 2025 and financial position of the Board at 30 June 2025.

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 17 September 2025.



Penny Fowler
Chair
Royal Botanic Gardens Board

Melbourne
17 September 2025



Chris Russell
Director and Chief Executive
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Melbourne
17 September 2025



Bradley Vice
Director Finance, Risk and Governance
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Melbourne
17 September 2025

Comprehensive operating statement ^(a)

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Revenue and income from transactions			
Grants	2.1	26,057	30,642
Donations	2.1	3,431	2,650
Sale of goods and services	2.1	2,604	2,208
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	2.1	1,228	1,389
Interest income	7.1.1	1,118	1,292
Other income	2.1	3,334	4,958
Total revenue and income from transactions		37,772	43,139
Expenses from transactions			
Employee benefit expenses	3.1	(23,199)	(22,884)
Depreciation	4.1.3	(3,944)	(3,735)
Interest expense	6.1	(17)	(26)
Other operating expenses	3.1	(14,181)	(12,873)
Total expenses from transactions		(41,341)	(39,518)
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		(3,569)	3,621
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net (loss) on non-financial assets ^(b)	8.2	(96)	(160)
Other gain from other economic flows ^(c)	8.2	6	18
Total other economic flows included in net result		(90)	(142)
Net result		(3,659)	3,479
Other economic flows - other comprehensive income:			
Items that will not be reclassified to net result			
Changes in physical asset revaluation surplus	8.3	(861)	(19)
Total other economic flows - other comprehensive income		(861)	(19)
Comprehensive result		(4,520)	3,460

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 gain/(loss) from other economic flows due to changes in bond rates for leave provisions.

Balance sheet ^(a)

As at 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	6.3	20,729	22,399
Receivables	5.1	1,181	696
Total financial assets		21,910	23,095
Non-financial assets			
Inventories	5.4	347	247
Other non-financial assets	5.5	331	362
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	1,015,606	1,017,889
Total non-financial assets		1,016,284	1,018,498
Total assets		1,038,194	1,041,593
Liabilities			
Payables	5.2	1,670	1,666
Contract liabilities	5.3	209	628
Borrowings	6.1	573	409
Employee related provisions	3.1.2	4,548	4,624
Total liabilities		7,000	7,327
Net assets		1,031,194	1,034,266
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		25,956	29,615
Physical asset revaluation surplus	8.3	909,482	910,343
Contributed capital		95,756	94,308
Net worth		1,031,194	1,034,266

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 ^(a)

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Receipts from government		25,265	27,510
Receipts from other entities		7,820	8,519
Goods and services tax received from the ATO ^(b)		709	851
Interest received		1,118	1,292
Total receipts		34,912	38,172
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(35,574)	(34,077)
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(27)	(4)
Total payments		(35,601)	(34,081)
Net cash flows (used in)/from operating activities		(689)	4,091
Cash flows from investing activities			
Sale of non-financial assets		242	190
Purchases of non-financial assets		(2,835)	(5,279)
Net cash flows (used in) investing activities		(2,593)	(5,089)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Owner contributions by State Government – appropriation for capital expenditure purposes		1,448	2,414
Proceeds from borrowings		386	262
Repayment of borrowings and principal portion of lease liabilities ^(c)		(222)	(208)
Net cash flows from financing activities		1,612	2,468
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		(1,670)	1,470
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year		22,399	20,929
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of financial year	6.3	20,729	22,399

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 ^(a)

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Physical asset revaluation surplus	Accumulated surplus	Contributed capital	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Balance at 1 July 2023	910,362	26,136	91,894	1,028,392
Net result for the year	-	3,479	-	3,479
Other comprehensive income for the year	(19)	-	-	(19)
Capital contributions	-	-	2,414	2,414
Balance at 30 June 2024	910,343	29,615	94,308	1,034,266
Net result for the year	-	(3,659)	-	(3,659)
Other comprehensive income for the year	(861)	-	-	(861)
Capital contributions	-	-	1,448	1,448
Balance at 30 June 2025	909,482	25,956	95,756	1,031,194

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

The Royal Botanic Gardens Board (the Board) is a not-for-profit Statutory Authority of the State of Victoria, established pursuant to the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991* on 1 July 1992.

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.

Its principal address is:

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
Birdwood Avenue
Melbourne VIC 3004

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are Tier 2 general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* (AASB 1060) and Financial Reporting Direction 101 *Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards* (FRD 101).

The Board is a Tier 2 entity in accordance with FRD 101. These financial statements are the first general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures. The Board's prior year financial statements were general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (Tier 1). As the Board is not a 'significant entity' as defined in FRD 101, it was required to change from Tier 1 to Tier 2 reporting effective from 1 July 2024.

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

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.

Capital grants which have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of distributions to or contributions 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 nearest \$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).

Where appropriate, those AASs 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 assessed the recognition of grant revenue for not-for-profit entities in accordance with AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers and AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities. Where grants are enforceable and contain sufficiently specific performance obligations, revenue is recognised under AASB 15 when the Board satisfies each performance obligation. Conversely, grants that do not contain sufficiently specific performance obligations fall within the scope of AASB 1058, and income is recognised either progressively as the related project is completed or when the Board obtains control of the funds.

Structure

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

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Grants	2.2.1	26,057	30,642
Donations	2.2.2	3,431	2,650
Sale of goods and services	2.2.3	2,604	2,208
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	2.2.4	1,228	1,389
Interest income	7.1.1	1,118	1,292
Other income	2.2.5	3,334	4,958
Total revenue and income from transactions		37,772	43,139

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

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Income recognised as income of not-for-profit entities		
Parks and Reserves Trust Account grants	23,213	25,894
Other specific purpose grants	423	2,531
Income recognised as revenue from contracts with customers		
Other specific purpose grants	2,421	2,217
Total grants	26,057	30,642

Grants recognised under AASB 1058. 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 AASB 1058. 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.

Grants recognised under AASB 15. Income from grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations are accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers in accordance with AASB 15. 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

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Donations	3,431	2,650
Total donations	3,431	2,650

The Board is deemed to have control when the funds are received from the provider, in accordance with AASB 1058.

2.2.3 Sale of goods and services

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Sale of goods	1,430	1,227
Rendering of services	1,174	981
Total sale of goods and services	2,604	2,208

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 service as 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

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Voluntary services	1,228	1,389
Total fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	1,228	1,389

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 Board 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 specimens.

2.2.5 Interest income

Interest income includes interest received on cash and deposits. Refer to Note 7.1.1 for information on interest income.

2.2.6 Other income

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Events	1,427	2,604
Rental income	1,420	1,523
Royalties	58	96
Other miscellaneous income	429	735
Total other income	3,334	4,958

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.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Non-cancellable lease receivables		
Not longer than one year	1,010	526
Longer than one year and not longer than five years	2,272	842
Total	3,282	1,368

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 disclosed.

Structure

- 3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services... 59
- 3.2 Other operating expenses.....61

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Employee benefit expenses	3.1.1	23,199	22,884
Other operating expenses	3.2	14,181	12,873
Total expenses incurred in delivery of services		37,380	35,757

3.1.1 Employee benefits and related expenses in the comprehensive operating statement

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Salaries and wages, annual leave and long service leave	19,540	19,312
Defined contribution superannuation expense	2,167	2,055
Termination benefits	75	125
Other on-costs	1,417	1,392
Total employee expenses	23,199	22,884

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-related provisions

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.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Current provisions		
Annual leave	1,404	1,335
Long service leave	1,922	351
Provision for on-costs	676	327
Total current provisions for employee benefits	4,002	2,013
Non-current provisions		
Employee benefits	454	2,187
On-costs	92	424
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits	546	2,611
Total provisions for employee benefits	4,548	4,624

Wages and salaries, annual leave and personal 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 personal leave as all personal leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average personal leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As personal leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the Comprehensive operating statement as it is taken.

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax, workers compensation and superannuation 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 either:

- 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.

3.2 Other operating expenses

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Supplies and services		
Contract costs	3,608	2,782
Garden and office equipment and supplies	1,123	1,253
Non-financial assets hire, maintenance and operational costs	2,427	1,723
Consultancies and professional services	1,538	2,224 ¹
Cleaning and waste disposal costs	989	912
Water charges	578	366
Advertising and promotion	309	371
Motor vehicle expenses	129 ¹	129
Computer expenses	898	664
Travel expenses	252	156
Staff training and development	215	126
Insurance costs	417	395
Postage and communication expenses	104	91
Books, periodicals and subscriptions	162	181
Legal costs	62	79
Security	194	160
Catering costs	149	152
Other	303	482
	13,457	12,246
Cost of goods sold	705	609
Lease rental expenses (low value assets)	19	18
Total other operating expenses	14,181	12,873

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 12 months or less; 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 assets 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 Property, plant and equipment.....63

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Land at fair value	491,100	491,100	-	-	491,100	491,100
Buildings at fair value	40,888	41,616	(4,097)	(3,009)	36,791	38,607
Infrastructure at fair value	74,964	74,546	(7,235)	(5,326)	67,729	69,220
Plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value	9,852	10,106	(5,660)	(5,836)	4,192	4,270
Cultural assets at fair value	414,771	414,522	-	-	414,771	414,522
Assets under construction at cost	1,023	170	-	-	1,023	170
Net carrying amount	1,032,598	1,032,060	(16,992)	(14,171)	1,015,606	1,017,889

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

4.1.1 Total right-of-use assets: vehicles

	Gross carrying amount 2025 \$'000	Accumulated depreciation 2025 \$'000	Net carrying amount 2025 \$'000	Gross carrying amount 2024 \$'000	Accumulated depreciation 2024 \$'000	Net carrying amount 2024 \$'000
Vehicles	748	(150)	598	732	(253)	479
Net carrying amount	748	(150)	598	732	(253)	479

	Vehicles at fair value 2025 \$'000
Opening balance - 1 July 2024	479
Additions	385
Disposals	(184)
Depreciation	(82)
Closing balance - 30 June 2025	598

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.

Right-of-use asset acquired by lessees - 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 the current replacement cost method.

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 Impairment of Assets* does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

4.1.2 Depreciation

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	10 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.

4.1.3 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amount of property, plant and equipment ^(a)

2025	Land at fair value \$'000	Buildings at fair value \$'000	Infrastructure at fair value \$'000	Plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value \$'000	Cultural assets at fair value \$'000	Assets under construction at fair value \$'000	Total \$'000
Opening balance	491,100	38,607	69,220	4,270	414,522	170	1,017,889
Additions	-	219	333	1,053	249	981	2,835
Disposals	-	-	-	(184)	-	(43)	(227)
Revaluations	-	(947)	-	-	-	-	(947)
Transfers ^(b)	-	-	85	-	-	(85)	-
Depreciation	-	(1,088)	(1,909)	(947)	-	-	(3,944)
Closing balance	491,100	36,791	67,729	4,192	414,771	1,023	1,015,606

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 as per the requirement of FRD 103.

The next scheduled full revaluation for this purpose group will be conducted in the 2026 financial year. Refer to Note 7.2 for more information.

(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.....	69

5.1 Receivables

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Contractual		
Sales of goods and services	710	403
Accrued income	392	190
	1,102	593
Statutory		
Net GST input tax credit recoverable	79	103
	79	103
Total receivables	1,181	696
<i>Represented by</i>		
Current receivables	1,181	696

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 *Financial Instruments* 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.

5.1.1 Impairment loss

In accordance to FRD 114 *Financial Instruments*, all entities shall apply the simplified approach, which requires the loss allowance to always be measured at an amount equal to lifetime expected credit losses for all trade receivables, lease receivables and statutory receivables.

No expected credit loss provision has been brought to account in 2025 and 2024 on the basis that there are no doubtful debts as all contractual receivables are expected to be paid within 30 days.

The loss allowances for receivables are based on assumptions about risk of default and expected loss rates. The expected loss rate applied as at 30 June 2025 was 0 per cent (30 June 2024: 0 per cent).

Impairment of financial assets

The Board records the allowance for expected credit loss for the relevant financial instruments applying AASB 9's Expected Credit Loss approach. The Board's contractual receivables and statutory receivables are subject to AASB 9 impairment assessment.

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.

Credit loss allowance is classified as other economic flows in the net result. 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.

Statutory receivables at amortised cost

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.

5.2 Payables

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Contractual payables		
Supplies and services	1,510	1,508
Other payables	12	10
	1,522	1,518
Statutory payables		
FBT payable	13	13
Other taxes payable	135	135
	148	148
Total payables	1,670	1,666
<i>Represented by</i>		
Current payables	1,670	1,666

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.

5.3 Contract liabilities

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Contract liabilities	209	628
<i>Represented by</i>		
Current contract liabilities ^(a)	209	628

Note:

(a) Current contract liabilities includes capital grants, and while some grants are ultimately recognised under AASB 1058, they are presented as contract liabilities due to timing differences between receipts and recognition.

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.

5.4 Inventories

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Current inventories		
Inventories held for sale		
At cost	347	247
Total inventories	347	247

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

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Current other assets		
Prepayments	331	362
Total other non-financial assets	331	362

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

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Current borrowings		
Lease liabilities ^(a)	120	182
Total current borrowings	120	182
Non-current borrowings		
Lease liabilities ^(a)	453	227
Total non-current borrowings	453	227
Total borrowings	573	409

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.

Terms and conditions of borrowings

2025	Weighted average interest rate (%)	Carrying amount \$'000	Nominal amount \$'000	Maturity dates				
				Less than 1 month	1- 3 months	3 months - 1 year	1 - 5 years	More than 5 years
				\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Lease liabilities	4.64	573	630	44	18	82	486	-
Total		573	630	44	18	82	486	-

2024	Weighted average interest rate (%)	Carrying amount \$'000	Nominal amount \$'000	Maturity dates				
				Less than 1 month	1- 3 months	3 months - 1 year	1 - 5 years	More than 5 years
				\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Lease liabilities	2.91	409	428	80	50	60	238	-
Total		409	428	80	50	60	238	-

Interest expense

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Interest on lease liabilities	17	26
Total interest expense	17	26

'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 4.1.1.

Below market 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.

6.2.2 Expense recognised for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

The following amounts are recognised as expense relating to short-term leases and leases of low-value assets:

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Expenses relating to leases of low-value assets	19	18
Total amount recognised as expense	19	18

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.

6.2.3 Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

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.

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.

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.

Future lease payments

	Minimum future lease payments ^(a)	
	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Not longer than 1 year	144	190
Longer than 1 year but not longer than 5 years	486	238
Longer than 5 years	-	-
Minimum future lease payments	630	428
Less future finance charges	(57)	(19)
Present value of minimum lease payments	573	409

Note

(a) Minimum future lease payments include the aggregate of all base payments and any guaranteed residual.

6.3 Cash flow information and balances

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand and cash at bank. The Board's bank account is held in the Central Banking System (CBS) under the *Standing Directions 2018*.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Total cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet ^(a)	20,729	22,399
Balance as per cash flow statement	20,729	22,399

Note:

(a) Cash and deposits bear variable interest rate with a weighted-average interest rate of 4.38% (2024: 4.41%),

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 2025	Less than 1 year \$'000	1-5 Years \$'000	5+ Years \$'000	Total \$'000
Capital expenditure commitments payable	146	-	-	146
Other commitments payable	1,060	964	-	2,024
Total commitments (inclusive of GST)	1,206	964	-	2,170
Less GST recoverable	(109)	(88)	-	(197)
Total commitments (exclusive of GST)	1,097	876	-	1,973
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
Total commitments (inclusive of GST)	1,840	948	-	2,788
Less GST recoverable	(184)	(95)	-	(279)
Total commitments (exclusive of GST)	1,656	853	-	2,509

7. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

Introduction

It is often necessary for the Board to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for the Board related 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 result:

- 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.

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.

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 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 - Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments by category

2025	Carrying Amount \$'000	Net gain/(loss) \$'000	Total interest income/(expense) \$'000	Fee income/(expense) \$'000	Impairment loss \$'000
Financial assets at amortised cost					
Cash and deposits	20,729	-	1,118	(39)	-
Trade receivables ^(a)					
Sale of goods and services	710	-	-	-	-
Accrued donations income	392	-	-	-	-
Total financial assets at amortised cost	21,831	-	1,118	(39)	-
Financial liabilities at amortised cost					
Trade payables ^(a)	1,522	-	-	-	-
Borrowings					
Lease liabilities	573	-	(17)	-	-
Total contractual financial liabilities	2,095	-	(17)	-	-

7.1.1 Financial instruments - Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments by category (continued)

2024	Carrying Amount \$'000	Net gain/(loss) \$'000	Total interest income/(expense) \$'000	Fee income/(expense) \$'000	Impairment loss \$'000
Financial assets at amortised cost					
Cash and deposits	22,399	-	1,292	(31)	-
Trade receivables ^(a)					
Sale of goods and services	403	-	-	-	-
Accrued donations income	190	-	-	-	-
Total financial assets at amortised cost	22,992	-	1,292	(31)	-
Financial liabilities at amortised cost					
Trade payables ^(a)	1,518	-	-	-	-
Borrowings					
Lease liabilities	409	-	(26)	-	-
Total contractual financial liabilities	1,927	-	(26)	-	-

Note:

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

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. In conjunction with VGV, the Board 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:

- valuation techniques
- details of significant assumptions used in the fair value determination.

7.2.1 Fair value determination: Non-financial physical assets

Valuation techniques and significant assumptions of non-financial physical assets measured at fair value

AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – *Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities* amended AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* by adding Appendix F *Australian implementation guidance for not-for-profit public sector entities*. Appendix F explains and illustrates the application of the principles in AASB 13 on developing unobservable inputs and the application of the cost approach. These clarifications are mandatorily applicable annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024. FRD 103 permits Victorian public sector entities to apply Appendix F of AASB 13 in their next scheduled formal asset revaluation or interim revaluation process (whichever is earlier).

The last scheduled full independent valuation of all the Board's non-financial physical assets was performed by the VGV at 30 June 2021. Annual fair value assessment for 30 June 2025 using VGV indices does not identify material changes in value. In accordance with FRD 103, the Board will reflect Appendix F in its next scheduled formal revaluation in the 2026 financial year or interim revaluation process (whichever is earlier). All annual fair value assessments thereafter will continue compliance with Appendix F.

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

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.

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 the current replacement cost method. Current 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 current replacement cost of the building/component after applying depreciation rates on a useful life basis. Current 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 2025.

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.

Description of significant assumptions applied to fair value measurement.

Asset Category	Valuation technique	Significant unobservable inputs	Range (weighted average)
Specialised Land	Market approach	Community Service Obligation (CSO) adjustment	70% ^(a)
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)
		Useful life of buildings	5-100 years (33 years)
Vehicles	Current Replacement Cost	Cost per unit	\$500 - \$381,000 per unit (\$37,000 per unit)
		Useful life of vehicles	5 - 8 years (6 years)
Plant and Equipment	Current Replacement Cost	Cost per unit	\$475 - \$339,000 per unit (\$15,000 per unit)
		Useful life of plant and equipment	4 - 50 years (7 years)
Infrastructure (specialised and heritage)	Current Replacement Cost ^(b)	Cost per unit	\$1,400 - \$4,600,000 per unit (\$296,000 per unit)
		Useful life of infrastructure assets	10 to 50 years (34 years)
Specialised Cultural Assets	Current Replacement Cost ^(b)	Costs of reinstating the collection per unit	\$0 - \$1,755 per unit
		Size of collections	1,500,000 - 1,600,000
Right-of-use assets	Current Replacement Cost	Cost per unit	\$16,000 - \$112,000 per unit (\$50,000 per unit)
		Useful life of right-of-use assets	3 - 6 years (4 years)

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 and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable respectively.

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 2025 (nil: June 2024).

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 not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligations the amount of the obligations cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Contingent liabilities are also classified as either quantifiable or non-quantifiable.

The Board has nil contingent liabilities at June 2025 (nil: June 2024)

8. OTHER DISCLOSURES

Introduction

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

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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.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Deed of release ex gratia payment ^(a)	-	123
Total ex gratia expenses ^(b)	-	123

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.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Net (loss) on non-financial assets		
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, plant and equipment ^(a)	15	(154)
Impairment of property, plant and equipment	(87)	-
Write down of inventory	(24)	(6)
Total net (loss) on non-financial assets	(96)	(160)
Other gains from other economic flows		
Net gain arising from revaluation of long service leave liability ^(b)	6	18
Total other gains from other economic flows	6	18

Notes:

(a) Prior year included disposal of a street sweeper 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

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Physical asset revaluation surplus ^(a)		
Balance at beginning of financial year	910,343	910,362
Revaluation decrements	(861)	(19)
Balance at end of financial year	909,482	910,343
Net change in reserves	(861)	(19)

Note:

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

8.4 Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Minister for Finance 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	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
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Governing Board

Chair	Mrs Penny Fowler AM	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Deputy Chair	Mr Jason Hay	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Member	Ms Christine Wyatt	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Member	Mr Damian Holmes	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Member	Mr Peter Langkamp OAM	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Member	Ms Felicia Mariani	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Member	Ms Arianne Rose	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

Accountable Officer

Director and Chief Executive	Mr Chris Russell	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
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Remuneration

Remuneration received or receivable by the Accountable Officer in connection with the management of the Board during the reporting period was in the range: \$310 000 – \$319 000 (2024: \$420 000 – \$429 000).

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.

Remuneration of the senior executive service (including Key Management Personnel disclosed in Note 8.6) ^(a)	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Total remuneration ^(a)	841	865
Total number of executives	5	4
Total annualised employee equivalents ^(b)	3.5	3.4

Note:

(a): The total number of senior executive service members includes persons who meet the definition of Key Management Personnel (KMP) of the entity under AASB 124 Related Party Disclosures and are also reported within the related parties note disclosure (Note 8.6). In the 2024 financial year, total remuneration included a termination payment made to a senior executive.

(b): 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 \$24.6 million (2024 - \$29.2 million) and the Department of Education and Training Victoria \$0.2 million (2024 - \$0.2 million) during the reporting period.

Key management personnel (KMP) of the Board include the Portfolio Minister, the Hon Steve Dimopoulos MP, 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.

Compensation of KMPs	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Total ^(a)	1,233	1,354

Note:

(a): Note that KMPs are also reported in the disclosure of remuneration of executive officers (Note 8.5)

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

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Victorian Auditor-General's Office		
Audit of the financial statements ^(a)	34	33
Total remuneration of auditors	34	33

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 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.

8.11 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 numbers
200x	year
200x-0x	year period.

The financial statements and notes are presented based on the illustration in the 2024-25 Tier 2 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 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 2025 • 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 material accounting policy information • 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 2025 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures.
Basis for opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report</i> section of my report. My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. 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 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)</i> (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 is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i>, 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.

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

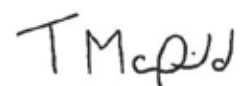
As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and 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 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.

MELBOURNE
24 September 2025



Timothy Maxfield
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria



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 and ensures all managers receive training prior to participating in selection panels. The Gardens' policies and practices are consistent with the Victorian Public Sector Commission's employment standards and provide for fair treatment, professional development 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, social engineering and phishing awareness, fraud and corruption awareness, and child safety. Employees are also trained in managing unconscious bias and developing resilience along with a broad offering of mental health and wellbeing awareness information sessions. Line Managers have also received training on obligations of Positive Duty under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and the *Federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984*.

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:

- Ongoing implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Ongoing commitment as a Child Safe organisation.
- Continued implementation of initiatives in the four-year Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).
- Promoting and implementing Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter.
- Implementing our *Occupational Health and Safety Strategy 2022–24*.
- Refresh of the e-learning platform and modules, including consulting of subject matter experts to develop customised and relevant training offerings.

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.
- Development and delivery of a second modular Leadership Development Training program for frontline managers to enhance their line management capabilities.
- A range of tailored training modules specifically for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria leaders, including providing effective feedback, managing return-to-work procedures for injured employees, and root cause analysis models to better understand workplace injuries.



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 introduced Mental Health First Aid Officers as part of our employee support network alongside the established Contact Officer cohort.

Our GEAP 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 equally in all aspects of employment.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria received advice from the Commission for Equality in the Victorian Public Sector that our progress report submitted in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* demonstrated positive progress against the seven key indicators, while more work was required to be done with our Gender Impact Assessments. One of our last major commitments to be delivered as outlined in the GEAP was an anonymous reporting process for instances of sexual harassment in the workplace. This was implemented via an online tool in Q2 of 2024–25.

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.

The Child Safety Policy was updated to reflect the significant changes to state legislation and the national Child Safe Standards and rolled out to all staff via an online learning module.

Comparative Workforce Data

Summary of Employment Levels as of June 2024–25 and June 2023–24

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 2023–24	246	180	127	53	159.68	66	39.43
June 2024–25	248	176	122	54	154.76	72	44.99

Details of Employment Levels Re: Gender, Age, and Classification

	June 2025			June 2024		
	Total Headcount (Includes Ongoing, Fixed Term, and Casual)	Ongoing	Fixed Term, Fixed Task, and Casual	Total Headcount (Includes Ongoing, Fixed Term, and Casual)	Ongoing	Fixed Term, Fixed Task, and Casual
	248	Number (Headcount)	Headcount	246	Number (Headcount)	Headcount
Gender						
Man	97	74	23	96	78	18
Woman	149	100	49	147	100	47
Self-Described	2	2	0	3	2	1
Age						
Under 25	12	1	11	8	0	8
25–34	55	36	19	55	35	20
35–44	52	39	13	53	38	15
45–54	72	53	19	76	60	16
55–64	46	38	8	42	38	4
Over 64	11	9	2	12	9	3
Classification						
Staff	199	133	66	191	129	62
Line Manager	35	35	0	37	35	2
Branch Manager	8	8	0	16	16	0
Executives	6	0	6	2	0	2

Notes:

- All figures reflect employment levels **in their substantive position** 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 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 Victorian Public Sector Commission's Public Entity Executive Remuneration Policy

Executive Data

Responsible Persons

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

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

Minister

Minister for Environment	
The Hon Steve Dimopoulos MP	1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Governing Board

Penny Fowler AM (Chair)		1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025
Jason Hay (Deputy Chair)		1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025
Damian Holmes		1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025
Peter Langkamp OAM		1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025
Felicia Mariani		1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025
Arianne Rose		1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025
Christine Wyatt		1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Accountable Officer

Director and Chief Executive	
Chris Russell	1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

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 following table discloses the SES of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria for 30 June 2025 broken down by gender.

	All		Women		Men		Self-Described	
Class	No.	Var.	No.	Var.	No.	Var.	No.	Var.
SES 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	n	n
SES 2	2	+2	1	+1	1	+1	n	n
SES 1	4	+2	2	+2	2	0	n	n
Total	6	+4	3	+3	3	+1	n	n

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 8.5 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 organisation during the relevant reporting period.

Occupational Health and Safety

Incident and Injury Summary

In the financial year 2024–25, there were a total of 234 incidents. Of these, 108 incidents or 46.2% were related to employees. Of these, 39 incidents, representing 36.1% of employee-related cases, involved injury. The remaining incidents were categorised as near misses, property or equipment damage, and report-only matters. This increase in employee-related incidents compared to 95 incidents in 2023–24 is largely due to active staff participation in reporting minor injuries, as awareness is being improved across the organisation.

There were nine lost time injuries reported in 2024–25, compared to four in the previous year. These injuries primarily involved musculoskeletal conditions affecting the lower back and shoulders.

Medical treatment injuries also rose to six cases in 2024–25, up from three in 2023–24. These injuries were related to musculoskeletal issues involving the lower back and shoulders.

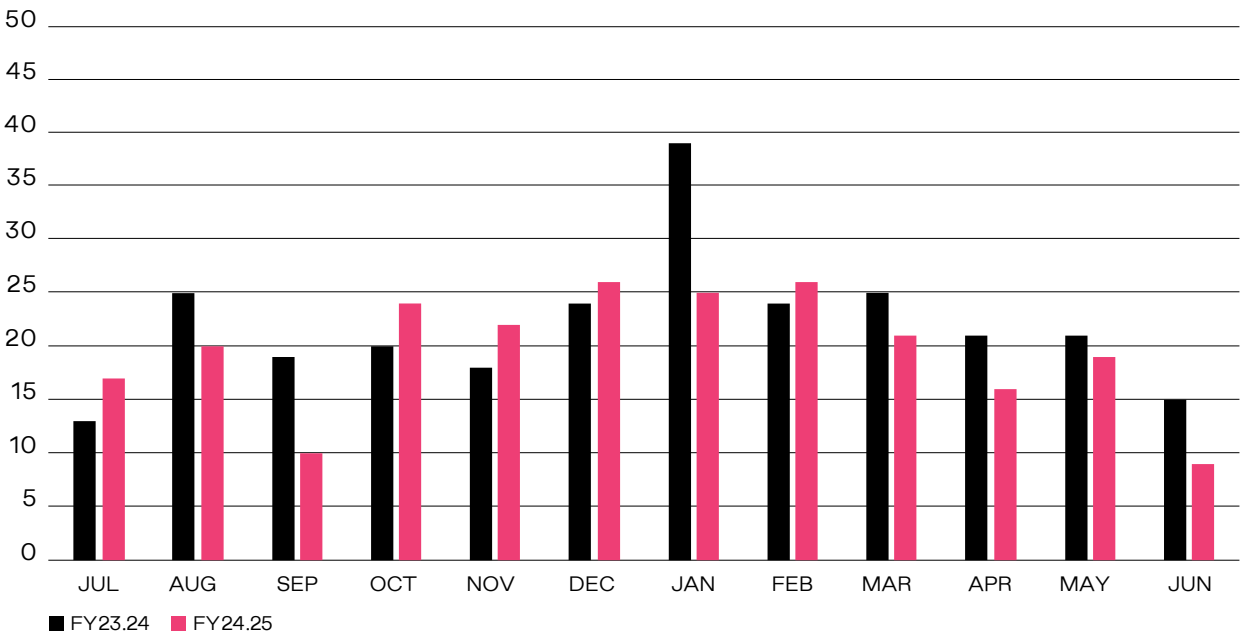
Line Managers collaborated closely with affected staff to develop return-to-work plans that aligned with medical certificates of capacity formed with the aid of a task analysis provided to the treating health practitioner. This approach has been instrumental in supporting employee rehabilitation and enabling a return to pre-injury work capacity.

First aid treatments numbered 24 in 2024–25, down from 40 the previous year. There was one mental health injury reported for 2024–25.

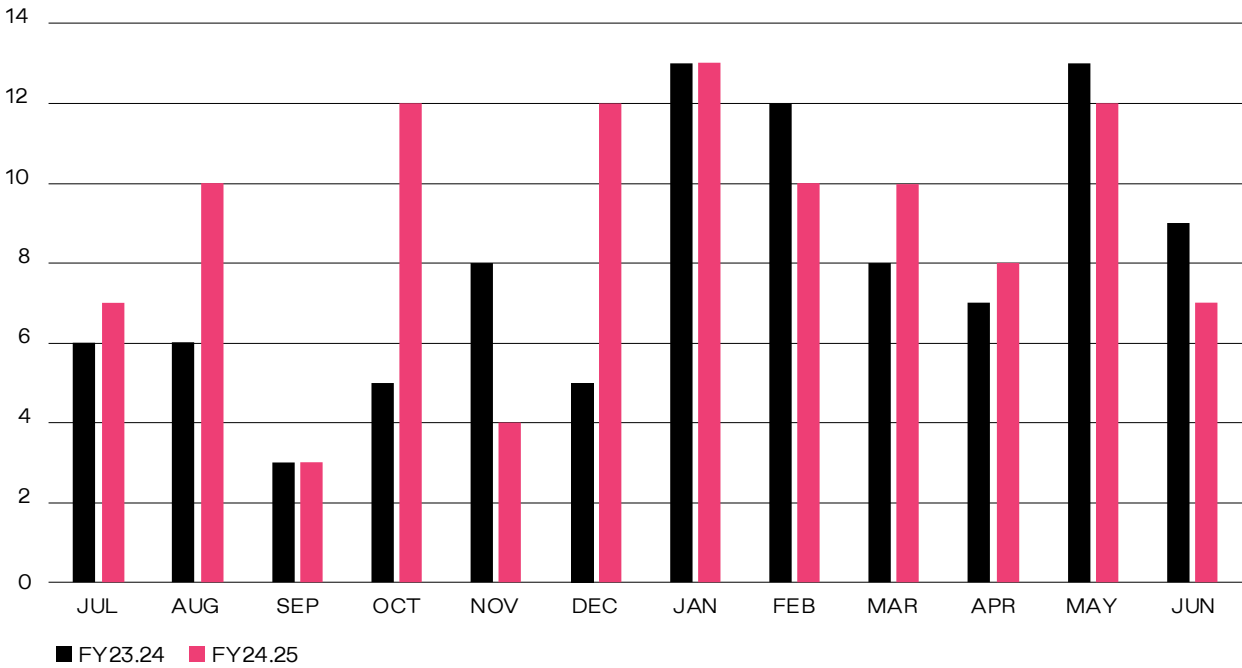
The table below summarises incidents and categories.

Incidents	Number	% of Total Incidents	Number	% of Total Incidents
	FY23.24		FY24.25	
Total Incidents – Employee and Non-Employee	258	–	234	–
Employee Incident	95	36.8	108	46.2
Employee Injury	46	17.8	39	16.6
Mental Health Injury	0	0	1	0
Lost Time Injury	4	1.5	9	3.8
Medical Treatment Injury	3	1.2	6	2.5
First Aid Treatment	39	15.1	24	10.2

Total Incidents Reported in the last 2 financial Years

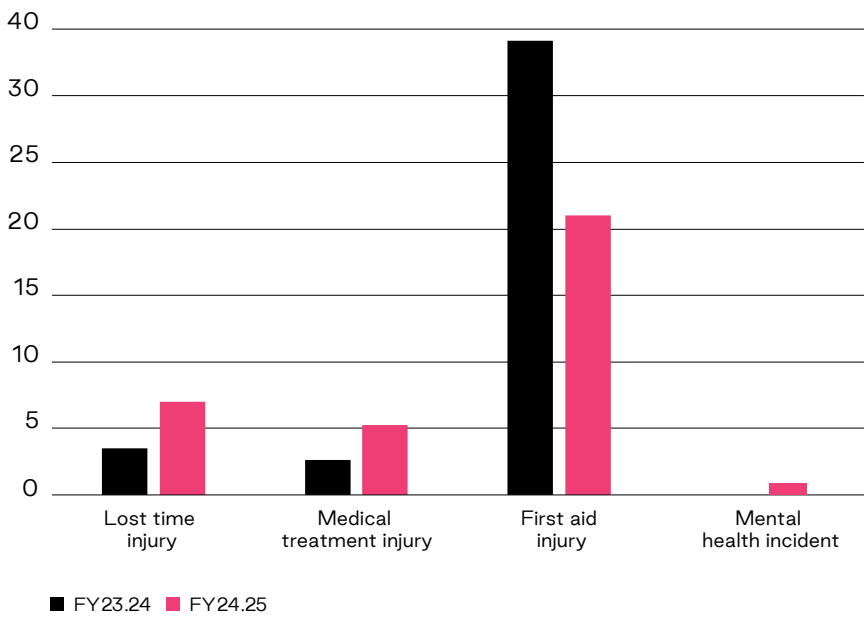


Total Employee Incidents Reported in the last 2 financial Years

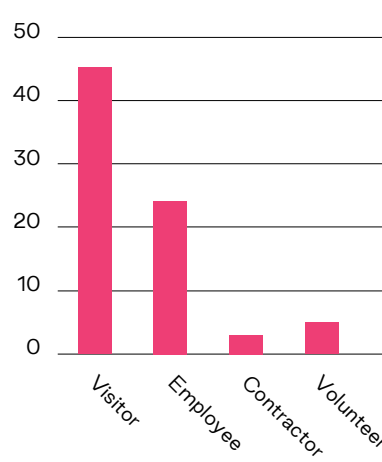




Total employee injury type by financial years



First aid incidents in FY24.25



Assessment of Compliance Against KPIs

Measure	KPI	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Incidents	No. of overall incidents	258	234
	No. of employee incidents	95	108
	Rate per 100 FTE	64.63	75.00
Claims	No. of standard claims	9	5
	Rate per 100 FTE	6.12	3.47
	No. of lost time claims	9	5
	Rate per 100 FTE	6.12	3.47
	No. of claims exceeding 13 weeks	6	3
	Rate per 100 FTE	4.08	2.08
	Number of standard claims open at 30 June	2	5
Fatalities	Fatality claims	0	0
Claims Costs	Average cost per standard claim	\$17,450.78	\$62,480.54
Return to Work	Percentage of claims with RTW plan <30days	0	0
Management Commitment	Evidence of OH&S policy statement, OH&S objectives, regular reporting to senior management of OH&S, and OH&S plans (signed by CEO or equivalent)		Compliant
Consultation and Participation	Evidence of agreed structure of designated workgroups (DWGs), health and safety representatives (HSRs) and committee, and issue resolution procedures (IRPs)		Compliant
	Compliance with agreed structure on DWGs, HSRs, and IRPs		Compliant

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 (FAT) 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



Disclosure on Expenditures

Government Advertising Expenditure

Nil reports.

Consultancy Expenditure

In 2024–25, there were three consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were \$10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2024–25 in relation to these consultancies was \$168,362.

Details of individual consultancies:

In 2024–25, no consultancies 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 2024–25 (exc. GST)	Future Expenditure (exc. GST)
CT Managment	Independent Building Compliance Assessment and advice to support Strategic and Operational Requirements	15/04/2024	14/07/2024	24,464	9,164	
Realm Studios	Development of Cranbourne Southern Grasslands Landscape Plan	1/05/2024	31/07/2024	63,934	44,630	0
Wetland Revival	Monitoring and evaluation of remnant and translocated populations of Stiff Groundsel	1/07/2024	31/11/2025	143,210	114,568	28,642
Total				231,608	168,362	28,642

In 2024–25, no consultancies were engaged where the total fees payable to individual consultants were less than \$10,000.

Reviews and Studies Expenditure

Nil reports.

Information and Communication Technology Expenditure

For the 2024–25 reporting period, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria had a total ICT Expenditure of \$2,566,920.

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 (Total)	(Total = Operational Expenditure and Capital Expenditure)	Operational Expenditure	Capital Expenditure
\$2,566,920	\$382,455	\$2,175,965	\$8,500

Major Contracts

During 2024–25, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not enter into any contracts valued at over \$10 million.

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. Departments and public sector bodies are 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. MPSG applies to all construction projects valued at \$20 million or more.

The MPSG guidelines and VIPP guidelines will continue to apply to MPSG-applicable and VIPP-applicable projects respectively where contracts have been entered prior to 15 August 2018.

Projects Commenced

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

Establishing Legislation

The RBG Act was not amended in 2024–25.

Legislative Compliance

Financial Management Act 1994

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

Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) allows the public a right of access to documents held by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. The purpose of the FOI 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 FOIA.

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 the organisation 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 the organisation's website under the Part II Information Statement.

The FOI 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 FOI Act, the FOI 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 Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, under section 49A of the FOI Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

Making a Request

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

When making an FOI 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 Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria 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 organisation's FOI Office via email at governance@rbg.vic.gov.au.

FOI Statistics

During 2024–25, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria received no FOI applications from the general public.

Further Information

Further information regarding the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the FOI Act and regulations made under the FOI Act and ovic.vic.gov.au.

Competitive Neutrality Policy

Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure that where services compete, or potentially compete, with the private sector, any net advantage arising from government ownership is accounted for if it is not in the public interest. Government businesses that undertake significant business activities are required to implement competitive neutrality measures (such as setting competitive neutral prices), which accounts for any net advantage that comes from public ownership. 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 removing resource allocation distortions.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria ensures Victoria fulfils its requirements on competitive neutrality reporting as required under the *Competition Principles Agreement* and *Competition and Infrastructure Reform Agreement*.

Compliance with the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (PID Act) 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 PID Act.

What are Improper or Corrupt Conduct and Detrimental Action?

Improper conduct is defined in the PID Act 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
- or 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; or 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 Board or any of its officers are not permitted to receive public interest disclosures made under the PIDA. 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 via the contact details provided below.

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission
Victoria Address: Level 1, North Tower,
459 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC
3000
Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234
Melbourne VIC 3001
Internet: www.ibac.vic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 735 135

Email: See the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

Public Interest Disclosure Statistics

During 2024–25, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not receive any Public Interest Disclosure requests.

How Can I Access Procedures for the Protection of Persons from Detrimental Action?

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

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission

Website: 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 2024–25, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria had no Emergency Procurement activations.

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 2024–25.

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 (SPF). 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 the following four social and sustainable objectives of the SPF 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 1: Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people:

- Total direct spend to Aboriginal businesses (excl. GST): \$110,912
- Number of Victorian Aboriginal businesses directly engaged: 20.
- Total number of Aboriginal people directly and indirectly engaged through the supply chain: 106.

Additional achievements include:

- Presentation of artworks and music compositions by 22 First Peoples artists featured in *Lightfall 2025* and *Lightscape 2025*, which equates to a total of \$24,840 (excl. GST) direct investment to First Peoples.
- Sales of First Nations products or products designed by First Peoples was sourced from some 28 First Peoples artists from nine shop suppliers. Three of the nine suppliers were Supply Nation or Kinaway certified and made-up \$32,277 (excl. GST) direct First Peoples retail spendings.
- A week of First Peoples-led cultural activities for community members during NAIDOC week at Cranbourne Gardens, which engaged six First Peoples businesses to the total value of \$7,160 (excl. GST).
- Afforded Aboriginal Heritage Walk public tours to 58 First Peoples to the value of \$3,975 (excl. GST) and Learning programs to 184 First Peoples students to the value of \$3,128 (excl. GST).
- Undertook social procurement training of all Gardens staff who are delegated purchasing officers, to ensure they understood the SPS and latest internal social procurement process updates.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is more than halfway through its implementation of its two-year *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2024–26* with 47% of its 58 actions achieved and 39% on track. Of the 14% of actions not on track, most have been postponed because of resourcing constraints due to the dependence on the outcomes of the organisational review.

Apart from the RAP-related achievements outlined under the SPF, additional mainly partnership-related achievements included:

- All-staff and Board NAIDOC 2024 historical joint planting of the 'Warun' Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) Traditional Owner representatives.

- A second year in a row of a co-developed *Wurundjeri biik baan* garden at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2025, with the WWCHAC, that shared cultural stories through landscape design and interpretation with some 120,000 visitors.
- Increased engagement with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) Traditional Owners on key projects such as *Lightfall 2025* and the *Southern Brown Bandicoot Community Engagement Strategy 2025–30*.
- Wurundjeri specific cultural training delivered by WWCHAC Traditional Owners at Melbourne Gardens and Bunurong specific cultural training delivered by BLCAC Traditional Owners at Cranbourne Gardens to Board members and some 180 staff.
- Recognition by the Victorian Peoples State Relations Department of one of our long-term First Peoples staff, Uncle Dennis Fisher, for his profound contribution to his community and wider Victoria, by being included in the 2025 Victorian Aboriginal Honorary Roll.
- All-staff National Reconciliation Week film screenings of First Peoples education film *Audrey Napanangka* and bush food afternoon tea provided by Supply Nation-certified caterers.
- An all-staff and public Science seminar by First Peoples Ethnobotanist, Gerry Turpin, on his work at the Tropical Indigenous Ethnobotany Centre.
- Formation of new partnerships with various Traditional Owner groups and representatives with our Horticulture and Science teams, notably:
 - *Raising Rarity* indigenous threatened plant knowledge sharing and plant propagation initiatives with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
 - Killara Foundation First Peoples trainees educational site tour hosted by Melbourne Gardens' Science and Horticulture teams
 - Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners site visit to both Gardens sites to learn about threatened species plant conservation
 - Collaborating with Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Budj Bim Rangers, with Parks Victoria, on the *Conserving Manna Gum Diversity – Victorian Koala Management Strategy* project, which resulted in joint indigenous seed collection at six sites on Traditional Owner lands
 - Seedbank scientific training of First Peoples students as part of their Warreen Beek Rangers Program syllabus
 - Seed collection and restoration activities with a Yorta Yorta and Barapa Barapa Traditional Owner and the Victorian Conservation Seedbank team

Compliance with the Disability Act 2006

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is committed to a deeper understanding about disability throughout our organisation, improving accessibility and creating more employment pathways for people with a disability. Under section 38 of the *Disability Act 2006*, the Gardens have recently completed their *Diversity, Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–24*. The Gardens will begin work on a new plan in 2025 while continuing to implement key actions from the previous plan.

Environmental Reporting

Environmental Sustainability Reporting Context

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is committed to play its role in the statewide 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 environmental reporting methodologies, we are also able to continue to improve 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 Gardens 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 April to 31 March 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25. This is the first year that reporting is undertaken from 1 April to 31 March. Previously the annual reporting period was from 1 July to 30 June. To ensure an accurate comparison between reporting years, the previous two years' reporting periods have been re-calculated from 1 July to 30 June to the new 1 April to 31 March timeframe as well. The new reporting timeframe allows for a more accurate and timely analysis of the Gardens' emissions status. This is the fifth year in a row that the Gardens have undertaken environmental sustainability reporting in line with Departmental standards and methodologies.

Reporting Updates

This year is the third year for reporting against the updated FRD 24E compared to previous FRD 24D requirements. Each year is increasingly improving the accuracy and methodology of data capture. However, the new reporting start and end date has meant that there needed to be some adjustments made to how data is to be gathered moving forward.

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

Existing and forecast climate change 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 Gardens manage, notably on the composition of the living collections of the Gardens' two sites, as well as the environment in which the Gardens undertakes its plant, algae, fungi, and seed collection and surveying across Australia. It will also impact on the cultural values of the Gardens' two sites, recreation, education and cultural event opportunities, commercial operations, and built assets managed by the Gardens.

Specifically, this will include:

- Increase in temperatures and weather events leading to loss of plant species, amenities, changing visitation patterns, and staff and visitor safety
- Increased flood impacts from severe rainfall, storm events, sea and surrounding waterway rising, leading to landform erosion, inundation, and asset damage
- Increased bushfire impacts and risks on the landscapes of both the Gardens' two sites and various plant, algae, and fungi ecosystems across Australia that our work extends to
- Increased biosecurity and ecosystem stress from new and emerging pest plants, animals, and diseases

- Increased water use demand and changing rainfall patterns impacting on the composition of the 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, mitigation, innovation, planning, and implementation of appropriate and flexible climate adaptation and resilience strategies.

Climate-Related Risk Governance

The Board and Executives team continue to lead on the Gardens' risk management framework, which includes quarterly risk management reporting. The Strategic Risk Register comprises 10 identified risks, including a stand-alone environmental threat risk, with climate risk further identified as impacting several other strategic risks. The Gardens' Operational Risk Register also highlights several climate-change-related risks, such as disruption caused by natural disasters and compromised emergency readiness. These registers are reviewed quarterly by the Senior Leadership Group, the Risk Planning and Review Group, and the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee, and annually by the Board. 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 an internal Environmental Sustainability Working Group to oversee the development of the Gardens' first ESAP 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 2025–29* addresses the effects of climate change and environmental sustainability by committing to:

- Alignment with key United Nations Sustainability Development Goals
- Contributing to specific plant, fungi, and algae expertise and projects to

support the delivery of *Biodiversity 2037* and *Victoria's Climate Change Strategy*

- Relaunching the *Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens*
- Delivering two Key Performance Indicators:
 - **Year 1 Action:**
'Develop an ESAP'
 - **Year 2 to 5 Initiatives:**
'Develop and implement a Climate Transition and Sustainability Strategy and Policy'

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 world-leading 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 Gardens' living collection holdings and composition to the projected climate of 2090.

The *Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Science Strategy 2022–31* identifies two from its three strategic goals that relate to climate-related risk:

1. The need for protection of plants, algae, and fungi against extinction
2. 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-02 Environmental Threats speaks to comprised living collections from failure to implement effective strategies to respond to the impacts of climate change and environmental threats harming the health of our people, plants, and place.

Operational risks: Climate change has also been identified as a contributing factor in numerous operational risks, with appropriate ongoing controls being 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 Gardens' identified risks, including climate change, emergency risks, site-specific and statewide and Australia-wide shared risks.

Climate-Related Metrics and Targets – Mitigation

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's greenhouse gas emission reduction goal is in line with the Victorian Government's target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. Attaining this goal is supported by, but not limited to, the introduction of the following range of actions:

- As of June 2025, a draft ESAP has been developed in partnership with Ironbark Sustainability Consultants and is currently under review
- The SPS outlines three environmental sustainability and climate change targets to guide environmentally sustainable and responsible procurement across all areas of our operations
- Continue to upgrade to LED lighting
- Undertake a lighting audit at Cranbourne Gardens, in line with the recent Melbourne Gardens lighting audit
- Swap over all new fleet vehicles and machinery to zero- or low-emission models
- Increase electric fleet charging capacity
- Continue to expand Melbourne Gardens power upgrades that to reduce the need for generators to be used for functions and events
- Continual improvement of greenhouse gas emissions reporting

Environmental Performance Report

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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 Gardens' scope one greenhouse gas emissions have reduced this year by 6% from 2023–24 and by 26% from 2022–23 figures. This year's reduced scope one greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to the reduction of the Gardens' vehicle fleet numbers.

Scope Two

Total scope two greenhouse gas emissions have increased this year by 10% from 2023–24 and by 9% from 2022–23 figures. This can be attributed to the additional use of electricity to generate new public programs and an increase in the reliance on electricity from the grid, as our solar capacity decreased. It is envisaged that this figure will decrease going forward, as solar upgrades continue to be made.

Scope Three

Total scope three greenhouse gas emissions have decreased by 9% compared to 2023–24 but remain higher by 4% compared to 2022–23 figures. This decrease in emissions this year can be attributed to the significant reduction of emissions associated with waste to landfill and vehicle transportation.

Net Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Total net greenhouse gas emissions this year remain similar to the last two years, with a marginal increase of just under 1% compared to 2023–24 and just over 1% compared to 2022–23

figures. 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-emission or all low-emission vehicles and machinery.

Indicator	2024–25	2023–24	2022–23
G1 Total scope one (direct) greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO ₂ -e]	305.11	324.24	396.49
G2 Total scope two (indirect electricity) greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO ₂ -e]	1,026.54	930.87	936.07
G3 Total scope three (other indirect) greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO ₂ -e]	649.80	713.61	623.96
GreenPower offset [MWh]	–	–	–
G(Opt) Net greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO ₂ -e]	1,981.45	1,968.72	1,956.51

Electricity Production and Consumption

Total electricity consumption was higher this year by 7% from 2023–24 and by 13% from 2022–23 figures. The main reason for this year's increase is due to the additional power required in preparation for a new Cranbourne Gardens public light event. This year also saw a reduction in the amount of self-generated solar electricity by 35% from 2023–24 and by 19% from 2022–23 figures. The reduction in solar electricity self-generation was due to two reasons.

Firstly, at our Melbourne Gardens site, there was no generation of solar for four months during the reporting period due to a series of break-ins. The trespassers turned off the solar invertors and caused damage to some equipment. Secondly, at the same site, one of the four Herbarium building solar invertors stopped working before it was fixed. However, the renewable power percentage in the grid use increased this year by 9% from last year and by 13% from the previous year, contributing to better overall electricity offset figures.

Indicator	2024–25	2023–24	2022–23
EL1 Total electricity consumption [MWh]	1,651.71	1,535.72	1,457.96
Purchased	1,556.31	1,400.41	1,342.98
Self-generated	95.40	135.30	114.98
EL2 Onsite electricity generated [MWh]	95.48	135.73	115.59
Total consumption behind-the-meter [MWh] – Solar Electricity	95.40	135.30	114.98
Total electricity exported [MWh] – Solar Electricity	0.07	0.43	0.60
EL3 Onsite installed generation capacity [MWh] – Solar System	0.15	0.15	0.15
EL4 Total electricity offsets [MWh]	288.09	262.97	252.48
GreenPower	–	–	–
RPP (Renewable Power Percentage in the grid)	288.09	262.97	252.48

Stationary Fuel Use

This year's greenhouse gas emissions from stationary energy fuel consumption remain relatively similar to last year's figures, though with a significant reduction of total fuels used in buildings by 29% compared

to 2023–24 figures. This can be attributed to the power upgrades just prior to this reporting period, which contributed to the significant decrease in the use of natural gas, LPG, and diesel use and replaced them with more sustainably powered sources.

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
F1 Total fuels used in buildings [MJ]	4,513,350.60	4,673,092.30	6,057,741.40
Natural gas	4,046,699.40	4,255,607.60	5,766,074.00
LPG	429,996.80	380,776.10	264,134.10
Diesel	36,654.40	36,708.60	27,533.30
F2 Greenhouse gas emissions from stationary fuel consumption [Tonnes CO₂-e]	237.16	244.94	315.07
Natural gas	208.53	219.29	297.13
LPG	26.06	23.07	16.01
Diesel	2.57	2.58	1.93

Transportation

The number and proportion of vehicles has decreased by 4% from 2023–24 and by 12% from 2022–23 figures. This can mainly be attributed to a 13% reduction in off-road vehicles from last year's figures, as petrol off-road vehicles reduction efforts continue and are replaced with electric off-road vehicles. Conversely, there has been a 20% increase in on-road vehicles due to several vehicles not having been accounted for in previous years' reporting. However, the overall energy vehicle fleet used this year was 15% lower compared to 2023–24, and 18% lower compared to 2022–23 figures. There has also been an overall reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from fleet vehicles by 15% from last year and by 18% from the year before. This can be attributed to the reduction of the use of diesel vehicles this year compared to previous years.

Total distance travelled by commercial aircraft has significantly increased by 105% from 2023–24 and by 153% from 2022–23 figures. This is due to a significant number of Gardens staff travelling internationally to several conferences and events. The COVID–19 pandemic had major impacts on conference cycles, resulting in overlaps that did not exist prior to the pandemic. This caused a confluence of meetings falling into 2024 that would normally be held in other years. It is expected that conference schedules will normalise and result in less concentrated international travel moving forward.

Indicator	2024-25	%	2023-24	%	2022-23	%
Number and proportion of vehicles	53	100	55	100	60	100
On-Road Vehicles	16	30	13	24	31	52
Electric	1	6	–	–	8	26
Hybrid	–	–	1	2	2	6
Diesel	14	88	12	22	16	52
Petrol	1	6	–	–	5	16
Off-Road Vehicles	37	70	42	76	29	48
Electric	14	38	18	43	7	24
Hybrid	–	–	–	–	–	–
Diesel	13	35	11	26	11	38
Petrol	10	27	13	31	11	38

Indicator	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Petrol	252,918.90	228,315.80	229,980.70
Diesel	722,213.30	906,996.00	935,559.80
T1 Total energy used in transportation (vehicle fleet) [MJ]	975,132.20	1,135,311.80	1,165,540.50
Petrol	17.10	15.44	15.55
Diesel	50.85	63.86	65.87
T3 Total greenhouse gas emissions from transportation (vehicle fleet) [tonnes CO₂-e]	67.95	79.30	81.42
T4 Total distance travelled by commercial air travel (passenger km travelled for business)	493,285.95	154,128.61	65,713.84

Total Energy Use

Total energy from fuels used by the Gardens this year continues to decrease, with a 6% drop from 2023–24 and 27% from 2022–23 figures. This is mainly driven by a decrease in energy usage from transport fuels. The total energy usage from electricity rose by 7% from 2023–24 and by 13% from 2022–23 figures. This can

be attributed to the additional power required in preparation for a new public lightshow event at Cranbourne Gardens. There was a significant increase in energy use per unit of FTE by 26% from 2023–24 and 15% from 2022–23 figures that may have also contributed to the higher energy use, as more staff worked from onsite as opposed to from home this year.

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
E1 Total energy usage from fuels, including stationary fuels (F1) and transport fuels (T1) [MJ]	5,488,842.80	5,808,404.10	7,223,281.90
E2 Total energy usage from electricity [MJ]	5,946,168.21	5,528,590.93	5,248,667.36
E3 Total energy usage segmented by renewable and non-renewable sources [MJ]	11,434,651.01	11,336,995.03	12,471,949.26
Renewable	1,380,556.25	1,433,779.41	1,322,870.44
Non-renewable (E1 + E2 – E3 Renewable)	10,054,094.76	9,903,215.61	11,149,078.82
E4 Units of stationary energy used normalised: (F1+E2)/normaliser			
Energy per unit of FRD FTE [MJ/FRD FTE]	52,363.05	51,236.42	57,486.32
Energy per unit of floor space [MJ/m ²]	703.48	686.14	760.44
Energy per unit of visitors [MJ/visitors]	5.67	5.86	5.65

Sustainable Procurement

The Gardens delivers on its sustainable procurement objectives through the implementation of its SPS, in line with the Victorian Government Framework. Details of the Gardens' 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 both Gardens sites, as exemplified by a recent upgrade at the Cranbourne Gardens nursery that is now running on 100% recycled water. However, this year's total units of water consumption were up by 35% from 2023–24 and by 21% from 2022–23 figures. This can be accounted for by the

significant increase in potable water used at the Cranbourne Gardens site, which required additional water to top up the Water Treatment Plant due to dry environmental conditions. A damaged backflow device on one of the Melbourne Gardens water meters may have contributed to higher potable water consumption. Overall higher water consumption can also be attributed to the drier seasonal conditions.

	2024–25	2023–24	2022–23
W1 Total units of metered water consumed by water source (kL)			
Potable water [kL]	128,756.93	78,983.90	121,962.53
Alternate supply consumption [kL]	51,701.00	46,529.48	33,716.28
Reused water [kL]	41,488.29	29,756.84	23,898.27
Total units of water consumed [kL]	221,946.22	155,270.22	179,577.08
W2 Units of metered water consumed normalised by FTE, headcount, or other			
Water per unit of FRD FTE [kL/FRD]	1,111.12	779.82	913.04
Water per unit of floor space [kL/m ²]	14.93	10.44	12.08
Water per unit of visitors [kL/visitors]	0.12	0.09	0.09

Waste and Recycling

There has been a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste disposal this year by 28% of CO₂-e(t) from last year and a 15% CO₂-e(t) reduction from the previous year. Some of this can be attributed to a reduction of waste to landfill by 28% from 2023–24 and 15% from 2022–23 figures. The reduction of waste to landfill is mainly from operational waste as opposed to public waste. The reason for this drop is due to the finalisation of significant infrastructure projects that produced additional waste in previous years compared to this year.

Much of the overall waste reduction is due to the significant reduction in recycling/recover disposal rate by 114% from 2023–24 and by 114% from 2022–23 figures. This can be attributed to the reduction in soil disposal this year being significantly lower compared to previous years at Cranbourne Gardens, due to the finalisation of major infrastructure projects. At Melbourne Gardens, the processing of garden biomass to mulch continues to provide a closed loop system reducing biosecurity concerns from imported mulch. This year's figures are lower than the previous two years due to the new reporting period, which meant that only one of the usual two green waste processing figures was included in this year's reporting, compared to previous years.

Staff kitchen minimum waste, composting, and recycling continues across both sites, as does recycling of the Gardens uniforms, toner cartridge, e-waste, and batteries. Efforts to eliminate single-use plastic also continue.

	2024-25	22023-24	22022-23
WR1 Total units of waste disposed of by waste stream and disposal method [kg]			
Landfill (total)	244,286.00	324,740.90	284,710.49
General waste	194,820.00	271,795.87	236,084.13
Public waste to landfill	49,466.00	52,945.03	48,626.36
Recycling/recovery (disposal)	282,022.42	1,034,845.27	1,027,668.48
Cardboard and paper	6,260.00	6,378.91	11,010.14
Commingled recycling	3,794.71	3,730.22	18,479.76
Green waste converted to mulch	770,895.85	1,016,740.21	938,064.66
Soil	571.86	7,995.92	60,113.92
Total units of waste disposed [kg]	1,025,808.42	1,359,586.18	1,312,378.96
WR3 Total units of waste disposed normalised by FTE [kg general waste]			
Total waste to landfill per FTE [kg]	1,222.96	1,630.96	1,447.58
Total waste recycled and reused per FTE [kg]	3,912.50	5,197.35	5,225.08
WR4 Recycling rate (%)	76.19%	76.11%	78.31%
WR5 Greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste disposal (CO₂-e(t))	390.86	519.58	455.54

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
Chair
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Board

17 September 2025

Compliance with the Building Act 1993

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria owns and maintains over 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 Gardens buildings are vetted to ensure that they hold the appropriate licences 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 as follows:

- Gardens House Servants' Quarters Restoration
- Children's Garden Discovery Shelter Restoration
- Children's Garden Signage Suite
- Cranbourne Gardens Bulk Storage Area Reconfiguration
- Security Camera Systems Installation
- Communications Tower
- Eastern Lodge Roof Replacement
- Gardens House First Floor – Floor Strengthening
- Herbarium Fire Sprinkler Head Relocation and Replacement Works
- Herbarium Lighting Upgrades
- Herbarium Fire Indicator Panel Upgrade
- Herbarium VESDA Panel Upgrade
- Melbourne Gardens Visitor Centre Upgrades

There were four building permits and four certificates of final completion issued for projects this year, as follows:

- Gardens House Servants' Quarters Restoration – building permit and certificate of final completion issued
- Cranbourne Gardens Communications Tower – building permit issued and certificate of final completion pending
- Gardens House First Floor – Floor Strengthening – building permit and certificate of final completion issued
- Herbarium Fire Sprinkler Head Relocation and Replacement Works – building permit and certificate of final completion issued

Buildings with 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-compliance and accessibility issues, lack 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 in this period.

Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF) Maturity Assessment

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria undertook an AMAF maturity assessment in 2023–24 (Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria 2024, *Annual Report 2023–24*, pp.121). In line with the AMAF and the Financial Management Compliance Framework, the organisation has undertaken an annual attestation of the AMAF in 2024–25. The assessment identified no compliance deficiencies. The next maturity assessment will be undertaken by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in 2026–27.

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 (RBGV) and are available in full on request, subject to the provisions of the FOI Act:

- Details of publications produced by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria about itself, and how these can be obtained
- Details of any major external reviews carried out on Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- Details of major research and development activities undertaken by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- Details of overseas visits undertaken, including a summary of the objectives and outcomes of each visit
- 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
- Details of changes in prices, fees, charges, rates and levies charged
- A statement on industrial relations within Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- A statement of completion of declarations of pecuniary interests by relevant officers
- 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).

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

Information that is not applicable to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria:

- Details of shares held by senior officers as nominee or held beneficially in a statutory authority or subsidiary: Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria does not hold any shares in any company.

Disclosure Index

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria 2024–25 Annual Report is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislation. This index has been prepared to facilitate identification of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

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Acronyms:

ALA	Atlas of Living Australia
AMAF	Asset Management Accountability Framework
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DoE	Department of Education
DTF	Department of Treasury and Finance
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESAP	Environmental Sustainability Action Plan
FM Act	Financial Management Act 1984
FMCF	Financial Management Compliance Framework
FOI	Freedom of Information
FOI Act	Freedom of Information Act 1982
FRD	Financial Reporting Direction
GAICD	Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan
LJF Act	Local Jobs First Act 2003
MRO	Model Report of Operations
PID Act	Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012
PRTA	Parks and Reserves Trust Account
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RBG Act	Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991
RMS	Retail Management System
SBC	State Botanical Collection
SD	Standing Direction
SPF	Social Procurement Framework
SPS	Social Procurement Strategy
VESDA	Very Early Smoke Detection Apparatus
VGPBF	Victorian Government Purchasing Board Framework







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