

MANAGEMENT PLANNING NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE ANBG'S DIRECTOR

Welcome to the combined March and April edition of our 'E' Management Planning Newsletter.

In March, we completed a technical audit of the previous management plan. This enabled us to reflect on the period from 2002-2008, evaluate our achievements and identify areas that we would like to address in the future. March was also a busy time behind the scenes while we prepared and organised our local and national consultation process for April.

As part of our comprehensive approach to consultation, we conducted discussion groups in Canberra on such topics as the Visitor Experience at the ANBG, Attracting 18-30 years olds to the Gardens, Communicating with the Canberra Community, Economic Sustainability and the ANBG's Living Collection. We greatly value the ideas and opinions of those who volunteered their time.

In April, we also undertook an in-depth consultation with the state botanic gardens and held discussion groups with community members drawn from the Friends and Volunteer Guides associated with these institutions. More on this later in our newsletter!

This month, we also give you an update on the progress in our review of Communication and Visitor Services. The ANBG staff have developed an evaluation approach drawing on advice and expertise from other botanic gardens in Australia, as well as professionals from various national institutions.

In this issue we also report on the review of the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research, a partnership between the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (involving the ANBG) and CSIRO.

Anne Duncan
Director



IN BRIEF

Important dates / reminders

- National 'E' consultation with Australia's regional botanic gardens in June 2009

If you would like to discuss the ANBG's management planning process, please contact:

Planning Officer
ANBG Management Plan
GPO Box 1777
Canberra, ACT 2601
Email: anbgplan@anbg.gov.au

COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE THEIR SAY

The groups we gathered in April brought together a diverse range of people from the Canberra community. In this issue, we report on “Attracting 18-30 year olds to the ANBG.”

Botanic gardens often lack appeal to the 18-30 year olds. Consequently, Steve Speer, ANBG’s Assistant Director (Communication and Visitor Services), brought together people from this age group to feed into our planning process. During the discussion, the 18-30 year olds highlighted the importance of the ‘natural’ design of the ANBG site, as well as the value they placed on the gardens as an oasis from the built environment. Moreover, some felt that the gardens created an intimate environment that was good for socialising with friends.

They had several ideas for attracting this age group, including a sophisticated web site and events such as concerts, theatre and photographic exhibitions. Establishing a young professional group had appeal and special events were seen as drawcards. However, participants emphasised that the events must be dynamic and also needed to be carefully facilitated so as to help new people to Canberra break into the City’s social network.

IN DEPTH CONSULTATION WITH OUR BOTANIC GARDENS COLLEAGUES AND AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES

Anne Duncan, ANBG’s Director, firmly believes that the preparation of a new management plan for the ANBG requires much more than simply reviewing the 2002-2008 management plan. She believes we need a rigorous planning approach to position the Australian National Botanic Gardens in relation to Australia’s other botanic gardens in the disciplines of scientific research, conservation and education. We must also identify a niche/s for the ANBG that helps to ensure its continued relevance to Australian society and Government.

During the national consultation with the state botanic gardens in April, key topic areas were:

- governance models
- research direction and priorities
- perceptions of the ANBG
- expectations of a national botanic garden in Australia
- approach to business planning and strategic partnerships and the associated ethical considerations
- relationship with regional botanic gardens
- opportunities for partnership

Our rigorous planning approach has been positively received by staff in Australia’s capital city botanic gardens:

Good luck with your review - you are to be congratulated for taking the time to do the national consultation process...

I'm really impressed with what is happening in Canberra and am really looking forward to visiting a revitalised and repositioned ANBG

ANBG has such a bright future and I hope we can help to achieve this.

The consultation results will be analysed during May and we will report the key findings in our next issue.



Mark Webb (CEO of Kings Park and Botanic Garden) provides an update to Anne Duncan (ANBG Director) on the master planning process for Kings Park and Botanic Garden in Perth

UPDATING YOU ON THE REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS AND VISITOR SERVICES

Since January, the Communications and Visitor Services (CVS) team members have been evaluating the programs and services they deliver and workshopping the future direction of ANBG's visitor services, education programs, public programs/events and marketing and media. In March, we held two workshops to discuss the future direction of these services.

Staff identified some key goals: to attract and provide programs for young people (18 – 30 year olds), to increase our school and education programs, to develop our web site as a marketing and outreach tool and to increase the profile of the ANBG to locals and nationally. The CVS staff also discussed the benefits of developing a *community hub* within the Gardens which would co-locate a new Visitors Centre, library, Botanical Resource Centre, education rooms and café into one central location. Something for the Gardens Master Plan!

Sharon Willoughby, Public Programs Manager at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne joined the Gardens staff at the second workshop to further explore the delivery and direction of CVS programs and services. There were discussions on the importance of monitoring and evaluating the programs we deliver and also discussion about the decision making process (whether to run programs or not). Do we determine the *value* of a public program or event before taking a decision, and if so how? Sharon pointed out that the 'value' of a program is a combination of the total cost of delivery and the value of the messages the program delivers. Different botanic gardens may have different models to determine this value and botanic gardens could benefit by sharing these models.

During April and May, we also held interviews and discussion groups with key stakeholders of the Gardens' education and marketing and media programs. These have been valuable in benchmarking the ANBG's programs against those of other institutions and organisations. The discussions have identified possible valuable collaborations and assisted in determining the future direction of CVS programs. Similar discussions will be held during May with stakeholders of ANBG's visitor services and public programs/events/exhibitions.



If you have comment on the future direction of the our visitor services, public programs/events, education programs or marketing and media, please contact the Planning Officer on email: anbgplan@anbg.gov.au

How do you most effectively determine the value of public programs?
These are some of the challenging questions being considered by the ANBG's
Communication and Visitor Services team

REVIEWING OUR KEY RESEARCH SCIENCE PARTNERSHIP

The ANBG's science program currently focuses on botanical information systems and communications and outreach for the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research (CPBR). The Centre is a research partnership between CSIRO and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. This partnership was established in 1993 and the partnership agreement has been regularly reviewed. The current agreement expires at the end of this year.

An independent review of the Centre is under way, addressing the scientific performance and priorities, governance arrangements, operational arrangements, value for money and the future of the partnership.

An independent panel has been selected to ensure a variety of expertise in fields including systematics and taxonomy, business systems, botany and botanic gardens, governance, biodiversity information management, as well as science and environment policy.

The panel will be meeting at the Centre over a three day period for consultation with both partner organisations, the Centre executive, the Centre staff and stakeholders. A range of external stakeholders has also been approached, requesting submissions for consideration by the review panel. As part of this process, the Director of National Parks and the Australian National Botanic Gardens were invited to meet with the panel and to provide a written submission. The panel will provide a draft report to the Board of the Centre by the end of June 2009.

With the Centre review coinciding with our work on a new ANBG Management Plan, there is considerable potential for cross fertilisation of ideas and further development of synergies between the two bodies for the duration of the next agreement.

Partnerships and networking are an important part of the work of the CPBR – a recent 'get together' of members of the Taxonomic Research and Information Network (TRIN) provided a great opportunity for CPBR staff to share ideas with their TRIN colleagues

