

Greg Hunt MP

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FLINDERS

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Botanic boost for Gardens exhibit

A new \$25 000 signed walk showcasing plants of the Sydney region will boost the Australian National Botanic Gardens reputation as the nation's premier native plant museum, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mr Greg Hunt, said today.

"The Sydney Region Gully walk is designed to take people on a short trip through one of Australia's richest floristic areas," Mr Hunt said. "The beauty and maturity of the Gully area represents 30 years of work by Gardens staff and is a sensory adventure."

In the wild, the Sydney region boasts some 3 000 different plant species. The region extends from Nowra to Nelson Bay on the central coast of New South Wales, and as far west as Rylstone. It includes Sydney, Wollongong, Nowra, Newcastle, Singleton, Cessnock, Muswellbrook and the Blue Mountains.

Mr Hunt said the Gardens had managed to provide a snapshot of the area with 4 400 living plants at its Canberra site, representing 625 species.

"The plants displayed represent everything from the woodland and coastal areas to the rainforests and upland heath," Mr Hunt said. "It is an evolving exhibit that invites touching, smelling and exploring. Among the centrepieces are icons such as the towering Gynea lily and the delicate Flannel flower."

Mr Hunt said the walk would provide an important site for scientific study, but also help educate Australians about the values of our native flora.

"Visitors can follow eye-catching and informative signs that tell them more about the geology of the Sydney area, how plants grow in the region and how generations of Aboriginal Australians have used those plants," he said.

"The quality of this approach to storytelling is yet another example of why the Australian National Botanic Gardens has won the Ecotourism category of the Capital Region Tourism Awards for the past three years."

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