



Australian Government
Australian National Botanic Gardens

MEDIA RELEASE

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NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS TO HELP CONSERVE THE ALPS

The Australian National Botanic Gardens has received a grant of more than \$250,000 to tackle the impact of climate change on the Australian Alps.

Australian National Botanic Gardens director Anne Duncan said the Australian Research Council grant would fund a three-year project into alpine seeds – the first of its kind in Australia.

“This project will develop an alpine seed bank at the Australian National Botanic Gardens as a conservation insurance policy, to ensure Australia’s alpine plant species are not lost for future generations,” she said.

“The project will help the Australian National Botanic Gardens protect the Alps’ fragile ecology. The Alps are one of the most plant-rich areas in our country and therefore one of the most vulnerable to a changing climate.

“The Alps are also one of Australia’s eight iconic National Landscapes, promoted all over the world as exemplifying the best of Australia’s nature-based tourism experiences.”

The alpine seed research project is a collaboration of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, the Australian National University, the University of Queensland and the Friends of the Gardens.

Ms Duncan said the gardens would also host a living collection of alpine plants for display as an education tool.

“This project will ensure long-term conservation of different alpine species and help us to understand how we can restore and rehabilitate plants in the wild.

“It involves not only seed collection and storage, but plant germination trials on previously unstudied species.

“We know very little about how to actually grow most alpine plants from seeds, and it is that knowledge that makes seed collections valuable for conservation and rehabilitation.

“We all understand that we have to play a central role in helping preserve our rich and unique flora and the creation of seed banks and the protection of living collections is an essential part of that process.

“Australia is a megadiverse country – we have 10 per cent of the world’s plants and animals, 80 per cent of which aren’t found anywhere else on earth. Research in significant biodiverse areas like the Alps is an important step towards conserving this rich heritage,” Ms Duncan said.

The project was developed from actions identified in *The National Strategy and Action Plan for the Role of Australia’s Botanic Gardens in Adapting to Climate Change* endorsed by Mr Garrett and the state and territory environment Ministers in November 2008.

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