



# MEDIA RELEASE

20 October 2010

## Australian National Botanic Gardens celebrates 40 years

The Australian National Botanic Gardens today launches its anniversary celebrations, 40 years to the day since the official opening by Prime Minister John Gorton in 1970.

Staff past and present, Friends of the Gardens and visitors will join Dr Judy West, the Gardens' Executive Director and Alan Munns President of the Friends to cut an anniversary cake at 10 am.

"Since 1970 over 10 million visitors have enjoyed the Gardens' magnificent Australian plants, spread over 35 hectares of bush setting," Dr West said.

"We have the largest collection of native Australian plants in the world with over 65,000 plants - nearly one-third of Australia's known species.

"From the pioneering days in the 1970s, the Gardens has fed Australia's passion for native plants, helping transform the character of the Aussie suburban garden.

"Now 40 years old and still growing strong, the Gardens has matured as a leader in science, conservation and community education, as well as a much loved retreat for locals and visitors.

"At this time of year many of the plants are in flower and the Gardens are looking fantastic, so we'd encourage everyone to come along and help us celebrate."

It is a double celebration as the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Friends have contributed over \$500,000 to Gardens' projects over the past 20 years.

"Today, we celebrate under the new shade shelter donated by the Friends to mark our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday," Mr Munns said.

"The Friends are incredibly proud of the contribution we've made to the Gardens - we are growing together."

The Gardens' celebrations continue with a **Gala Dinner on Friday 22 October** in a glasshouse style marquee on the Rock Garden Lawn. Chris Darwin, great great grandson of Charles Darwin will be special guest speaker at the Gala Dinner. Come and enjoy the best of Canberra's food and wine! **Tickets are still available on 6250 9451.**

The weeks celebrations culminate with an **Open Day Garden Party on Sunday 24 October** featuring live music and entertainment, childrens' activities, talks and walks, and behind the scene tours of the Australian National Herbarium, nursery, library Cryptogam Herbarium and glasshouses.

**Today's events:**            **Australian National Botanic Gardens 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremony**  
Cake cutting and morning tea  
Wednesday 20 October, 10 am  
Crosbie Morrison Amphitheatre  
Australian National Botanic Gardens  
Clunies Ross St, Acton

The Gardens had its origins in 1914, when Walter Burley Griffin included a botanic garden in his suggested plans for the federal capital. Planting in the Gardens began in the 1940s, including a ceremonial planting of the 'first' trees by Prime Minister Ben Chifley and Sir Edward Salisbury, Director of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in 1949.

**Media contact:** Jenny Blake 02 6250 9405 or 0408 611 014.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

*40 years and growing*