



## Becoming a Guide at the Australian National Botanic Gardens

The Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) has welcomed volunteers since it was first established in 1949. There are currently over 150 volunteers working in a range of functions with the ANBG and its sister organisations, the Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research.

The ANBG's Volunteer Guides program has been running since 1992 and provides an opportunity for people to deliver guided tours of the Gardens to visitors and booked groups.

Being a volunteer guide at the Australian National Botanic Gardens is a very rewarding experience for people who are interested in Australian plants, enjoy being outdoors, enjoy spending time with other like minded people, would like to expand their skills and knowledge in new areas and like meeting people from all over Australia and overseas.

You don't need to have a botanical background as the training program, resource materials available to Guides and ongoing Professional Development equips you with the knowledge and skills you need to undertake your own research and prepare walks.

Free guided walks are offered at 11am and 2 pm every day of the year except Christmas Day and Guides nominate which walks they want to lead at the monthly Guides meeting held on the third Tuesday of the month from 1:00 to 2:30 pm. The meeting includes a Professional Development session which helps guides maintain and build on their knowledge and experience.

Each guide develops their own walks through the Gardens which vary depending on the time of the year, particular interests of guides and/or visitors and special events such as Wattle Week.

Guides also lead walks booked by groups who arrange and pay a fee for a guided walk at a time of their choosing. Fees contribute to the Friends of the ANBG support for the Gardens.

Guides also provide the regular Flora Explorer electric vehicle tours twice a day on weekends and public holidays at 10:30 am and 1:30 pm. Extra tours are sometimes scheduled for school holiday periods. Flora Explorer seats up to 13 passengers and allows visitors to reach parts of the Gardens they might otherwise not visit. The tours also allow less mobile visitors, who are unable to participate in a guided walk, the opportunity to enjoy a guided tour of the Gardens. The Flora Explorer follows a set route around the Gardens away from the Main Path but still visits key areas of interest.

Some guides lead both walks and Flora Explorer tours but it is possible to qualify as either a Walks guide or a Flora Explorer guide and applications are welcome from people who would like to become a Flora Explorer guide only. The training program for both will be the same; however the assessment and qualification process at the end of the Training Program for the two kinds of guides will be different.

The ANBG Volunteer Guide program is supported by the Friends of the ANBG. The Friends, established in 1990, are wonderful supporters of the Gardens and offer many benefits to members.

As a volunteer you can expect:

- a supervisor to assist with enquiries and provide any training necessary for your work
- safe and healthy working conditions, in line with standards required for paid staff
- insurance cover for accidents while you are directly engaged at your work with ANBG
- rewarding work

If you would like further information please attend one of the **Information Sessions** to be held on **Tuesday 29 September at 12:30 pm and Wednesday 30 September at 5:30 pm** in the Theatre opposite the Visitors Centre.