



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
BOTANIC GARDENS



Submission to the Inquiry into Canberra's National Institutions

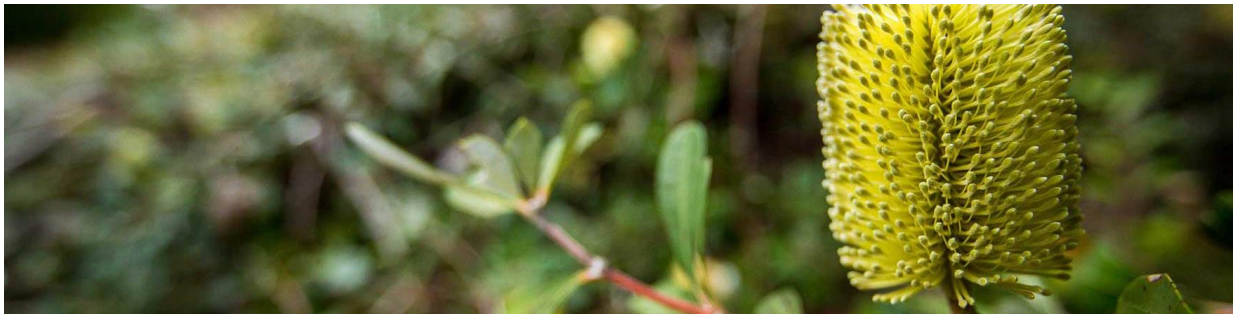


Australian Government
Director of National Parks



The Australian National Botanic Gardens is pleased to provide this submission to the Inquiry into Canberra's national institutions conducted by the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories.

About the Australian National Botanic Gardens



The Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) has been growing, studying and promoting Australian plants and related flora for over 40 years.

Officially opened on 20 October 1970 by Prime Minister John Gorton, the ANBG is located on the eastern slopes of Black Mountain in Canberra. With a major development phase in the 1960s and its official opening in 1970, the ANBG became Australia's first botanic garden and research institution to specialise in native flora.

The ANBG occupies an 85 hectare site on the lower eastern slopes of Black Mountain in Canberra. It is an integral component of architect Walter Burley Griffin's vision for Canberra and contributes to the aesthetic quality of the national capital. The living collection is displayed in 35 hectares of the 85 hectare site with 50 hectares in the bushland precinct.

The ANBG is managed by the Director of National Parks as a Commonwealth reserve declared under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Director is assisted by Parks Australia, a division of the Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Energy.





OUR VISION: THAT AUSTRALIANS VALUE, CONSERVE AND APPRECIATE OUR RICH PLANT HERITAGE

To achieve this vision, our mission is to inspire, inform and connect people to the Australian flora

Value: The ANBG – Australia’s only national institution to focus solely on Australian plants and related flora – is both nationally and internationally significant.

The ANBG is listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List under the EPBC Act in recognition of its national significance for its unique landscape, environmental character and outstanding examples of landscape design and horticulture using Australian native plants. There is a key role for the ANBG to reflect the essence of Australian culture through interpreting its living collection.

As a botanic garden and national institution the ANBG has a mandate to conserve its living and herbarium collections as key records of plant species as part of Australia’s cultural and natural heritage; to encourage and support the cultivation, use and conservation of Australian plants and to be a custodian of the national story of Australia’s unique flora.

Since opening in 1970, the ANBG has challenged prevailing botanic garden design by presenting a bush-like landscape showcasing Australia’s unique plant diversity. The ANBG’s establishment has led to a diversification of botanic garden design and focus in Australia from the early colonial gardens displaying introduced plants, to a range of less formally designed botanic gardens specialising in the display of native flora. It has been the inspiration for many of the nation’s regional botanic gardens focusing on local flora.

Conservation: The ANBG cares for the national collection of more than 78,000 Australian native plants. The collection features more than 6,300 species representing nearly one-third of Australia’s known native plants. The living collection of Australian native plants is the most comprehensive in the world. The ANBG is a centre for horticultural trials and learning in relation to Australia’s flora, and makes a valuable contribution to native plant horticulture and display. Staff also provide horticultural expertise in collaborative conservation projects. The ANBG facilitates collaborations with Australia’s leading botanic gardens to enhance their work on Australia’s national biodiversity conservation agenda.

Research: The ANBG is renowned for plant classification and biological and horticultural research. A herbarium of preserved plant specimens is closely associated with the living collection. The ANBG also cultivates plants threatened in the wild to help protect them from extinction. The ANBG makes an important contribution to taxonomy through our partnership in the Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research (CANBR) – jointly managed by CSIRO and the Director of National Parks – where research programs and collections provide a national focus for botanical information



The ANBG holds the following scientific collections:

- Australian National Herbarium
- National Seed Bank
- Library and archives
- Australian plant image collection

Tourism: About 490,000 visitors come to the ANBG each year from all over Australia and from around the world. It is a much loved local attraction for Canberra residents. A range of popular visitor experiences are on offer, including the Summer Sounds concert series, themed afterDARK tours, sunset cinema evenings, and Flora Explorer bus tours for those with mobility issues. There is a bookshop, cafe and day spa on-site.

Education: The ANBG provides education programs for schools across Australia, allowing children to explore Australia's rich natural and cultural heritage in a living classroom.



The ANBG is an important reminder of Australians' increasing appreciation of their natural heritage and is considered to be of outstanding value to many Australians. This is reflected by the number of visitors to the ANBG and to its website. Strong support is provided by the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, a community support group which boasts a large active membership.



Master Plan 2015 – 2035



In 2015, the (then) Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment released a Master Plan for the ANBG.

The Master Plan provides the framework for the ANBG's projected infrastructure to support enhanced visitor experiences, horticulture and research capabilities over the next 20 years. This long-term vision will ensure that the ANBG remains at the forefront of contemporary gardens world-wide.

The Master Plan will guide infrastructure development and attractions to support the growth of our visitor experiences, educational and recreational opportunities for the next 20 years.

The Master Plan focuses on the following three precincts:

Core Precinct: the aim of this area is to focus on welcoming visitors, enabling them to quickly orientate themselves and plan their visit. Emphasis has been placed on developing a central hub featuring the Visitor Centre, Cafe and Function Centre, Event Amphitheatre and Nature Play Terrace.

Northern Precinct: a range of functions will be consolidated into a new integrated-service zone, including the new National Seed Bank and maintenance depot.

Bushland Precinct: this zone will focus on ecotourism and a treetop adventure course, utilising the bushland setting. An initial development will be a walking track that links to the National Arboretum.

Many of the infrastructure assets are between 30-40 years old and are considered in need of replacement. Implementation of the Master Plan will enhance the character of the ANBG and reduce ongoing maintenance costs. It will integrate the existing landscape with the built environment. Utilising the existing footprint of current buildings means it will not impact on the living collection.



The ANBG has commenced implementing Stage 1 of the Master Plan with the following status:

- Ian Potter National Conservatory – \$6 million funded for construction of the Conservatory and design development currently underway. The Conservatory will open in early 2020
- Bushland Precinct walking trail – opened in December 2016
- Public Art Commission – Paperbark Treehouse opened in February 2018, funded by the Friends of the ANBG
- New National Seed Bank – concept design developed, funding campaign underway
- New Horticultural Maintenance Facility – concept design developed.

The Ian Potter National Conservatory is a key new attraction identified as part of the Master Plan. The Conservatory will be a national showcase for tropical Australian native flora from the far north and islands including rare and threatened species. The Conservatory will become a major destination in Canberra and will interpret the rich story of Australia's tropical flora.



The investment in the Master Plan will benefit all Australians now and into the future preserving, conserving and displaying Australia's native flora.

The remaining stages of the Master Plan have been costed at \$73.5 million. The timeframe for future development is dependent on the availability of funding. The ANBG is pursuing a range of options that, in combination with Australian Government funding, will assist us to fully realise the Master Plan within projected timeframes, such as through philanthropic donations and Public Private Partnerships.



Cooperative partnerships

The ANBG has established cooperative relationships with other like-minded national institutions in Canberra, including the National Museum of Australia, Questacon, the National Library and the National Arboretum. These relationships range from exchange of display materials and education activities to participation on advisory committees.

Relationships with institutions such as CSIRO and the Australian National University involve more formal collaborative partnerships around scientific activities.

The ANBG contributes significantly to the tourism sector as a destination, but also in working with the National Capital Attractions Association and Visit Canberra and through cooperation with the Canberra Business Chamber.

To build relationships further and to develop linkages between a number of the national institutions in Canberra holding significant national collections, it would be a service to the Australian community if there was a shared display facility through which selections of collection material could be displayed to the public. This could range from the extensive natural history collections to archival and library treasures, most of which are not open to the public on a regular basis.





Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens

The Friends is a non-profit community based organisation incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* (ACT). Its objectives are to:

- Support the ANBG
- Increase community awareness of the ANBG's scientific, educational, conservation and recreation functions
- Promote the ANBG's continued development
- Serve as a link to encourage the use and enjoyment of the ANBG by the community.

Members of the Friends take part in a wide range of activities in, and in support of, the ANBG, including as volunteers (e.g. as guides), as part of the Friends' special interest groups (e.g. the Growing Friends) and on subcommittees.

Activities may be conducted under the supervision of ANBG staff (as part of the ANBG's volunteer programs), in collaboration with the ANBG (e.g. the summer concert series, and collaborative projects) or independently (e.g. annual plant sales). The Friends also contribute funding to agreed ANBG projects and activities.





Volunteers

The ANBG has over 150 volunteers contributing over 32,000 hours per year to the ANBG and the majority are members of the Friends of the ANBG. Their work spans across a range of activities and areas including the Herbarium, National Seed Bank, Library, photography collection, Botanical Resource Centre, education section, Flora Explorer drivers, tour guides and the ANBG's Visitor Centre. The Friends of the ANBG also provide many volunteer opportunities through the Friends' special interest groups including the Growing Friends, Botanic Art Group, Photography Group, Thursday Talk and Activities committee.





Response to Terms of Reference

1. Creating a strong brand and online presence

The ANBG is a significant tourist destination in Canberra, currently attracting over 490,000 visitors annually. Thirty-five per cent of visitors are from interstate or overseas. In 2011, the ANBG produced a new brand to support marketing opportunities, enhance the profile of the institution and project the diverse range of functions to the public and stakeholders. The new brand emphasised the ANBG as a contemporary organisation and uniquely Australian. The logo was stylised to represent a generic banksia flower, a plant that is recognisable across Australia. One of the creative expressions of the brand was the development of a flexible and representative tagline: 'Alive with ...' - Alive with learning, Alive with discovery, Alive with music, etc.



Alive with discovery

The ANBG predominately uses online marketing tools to promote it as a destination and its many activities and features. This includes:

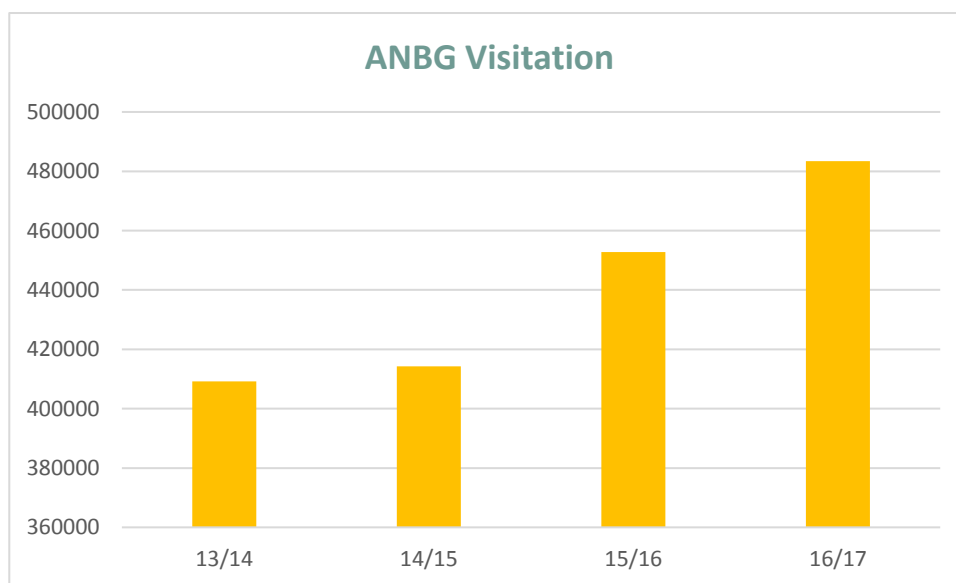
- Tourism website – 156,900 page views in 2017 (up 13.6 per cent year on year)
<https://parksaustralia.gov.au/botanic-gardens/>
- Facebook – 9,000 followers
- Twitter – 2,300 followers
- Instagram – 712 followers.

The social media accounts reached more than 2 million people in the 2016/17 financial year and there is a 4.5 rating on TripAdvisor (out of 5).



2. Experimenting with new forms of public engagement and audience participation

The ANBG has been actively experimenting with new forms of public engagement to increase audience participation, environmental education outcomes and new revenue streams. This has resulted in a steady increase in visitation in recent years. Visitation to the ANBG in 2016/17 was 483,470 visitors, 7 per cent up on the 2015/16 figure of 452,770. Overall satisfaction with events and public programs delivered by ANBG was rated at 95 per cent.



Since the announcement of the Master Plan in 2015 a range of new attractions and experiences have been established such as:

New Attractions: funded by the Friends of the Gardens, the Paperbark Treehouse allows visitors to come eye-to-eye with birds and to become part of the tree canopy. This and other recent attractions, such as the Bushland Nature Walk, have increased the range of visitor experiences and attracted new audiences to the ANBG.

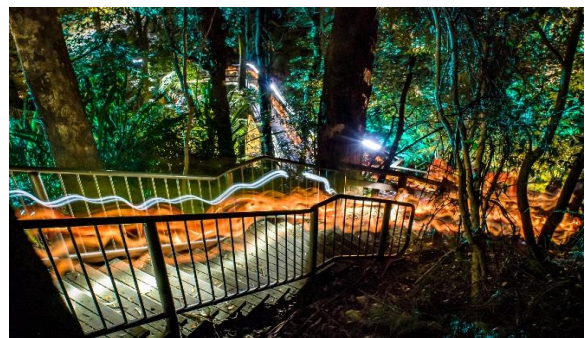




Prehistoric Garden trail: a partnership with the National Dinosaur Museum where life-like dinosaur models are placed throughout a trail in the ANBG. This event, conducted over the school holidays in July, showcases the Gondwanaland dinosaurs in the landscapes they once inhabited. Special night lighting was also added for ticketed evening tours. Over 18,000 additional visitors attended the event and has now boosted July into one of the biggest visitation periods during the year.



AfterDark Tours: since 2011, the Friends of the ANBG have been funding a range of specialist lighting installations along trails in the ANBG such as the Rainforest and the Red Centre Gardens. This has enabled the establishment of ticketed AfterDark tours that are held each month for the public and are also available for school groups during weekdays.



Enlighten Festival: the ANBG has been involved in the delivery of night time events and activities during the Enlighten festival since the establishment of the event, benefiting from the interstate marketing campaigns delivered by VisitCanberra.





Hosting Commercial events: the ANBG has actively encouraged new commercial events to be held within the ANBG subject to licence fees and conditions. The most successful of these events is Sunset Cinema. This event operates over a six week period, attracting a younger audience to the ANBG.

China Ready: with the commencement of direct flights from Singapore to Canberra, the ANBG has commenced the implementation of a 'China Ready' strategy. This includes a range of Chinese visitor guides and map, together with staff training.





3. Conducting outreach outside of Canberra

The ANBG's outreach outside of Canberra primarily consists of the provision of online botanical resources that are available free to the public at www.anbg.gov.au. The ANBG has responsibility for several significant botanical databases, including:

- Australian National Herbarium - Specimen Information Register (ANHSIR) delivers more than 1 million specimen records to the internet
- Australian Plant Image Index (APII) – holds 82,239 plant images of about 16,000 species and in the past 12 months more than 460,000 images have been downloaded
- Australian Plant Name Index (APNI)
- Australian Plant Census (APC)
- The National Species List – incorporates both the APNI and APC and delivers to the internet directly through the Atlas of Living Australia (NCRIS facility) – more than 15,956,500 plant records in the ALA are underpinned by the NSL.

These databases provide authoritative information for the Australian flora, including images and nationally-agreed plant names, delivered world-wide.

The ANBG undertakes an outreach program for training indigenous rangers in Kakadu National Park on seed collecting from significant plant species. The seed is then secured within the ANBG seed bank for future conservation programs.





The ANBG collaborates widely with other botanic gardens in Australia and internationally. We play a strong role in the Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens Inc. (CHABG) – the peak body incorporating the eight major botanic gardens in the country. On behalf of CHABG, the ANBG funds the National Coordinator of the Australian Seed Bank Partnership, a body incorporating conservation seed banks of Australia. ANBG staff assist, advise and undertake conservation projects with smaller regional gardens, and we play key leadership roles in our relationship with New Zealand botanic gardens through Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand Inc. (BGANZ).

On the international scene the ANBG works closely with several overseas institutions including Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in the UK, Missouri Botanic Gardens in the US and Singapore Botanic Gardens.

The ANBG conducts a range of educational programs and students visiting Canberra comprise the largest users of these programs. Students experience the ANBG's living classroom to discover Australia's rich natural and cultural heritage. Education programs explore the connections between people, plants, and animals through inquiry based exploration and hands-on learning experiences.

In 2016/17, 13,195 students participated in an ANBG education program – an increase of 5 per cent on 2015/16.





4. Cultivating private sector support



Photo credit: (L-R) Gregory Andrews, Threatened Species Commissioner; Dr Judy West, Acting Director of National Parks; John Choi, Director of CHROFI, Design team winners National Conservatory design competition; Hon Josh Frydenberg, Minister for the Environment and Energy; Sally Barnes, Former Director of National Parks

The major focus of the ANBG fund raising program is seeking philanthropic and corporate partnerships. The most successful partnership has been with the Ian Potter Foundation to co-fund the National Conservatory development. The Ian Potter Foundation donation of \$1.5 million is the largest donation received in the history of the ANBG.



Photo credit: (L-R) Craig Connolly, CEO Ian Potter Foundation; Hon Zed Seselja, Liberal Senator for the ACT; Peter Byron, General Manager Australian National Botanic Gardens



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In 2017/18, the ANBG commenced a fund raising campaign for the new National Seed Bank. This facility is currently operating out of a former caretaker's cottage and requires a new modern development to house a large and ever increasing collection of Australian native seed used for conservation and research. To date, in the early stages of the campaign, over \$0.7 million has been raised from donations.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

THE NEW NATIONAL SEED BANK

Building a unique collection of Australian native seeds for conservation and research

AN INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE

AN INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO SAFEGUARDING AUSTRALIA'S PLANT HERITAGE

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Australian National Botanic Gardens in 2020, we are focused on developing enhanced horticultural capabilities and visitor experiences into the Gardens future. We are committed to ensuring that we remain at the forefront of contemporary botanic gardens worldwide and that the unique and diverse heritage of Australian plants is appreciated and protected. The National Seed Bank is a key component of this long-term vision.

More than 1200 plant species in Australia are endangered and ex-situ collections of plant species are insurance policies against extinction in the wild. Seed Banks are valuable storehouses for conservation work, seeds are available for essential research and support for re-introduction of plants to their native habitats.

The Gardens current seed bank is at capacity and unless expanded will not allow us to achieve our future goals in both seed banking and research functions. Accordingly we intend to expand our seed bank collection and research capacity with a new purpose-built Seed Bank Facility.

We invite you to join us in building a contemporary National Seed Bank to guarantee the continuing collection, study and preservation of Australia's plant heritage.

Dr Judy West AO
Executive Director

A new National Seed Bank facility will safeguard the future of Australian plant species.

The Friends of the ANBG have provided donations to the ANBG to support new developments and projects of approximately \$1 million in the last 10 years. The Friends have raised these funds through membership fees and a range of their own fund raising activities.

The ANBG has had varying success in cultivating private sector support through sponsorship, including attracting sponsorship for the Summer Concert series held over four weekends in summer. Other sponsorships include a partnership with Seasol for supply of their product in return for sponsor recognition. Securing and managing sponsorship arrangements has proven to be a resource intensive activity with limited returns for the ANBG.



5. Developing other income streams



The ANBG receives an annual appropriation via the Director of National Parks to manage its core functions. The ANBG's revenue streams include:

Pay parking: all parking fees are retained by the ANBG, parking fees are based on market rates and reviewed on an annual basis

Educational activities including public and school programs: fees are charged for all school programs and public programs with the intention of cost recovering the cost of staff involved in delivering the program

Facility hire: the ANBG conference centre and board room are hired to clients at market rates, fees are charged for exclusive use of outdoor spaces, e.g. for weddings

Fee for service contracts to grow plants for government clients: the ANBG provides specialist services for growing native plants used for conservation programs often funded by ACT or NSW Government agencies

Obtaining grants: the ANBG actively and successfully secures grants to deliver conservation programs often in partnership with other botanic gardens or conservation agencies

Commercial licences: the ANBG has commercial licences for the onsite Café, Bookshop and a Day Spa (Jindii Eco Spa). The Jindii Eco Spa is an example of adaptive reuse of a surplus building that is leased to a successful Spa operator specialising in treatments derived from native plant products. This has attracted new audiences to the ANBG and the rental fees have provided a new revenue stream.

Donations and sponsorships: the ANBG has deductible gift recipient and charitable status and accepts donations from the public and philanthropic foundations that are used to deliver conservation outcomes. Sponsorships are sought to offset the cost of delivering public programs.

Commercial events: the ANBG charges licence fees for commercial event operators such as Sunset Cinema.



6. Ensuring the appropriateness of governance structures

The ANBG was first declared a Commonwealth reserve on 17 September 1991 under the *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975* (NPWC Act) which was replaced by the EPBC Act in July 2000. It continues as a Commonwealth reserve under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) for the purpose of the increase of knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Australia's plant heritage by establishing, as an integrated resource, a collection of living and herbarium specimens of Australian and related plants for study, interpretation, conservation and display.

The Director of National Parks, a corporation established under the EPBC Act is responsible for managing the ANBG, assisted by staff from Parks Australia, a division of the Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Energy. The Director of National Parks is appointed by the Governor-General and is accountable to the relevant Minister, currently Assistant Minister for the Environment, the Hon Melissa Price MP.

The ANBG operates within the governance and management structures of the Director of National Parks and is included in the Director's corporate plan and annual report.

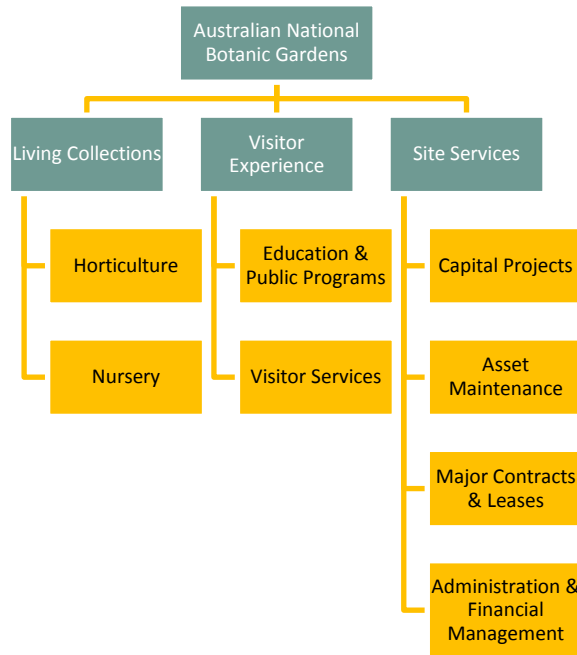
The functions of the Director include the administration, management and control of the ANBG. The Director generally has power to do all things necessary or convenient for performing the Director's functions. The Director has a number of specified powers under the EPBC Act and EPBC Regulations, including powers to prohibit or control some activities, and to issue permits for activities that are otherwise prohibited.

The EPBC Act requires the Director of National Parks to prepare management plans for Commonwealth reserves. Management plans are approved by the relevant Minister and tabled in both houses of the Commonwealth Parliament. A management plan for the Australian National Botanic Gardens is current and operates from 2012–2022.



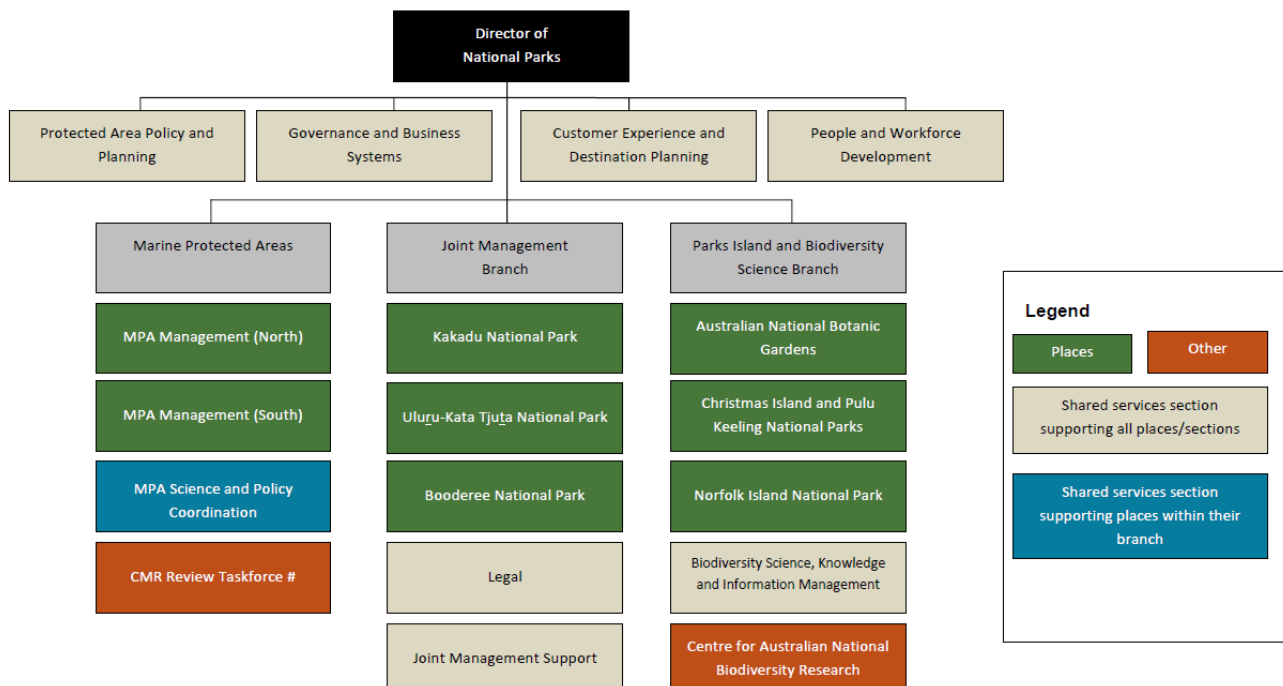
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The ANBG currently has a staffing profile with 38 ASL. There are currently three units that manage the operations of the ANBG and report to an Executive Level 2 Manager.



Science functions at the ANBG report to another Executive Level 2 with broader science responsibilities within the Director of National Parks. Corporate areas within the Director of National Parks provide support relating to financial management, people management, marketing, legal advice and governance.

The ANBG is part of the Parks, Island and Biodiversity Branch within the Director of National Parks





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