



2.1 Purpose of Gardens

In 1837, Colonel William Light in his plan for the city of Adelaide showed an area set aside for a botanic garden on an island in the Torrens, northwest of the city. However, it was not until 1854, after a public appeal to the Governor, that the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society recommended the establishment of a sixteen hectare (forty-one acre) botanic garden on the present site of the Adelaide Botanic Garden. A year later, George Francis was appointed Superintendent, and the Garden was opened to the public in 1857. Francis had been active in the establishment of the Garden for a number of years and wrote in 1849 of the need for a botanic garden in Adelaide to act as "a nucleus from which emanates a knowledge of plants and a taste for botanical and horticultural pursuits".

One hundred and fifty years later, the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide comprises three gardens and an experimental field site: Adelaide, Mount Lofty (in Piccadilly) and Wittunga (in Blackwood) Gardens and the John Gould Kelly Memorial Plantation. The stated mission of the Gardens is:

On behalf of the people of South Australia, to manage the natural and cultural assets and resources of the Botanic Gardens & State Herbarium, advancing plant conservation and sustainable horticultural practices, and enriching society.

While the focus remains the advancement of plant knowledge to the wider community, a contemporary shift in the Gardens' purpose toward plant conservation is evident in the Gardens' mission. This is no doubt due to the recognition globally that conservation of the world's biological diversity is of vital importance to the well being of the planet and present and future generations. The international 1992 *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD), to which Australia is a signatory, sets criteria for conservation of the world's biological diversity. One of the principle outcomes of the Convention has been the *Global*

Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) adopted in April 1992 as a binding strategy on all signatories to the CBD, setting sixteen targets for biodiversity conservation and sustainability to be achieved globally by 2010.

Botanic gardens world wide came together on this issue and, by the turn of the century, the *International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation* (2000) was formulated as a tool to assist botanic gardens around the world to assist in achieving the targets of the GSPC and help halt the threat to endangered species and ecosystems through shared resources and partnerships. The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide were significant contributors to the International Agenda.

When the concept of an annex for the Adelaide Botanic Garden was proposed by then director Noel Lothian in 1952, the progressive acquisition of eighty hectares of land on the eastern slopes of the Mount Lofty Ranges saw perhaps the Gardens first shift toward plant conservation as one of its primary aims. Later to become the Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens, opened to the public in 1977, the annex was established on a parcel of land consisting of seven intersecting valleys in regenerating Stringy Bark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) forest. The subsequent Master Plan for the Garden, by landscape architect Allan Correy, incorporated substantial areas of the native forest into the overall conceptual design of the Garden, giving it a contextual value equal to that of the exotic display gardens.

In introductory statements to the Gardens' Strategic Plan 2002-2005, Gardens Director Stephen Forbes, contextualises the changing role of botanic gardens in the modern era:

In the twenty-first century, botanic gardens are ideally placed for learning and celebration around issues of fundamental importance to the planet. Botanic gardens must provide leadership in the debate about the relationship between Australians and the Australian environment.

This debate is important in changing our approach to sustainability in our cities and in rural and outback areas, and in addressing such issues as water quality, salinity, desertification and biodiversity decline. At the end of the debate, change will be achieved through our understanding of our relationship with our environment and by our effective use of plant materials.

Botanic gardens have a significant role to play and (the Gardens') strategic plan provides an important starting point for this journey.

2.2 Management

The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide are managed by the State Government of South Australia through the provisions of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium Act (1978). The Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium is established pursuant to Section 6 of the Act and is subject to the general direction and control of the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

The Board is responsible for the administration of the Act and has responsibility for four sites: Adelaide Botanic Garden, Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, Wittunga Botanic Garden and a small historical experimental arboretum at Giles Corner near Tarlee, known officially as the John Gould Kelly Memorial Plantation.

The functions of the Board are set out in Section 13(1) of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium Act (1978) as follows:

- to establish and maintain botanic and other gardens for the use and enjoyment of members of the public on land vested in or placed under the control of the Board; and
- to establish and manage in, or in connection with, its gardens exhibitions of interest in the fields of botany, horticulture, biology, conservation of the natural environment or history; and
- to establish and maintain a herbarium and, subject to this Act, to retain original specimens included in the herbarium; and
- to accumulate and care for specimens (whether living or preserved), objects and things of interest in the fields of botany, horticulture, biology, conservation of the natural environment or history; and
- to accumulate and classify data in regard to any such matters; and

- to manage all lands and premises vested in, or placed under the control of, the Board; and
- to manage all funds vested in, or under the control of, the Board and to apply those funds in accordance with the terms and conditions of any instrument of trust or other instrument affecting the disposition of those funds; and
- to carry out, or promote, research into matters of interest in the fields of botany, horticulture, biology, conservation of the natural environment or history; and
- to disseminate information of interest in the fields of botany, horticulture, biology, conservation of the natural environment or history; and
- to undertake the commercial exploitation of knowledge acquired by the Board in the course of conducting research; and
- to sell or propagate and sell (whether alone or in partnership or joint venture with a nursery business) hybrids or cultivated varieties of plants that -
 - have occurred spontaneously in the Board's gardens or been developed in the course of its research activities; and
 - are not widely commercially available in the State; and
- to provide consultant services; and
- to perform any other functions of scientific, educational or historical significance that may be assigned to the Board by regulation.

2.3 Strategic Plans and Policies

In recognition that botanic gardens operate in a constantly changing environment and consequently must be evolving institutions not 'fixed in time', the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide released its Strategic Plan 2002-2005. The Plan was a complete and substantive document, with clear directions and strategies for defining the nature of the Gardens' business and for the future implementation of the Gardens' desired outcomes. For the first time, the Gardens had specified statements of its Vision, its Mission, and Principles. Further, the Plan established twenty-six strategies for achieving goals grouped around sustainable gardens management, sustainable business management and effective engagement with visitors, stakeholders and other partnerships. Each of the strategies listed a series of outcomes, outputs and performance indicators to assess progress.

In 2004, the Gardens issued the Strategic Plan 2004-2007, reviewing progress and better aligning its management planning frameworks with those released by the State Government in its State Strategic Plan (March 2004) and in the Department for Environment and Heritage's Corporate Plan (2004). The strategic aims proposed in the Strategic Plan are discussed in detail in the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Values section of this document.

Policy development within the Gardens is currently proceeding at a somewhat accelerated rate. Prior to the Strategic Plan 2002-2005, few plans or policies existed within the Gardens' organisational structure.

The Strategic Plan nominates a number of policies across a wide range of areas for development over the three-year timeframe of the plan. The policies, grouped according to strategic outcomes, are summarised as follows:

PLANT CONSERVATION

- Living Collections Policy - working document with objectives and recommendations for each collection held by the BGA, including recommendations for Focus Collections
- Science and Conservation Policy- including Plant Conservation Guidelines based on international agendas
- Education and Interpretations Policy - including signage, publications, internet
- Information Resources Policy - including records management system, library resources, computer systems, photographic records

SUSTAINABLE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

- Sustainable Horticulture Policy - including management plans for each Garden or areas of Gardens and horticultural benchmarks for general maintenance
- Sustainable Water-use Policy - to be largely built on recommendations of the waterways studies
- Environmental Policy - including pest and disease control management
- Weed Species Policy
- Tree Replacement Policy

ENHANCED COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Cultural Policy - including stakeholder partnerships, functions and events management and visitor facilities development
- Recreation Policy
- Asset Management Policy - including built and cultural assets

General operational policies, such as Hardscape and Softscape Design Guidelines, Access Plans including Disability Access, Business Continuity and Emergency Response Plans, Memorials and Commemorations Policy, etc

TOURISM/REGIONAL BENEFITS

- Marketing Policy

These policies are in varying degrees of development and revision. One of the Gardens' most important policies is the Living Collections Policy. With significant work having been done in this area, the preparation of discussion papers on prioritising focus collections has greatly assisted the master planning process in highlighting plant groupings which are to be preserved, enhanced and developed.

2.4 Visitor Profile

Both the Adelaide Botanic Gardens and the Mount Lofty Gardens attract many visitors each year (approximately 1.4 million and 200,000 respectively in 2003/2004).

Visitor surveys carried out by Market Equity and UniSA have found that:

- Most visitors to both gardens are within the 25-64 age group. This is consistent with the profile of holiday or 'VFR' (visiting friends and relatives) visitors to South Australia.
- Most adults attend with another adult.
- Different surveys show different rates of adults attending with children, probably reflecting the times at which the surveys were undertaken. (UniSA found 15% of adult visitors attended with children under 15 years. Market Equity found that 30% of adults were accompanied by children under 15 years).
- Results on those attending events are limited to private functions such as weddings, as no major events were being held at the time of the UniSA surveys at Adelaide.
- Visitors to the Gardens match the tourism market segments of Socially Aware, Visible Achievement and Traditional Family. They also fit within the profile of the SATC Most Profitable Prospects market segments, and are likely to be interested in environment, heritage and ideas.
- The tourism market segment commonly referred to as VFRs (visiting friends and relatives) is a significant potential segment for both gardens.

ORIGIN OF VISITORS TO ADELAIDE BOTANIC GARDEN

Surveys of visitors to Adelaide Botanic Gardens were conducted by the Centre for Environmental and Recreational Management (CERM) at the University of SA in 2003 and Market Equity in 2000/2001.

Both surveys show that the majority of visitors to the Adelaide Botanic Gardens live in Adelaide.

In both surveys, the Adelaide Botanic Gardens received more interstate visitors than the state average (8%) – UniSA reported 11 % and Market Equity 15%. Most interstate visitors are from NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

Likewise, the Garden is attracting a significantly higher proportion of international visitors than the State average (7%). Market Equity found that 23% of visitors surveyed were from overseas (mainly UK, but also Japan, Germany and USA). This is significantly higher than UniSA's findings (14% international visitors).

Market Equity found that 18% of South Australian visitors were accompanied by interstate or overseas visitors, indicating the importance of the VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market. This is consistent with the findings of the UniSA study.

ORIGIN OF VISITORS TO MOUNT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN

Market Equity (2002) found that the vast majority of visitors to Mount Lofty Botanic Garden are South Australian (90%), with only 8% from interstate, again predominantly from NSW and Victoria. Only 2% of visitors to Mount Lofty are overseas visitors, of which half are from the United Kingdom. Of the South Australian visitors to the Garden, 10% were accompanied by visitors from interstate or overseas.

VISITOR PREFERENCES

The UniSA survey gives a detailed picture of preferred activities within the BGA, fleshing out earlier results from Market Equity surveys. These findings can be summarised as:

Visitors to the botanic gardens enjoy:

- Viewing plants, landscape and ambience
- Relaxation and spending time with family and friends
- Active recreation (Mount Lofty)

Visitors would like:

- More information (interpretation and way finding)
- Better facilities (toilets, seats, picnic areas and disability access).

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Suggested development priorities have been collated incorporating views expressed by survey respondents, Botanic Gardens staff and Master Plan Workshop participants. Each of these ideas has been addressed in the Master Plan's Strategic Responses and Actions detailed in this document.

Development priorities identified are:

- Improve information at all levels – maps, directional signage and way finding, plant labels.
- Develop interpretation programs and activities to engage adults as well as children.
- Build on existing school education and holiday programs.

- Improve provision and maintenance of facilities such as toilets, food and drink outlets.
- Develop coherent collection policies. This will facilitate stronger branding and positioning for both gardens. Mount Lofty in particular needs a stronger identity.
- Build indigenous community education and activities
- Improve access to plantings. Review path surfaces and gradients generally and specifically create easier access for strollers and wheelchairs. Mount Lofty path gradients were noted as particularly difficult for many visitors.
- Review events strategies to maximise benefit to the Gardens with minimum impact, in particular Botanic Park at Adelaide.
- Identify opportunities for product 'bundling' with appropriate partners such as the Adelaide Zoo, Art Gallery of South Australia, Cleland Wildlife Park and others.

