

Annual Report
2025–26

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our two Gardens are situated: the Wurundjeri People and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and acknowledge their continued custodianship and deep spiritual connection to these lands and waters.

Chair and Director and Chief Executive Report **4**

Year in Review **6**

Vision, Purpose, and Charter **8**

Our Organisational Culture **10**

Our Organisation **12**
The Board 18
The Executive Team 19
Organisational Structure 21

Our Performance **22**
Our Strategic Objectives and Achievements 24

Our Supporters **32**

Financial Overview **44**

Financial Statements **48**

Our People **96**
Public Sector Values and Employment Principles 97
Workforce Inclusion 98
Executive Data 100
Occupational Health and Safety 101

Other Disclosures **108**
Disclosure on Expenditures 109
Local Jobs First — Victorian Industry Participation Policy 111
Establishing Legislation 111
Legislative Compliance 111
Freedom of Information 111
Competitive Neutrality Policy 112
Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* 112
Compliance with Other Legislation 113
Environmental Reporting 116
Attestation for Financial Management Compliance with Standing Direction 5.1.4 126
Compliance with the *Building Act 1993* 127
Additional Information Available on Request 127
Disclosure Index and Acronyms 128

Responsible body declaration

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994,* I am pleased to present the Royal Botanic Gardens Board's Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2026.

Penny Fowler AM
Chair Royal Botanic Gardens Board
6 October 2026

Chair and Director and Chief Executive Report

This year has been one of remarkable achievements for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, as we welcomed 2.68 million visitors across Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens – our highest visitation on record. This milestone reflected the growing importance of our Gardens to the Victorian community and the increasing appeal of our celebrated living landscapes, diverse programs, events, and public engagement activities. It also reflects our vital leadership role in horticulture and science, driving important contributions to biodiversity conservation across the State. Operationally we continued our focus on strengthening financial sustainability and organisational efficiency through diversifying revenue sources and improving business systems, all aimed at increasing our ability to connect people with nature and positively impacting the environmental challenges we face as a community.

This progress could not be done alone. We extend our sincere thanks to donors, supporters and partners whose shared commitment to conserving nature helps drive our achievements. We would also like to acknowledge Ministers Dimopoulos and Erdogan for their attention and leadership in the portfolio, supported by officers of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

Our programming continued to delight audiences with more than 504,000 attendees recorded across our major events and experiences. *Lightscape* once again captivated visitors as a lead attraction on Melbourne's winter calendar, earning Gold in the Victorian Tourism Awards' Major Festivals and Events category for the second consecutive year. *Live at the Gardens* continued to cement its reputation as a premier outdoor music event, while programs such as *Forest Therapy*, *Harp Meditations* and *Stellar Nights* consistently sold out. Visitors enjoyed opportunities to engage more deeply in the Gardens through regular initiatives such as the *Explorer Bus*, *Volunteer-led Tours*, and our highly regarded *Aboriginal Heritage Walk*, which continues to attract strong interest from both domestic and international audiences. New and innovative offerings included *Speed Dating with Cacti* at Melbourne Gardens and Polyglot Theatre's *Forest* at Cranbourne Gardens, which attracted new audiences and inspired meaningful connection with nature for all ages.

More than 40,000 students participated in learning experiences delivered onsite and across regional Victoria through programs focused on First Peoples knowledge, STEM, sustainability and nature-based wellbeing. These included Department of Education-funded initiatives such as *Resilience by Nature*, *The Biomimicry Project* and *Young Botanists*. The continued expansion of the *Raising Rarity Schools Conservation Program* saw 15 partner schools contribute to the conservation of Victoria's most threatened plant species through seed collection and propagation activities.

As a leading scientific institution, we continued to advance knowledge and conservation outcomes for plants, fungi and algae. During the year, our researchers published journal articles describing eight new species or genera and produced a total of 61 peer-reviewed publications and three books. To further protect the State Botanical Collection, the Herbarium Volunteer Program mounted 13,797 botanical specimens and 21,642 new specimens were databased by Gardens staff for the Collection. Importantly, we continued to develop plans to address facility and asset shortcomings with the National Herbarium of Victoria, housing more than 1.6 million irreplaceable botanical specimens within the State Botanical Collection, the Victorian Conservation Seedbank and associated research activities. These challenges remain the organisation's most pressing strategic risk.

Our conservation impact extended well beyond the Gardens. The *Southern Brown Bandicoot Outreach Program* engaged more than 24,000 people through community campaigns, partnerships and events that encouraged local conservation action. We also commenced a comprehensive review of our *Landscape Succession Strategy*, ensuring our climate adaptation and resilience planning continued to evolve through stronger integration of First Peoples knowledge, contemporary science and collaboration across our living and preserved collections.



Throughout the year, we continued to strengthen First Peoples engagement and storytelling across our organisation. Progress was made in embedding cultural stories, language and creative expression into our programs and visitor experiences while maintaining a strong relationship with Traditional Owners. Actions from our first *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan* were delivered and development of the next phase of this important work continues alongside engagement with Traditional Owners.

Through the support of our generous donors, we have made significant progress in shaping the future of our places too. At Cranbourne Gardens the How to Garden offers an accessible and inspiring demonstration garden for visitors seeking to create biodiverse, native–plant gardens at home and we commenced ecological restoration works along Wylies Creek. At Melbourne Gardens, philanthropic support has led to the construction of a new learning pavilion in the Australian Drylands precinct, along with the restoration of historic arbours.

We continue to plan, this year seeing an update of the *Cranbourne Gardens Strategic Place Plan*, the development of the *Southern Grasslands Landscape Plan*, and progress on our *Cranbourne Gardens Living Collections Plan*, all documents critical to our future success. At a time when public institutions face increasing financial pressures and growing community expectations, these plans provide a clear roadmap for the decades ahead. They reflect our commitment to responsible stewardship of the Gardens' extraordinary natural and cultural assets, while ensuring we remain adaptable, sustainable and ambitious in our pursuit of excellence. By taking a long–term view and carefully prioritising investment, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is working hard to thrive in a challenging fiscal environment and enrich the lives of all Victorians.

It is with heartfelt appreciation that we acknowledge the dedication, expertise and passion of our staff and volunteers as the foundation of our achievement. Together with our supporters, partners and Traditional Owner communities, we look forward to the coming year striving to create a world that values the beauty, wonder, and importance of nature.



Penny Fowler AM
Chair



Chris Russell
Director and Chief Executive

Year in Review



Highlights

2.68M people visited

40K students participated in learning programs

177 new donors supported the gardens

#1 Attraction in Melbourne on TripAdvisor

13 new taxa described

24K people learned about bandicoot conservation actions

61 peer–reviewed papers and 3 books published

14K Herbarium specimens mounted by volunteers

22K new botanical specimens databased for the SBC

Vision, Purpose, and Charter





Our Vision

A world that values the beauty, wonder, and importance of nature.

Our Purpose

To champion the role of plants and botanic gardens for the wellbeing of people and the planet.

Our Charter

Under the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991* (the RBG Act), the objectives of our organisation are:

— To conserve, protect and improve the botanic gardens and managed land and their collections of living plants.

— To conserve and enhance the State Botanical Collection and National Herbarium of Victoria.

— To provide for the use of the State Botanical Collection or plants or plant specimens at the botanic gardens or managed land for scientific or reference purposes, consistent with accepted international practice.

— To increase public knowledge and awareness of plants and plant communities.

— To provide for the use of the botanic gardens for education, public enjoyment and tourism.

— To provide for the carrying out of and contribution to research into biodiversity and the conservation of biodiversity.



Our Organisational Culture

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria organisational culture is reflected through our four values, which underpin the way we act and behave:

Creative – we embrace innovation and change.

We are inventive and enthusiastic. Our curiosity allows us to find considered solutions to challenges. We use our resources wisely and draw upon our collective intelligence to answer questions. We have a joyful, positive, and respectful approach that is expressed with a good sense of humour. Our inclusive and engaging style helps us to learn and share our knowledge in new and interesting ways.

Open – we are curious.

We make time to listen, learn, and be clear. To help us achieve our vision, we listen to each other and the community. We are friendly and respectful of different perspectives. We solve problems together because supporting and learning from each other results in better work. We share our knowledge because it helps people inside and outside our organisation to understand the importance of safeguarding plants for the wellbeing of people and the planet.

Brave – we have the courage to change things.

We have the confidence to challenge established ways of thinking if it improves our collective understanding of plants. We embrace our responsibility to protect plants and biodiversity. We have the courage to try new things, and we help each other as we make these changes. We are positive, so we turn challenges into opportunities. We lead the way to inspire confidence and enthusiasm in others.

Remarkable – we leave a lasting impression.

We create experiences and special places that help everyone to learn and see the world differently. Whether our actions are big or small, they inspire people to think and act. We seek out knowledge and apply our learning because we believe in the importance of plants and our planet. We do things that are different and exciting if they help us achieve our vision. We are proud of our past and passionate about our future.



Our Organisational Performance

We recognise that great organisational achievement is supported by several underlying elements, all of which influence how we perform as an organisation. These include:

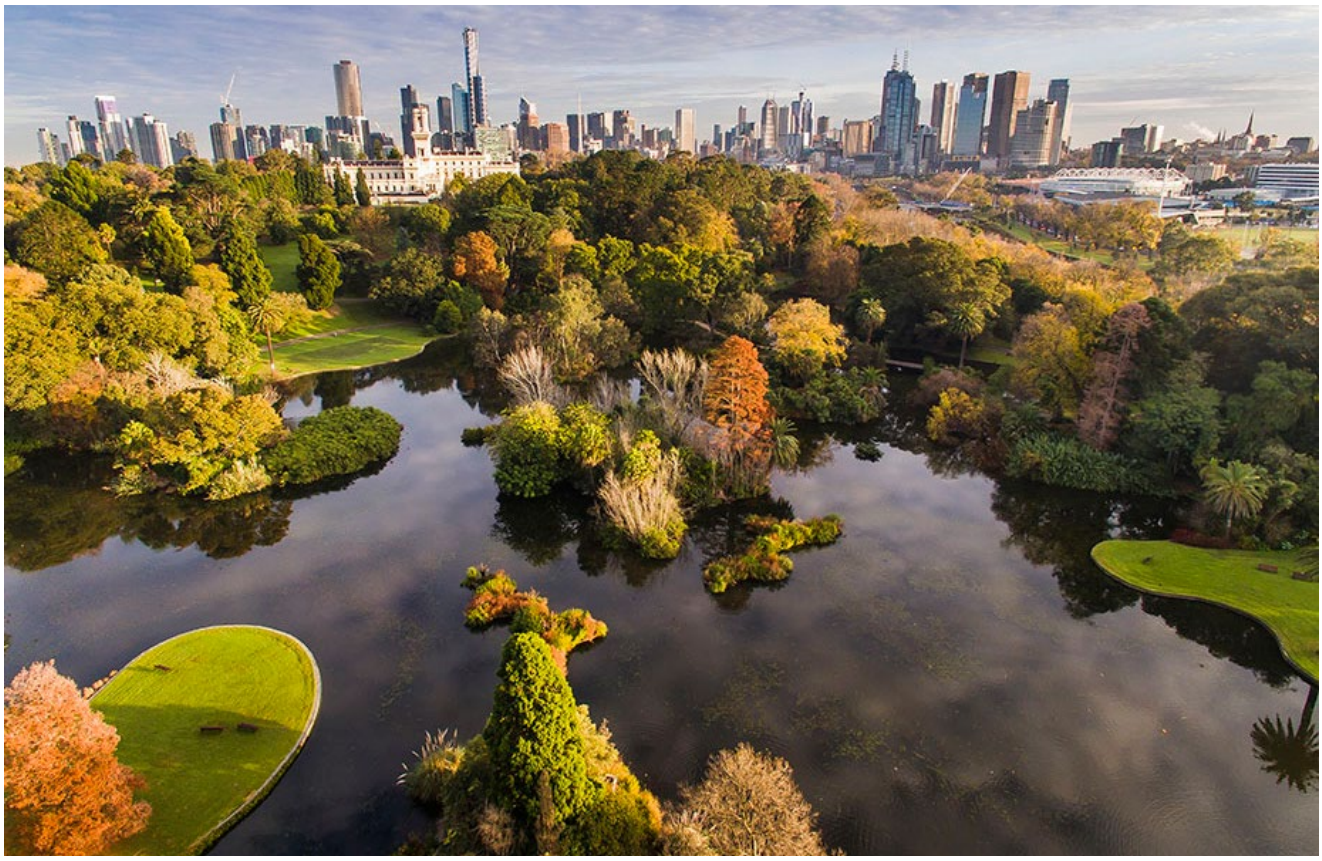
— A clear strategy and goals so our people can immediately see and understand what Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is aiming to achieve.

— Appropriate planning frameworks and mechanisms that are inclusive of staff, ensuring our people influence and contribute to the future direction of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

— Strong systems and processes to support our people to be their best.

— Empowering leadership skills and behaviours that engage and involve people.

Our Organisation



Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is one of the world's leading botanical organisations, dedicated to the conservation, cultivation, study and enjoyment of plants for the benefit of communities and the environment. Managing two world-class sites—Melbourne Gardens and Cranbourne Gardens—the organisation plays a vital role in plant science, biodiversity conservation, education and public engagement. Through its extensive living collections, research programs, cultural initiatives and immersive visitor experiences, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria connects people with plants and nature while working to address critical environmental challenges, including climate change and species conservation. Welcoming millions of visitors each year, the organisation is a place where science, culture, wellbeing and nature come together.

Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

Established in 1846, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne is one of Victoria's most iconic attractions, valued by generations of locals and visitors. Located less than three kilometres from the CBD, the 38-hectare, heritage-listed Gardens serve as a vital green sanctuary for recreation, education, conservation and horticulture.

The Gardens feature more than 7,500 plant species from Australia and around the world, including many rare and threatened species, alongside over 8,000 trees—some predating the Gardens themselves—forming a nationally significant collection.

At the heart of the site is the National Herbarium of Victoria, which underpins the organisation's scientific and conservation work. It houses more than 1.6 million botanical specimens (forming part of the State Botanical Collection) and the Victorian Conservation Seedbank, supporting research, biodiversity protection, land management and biosecurity. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is also the steward of the historic Melbourne Observatory, established in 1862 for astronomical research. While operations ceased in 1945, the site remains open for tours and research, contributing to Victoria's scientific heritage.



Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne is a 363–hectare site in the south–east of Melbourne, offering a natural bushland experience alongside the Australian Garden—an award–winning, contemporary botanic garden celebrating the beauty and diversity of Australian landscapes and flora, featuring more than 100,000 plants representing 1,900 different taxa. Approximately two–thirds of Cranbourne Gardens is high conservation value vegetation with more than 450 indigenous plant species found in the bushland areas.

Parts of the bushland provide important social amenities to the growing surrounding population through 10 kilometres of walking tracks, six kilometres of cycling tracks, picturesque shelters, barbecues, and playgrounds, while other areas are actively managed as a conservation zone. Through pest plant and animal management, fire management, and flora and fauna species conservation programs, we are committed to protecting and enhancing the natural values of this increasingly vital piece of remnant vegetation.



Scientific Research

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is Victoria's scientific engine for understanding and protecting the State's natural ecosystems. As the Government's primary centre for botanical studies, its research spans plant and fungal biodiversity, genomics, climate resilience, and horticulture. This work informs land management, agriculture, conservation, biosecurity and health innovation.

Founded in 1853 and holding more than 1.6 million plant, fungi, and algae specimens, the State Botanical Collection (SBC) is more than a library of dried material; it is the evidence base for past and present biodiversity that guides biosecurity responses, supports First Peoples' land stewardship, and underpins environmental decisions that affect every Victorian. Its global significance cannot be overstated.

Used daily by scientists, government, and industry worldwide, the SBC helps detect invasive species, track the impacts of climate change, improve agriculture, and inspire breakthroughs in biopharma. Without it, we lack the historical record and scientific insight needed to safeguard biodiversity and support Victoria's economy. Alongside the SBC sits the Victorian Conservation Seedbank, an insurance policy against extinction. By securing the genetic future of Victoria's rarest and most threatened plants, the Seedbank gives communities, policymakers, and industry the tools to restore ecosystems, protect food security, and ensure our natural heritage endures for generations.

Engagement

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria welcomed 2.68 million visitors across our two sites this year. Our programs, events, and storytelling attract a diverse range of visitors through innovative online and onsite engagement that promotes learning, wellbeing and community cohesion through affordable, inclusive, nature–based experiences and events. With programming throughout the year such as *Lightscape*, our flagship winter program, and our regular learning, creative, interpretation, and tourism programs, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to focus our engagement on creating a deepened connection with, understanding of, and care for both nature and each other.



Governance

The Royal Botanic Gardens Board is a statutory authority established under the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991*. The *Royal Botanic Gardens Regulations 2024* make provision for the care, protection, management, and improvement of Melbourne Gardens, Cranbourne Gardens, and the National Herbarium of Victoria. The responsible Minister for the period from 1 July 2025 to 14 April 2026 was the Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP, Minister for Environment and the Hon. Enver Erdogan MP, Minister for Environment from 15 April 2026 to 30 June 2026. The Board comprises a maximum of seven members, including a Chair and a Deputy Chair, who are appointed by the Governor-in-Council on the recommendation of the Minister. Appointed Board members have a diversity of knowledge and expertise in the fields of financial and business management, science, law, tourism, architecture, the disability sector, and marketing.

The members are appointed for a term not exceeding four years but are eligible for re-appointment. A quorum of the Board is four members. The Board oversees the governance of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and may delegate its functions and powers to a committee of the Board, the Director and Chief Executive, any of the Board's members, or any of its employees. The Director and Chief Executive has responsibility for the day-to-day management and control of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

Board Members
1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026



Penny Fowler AM, BBus, GAICD
Chair – Appointed 1 October 2023, reappointed 1 October 2025
First Appointed to the Board 8 April 2014

Previously Deputy Chair (appointed 9 April 2016, reappointed 9 April 2020) and Board Member (appointed 8 April 2014, reappointed 9 April 2020 and 1 October 2025)

Penny Fowler has a Bachelor of Business (Marketing) and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) and a Chief Executive Women member. She has been a member of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board since 2014 and is currently the Chair. She is also Chair of the Herald and Weekly Times and the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal. In addition, Penny is Chair of Tourism Australia and a Council Member of the National Gallery of Australia. Penny is a Board member of Tech Mahindra and on the Advisory Board of Visy/Pratt USA.



Jason Hay, MBA, GAICD
Deputy Chair – Appointed 1 October 2023

Jason Hay is Regional Asset Manager at IFM Investors, a global institutional investor and asset management company. Jason has previously held senior management positions at ISPT, Fort Street Real Estate Capital (a boutique funds manager), the Coles Group, and Coles Express. Jason has also spent time working in London at EA Shaw Chartered Surveyors and Foxtons. Jason is currently a Board member of the Victorian Pride Centre, a member of the Property Council of Australia's Retail Committee and was previously the Partnerships Director and a Board member of GLOBE (Gay and Lesbian Organisation of Business and Enterprise). He holds a Master of Business Administration (Executive) and Certificate IV in Real Estate and has completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course.



Damian Holmes, AILA, RLA
Appointed 1 October 2023

Damian Holmes is the Founder and Editor of the World Landscape Architecture website. He was previously the Chief Technical Officer at ASPECT Studios, an international design practice. Damian has extensive experience as a Registered Landscape Architect, including previous roles in Australia, China, and Canada. He is a member of the International Federation of Landscape Architects and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. Damian holds a Master of Landscape Architecture, a Postgraduate Diploma in Urban Design and Planning (Landscape Architecture), and a Bachelor of Applied Science (Horticulture).



Peter Langkamp OAM, PhD, FAICD
Appointed 1 October 2023 – 30 September 2025

Peter Langkamp is Chair of The Disability Trust (and subsidiary entities specialising in mental health and disability service provision). He is a member of the General Advisory Standing Committee of .au Domain Administration Limited. He is also a non-executive director of Elder Rights Australia and has more than 15 years' experience as a non-executive director, having previously served on the Boards of Karingal St Laurence 'genU', Wellways, Forticom Group, Carers Australia, and Yooralla, where he also served as President and Chair respectively. Peter has significant executive-level experience with prior Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and senior executive roles with Callista Software Services, Loyalty Pacific 'FlyBuys', Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, Accenture, National Disability Insurance Agency, Acxiom, National Roads and Motorists Association Limited, Shell Australia, and National Australia Bank. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Agriculture Science, Bachelor of Agriculture Science, and Graduate Diploma in Accounting and Finance and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Felicia Mariani, GAICD
Appointed 1 October 2023

Felicia Mariani has been CEO and Company Secretary of the Victorian Tourism Industry Council (departing that position on 4 July 2025). She is Vice President and Deputy Chair of RSPCA Tasmania, Chair of Committee for Ballarat, and a non-executive director on the Board of Food + Drink Victoria. Felicia has a strong background in tourism marketing and development, with a significant track record of government relations and strategic communication. Her prior roles have included Director of Marketing at Tourism Victoria, Managing Director at Australian Tourism Export Council, CEO of Tourism Tasmania, and General Manager of Tourism Sydney. She was previously a non-executive director of the Australian Tourism Industry Council, Monash Gallery of Art, and Cultural Attractions of Australia. Felicia has completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course and is a member of the Women Chiefs of Enterprises International.



Arianne Rose, BSc LLB, GCertFinPlanning, FAICD
Appointed 1 October 2023, reappointed 1 October 2025

Arianne Rose is an experienced non-executive director and executive, working in highly regulated industries, in both public and private sectors. She holds extensive experience in law and governance. Arianne is currently a member of the Architects Registration Board of Victoria Tribunal Panel. She was previously the Chair of the Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council, a non-executive director of Canopy nature-based solutions, Greening Australia, the Architects Registration Board of Victoria, and Melbourne Polytechnic and Company Secretary and General Counsel of VicTrack. She is a Bachelor of Law, and a Bachelor of Science, and holds a Graduate Certificate in Financial Planning. Arianne is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Christine Wyatt, MEnvS, BRTP (Hons), GAICD
Appointed 30 November 2021, reappointed 30 November 2025

Christine Wyatt is an independent adviser and non-executive director with substantial corporate and public sector executive leadership and expertise in urban planning, environmental management, infrastructure delivery, and governance. She is currently the Deputy Chair of the Suburban Rail Loop Authority and Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation and was a Board member of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority Board until November 2024. Previously, Christine held the position of Deputy Secretary Planning with two Victorian State Government departments. Before joining the public service, she was a senior executive leading planning and environmental services with global consulting engineering firms, working with public and private organisations across Australia and internationally. Christine holds a Master of Environmental Studies and a Bachelor of Town and Regional Planning, both from the University of Melbourne. She is also a GAICD.

Board Attendance 2025–26

The board meets formally at least six times a year or more frequently as required.

Board Member	Number of meetings eligible	Number of meetings attended
Penny Fowler (Chair)	6	6
Jason Hay (Deputy Chair)	6	6
Damian Holmes	6	6
Peter Langkamp	1	1
Felicia Mariani	6	6
Arianne Rose	6	6
Christine Wyatt	6	6

Board Committees

Board members participate in one or more Board Committees. During the 2025–26 year, the following Committees were in place:

— Audit, Risk and Finance Committee

— Remuneration Committee

Audit, Risk and Finance Committee

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee provides independent oversight and monitoring of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's performance, risk management, internal controls and compliance framework, and its reporting obligations under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FM Act). It oversees the financial reporting process and financial performance of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. The Committee consists of six members, appointed by the Board, including four Board members and one external member.

Members: Christine Wyatt (Committee Chair), Felicia Mariani, Arianne Rose, Peter Langkamp (until 30 September 2025), Penny Fowler (Ex–officio), and Chris Russell (Ex–officio).

External Member: Rochelle Wrigglesworth.

Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee is responsible for advising the Board that Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria complies with executive remuneration requirements, setting the Director and Chief Executive's performance measures and reviewing the performance of the Director and Chief Executive. The Remuneration Committee consists of three members, appointed by the Board.

Members: Jason Hay (Committee Chair), Damian Holmes, and Penny Fowler.







Executive Team as at 30 June 2026

Director and Chief Executive

Chris Russell, BSc (Hons), Grad Dip Land Rehab, GAICD

Responsible for overall strategic leadership and management of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, including achievement of horticulture, land management, and science objectives as well as the development and delivery of stimulating and impactful programs and events, major projects, fundraising, and financial management. Chris was Acting Director and Chief Executive from 5 February 2024 before assuming the role on 1 July 2024. Prior to this, he was Executive Director of Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne from 2001, overseeing the development of the award–winning Australian Garden. Chris is an inclusive leader, passionate about the role of botanic gardens in fostering a world that values nature as the foundation of life on the planet. He is a previous Board member of Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand Ltd (BGANZ) and Deputy Chair of Casey Cardinia Tourism.

Chief Operating Officer

Virginie Hoareau, BCom, CPA, MBA, GAICD

Responsible for providing strategic leadership across the corporate and operational functions of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, with responsibility for finance, information and communication technology, people and culture, infrastructure, governance, and risk.

With over 20 years' experience in financial management, operations, and organisational transformation, Virginie has held senior leadership roles across higher education, research, media and communications, and the not–for–profit sector. Virginie was previously Executive Director at Deakin University's Research Portfolio, Chief Financial Officer at the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, and General Manager of a newly established research institute. She brings deep expertise in financial strategy, operational excellence, and stakeholder engagement, with a strong track record of leading major transformation initiatives and managing complex budgets. A GAICD, Virginie has also contributed as a non–executive director, drawing on her governance and finance experience to support purpose–driven organisations. She is a values–led leader, passionate about creating sustainable impact, building collaborative cultures, and enabling high–performing teams to thrive.

Executive Director Commercial and External Relations

Alice Molan, BSc, Grad Cert (Cross–Sector Partnerships)

Responsible for the strategic oversight of commercial, philanthropic and external relations functions of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Alice is an accomplished leader with over 20 years' experience driving strategic growth, stakeholder engagement, and operational excellence in public and not–for–profit organisations. She leads diverse teams across revenue generation, marketing and communications, and commercial operations. Alice is known for delivering strong financial outcomes, cultivating high–value partnerships, and navigating complex stakeholder environments with empathy and clarity. Her leadership has resulted in increased fundraising, revitalised commercial performance, and greater public engagement. With deep expertise in strategy, communication, and relationship management, Alice is passionate about advancing the mission and impact of purpose–driven organisations through innovation, collaboration, and thoughtful stewardship.



Executive Director Science

Professor David Cantrill, PhD, BSc (Hons)

Responsible for directing research into plant biodiversity, systematics, and conservation and management of the SBC. This entails statutory responsibility under the RBG Act and the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981*. David worked as a senior research scientist in Europe for 15 years, first for the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge and later at the Swedish Museum of Natural History in Stockholm. He has published more than 130 scientific articles; is Chief Editor for Grana, an international journal for pollen studies; and sits on several international editorial and scientific advisory boards. His research interests focus on integrating information from fossil and living floras to understanding the origins of patterns of diversity in the Southern Hemisphere. He holds an honorary professorship with the School of BioSciences at the University of Melbourne. David has been Executive Director Science since 2006.



Executive Director Experience and Engagement

Emily Clarke, BA, MA(Curatorship), GradCertArtHist, GAICD

20 April 2026

Responsible for visitor experience, interpretation and placemaking, creative programming and tourism, learning and community engagement across Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens, with responsibility for shaping inclusive, high-quality experiences that connect people to plants, Country and nature and deliver wellbeing and public value.

Emily brings over 15 years' experience in senior cultural sector leadership roles. Her work focuses on connecting audiences to significant places, collections and stories through experience-led approaches that support social impact, and on building adaptable, resilient and high-performing teams. Prior to joining Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, she was Executive Director, Interpretation and Experience at the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority and has held senior leadership roles at City of Casey, Arts Centre Melbourne and Museums Victoria.

Émer Harrington

1 July 2024 – 9 January 2026



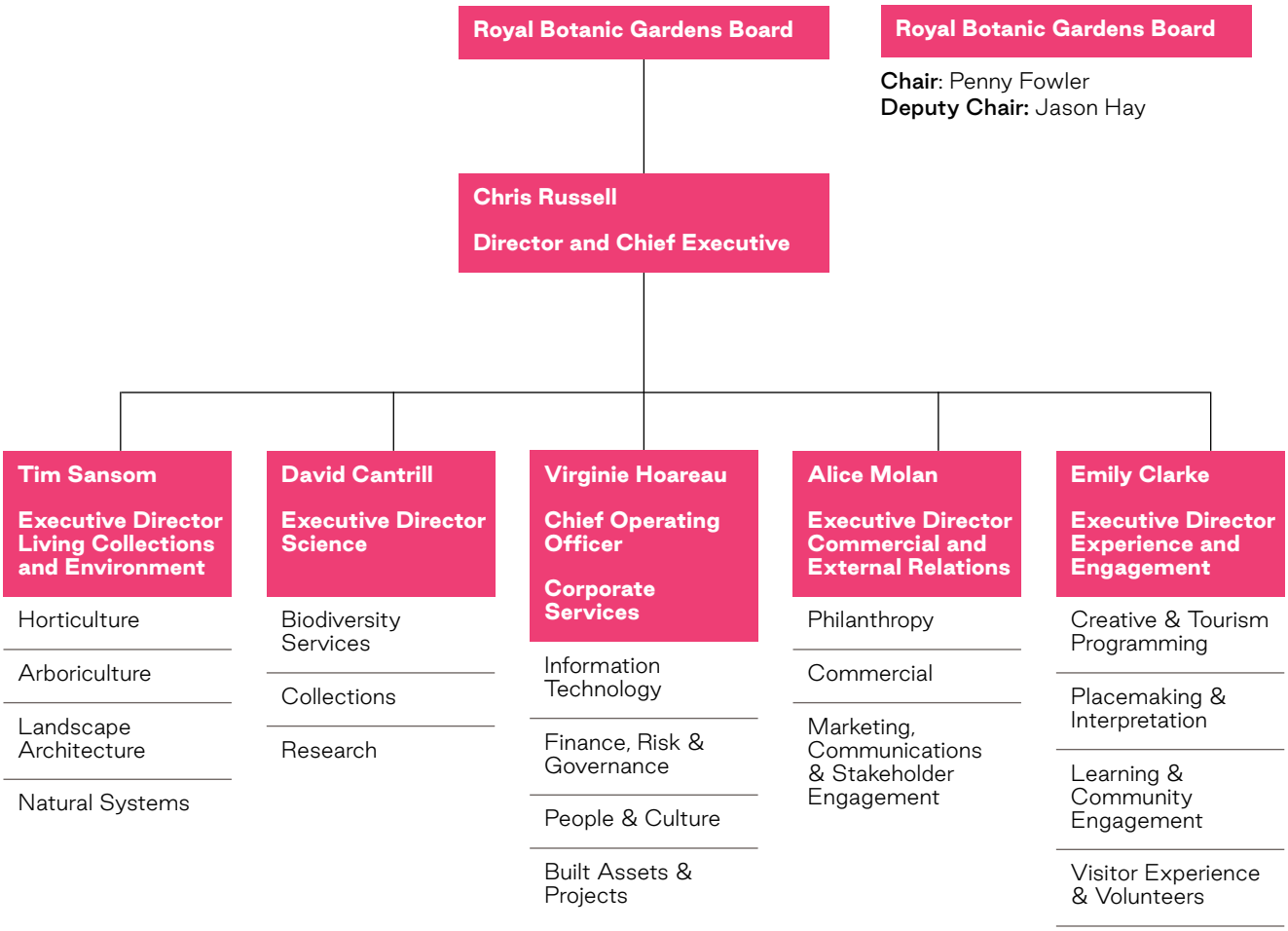
Executive Director Living Collections and Environment

Tim Sansom, BAppSc, GradDipHort

Responsible for providing strategic leadership for the creation and stewardship of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's world-class gardens, landscapes, and natural areas. Tim has over 30 years' experience in horticulture, ecological restoration, and organisational leadership across the not-for-profit, commercial, and community sectors. He was previously Group CEO of The Diggers Club and The Diggers Foundation, Manager — Communications and Horticulture at Plants Management Australia, and General Manager of the Australian Ecosystems nursery. Tim brings a deep understanding of garden design, plant production, ecological management, and public education, and is passionate about advancing environmental sustainability through landscape leadership. He maintains long-standing involvement with industry organisations including the International Plant Propagators Society, the Nursery and Garden Industry of Victoria, and the Global Gardens of Peace.

Organisation Structure

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
As of 1 May 2026



Our Performance



BP3 Performance Measures

Visitors to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria		
Target	**Actual**	**Comments**
2 million	2.68 million	Performance is above target reflecting strong summer visitation driven by a marketing campaign, high engagement across social media channels and increased cruise ship tour visitors.
Specimens curated in the State Botanical Collection		
27,000	21,642	Performance was below target due to complexity of the species being catalogued and the ongoing renovation works in the National Herbarium of Victoria which impacted access to the Collection.

Performance Measures (Corporate Plan 2025–29)

Action	Performance Measure	Actual
Develop and deliver engaging and distinctive learning programs	37,000 student attendances	42,121
Deliver vibrant and impactful programming experiences	450,000 attendances	1,415,312
Deliver community engagement programs to encourage action for conservation	10,000 people participate in Southern Brown Bandicoot program	867,983
Redevelop the How to Garden	Construction completed	Complete
Improve our knowledge of flora and fungi through the description of new taxa	10 taxa described by staff per annum	13
Science team publish research in peer–reviewed journals that are cited	42 published papers	50
Develop 3–5 year commercial strategy	Strategy developed and endorsed by board	Completed
Deliver in–house building foundation skills development training program	95% participation	100% participation
Implement the new enterprise resource planning and retail management solution	Achieve Go–Live date of 1 Oct 2025	Implemented on time and on budget
Enrich living collections by developing Cranbourne Gardens Southern Grasslands Landscape plan	Plan completed and implementation commenced	Achieved



Our Strategic Objectives and Achievements

Engagement

Curate and deliver nature and science-based learning programs
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria engaged more than 40,000 students onsite and across regional Victoria through First Peoples, STEM, sustainability, and nature-based wellbeing programs, with the support of education partners, the Department of Education (DoE), and the Victorian Catholic Education Authority.

DoE-funded programs—*Resilience by Nature, Biomimicry Project, and Young Botanist*—brought together local artists, the Gardens' scientific expertise, and First Peoples' perspectives to deliver wellbeing, science, and creative learning experiences.

The *Raising Rarity Schools Conservation Program* expanded its regional outreach across three Victorian hubs—Metro, Gippsland, and Western Victoria—with the continued support of the Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation and the City of Casey. The 15 partner schools grew and harvested seeds to support the conservation of some of Victoria's most threatened species.

Deliver vibrant and impactful programming experiences
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria captivated, inspired, and engaged new and existing audiences this year, amplifying our impact, driving revenue and deepening audience connection to nature, our scientific research, and our two Gardens. The organisation reached over 504,865 visitors through a range of programmed experiences and award-winning interpretation and signage.

Engagement has been driven by accessible initiatives such as the *Garden Explorer Bus* and volunteer-led tours. The *Aboriginal Heritage Walk* maintains significant appeal, drawing sustained interest from both domestic and international visitors. Regular sell-out programs include *Forest Therapy*, *Harp Meditations* and *Stellar Nights*.

Program highlights
The 20th anniversary of the Australian Garden at Cranbourne was celebrated with a three-day weekend 'birthday party' event with activities including the *Big Bandicoot Backyard, Wild City by Kathy Holowko*, performances by *Born in a Taxi*, live music, workshops and activities for families, tours and an exhibition chronicling the story of the Australian Garden.

Large-scale events included *Lightscape*, which won the Gold medal in the Victorian Tourism Awards' coveted Major Festivals and Events category for the second consecutive year, and *Live at the Gardens* contemporary live music program, which returned in November and March.

Other program highlights included *Speed Dating with Cacti* by Canada's award-winning Mammalian Diving Reflex, presented as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival. This part theatre, part walking tour experience invited audiences to slow down, be fully present and reconnect with the natural world.

At Cranbourne, *Forest*, an immersive work by world renowned children's theatre company Polyglot, introduced a new generation of children to the wonders of nature through engaging bushland experiences and storytelling.



Knowledge

Optimise care for the State Botanical Collection

The National Herbarium of Victoria facility, home to the State Botanical Collection, has been identified as Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's highest strategic risk due to ageing, capacity–constrained Herbarium facilities that can no longer adequately preserve, protect or provide access to Victoria's globally significant collection.

The organisation continued the development of plans to address this risk, establishing a pathway for future investment to safeguard the Collection for generations to come, supporting Victoria's environmental and economic priorities, and enhancing public access to one of the State's most significant scientific assets.

As an interim measure to protect the State Botanical Collection, critical infrastructure and building remediation works were completed at the Herbarium. These included atrium roof repairs, installation of a new 1600amp substation valued at more than $250,000 to support and futureproof the precinct, and the installation of a compliant main switchboard and Herbarium distribution board. Additional Herbarium capacity works were also undertaken to improve collection storage and management.

While these works have reduced immediate risks and improved operational resilience, they do not fully address the long–term infrastructure requirements needed to safeguard the Collection. Future investment remains critical to securing the protection and sustainability of this nationally significant asset.

Herbarium volunteers curated 13,797 specimens, and 21,642 new specimens were databased into the State Botanical Collection this year.

Leverage our expertise to lead conservation and climate actions

The *Landscape Succession Strategy Melbourne Gardens 2016–2036* reached the 10–year mark of its 20–year timeframe during the year. This pioneering climate adaptation strategy has been referenced and utilised by botanic gardens around the world and has seen the establishment of the Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens, a global knowledge–sharing platform with more than 600 botanic gardens and associated organisations as members. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to serve as the Alliance's secretariat.

Planning commenced for a 10–year review of the strategy to evaluate targets and actions, update technical data, broaden First Nations engagement, and document achievements and case studies. The review was designed to support a more inclusive organisational approach, linking Cranbourne and Melbourne Gardens and their living and preserved plant collections, to strengthen an integrated multidisciplinary response to climate change. This year, a scoping review of the Strategy was completed, and a Climate Change Planning Roadmap was developed to guide the next phase of this work.

Deliver community engagement programs to encourage action for conservation

The Southern Brown Bandicoot community engagement program, in partnership with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's (DEECA) *Nature Next Door* Melbourne Strategic Assessment, saw strong community participation through initiatives including the Bandicoot Brigade eNewsletter, social media campaigns, partnerships with local schools, and the three–day *Bandicoot Big Backyard* community festival which attracted 5,480 visitors. Together, these activities strengthened the local bandicoot conservation network and encouraged positive conservation actions, engaging more than 24,000 people throughout the year.



Bandicoot shelter trials were undertaken in the Australian Garden at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, testing bandicoot preferences across five different shelter designs. These trials received coverage from multiple news outlets, reaching an audience of more than 800,000.

Enhance our understanding of plants, algae, and fungi through description and publication of new taxa

Understanding what species exist and how they are related is fundamental to conserving the world's biodiversity. Throughout the year, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria scientists continued their vital work describing and classifying plant species, using the significant State Botanical Collection to support research that informs conservation, environmental decision-making and scientific discovery. This work forms the foundation of botanical knowledge, enabling researchers around the globe to better understand, manage and protect plant life in a rapidly changing environment.

During the year, seven journal articles were published, describing eight new species or genera and resolving taxonomic issues across lichens, ferns, fungi and flowering plants from Australia and overseas. Newly published names included four fungi species (*Peziza austroechinospora*, *Peziza meridionalis*, *Porpoloma flavilamellatum* and *Auriscalpium greyorum*), the new fungus genus *Pyropezia*, the new fern genus *Phaneroloma*, and two plant species: *Stigmatodactylus maraiparaiensis*, an orchid from Mount Kinabalu in Sabah, Malaysia; and *Nepenthes megastoma*, a carnivorous pitcher plant from Palawan, Philippines.

Improve the impact and awareness of our scientific and conservation expertise

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to strengthen the impact and reach of its scientific and conservation expertise during the year. Researchers produced 61 peer-reviewed publications and three books, contributing valuable knowledge to global efforts in plant science, biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration. The influence of this work continued to grow, with citation rates increasing significantly to 6,378 citations (Scopus 2025), demonstrating the relevance and international standing of our research.

Scientific expertise was also shared with broader audiences through several high-profile publications. Neville Walsh and Daniel Murphy co-authored *Wattles of Victoria and Tasmania*, published by CSIRO Publishing in March 2025. Supported by media interviews and public events, including a launch hosted by the Australian Plant Society in Wangaratta, the book helped bring authoritative botanical knowledge to plant enthusiasts, land managers and the wider community.

Similarly, *Planet Fungi*, co-authored by Tom May, Catherine Marciniak and Stephen Axford, showcased the extraordinary diversity and beauty of fungi through stunning macro-photography and accessible scientific storytelling. The book's launch at The Observatory Café attracted strong community interest, further expanding awareness of the critical role fungi play in healthy ecosystems and reinforcing Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's position as a trusted source of scientific knowledge.



Place

Develop and implement priority projects from the Gardens' Master Plans

During the year, a project brief and research were undertaken for the development of the *Cranbourne Gardens Master Plan*, which will establish the vision and framework for the future development of the Gardens. This included a strategic context study, site-scale spatial analysis and a review of the previous Master Plan, which found that more than 92% of its actions had been completed or were well progressed.

Early resolution of the placement of future built form elements is critical to allow careful integration within the landscape, as it may influence other initiatives identified through the Master Plan process. This work has been advanced through an updated *Cranbourne Gardens Strategic Place Plan*, which establishes an agreed spatial framework to guide future development across the Gardens, aligning built form, landscape and visitor experience with the site's long-term vision.

Together, the contextual research and updated Strategic Place Plan form a strong foundation for the next stages of the Master Plan development.

Progress was also made on several other master plan projects, including the redevelopment of the How to Garden. This project successfully transformed an outdated space within the Australian Garden into a contemporary, accessible and educational demonstration garden designed to inspire visitors to create their own biodiverse, native-focused gardens at home.

The garden showcased practical and affordable planting approaches at a domestic scale, integrated edible and First Peoples-use plants, and promoted sustainable principles such as 'right plant, right place' and water-sensitive design. It also enabled hands-on learning through flexible program spaces and enhanced self-guided visitor experiences.

At Melbourne Gardens, the Australian Drylands Learning Pavilion also commenced during the year, marking a further step in the implementation of the Gardens' long-term development priorities. The facility will provide an undercover space to deliver a range of different programs, including those for schools.

Upgrade physical assets for safety, sustainability and efficiency

In 2025-26, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria successfully secured government and philanthropic funding to deliver a range of critical asset renewal and infrastructure improvements across both Melbourne and Cranbourne sites. This support is essential, as these projects would not be possible through operational funding alone.

Projects included $500,000 in grant funding for priority building remediation works, including atrium roof repairs at the National Herbarium of Victoria, floor repairs to the Sign Workshop, and critical roof replacement works at Observatory House, scheduled for delivery in 2027-28.

In addition, several hundred metres of underground electrical conduit were installed to provide Gardens House, Trial Bed and Dog Flat with access to 100% green power. This eliminated the need for generators for onsite partners and major events such as *Lightscape*, while significantly improving site safety, operational resilience and sustainability outcomes. New handrails were also installed at Mueller Hall to improve accessibility and reduce public safety risks.



At the Cranbourne Visitor Centre, weather–damaged louvers were removed to mitigate risks to visitors and staff, new sliding workshop doors were installed to improve safe access, and end–of–life switchboards and HVAC systems were replaced to improve reliability, compliance and operational performance.

Commence the development of an asset management plan

An *Operational Asset Management Policy* was developed and approved during 2025–26 to support the implementation of a new *Strategic Asset Management Plan* (SAMP) and Asset Investment Framework.

Stage 1 of the *Asset Management Plan* (AMP) development was completed, resulting in the identification, prioritisation and costing of minor capital expenditure (CAPEX) projects for delivery in 2026–27. The AMP program is currently progressing through Stage 2 of 3, focused on the development of a 10–year AMP, scheduled for completion in September 2026.

Enrich the beauty, conservation and scientific value of our living collections

Significant progress has been made on the *Cranbourne Gardens Living Collections Plan*, a key initiative to guide the future development, management and conservation of the Gardens' nationally significant plant collections. Through a comprehensive review of the Australian Garden collections, the number of collections was refined from more than 35 to a strategically focused 15, creating a more sustainable and impactful framework for collection management.

This work will strengthen the horticultural, conservation and scientific value of the collections, support clearer interpretation and storytelling, and help ensure resources are directed to areas of greatest significance. Development of high–level collection profiles also progressed during the year, with the Living Collections Plan remaining on track for completion in 2026–27.

Develop the *Cranbourne Gardens Southern Grasslands Landscape Plan*

The *Southern Grasslands Landscape Plan* was completed, establishing a clear and balanced framework to accommodate increasing visitor numbers while safeguarding the ecological values of the Gardens. The Plan provides a roadmap for improving access to and within the conservation area through new entrances, upgraded trails, rest areas, and landscape markers that highlight the site's natural features and views. It also outlines a strategic approach to enhancing waterway health, strengthening ecological systems, and creating diverse habitats.

Implementation of the Plan commenced during the year. The Wylies Creek Riparian Restoration Project funded by the Australian Government's Natural Ecological Heritage Trust under the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program progressed the delivery of many of the watercourse improvements and vegetation enhancements identified in the Plan. Detailed designs for the first new trail and boardwalk section were completed, and the design of the first new entrance was underway at the end of the reporting period.



Embed First Peoples cultural knowledge and stories on our sites

Meaningful progress was made throughout the year in strengthening First Peoples storytelling at Melbourne Gardens, with valuable engagement and support from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's Policy and Partnership Unit, Elders and Representatives. This work included the development of significant plant and cultural stories, language content, and graphic design, as well as the important process of seeking permissions and approvals in accordance with Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property guidelines.

Strengthening of the relationship with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation also continued through executive engagement and a range of cultural programs. These included a vibrant three–day program of NAIDOC Week celebrations, inviting visitors of all ages to connect with First Peoples' culture through art, storytelling, dance, music and bushfood experiences.

Agreed outcomes, including interpretive signage, audio content and digital experiences, remained in development in consultation with Traditional Owners. Delivery of the final project outcomes was carried over to the next financial year.



Growth

Strengthen commercial outcomes and increase retail income

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria took important steps to build organisational readiness for commercial growth. The development and Board endorsement of the Commercial Strategy established a clear framework for strengthening commercial performance, diversifying revenue streams and embedding a more commercially focused approach across the organisation. While implementation remains in its early stages, initial initiatives have demonstrated the potential to generate improved financial outcomes and provide a foundation for more significant opportunities in the years ahead.

The retail business continued to build momentum during the year, supported by a focus on improving operational efficiency, enhancing the product offering and strengthening the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria brand. The expansion of the branded merchandise range was particularly well received by visitors, demonstrating the value of products that reflect the Gardens' unique identity and purpose. These early improvements have delivered encouraging results and provide a strong foundation for the continued growth and development of retail as an important contributor to the organisation's financial sustainability.

Operations

Cultivate essential relationships, capabilities and leadership skills required for the future

Following the organisational structural review completed in late 2024 and early 2025, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria focused on strengthening leadership capability across the newly formed Executive Team. This work will extend to branch managers and broader leadership development in 2026–27. The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) refreshed its Terms of Reference and objectives with coordination now supported by a rotating working group. Meetings are held at both Melbourne and Cranbourne to strengthen senior leaders' connection with and oversight of both sites.

Implement initiatives that make the organisation a more inclusive workplace

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is proud to have partnered with the Community and Public Sector Union along with our employees to develop a new *Gender Equality Action Plan 2026–2030*. This plan outlines strategies to improve a range of indicators under the *Gender Equality Act* and ensure our workplace is more inclusive and promotes fairer outcomes regardless of gender or other intersectional factors.

In addition, the activities outlined in our reconciliation action plans and the work undertaken in negotiating a new Enterprise Agreement have cultivated an overall review of all language and tone in our people policies and procedures. A focus of this has been to remove any indirect discrimination and support inclusion and accommodation of individuals where possible to maximise the workplace experience for all.

Upgrade IT infrastructure to support business needs

The new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and retail management solution, Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, went live on 1 October 2025. As with any significant implementation, the year focused upon stabilisation optimisation and embedding new ways of working across the organisation. Business processes continued to be refined, and staff supported through the transition.

Implement cyber security strategy

During 2025–26, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to strengthen our cyber security capability through the delivery of the Year Three *Cyber Security Strategy Action Plan*. All planned initiatives were successfully implemented, resulting in enhancements to the organisation's cyber security framework, a stronger security posture, and increased organisational awareness of cyber risk.

Key achievements included the modernisation of cyber security policies and procedures, the uplift of core security controls, and continued progress towards higher levels of maturity under the Essential Eight framework. The organisation also implemented enhanced threat detection and monitoring capabilities, improved disaster recovery resilience, and increased cyber security awareness through targeted training and communication initiatives.

These outcomes strengthened Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's ability to identify, protect against, detect and respond to cyber threats, supporting a more resilient and proactive approach to managing cyber risk across the organisation.

Develop fit–for–purpose AI governance framework

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria recognises the opportunities presented by generative artificial intelligence (AI) to improve organisational efficiency and support innovative service delivery, while also acknowledging the associated risks and limitations. During the year, the organisation commenced the development of a fit–for–purpose AI governance framework. AI Guidelines were implemented to support the safe and responsible use of AI by workplace participants, and an AI Transparency Statement was published on the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria website to provide advice regarding the organisation's use of AI. Work to further develop and strengthen the AI governance framework will continue in 2026–27.

Increase sustainability practice across the Gardens

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria recognises the importance of climate action and reconciliation as interconnected priorities that contribute to broader global and national commitments, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This year, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria made progress in its climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, including developing its first *Environment and Sustainability Action Plan* (ESAP), which is now nearing completion, and commencing an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policy. Together, these initiatives outline a pathway towards achieving net zero emissions by 2045 and strengthening organisational sustainability, with the ESG policy to be progressed through 2026–27.

Evaluation and development of Reconciliation Action Plan

Most target actions outlined in the *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–26* (RAP) were completed during the year. An evaluation of the RAP's outcomes commenced, alongside the development of the next *Innovate RAP*. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria also continued to maintain strong engagement with Traditional Owners, statewide First Peoples initiatives and Treaty processes to support alignment with ongoing reform.

Participation in People Matter Survey

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria participated in the 2026 People Matter Survey with participation at 60% and a staff engagement score of 76.

Our Supporters









Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria extends its deepest gratitude to our donors for their unwavering support and generosity throughout the year. Philanthropic contributions have been instrumental in helping the Gardens advance our vision of a world that values the beauty, wonder, and importance of nature.

Thanks to donor support, we have been able to deliver impactful education programs, expand our scientific impact, and enhance our landscapes for the benefit of all visitors. The generosity of donors to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria allows us to nurture the next generation of environmental stewards, protect biodiversity, and create meaningful experiences for thousands of students, researchers, and garden lovers.

This year, philanthropic support enabled Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to deliver a range of projects and programs that otherwise would not have been possible. Some of these key projects included:

— Build the new How to Garden at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, demonstrating productive plants from across Australia that visitors can grow in their own gardens.

— Rejuvenate the Sensory Garden with a beautiful bamboo arcade and a space of quiet contemplation.

— Install a new Tissue Culture Lab in the Victorian Conservation Seedbank to enable plant scientists to use advanced in vitro techniques to conserve genetic diversity and restore endangered species.

— Improve global scientific access by curating and databasing the Algae specimens within the Global Collection.

— Expand nature-based learning by enabling 1,306 students to participate in immersive educational programs through the Nurtured by Nature Access Fund.

— Continue to restore and protect native landscapes with the initiation of a five-year rehabilitation program along Wylies Creek and the creation of a landscape plan for the Southern Grasslands to improve visitor access to Cranbourne Gardens.

Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria

Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria was established in May 2001 to provide the Gardens with a vital source of income from the investment of bequests, seat dedications, and support for the Director's Circle, the Gardens' annual giving program. The Foundation is structured as a public ancillary fund, has Deductible Gift Recipient (Item 2) status and is endorsed as an Income Tax Exempt Fund.

Maud Gibson Trust

Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria also serves as Trustee of the Maud Gibson Trust, a public ancillary fund established in 1945 through a generous donation from Miss Maud Gibson. The Trust is dedicated to supporting the maintenance, development, and overall benefit of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. In accordance with its obligations, the Trust makes annual distributions to the Gardens, ensuring ongoing investment in our vital work.



From the Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria Chair

The Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria was established by Melbourne philanthropist Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC more than 20 years ago. This Foundation established in-perpetuity funding for the Gardens, to allow it to flourish beyond the Victorian Government's critical funding and public donation income streams. Today, the Foundation manages a pool of capital for the Gardens' benefit, providing long-term sustainable funding for many projects and initiatives. The Foundation works closely with the Gardens to understand the priority funding areas and support the most important of these, with a focus on those that are top priorities and which would not otherwise receive funding from other sources.

The vision for the Foundation reflects this rich philanthropic history and our vision for the future: 'Our treasured and iconic Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, nurtured by philanthropy, and sustained through responsible financial stewardship.'

The Foundation's mission flows from this: 'To establish, strengthen and honour donor relationships; raise and steward funds ethically and responsibly; and distribute critical funding to secure the future of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.'

We are deeply appreciative of the passionate community of donors who have supported the Foundation through the Director's Circle, the Seat Dedication program and the bequest program, and we have had the pleasure to meet with many of these donors at the Gardens' events during the year. There are currently 190 people who are Director's Circle members and 220 people who have seat dedications in the Gardens. Both programs provide important funding to the Foundation which, in turn, contributes to the long-term support of the Gardens through our annual distributions for priority needs.

During the year, we received bequests from the Estate of Alastair Hugh Gurner ($368,750) and the Estate of Neil Irvine McArthur ($177,651). In addition, several of our donors confirmed that they are leaving a bequest via their estates. We feel enormous gratitude when we hear that someone has chosen to leave a bequest to the Foundation to support the Gardens beyond their lifetime, and we recognise the responsibility that comes with honouring this. There are now 68 people who have confirmed they are leaving a bequest to the Gardens in their wills, and we are deeply grateful for their support.

A key milestone that the Foundation and Maud Gibson Trust bore witness to this year was the 20th anniversary of the Australian Garden at Cranbourne. The anniversary was celebrated with a range of family-friendly programs and donor events to honour key contributors and stakeholders. It is extraordinary to see that in a time slice as brief as 20 years, an award-winning garden representing a wide range of Australian ecosystems has been created. These Gardens were established on land that has been stewarded by First Peoples for millennia, carved into an industrial sand mine from the 1920s, underwent significant rehabilitation and restoration work and then given a new life in the guise of the Australian Garden, on recommendation from the Maud Gibson Trust. It is now an internationally acclaimed botanic garden and tourist destination and provides much-needed green space to the rapidly growing community in the City of Casey and surrounding areas.

Visitors to the Melbourne site will begin to see the benefits of the refurbishment of the Visitor Centre and retail space, both of which were supported by the Foundation. Critical scientific work has been funded on both sites, and a range of priority projects have been funded that would not otherwise be able to proceed.



During 2025–26, the Foundation granted $634,405 to the Gardens to fund the following priority projects:

— Global Collection (within the State Botanical Collection)

— Wonnaminta Project Phase One

— Rejuvenation of Lower River Habitat and Long Island

— Fungi Festival

— Phylogeny of Australian Arid Solanum

— Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Business Development

The Foundation also distributed $137,108 in funding to the following projects via tied sub–funds:

— Jim Willis Studentships

— Pauline Ladiges PhD Fellowship

The Maud Gibson Trust distributed $54,249 in support of the following projects at the Gardens during the year:

— Elisabeth Murdoch Scholarships for Gardens Staff

— The Australian Garden 20th Anniversary: People, Plants, Place

— Combining snow science and seed ecology to better manage alpine systems

— Cranbourne Gardens Master Plan Update

The corpus of the Foundation and the Maud Gibson Trust is invested prudently, growing over time to support the grants to the Gardens and keep pace with inflation while being aligned to our sustainability values.

To the many thousands of people who visit each year, the Gardens provide a treasured place of beauty and connection to nature, solace and respite in times of loss and despair, celebration and joy with loved ones and friends, a meeting place to foster a stronger community and learning and curiosity sparking for students of all ages. The Foundation is honoured to contribute to the Gardens' important work in horticulture, science, and learning and to provide sustainable support to benefit current and future generations. I would like to extend my deep appreciation for the generous contributions made by the Foundation Directors, the Maud Gibson Trust Committee and Advisory Panel members throughout the year in support of the Foundation and the Maud Gibson Trust for the ultimate benefit of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

Farren Williams
Chair

Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria

Members of the Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria Ltd Board (Trustee of the Foundation and Maud Gibson Trust):

— Farren Williams (Chair), 2018 – current

— Ian Wong (Chair Finance and Audit Committee), 2018 – current

— Chris Russell (Company Secretary), 2024 – current

— Alice Sidhu, 2019 – current

— Cameron Bertalli, 2023 – current

— Jan Robins, 2021 – current

— Kathryn Kings, 2021 – current

Maud Gibson Trust Committee:

— Penny Woodward (Chair), Advisory Panel 2014–2019, Committee Deputy Chair 2020–2023, Chair 2023 – current

— George Howson (Treasurer), 2000 – current

— Chris Russell (Director and Chief Executive Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria), 2024 – current

— Jill Burness, 2023 – current

— Professor Mike Bayly, 2025 – current

Maud Gibson Trust Advisory Panel:

— Kate Walsh, 2021 – current

— Millie Ross, 2016–2025

— Neville Walsh, 2024 – current

— Chloe Foster, 2025 – current

Donor Stewardship

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We are grateful to the following donors for their support of $1,000 or more during 2025–26.

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Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust under the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program

Brian and Virginia McNamee Foundation

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The Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation

Dr Ian Ross and Margaret Ross AM

Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria

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Lisa Barry
Sian Darling and Paul Kelly
Linda Delli Cicchi
Andrew Guild
Dr Rachel Hale
Ben Lilley
Andrew Lord
Judy Matear and Family Fund
David Ogg
Helen Ogg
Daniel O'Hare
Ian Proctor
Girish Ramkrishnani
David Robinson
John Simpson AM
Rocky Sorrenti
Kathryn Wachsmuth

Perennial Gardeners 2026

Angela Armstrong
Graeme Baker
Dr Susan Bannerman
Paul Barnett
Meg Bentley
Nat Bijayendrayodhin
Tamara and Mark Boldiston
Hazel Brentnall
Elsie Carter
Roger Chao
Rosemary Cotte
Lorna Downey
Sebastien Dunn
Megan Dwyer
Richard Farrar
Rob Grant
Cody Hajnal
Virginia Henry
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Professor Roderick W. Home AM
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Peter Jopling AM KC
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Lori Kravos
Janet Lilley
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David Plant OAM
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Christopher Williams
Marius Yianni
Anonymous – 19

Bequests Realised in 2026

Estate of Alastair Hugh Gurner
Estate of Jack MacDonald Reid
Estate of Neil Irvine McArthur
Anonymous – 1

Corporate Partners and Sponsors

Corporate Partnerships continued to play a vital role in enabling Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to deliver exceptional experiences, conservation outcomes and community programs across both Gardens.

During 2025–26, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria maintained a strong portfolio of corporate partners while securing several significant new collaborations. Red Energy continued its valued support as Presenting Partner of *Lightscape* and Major Partner of the Australian Garden 20th Anniversary celebrations at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. Interflora and Neutrog also continued their longstanding partnerships, reinforcing their commitment to the Gardens. Within retail, Maxwell & Williams extended its support for a remarkable twenty–first consecutive year. Designer Boys recommitted to the Gardens through a new three–year agreement, while new licensing partnerships were established with Fleur Harris and La La Land.

The year also saw the establishment of several exciting new commercial partnerships. Brunswick Aces collaborated on the development of *The Arborist*, a botanical gin distilled using botanicals sourced from Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

These partnerships, together with the ongoing support of our corporate sponsors, licensees and collaborators, continued to strengthen the Gardens' ability to connect people with plants through world–class visitor experiences, education, conservation and horticultural excellence.

LIGHTSCAPE PRESENTING PARTNER

red energy

OFFICIAL PARTNER

MAXWELL & WILLIAMS DESIGNER HOMEWARES

SILVER SPONSOR

Interflora

BRONZE SPONSOR

NEUTROG Biological Fertilisers

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne continued to foster a passionate community united by a shared appreciation of the Gardens. During the year, the Friends approved grants totalling $199,000 to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria through the Trust Fund. Funding included a General Purpose Grant ($6,000), the Helen McLelland Research Grant ($16,673) supporting Dr Megan Hirst and Dr Tara Hopley in the third year of a three-year commitment, scholarships and the Sharwood Travel Bursary for Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria staff ($17,000), and $159,326 towards the Arbour Restoration Project as part of a multi-year commitment of $270,000.

The Friends delivered a diverse program of events, walks and talks that kept members informed about projects across Melbourne Gardens and provided opportunities to learn from subject matter experts. Plant Craft Cottage hosted a range of popular workshops celebrating traditional plant-based crafts, while the Botanical Art program continued to attract strong participation under the guidance of leading Australian botanical artists in preparation for *The Art of Botanical Illustration* exhibition.

The Growing Friends nursery continued to provide high-quality plants propagated from collections at Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne through weekly and seasonal plant sales, supporting both members and the broader community.

Cranbourne Friends, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Inc.

Membership of the Cranbourne Friends continued to grow during the year, reaching approximately 710 members. Committee participation also increased, enabling responsibilities to be shared across a broader volunteer base. Succession planning, policy and protocol reviews, and information technology improvements were progressed to support the organisation's long-term sustainability.

Funds contributed by the Cranbourne Friends during 2025–26 supported the Gardens Nursery upgrade and the Children's Waterplay concept designs. Work also continued with Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to identify additional funding opportunities and enhance visitor awareness of the Friends through improved garden signage.

The Growing Friends nursery maintained strong plant production and sales, including its two major annual plant sales. While broader economic conditions resulted in reduced plant purchases, initiatives such as a discounted sale for members and staff successfully reduced surplus stock and created capacity for future plantings. The group also continued to share its expertise through tours and a bonsai workshop for community groups.

The Friends in the Gardens volunteer group continued to support horticultural teams through its 'beautifying and detailing' work in the Australian Garden. Membership of the group increased, enabling volunteer activities to expand from monthly to twice-monthly sessions.

The Friends delivered a successful program of tours and events, including self-drive visits to the Grampians and Mt Hotham, and a coach tour of Kangaroo Island. Highlights included the Banksia Festival, featuring guided walks, exhibitions by the Weavers, Savvy Stitchers and Botanical Illustrators, and a well-attended art show. The Acacia Talk presented by Bill Aitchison was also particularly popular.

Special interest groups continued to foster active and engaged member communities through regular meetings and workshops. The Savvy Stitchers increased sales through a stronger focus on high-demand products and joined the Botanical Illustrators at the Gardens' 20th Anniversary celebrations. The Friends in Focus photography group continued its monthly walks, providing opportunities for members to develop their skills while documenting the beauty of the Gardens.

The ongoing commitment and enthusiasm of members, volunteers, special interest groups and committees continued to strengthen the Friends and support the important work of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

Research Partners

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria acknowledges the following organisations and individuals for supporting or collaborating with the activities of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Science Division in 2025–26: Alpine Garden Society Victorian Group, Atlas of Living Australia (CSIRO), Austin Health, Australasian Native Orchid Society Victorian Branch, Australasian Systematic Botany Society, Australian Biological Resources Study, Australian Flora Foundation, Australian Desert Expeditions, The Australian National University, Australian Network for Plant Conservation, Australian Pacific Science Foundation, Australian PlantBank, Australian Research Council, Australian Seed Bank Partnership, Australian Tropical Herbarium, Bairnsdale and District Field Naturalists Club, Barapa Barapa Elders, Biodiversity Heritage Library, Biodiversity Information Standards, BioPlatforms Australia, Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium of South Australia, Botanical Garden of the University of Vienna (Austria), Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, State Key Laboratory of Mycology – Institute of Microbiology – Chinese Academy of Sciences, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria, Curtin University, Cybec Foundation, Deakin University, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (Victorian Government), Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Victorian Government), Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (Australian Government), Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (Tasmanian Government), Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, ENVITE Environment, Faculty of Tropical Forestry, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (Malaysia), Forest Research Centre (Malaysia), Friends of the Grampians Gariwerd, Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc., Gippsland Water, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, Global Partnerships, Seedcorn Fund, Griffith University, GHD Group Pty. Ltd., Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Halls Gap Botanic Gardens, Harvard University (USA), Hermon Slade Foundation, Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation, Herbarium Information Standards Committee, The Ian Potter Foundation, International Carnivorous Plant Society, Inc. (USA), International Commission on the Taxonomy of Fungi, James Cook University, Joint Genome Institute (United States Department of Energy), John T Reid

Charitable Trusts, La Trobe University, Local Land Services Murray, The Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (Germany), Managers of Australasian Herbarium Collections, Maud Gibson Trust, The Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation (USA), Muse – Museo delle Scienze (Italy), Museums Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria, National Herbarium of Tanzania, National Seed Bank, The Nell and Hermon Slade Trust, Newstead Natives, Nillumbik Shire, Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW Government), Palawan State University (Philippines), Parks Victoria, Philippines Taxonomic Initiative Inc. (Philippines), Phillip Island Nature Parks, Project Platypus Association Inc., Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation Victoria, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Sandakan Herbarium (Malaysia), Singapore Botanic Gardens Seed Bank, Society for the Protection of Underground Networks, Southern Cross University, Specify Collections Consortium, Taxonomy Australia, The Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species, Trust for Nature, The University of Florida (USA), The University of Melbourne, The University of New England, University of New South Wales, University of Oxford (United Kingdom), University of Pavia (Italy), University of the Ryukyus (Japan), Wamba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation, Wetland Revival Trust, Wettenhall Environment Trust, Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, including the Narrap Team, Zoos Victoria.

Learning Partners

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria gratefully acknowledges its funding partners in support of learning and participation programs for primary and secondary school students in Victoria. For specific grants and collaborations, the organisation acknowledges: City of Casey, Collier Charitable Fund, Department of Education, DEECA, Melbourne Airport, The Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation, The Marian & E.H. Flack Trust, Toyota Community Trust, Victorian Catholic Education Authority.

Living Collections and Environment Partners and Collaborators

Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand, Botanic Gardens of Sydney, City of Melbourne, David Smith (Forest Pathologist), DEECA, Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden, Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Global Conservation Consortia for Cycads, Global Conservation Consortia for Oaks, Inala Jurassic Garden, International Oak Society, International Plant Production Society James Cook University, Maud Gibson Trust, The Nature Conservancy, South Australian Research and Development Institute, South East Water, University of Sydney, Western Australian Botanic Garden.

The Pookila Reintroduction at Cranbourne Project is a partnership between Zoos Victoria and Moonlit Sanctuary. Over 80 mice have been bred in captivity and released into the wild in the Cranbourne Bushland since 2024. In 2026, the first wild-born mice were recorded.

Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens collaborators include Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Cambridge University Botanic Garden Future in Nature, Jardín Botánico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires 'Carlos Thays', Longwood Gardens (USA), The Morton Arboretum (USA), Peter E Symes Botanical Horticulture Consultancy, Royal

Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, South African National Biodiversity Institute, University of British Columbia Botanic Gardens.

Tromps – Tropical Mountain Plant Science Project

Key partners include the Australian Tropical Herbarium, the Australian Rhododendron Society–Victoria, and several Botanic Gardens such as Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Australian National Botanic Gardens Canberra (ANBG), Cairns Botanic Gardens, Mossman Botanic Gardens and the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, Inala Jurassic Garden, Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, The Australian PlantBank – Botanic Gardens of Sydney, Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden (Parks Victoria).

Care for the Rare

Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton, Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden (Parks Victoria), Ballarat Botanical Gardens, Colac Botanic Garden, Sale Botanic Gardens, Wilson Botanic Park, WAMA – Grampians (Gariwerd) Botanic Gardens, Mallacoota Endemic Garden.

Volunteers and Associates

Volunteers and Honorary Associates worked across Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in a variety of roles at Cranbourne Gardens, Melbourne Gardens, the National Herbarium of Victoria, and the Experience and Engagement division. Working in partnership with staff, they welcomed visitors, guided tourists, supported science, planted and propagated, and provided important knowledge and skills. Over the year, volunteers contributed almost 22,676 hours to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, making a significant contribution to the organisation. This does not include the additional hours contributed by our numerous Honorary Associates, nor the significant contribution made by citizen scientists.

Cranbourne Bird Survey Volunteers

Pat Bingham, Sue Charles, Liz and Peter Gower, Dawn Neylan.

Orchid Conservation Program

Fourteen Orchid Conservation Program volunteers undertook 1,614 hours of seed cleaning and storage, seed viability counting, seedling flasking, deflasking, and repotting the ex-situ orchid conservation collection. The volunteer work is invaluable in helping to conserve rare and threatened orchids. We wish to thank those onsite volunteers: Eve Almond, Mike and Cathy Beamish, Sharon Berry, Andrew Cocks, Andrew Cosby, Neil Freestone, Bryan Lawrence, Karen McGregor, Jenny Raven, Russell Wadsworth, April Whitmore, Mike Wicks, Charles Young.

Research Branch – Mycology

Taya Lacey, Heather Merrylees, Emma Yearwood.

Victorian Conservation Seedbank

Bo Huang, Bob Hare, Cameron Monaco, Charli Lincke, Emma Varveri, Leanora Mezger, Mandy Zhang, Mandy Wong, Oliver Jaeger, Poornima Thihani, Rowena Thomson, Sia Wang, Suzanne Gwilym.

Collections Branch

Adeline Dotchin, Alison Foster, Allan Davey, Bernie O'Kane, Berys Dixon, Bob Thomas, Bud Batrouney, Cameron Monaco, Catherine Bortolussi, Cathy Mann, Cathy Mostafa, Cathy Taylor, Charli Lincke, Cheryl Heinze, Dianne Sekeres, Eve Recht, Fen Saxon–Kron, Fran Faul, Gillian Jervis, Heather Sandford, Helen Trueman, Ian Cullen, James Lidsey, Janne Lade, Jannie Lay, Jayne Anderson, Jein Ku, Jen Murphy, Judy Ryan, Katie Pahlow, Liz Cooper, Lorraine Box, Lynsey Poore, Mandy Zhang, Marina Albert, Marysia Kozak, Melinda Rochford, Mira Vuletic, Robyn Brownscombe, Ros Savio, Rosemary Young, Ruth Ault, Sandra Cumbari, Sia Wang, Sophie Thompson, Vicki Jaeger, Wey Yao Wong, and Yvonne Sanders.

Honorary Associates

Honorary Associates are appointed on the recommendation of the Chief Botanist and Executive Director Science for a fixed term of up to three years, with the option of reappointment by mutual agreement. They are individuals with expertise in areas that supplement or complement Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria employees. They have contributed greatly to the achievements of the organisation through their research on various angiosperm plant families, as well as bryophytes, fungi, lichens, and algae, or by curating the specimens held in the SBC. Others contributed to the SBC by collecting specimens, including undescribed plants and fungi, from areas that employees are unable to survey. The library also benefits from the input of several Honorary Associates to the Mueller Correspondence Project. The Gardens acknowledges these Honorary Associates: Dr Michael Amor, Margaret Brookes, Dr Austin Brown, Dr Martin Burd, Dr Michelle Casanova, Dr Thomas Darragh, Dr Marinus de Jager, Dr Matthew Dell, Professor Tim Entwisle, Professor David Guest, Dr Bee Gunn, Professor Rod Home, Dr Gerry Kraft, Dr Teresa Lebel, Dr Graeme Lorimer, Dr Sara Maroske, Dr Todd McLay, John Miller, Dr Josephine Milne, Mali Moir, Dr Tarquin Netherway, Dr Ryan Phillips, Kevin Rule, Dr Ian Sluiter, Dr Roger Spencer, Ray Thomas, Dr Susanna Venn, Neville Walsh, Bryce Watts–Parker and Wey Yao Wong.

Experience and Engagement Volunteers

Thank you to our volunteers who contributed an extraordinary 8,763 hours of service. Their contribution helped create memorable experiences, supported our programs and created meaningful connections with our visitors.

The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden Volunteers

Anne Ada, Moira Bainbridge, Lesley Blow, Deborah Boyd, Lorraine Brock, Jan Brown, Jenni Eaton, Karlene Lang, Lea Levy, Kathy Mahar, Anne Malone, Claire McGoldrick, Susan Moloney, Arlene Mou, Donna Osbourne, Emily Sale, Sue Smith, Julie Troschke.

Gardens Ambassadors (Melbourne Gardens)

Roanne Allen, Dianne Allen, Billy Atkin, Marie Banic, Carmel Bateman, Deborah Boyd, David Brown, Judy Cain, Susanne Clarke, Dianne Costelloe, Marguerite Cottington, Rose Davey, Allison Delloro, Sandra Dimitrijevic, Valarie Doan, Suzannah Goodwin–Dorning, Stephen Grover, Veronica Harrison, Angela Herd, Catherine Jones, Frances Jones, Karlene Lang, Lea Levy, Dennis Manz, Claire McGoldrick, Fiona Nicholson Stocker, John Pinniger, Clea Porteous Borthwick, Caroline Radisich, Rick Rayward, Maggie Richards, Ann Scott, Christine Stott, Anne Syme, Libby Tronson.

National Disability Support Volunteers

Jakub Mardon and Billy Moore.

Gardens Ambassadors (Cranbourne Gardens)

Anne Adams, Louise Anderson, Jane Battrick, Pamela Binks, Eileen Blake, Virginia Brook, Leanne Bunn, Peter Cowley, Jane Cox, Johan de Bree, Ron Deane, Alexander 'Mack' Fenwick, Jan Flavin, Carole Foley, Brenton Friday, Barrie Gallacher, Claire Hall, Tess Holderness, Mandy Horton, Phil Jackson, Christine Kenyon, Eva Kowal, Shelley Lai, Linda Lee, Shelley Lloyd, Kerryn Maynes, Peter McGrath, Lauris McInerney, Deidre Narzisi, Jacqui Oldham, Trish O'Neill, Alexander Packett, Ella Roberts, Beau Ryan, Sue Spicer, Sharon Start, Julie Thompson, Jean Wallis, Alan Watts.

Voluntary Guides (Melbourne Gardens)

Anne Ada, Marie Banic, Jill Bartlett, Carmel Bateman, Bud Batrouney, Doris Berry, Sue Broadbent, Geraldine Callister, Pamela Carder, Liz Cooper, Rosemary Cotter, David Forbes, Jenny Happell, Virginia Heywood, Judith Hughes, Marg Kerr, Judy MacWilliams, Dennis Manz, Georgina Mountford, Rosemary O'Brien, Sue O'Brien, Anne Peterson, Kathryn Pile, David Plant, Lynsey Poore, Helen Pyman, Maggie Richards, Sandia Rose, Louise Sexton, Carole Spillane, Paul Taylor, Catherine Trinca, Robin Viney, Chris Wallis, Mary Ward, Mali Wilson, Joan Zheng.

Living Collections Volunteers Horticulture Volunteers (Melbourne Gardens)

Meg Bentley – Lamiaceae and Salvia expert (approximately 344 hours) and Jenny Happell – Camellia expert.

Nursery Volunteers (Cranbourne Gardens)

Five volunteers on average have contributed 27 sessions this year, with five hours of work per session for a total of 270 hours of work. This work covers propagation, tubing, weeding, and other general horticultural maintenance tasks in the Nursery. We would like to thank: Gillian Jervis, Nancy Leonard, Peter McGrath, Amy Perryman, Amanda Ford.

Mapping of Living Collection Assets

Alison Rice.



Friends in the Gardens – FiGs (Cranbourne)

Across the year, a dedicated team of seven volunteers delivered an impressive 23 sessions, contributing a total of 483 hours across the gardens. Their efforts made a substantial impact, particularly through major renovations in the car park beds, which involved plant removal, soil improvement, mulching, replanting, and the installation of protective fencing.

Additional large-scale works included significant planting initiatives in the Bloodwood Garden, the Lunettes, and the North Line. The FiGs also played an important role in ongoing garden maintenance, undertaking infill planting, mulching, hand weeding, composting, pruning clean-ups, and general upkeep.

Natural Areas Volunteers (Cranbourne)

Fantastic effort from our volunteers in 2025-26, contributing an impressive 650 hours. The volunteer team assisted in a variety of tasks including weed management, litter collection, revegetation, as well as fencing and fence repairs, including special projects to assist with the $1.3M federally funded Wylies Creek and Ecological Corridor Restoration project.

The team also supported ongoing ecological monitoring through monthly bird surveys and koala scat surveys, along with some hands-on work in plant propagation. A huge thank you to the following volunteers: Tony Anderson, David and Kay Cole, Michael Cook, Dave Cundall, Michelle Curtain, Len Gardner, Allan Gillies, Liam Martin, Dawn Neylan, Mike Paterson, and Lily Brock.



Financial Overview



Revenue Generation and Budgetary Objectives

In 2025–26, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continued to improve its financial position through strong revenue performance and disciplined financial management aligned with the *Corporate Plan 2025–29*. While the organisation recorded a net deficit for the year, the result represented significant improvement on the previous year and reflected continued growth in commercial and philanthropic income.

Strong visitation, vibrant programming and public engagement remained key drivers of earned income across both Gardens. Programs, tours, events and learning experiences performed strongly throughout the year, supporting record visitation and reinforcing the Gardens' position as one of Victoria's leading cultural, tourism and nature–based destinations. Signature experiences, including *Lightscape*, *Live at the Gardens* and a diverse range of cultural, educational and community programs, continued to attract new audiences while deepening engagement with existing visitors.

Commercial operations delivered another strong result during the year. Retail revenue exceeded budget expectations, supported by increased visitation, extended trading hours, cruise tourism, and the introduction of new product ranges. Venue hire, hospitality and tenancy activities also performed strongly, reflecting continued demand for unique experiences within the Gardens and the growing maturity of the organisation's commercial operations. The Observatory Café continued to enhance the visitor experience while contributing to revenue growth and activation of Melbourne Gardens.

Strategic partnerships with philanthropic foundations, government agencies, education providers and corporate supporters continued to play an important role in advancing the organisation's objectives. Donor contributions remained strong throughout the year, supporting priority conservation, education and community programs, while continued investment in fundraising capability and stakeholder relationships strengthened the organisation's ability to diversify revenue sources and secure support for future initiatives.

Budget priorities in 2025–26 focused on strengthening organisational capability, progressing strategic capital projects, maintaining high–quality visitor experiences and improving financial sustainability. Throughout the year, workforce planning and disciplined expenditure management assisted the organisation in responding to broader economic pressures while continuing to invest in priority program services and strategic initiatives.

The organisation also progressed a range of significant capital and infrastructure initiatives including the Herbarium remediation program, electrical and infrastructure upgrades, Cranbourne Gardens nursery improvements and planning for visitor experience enhancements. Planning and delivery continued with the Australian Drylands Learning Hub and other strategic asset renewal projects. These investments support the long–term sustainability of the Gardens' built and natural assets while ensuring the organisation remains well positioned to meet future community, conservation and tourism needs.

These outcomes demonstrate continued progress towards a more sustainable financial position while maintaining investment in the Gardens' people, places, collections and services. Strong revenue growth, disciplined financial management and strategic investment have strengthened the organisation's capacity to deliver lasting value for visitors, stakeholders and the Victorian community.

Income from Government

During 2025–26, annual funding provided through the Parks and Reserves Trust Account (PRTA) continued to play a critical role in supporting the delivery of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's strategic objectives under the *Corporate Plan 2025–29*.

This funding enabled the organisation to maintain and enhance its world–class botanical, scientific and visitor assets while delivering a diverse program of conservation, research, education and community engagement activities across Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens. Government investment supported ongoing progress against key priorities including visitor experience improvements, environmental sustainability initiatives, biodiversity conservation and First Peoples engagement. This included the Southern Brown Bandicoot Community Engagement Program grant from DEECA which totals $1,294,363 over the 6–year period 2025–2030 and is delivered across urban and rural areas. The annual funding for the 2025–26 year was $175,025.

PRTA funding also supported the maintenance and renewal of essential infrastructure across both sites, including critical works within the National Herbarium of Victoria and broader asset renewal programs. These investments help ensure that the Gardens remain safe, accessible and resilient public spaces while protecting the State Botanical Collection and supporting the long–term stewardship of Victoria's significant botanical assets.

Additional government funding received during the year supported a range of organisational and workforce initiatives, enabling Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to continue delivering high–quality services while responding to emerging operational requirements and broader public sector priorities.

Financial Results for 2025–26

($ thousand)

	2025–26	2024–25	Change
	$	$	$
Government and other grants			
— Parks and reserves trust account grants	23,910	23,213	697
— Other Victorian government grants	1,915	1,739	176
— Commonwealth Government grants	147	736	(589)
— Other grants	164	369	(205)
Philanthropic and other donations	4,323	3,431	892
Other income	11,600	8,284	3,316
Total Expenses	(43,327)	(41,341)	(1,986)
Net result	(1,268)	(3,569)	2,301

Comparison of Financial Performance and Position

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria recorded a net deficit of $1.6 million for the financial year ended 30 June 2026, an improvement of $2.0 million compared to the prior year. This result reflects continued growth in commercial and philanthropic income, disciplined expenditure management, and a strong focus on financial sustainability, partially offset by increased employee and operating costs associated with delivering the organisation's strategic priorities.

Total revenue increased by $4.0 million, driven by growth in commercial activities, philanthropic support and other income. Total expenses increased by $2.0 million, reflecting investment in employees, visitor services, conservation initiatives, infrastructure renewal and strategic projects across both Gardens.

Key movements in revenue and expenses included:

— PRTA funding increased by $0.7 million, supporting delivery of the organisation's strategic objectives and ongoing maintenance and renewal of critical assets across Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens.

— Other Victorian Government grants increased by $0.2 million, reflecting targeted funding received to support organisational priorities and workforce initiatives during the year.

— Commonwealth Government grant income decreased by $0.6 million, reflecting the completion of several grant-funded activities and lower levels of Commonwealth-funded project delivery compared with the prior year.

— Philanthropic and donation income increased by $0.9 million, supported by strong donor engagement, successful fundraising activities and continued investment in conservation, education and community programs.

— Other income increased by $3.0 million, primarily due to the recognition of tenant-funded capital improvements at The Observatory Café as income received free of charge. This result was further supported by strong commercial performance across the organisation, with increased visitation, cruise tourism, extended trading hours and new product ranges driving growth in retail revenue, while tenant income, venue hire, hospitality, events, education programs and tours all exceeded expectations, reflecting continued demand for high-quality visitor experiences.

— Expenses increased by $2.0 million, reflecting ongoing investment in employees, delivery of visitor experiences, strategic projects, asset management and organisational capability initiatives.

— Employee expenses increased during the year, reflecting wage growth and the one-off Victorian Government cost-of-living payment provided to employees, alongside continued investment in organisational capability and service delivery. These increases were partially offset through active workforce planning, vacancy management and recruitment controls.

Key movements in the financial position include:

- Cash on hand on 30 June 2026 was $17.6 million, comprising funds held for current and future capital projects, philanthropic commitments and operational requirements. Most cash holdings remained restricted for specific purposes.
- The organisation continued to invest in strategically significant capital projects, including:
  - Herbarium remediation and infrastructure upgrades;
  - Australian Drylands Learning Hub development;
  - Cranbourne Nursery upgrades;
  - Visitor experience improvements across Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens; and
  - Asset renewal and infrastructure replacement programs.
- Delays in the delivery of several capital projects, arising from procurement processes, project sequencing and funding dependencies, resulted in expenditure being deferred into 2026–27. These projects remain active and are expected to progress in future reporting periods.
- The organisation maintained a strong liquidity position, with available cash reserves considered sufficient to meet existing commitments and support the ongoing delivery of approved capital and strategic projects.
- Total assets remained stable at $1.038 billion, with capital investment and the recognition of tenant–funded improvements largely offset by depreciation and reduced cash holdings during the year. As part of the organisation's mandatory five–year cyclical asset revaluation program, preliminary valuation advice indicates an increase in asset values of approximately $180 million, subject to final review and approval by the Victorian Auditor–General's Office.
- Total liabilities increased to $8.1 million, primarily reflecting the timing of employee provisions and other operating liabilities at balance date.
- At balance date, the organisation had identified a contingent asset relating to a material insurance claim for damage to part of the State Botanical Collection Seedbank. As the amount and timing of any recovery remain uncertain, no asset has been recognised in the financial statements.
- No contingent liabilities were identified on 30 June 2026.
- Subsequent to balance date, the valuation of land, buildings, infrastructure and cultural assets remained subject to final review and audit approval. In addition, the outcome of a contingent asset relating to an insurance claim for damage to part of the State Botanical Collection Seedbank remained under assessment. Neither matter has resulted in an adjustment to the financial statements at the date of reporting.

Five–Year Comparison of Financial Results

($ thousand)

	2025–26	2024–25	2023–24	2022–23	2021–22
Income from government	**$**	**$**	**$**	**$**	**$**
Income from government	25,972	25,688	30,057	29,761	26,999
Total revenue and income from transactions	42,059	37,772	43,139	41,293	39,699
Total expenses from transactions	(43,327)	(41,341)	(39,518)	(37,107)	(35,207)
Net result from transactions	(1,268)	(3,569)	3,621	4,186	4,493
Net result	(1,614)	(3,659)	3,479	4,196	2,003
Net cash flow from operating activities	(304)	(689)	4,091	3,194	5,860
Total assets	1,222,826	1,038,194	1,041,593	1,038,279	964,101
Total liabilities	8,037	7,000	7,326	9,888	14,105

Financial Statements



ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS BOARD FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

How this report is structured

The Royal Botanic Gardens Board (the Board) has presented its audited general-purpose financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2026 in the following structure to provide users with information about the Board's stewardship of the resources entrusted to it.

Financial statements	Comprehensive operating statement		52
	Balance sheet		53
	Cash flow statement		54
	Statement of changes in equity		55
Notes to the financial statements	**1.**	**About this report**	**56**
	The basis on which the financial statements have been prepared and compliance with reporting requirements		
	2.	**Funding delivery of our services**	**57**
	Income and revenue recognised from grants, sales of goods and services and other sources		
	2.1	Summary of revenue and income that funds the delivery of our services	57
	2.2	Income and revenue from transactions	58
	3.	**The cost of delivering services**	**61**
	Operating expenses of the Board		
	3.1	Expenses incurred in delivery of services	61
	3.2	Other operating expenses	63
	4.	**Key assets available to support service delivery**	**65**
	Land, property and cultural assets		
	4.1	Property, plant and equipment	65
	5.	**Other assets and liabilities**	**69**
	Working capital balances, and other key assets and liabilities		
	5.1	Receivables	69
	5.2	Payables	70
	5.3	Contract liabilities	71
	5.4	Inventories	71
	5.5	Other non-financial assets	71
	6.	**How we financed our operations**	**72**
	Borrowings, cash flow information, leases and commitments for expenditure		
	6.1	Borrowings	72
	6.2	Leases	73
	6.3	Cash flow information and balances	76
	6.4	Commitments for expenditure	76

7. Financial instruments, contingencies and valuation judgements 77

Financial instuments, contingent assets and liabilities as well as fair value determination

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures 77

7.2 Fair value determination 79

7.3 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities 83

8. Other disclosures 84

8.1 Ex gratia expenses 84

8.2 Other economic flows included in net result 84

8.3 Reserves 85

8.4 Responsible persons 86

8.5 Remuneration of executives 87

8.6 Related parties 87

8.7 Remuneration of auditors 88

8.8 Subsequent events 89

8.9 Other accounting policies 89

8.10 Glossary of technical terms 89

8.11 Style conventions 92

DECLARATION IN THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The attached financial statements for the Royal Botanic Gardens Board (the Board) have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards including interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2026 and financial position of the Board at 30 June 2026.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 6 October 2026.



Penny Fowler
Chair
Royal Botanic Gardens Board

Melbourne
6 October 2026



Chris Russell
Director and Chief Executive
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Melbourne
6 October 2026



Bradley Vice
Director Finance, Risk and Governance
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Melbourne
6 October 2026

Comprehensive operating statement [a]

For the Financial year ended 30 June 2026

	Notes	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Revenue and income from transactions			
Grants	2.1	26,136	26,057
Donations	2.1	4,323	3,431
Sale of goods and services	2.1	2,994	2,604
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	2.1	3,907	1,228
Interest income	2.1	892	1,118
Other income	2.1	3,807	3,334
Total revenue and income from transactions		**42,059**	**37,772**
Expenses from transactions			
Employee benefit expenses	3.1	(26,354)	(23,199)
Depreciation	4.1.3	(4,108)	(3,944)
Interest expense	6.1	(27)	(17)
Other operating expenses	3.1	(12,838)	(14,181)
Total expenses from transactions		**(43,327)**	**(41,341)**
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		**(1,268)**	**(3,569)**
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets [b]	8.2	(291)	(96)
Other gain/(loss) from other economic flows [c]	8.2	(55)	6
Total other economic flows included in net result		**(346)**	**(90)**
Net result		**(1,614)**	**(3,659)**
Other economic flows - other comprehensive income:			
Items that will not be reclassified to net result			
Changes in physical asset revaluation surplus	8.3	185,209	(861)
Total other economic flows - other comprehensive income		**185,209**	**(861)**
Comprehensive result		**183,595**	**(4,520)**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) *This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.*

(b) *'Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets' includes disposals of all physical assets.*

(c) *Other gain/(loss) from other economic flows due to changes in bond rates for leave provisions.*

Balance sheet [(a)]

As at 30 June 2026

	Notes	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	6.3	17,645	20,729
Receivables	5.1	2,081	1,181
Total financial assets		**19,726**	**21,910**
Non-financial assets			
Inventories	5.4	360	347
Other non-financial assets	5.5	288	331
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	1,202,452	1,015,606
Total non-financial assets		**1,203,100**	**1,016,284**
Total assets		**1,222,826**	**1,038,194**
Liabilities			
Payables	5.2	2,650	1,670
Contract liabilities	5.3	214	209
Borrowings	6.1	563	573
Employee related provisions	3.1.2	4,610	4,548
Total liabilities		**8,037**	**7,000**
Net assets		**1,214,789**	**1,031,194**
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		24,342	25,956
Physical asset revaluation surplus		1,094,691	909,482
Contributed capital		95,756	95,756
Net worth		**1,214,789**	**1,031,194**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Note:
(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

Cash flow statement [a]

For the financial year ended 30 June 2026

	Notes	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Receipts from government		25,963	25,265
Receipts from other entities		8,904	7,820
Goods and services tax received from the ATO [b]		666	709
Interest received		892	1,118
Total receipts		**36,425**	**34,912**
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(36,704)	(35,574)
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(25)	(27)
Total payments		**(36,729)**	**(35,601)**
Net cash flows (used in) operating activities		**(304)**	**(689)**
Cash flows from investing activities			
Sale of non-financial assets		-	242
Purchases of non-financial assets		(2,770)	(2,835)
Net cash flows (used in) investing activities		**(2,770)**	**(2,593)**
Cash flows from financing activities			
Owner contributions by State Government – appropriation for capital expenditure purposes		-	1,448
Proceeds from borrowings		103	386
Repayment of borrowings and principal portion of lease liabilities [c]		(113)	(222)
Net cash flows (used in)/from financing activities		**(10)**	**1,612**
Net (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(3,084)	(1,670)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year		20,729	22,399
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of financial year	6.3	**17,645**	**20,729**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

(b) Goods and services tax received from the ATO is presented on a net basis.

(c) The Board has recognised cash payments for the principal portion of lease payments as financing activities; cash payments for the interest portion as operating activities consistent with the presentation of interest payments for leases and low-value assets as operating activities.

Statement of changes in equity [(a)]

For the financial year ended 30 June 2026

	Physical asset revaluation surplus	Accumulated surplus	Contributed capital	Total
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Balance at 1 July 2024	910,343	29,615	94,308	1,034,266
Net result for the year	-	(3,659)	-	(3,659)
Other comprehensive income for the year	(861)	-	-	(861)
Capital contributions	-	-	1,448	1,448
Balance at 30 June 2025	**909,482**	**25,956**	**95,756**	**1,031,194**
Net result for the year	-	(1,614)	-	(1,614)
Other comprehensive income for the year	185,209	-	-	185,209
Capital contributions	-	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2026	**1,094,691**	**24,342**	**95,756**	**1,214,789**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Royal Botanic Gardens Board (the Board) is a not-for-profit Statutory Authority of the State of Victoria, established pursuant to the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991* on 1 July 1992.

A description of the nature of its operations and its principal activities is included in the Report of operations, which does not form part of these financial statements.

Its principal address is:

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
Birdwood Avenue
Melbourne VIC 3004

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are Tier 2 general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* (AASB 1060) and Financial Reporting Direction *101 Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards (FRD 101).*

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in preparing these financial statements whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Consistent with the requirements of AASB 1004 *Contributions*, contributions by owners (that is, contributed capital and its repayment) are treated as equity transactions and, therefore, do not form part of the income and expenses of the Board.

Capital grants which have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of distributions to or contributions by owners have also been designated as contributions by owners.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in applying AAS that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates are disclosed in the notes under the heading ‘Significant judgements or estimates’.

The financial statements cover the Board as an individual reporting entity which administers the operations of the Melbourne Gardens and the Cranbourne Gardens.

All amounts in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest $1,000 unless otherwise stated.

Compliance Information

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the FMA and applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AASs) which include Interpretations, issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB).

Where appropriate, those AASs paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities have been applied. Accounting policies selected and applied in these financial statements ensure that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

2. FUNDING DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

Introduction

The Board's overall objective is to nurture an understanding of the scientific, environmental, social, economic, cultural and spiritual importance of plants to our existence, and provide our community with opportunities to prosper from a deep connection with plants.

To enable the Board to fulfil its objective, it receives income from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account, supplemented by income generated through grants, donations, programs, business operations and investment.

Significant judgement : Grants revenue
The Board has assessed the recognition of grant revenue for not-for-profit entities in accordance with AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers and AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities. Where grants are enforceable and contain sufficiently specific performance obligations, revenue is recognised under AASB 15 when the Board satisfies each performance obligation. Conversely, grants that do not contain sufficiently specific performance obligations fall within the scope of AASB 1058, and income is recognised either progressively as the related project is completed or when the Board obtains control of the funds.

Structure

2.1 Summary of revenue and income that funds the delivery of our services..... 57

2.2 Income and revenue from transactions..... 58

2.1 Summary of revenue and income that funds the delivery of our services

	Notes	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Grants	2.2.1	26,136	26,057
Donations	2.2.2	4,323	3,431
Sale of goods and services	2.2.3	2,994	2,604
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	2.2.4	3,907	1,228
Interest income	2.2.5	892	1,118
Other income	2.2.6	3,807	3,334
Total revenue and income from transactions		**42,059**	**37,772**

Revenue and income that fund delivery of the Board's services are accounted for consistent with the requirement of the relevant accounting standards disclosed in the following notes.

2.2 Income and revenue from transactions

2.2.1 Grants

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Income recognised as income of not-for-profit entities		
Parks and Reserves Trust Account grants	23,910	23,213
Other specific purpose grants	-	423
Income recognised as revenue from contracts with customers		
Other specific purpose grants	2,226	2,421
Total grants	**26,136**	**26,057**

Grants recognised under AASB 1058. The annual Parks and Reserves Trust Account grant received from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action is recognised as income of not-for-profit entities in accordance with AASB 1058. As there are no specific performance obligations, the income is therefore recognised when the Board gains control over the funds. The Parks and Reserves Trust Account derives its funding from the rate levied on metropolitan properties under the provisions of the *Water Industry Act 1994* and is provided to the Board for the purposes of conservation, recreation, leisure and tourism within the metropolitan area.

Grants recognised under AASB 15. Income from grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations are accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers in accordance with AASB 15. Revenue is recognised when the Board satisfies the performance obligation by providing the relevant services. This is recognised based on the consideration specified in the funding agreement and to the extent that it is highly probable a significant reversal of the revenue will not occur. Consideration received in advance of recognising the associated revenue from the customer is recorded as a contract liability (Note 5.3). Where the performance obligations are satisfied but the grant income not yet invoiced, a contract asset is recorded. The Board does not have any contract assets.

Income from grants to construct capital items are recognised progressively as the asset is constructed. This aligns with the Board's obligation to construct the asset. The progressive percentage costs incurred is used to recognise income because this most closely reflects the construction progress as costs are incurred as the works are done.

2.2.2 Donations

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Donations	4,323	3,431
Total donations	**4,323**	**3,431**

The Board is deemed to have control when the funds are received from the provider, in accordance with AASB 1058.

2.2.3 Sale of goods and services

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Sale of goods	1,778	1,430
Rendering of services	1,216	1,174
Total sale of goods and services	**2,994**	**2,604**

The sale of goods and services are transactions that the Board has determined to be classified as revenue from contracts with customers in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers.*

Performance obligations and revenue recognition policies

Revenue from the rendering of services is recognised at a point in time when the performance obligation is satisfied when the service is completed and over time when the customer simultaneously received and consumes the service as it is provided. Revenue is measured based on the consideration specified in the contract with the customer.

Sale of goods are recognised as revenue at a point in time when the goods are delivered and have been accepted by the customer.

Consideration received in advance of fulfilment of the performance obligation and the related recognition of the associated revenue from the customer is recorded as a contract liability (Note 5.3). Where the performance obligations are satisfied but not yet invoiced, a contract asset is recorded. The Board does not have any contract assets.

2.2.4 Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration

Total contractual financial liabilities	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Building improvement services	3,042	-
Voluntary services	865	1,228
Total fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration	**3,907**	**1,228**

In accordance with AASB 1058, contributions of resources provided free of charge or for nominal consideration are recognised at their fair value when the Board obtains control over the resources, irrespective of whether restrictions or conditions are imposed over the use of the contributions.

During the year, the Board recognised approximately $3.042 million of tenant-funded leasehold improvements relating to capital works undertaken by the tenant at the Observatory Café. The works were recognised at fair value in accordance with AASB 1058.

Voluntary services: Contributions in the form of services are only recognised when a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would have been purchased if not donated.

Volunteers mainly relate to guides, science research and collection of specimens.

2.2.5 Interest income

Interest income includes interest received on cash and deposits. Refer to Note 7.1.1 for information on interest income.

2.2.6 Other income

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Events	1,412	1,427
Rental income	1,983	1,420
Royalties	45	58
Other miscellaneous income	367	429
Total other income	**3,807**	**3,334**

Royalties are recognised when received or receivable in accordance with the substance of the licensing agreement.

Rental income in relation to leasing of the Board's assets (i.e. café spaces) is recognised when received or receivable under the terms of the lease agreement.

Leases mainly relate to the provision of event management, catering and functions in the Gardens, with lease terms generally of 5 years and an option to extend for a further 5 years.

All lease agreements of 5 years and option to extend for a further 5 years contain market review clauses in the event that the Board or lessee exercises its option to renew. The lessees do not have an option to purchase the leased asset at the expiry of the lease period.

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Non-cancellable lease receivables		
Not longer than one year	880	1,010
Longer than one year and not longer than five years	1,392	2,272
Total	**2,272**	**3,282**

3. THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

Introduction

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by the Board in delivering services. In Section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the costs associated with provision of services are disclosed.

Structure

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services..61

3.2 Other operating expenses……..…… 63

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

	Notes	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Employee benefit expenses	3.1.1	26,354	23,199
Other operating expenses	3.2	12,838	14,181
Total expenses incurred in delivery of services		**39,192**	**37,380**

3.1.1 Employee benefits and related expenses in the comprehensive operating statement

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Salaries and wages, annual leave and long service leave	21,994	19,540
Defined contribution superannuation expense	2,571	2,167
Termination benefits	71	75
Other on-costs	1,718	1,417
Total employee expenses	**26,354**	**23,199**

Employee expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, termination payments and WorkCover premiums.

The amount recognised in the Comprehensive operating statement in relation to superannuation is employer contributions for members of both defined benefit and defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period. The Board does not recognise any defined benefit liabilities because it has no legal or constructive obligation to pay future benefits relating to its employees. Instead, the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) discloses in its annual financial statements the net defined benefit cost related to the members of these plans as an administered liability (on behalf of the State as sponsoring employer).

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated before normal retirement date, or when an employee accepts an offer of benefits in exchange for the termination of employment. Termination benefits are recognised when the Board is demonstrably committed to terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal or providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy.

3.1.2 Employee-related provisions

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave (LSL) for services rendered to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Current provisions		
Annual leave	1,226	1,404
Long service leave	1,932	1,922
Provision for on-costs	641	676
Total current provisions for employee benefits	**3,799**	**4,002**
Non-current provisions		
Employee benefits	674	454
On-costs	137	92
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits	**811**	**546**
Total provisions for employee benefits	**4,610**	**4,548**

Wages and salaries, annual leave and personal leave: Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and on-costs) are recognised as current liabilities, because the Board does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of these liabilities.

The liability for salaries and wages is recognised in the balance sheet at remuneration rates which are current at the reporting date. As the Board expects the liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, they are measured at undiscounted amounts.

The annual leave liability is classified as a current liability and measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid, as the Board does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

No provision has been made for personal leave as all personal leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average personal leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As personal leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement as it is taken.

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax, workers compensation and superannuation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred. The oncosts provision is immaterial in 2026.

Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability, even where the Board does not expect to settle the liability within 12 months, because it will not have the unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement should an employee take leave within 12 months.

The components of this current LSL liability are measured at either:

- undiscounted value – if the Board expects to wholly settle within 12 months; or
- present value – if the Board does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Conditional LSL is disclosed as a non-current liability. There is a conditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement until the employee has completed the requisite years of service. This non-current LSL is measured at present value.

Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of non-current LSL liability is recognised as a transaction, except to the extent that a gain or loss arises due to changes in bond interest rates for which it is then recognised as an 'other economic flow' in the net result.

3.2 Other operating expenses

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Supplies and services		
Contract costs	1,843	3,608
Garden and office equipment and supplies	945	1,123
Non-financial assets hire, maintenance and operational costs	1,439	2,427
Consultancies and professional services	2,494	1,538
Cleaning and waste disposal costs	1,051	989
Water charges	543	578
Advertising and promotion	406	309
Motor vehicle expenses	140	129
Computer expenses	880	898
Travel expenses	169	252
Staff training and development	219	215
Insurance costs	434	417
Postage and communication expenses	202	104
Books, periodicals and subscriptions	155	162
Legal costs	45	62
Security	256	194
Catering costs	112	149
Other	617	303
	11,950	**13,457**
Cost of goods sold	880	705
Lease rental expenses (low value assets)	8	19
Total other operating expenses	**12,838**	**14,181**

Other operating expenses generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations.

Supplies and services are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

The following lease payments are recognised on a straight-line basis:

• Short-term leases – leases with a term 12 months or less; and

• Low value leases – leases where the underlying asset's fair value (when new, regardless of the age of the asset being leased) is no more than $10,000 and are listed in Note 6.2.

Variable lease payments that are not included in the measurement of the lease liability (i.e. variable lease payments that do not depend on an index or a rate and which are not, in substance fixed) such as those based on performance or usage of the underlying asset, are recognised in the Comprehensive operating statement (except for payments which have been included in the carrying amount of another asset) in the period in which the event or condition that triggers those payments occur.

Operating rental expenses payments are recognised on a straight line basis over the lease term, except where another systematic basis is more representative of the time pattern of the benefits derived from the use of the leased asset.

Cost of goods sold: When inventories are sold, the carrying amount of those inventories shall be recognised as an expense in the period in which the related income is recognised. The amount of any write down of inventories to net realisable value and all losses of inventories are recognised as an expense in the period the write down or loss occurs.

The amount of any reversal of any write down of inventories, arising from an increase in net realisable value, shall be recognised as a reduction in the amount of inventories recognised as an expense in the period in which the reversal occurs.

4. KEY ASSETS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT SERVICE DELIVERY

Introduction

The Board controls assets that are utilised in fulfilling its objectives and conducting its activities. They represent the resources that have been entrusted to the Board to be utilised for delivery of those services.

Structure

4.1 Property, plant and equipment..... 65

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2026 $'000	2025 $'000	2026 $'000	2025 $'000	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Land at fair value	502,400	491,100	-	-	502,400	491,100
Buildings at fair value	54,296	40,888	(248)	(4,097)	54,048	36,791
Infrastructure at fair value	85,982	74,964	(9)	(7,235)	85,973	67,729
Plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value	9,500	9,104	(6,390)	(5,510)	3,110	3,594
Cultural assets at fair value	553,340	414,771	-	-	553,340	414,771
Assets under construction at cost	2,975	1,023	-	-	2,975	1,023
Right-of-use assets: Vehicles [(a)]	851	748	(245)	(150)	606	598
Net carrying amount	**1,209,344**	**1,032,598**	**(6,892)**	**(16,992)**	**1,202,452**	**1,015,606**

Note:

(a) As a result of a change in FRD 104 Leases effective for reporting periods from 30 June 2026, right-of-use assets are measured at cost for reporting period 2026. The comparative information for reporting period 2025 is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value. For further information, refer to Note 8.3.

The following tables are subsets of plant and equipment by right-of-use assets:

4.1.1 Total right-of-use assets: vehicles

	Gross carrying amount 2026 $'000	Accumulated depreciation 2026 $'000	Net carrying amount 2026 $'000	Gross carrying amount 2025 $'000	Accumulated depreciation 2025 $'000	Net carrying amount 2025 $'000
Vehicles	851	(245)	606	748	(150)	598
Net carrying amount	**851**	**(245)**	**606**	**748**	**(150)**	**598**

	Vehicles at fair value 2026 $'000
Opening balance - 1 July 2025 [(a)]	**598**
Additions	103
Disposals	-
Depreciation	(95)
Closing balance - 30 June 2026	**606**

Note:

(a) As a result of a change in FRD 104 Leases effective for reporting periods from 30 June 2026, right-of-use assets are measured at cost for reporting period 2026. The comparative information for reporting period 2025 is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value. For further information, refer to Note 8.3.

Initial recognition: Items of property, plant and equipment are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition.

The cost of constructed non-financial physical assets includes the cost of all material used in construction, direct labour on the project and an appropriate proportion of variable and fixed overheads.

Right-of-use asset acquired by lessees - Initial measurement

The Board recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentive received; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred, and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

Right-of-use asset acquired by lessees - subsequent measurement

Right-of-use assets under leases are subsequently measured at cost value less accumulated depreciation, impairment and any adjustments for remeasurement of the lease liability.

Right-of-use asset – Subsequent measurement

The Board depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight-line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The right-of-use assets are not subject to revaluation at fair value.

Impairment of right-of-use assets is determined and accounted for in accordance with AASB 136 Impairment of Assets.

Specialised land and specialised buildings: The market approach is also used for specialised land, although is adjusted for the community service obligation (CSO) to reflect the specialised nature of the land being valued.

The CSO adjustment reflects the valuer's assessment of the impact of restrictions associated with an asset to the extent that is also equally applicable to market participants. This approach is considering the highest and best use consideration required for fair value measurement and takes into account the use of the asset that is physically possible, legally permissible, and financially feasible.

For the majority of the Board's specialised buildings, the current replacement cost method is used, adjusting for the associated depreciation.

Infrastructure assets are valued using the current replacement cost method. This cost generally represents the replacement cost of the building/component after applying depreciation rates on a useful life basis. However, for some heritage and iconic assets, the cost may be the reproduction cost rather than the replacement cost if those assets' service potential could only be replaced by reproducing them with the same materials.

Infrastructure mainly relates to various buildings, pavilions, workshops, iron picket fencings and gates.

Cultural assets are valued using the market approach, whereby assets are compared to recent comparable sales or sales of comparable assets that are considered to have nominal value. The State Botanical Collection is valued using the current replacement cost method.

Cultural assets mainly relates to the State Botanical Collection which is the collection of botanical specimens; paintings, photographs and drawings and other artistic material; and documents of all kinds located at the National Herbarium of Victoria.

Significant estimate: valuation of specialised cultural assets

The fair value of the Board's specialised cultural assets, principally the State Botanical Collection, is subject to significant estimation uncertainty due to the specialised and unique nature of the collection and the use of significant unobservable inputs in determining current replacement cost.

The valuation estimates the cost of replacing the service capacity of the collection by determining a replacement cost per sample unit and applying this across the estimated size of the collection. Significant inputs include the size of the collection and the estimated costs associated with reinstating the collection. These costs incorporate assumptions regarding the resources required to recollect and reinstate specimens, including staff costs, working days, travel, accommodation and transport costs.

Changes in these assumptions may result in a materially different fair value because the estimated unit costs are applied across a collection of approximately 1.5 million to 1.6 million items.

At 30 June 2026, specialised cultural assets were recognised at $553.3 million following an independent valuation undertaken by the Valuer-General Victoria. The revaluation resulted in an increase of $138.6 million during the year.

Vehicles are valued using the current replacement cost method. The Board acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by experienced fleet managers in the Board who set relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

Plant and equipment are valued at fair value and are specialised in use (such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern) is determined using the current replacement cost method.

Refer to Note 7.2 for additional information on fair value determination of property, plant and equipment.

Impairment of property, plant and equipment

The recoverable amount of primarily non-cash-generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity, is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under *AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement* , with the consequence that AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets* does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

4.1.2 Depreciation

All infrastructure assets, buildings and plant and equipment that have finite useful lives, are depreciated. The exceptions to this rule include items such as assets held for sale, land and cultural assets.

Depreciation is generally calculated on a straight line basis, at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life. Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table below:

Asset	Useful Life
Buildings	5 to 100
Infrastructure	10 to 50
Plant, equipment and vehicles	4 to 50
Vehicles - right-of-use assets	3 to 5

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustments made where appropriate.

Right-of-use assets are generally depreciated over the shorter of the asset's useful life and the lease term. Where the Board obtains ownership of the underlying leased asset or if the cost of the right-of-use asset reflects that the entity will exercise a purchase option, the entity depreciates the right-of-use asset over its useful life.

Indefinite life assets: Land and core cultural assets, which are considered to have an indefinite life, are not depreciated. Depreciation is not recognised in respect of these assets because their service potential has not, in any material sense, been consumed during the reporting period.

4.1.3 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amount of property, plant and equipment [(a)]

2026	Land at fair value $'000	Buildings at fair value $'000	Infrastructure at fair value $'000	Plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value $'000	Cultural assets at fair value $'000	Assets under construction at fair value $'000	Right-of-use assets [(c)] $'000	Total $'000
Opening balance	**491,100**	**36,791**	**67,729**	**3,594**	**414,771**	**1,023**	**598**	**1,015,606**
Additions	-	3,042	-	237	-	2,672	103	6,054
Disposals	-	(296)	-	(13)	-	-	-	(309)
Revaluations	11,300	15,440	19,900	-	138,569	-	-	185,209
Transfers [(b)]	-	257	278	185	-	(720)	-	-
Depreciation	-	(1,186)	(1,934)	(893)	-	-	(95)	(4,108)
Closing balance	**502,400**	**54,048**	**85,973**	**3,110**	**553,340**	**2,975**	**606**	**1,202,452**

Note:

(a) A full revaluation of all asset classes as per the requirement of FRD 103 was carried out in 2026 by the Valuer-General Victoria and changes to the holding value of assets have been reflected in the accounts. Movements in the value of assets have been processed through the asset revaluation account (Equity).

(b) Transfers balances represent amounts transferred between asset classes.

(c) As a result of a change in FRD 104 Leases effective for reporting periods from 30 June 2026, right-of-use assets are measured at cost for reporting period 2026. The comparative information for reporting period 2025 is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value. For further information, refer to Note 8.3.

5. OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Introduction

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the Board's operations.

Structure

5.1 Receivables 69

5.2 Payables..... 70

5.3 Contract liabilities..... 71

5.4 Inventories..... 71

5.5 Other non-financial assets..... 71

5.1 Receivables

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Contractual		
Sales of goods and services	483	710
Accrued Grants	1,154	-
Accrued donations income	332	392
	1,969	**1,102**
Statutory		
Net GST input tax credit recoverable	112	79
	112	**79**
Total receivables	**2,081**	**1,181**
Represented by		
Current receivables	**2,081**	**1,181**

Contractual receivables are classified as financial instruments and categorised as 'financial assets at amortised costs'. They are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. The Board holds the contractual receivables with the objective to collect the contractual cash flows and therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

Accrued grant income primarily relates to Government funding receivable for one-off employee hardship payments made under the Enterprise Agreement settlement. The funding was confirmed prior to balance date and is expected to be received in August 2026.

Statutory receivables do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment), but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes. The Board applies AASB 9 *Financial Instruments* for initial measurement of the statutory receivables and as a result, statutory receivables are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction cost.

5.1.1 Impairment loss

In accordance to FRD 114 *Financial Instruments*, all entities shall apply the simplified approach, which requires the loss allowance to always be measured at an amount equal to lifetime expected credit losses for all trade receivables, lease receivables and statutory receivables.

No expected credit loss provision has been brought to account in 2026 and 2025 on the basis that there are no doubtful debts as all contractual receivables are expected to be paid within 30 days.

The loss allowances for receivables are based on assumptions about risk of default and expected loss rates. The expected loss rate applied as at 30 June 2026 was 0 per cent (30 June 2025: 0 per cent).

Impairment of financial assets

The Board records the allowance for expected credit loss for the relevant financial instruments applying AASB 9's Expected Credit Loss approach. The Board's contractual receivables and statutory receivables are subject to AASB 9 impairment assessment.

Contractual receivables at amortised cost

The Board applies AASB 9 simplified approach for all contractual receivables to measure expected credit losses using a lifetime expected loss allowance based on the assumptions about risk of default and expected loss rates. The Board has grouped contractual receivables on shared credit risk characteristics and days past due and selected the expected credit loss rate based on the Board's past history and existing market conditions, as well as forward looking estimates at the end of the financial year.

Credit loss allowance is classified as other economic flows in the net result. Contractual receivables are written off when there is no reasonable expectation of recovery and impairment losses are classified as a transaction expense. Subsequent recoveries of amounts previously written off are credited against the same line item.

Statutory receivables at amortised cost

The Board's statutory receivables are considered to have low credit risk, taking into account the counterparty's credit rating, risk of default and capacity to meet contractual cash flow obligations in the near term. As a result, the loss allowance recognised for these financial assets during the period was limited to 12 months expected losses. No loss allowance has been recognised.

5.2 Payables

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Contractual payables		
Supplies and services	2,391	1,510
Other payables	4	12
	2,395	**1,522**
Statutory payables		
FBT payable	16	13
Other taxes payable	239	135
	255	**148**
Total payables	**2,650**	**1,670**
Represented by		
Current payables	**2,650**	**1,670**

Payables consist of:

- **Contractual payables**, classified as financial instruments and measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Board prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid.
- **Statutory payables**, that are recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables, but are not classified as financial instruments and not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost, because they do not arise from contracts.

Payables for supplies and services have an average credit period of 30 days.

5.3 Contract liabilities

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Contract liabilities	**214**	**209**
Represented by		
Current contract liabilities	214	209

Contract liabilities include consideration received in advance by the Board completing performance obligations within the specific grant agreements. Revenue is recognised as the obligations are completed.

5.4 Inventories

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Current inventories		
Inventories held for sale		
At cost	360	347
Total inventories	**360**	**347**

Inventories include goods held for sale in the ordinary course of business operations and are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

5.5 Other non-financial assets

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Current other assets		
Prepayments	288	331
Total other non-financial assets	**288**	**331**

Other non-financial assets include prepayments which represent payments made in advance of receipt of goods or services or the payments made for services covering a term extending beyond that financial accounting period.

6. HOW WE FINANCED OUR OPERATIONS

Introduction

This section provides information on the sources of finance utilised by the Board during its operations, along with interest expenses (the cost of borrowings) and other information related to the financing activities of the Board.

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments (such as borrowings and cash balances). Notes 7.1 and 7.2 provide additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

Structure

6.1 Borrowings…… 72

6.2 Leases…… 73

6.3 Cash flow information and balances…… 76

6.4 Commitments for expenditure…… 76

6.1 Borrowings

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Current borrowings		
Lease liabilities [(a)]	193	120
Total current borrowings	**193**	**120**
Non-current borrowings		
Lease liabilities [(a)]	370	453
Total non-current borrowings	**370**	**453**
Total borrowings	**563**	**573**

Note

(a) Secured by the assets leased. Lease liabilities are effectively secured as the rights to the leased assets revert to the lessor in the event of default.

Borrowings refer to interest bearing liabilities which are lease liabilities that relate to motor vehicles leased through the VicFleet.

Borrowings are classified as financial instruments. The Board classifies its interest bearing liabilities as financial liabilities at amortised cost subsequent to initial recognition.

During the current and prior year, there were no defaults and breaches.

Terms and conditions of borrowings

2026	Weighted average interest rate (%)	Carrying amount	Nominal amount	Maturity dates				
				Less than 1 month	1- 3 months	3 months - 1 year	1 - 5 years	More than 5 years
		$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Lease liabilities	4.16	563	606	18	36	162	390	-
Total		**563**	**606**	**18**	**36**	**162**	**390**	**-**

2025	Weighted average interest rate (%)	Carrying amount	Nominal amount	Maturity dates				
				Less than 1 month	1- 3 months	3 months - 1 year	1 - 5 years	More than 5 years
		$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Lease liabilities	4.64	573	630	44	18	82	486	-
Total		**573**	**630**	**44**	**18**	**82**	**486**	**-**

Interest expense

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Interest on lease liabilities	27	17
Total interest expense	**27**	**17**

'Interest expense' includes costs incurred in connection with the borrowing of funds and includes the interest component of finance lease repayments.

Interest expense is recognised in the period in which it is incurred.

The Board recognises borrowing costs immediately as an expense, even where it is directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of a qualifying asset.

6.2 Leases

Information about leases for which the Board is a lessee is presented below.

The Board leasing activities

The Board leases motor vehicles with terms generally of 3 - 5 years. Additionally, the Board leases office equipment which are low value assets that have not been included in lease liabilities.

6.2.1 Right-of-use Assets

Right of use assets are presented in note 4.1.1.

Significantly below market lease

Right-of-use assets under leases at significantly below-market terms and conditions that are entered into principally to enable the Board to further its objectives, are initially and subsequently measured at cost.

These right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter of the lease term and the estimated useful lives of the assets.

6.2.2 Expense recognised for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

The following amounts are recognised as expense relating to short-term leases and leases of low-value assets:

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Expenses relating to leases of low-value assets	8	19
Total amount recognised as expense	**8**	**19**

The Board has elected to account for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets using the practical expedients. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

6.2.3 Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

For any new contracts entered into, the Board considers whether a contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as ‘a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration’. To apply this definition the Board assesses whether the contract meets three key evaluations:

- Whether the contract contains an identified asset, which is either explicitly identified in the contract or implicitly specified by being identified at the time the asset is made available to the Board and for which the supplier does not have substantive substitution rights;

- Whether the Board has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the identified asset throughout the period of use, considering its rights within the defined scope of the contract and the Board has the right to direct the use of the identified asset throughout the period of use; and

- Whether the Board has the right to take decisions in respect of ‘how and for what purpose’ the asset is used throughout the period of use.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

Lease liability - initial measurement
The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease if that rate is readily determinable or the Board incremental borrowing rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- fixed payments (including in-substance fixed payments) less any lease incentive receivable; variable payments
- based on an index or rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date; amounts
- expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- payments arising from purchase and termination options reasonably certain to be exercised.

Lease liability - subsequent measurement
Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification, or if there are changes in-substance fixed payments.

When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset, or profit and loss if the right-of-use asset is already reduced to zero.

Presentation of right-of-use assets and lease liabilities
The Board presents right-of-use assets as 'property plant and equipment' unless they meet the definition of investment property, in which case they are disclosed as 'investment property' in the balance sheet. Lease liabilities are presented as 'borrowings' in the balance sheet.

Future lease payments

	Minimum future lease payments [(a)]	
	2026 $'000	**2025 $'000**
Not longer than 1 year	216	144
Longer than 1 year but not longer than 5 years	390	486
Longer than 5 years	-	-
Minimum future lease payments	**606**	**630**
Less future finance charges	(43)	(57)
Present value of minimum lease payments	**563**	**573**

Note

(a) Minimum future lease payments include the aggregate of all base payments and any guaranteed residual.

6.3 Cash flow information and balances

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand and cash at bank. The Board's bank account is held in the Central Banking System (CBS) under the *Standing Directions 2018.*

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Total cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet [(a)]	17,645	20,729
Balance as per cash flow statement	**17,645**	**20,729**

Note:

(a) Cash and deposits bear variable interest rate with a weighted-average interest rate of 4.49% (2025: 4.38%),

6.4 Commitments for expenditure

Commitments for future expenditure include operating and capital commitments arising from contracts. These commitments are recorded below at their nominal value and inclusive of GST. Where it is considered appropriate and provides additional relevant information to users, the net present values of significant individual projects are stated. These future expenditures cease to be disclosed as commitments once the related liabilities are recognised in the Balance sheet.

6.4.1 Total commitments payable

Nominal amounts 2026	Less than 1 year $'000	1-5 Years $'000	5+ Years $'000	Total $'000
Capital expenditure commitments payable	-	-	-	-
Other commitments payable	1,295	765	-	2,060
Total commitments (inclusive of GST)	**1,295**	**765**	**-**	**2,060**
Less GST recoverable	(118)	(70)	-	(188)
Total commitments (exclusive of GST)	**1,177**	**695**	**-**	**1,872**

Nominal amounts 2025	Less than 1 year $'000	1-5 Years $'000	5+ Years $'000	Total $'000
Capital expenditure commitments payable	146	-	-	146
Other commitments payable	1,060	964	-	2,024
Total commitments (inclusive of GST)	**1,206**	**964**	**-**	**2,170**
Less GST recoverable	(109)	(88)	-	(197)
Total commitments (exclusive of GST)	**1,097**	**876**	**-**	**1,973**

7. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

Introduction

It is often necessary for the Board to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for the Board related mainly to fair value determination.

Structure

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures…..... 77

7.2 Fair value determination…..……..……..... 79

7.3 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities…... 83

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

Introduction

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Due to the nature of the Board's activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statute rather than a contract (for example taxes). Such assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments in AASB 132 *Financial Instruments: Presentation.*

Categories of financial assets

Financial assets at amortised cost

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met and the assets are not designated as fair value through net result:

- the assets are held by the Board to collect the contractual cash flows; and
- the assets' contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The Board recognises the following assets in this category:

- cash and deposits; and
- receivables (excluding statutory receivables).

Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income

These assets are initially recognised at fair value with subsequent change in fair value in other comprehensive income.

Derecognition of financial assets

A financial asset (or, where applicable, a part of a financial asset or part of a group of similar financial assets) is derecognised when:

- the rights to receive cash flows from the asset have expired; or
- the Board has transferred the rights to receive cash flows from the asset and either:
  - has transferred substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset; or
  - has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset, but has transferred control of the asset.

Where the Board has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards or transferred control, the asset is recognised to the extent of the Board's continuing involvement in the asset.

Categories of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially recognised on the date they are originated. They are initially measured at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method. The Board recognises the following liabilities in this category:

- payables (excluding statutory payables); and
- borrowings (including lease liabilities).

Derecognition of financial liabilities: A financial liability is derecognised when the obligation under the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires.

When an existing financial liability is replaced by another from the same lender on substantially different terms, or the terms of an existing liability are substantially modified, such an exchange or modification is treated as a derecognition of the original liability and the recognition of a new liability. The difference in the respective carrying amounts is recognised as an 'other economic flow' in the comprehensive operating statement.

7.1.1 Financial instruments - Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments by category

2026	*Carrying Amount* $'000	*Net gain/(loss)* $'000	*Total interest income/ (expense)* $'000	*Fee income/ (expense)* $'000	*Impairment loss* $'000
Financial assets at amortised cost					
Cash and deposits	17,645	-	892	(12)	-
Trade receivables [(a)]					
Sale of goods and services	483	-	-	-	-
Accrued donations income	332	-	-	-	-
Total financial assets at amortised cost	**18,460**	**-**	**892**	**(12)**	**-**
Financial liabilities at amortised cost					
Trade payables [(a)]	2,395	-	-	-	-
Borrowings					
Lease liabilities	563	-	(27)	-	-
Total contractual financial liabilities	**2,958**	**-**	**(27)**	**-**	**-**

7.1.1 Financial instruments - Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments by category (continued)

2025	*Carrying Amount* $'000	*Net gain/(loss)* $'000	*Total interest income/ (expense)* $'000	*Fee income/ (expense)* $'000	*Impairment loss* $'000
Financial assets at amortised cost					
Cash and deposits	20,729	-	1,118	(39)	-
Trade receivables [(a)]					
Sale of goods and services	710	-	-	-	-
Accrued donations income	392	-	-	-	-
Total financial assets at amortised cost	**21,831**	**-**	**1,118**	**(39)**	**-**
Financial liabilities at amortised cost					
Trade payables [(a)]	1,522	-	-	-	-
Borrowings					
Lease liabilities	573	-	(17)	-	-
Total contractual financial liabilities	**2,095**	**-**	**(17)**	**-**	**-**

Note:

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory receivables (i.e. GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable).

7.2 Fair value determination

This section sets out information on how the Board determined fair value for financial reporting purposes. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

The following assets and liabilities are carried at fair value:

- financial assets and liabilities at fair value through operating results;
- available for sale financial assets; and
- land, buildings, plant and equipment.

The Board determines the policies and procedures for determining fair values for both financial and non-financial assets and liabilities as required.

Fair value hierarchy

In determining fair values a number of inputs are used. To increase consistency and comparability in the financial statements, these inputs are categorised into three levels, also known as the fair value hierarchy. The levels are as follows:

- Level 1 - quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;
- Level 2 - valuation technique for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
- Level 3 - valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

The Board determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by reassessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

The Valuer General Victoria (VGV) is the Board's independent valuation agency. In conjunction with VGV, the Board monitors changes in the fair value of each asset and liability through relevant data sources to determine whether revaluation is required.

How this section is structured

For those assets and liabilities for which fair values are determined, the following disclosures are provided:

- valuation techniques
- details of significant assumptions used in the fair value determination.

7.2.1 Fair value determination: Non-financial physical assets

Valuation techniques and significant assumptions of non-financial physical assets measured at fair value

AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – *Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities* amended AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* by adding Appendix F *Australian implementation guidance for not-for-profit public sector entities*. Appendix F explains and illustrates the application of the principles in AASB 13 on developing unobservable inputs and the application of the cost approach. These clarifications are mandatorily applicable annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024. FRD 103 permits Victorian public sector entities to apply Appendix F of AASB 13 in their next scheduled formal asset revaluation or interim revaluation process (whichever is earlier).

The last scheduled full independent valuation of all the Board's non-financial physical assets was performed by the VGV at 30 June 2026. In accordance with FRD 103, the Board will reflect AASB13 Appendix F in its formal revaluation in the 2026 financial year. All annual fair value assessments thereafter will continue compliance with Appendix F.

For all assets measured at fair value, the Board considers the current use is the highest and best use.

The fair values and net fair values of financial assets and liabilities are determined as follows:

- Level 1 – the fair value of financial instruments with standard terms and conditions and traded in active liquid markets are determined with reference to quoted market prices.
- Level 2 – the fair value is determined using inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the financial asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 – the fair value is determined in accordance with generally accepted pricing models based on discounted cash flow analysis using unobservable market inputs.

Non-specialised antiques and artworks

Non-specialised antiques and artworks are valued using the market approach. Under this valuation method, valuation of the assets is determined by a comparison to similar examples of the artist's work in existence throughout Australia and research on prices paid for similar examples offered at auction or through art galleries in recent years. An independent valuation of antiques and artwork was undertaken by the Valuer-General Victoria to determine their fair value at 30 June 2026.

Specialised land and buildings

The market approach is also used for specialised land, although it is adjusted for the community service obligation (CSO) to reflect the specialised nature of the land being valued.

The CSO adjustment reflects the valuer’s assessment of the impact of restrictions associated with an asset to the extent that is also equally applicable to market participants. This approach is considering the highest and best use consideration required for fair value measurement and takes into account the use of the asset that is physically possible, legally permissible, and financially feasible.

For the majority of the Board's specialised land and buildings, the current replacement cost method is used, adjusting for the associated depreciations. As depreciation adjustments are considered significant unobservable inputs in nature, specialised buildings are classified as Level 3 fair value measurements.

An independent valuation of the Board's specialised buildings was performed by the Valuer-General Victoria. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2026.

Specialised cultural assets

Specialised cultural assets, including the State Botanical Collection, are valued using the current replacement cost method. Current replacement costs are costs to replace the current service capacity of the asset. The method used calculates a unit cost per sample unit that is then scaled up to each collection.

An independent valuation of the Board's specialised cultural assets was performed by the Valuer-General Victoria. The valuation was performed using the Market approach. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2026.

Infrastructure assets

Infrastructure assets are valued using the current replacement cost method. This cost represents the current replacement cost of the building/component after applying depreciation rates on a useful life basis. Current replacement costs are costs to replace the current service capacity of the asset.

Where it has not been possible to examine hidden works such as structural frames and floors, the use of reasonable materials and methods of construction have been assumed, bearing in mind the age and nature of the building. The estimated cost of reconstruction, including structural services and finishes, also factors in any heritage classifications as applicable.

An independent valuation of the Board's infrastructure assets was performed by the Valuer-General Victoria. The valuation was performed based on the current replacement cost of the assets. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2026.

Vehicles

Vehicles are valued using the current replacement cost method. The Board acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed under finance leasing arrangements with DTF and Westpac Bank. Depreciation rates used reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

Right-of-use assets

Right-of-use assets are initially recorded at cost and not revalued in subsequest years, in line with changes to FRD 104 effective for the reporting periods from 30 June 2026.

Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment is held at fair value. When plant and equipment is specialised in use, such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern, fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method.

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2026.

For all assets measured at fair value, the current use is considered the highest and best use.

Significant valuation uncertainty

The Board's assets relating to property, plant and equipment were independently valued by the Valuer General Victoria (VGV) as at 30 June 2026.

Description of significant assumptions applied to fair value measurement.

Asset Category	Valuation technique	Significant unobservable inputs	Range (weighted average)
Specialised Land	Market approach	Community Service Obligation (CSO) adjustment	70% [(a)]
Buildings *(specialised and heritage)*	Current Replacement Cost	Useful life, remaining useful life and depreciation rate	$1,100 - $6,600,000 per unit ($350,000 per unit)
		Useful life of buildings	5-100 years (33 years)
Vehicles	Current Replacement Cost	Cost per unit	$500 - $381,000 per unit ($35,000 per unit)
		Useful life of vehicles	5 - 8 years (6 years)
Plant and Equipment	Current Replacement Cost	Cost per unit	$475 - $339,000 per unit ($15,000 per unit)
		Useful life of plant and equipment	4 - 50 years (7 years)
Infrastructure *(specialised and heritage)*	Current Replacement Cost [(b)]	Cost per unit	$1,600 - $4,300,000 per unit ($300,000 per unit)
		Useful life of infrastructure assets	10 to 50 years (33 years)
Specialised Cultural Assets	Current Replacement Cost [(b)]	Costs of reinstating the collection per unit	$0 - $1,755 per unit
		Size of collections	1,500,000 - 1,600,000
Right-of-use assets	Current Replacement Cost	Cost per unit	$16,000 - $112,000 per unit ($50,000 per unit)
		Useful life of right-of-use assets	3 - 6 years (4 years)

Notes:

(a) *CSO adjustment of 70 per cent were applied to reduce the market approach value for the Royal Botanic Gardens specialised land.*

(b) *For some infrastructure heritage assets and specialised cultural assets, cost may be the reproduction cost of the asset rather than the replacement cost if their service potential could only be replaced by reproducing them with the same materials.*

7.3 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet but are disclosed and, if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value.

Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable respectively.

Contingent assets
Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the entity.

In June 2026 the Cranbourne location of the RBGV experienced a break-in which resulted in substantial damage to its Orchid Seedbank. The RBGV has lodged a claim with its insurers, VMIA (The Victorian Managed Insurance Association), who have advised the claim falls within the terms of the insurance policy. This gives rise to a Contingent Asset, subject to the completion of VMIA's assessment of the value of the damaged seedbank and therefore the payment amount of the claim.

The Board has contingent assets of $1.8m at June 2026 (nil: June 2025).

Contingent liabilities
Contingent liabilities are:

- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the entity: or
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligations the amount of the obligations cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Contingent liabilities are also classified as either quantifiable or non-quantifiable.

The Board has nil contingent liabilities at June 2026 (nil: June 2025)

8. OTHER DISCLOSURES

Introduction

This section includes additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise, for the understanding of this financial report.

Structure

8.1 Ex gratia expenses 84

8.2 Other economic flows included in net result 84

8.3 Reserves..... 85

8.4 Responsible persons..... 86

8.5 Remuneration of executives..... 87

8.6 Related parties..... 87

8.7 Remuneration of auditors..... 88

8.8 Subsequent events..... 89

8.9 Other accounting policies..... 89

8.10 Glossary of technical terms..... 89

8.11 Style conventions..... 92

8.1 Ex gratia expenses

Ex gratia expenses are the voluntary payments of money or other non-monetary benefit (e.g. a write off) that are not made either to acquire goods, services or other benefits for the entity or to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability or claim against the entity.

No ex-gratia payments were made during the 2026 financial year.

8.2 Other economic flows included in net result

Other economic flows are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions.

Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows include the gains or losses from:

- the revaluation of the present value of the long service leave liability due to changes in the bond interest rates
- write down of inventory.

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets		
Net gain on disposal of property, plant and equipment	5	15
Impairment of property, plant and equipment	(296)	(87)
Write down of inventory	-	(24)
Total net (loss) on non-financial assets	**(291)**	**(96)**
Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows		
Net (loss)/gain arising from revaluation of long service leave liability [(a)]	(55)	6
Total other (losses)/gains from other economic flows	**(55)**	**6**

Notes:

(a) Revaluation gain/(loss) due to changes in bond rates.

8.3 Reserves

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Physical asset revaluation surplus [(a)]		
Balance at beginning of financial year	909,482	910,343
Revaluation increments/ (decrements)	185,209	(861)
Balance at end of financial year	**1,094,691**	**909,482**
Net change in reserves	185,209	(861)

Note:

(a) The physical asset revaluation arises on the revaluation of cultural assets, infrastructure, land and buildings.

8.3.1 Changes in accounting policy - Right-of-use assets

In accordance with the updated requirements under FRD 104, the Board has made a change in accounting policy to change the measurement basis from the revaluation model to the cost model for the subsequent measurement of right-of-use assets arising from market leases.

Previously, the Board had measured all right-of-use assets arising from market leases using the revaluation model under AASB 13. Following the change in accounting policy, the Board will measure all right-of-use assets using the cost model. Right-of-use assets measured using the cost model are held at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment and any adjustments for remeasurement of lease liability. Periodic revaluations are not required; however, the cost model requires annual impairment assessments in accordance with AASB 136.

Upon adoption of the cost model, the Board has applied a modified retrospective approach. The approach takes the right-of-use asset's carrying amounts recorded under the revaluation model as at 30 June 2025 as the right-of-use asset's opening balances on application of the cost model.

Accordingly, the comparative information presented is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value.

Right-of-use assets arising from significantly below-market leases

The Board is not required to make any adjustments to right-of-use assets arising from significantly below-market leases, including peppercorn leases, as the Board already measures these right-of-use assets using the cost model in accordance with AASB 16 and FRD 104, and are thus not impacted as a result of this accounting policy change.

Impacts on financial statements

On transition to the cost model, there was no impact on the Board's financial statements. No impairment was identified by the Board for the right-of-use asset held as at 30 June 2026.

8.4 Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Minister for Finance under the Financial Management Act 1994 (FMA), the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

Names

The persons who held the positions of Minister, Governing Board and Accountable Officer of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board are as follows:

Minister

Minister for Environment	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	1 July 2025 to 14 April 2026
Minister for Environment	The Hon. Enver Erdogan MP	15 April 2026 to 30 June 2026

Governing Board

Chair	Mrs Penny Fowler AM	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Deputy Chair	Mr Jason Hay	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Member	Ms Christine Wyatt	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Member	Mr Damian Holmes	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Member	Mr Peter Langkamp OAM	1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025
Member	Ms Felicia Mariani	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Member	Ms Arianne Rose	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

Accountable Officer

Director and Chief Executive	Mr Chris Russell	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

Remuneration

Remuneration received or receivable by the Accountable Officer in connection with the management of the Board during the reporting period was in the range: $310 000 – $319 000 (2025: $310 000 – $319 000).

8.5 Remuneration of executives

The number of executive officers, other than Ministers and accountable officers, and their total remuneration during the reporting period are shown in the table below. Total annualised employee equivalents provides a measure of full-time equivalent executive officers over the reporting period.

Remuneration comprises employee benefits (as defined in AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*) in all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by the entity, or on behalf of the entity, in exchange for services rendered. Accordingly, remuneration is determined on an accrual basis.

Remuneration of the senior executive service (including Key Management Personnel disclosed in Note 8.6) [(a)]	**2026 $'000**	**2025 $'000**
Total remuneration [(a)]	**1,247**	**841**
Total number of executives	5	5
Total annualised employee equivalents [(b)]	5	3.5

Note:

(a): The total number of senior executive service members includes persons who meet the definition of Key Management Personnel (KMP) of the entity under AASB 124 Related Party Disclosures and are also reported within the related parties note disclosure (Note 8.6). In the 2026 financial year, total remuneration included a termination payment made to a senior executive.

(b): Annualised employee equivalent is based on the time fraction worked over the reporting period.

8.6 Related parties

The Board is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.

Related parties of the Board include:

- all key management personnel and their close family members and personal business interests (controlled entities, joint ventures and entities they have significant influence over);
- all Cabinet Ministers and their close family members; and
- all Departments and public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of state consolidated financial statements.

All related party transactions have been entered into on an arm’s-length basis.

Significant transactions with government-related entities

The Board received grant funding from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action of $24.5 million (2025 - $24.6 million) and the Department of Education and Training Victoria $0.13 million (2025 - $0.2 million) during the reporting period.

Key management personnel (KMP) of the Board include the Portfolio Minister, the Hon Enver Erdogan MP, the members of the governing board and the Director and Chief Executive.

Remuneration of key management personnel

The compensation detailed below excludes the salaries and benefits the Portfolio Minister receives. The Minister's remuneration and allowances are set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

Compensation of KMPs	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Total [(a)]	**1,683**	**1,233**

Note:

(a): Note that KMPs are also reported in the disclosure of remuneration of executive officers (Note 8.5)

Transactions and balances with key management personnel and other related parties

Given the breadth and depth of State government activities, related parties transact with the Victorian public sector in a manner consistent with other members of the public, e.g. stamp duty and other government fees and charges. Further employment of processes within the Victorian public sector occur on terms and conditions consistent with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and Codes of Conduct and Standards issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. Procurement processes occur on terms and conditions consistent with the Victorian Government Procurement Board requirements.

Outside of normal citizen type transactions with the Board, there were no related party transactions that involved key management personnel, their close family members and their personal business interests. No provision has been required, nor any expense recognised, for impairment of receivables from related parties.

8.7 Remuneration of auditors

	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Victorian Auditor-General's Office		
Audit of the financial statements [(a)]	36	34
Total remuneration of auditors	**36**	**34**

Note:

(a): The Victorian Auditor-General's Office is prohibited from providing non-audit services.

8.8 Subsequent Events

There were no significant events occurring after the balance date which will have a material impact on the information disclosed in the financial statements.

8.9 Other accounting policies

Contribution by owners

Consistent with the requirements of AASB 1004 *Contributions,* contributions by owners (that is, contributed capital and its repayment) are treated as equity transactions and, therefore, do not form part of the income and expenses of the Board.

Additions to net assets that have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of contributions to or distributions by owners have also been designated as contributions by owners.

8.10 Glossary of technical terms

The following is a summary of the major technical terms used in this report.

Borrowings refers to interest-bearing liabilities mainly from public borrowings raised through finance leases.

Commitments include those operating, capital and other outsourcing commitments arising from non-cancellable contractual or statutory sources.

Comprehensive result is the amount included in the operating statement representing total change in net worth other than transactions with owners as owners.

Depreciation is an expense that arises from the consumption through wear or time of a produced physical asset. This expense is classified as a 'transaction' and so reduces the 'net result from transaction'.

Effective interest method is the method used to calculate the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected useful life of the financial asset or, where appropriate, a shorter period.

Employee benefits expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, redundancy payments and defined benefit superannuation plans and defined contribution superannuation plans.

Finance lease is a lease that transfers substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an underlying asset.

Ex gratia expenses mean the voluntary payment of money or other non-monetary benefit (e.g. a write off) that is not made either to acquire goods, services or other benefits for the entity or to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability or claim against the entity.

Financial asset is any asset that is:

- cash;
- an equity instrument of another entity;
- a contractual right:
  - to receive cash or another financial asset from another entity; or
  - to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially favourable to the entity; or
- a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:
  - a non-derivative for which the entity is or may be obliged to receive a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments; or
  - a derivative that will or may be settled other than by the exchange of a fixed amount of cash or another financial asset for a fixed number of the entity's own equity instruments.

Financial instrument is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

Financial liability is any liability that is:

(a) a contractual obligation:

- to deliver cash or another financial asset to another entity; or
- to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially unfavourable to the entity.

(b) a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:

- a non-derivative for which the entity is or may be obliged to deliver a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments; or
- a derivative that will or may be settled other than by the exchange of a fixed amount of cash or another financial asset for a fixed number of the entity's own equity instruments. For this purpose, the entity's own equity instruments do not include instruments that are themselves contracts for the future receipt or delivery of the entity's own equity instruments.

Financial statements comprises:

- a balance sheet as at the end of the period;
- a comprehensive operating statement for the period;
- a statement of changes in equity for the period;
- a cash flow statement for the period;
- notes, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information;
- comparative information in respect of the preceding period as specified in paragraph 38 of AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements*; and
- a statement of financial position as at the beginning of the preceding period when an entity applies an accounting policy retrospectively or makes a retrospective restatement of items in its financial statements, or when it reclassifies items in its financial statements in accordance with paragraph 41 of AASB 101.

General government sector comprises all government Boards, offices and other bodies engaged in providing services free of charge or at prices significantly below their cost of production. General government services include those that are mainly non-market in nature, those that are largely for collective consumption by the community and those that involve the transfer or redistribution of income. These services are financed mainly through taxes, or other compulsory levies and user charges.

Infrastructure systems provide essential services used in the delivery of final services or products. They are generally a complex interconnected network of individual assets and mainly include sewage systems and water storage and supply systems.

Interest expense represents costs incurred in connection with borrowings. It includes interest on loans and interest components of finance lease repayments.

Interest income includes interest received on bank term deposits and other investments.

Leases are rights conveyed in a contract, or part of a contract, the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration.

Net acquisition of non-financial assets (from transactions) are purchases (and other acquisitions) of non-financial assets less sales (or disposals) of non-financial assets less depreciation plus changes in inventories and other movements in non-financial assets. Includes only those increases or decreases in non-financial assets resulting from transactions and therefore excludes write-offs, impairment write-downs and revaluations.

Net financial worth is equal to financial assets minus liabilities. It is a broader measure than net debt as it incorporates provisions made (such as superannuation, but excluding depreciation and bad debts) as well as holdings of equity. Net financial worth includes all classes of financial assets and liabilities, only some of which are included in net debt.

Net operating balance or **net result from transactions** is a key fiscal aggregate and is revenue from transactions minus expenses from transactions. It is a summary measure of the ongoing sustainability of operations. It excludes gains and losses resulting from changes in price levels and other changes in the volume of assets. It is the component of the change in net worth that is due to transactions and can be attributed directly to government policies**.**

Net result is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those classified as 'other non-owner movements in equity'.

Net worth is calculated as assets less liabilities, which is an economic measure of wealth.

Non-financial assets are all assets that are not financial assets. It includes inventories, land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment, and cultural and heritage assets.

Operating result is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those that are classified as 'other non-owner movements in equity'. Refer also to 'net result'.

Other economic flows included in net result are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. In simple terms, other economic flows are changes arising from market re-measurements. They include gains and losses from disposals, revaluations and impairments of non-current physical and intangible assets; fair value changes of financial instruments and agricultural assets; and depletion of natural assets (non-produced) from their use or removal.

Other economic flows – other comprehensive income comprises items (including reclassification adjustments) that are not recognised in net result as required or permitted by other Australian Accounting Standards. They include changes in physical asset revaluation surplus.

Payables includes short and long-term trade debt and accounts payable, grants, taxes and interest payable.

Receivables include amounts owing from short and long-term trade credit and accounts receivable and interest receivable.

Sale of goods and services refers to income from the direct provision of goods and services and includes fees and charges for services rendered and sales of goods and services.

Supplies and services generally represent cost of goods sold and the day-to-day running costs, including maintenance costs, incurred in the normal operations of the Board.

Transactions are those economic flows that are considered to arise as a result of policy decisions, usually an interaction between two entities by mutual agreement. They also include flows within an entity such as depreciation where the owner is simultaneously acting as the owner of the depreciating asset and as the consumer of the service provided by the asset. Taxation is regarded as mutually agreed interactions between the government and taxpayers. Transactions can be in kind (e.g. assets provided/given free of charge or for nominal consideration) or where the final consideration is cash. In simple terms, transactions arise from the policy decisions of the Government.

8.11 Style conventions

Figures in the tables and in the text have been rounded. Discrepancies in tables between totals and sums of components reflect rounding. Percentage variations in all tables are based on the underlying unrounded amounts.

The notation used in the tables is as follows:

-	zero, or rounded to zero
(xxx)	negative numbers
200x	year
200x-0x	year period.

The financial statements and notes are presented based on the illustration in the 2024-25 Tier 2 Model Report for Victorian Government Boards. The presentation of other disclosures is generally consistent with the other disclosures made in earlier publications of the Board's annual reports.



Independent Auditor's Report

Victorian Auditor-General's Office

To the Royal Botanic Gardens Board

Opinion	I have audited the financial report of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board (the entity) which comprises the: • balance sheet as at 30 June 2026 • comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • cashflow statement for the year then ended • notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information • declaration in the financial statements. In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the entity as at 30 June 2026 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures.
Basis for opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report* section of my report. My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975.* My staff and I are independent of the entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.
Board's responsibilities for the financial report	The Board is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the *Financial Management Act 1994,* and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.

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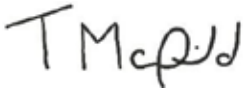
Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

As required by the *Audit Act 1994,* my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of the internal controls relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



MELBOURNE
9 October 2026

Timothy Maxfield
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Our People





Public Sector Values and Employment Principles

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria adopts policies and practices that are consistent with the *Public Administration Act 2004*. The organisation is committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing employees and ensures all managers receive training prior to participating in selection panels. The Gardens' policies and practices are consistent with the Victorian Public Sector Commission's employment standards and provide for fair treatment, professional development opportunities, and the early resolution of workplace issues. The organisation has trained its employees on how to avoid conflicts of interest, how to respond to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality, social engineering and phishing awareness, fraud and corruption awareness, and child safety. Employees are also trained in managing unconscious bias and developing resilience along with a broad offering of mental health and wellbeing awareness information sessions. Line Managers have also received training on obligations of Positive Duty under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and the *Federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984*.

Strategy and Direction

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria actively engages with staff and stakeholders to develop a robust and contemporary platform for the wellbeing of staff and volunteers. We commit to best practice for wellbeing, inclusion, and recognising diversity through the following:

— Ongoing implementation of the *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan*.

— Ongoing commitment as a Child Safe organisation.

— Continued implementation of initiatives in the four-year *Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2026* (GEAP) and the development of the next GEAP, which was submitted to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector in May 2026.

— Progressing our Occupational Violence and Aggression (OVA) Framework to better prevent and respond to incidents of OVA in our workplace.

— Development of a new Occupational Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the next four years, which will incorporate the psychosocial regulations released in December 2025.

— Face-to-face Workplace Behaviour Training for all staff to introduce or reinforce expected standards of behaviour in line with legislation and the Victorian Public Sector Commission's Code of Conduct.

— Regular refresh and rollout of e-learning modules with the content being driven by workplace needs, which includes consulting with subject matter experts to develop customised and relevant training offerings.

Leadership Skills and Behaviours

— Positive Duty Training for managers to highlight the legislative requirement to take preventative strategic action to identify and prevent as well as eliminate both potential and existing inappropriate workplace and work-related behaviour, particularly sexual harassment.

— Development and delivery of People Leader training for all employees who manage staff to enhance their understanding of their line management responsibilities and improve capability.

Workforce Inclusion

As part of its workforce inclusion initiatives and obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic), RBGV implemented a four-year Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) in 2022, which concluded in April 2026. The Plan was developed through consultation with employees and union representatives and was endorsed by the Executive and Board.

The GEAP provides a framework for advancing workplace gender equality through measurable targets, strategies and actions. It also supports the creation of inclusive workplaces that are free from discrimination, sexual harassment and gender-based stereotypes.

Consistent with the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, the GEAP aligns with RBGV's broader Diversity and Inclusion objectives, which seek to remove both visible and invisible barriers to participation and foster an inclusive workplace for employees from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Action	Target 25-26	Actual 25-26
Increase percentage of female employees in senior roles	50%	53%

RBGV exceeded its 2025-26 target, with women representing 53% of employees in senior roles. While this result is lower than the 58% achieved in 2024-25, it reflects sustained progress over the life of the GEAP. At the commencement of the Plan, women represented 46% of employees in senior roles, with interim targets of 47% in 2023-24 and 48% in 2024-25. The 2025-26 result demonstrates that RBGV has maintained gender representation in senior leadership above its established targets and continues to support gender equity across the organisation.

Child Safety

Child safety continued to be a priority at the Gardens, with all new staff and volunteers required to complete all elements of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Child Safe Program. All incidents relating to the safety or wellbeing of children and young people continued to be overseen and managed through the Child Safety incident reporting mechanisms. No formal investigation was required or launched during this year. The Child Safety Policy and the national Child Safe Standards were rolled out to all staff via an online learning module, which is required to be completed annually.

Summary of Employment Levels as at June 2025-26 and 2024-25

Employees have been correctly classified in the workforce data collections.

	Ongoing Employees					Fixed term, Fixed task and Casual	
	Total Headcount (includes Ongoing, Fixed term, Fixed task & Casual)	Number (Headcount)	Full-time (Headcount)	Part-time (Headcount)	FTE	Headcount	FTE
June 2024-25	248	176	122	54	154.76	72	44.99
June 2025-26	257	193	127	66	168.97	64	38.01

Details of Employment Levels re: Gender, Age, and Classification

	June 2026			June 2025		
	Total Headcount (includes Ongoing, Fixed term, Fixed task & Casual)	Ongoing	Fixed term, fixed task and casual	Total Headcount (includes Ongoing, Fixed term, Fixed task & Casual)	Ongoing	Fixed term, fixed task and casual
	257			**248**	**Headcount**	**Headcount**
Gender						
Man	94	76	18	97	74	23
Women	161	115	46	149	100	49
Self-Described	2	2	0	2	2	0
Age						
Under 25	5	0	5	12	1	11
25–34	55	36	19	55	36	19
35–44	58	49	10	52	39	13
45–54	76	58	18	72	53	19
55–64	49	39	10	46	38	8
Over 64	14	12	2	11	9	2
Classification						
Staff	196	141	55	199	133	66
Line Manager	43	40	3	35	35	0
Branch Manager	12	12	0	8	8	0
Executives	6	0	6	6	0	6

Notes:

- All figures reflect employment levels in their *substantive position* and FTE count during the last full pay period in June of each year.
- Excluded are those employees on leave without pay or absent on secondment, or casuals who were not paid in the final pay period and employee and employees on WorkCover leave.
- Ongoing employees include people engaged on an open-ended contract of employment.
- FTE means Full-time staff equivalent.
- Classification is based on previous years' reporting and is as follows:
- Staff includes all employees other than those who have line management responsibilities.
- Line Manager refers to an employee who supervises staff but does not manage a Branch function.
- Branch Manager is responsible for a function within an organisational division.
- Executives are employed under the VPSC PEER policy.

Executive Data

Responsible Persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FM Act), the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period:

Minister

The persons who held the positions of Minister, Governing Board and Accountable Officer of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria are as follows:

Minister		
Minister for Environment	Steve Dimopoulos MP	1 July 2025 to 14 April 2026
Minister for Environment	Enver Erdogan MP	15 April 2026 to 30 June 2026

Governing Board		
Chair	Penny Fowler AM	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Deputy Chair	Jason Hay	
Member	Damian Holmes	
Member	Felicia Mariani	
Member	Arianne Rose	
Member	Christine Wyatt	
Member	Peter Langkamp OAM	1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025

Accountable Officer		
Director and Chief Executive	Chris Russell	

An executive is defined as a person employed as an executive under Part 3 of the *Public Administration Act 2004* or a person to whom the Victorian Government's Public Entity Executive Remuneration Policy applies. All figures reflect employment levels at the last full pay period in June of the current and corresponding previous reporting year.

The definition of SES does not include a statutory office holder or an Accountable Officer.

The following table discloses the SES of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria for 30 June 2026 broken down by gender.

	All		**Women**		**Men**		**Self-described**	
Class	**No.**	**Var.**	**No.**	**Var.**	**No.**	**Var.**	**No.**	**Var.**
SES3	0	0	0	0	0	0	n	n
SES2	2	0	1	0	1	0	n	n
SES1	4	0	2	0	2	0	n	n
Total	**6**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**n**	**n**

The number of executives in the report of operations is based on the number of executive positions that are occupied at the end of the financial year.

Occupational Health and Safety

Incident and Injury Summary

In the financial year 2025–26, there were a total of 218 incidents. Of these, 70 incidents or 32.11% were employee related. Of these, 27 incidents, representing 38.5% of employee–related cases, involved injury resulting in Lost Time, Medical or First Aid treatment. The remaining incidents were categorised as near misses, property or equipment damage, and report–only. The reduction in employee–related incidents from 108 incidents in 2024–25 to 70 in 2025–26 is largely attributable to changes made to the incident classification processes. These changes streamlined reporting categories to more accurately distinguish between employee incidents, property and equipment damage and incident mechanisms. As a result, the decrease in reported employee–related incidents should not be interpreted as evidence of a significant drop in workplace incidents, but rather as a reflection of improved incident classifications and reporting practices.

There were six Lost Time Injuries reported in 2025–26, compared to nine in the previous year. The Lost Time Injuries arose from a variety of incident mechanisms, including environmental exposures, manual handling activities, slips, trips and falls and contact with objects. Medical Treatment Injuries remained consistent when compared to 2024–25. The Medical Treatment Injuries also arose from a variety of mechanisms including biological exposure, manual handlings activities and contact with moving and falling objects. Both the Lost Time and Medical Treatment Injuries highlight the diverse operational and physical risks encountered across our workplaces.

Workflow improvements, the introduction of mechanical aids, and collaborative return–to–work planning involving Line Managers, treating medical practitioners and occupational rehabilitation providers supported improved return–to–work outcomes. Several long–term WorkCover claims progressed, with employees returning to pre–injury duties and no longer requiring certificates of capacity.

First Aid treatments numbered 16 in 2025–26, down from 24 the previous year. This is likely attributable to the introduction of revised incident classification processes.

The below table contains the relevant statistical information.

Overall Incident Data				
Category	**FY 24–25**		**FY 25–26**	
	Total numbers	**% of total incidents**	**Total numbers**	**% of total incidents**
Employee Related	108	46.15%	70	32.11%
Visitor Related	126	53.84%	148	67.88%
TOTAL Incidents	234		218	

Employee Only Related Incident Data				
Incident Categories	**FY 24–25**		**FY 25–26**	
	Total numbers	**% of total incidents**	**Total numbers**	**% of total incidents**
Employee incidents	108	46.2%	70	32.11%
Employee injuries	39	16.6%	27	12.38%
Breakdown of Injury Classifications				
Lost Time Injuries	9	3.8%	6	2.75%
Medical Treatment	6	2.5%	5	2.29%
First Aid Treatment	24	10.2%	16	7.33%
Report Only/Near Miss	69	14.7%	43	19.72%

Streamlining the incident data being captured for 2025–26 included improvements to incident classification and the introduction of incident mechanism reporting, strengthening data quality and enhancing our ability to identify trends and implement proactive controls. As these classifications were only introduced during 2025–26, comparisons with previous years are currently not available.

Of the 70 employee–related incidents reported during the year, psychosocial hazards accounted for the largest proportion, with 23 incidents (32.85%). Environmental hazards were the second–highest contributor, with 18 incidents (25.7%), followed by manual handling incidents, with 10 reports (14%).

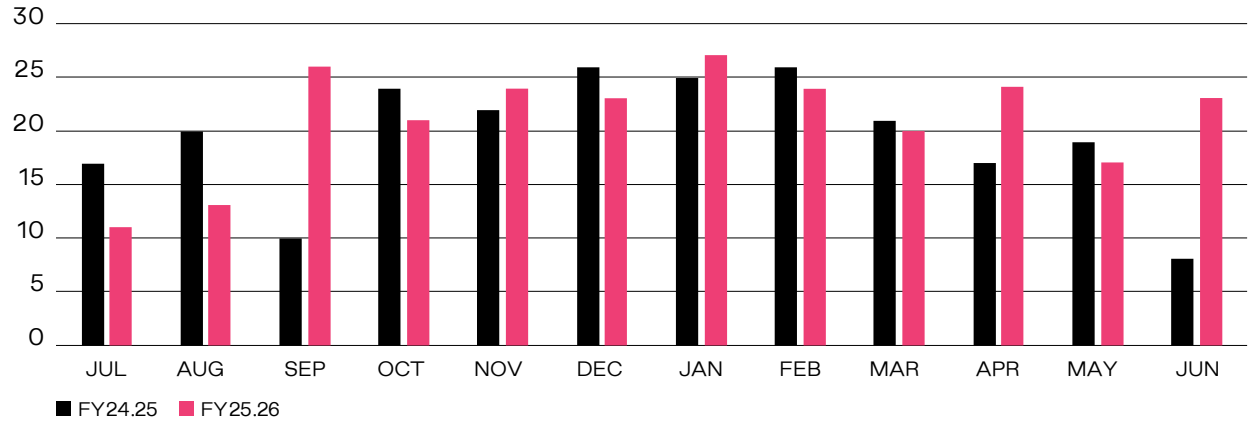
Psychosocial hazards represented the most common incident mechanism and were largely associated with challenging interactions with visitors, including aggressive or abusive behaviour, inappropriate comments, suspicious persons, and unsafe driving or tailgating incidents. Several events required police attendance or additional employee support.

The data highlights psychosocial, environmental and manual handling hazards as the primary contributors to employee incidents in 2025–26 and identifies these areas as key priorities for ongoing risk management and prevention initiatives.

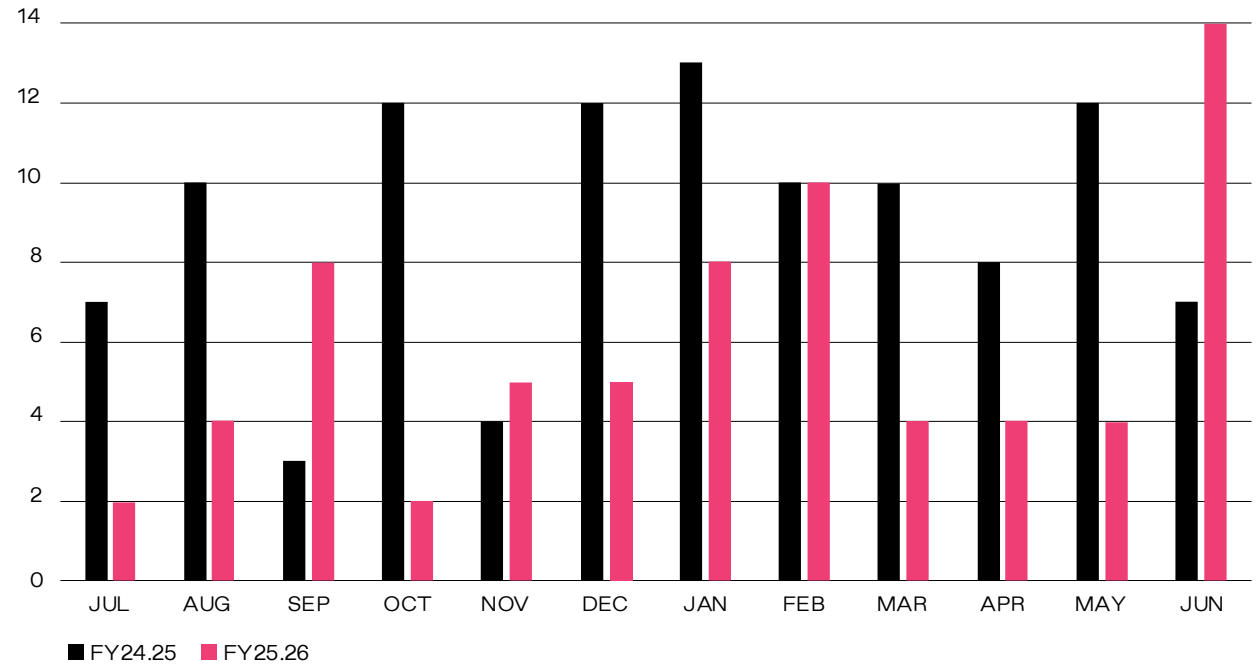
The below table contains the relevant statistical information.

	FY 25–26	
Mechanism	**Total Numbers**	**% of Employee Incidents (70)**
Exposure including biological, chemical, environmental or airborne contaminants	3	4.28%
Environmental including animal involvement and injury due to vegetation and surrounds	18	25.71%
Manual Handling	10	14.28%
Other	5	7.14%
Personal Medical Episode	3	4.28%
Property / Equipment Damage including damage to vehicles, garden, vegetation	3	4.28%
Psychosocial	23	32.85%
Struck by / Collided with Object	2	2.85%
Slip, Trip and Fall	3	4.28%
TOTAL Incidents	70	

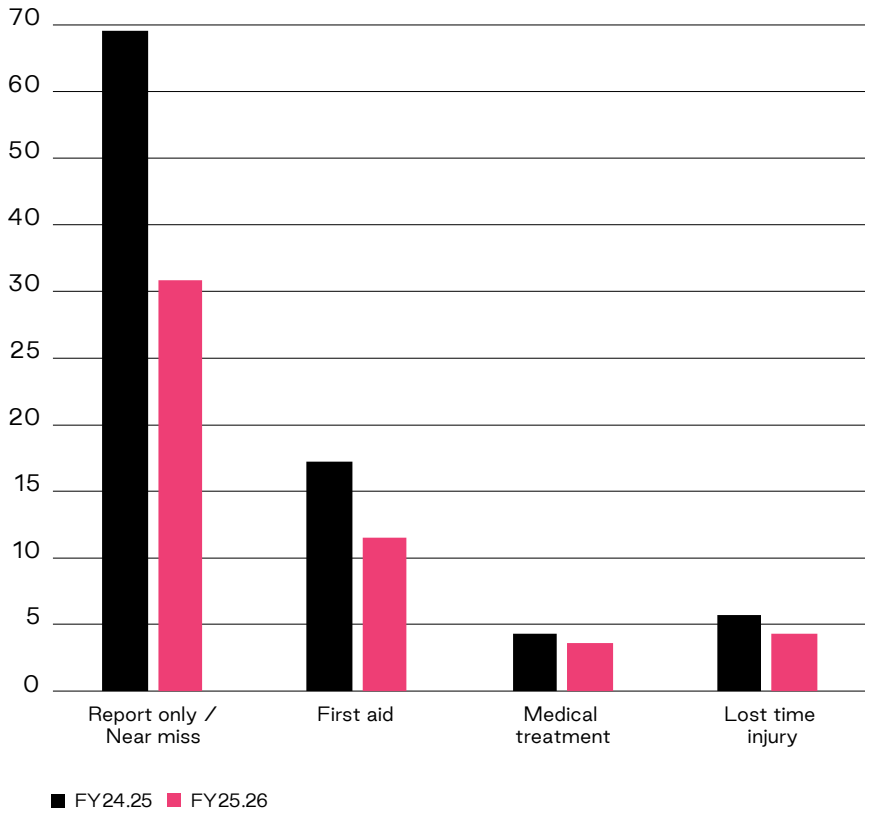
Total incidents reported last 2 financial years



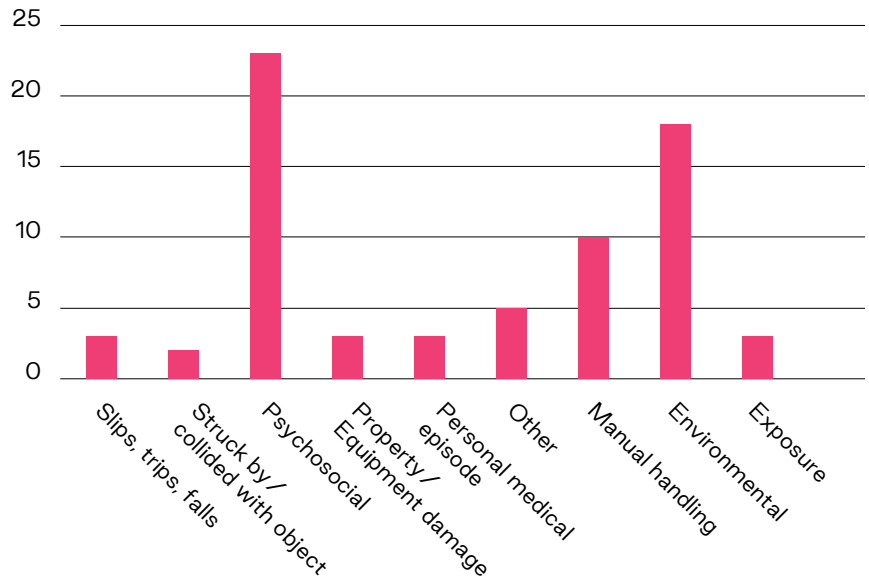
Total employee incidents reported: FY24–25 v FY25–26



Employee incident classifications: FY24–25 v FY25–26



Employee incident mechanism: FY25–26 only



Assessment of Compliance Against KPIs			
Measure	**KPI**	**FY 24–25**	**FY 25/26**
Incidents	No. of overall incidents	234	218
	No. of employee incidents	108	70
	Rate of employee incidents per 100 FTE*	55.7	35.0
Claims	No. of standard claims	5	8
	Rate per 100 FTE	2.50	4.00
	No. of Lost Time claims	5	7
	Rate per 100 FTE	2.50	3.5
	No. of Lost Time claims exceeding 13 weeks	3	1
	Rate per 100 FTE	1.50	0.50
	Number of standard claims open at 30 June	5	3
Fatalities	Fatality claims	0	0
Claims Cost	Average cost per standard claim	$62,480.54	$11,172.39**
Return to Work	Percentage of claims with RTW plan <30 days	0	0
Management Commitment	Evidence of OHS policy statement, and objectives, regular reporting to senior management of OHS and OHS plans (signed by CEO or equivalent).		Compliant
Consultation and Participation	Evidence of agreed structure of designated workgroups (DWGs), health and safety representatives (HSRs) and committee, and issue resolution procedures (IRPs).		Compliant
	Compliance with agreed structure on DWGs, HSRs, and IRP.		Compliant

* This measure has been defined as employee incidents only – 2024–25 data have been corrected to reflect this.
** Previous year's cost was calculated based on the overall expected life of the claim and not the actual/current cost. This has been corrected for 2025–26.



Definitions of Injury Type

Lost Time Injuries (LTI)

A Lost Time Injury is defined as an occurrence that resulted in a fatality, permanent disability or time lost from work of one day/shift or more. (SafeWork Australia)

Medical Treatment Injuries (MTI)

Medical Treatment Injury is work-related injury or illness that requires treatment by a medical practitioner, beyond the scope of onsite First Aid, without losing time off work for the whole day.

First Aid Treatment Injury (FAT)

A First Aid Treatment Injury (FAT) is an injury that requires a single First Aid treatment and may not need further medical care, such as minor scratches, burns, cuts.

Psychosocial

A psychosocial injury is psychosocial or physical harm caused by a psychosocial hazard. Work-related stress resulting in the physical and psychological response of an employee who perceives that the demands of their work or workplace environment exceed their ability or resources to cope.



Other Disclosures



Disclosure on Expenditures

Government Advertising Expenditure: Nil reports.

Consultancy Expenditure

Details of consultancies (valued at $10,000 or greater)

In 2025–26, there were nine consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were $10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2025–26 in relation to these consultancies is $813,433 (excluding GST). Details of individual consultancies are outlined below.

Consultancies Engaged Where Fees Exceeded $10,000

Consultant	Purpose of Consultancy	Start Date	End Date	Total Approved Fee (excl. GST)	Expenditure 2025–26 (excl. GST)	Future Expenditure (excl. GST)
EcoSure Pty Ltd	Develop Macropod Management Plan	23/10/2025	17/6/2026	20,000	20,000	0
Extent Heritage Pty Ltd	Develop the Cultural Heritage Management Plan prior to Wylies Creek excavation	7/8/2025	30/6/2027	97,742	63,539	34,203
Ironbark Group Pty Ltd	Develop an Environmental Sustainability Action Plan	28/3/2025	30/1/2026	33,605	10,382	0
MIGSO–PCUBED	ERP Implementation Project Health Check, recovery planning, project assurance, change management assessment and recommendations for ERP implementation	3/7/2025	15/10/2025	250,800	250,800	0
MIGSO–PCUBED	Provision of Senior Change Manager and Process Business Analyst resources to support ERP implementation, change management, process mapping, communications, training and adoption activities	20/10/2025	23/1/2026	84,600	84,600	0

Consultant	Purpose of Consultancy	Start Date	End Date	Total Approved Fee (excl. GST)	Expenditure 2025–26 (excl. GST)	Future Expenditure (excl. GST)
Sandwalk Partners Pty Ltd	A structured review of commercial activity, assets, and revenue streams across RBGV benchmarked against sector insight and aligned to future strategic potential	7/8/2025	28/2/2026	82,500	82,500	0
SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd	Develop a Business Case to support a funding request	7/7/2025	30/12/2025	230,770	230,770	0
Taylor Cullity Lethlean	Provision of landscape architecture consultancy services to support the development of the revised Strategic Place Plan for the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne site, in collaboration with RBGV's Landscape Architect and other senior staff.	14/1/2026	31/8/2026	49,990	42,200	7,790
Wetland Revival Pty Ltd	Monitoring and evaluation of remnant and translocated populations of Stiff Groundsel	1/7/2024	30/11/2025	143,210	28,642	0
Total				993,217	813,433	41,993

In 2025–26 seven consultants were engaged where the total fees payable to individual consultants were less than $10,000.

Reviews and Studies Expenditure

Nil reports.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Expenditure

For the 2025–26 reporting period, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria had a total ICT Expenditure of $3,662,885.

All operational ICT expenditure	ICT expenditure related to projects to create or enhance ICT capabilities		
Total Expenditure	**Non Business as Usual (Non BAU) ICT Expenditure**	**Business as Usual (BAU) ICT Expenditure**	**Capital Expenditure**
$3,662,885	$707,837	$2,304,858	$650,190

Major Contracts

During 2025–26, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not enter into any contracts valued at over $10 million.

Local Jobs First – Victorian Industry Participation Policy Statement

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* introduced in August 2018 brings together the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) and Major Project Skills Guarantee (MPSG) policy, which were previously administered separately. Departments and public sector bodies are required to apply the Local Jobs First policy in all projects valued at $3 million or more in Metropolitan Melbourne or for statewide projects, or $1 million or more for projects in regional Victoria. MPSG applies to all construction projects valued at $20 million or more.

The MPSG guidelines and VIPP guidelines will continue to apply to MPSG–applicable and VIPP applicable projects respectively where contracts have been entered prior to 15 August 2018.

Projects Commenced

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria had no projects valued at $3 million or more in Metropolitan Melbourne, or $1 million or more for projects in regional Victoria during the reporting period.

Establishing Legislation

The RBG Act was not amended in 2025–26.

Legislative Compliance

Financial Management Act 1994

Full details of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's compliance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* are outlined in the section 'Financial Management' and in the Disclosure Index.

Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) allows the public a right of access to documents held by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. The purpose of the FOI Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers and other bodies subject to the FOI Act.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. This comprises documents both created by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria or supplied to the organisation by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, photographs, tape recordings and videotapes. Information about the type of material produced by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is available on the organisation's website under Policies and Procedures: Freedom of Information.

The FOI Act allows Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include personal information about other people; documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice; information that is confidential under another Act; and some internal working documents.

Under the FOI Act, the FOI processing time for requests received is 30 calendar days. However, when external consultation is required under s29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 34 or 35, a 15–day automatic extension applies. Processing time may also be extended by periods of up to 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. With the applicant's agreement this may occur any number of times. However, obtaining an applicant's agreement for an extension cannot occur after the expiry of the timeframe for deciding a request. If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision made by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, under section 49A of the FOI Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

Making a Request

FOI requests can be emailed to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria at governance@rbg.vic.gov.au. To ensure an FOI request is 'valid' under the FOI Act, applicants should ensure the request:

— is made in writing

— clearly identifies what documents are being sought, and

— is accompanied by the application fee. In 2025/26, the application fee was $34.50. The application fee increases each year on 1 July.

Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large and the search for material time consuming.

FOI requests can also be made by sending a written request to:

Freedom of Information (FOI) Officer
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
Private Bag 2000
South Yarra, VIC 3141

FOI Statistics

During 2025–26, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not receive any FOI applications from the public.

Further Information

Further information regarding the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the FOI Act and regulations made under the FOI Act and ovic.vic.gov.au.

Competitive Neutrality Policy

Competitive neutrality seeks to ensure that government businesses do not gain a net competitive advantage solely because of public ownership. The policy supports fair and effective competition by requiring significant government business activities to account for any advantages or disadvantages arising from government ownership, where it is in the public interest to do so.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria undertakes a range of commercial activities that support its public purpose and applies competitive neutrality principles in the management of these activities, consistent with Victorian Government policy and the organisation's broader environmental, educational, scientific and community objectives.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to comply with the Victorian Government's Competitive Neutrality Policy requirements.

Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* encourages and assists people in making disclosures of improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The Act provides protection to people who make disclosures in accordance with the Act and establishes a system for the matters disclosed to be investigated and rectifying action to be taken.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria does not tolerate improper conduct by employees, nor reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct. It is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment. The department has a public interest disclosures management policy and procedure, as well as integrity training and communications in place to support staff compliance with the Act. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria will take all reasonable steps to protect people who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for making the disclosure. It will also afford natural justice to the person who is the subject of the disclosure to the extent it is legally possible.

Reporting Procedures

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is not a public body able to receive public interest disclosures under the PID Act. If you wish to make a public interest disclosure about Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria or any of its employees and/or officers, you must contact:

The Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC)
Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000
Phone: 1300 735 135
Website: www.ibac.vic.gov.au
Email: See the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

Public Interest Disclosure Statistics

During 2025–26, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not receive any Public Interest Disclosure requests.

Further Information

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has established a Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedures, which outline the process for reporting disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by any of its employees and/or officers. These are available on the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria website: https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/about-us/policies/

Compliance with Other Legislation

Disclosure of Emergency Procurement

In 2025–26, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria activated Emergency Procurement on two occasions, in accordance with the requirements of Victorian Government policy and associated guidelines. Details of these emergency procurements are provided below. One new contract valued at $100,000 or more (inclusive of GST) was awarded in connection with one of the emergency procurement activities.

Nature of Emergency	Date of Activation	Summary of Goods and Services Procured Under New Contract	Total Spend on Goods and Services in Response to the Emergency	Number of New Contracts Awarded Valued at $100,000 (incl. GST) or more
Power failure at Melbourne Observatory Precinct	26 November 2025	H and L Moodie: Power failure due to a switchboard fault necessitated generator hire and installation while repairs completed.	Total engagement: $82,900 ($40,299 ex GST + $42,601 + GST)	Nil
Electrical extension upgrade to mitigate the risk of a diesel supply shortage during the *Lightscape* event	26 May 2026	Wallgates Electrical: Electrical upgrade connection of main switchboard to Dog Flat (via Gardens House and Hopetoun Lawn), to remove the need for diesel generators for *Lightscape* / Gardens House functions and mitigate diesel supply chain risks. Due to economies of scale (efficiencies at execution), the contract also incorporated additional elements of other work outside the emergency component (future proof conduit install) from the Herbarium electrical upgrade project.	Total engagement: $286,263 + GST Of which $243,410 + GST related to the emergency response.	One

Disclosure of Procurement Complaints

Under the Governance Policy of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB), Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria must disclose any formal complaints relating to the procurement of goods and services received through its procurement complaints management system. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria did not receive any formal complaints through its procurement complaints management system in 2025–26.

Social Procurement Framework

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria recognises that it plays a key role in advancing social and sustainable outcomes for Victorians and is fully committed to supporting the Government's directions under the Social Procurement Framework. This is reflected in the third year of delivery of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's first *Social Procurement Strategy 2023–26* (SPS), which provides an organisation-wide approach to how we deliver social and sustainable outcomes. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has prioritised the following four social and sustainable objectives of the Social Procurement Framework for the term of our initial SPS:

1. Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people – Purchasing from Victorian Aboriginal businesses – Employment of Victorian Aboriginal people by suppliers to the Victorian Government.
2. Environmentally sustainable outputs – Project-specific requirements to use sustainable resources and to manage waste and pollution – Use of recycled content in construction.
3. Environmentally sustainable business practices – Adoption of sustainable business practices by suppliers to the Victorian Government.
4. Implementation of the Climate Change Policy Objectives – Project-specific requirements to minimise greenhouse gas emissions – Procurement of outputs that are resilient against the impacts of climate change.

Achievements

This year's reporting continues to focus on the first identified priority objective set out in its SPS. Over the term of the Strategy, future reporting will expand to all four objectives. Objective 1: Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people:

- Total direct spend to Aboriginal businesses (excl. GST): $282,900
- Number of Victorian Aboriginal businesses directly engaged: 26
- Total number of Aboriginal people directly and indirectly engaged through the supply chain: 93

Additional achievements include:

- Invested $141,790 with Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation through Commonwealth funding secured by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. The funding supported a First Nations Threatened Species Nursery Officer (1 FTE) at Dalki Garringa Native Nursery, strengthening Traditional Owner participation and capability in threatened species conservation, seed collection and banking, and native plant propagation.
- Engaged 24 First Peoples representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWWCHAC), representing $9,975 (excl. GST) in procurement across cultural interpretation, education, conservation and community engagement initiatives.
- Engaged 16 representatives from Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC), representing $52,498 (excl. GST) in procurement across cultural interpretation, Cultural Heritage Management Plan assessments, land management, conservation projects and event delivery.
- Through retail operations, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria generated $40,965 (excl. GST) in direct procurement with three First Peoples businesses, alongside $192,415 (excl. GST) in sales of products that support at least 31 First Peoples artists, art centres and Aboriginal enterprises.
- Commissioned artworks and music compositions by four First Peoples artists for *Lightscape 2026,* representing a direct investment of $22,500 (excl. GST).
- A week of First Peoples-led cultural activities for approximately 350 community members during NAIDOC Week at Cranbourne Gardens, directly engaging seven First Peoples businesses to a total value of $7,143 (excl. GST).
- Affordable cultural learning programs were delivered across both Gardens sites to 360 First Peoples students, valued at $14,622, while complimentary public cultural programs supported a further 140 First Peoples participants, valued at $5,874.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria completed its first *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–26* (RAP) in February 2026, achieving 48 of 58 actions (83%). A further 10% were partially completed and will be carried forward, while 7% were not progressed. Most uncompleted actions were deferred due to organisational restructure and reliance on the establishment of a future senior First Peoples-identified leadership role. Overall, this represents a 6% improvement on the previous *Reflect RAP 2021–22* (77%). As part of the evaluation and close-out of the first *Innovate RAP*, a refreshed RAP Working Group and new Executive RAP Champion have been appointed. Organisation-wide engagement with staff and volunteers has commenced to inform the development of the second *Innovate RAP*, scheduled for completion in 2026-27. In addition to the RAP-related achievements outlined under the Social Procurement Framework, key RAP outcomes during 2025-26 included:

Traditional Owner Partnerships

— Continued implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding with WWWCHAC, supporting Healing Country initiatives, cultural interpretation, knowledge exchange and partnership development.

— A third consecutive year of co-developing the *Wurundjeri biik bolin bolin* Garden at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2026, alongside ongoing collaboration on cultural interpretation, education and community engagement initiatives.

— Continued collaboration with BLCAC through the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, Cultural Heritage Management Plan development, land management initiatives and cultural interpretation projects at Cranbourne Gardens.

— Continued consultation with Traditional Owners to inform cultural interpretation projects across both sites, including the How to Garden at Cranbourne Gardens and *Lightscape* at Melbourne Gardens.

First Peoples Conservation and Knowledge Exchange

— Continued partnerships with Traditional Owner groups across Victoria, including Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, supporting conservation, seed collection, land management and cultural outcomes.

— Delivery of seedbank partnerships, Country-based seed collection programs and collaborative research initiatives, including work with Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Wurundjeri Narrap Nursery and Indigenous Knowledge reconnection projects.

— Supported Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation's Dalki Garringa Native Nursery through threatened species conservation and capacity-building initiatives, strengthening First Nations-led conservation, seed collection and banking, threatened species propagation and knowledge exchange.

— Delivered two-way knowledge exchange programs with Aboriginal ranger groups, including the Warreen Beek Rangers Program, supporting skills development and First Nations leadership in Caring for Country.

— Continued integration of First Peoples knowledge and perspectives into conservation education initiatives, including the Raising Rarity program in partnership with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal educators and local schools.

Learning, Education and Community Impact

— Delivery of National Reconciliation Week programming, including film screenings of *Her Name is Nanny Nellie*, bush food engagement activities and a public science seminar by First Peoples author and artist Zena Cumpston.

— Aboriginal Learning Facilitators and Officers delivered cultural learning programs to 9,198 students and teachers across Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens, representing approximately one-third of all education program delivery.

— Through initiatives including Marrung Mob Days, Koorie Leadership Programs, First Nations Playgroup, NAIDOC Week activities and community outreach events, First Peoples staff strengthened cultural connection for Aboriginal children, young people and families while increasing understanding of Aboriginal cultures, knowledge systems and connection to Country among the broader Victorian community.

— Partnerships with schools, Koorie Education Support Officers, Melbourne Indigenous Transition School, the City of Casey and other community organisations continued to expand the reach and impact of First Peoples-led education and engagement programs.

Compliance with the *Disability Act 2006*

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace and improving accessibility for people with disability. During the reporting period, all people policies were reviewed through a disability inclusion lens to ensure language and practices are equitable, respectful and free from unintended bias. Recruitment panel members continue to receive training in non-discriminatory recruitment practices, supporting fair and merit-based selection decisions. In addition, all people leaders have been provided with training on supporting employees with disability, including their responsibilities to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate. A new Diversity, Access and Inclusion Plan is currently being developed and will be implemented in the coming year to further strengthen accessibility, inclusion and employment opportunities across the organisation

Environmental Reporting

Environmental Sustainability Reporting Context

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is committed to play its role in the statewide transition to net zero emissions and climate resilience by 2045, better manage exposure to climate-related risk, and meet responsibilities in reducing its environmental impacts. This commitment is reflected by the way in which we continue to report beyond our required disclosure under Financial Reporting Directive FRD24E, on our ongoing performance in managing and reducing the environmental impacts of our activities. By continuing to improve on environmental reporting methodologies, we are also able to continue to improve in our environmental sustainability practices.

Reporting Boundary for Environmental Data

Our reporting boundary remains within the Gardens' two sites, Melbourne and Cranbourne, with data collated for each and then calculated together for the purpose of this report. It currently does not include environmental impacts produced by tenants or event contractors that the Gardens host or partner with at each site, nor any environmental impacts associated with work that we do outside of our site's boundary, such as remote scientific field work.

Reporting Period

The tables below capture environmental reporting data for the periods 1 April to 31 March 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26. This is the second year that reporting period has been undertaken on a 1 April to 31 March basis. Previously, the annual reporting period was aligned to the financial year (1 July to 30 June). To ensure accurate year-on-year comparisons, data for all three reporting years has been recalculated using the 1 April to 31 March reporting period. This is the sixth consecutive year that the Gardens has undertaken environmental sustainability reporting in accordance with departmental standards and methodologies.

Reporting Updates

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to report against seven of the nine FRD24E environmental indicators. Data collection methods and reporting processes continue to mature, resulting in ongoing improvement to data quality, completeness and accuracy.

During 2025-26, updates were made to several data collection and classification processes. These included the inclusion of annual kilometres travelled for all vehicles and the review of soil disposal data at Cranbourne Gardens, which identified contaminated soil that had previously been reported within recycling and recovery streams and has now been reclassified as waste to landfill. As a result of these improvements, some emissions data have been recalculated to provide a more accurate representation of the organisation's environmental performance.

Climate-Related Risk Disclosure Statement

Climate change is expected to increase average temperatures and the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, alter rainfall patterns, and increase bushfire risk. These changes may affect Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's living collections, natural and cultural landscapes, scientific programs, visitor experiences, commercial operations, and built assets.

Key climate-related risks include:

- Increased temperatures and extreme weather resulting in impacts on plant health, biodiversity, visitation patterns, and the safety of staff and visitors.
- More frequent and severe flooding, storms, and inundation leading to erosion, asset damage, and operational disruption.
- Increased bushfire risk affecting the Gardens' landscapes, living collections, and broader conservation and research activities.
- Greater biosecurity risks from emerging pests, weeds, and diseases.
- Increased water demand and changing rainfall patterns affecting the long-term resilience and composition of living collections.
- Increased operational and financial pressures associated with climate adaptation, emergency response, recovery activities, and asset management.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria continues to strengthen its climate adaptation and resilience planning to support the long-term sustainability of its landscapes, collections, operations, and community services.

Climate-Related Risk Governance

The Board and Executive oversee Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's risk management framework, including the identification and management of climate-related risks. Climate change is recognised through a standalone environmental threat risk and as a driver of several strategic and operational risks.

The Strategic and Operational Risk Registers are reviewed regularly by management, the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee, and the Board to monitor climate-related risks and mitigation actions.

The Board and Executive have also endorsed an Environmental Sustainability Working Group to oversee the implementation of the Gardens' Environmental Sustainability Action Plan and supporting policies.



Climate-Related Risk Strategy

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria addresses climate-related risks through its *Corporate Plan 2025–29* and a range of supporting strategies, including the Melbourne Gardens Master Plan, Cranbourne Gardens Master Plan, Landscape Succession Strategy, and Science Strategy.

These strategies incorporate climate adaptation, environmental sustainability, biodiversity conservation and organisational resilience. Key commitments include the development of an Environmental Sustainability Action Plan and a Climate Transition and Sustainability Strategy and Policy to support the long-term sustainability of the Gardens' collections, landscapes, scientific programs and operations. Environmental performance reporting undertaken through FRD24E supports the monitoring of the Gardens' climate and sustainability objectives and informs future planning and decision-making.

Climate-Related Risk Management

The Gardens has considered the effects of climate change outcomes such as weather extremes, bushfires, and flooding as a factor in planning risk management as identified in the following strategic risks:

Strategic risks: SR-02 Environmental Threats speaks to comprised living collections from failure to implement effective strategies to respond to the impacts of climate change and environmental threats harming the health of our people, plants, and place.

Operational risks: Climate change has also been identified as a contributing factor in numerous operational risks, with appropriate ongoing controls being implemented to manage each of these risks.

Shared risk management: The Gardens' risk management framework incorporates policies and procedures that guide the management of the Gardens identified risks, including climate change, emergency risks, site-specific and statewide and Australia-wide shared risks.

Climate-Related Metrics and Targets – Mitigation

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria supports the Victorian Government's target of achieving net zero emissions by 2045 and continues to implement measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across its operations. Key mitigation activities include:

- Development of an Environmental Sustainability Action Plan to guide future emissions reduction and environmental sustainability initiatives.
- Implementation of the *Social Procurement Strategy 2023–26*, which includes environmental sustainability and climate change targets for procurement activities.
- Ongoing upgrades to energy-efficient LED lighting.
- Completion of baseline waste audits to inform future waste reduction and circular economy initiatives.
- Progressive replacement of fleet vehicles and machinery with zero- or low-emission alternatives, where operationally feasible.
- Continuous improvement of greenhouse gas emissions data collection, monitoring and reporting.



Environmental Performance Report

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria reports environmental performance in accordance with FRD24E. Performance against the applicable indicators for the reporting period is presented below, together with commentary on significant changes and trends.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions are broken down into emissions 'scopes' consistent with national and international reporting standards. Scope One emissions are from sources that the Gardens owns or controls, such as fossil fuels generated by our machinery. Scope Two emissions are indirect emissions from the Gardens' use of electricity from the grid. Scope Three emissions are indirect emissions from sources the Gardens does not control but does influence, such as corporate air travel, waste, and water.

Scope One

The Gardens' Scope One greenhouse gas emissions increased by 21.6% compared with 2024–25 and 13.9% compared with 2023–24. The increase is primarily attributable to the inclusion of additional vehicle kilometres that were not previously captured and the reclassification of contaminated soil sent to landfill. Together, these changes have resulted in a more complete and accurate representation of the Gardens' Scope One emissions.

Scope Two

The Gardens' Scope Two greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 9.3% compared with 2024–25 and remained broadly consistent with 2023–24 levels, increasing by less than 1% over the two–year period. The reduction from the previous year is primarily attributable to lower electricity consumption during the reporting period, including fewer evening public programs at Cranbourne Gardens requiring additional electricity from the grid.

Scope Three

The Gardens' Scope Three greenhouse gas emissions continued to decline, decreasing by 15.1% compared with 2024–25 and 13.7% compared with 2023–24. The reduction was primarily driven by significantly lower emissions from commercial air travel, which decreased by approximately 79% during the reporting period. Additional reductions were recorded in waste and transport energy emissions, partially offset by a small increase in water–related emissions.



Net Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Gardens' net greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 41.3% compared with 2024–25 and 38.8% compared with 2023–24, falling from 2,190.97 t CO_2–e in 2024–25 to 1,285.97 t CO_2–e in 2025–26.

The reduction was primarily attributable to the Gardens' use of renewable electricity supplied through the Victorian Government State Purchase Contract. The associated GreenPower and Large-scale Generation Certificate (LGC) arrangements reduced the Gardens' net greenhouse gas emissions by 745.36 t CO_2–e during 2025–26.

Gross greenhouse gas emissions (before offsets) also decreased by 7.3% compared with 2024–25, reflecting lower Scope Two and Scope Three emissions during the reporting period.

Indicator	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24
G1 Total scope one (direct) greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO_2–e]	**369.31**	**303.69**	**324.24**
G2 Total scope two (indirect electricity) greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO_2–e]	**931.54**	**1,026.54**	**930.87**
G3 Total scope three (other indirect) greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO_2–e]	**730.48**	**860.73**	**846.31**
GreenPower offset [MWh]	745.36	–	–
G(Opt) Net greenhouse gas emissions [tonnes CO_2–e]	**1,285.97**	**2,190.97**	**2,101.42**

Electricity Production and Consumption

Total electricity consumption decreased by 7.9% compared with 2024–25 and was 0.9% lower than 2023–24 levels. The reduction was primarily driven by a decrease in purchased electricity across both the Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens sites.

On–site electricity generation increased by 26.5% compared with 2024–25, with solar electricity consumed on site increasing from 95.40 MWh to 120.47 MWh. This reflects improved solar generation performance following operational disruptions experienced in previous years.

Electricity offsets increased substantially during 2025–26, rising by 268.3% compared with 2024–25 and 303.5% compared with 2023–24. This increase reflects the addition of Large–scale Generation Certificates (LGCs) voluntarily retired on the Gardens' behalf under the Victorian Government State Purchase Contract, together with the renewable component of grid–supplied electricity.

Indicator	2025–26	2024–25	2023–24
EL1 Total electricity consumption [MWh]	**1,521.44**	**1,651.71**	**1,535.72**
Purchased	1400.96	1,556.31	1,400.41
Self–generated	120.47	95.40	135.30
EL2 Onsite electricity generated [MWh]	**120.75**	**95.48**	**135.73**
Total consumption behind–the–meter [MWh] — Solar Electricity	120.47	95.40	135.30
Total electricity exported [MWh] — Solar Electricity	0.28	0.07	0.43
EL3 Onsite installed generation capacity [MWh] — Solar System	**0.15**	**0.15**	**0.15**
EL4 Total electricity offsets [MWh]	**1,061.08**	**288.09**	**262.97**
LGCs voluntarily retired on the entity's behalf	810.17	–	–
RPP (Renewable Power Percentage in the grid)	250.91	288.09	262.97

Stationary Fuel Use

Total fuel consumption in buildings increased by 31.0% compared with 2024–25 and by 25.8% compared with 2023–24. The increase was primarily driven by higher natural gas consumption across the Gardens' operations, partially offset by a reduction in diesel use.

As a result, greenhouse gas emissions from stationary fuel consumption increased by 30.4% compared with 2024–25 and by 25.5% compared with 2023–24, rising from 235.74 t CO_2–e to 307.41 t CO_2–e. Natural gas remained the largest contributor to stationary fuel emissions, accounting for approximately 90% of emissions from fuel used in buildings during the reporting period.

Indicator	2025–26	2024–25	2023–24
F1 Total fuels used in buildings [MJ]	**5,878,516.60**	**4,485,775.00**	**4,673,092.30**
Natural gas	5,392,817.00	4,019,123.80	4,255,607.60
LPG	476,555.20	429,996.80	380,776.10
Diesel	9,144.40	36,654.40	36,708.60
F2 Greenhouse gas emissions from stationary fuel consumption [Tonnes CO_2–e]	**307.41**	**235.74**	**244.94**
Natural gas	277.89	207.11	219.29
LPG	28.88	26.06	23.07
Diesel	0.64	2.57	2.58

Transportation

The total number of vehicles in the Gardens' fleet increased from 53 vehicles in 2024–25 to 57 vehicles in 2025–26, primarily due to improvements in fleet recording and asset identification. Despite the increase in fleet numbers, the transition towards lower–emission vehicles continued, particularly within the off–road fleet, where electric vehicles now account for 49% of all off–road vehicles compared with 38% in 2024–25.

Total energy used by the Gardens' vehicle fleet decreased by 8.8% compared with 2024–25 and by 21.7% compared with 2023–24. Greenhouse gas emissions from fleet vehicles similarly decreased by 8.9% from 2024–25 and by 21.9% from 2023–24. These reductions were largely driven by lower diesel consumption, reflecting the ongoing replacement of diesel–powered vehicles and equipment with more energy–efficient and electric alternatives.

Total distance travelled by commercial aircraft decreased significantly during 2025–26, falling by 79.1% compared with 2024–25 and by 33.3% compared with 2023–24. The reduction reflects fewer interstate and international conferences, events and partnership meetings attended by staff during the reporting period. Travel levels in the previous two years were unusually high due to a post–COVID backlog of conferences and increased travel associated with re–establishment of research collaborations and external partnerships and stakeholder networks.

Indicator	2025–26	%	2024–25	%	2023–24	%
T2 Number and proportion of vehicles	**57**	**100**	**53**	**100**	**55**	**100**
On–Road Vehicles	**16**	**28**	**16**	**30**	**13**	**24**
Electric	0	13	1	6	–	–
Hybrid	1	69	–	–	1	2
Diesel	11	6	14	88	12	22
Petrol	1	13	1	6	–	–
Off–Road Vehicles	41	72	37	70	42	76
Electric	20	49	14	38	18	43
Hybrid	0	0	–	–	–	–
Diesel	9	22	13	35	11	26
Petrol	12	29	10	27	13	31

Indicator	2025–26	2024–25	2023–24
T1 Total energy used in transportation (vehicle fleet) [MJ]	**889,487.50**	**975,132.20**	**1,135,311.80**
Petrol	260,813.20	252,918.90	228,315.80
Diesel	628,674.30	722,213.30	906,996.00
T3 Total greenhouse gas emissions from transportation (vehicle fleet) [tonnes CO_2–e)	**61.90**	**67.96**	**79.30**
Petrol	17.64	17.10	15.44
Diesel	44.27	50.85	63.86
T4 Total distance travelled by commercial air travel (passenger km travelled for business)	**102,864.62**	**493,285.95**	**154,128.61**

Total Energy Use

Renewable energy increased substantially during 2025–26, rising from 1.38 million MJ in 2024–25 to 4.25 million MJ, reflecting the inclusion of renewable electricity supplied through the Victorian Government State Purchase Contract and associated Large-scale Generation Certificates.

Melbourne Gardens continues to process a substantial proportion of garden biomass into mulch for reuse on site, supporting a closed-loop approach to green waste management and reducing reliance on imported mulch. Staff kitchen composting and recycling programs also continue across both sites, together with the recycling of uniforms, toner cartridges, batteries and e-waste. Efforts to minimise waste generation and reduce single-use plastics remain ongoing.

Indicator	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24
E1 Total energy usage from fuels, including stationary fuels (F1) and transport fuels (T1) [MJ]	**6,768,004.10**	**5,460,907.20**	**5,808,404.10**
E2 Total energy usage from electricity [MJ]	**5,477,185.65**	**5,946,168.21**	**5,528,590.93**
E3 Total energy usage segmented by renewable and non-renewable sources [MJ]	**12,245,189.75**	**11,434,651.01**	**11,336,995.03**
Renewable	4,253,613.05	1,380,556.25	1,433,779.41
Non-renewable (E1 + E2 – E3 Renewable)	7,991,576.70	10,026,519.16	9,903,215.61
E4 Units of stationary energy used normalised: (F1+E2)/ normaliser			
Energy per unit of FRD FTE [MJ/FRD FTE]	58,543.60	52,225.00	51,236.42
Energy per unit of floor space [MJ/m2]	763.75	701.63	686.14
Energy per unit of visitors [MJ/visitors]	4.23	5.66	5.86

Sustainable Procurement

The Gardens delivers on its sustainable procurement objectives through the implementation of its *Social Procurement Strategy 2023–26*, in line with the Victorian Government Framework. Details of the Gardens' social procurement actions are outlined in the relevant section of the Annual Report.

Water Conservation

Water conservation and water quality continue to be a high priority across both Gardens sites, including the Cranbourne Gardens Nursery, which now operates using 100% recycled water. Total water consumption increased by 3% compared with 2024–25 and by 47.3% compared with 2023–24, largely due to increased use of potable water for irrigation and operational purposes.

Potable water consumption increased by 14.4% compared with 2024–25 and by 86.5% compared with 2023–24. At Melbourne Gardens, higher potable water use was associated with increased irrigation demand during drier conditions and warmer periods. Investigations into higher consumption recorded at one water meter are ongoing, and a faulty backflow prevention device was replaced during the reporting period, which may also have contributed to elevated water use.

Use of alternative water supplies decreased by 17.5% compared with 2024–25 but remained broadly consistent with longer–term usage patterns. Reused water consumption decreased by 6.6% compared with 2024–25 but increased by 30% compared with 2023–24. Overall, the increase in total water consumption reflects the challenges of maintaining living collections during drier conditions while continuing to prioritise sustainable water management across both Gardens sites.

Indicator	2025–26	2024–25	2023–24
W1 Total units of metered water consumed by water source (kL)	**228,701.41**	**221,946.22**	**155,270.22**
Potable water [kL]	147,299.41	128,756.93	78,983.90
Alternate supply consumption [kL]	42,656.00	51,701.00	46,529.48
Reused water [kL]	38,746.00	41,488.29	29,756.84
Total units of water consumed [kL]	**228,701.41**	**221,946.22**	**155,270.22**
W2 Units of metered water consumed normalised by FTE, headcount, or other			
Water per unit of FRD FTE [kL/FRD]	1,179.06	1,111.12	779.82
Water per unit of floor space [kL/m2]	15.38	14.93	10.44
Water per unit of visitors [kL/visitors]	0.09	0.12	0.09

Waste and Recycling

Greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste disposal decreased by 16.5% compared with 2024–25 and by 37.2% compared with 2023–24. This reduction was primarily driven by lower volumes of waste sent to landfill across both Gardens sites.

Total waste sent to landfill decreased by 16.5% compared with 2024–25 and by 37.2% compared with 2023–24. The reduction was largely attributable to lower operational waste volumes following the completion of several major infrastructure and capital works projects that generated additional waste in previous reporting periods.

During 2025–26, a review of waste classification methodologies identified that some soil previously reported within recycling and recovery streams was more appropriately classified as landfill waste. This has improved the accuracy of waste reporting and should be considered when comparing results across reporting years.

A review of historical green waste reporting at Melbourne Gardens also identified inconsistencies in the way green waste volumes had been measured and reported. To improve accuracy and year–on–year comparability, all three reporting years have been updated to reflect the quantity of processed mulch produced from garden biomass. This has resulted in revised recycling and recovery figures across the reporting period.

Recycling and recovery volumes remained relatively stable at approximately 552 tonnes during 2025–26, compared with 548 tonnes in 2024–25 and 571 tonnes in 2023–24. Melbourne Gardens continues to process a substantial proportion of garden biomass into mulch for reuse on site, supporting a closed–loop approach to landscape management while reducing reliance on externally sourced mulch and minimising waste sent to landfill.

Staff kitchen minimum waste, composting, and recycling continue across both sites, as does recycling of the Gardens uniforms, toner cartridge, e–waste, and batteries. Efforts to eliminate single–use plastic also continue.

Indicator	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24
WR1 Total units of waste disposed of by waste stream and disposal method [kg]	**755,956.00**	**792,092.57**	**896,193.12**
Landfill (total)	204,050.00	244,286.00	324,740.90
General waste	148,160.00	194,820.00	271,795.87
Public waste to landfill	55,890.00	49,466.00	52,945.03
Recycling/recovery (disposal)	551,906.00	547,806.57	571,452.20
Cardboard and paper	5,626.00	6,260.00	6,378.91
Commingled recycling	4,280.00	3,794.71	3,730.22
Green waste converted to mulch	542,000.00	537,180.00	553,347.15
Soil	0	571.86	7,995.92
WR3 Total units of waste disposed normalised by FTE [kg general waste]			
Total waste to landfill per FTE [kg]	1,051.97	1,222.96	1,630.96
Total waste recycled and reused per FTE [kg]	2,845.32	2,742.46	2,870.03
WR4 Recycling rate (%)	**73.01%**	**69.16%**	**63.76%**
WR5 Greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste disposal (CO2-e(t))	**326.48**	**390.86**	**519.58**

Royal Botanic Gardens Board Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

I, Penny Fowler, on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has no Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the *Financial Management Act* 1994 and Instructions.



Penny Fowler
Chairperson
Royal Botanic Gardens Board

6 October 2026

Compliance with the *Building Act 1993*

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria owns and maintains over 50 buildings and shelters across its two sites and is therefore required to include a statement on its compliance with the provisions of the *Building Act 1993*.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has the following mechanisms in place to ensure conformity with building standards:

— A Building Surveyor is appointed to assess any works that involve alterations, additions, or structural repair to a building, and a Building Permit issued where deemed necessary.

— All consultants and contractors engaged to work on Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria buildings are vetted to ensure that they hold the appropriate licenses and registration.

The following mechanisms are in place for inspection, reporting, scheduling, and carrying out rectification works on existing buildings:

— Routine and scheduled maintenance audits and reporting

— Ongoing routine and responsive servicing and repair

— All essential safety measure inspections undertaken by a registered Building Surveyor with compliance issues being responded to and progressed as required

Major works (greater than $50,000) were conducted as follows:

— Herbarium Capacity Upgrade

— How to Garden

— Drylands Hub

— Arbour Restoration

— Sign Workshop Remediation

There were three building permits and no certificates of final completion issued for projects this year, as follows:

— Herbarium Capacity Upgrade – Building Permit issued

— Drylands Hub – Building Permit issued

— Sign Workshop floor remediation – Building Permit issued

Buildings of Non-Conformity

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has undertaken building conformity and essential safety measure inspections throughout the site. Several non-conformities were identified within the heritage-listed building infrastructure at Melbourne Gardens, including non-compliance and accessibility issues, lack of access ramps, and non-compliant exit thresholds. These will be addressed through the planned asset upgrade program.

There were no emergency and building orders issued in this period.

Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF) Maturity Assessment

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria undertook an AMAF maturity assessment in 2023-24 (Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria 2024, Annual Report 2023-24, p.121). In line with the AMAF and the Financial Management Compliance Framework, the organisation undertook an annual attestation of the AMAF in 2024-25. The assessment identified no compliance deficiencies. The next maturity assessment will be undertaken by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in 2026-27.

Additional Information Available on Request

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance, details in respect of the items listed below have been retained by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and are available in full on request, subject to the provisions of the FOI Act:

— Details of publications produced by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria about itself, and how these can be obtained

— Details of any major external reviews carried out on Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

— Details of major research and development activities undertaken by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

— Details of overseas visits undertaken, including a summary of the objectives and outcomes of each visit

— Details of major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to develop community awareness of the entity and its services

— Details of changes in prices, fees, charges, rates and levies charged

— A statement on industrial relations within Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

— A statement of completion of declarations of pecuniary interests by relevant officers

— All contractors engaged, services provided, and expenditure committed for each engagement (in addition to the information included in Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Annual Report).

The information is available on request from:

Freedom of Information Officer
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
Phone: (03) 9252 2300
Email: governance@rbg.vic.gov.au

Information that is not applicable to Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria:

— Details of shares held by senior officers as nominee or held beneficially in a statutory authority or subsidiary: Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria does not hold any shares in any company.

Disclosure Index

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's 2025–26 Annual Report is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislation. This index has been prepared to facilitate identification of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

Legislation	Requirement	Page
Standing directions and Financial reporting directions		130
Charter and Purpose		
FRD 22	Manner of establishment and the relevant Ministers	15
FRD 22	Purpose, functions, powers and duties	9
FRD 8	Departmental objectives, indicators and outputs	23
FRD 22	Key initiatives and projects	24
FRD 22	Nature and range of services provided	12
Management and Structure		
FRD 22	Organisational structure	21
Financial and Other Information		
FRD 8	Performance against output performance measures	23
FRD 10	Disclosure index	128
FRD12	Disclosure of major contracts	111
FRD 15	Executive disclosures	111
FRD 22	Employment and conduct principles	97
FRD 22	Occupational health and safety policy	101
FRD 22	Summary of the financial results for the year	48
FRD 22	Significant changes in financial position during the year	46
FRD 22	Major changes or factors affecting performance	47
FRD 22	Subsequent events	89
FRD 22	Application and operation of *Freedom of Information Act 1982*	111
FRD 22	Compliance with building and maintenance provisions of *Building Act 1993*	127
FRD 22	Statement on National Competition Policy	127

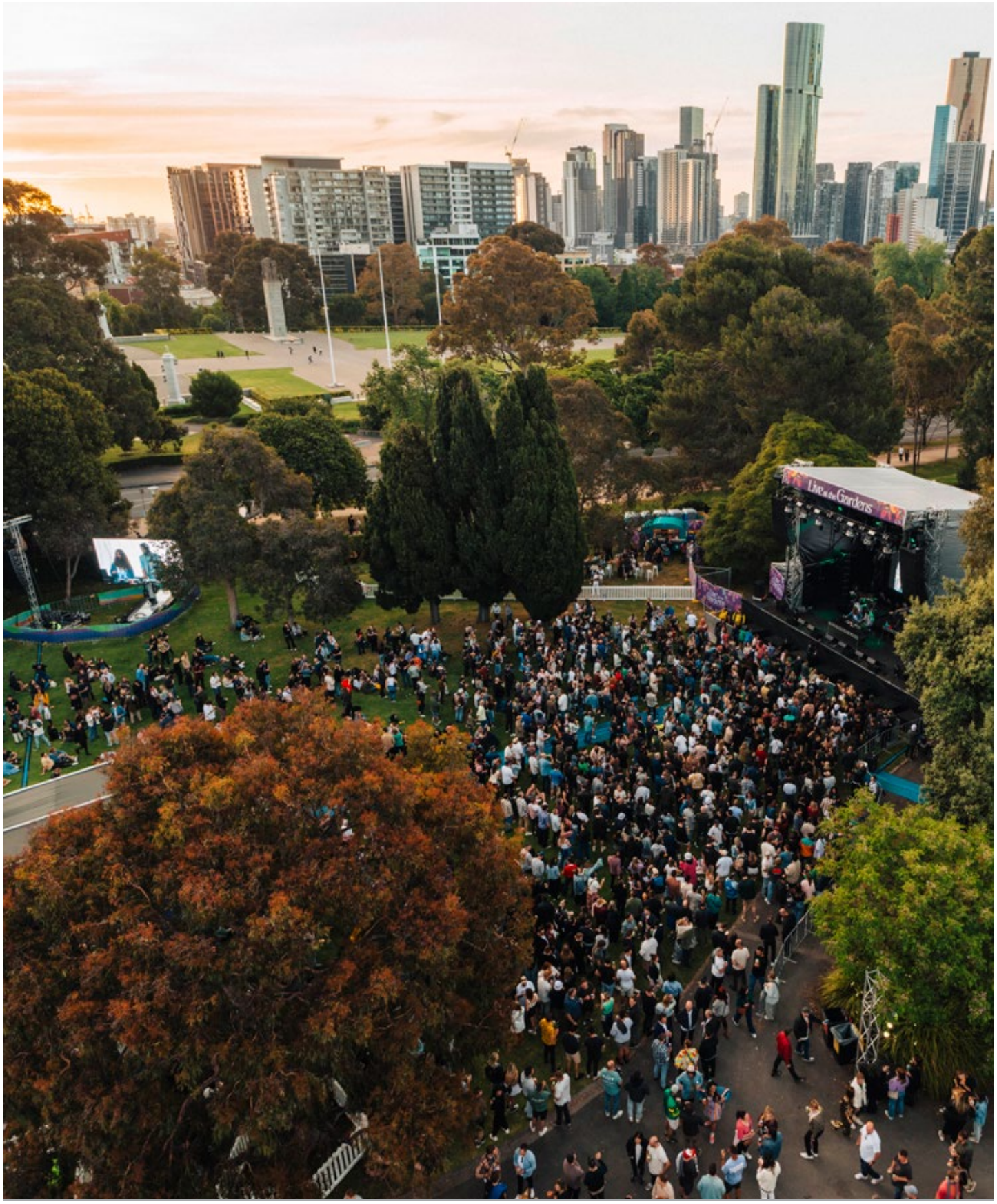
Legislation	Requirement	Page
FRD 22	Application and operation of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*	112
FRD 22	Details of consultancies over $10,000	109
FRD 22	Details of consultancies under $10,000	109
FRD 22	Disclosure of government advertising expenditure	109
FRD 22	Disclosure of ICT expenditure	111
FRD 22	Reviews and studies expenditure	111
FRD 22	Statement of availability of other information	112
FRD 22	Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF) maturity assessment	127
FRD 22	Disclosure of emergency procurement	113
FRD 22	Disclosure of social procurement activities under the Social Procurement Framework	114
FRD 22,	Disclosure of procurement complaints	114
FRD 24	Reporting of environmental data	116
FRD 25	Local Jobs First	111
FRD 29	Workforce Data disclosures	96
SD 5.2	Specific requirements under Standing Direction	126
Compliance Attestation and Declaration		
SD 5.1.4	Attestation for compliance with Ministerial Standing Direction	126
Financial Statements		46
Report of operations		6
Declaration		
SD 5.2.2	Declaration in financial statements	51
Other Requirements Under Standing Directions 5.2		
SD 5.2.1(a)	Compliance with Australian accounting standards and other authoritative pronouncements	51
SD 5.2.1(a)	Compliance with Standing Directions	126
SD 5.2.1(b)	Compliance with Model Financial Report	51

Legislation	Requirement	Page
Other Disclosures as Required by FRDs in Notes to the Financial Statements (a)(b)		
FRD 9	Departmental Disclosure of Administered Assets and Liabilities by Activity	69
FRD 11	Disclosure of Ex gratia Expenses	84
FRD 21	Disclosures of Responsible Persons and Executive Officers in the Financial Report	86
FRD 103	Non–Financial Physical Assets	66
FRD 110	Cash Flow Statements	54
FRD 112	Defined Benefit Superannuation Obligations	61
FRD 114	Financial Instruments – general government entities and public non–financial corporations	77

Legislation
Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) (FOI Act)
Building Act 1993
Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012
Disability Act 2006
Financial Management Act 1994 (b)

Acronyms:

AMAF	Asset Management Accountability Framework
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DoE	Department of Education
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESAP	Environmental Sustainability Action Plan
FM Act	Financial Management Act 1994
FMCF	Financial Management Compliance Framework
FOI	Freedom of Information
FOI Act	Freedom of Information Act 1982
GAICD	Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan
LJF Act	Local Jobs First Act 2003
MRO	Model Report of Operations
PID Act	Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012
PRTA	Parks and Reserves Trust Account
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RBG Act	Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991
SBC	State Botanical Collection
SD	Standing Direction
SPF	Social Procurement Framework
SPS	Social Procurement Strategy


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VICTORIA
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