

# **Norfolk Island Botanic Garden**

## **Plan of Management**



## Note

This Plan of Management for Norfolk Island Botanic Garden has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975 under which the Garden was established and has been managed. The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act is however to be replaced by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 by no later than 16 July 2000. The new Act will also replace the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974, Endangered Species Protection Act 1992, Whale Protection Act 1980 and World Heritage Properties Conservation Act 1983. References to any of these Acts in this Plan of Management are to be read where necessary as including references to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The Environmental Reform (Consequential Provisions) Act 1999 will continue the operation of this Plan as if it had been made under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act but the Plan will need to be read subject to the provisions of the new Act.

The Director of National Parks and Wildlife will continue to be responsible for the administration, management and control of the Garden in accordance with this plan, although the name of the Director will be changed to the Director of National Parks.

Copies of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and the Environmental Reform (Consequential Provisions) Act may be purchased from Commonwealth government bookshops or may be viewed on the internet at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth> or <http://scaleplus.law.gov.au/>.

This Plan of Management has been prepared under sections 11 and 12 of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975, sections 2 and 3 of the Norfolk Island National Park and Norfolk Island Botanic Garden Regulations 1988 and to be consistent with sections 365-373 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

This Plan of Management commences in accordance with section 12(3) of the NPWC Act and will cease to have effect on the day specified by the Minister in a notice published in the Commonwealth Government Gazette pursuant to section 12(6) of the Act.

Consistent with section 373 of the EPBC Act, it is intended that the Plan will be effective for seven years or until a new Plan comes into operation within the prescribed seven year period.

### **3.1 Interpretation**

In this Plan of Management:

- ‘Act’ means the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975 and from the commencement of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 means that Act ;
- ‘ANBG’ means the ‘Australian National Botanic Gardens’ being the area declared to be a reserve, and to which that name was assigned, by Proclamation under subsection 7 of the Act;
- ‘ANPWS’ means the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service established under section 33 of the Act, now known as Parks Australia;
- ‘Botanic Garden’ means the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden established under section 7 of the Act;
- ‘Committee’ means the Norfolk Island National Park Advisory Committee;
- ‘Director’ means the Director of National Parks and Wildlife established under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975 and, from the commencement of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 means the Director of National Parks;
- ‘EPBC Act’ means the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999;
- ‘Environment Australia’ means the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage, and includes the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service established under section 33 of the Act, now known as Parks Australia;
- ‘Gazette’ means the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette;

- ‘Parks Australia’ includes the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service established under section 33 of the Act, and those parts of the Department of the Environment and Heritage bearing that name;
- ‘Plan’ means this Plan of Management in operation under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975 and, from its commencement, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999;
- ‘Regulations’ means any Regulations in force relating to the management of Norfolk Island Botanic Garden; and
- ‘Territory’ means the Territory of Norfolk Island.

## **3.2 Aims and Objectives**

### **3.2.1 Purpose of a Botanic Garden**

A botanic garden is defined under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975 as:

- a scientific and educational institution the purpose of which is the advancement and dissemination of knowledge and appreciation of plants by:
  - growing them in a horticultural setting; and
  - establishing herbarium collections; and
  - conducting research; and
  - providing display and interpretative services.

The Act requires the following objective to be considered when preparing a plan of management for a botanic garden:

- the increase of knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Australia’s plant heritage by establishing, as an integrated resource, a collection of living and herbarium specimens of Australian and related plants for study, interpretation, conservation and display.

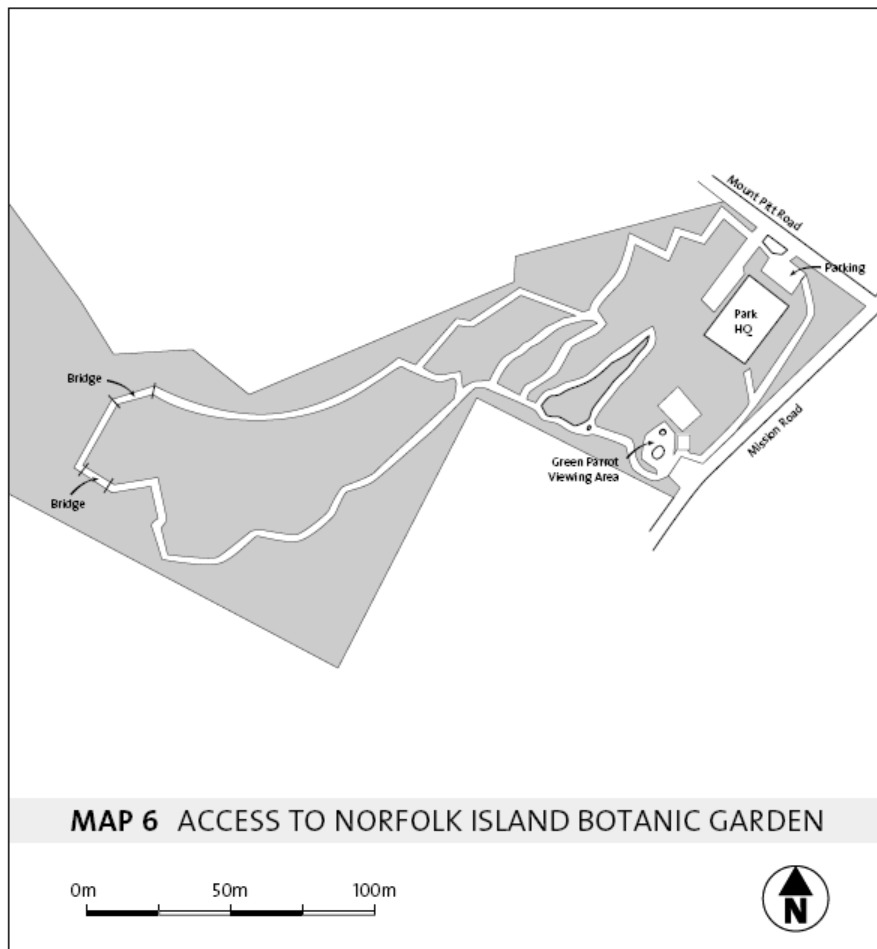
### **3.2.2 Management Context for Norfolk Island Botanic Garden**

**AIMS:** Through managing the Botanic Garden, to increase knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Norfolk Island's plant heritage.

#### **Background**

The Botanic Garden, which covers an area of 5.5ha adjacent to, but separate from, the Park is managed by Parks Australia staff with the assistance of contract staff and casual labour. The Botanic Garden is located on Mission Road, near the Mt Pitt Road entrance to the Park. In 1993, a further 4.9ha of sub-tropical vine-rainforest was added to the original 0.6ha Botanic Garden, bringing the total area of the Botanic Garden to 5.5ha (Map 6).

Under the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Protected Area Management Categories, the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden is a Category IV area (managed mainly for conservation through management intervention).



## Proposed Policies and Actions

The management aim will be achieved by establishing and maintaining, as an integrated resource, a collection of living and herbarium specimens of Norfolk Island plants for study, interpretation, conservation and display. Policies and actions proposed to achieve this are given in the following sections.

### **3.3 Promotion and Use of the Botanic Garden**

#### **3.3.1 Recreation**

**AIMS:** To provide for an appropriate range of recreational opportunities for visitors and residents of Norfolk Island.

#### **Background**

The lawns near the Mission Road Entrance of the Botanic Garden are a popular meeting spot for both residents and visitors. The walking trails are also regularly used for exercise and sightseeing.

One of the major constraints to the development of the Botanic Garden is the steep terrain of the site. Many elderly or less agile people find the slopes and steps difficult and mainly tend to use the areas adjacent to each entrance.

The (Norfolk Island) Norfolk Island National Park and Norfolk Island Botanic Garden Regulations 1988 generally prohibit camping in the Botanic Garden.

#### **Policies**

- The Botanic Garden will be maintained as a venue for passive recreation.
- Pedestrian access only will be provided in the Botanic Garden.

#### **Management Actions**

##### ***General***

- Information available on the range of opportunities for visitors to the Botanic Garden will be regularly updated.
- Visitor use of the Botanic Garden, expectations and experiences will continue to be monitored and management practices will be adjusted to suit public demand where necessary or desirable. Formal visitor surveys will be undertaken at least once every five years.



- Interpretation of the Botanic Garden and its features will be implemented and conducted in accordance with an interpretation strategy (see also section 3.3.6).

### **3.3.2 Facilities**

**AIMS:** To provide and maintain appropriate facilities to meet the needs of visitors to the Botanic Garden.

#### **Background**

Facilities are installed in public areas to meet the basic needs of people (such as toilets), for recreation (picnic facilities), for safety or visitor control (barriers and steps), for comfort (seats), and to provide information (signs).

Facilities provided include seats at various locations within the Botanic Garden, interpretive signs and aviaries associated with a captive breeding program for the endangered Green Parrot. A list of existing facilities is recorded in Schedule 1.

As camping is prohibited in the Botanic Garden, camping facilities are not provided.

A policy of ‘take out what you take in’ has been in practice since the Botanic Garden was established and no litter bins are located in the Botanic Garden.

There are no facilities in the Botanic Garden which are specifically designed for wheelchair access.

#### **Policies**

- Visitor facilities will be kept to a minimum with priority being given to maintaining existing facilities.
- All signs are to be designed and sited in accordance with an interpretation strategy to ensure they are clearly evident to visitors without being overly intrusive (see also section 3.3.6).
- To the extent feasible, within the physical constraints of the site, the needs of elderly and disabled people will be

considered in the provision of infrastructure and facilities in the Botanic Garden.

### **Management Actions**

- As a general principle, any new facilities will be designed, sited and constructed with the needs of disabled people in mind.
- In accord with a works program, consideration will be given to provision of the following facilities:
- public toilets within the Botanic Garden-Park Headquarters complex; and
- a covered seat or similar structure at the bottom of the Botanic Garden so that people can shelter from the rain.

### **3.3.3 Safety**

**AIMS:** To ensure that visitors to the Botanic Garden have a safe and enjoyable experience.

### **Background**

Accidents most likely to cause injury to people in the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden include slipping on walking tracks, boardwalks and bridges, and being struck by falling trees or branches. Over-exertion can also lead to a life-threatening situation for some people, particularly the elderly or infirm.

Steps have been constructed in sections of walking tracks that have been identified as being steep and slippery. Other safety precautions taken include the re-alignment of tracks away from steep slopes, resurfacing walking tracks and routine inspections.

Parks Australia uses a VHF radio system consisting of a base transceiver located at its office on Mt Pitt Road and vehicle-mounted and hand-held transceivers. The portable units can transmit through dense vegetation and good reception can be obtained from most places on either Norfolk or Phillip Islands. The radio system is compatible

with the emergency radio frequencies used by the Norfolk Island Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Parks Australia has installed an integrated lock system which enables emergency vehicles (police, fire and ambulance) to gain access to all management tracks.

### **Policies**

- Parks Australia will assess regularly the risks to visitors in the Garden and take appropriate action to minimise those risks.
- Signs will be provided to advise the public of potential hazards in the Garden.

### **Management Actions**

- Regular safety inspections will be undertaken of roads, tracks and other facilities within the Botanic Garden.
- An effective emergency response strategy for the Botanic Garden will be established in consultation with emergency services and local residents, tested and implemented as necessary.
- Gradual incorporation of new radio-telephone networks into the new emergency communication system will be investigated for possible adoption.
- All permanent management staff will receive regular training in first aid and will be required to keep their qualification current.

### **3.3.4 Water**

**AIMS:** To maintain the water catchment values of the Garden for other users, and to manage those values, where appropriate, for biodiversity.

### **Background**

Precipitation on Norfolk Island occurs mainly through rainfall and fog-drip. The Botanic Garden forms a minor water catchment area for

the Mission Road area of Norfolk Island and it is a recharge area for Norfolk Island's underground aquifers. The flow of the creek through the middle of the Botanic Garden is restricted to periods of heavy or sustained rainfall.

There is currently no source of potable water in the Botanic Garden.

### **Policies**

- Water conservation principles will be applied to all water use in the Botanic Garden.
- Persistent chemicals, particularly organo-chlorides, which may compromise the quality of water derived from the Botanic Garden catchment will not be permitted for use in the Botanic Garden.

### **Management Actions**

- The watering systems at the Botanic Garden will be investigated with a view to minimising, through improved watering techniques and recycling, the amount of water used.
- Consideration will be given to including rainwater tanks in the design of buildings erected in the Botanic Garden in order to provide a source of drinking water.

### **3.3.5 Commercial Activities**

**AIMS:** To regulate commercial activities in the Botanic Garden whilst ensuring compatibility with other management objectives.

#### **Background**

Parts of the Botanic Garden are managed to provide opportunities for public recreation and enjoyment. This creates opportunities for local businesses to provide products and services to the visitors to the Botanic Garden, particularly where Parks Australia is unable to meet the full range of public demand.

In addition to the Botanic Garden's economic values with respect to tourism and recreation, there are minor non-native resources present

within the Botanic Garden, eg. guava and olive, which may have commercial value. The Botanic Garden is a community asset and Parks Australia has a responsibility to ensure that any use which is made of it or its resources is environmentally appropriate and for the benefit of the whole community, without favour to any one commercial operator.

The Act and Regulations provide that commercial activities must only be conducted where a permit has been issued and in accordance with the conditions of that permit. Commercial activities which currently take place within the Botanic Garden include walking tours, sometimes following a particular theme.

In 1995, a display aviary was constructed in anticipation that the number of parrots bred would enable some to be put on display. The captive-bred population has not increased as rapidly as anticipated, delaying introduction of display animals. A viewing platform was constructed and opened in 1999 and some parrots released in the display aviary. This provides an attraction for the local tourism industry.

## **Policies**

- Commercial activities in the Botanic Garden will only be allowed in accordance with a permit issued by the Park Manager.
- No operations for the recovery of minerals will be conducted in the Botanic Garden during the life of this Plan.

## **Management Actions**

- The Park Manager will be responsible for considering all applications for permits to conduct commercial activities in the Botanic Garden in accordance with guidelines approved by the Committee.
- Parks Australia will maintain a permitting system and permit register. Commercial permits will be issued on a financial year basis or for a lesser trial period.

- The Park Manager will provide to the Committee details of all permits issued and refused for commercial activities within the Botanic Garden.

### **3.3.6 Interpretation and Education**

**AIMS:** To use appropriate methods to increase public awareness of nature conservation values of the Botanic Garden, inform people of features of interest, and to promote behaviour which is favourable to achieving management objectives.

#### **Background**

The Botanic Garden provides a valuable resource and supplement to the Park for teaching people about the natural history of Norfolk Island, particularly its flora. Education and interpretive services are critical to the ability of visitors to enjoy their visit to the Botanic Garden.

There is currently no visitor centre for the Botanic Garden. Information about the Botanic Garden is available from the Parks Australia office on Mt Pitt Road. There is also a leaflet dispenser and notice board at the Botanic Garden.

The Norfolk Island Flora and Fauna Society established a natural history display which is currently housed in the Park Visitor Centre. This provides visitors with a range of information about the environment of the Norfolk group of islands.

Parks Australia has produced a number of leaflets and media articles related to the natural history and features of interest in the Botanic Garden. In collaboration with the Norfolk Island Central School, it has also produced *The Norfolk Island Environment Book* (Jurd, 1989) as a resource for environmental education on Norfolk Island.

Since the opening of an extended Botanic Garden track in 1993, an interim Norfolk Island Botanic Garden guide has been made available to visitors. The text from this guide was placed on the World Wide Web during 1996 (<http://www.anbg.gov.au/norfolk.gardens/norfolk.1.html>).

Plant labels are used to assist the public to identify plant species occurring in the Botanic Garden. The form and extent of labelling is under revision.

From time to time Parks Australia staff give talks to school groups and local associations about the natural history of Norfolk Island. Radio interviews and talks to local groups on topical issues are also given occasionally. Due to limited staffing, guided walks only occur by special arrangement.

### **Policies**

- Interpretive activities in the Botanic Garden will be guided by an interpretation strategy.

### **Management Actions**

- An interpretation strategy for the Botanic Garden will be developed and implemented, within the constraints of available resources. The strategy will provide details of the style and siting of signs describing the living collection, and a range of pamphlets and brochures will link all elements together.
- The information, content and style of presentation of interpretive materials currently available for the Botanic Garden will be reviewed to meet audience demands and to match the local school curriculum.
- Management staff will continue to be available to provide occasional talks to school students and other groups about the Botanic Garden and related aspects.
- Parks Australia will cooperate with groups such as the Norfolk Island Flora and Fauna Society and the Tourist Bureau to ensure that a range of information is available to meet the needs of visitors to the Island.
- Self-guided walks using leaflets and numbered posts may be developed along walking tracks which are suitable for this purpose.

- A leaflet will be produced which explains the relationships between the habitat requirements of the Green Parrot and plant species which are present in the Botanic Garden.

### **3.3.7 Burials and Scattering of Ashes**

**AIMS:** To provide for sensitive and appropriate disposal of human remains in the Botanic Garden.

#### **Background**

On occasions, people have sought permission for burials, scattering of ashes and erection of monuments in national parks. It is possible that similar requests may be made in relation to disposal of human remains in the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden.

Burials are not permitted on Norfolk Island outside appropriately gazetted areas.

#### **Policies**

- No burials will be permitted within the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden.
- Scattering of ashes may be permitted within the Botanic Garden in accordance with defined guidelines.
- Erection of monuments will not be permitted within the Botanic Garden but installation of memorial plaques will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Management Actions**

- All requests for scattering of ashes or installation of plaques will be referred to the Committee for consideration.
- Approval for scattering of ashes will only be given subject to the following conditions:
  - adequate lead time should be given in order to allow the Park Manager to consult with the Committee;



- the time of day chosen should minimise impact on other Park users;
  - only areas accessible by public roads or tracks may be used;
  - a reasonable limit should be set on the number of people attending, taking into account access, parking, environmental sensitivity and other features of the site and the needs of other Park users;
  - attendance of the media is generally not appropriate; and
  - any associated activities must be specified so that they may be considered by the Committee.
- Approval may be given for the installation of memorial plaques subject to the identification of a suitable site and a design and sitting that is modest and unobtrusive.

### **3.4 Curation**

#### **3.4.1 Management of the Living Collection**

**AIMS:** To establish and maintain living collections representative of Norfolk Island's flora.

#### **Background**

In order to achieve the Botanic Garden's purpose of providing a reference collection of the Island's flora, it would be ideal for representatives of every plant taxon native to Norfolk Island to be held in the collection. This would be best achieved by having collections of both living and herbarium specimens.

In order to develop the living collection aspect of the Botanic Garden, an initial priority was to remove the large number of exotic plants, especially African Olive, which existed on the site. While significant progress has been made in removal of exotic plants, further work is required.

Officers of the ANBG have visited Norfolk Island to provide advice to local Parks Australia staff (and Norfolk Island Parks and Forestry Service staff) on collection management including propagation methods, facilities and labelling.

### **Policies**

- A strategy will be prepared for the Botanic Garden to provide for as many of Norfolk Island's plants as possible to be displayed in a horticultural setting, with an appropriate use of themes.

### **Management Actions**

- Actions identified in the Botanic Garden strategy will be undertaken as resources permit.
- Clearing of exotic weeds will continue in line with recommendations contained in the Native Forest Rehabilitation Strategy for Norfolk Island National Park 1994-1998 as revised.
- Expert horticultural advice will continue to be sought as required through the Australian National Botanic Gardens and external consultants.
- Staff responsible for managing the living collection will have access to appropriate training and expertise.

### **3.4.2 Management of Weeds, Feral Animals and Pathogens**

**AIMS:** To protect the living collections of the Botanic Garden from grazing and seed predation by feral animals; from competition with weeds; and from threats posed by pathogens.

#### **Background**

Like the nearby Park, the Botanic Garden supports populations of native and feral animals. Introduced rats pose the biggest threat to living collections.

Rat baiting is routinely carried out in the Botanic Garden.

A rat bait station network was established in June 1994 and is monitored on a monthly basis.

While some areas of the Botanic Garden are largely free of weeds, significant work is still required to clear weeds from the more remote areas. Casual and contract labour is used regularly to deal with both weed removal and re-infestations.

A wide variety of plant pathogens could seriously affect the living specimens in the Botanic Garden. Earth-moving equipment, mowers and other vehicles operating in the Botanic Garden are among the potential sources of pathogens. Of particular concern is the root rot fungus *Phellinus noxius*, already suspected of killing several trees there. To reduce the likelihood of such events, plants introduced to the Botanic Garden are derived from stock propagated in the Nursery under hygienic conditions.

## **Policies**

- A feral animal management strategy for the National Park and Botanic Garden (also see section 2.3.6 of the Norfolk Island National Park Plan) will cover policies and actions applicable to the Botanic Garden. This will include the use of rat bait stations and traps.
- Weed control methods will be limited to those which minimise impacts on the environment and nearby living collections.
- Appropriate quarantine procedures will be followed when introducing plants to the Botanic Garden.

## **Management Actions**

- Where extra protection from rats is required to ensure the safety of particularly rare or sensitive plants, cages and other devices/methods will be used.
- Priorities for weed removal in the Botanic Garden will be a component of the revised rehabilitation strategy.
- Weeding in the Botanic Garden will generally be conducted by hand. As a general rule, herbicides will not be used in the

Botanic Garden. However, some poisoning may be used to kill large woody weed species such as African Olive, preferably by stem injection.

- The living collection will be routinely inspected for signs of pathogenic infections, with immediate action being taken to control identified outbreaks, using best-practice methods.
- Any trees or woody plants felled in the Botanic Garden will be treated, e.g. inoculated with heart-rot fungus, to prevent the spread of *Phellinus noxius*.
- Vehicles and equipment entering the Botanic Garden will be assessed to determine the likelihood of infection occurring and consideration will be given to the need for steam-cleaning.

### **3.4.3 Herbarium**

**AIMS:** To establish and maintain a comprehensive herbarium collection of Norfolk Island's flora, linked to the living collection of the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden, for the purposes of conservation, study, research and education.

#### **Background**

Parks Australia staff have compiled a reference collection of herbarium specimens of terrestrial plants native to Norfolk and Phillip Islands. The collection is housed at the Parks Australia office on Norfolk Island and can be accessed by members of the public on request.

Herbarium specimens of the Norfolk Island flora are also held in a number of botanical institutions including the ANBG and the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, United Kingdom.

#### **Policies**

- The existing herbarium collection will be maintained and, if possible, enhanced during the life of this Plan.
- The herbarium will continue to be made available for use by the public.

## **Management Actions**

- Progressively, living specimens in the Botanic Garden will be vouchered and linked to specimens in the herbarium collection. Duplicate specimens will be provided to the ANBG and Kew Gardens herbaria, as appropriate.
- Aquatic flora from the Territory will be gradually incorporated into the collection.
- Consideration will be given to linking records of the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden with the ANBG collection.

## **3.5 Research and Monitoring**

### **3.5.1 Research**

**AIMS:** To conduct and sponsor research within a strategy which will lead to better understanding and management of Norfolk Island's plants.

### **Background**

Although Norfolk Island is fortunate in having been the site of some of the earliest scientific studies conducted in the South Pacific, large gaps remain in our knowledge of the natural resources of Norfolk Island and the ecological processes which are operating there. The major areas of research undertaken so far in the Botanic Garden include the ecology of the flora, surveys, plant taxonomy, and pest management.

While research priorities have focused on the Botanic Garden, a Territory-wide perspective has been maintained in cooperation with relevant authorities and landholders outside the Park.

A permit system operates in the Botanic Garden for the taking of plants and animals for scientific research and other purposes. The Park Manager, Administrator, the Crown Solicitor and the Conservator of Public Reserves have developed a standard set of guidelines to apply to complementary permits issued for research conducted in the Botanic Garden and other areas.

A large and ongoing research effort is needed to address information gaps. This should be conducted within a strategic framework to target management needs.

### **Policies**

- Research priorities for the Botanic Garden will be set out in a research strategy.
- Permits for scientific research involving the taking of plants or animals from the Botanic Garden will be considered in accordance with the Regulations, the research strategy and related Government policies.

### **Management Actions**

- The Park Manager will maintain a strategy document identifying priority areas for research in the Botanic Garden. As a general principle, priority will be given to research projects that directly assist management of the Botanic Garden.
- Research consultancies will be developed for specific research projects requiring specialist skills or knowledge, and which Parks Australia staff are unable to conduct.
- Research guidelines and conditions imposed on research permits will reflect those applied throughout Parks Australia. However, as appropriate, the Park Manager, in consultation with the Conservator of Public Reserves, will develop additional guidelines to apply to particular scientific research in the Botanic Garden.

### **3.5.2 Monitoring**

**AIMS:** To monitor the environments and usage of the Botanic Garden to review the effectiveness of management and guide future strategies.

## **Background**

Monitoring is an essential management tool which allows environmental changes to be recognised and which also allows management actions to be evaluated against stated objectives.

Monitoring has been an integral part of Parks Australia operations on Norfolk Island, notably in the endangered bird recovery programs, and associated feral animal control programs. Both these programs have been extended to the Botanic Garden. Monitoring is also used to evaluate the success of vegetation rehabilitation works and to check visitor numbers and attitudes.

## **Policies**

- Simple monitoring techniques will be incorporated into routine and other operations, where there is value in doing so.
- Monitoring of flora and fauna will include both population and habitat analyses.

## **Management Actions**

- Aerial photogrammetry and photo points will be considered for greater use in monitoring the success of vegetation rehabilitation programs.
- Current monitoring programs for the Norfolk Island Green Parrot and Morepork populations will continue during the life of this Plan in accordance with any Endangered Species Recovery Plans.
- Weed control, vegetation rehabilitation and feral pest control efforts will continue to be monitored to evaluate their performance and ensure they remain effective. The results of monitoring will be incorporated in the updates of the relevant strategy.
- Visitor numbers and expectations will be monitored and the information used in evaluating and providing for appropriate levels of access, facilities and other services.

## **3.6 Staffing and Facilities and Resources**

### **3.6.1 Staffing**

**AIMS:** To ensure that Parks Australia has a sufficient number of staff on Norfolk Island with appropriate skills and experience with which to implement the management prescriptions contained in this Plan.

#### **Background**

Parks Australia staff are currently members of the ANPWS but from the commencement of the EPBC Act, staff will become Environment Australia staff. Parks Australia is required to follow Equal Employment Opportunity principles and Australian Public Service guidelines regarding recruitment and employment of contractors and consultants.

Parks Australia currently employs six staff on Norfolk Island and engages casual and contract labour to meet the workload demands of managing the Norfolk Island National Park and the Botanic Garden. Currently, four of the Island-based staff are permanent residents of Norfolk Island.

In accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Administration of the Territory of Norfolk Island, Parks Australia staff appointed to the Norfolk Island Office of Parks Australia abide by the requirements of the (Norfolk Island) Immigration Act 1980. These requirements dictate that any non-resident employees must be appointed on term transfers which are generally of about three years duration. A member of the Norfolk Island National Park Advisory Committee is invited to participate in the staff selection process by being a member of the Selection Advisory Committee convened to interview applicants for vacant positions.

To ensure continuity and facilitate the transfer of information between incoming and outgoing staff, it is important that as many aspects of operational procedures as possible are clearly documented.

Extensions to the Botanic Garden, together with the implementation of endangered species recovery plans and feral animal control programs, have added significantly to the Parks Australia workload. This has



resulted in an increasing reliance on contractors and consultants over recent years.

Staff have benefited from both Parks Australia-based and other training opportunities whilst attached to the Norfolk Island Office of Parks Australia. Some training programs organised by Parks Australia on Norfolk Island have been made available to Norfolk Island residents. The transfer of skills to Island-based staff may reduce the current reliance on consultants for specialist services.

### **Policies**

- Staff resources will be subject to periodic review during the life of this Plan to ensure that sufficient, appropriately trained staff is available to carry out required functions in the Botanic Garden.

### **Management Actions**

- Casual and contract staff will continue to be employed for tasks which have a high labour requirement over a short time frame, or for projects which require skills or expertise not available amongst Parks Australia staff on Norfolk Island.
- Training opportunities will continue to be provided to Parks Australia staff on the Island when possible and provision will be made for staff to attend relevant training courses on the mainland or elsewhere as appropriate.
- Volunteer labour may be used in the implementation of this plan.

### **3.6.2 Facilities and Resources**

**AIMS:** To ensure that staff managing the Botanic Garden are provided with adequate facilities and resources to enable them to work effectively and to implement the prescriptions contained in this Plan.

## **Background**

Managing the Botanic Garden requires a considerable amount of infrastructure such as office space from which to work, sheds to store equipment and other items used in day-to-day management.

The Parks Australia office is currently located on Mt Pitt Road. A small shed located at the Botanic Garden services both the Botanic Garden and the Green Parrot aviary. Other facilities

are located at the Nursery/NIPFS Depot. These include sheds for storing equipment, herbicides, pesticides and associated equipment.

Currently, Parks Australia operations on Norfolk Island are funded wholly from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Fund through a Commonwealth Government budgetary allocation.

## **Policies**

- Any infrastructure or equipment required in order to implement the prescriptions contained in this Plan will be provided in accordance with an annual works program and the provisions of section 3.7.1.
- Occupational Health and Safety requirements will be taken into account when acquiring and maintaining infrastructure and equipment.

## **Management Actions**

- Annual works programs will identify new infrastructure to be put in place and, to the extent possible, equipment to be purchased during the year.
- An annual repairs and maintenance program covering all Botanic Garden assets will be established and implemented.
- Staff and contractors operating specialised equipment will be required to obtain and maintain appropriate training and/or qualifications. Appropriate training may be provided in accordance with the provisions of section 3.6.1.

### **3.7 *Making Decisions and Evaluating Proposals***

#### **3.7.1 Making Decisions and Evaluating Proposals**

**AIMS:** To ensure that decisions about managing the Botanic Garden are made using procedures that are consistent; clear and accountable; based on the best available information; and fair, efficient and timely; and to ensure that decision-making processes include adequate evaluation and assessment of all impacts on the Botanic Garden and, where appropriate, opportunities for the general public to make comments.

#### **Background**

To manage Norfolk Island Botanic Garden, decisions have to be made on a wide range of issues and at a range of levels. Staff make day-to-day decisions about operations, consulting where appropriate with the Committee, and following approved procedures. Making decisions about more complex issues requires increased and more formal consultation and approval processes. The Plan of Management is the process for setting policies and management directions for the Botanic Garden, and involves consultation with the public and the Committee, and approval by the Director, the Norfolk Island Government, the Commonwealth Minister and Parliament.

**Table 1: Decision-making Procedures, Norfolk Island Botanic Garden**

CLASS	APPLIES TO —	PROCESS
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Category 1 developments</li> <li>– Work programs</li> <li>– Specific actions carried out under existing strategies</li> </ul>	Botanic Garden staff: 1. consult; 2. follow any procedures required in a relevant Manual of Procedures; 3. make and implement decision.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Category 2 developments</li> <li>– Construction of Minor Capital Works (below \$250 000)</li> </ul>	Botanic Garden staff: 1. consult; 2. prepare draft documentation; 3. consult with key interest groups and/or experts. Delegate of the Director approves after evidence of consultation with all relevant stakeholders.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Category 3 developments</li> <li>– Feral animal management strategies</li> <li>– Research strategy</li> <li>– Visitor management strategy</li> </ul>	Botanic Garden staff: 1. consult; 2. prepare draft documentation; 3. consult with key interest groups, experts, and Norfolk Island Government. Delegate of the Director approves after evidence of consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

## Policies

- Opportunities for public and stakeholder input will be provided whenever appropriate, and to as great an extent as is reasonably feasible, taking into account the need for decisions to be made efficiently and without undue delay.

- Where appropriate, Parks Australia and the Committee will seek information from experts outside the Botanic Garden as well as from staff. Information will be obtained through the consultative and assessment procedures set out in Table 1, and from relevant research and surveys.
- Issues that endanger human life or safety will precipitate immediate management action and a subsequent report to the Director, the Committee and the Norfolk Island Government.

### **Management Actions**

- All proposed developments in the Botanic Garden will be evaluated environmentally. This may be conducted by Parks Australia staff, consultants or outside agencies. Proposals will be assessed as appropriate for their impact on the aesthetic, scientific, recreational, educational, natural and cultural value of the site and the Botanic Garden.
- After being evaluated, a proposal may be approved to proceed if the likely impact is acceptable in terms of this Plan, relevant legislation and Regulations governing the Botanic Garden. Proposals which are considered to have a possible negative impact on the Botanic Garden may be rejected.
- Where proposals originate outside Parks Australia or are intended to make money for the person proposing them, Parks Australia may require that the proponent pay the financial costs of environmental assessment.
- Proposed developments and works in the Botanic Garden will be considered under the categories set out in Table 2.
- Proposals with significant impacts (Category 3) will be referred for assessment under the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974 (or the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 after July 2000) and section 30 of the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975.
- Rolling three-year work programs in the Botanic Garden will be prepared by staff. Work plans will describe the roles of staff in carrying out the planned activities.

- In advising the Committee, Parks Australia may consult with other interested parties, and will advise the Committee of the level of consultation carried out and the views expressed. Written records will continue to be kept of all recommendations of the Committee and the reasons for the recommendations.
- Development proposals will be evaluated under the relevant legislative framework.

**Table 2: Development Categories, Norfolk Island Botanic Garden**

<b>Category 1</b>	<b>Activities which have, or are likely to have little or no environmental or social impact.</b>
Examples:	Routine maintenance; repairing or replacing existing structures in their present form; replacing toilets with similar facilities; improving existing car parks to minimise environmental degradation; minor realignment of existing walking tracks to minimise damage to the environment; and repairs to existing roads or tracks.
<b>Category 2</b>	<b>Activities which may have an environmental or social impact at a local level.</b>
Examples:	The establishing of new, or extending walking tracks, car parks etc; upgrading facilities, e.g. amenity blocks; minor realignment of existing roads or access tracks; regrading existing roads and tracks where this involves constructing culverts etc. which may affect water flow.
<b>Category 3</b>	<b>Activities which are likely to produce a major environmental impact and/or significantly alter visitor usage and/or are a significant change from existing facilities in the Botanic Garden.</b>
Examples:	Major realignments of existing roads or tracks; establishing permanent roads or tracks; and opening and/or closing areas of the Botanic Garden to a high level of visitor use.

### **3.7.2 Reporting and Technical Audit**

**AIMS:** To evaluate progress in implementing the Plan and conduct a final technical audit.

#### **Background**

This Plan of Management has been developed on the basis of the financial and staff resources, expectations and knowledge currently available. Management techniques considered appropriate at any particular time can be expected to change as knowledge continues to improve, or circumstances change.

As circumstances and expectations are likely to change during the life of this plan, mechanisms have been established to evaluate and review the effectiveness of the Plan and to provide for necessary modifications in the next plan.

#### **Policies**

- Progress on the implementation of the Plan will be summarised annually and a final technical audit of the implementation of the Plan will be conducted during the last year of its life as part of the process of preparing the next Plan of Management.
- The scope and procedures for the final technical audit will be developed in consultation with the Committee and the Norfolk Island Government.

#### **Management Actions**

- An annual report on the implementation of management prescriptions described in this Plan will be presented through the Director to the Committee.
- Towards the end of the period of implementation of this Plan a technical audit of the Plan will be commissioned with the following terms of reference:
  - (a) to consider each prescribed management action and determine whether or not it was carried out;

- (b) to evaluate the performance of each prescribed action in relation to the objective or objectives it was intended to serve;
- (c) in the case of any prescribed action that was not implemented, or which failed to achieve the desired outcome, to determine the cause;
- (d) to report the results of (a), (b) and (c) above to the Committee and the Director together with an overall assessment of the delivery of the Plan in relation to its objectives; and
- (e) in the light of the Plan's performance, to recommend to the Director any changes to the objectives and prescribed actions that should be considered during the preparation of the next plan.



## ***Schedule 1***

### ***DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORFOLK ISLAND BOTANIC GARDEN***

In accordance with Section 11(6) of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975, the following description of buildings, structures, facilities and developments in the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden is provided.

Boundary fencing

Gates and turnstile

Walking track

Steps and handrails on steep sections of track

Seats

Small bridges across stream crossed by walking track

Boardwalks

Small storage shed

Display and breeding aviaries for the Green Parrot captive breeding program

Viewing deck associated with the display aviary

## ***Schedule 2***

### ***DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED BUILDINGS***

### ***AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORFOLK ISLAND***

#### ***BOTANIC GARDEN***

In accordance with Section 11(6) of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975, the following description of proposed buildings, structures, facilities and developments in the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden is provided.

#### **Developments by Parks Australia**

##### **Visitor Facilities**

Subject to availability of funds and the environmental impact assessment and decision-making processes set out in this Plan, the following visitor facilities will be provided:

- public toilets near the entrance to the Botanic Garden; and
- a covered seat or similar at the bottom of the Garden to provide shelter for visitors.