



ROYAL TASMANIAN
BOTANICAL GARDENS

Interpretation Plan

2009-2014



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for

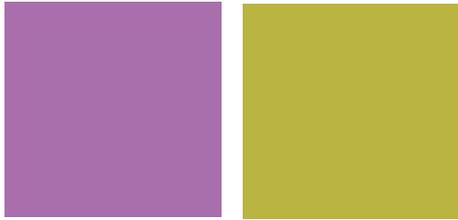


*Images courtesy of
Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens*

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1. Introduction

1.1. DESCRIPTION

The 14.1 ha Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, on Hobart's Queens Domain, is one of Tasmania's key cultural assets and one of the nation's best cool climate gardens, with collections of international significance.

Its cultural heritage landscape is significant for the Aboriginal community and general public and it is one of the most popular tourism attractions in the State. It is located on land originally occupied by the Mouheneenner people, with extensive shell middens and stone artefacts within the Gardens. RTBG is the second oldest botanic garden in Australia, with Sydney's garden being two years older, and is listed on the National Estate.

RTBG is located in a precinct that includes Government House, the former Beaumaris Zoo site and a large area of remnant native grasslands. Its easterly aspect overlooks the Derwent River. Views from its site include the river and bushland on the river's eastern shore and Mount Wellington.

It is managed by a statutory authority, the Botanical Gardens Board, established under the *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Act 2002*.

1.2. RTBG ROLE

Development of the site has occurred over about 200 years and its many phases have been influenced by changing social attitudes in regard to the role and purpose of botanical gardens and their collections.

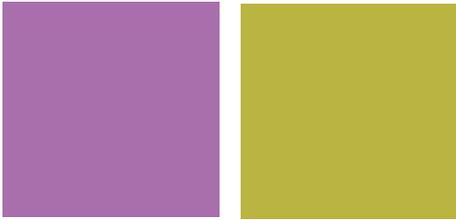
"Botanic gardens' activities have always reflected the needs and values of societies and even our oldest gardens owe their origins to the relationship of people and plants."¹

Botanic gardens have a scientific basis for what they do and are also often involved in activities that use biodiversity and environmental sustainability to promote human wellbeing. Increasingly, botanic gardens also have a role in conservation, generally focused on their regional species.

"In the 20th and 21st centuries, the focus has shifted to Sanctuary or Conservation Gardens. Today, much of the responsibility for the genetic protection of threatened species, along with ex situ protection of plants with economic and ecological importance, rests with botanical gardens."²

¹ *Botanic Gardens: Using Biodiversity to Improve Human Well-being*, Kerry Waylen, Botanic Gardens Conservation International report, 2006.

² *Looking Forward, Looking Back: the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens*, public presentation notes, RTBG Director, Lesley Kirby, 2007.



Further, it is widely acknowledged that strong community involvement and engagement is critical to the relevance and long-term sustainability of contemporary botanic gardens.

1.3. CONTEXT FOR INTERPRETATION PLANNING

1.3.1 Strategic Intent

The Vision of the RTBG, as outlined in its *Strategic Master Plan* is:

“To create and maintain an exceptional garden that enriches Tasmania’s social and cultural life, educates the community about the importance of plants and contributes to the conservation of the flora of Tasmania and the world.”

The vision:

sets aspirational aims for a reputation of excellence within the international arena;

provides a focus on Tasmania as the locus for the operations and the identity of the Gardens (i.e. its sense of place but also as a focus for collections); and

specifies that the Gardens contribute to flora conservation initiatives.

Its mission is:

“In common with other botanical gardens, the RTBG will:

act as an ex situ repository for species of conservation significance and participate in other conservation programs aimed at preserving bio-diversity in the world; and

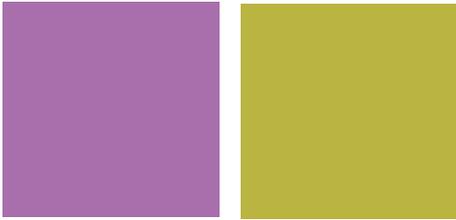
incorporate plants of an economic value to the community.

In achieving its mission, the RTBG will create and maintain core/priority plant collections based on Tasmania’s flora and associated cool climate flora from the southern hemisphere.

In respect to its history, the RTBG will maintain:

the Gardens in a manner that recognises and interprets the layered history of the site from Aboriginal times through to the present;

identified heritage collections of plants that are of State, national and international significance for their historic heritage values; and



the place in a manner that respects its important landscape and sense of place values.”

1.3.2. Role of Interpretation

Interpretation is an important contributor to the achievement of RTBG’s strategic intent, both externally and internally, and forms part of its core business.

It does this through targeted communication with external audiences, designed to influence the level of understanding of and connection with the Gardens, its role, management and significance; and with internal audiences, in the shaping of the shared vision, perceptions, views and pride of the Gardens workforce.

1.4. METHODOLOGY

Thematic Interpretation methodology has been used in developing this Interpretation Plan. A world best practice approach, it is based on more than two decades of communications psychology research identifying that the strongest intellectual and emotional connections arise from interpretation that is thought-provoking rather than fact-oriented.

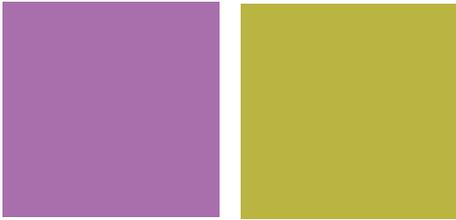
It recognises that the most powerful impressions people take away with them from a site are the conclusions or meanings they have drawn from the facts presented. It therefore aims to make it easy for visitors to form strong meanings and connections by interpreting through the strategic delivery of themes – sometimes referred to as central or take-home messages.

A fundamental premise of Thematic Interpretation is that once visitors attach meanings to the place being interpreted, the place matters to them. This leads to outcomes such as high levels of visitor satisfaction, word-of-mouth promotion and repeat visitation.

While the provision of information is important, the information itself is tailored to assist visitors in understanding the local place in a way that informs their own lives.

The planning methodology has involved:

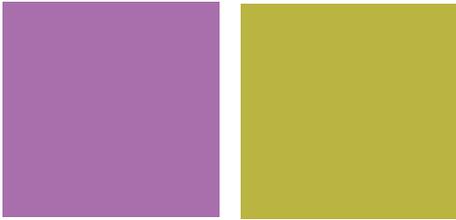
- scoping the operating environment, including business mission and goals and identification of issues relevant to interpretation;
- an inventory of current RTBG interpretation programs, services and support services, such as training;
- scoping of interpretive potential;
- identifying interpretive goals and goal outcomes;
- a review of visitation, trends and visitor patterns as the basis for identifying interpretive audiences;



- determining the desired visitor experience, based on project research, anecdotal evidence from relevant RTBG staff and data from the RTBG's visitor counts and Tasmanian Visitor Survey and other relevant tourism sources;
- a theme development workshop with a representative group of participants, selected in conjunction with key RTBG staff and including a wide range of RTBG employees, to scope topics and develop preliminary themes;
- assessing preliminary themes from the workshop to identify gaps, refine themes and determine priorities in relation to relevance to audiences;
- developing a media matrix for each audience to assist in targeting of themes and selection of media for delivery of the themes, taking into account audience learning styles (cognitive, emotional, active, and sensory);
- identifying delivery issues and solutions;
- developing guidelines and standards for interpretation and education programs; and
- implementation plan and evaluation requirements.

This approach is consistent with the ANZECC Business Model for Best Practice Interpretation Projects.³

³ Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council report resulting from an investigation of best practice in park and cultural site interpretation and education services, published in 1998.



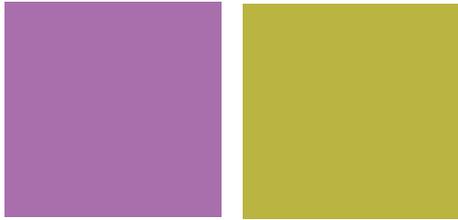
2. Purpose of plan

RTBG interpretation planning and delivery has occurred, to date, on an *ad hoc* basis, hampering its potential as an effective management tool. At the same time, there are increasing expectations – particularly from tourists – for interpretive materials and services.

As a result, RTBG has recognised the necessity for an Interpretation Plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

- ensure that interpretation activities are in alignment with the organisation’s vision, mission, and strategic goals;
- ensure that the interpretation function is an integral part of RTBG management and operations;
- provide a holistic framework for the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of the overall interpretive program;
- ensure that interpretation is focused on the needs and desired experiences of those who visit the Gardens;
- provide a basis for regular assessment of the effectiveness of the interpretation role and for continual improvement;
- underpin the business case for investment in the interpretation program;
- allow for timely responses to emerging needs and situations;
- ensure that interpretation is balanced with and informs the overall development of the RTBG over time; and
- ensure that interpretation contributes in an effective way to the RTBG’s organisational and marketing communications.

The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Interpretation Plan 2008-2013 should be read in conjunction with the *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Strategic Master Plan*, *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Conservation Management Plan* and the *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Living Collections Plan*.



3. Current situation

3.1. SITE VALUES

The *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Strategic Management Plan* (Inspiring Place Pty Ltd, April 2008) lists the overarching site values as:

3.1.1. The setting

Key relevance to interpretation:

- Location in relation to surrounding landscapes such the Queens Domain and Derwent River; and
- Viewlines such as those to Mount Wellington (from the Japanese Garden), the Tasman Bridge (from the Eucalypt Lawn), and eastern shore bushland (from the vicinity of the Visitor Centre) also contribute to the overall ambience, landscape aesthetics and sense of place.

3.1.2. Remnant natural biological values

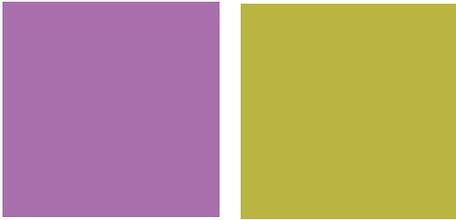
Key relevance to interpretation:

- Adjacent remnant native grasslands and open woodlands on the Queens Domain.
- Native fauna – Gardens inhabitants include the southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus*), Eastern Barred Bandicoot (*Perameles gunnii*), Long-tailed mouse (*Psuedomys higginsi*), and Brush-tailed possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*). Other native wildlife known to be occasional ‘visitors’ include the Long-nosed potaroo, Tasmanian bettong and pademelons.
- Diverse range of native and introduced bird species.

3.1.3. Living collections

Key relevance to interpretation:

- The RTBG’s 42 living collections, listed in the *Living Collections Plan* under four categories – Tasmanian, Conservation and Research, Southern Hemisphere, and Cultural and Ornamental, with sub- groupings by focus: geographical, taxonomic, demonstration, heritage and horticultural.



- Key collections are: the Subantarctic Collection, the Tasmanian Native Garden Collection, the Conifer Collection and the potted Southern Hemisphere Collection.

3.1.4. Cultural heritage

Key relevance to interpretation:

The *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Conservation Management Plan* (Godden Mackay Logan, 2008) provides the following overarching statement of significance –

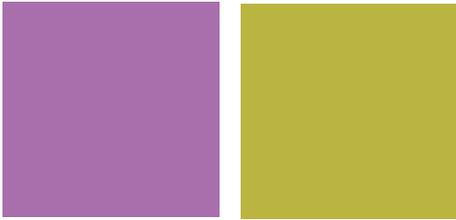
The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens are of exceptional national, state and local significance. Established in 1818, the Gardens are an integral part of the nation's history reflecting the transition of the country from a subsistence outpost to a community of people making a valuable contribution to global conservation through the collection, propagation, display and conservation of Tasmania's native flora. In the process of its evolution, the RTBG has become a garden of exceptional beauty that holds a significant place in the hearts and minds of its many users and attracts visitors from around the world. The Gardens retains significant reminders of its various stages of development including built elements and living collections and individual plants dating from the period of its colonial establishment and later Victorian era gardenesque landscaping.

The Gardens have exceptional international significance as a leader in the conservation of Tasmania's flora. Many of the species under their care and/or research only occur in Tasmania (i.e. are endemic to the State) and as such are of importance for the conservation of the world's biodiversity.

The plan identifies the relevance of the RTBG history to seven topic categories under the Australian Historic Themes Framework⁴ – Tracing the Evolution of the Australian Environment, Peopling Australia, Developing Local, Regional and National Economies, Building Settlements, Towns and Cities, Educating, Governing, and Developing Australia's Cultural Life.

As part of an evaluation against national and state heritage criteria, the Conservation Management Plan acknowledges the significance of a number of specific cultural heritage values with direct relevance to interpretation:

⁴ Published by the Australian Heritage Commission in 2001 and providing links between different regional stories in Australia's history (<http://www.ahc.gov.au/publications>)

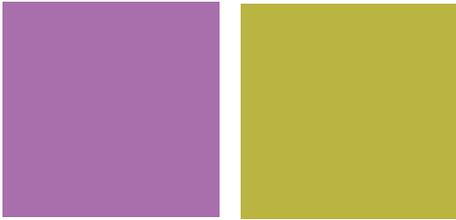


- the Gardens as the traditional country of the Mouheneenner group of the South East Aboriginal people and the shell middens and stone artefacts within the Gardens;
- the Gardens as an integral part of the history of British settlement of Tasmania, illustrating successive phases of occupation, starting with land grants for farming;
- the living collections, with more than 6,000 species and varieties, as a demonstration of major botanical collection and management strategies in Tasmania;
- the Gardens' "exceptional living collection of exotic and native species", including Subantarctic, conifers and threatened species collections;
- the role of RTBG in managing and conserving the most diverse living collection of conifers in the southern hemisphere, making it "a precious scientific and cultural resource for Australia";
- the fact that RTBG holds 100 of Tasmania's 400 threatened vascular species;
- its many features and historical associations that are "fine representative examples" of a 'Victorian' park landscape". It is one of only a small group of Australian landscapes "imbued with nationally significant aesthetic values that express the evolution of garden design, display and embellishment" that have British and European influences;
- technical values illustrated by the 1827 internally-heated Arthur Wall, developed for the growing of warm climate fruits and vegetables through to the current Tasmanian Seed Conservation Centre (also known as the Seed Bank) and its purpose-built laboratory, as well as innovative RTBG solutions to the Gardens' water supply; and
- social values, including a landscape experience that "enables people to engage with the smells, sounds, textures, shapes and colours of nature and contributes to the lives, experiences and memories of Tasmanians".

3.1.5. Recreation, tourism and education

Key relevance to interpretation:

- The Gardens are one of the most visited recreational and tourism attractions in the State. Tourism visitors include Tasmanian, interstate and international travellers; recreational users who are generally from the Greater Hobart area or further afield; school groups visiting the Gardens on an informal basis for socialising and learning and school



groups participating in the Gardens' formal education program; and adult learners.

- Part of its popularity relates to free entry, proximity to the Hobart CBD, its combination of open lawn areas suitable for family/social gatherings and more intimate spaces for those seeking refuge from noise and activity.

3.1.6. Conservation and research

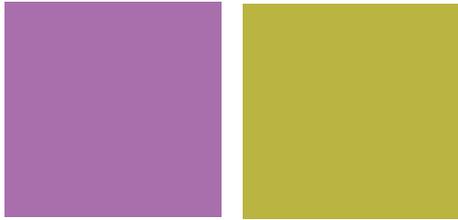
Key relevance to interpretation:

- RTBG is committed to biodiversity conservation, to sustainable business practices in managing the Gardens, and to providing community leadership and education in sustainable environmental programs.
- It is a signatory to Botanical Gardens Conservation International and a key partner in the global Millennium Seed Project.
- Its role in the conservation of Tasmanian rare and threatened species is focused on the research, propagation and dissemination of propagated specimens and the housing of ex-situ threatened species collections, as well as development of the Rare and Threatened Species (RATS) database. For example, RTBG is also a leader and partner in project-based conservation initiatives that include working with the Tasmanian mining industry to use native plants for mine site rehabilitation.
- The Tasmanian Seed Conservation Centre is one of only two sites in the world – along with the Millennium Seed Bank – that houses a viable collection of Tasmanian seeds and its importance will increase with growing global threats to biodiversity and projected impacts of climate change.

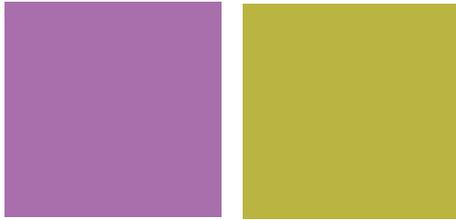
3.2. OBSERVABLE FEATURES

Figure 1 Observable Features by Category

Category	Features
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main gates • Arthur Wall, Eardley-Wilmot Wall • Friends' Cottage • Superintendent's Cottage • Anniversary Arch • Conservatory and Syme Memorial Fountain • Heritage apples • Trees of substantive maturity



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lily pond
Collections/ gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cactus House • French Memorial Garden – plantings, water and structures • Herb Garden • Japanese Garden • Pete’s Vegie Patch • Rain Garden – Water Sensitive Urban Design • Subantarctic Plant House • A.P. May Tasmanian Plants and other Tasmanian collections • Current Easy Access Garden • Fern House • Fuchsia House • Greater Hobart Native Collection • The Friends’ Mixed Border • New Zealand plants • Oaks • Palms • Pinetum • Rhododendrons and camellias • Proteas • Ericas • Chinese Garden & stone lions
Sculpture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure of gardener outside Friends Cottage • Stephen Walker Huon pine work, ‘Antipodean Voyage’, French Memorial Garden
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Pod
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including major events, and related activities and displays, organised by the RTBG (e.g. Huskies Picnic, Spring Tulip Festival, Summer theatre, Cinema After Dark); as well as community and social events (weddings, birthday parties, playgroup gatherings etc).
Other features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floral Clock • Wollemi pine • Gazebo • Wombat One open plan shelter • The ‘Playground’

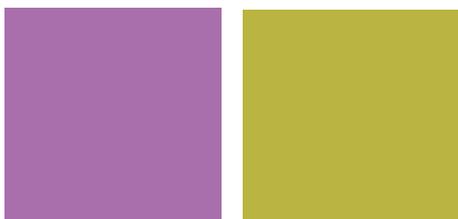


3.3. INVENTORY OF INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

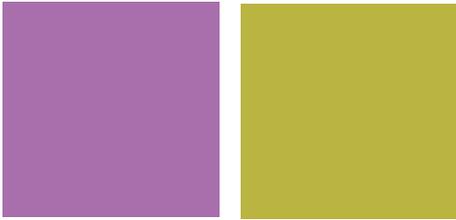
Current RTBG interpretive facilities and services are –

Figure 2 List of facilities and services by category

Category	Interpretive facility/service
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-guided brochure/map • Suite of free brochures, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – overview (brochure on features and facilities, full colour); – specific collections (e.g. Subantarctic Plant House, full colour; Japanese Garden, single colour, 1990) – specific features (e.g. <i>The Wollemi Pine and its Relatives</i>, (in-house photocopies) – Specific programs e.g. <i>Seed Safe</i>, Tasmanian Seed Bank (full colour); and – Community education (e.g. <i>Fire Retardant Garden Plants for the Urban Fringe and Rural Areas</i>, produced in partnership with the Tasmanian Fire Service, Forestry Tasmania and Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service, full colour). • Publications for sale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Visitor Guide – <i>People, Places and Plants</i>, on the influence of RTBG on the Tasmanian cultural landscape – <i>Seasons of Colour</i>, celebrating the changing face of the Gardens throughout the year • Information and fact sheets, photocopies and PDFs on website • educational materials specific to educational programs/curriculum needs
Static interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation board inside main gate • white text on brown plant labels throughout the Gardens <p>Major panel series:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subantarctic Plant House interpretation panels • French Memorial Garden interpretive panels featuring early French explorers



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tasmanian Collection interpretive signs, including connections to explorers <p>Stand-alone panels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locations including Fern House, Pete's Vegie Patch and Waterwise Garden.
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends Cottage – static displays, including historic artefacts Subantarctic Plant House – soundscape, plants and murals Education pod, used as a gathering space Facility for fixed interpretation for school groups, focused on recycling (the Roundhouse) Easy Access Garden in raised beds, originally designed for disabled groups Display/gallery area adjacent to retail section of Visitor Centre Wombat One, open plan shelter
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteer Friends of the Gardens tour guides informal exchanges with Gardens horticultural staff
Exhibitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> temporary exhibitions in the Visitor Centre gallery area, including travelling exhibitions and local displays (e.g. art, photography). Some exhibitions have relevance to the RTBG interpretive program.
Interpretive roles	<p>Dedicated roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Officer (full-time) Interpretation Officer (full-time – position currently vacant) <p>Related roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Botanical and Public Programs provides leadership and has direct input into interpretive activities Horticultural Botanist and Botanical Resources Officer contribute research/preparation of interpretive text to interpretive program Involvement of horticultural staff as presenters in learning activities Marketing and Events Officer and other staff, as directed from time to time
Specific Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> education program – 'Grow a Brain', can be tailored to suit all ages K-Yr12



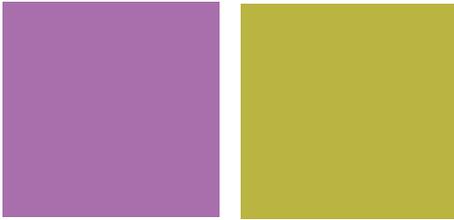
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Holiday Activity Program • Plant Conservation and Horticulture Courses for Teachers • Migrant Program, award-winning program focusing on edible fruits and vegetables • Horticultural Therapy • Green Thumbs classes and Explore the Gardens Tours, centring on specific topics for the general public
Pre-visit interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTBG website • participation in annual <i>Tasmania's Discoveries Guide</i>, in conjunction with the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service (Discovery Ranger Program) and Forestry Tasmania. • ABC TV's <i>Gardening Australia</i> presenter, Peter Cundall, in broadcast segments focused on Pete's Vegie Patch. • Event promotion • Blooming Tasmania

3.4. ISSUES

A range of issues currently affect the interpretive program and the capacity of RTBG to deliver high quality interpretation.

Figure 3 Key issues

Issue	Situation
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of policy and strategic direction for interpretation development and delivery. • a system-wide response to interpretation is potentially limited by the role and placement of interpretation as a function within the organisational structure. • Difficulty in matching skill sets to interpretive tasks and requirements. • lack of a signage strategy • lack of allocated funding and limitations on interpretive resources/budget
Physical RTBG layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the existing path network does not invite exploration of the Gardens or support ease of movement and decision-making. • there is no visual connection from the main entry to the focus



	point for visitor information/interpretation, the Visitor Centre.
Presentation barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inconsistency of presentation in interpretive signage. • the Gardens are presented as a range of collections and sites, giving a sense of fragmentation and missing the opportunity to convey the overall significance of RTBG. • a number of the RTBG's core strengths are not adequately reflected in the interpretation program, including the Seed Bank and its international links; Tasmanian and Gondwanan plants; and the convict connection. • existing self-guided brochure and map does not meet the needs of the RTBG audiences.
Impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potential for signage to create visual intrusion. This is likely to be a greater issue for locals, who have a stronger propensity than visitors to seek out a relaxing experience as an escape from daily life. • traffic noise from the highway access route to/from Tasman Bridge.⁵
Visitor appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • surveys suggest that the Gardens are not attracting young people, although anecdotal evidence suggests that particular events are well supported by young people. • the existing Visitor Centre/Restaurant is attracting less than half the overall number of Gardens visitors.⁶, largely due to its position.

3.5. INTERPRETIVE POTENTIAL

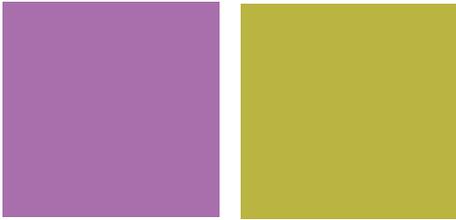
A stronger focus on the Education and Economic Collections precinct, as identified in the *Strategic Master Plan* (Section 6 Master Plan and 20 Year Strategic Action Plan), will provide greater opportunity for hands-on interpretation through demonstrations of sustainable horticulture, including heritage plants; workshops and other interactive activities.

The existing RTBG interpretive program currently has a range of gaps that represent interpretive potential.

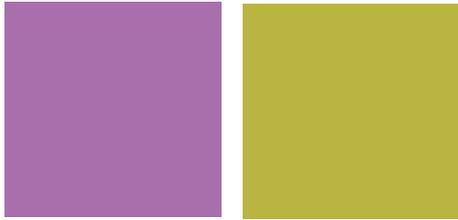
They include:

⁵ *Perceptions of Service Quality at the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens*, Centre for Tourism and Leisure Management, University of South Australia, June 2007.

⁶ For 2006-07, RTBG data collected from automated counters at the entrance showed 42% of the total Gardens' visitors entered the facility.



- a number of RTBG core strengths, are not adequately represented in the interpretive program, including:
 - the Tasmanian Seed Conservation Centre and its international significance;
 - unique Tasmanian plants, along with Subantarctic and Gondwanan connections;
 - the convict story, which is a significant underpinning of Tasmania's *Inspiring Island* tourism brand and links to other high-profile visitor sites; and
 - RTBG staff, particularly Gardens staff, who are the 'face' of the organisation and interact on a regular basis with RTBG audiences.
- increasing community expectations about RTBG's role in delivering education in relation to topical conservation issues e.g. climate change, water conservation, sustainable horticulture.
- interpretation delivery media/mechanisms are limited in their range, and are mainly publications and signage.
- the RTBG restaurant and kiosk currently delivers no indirect or direct interpretive messages and represents missed opportunities to communicate, particularly with local users.
- RTBG does not use technology as an interpretive medium. However, it has recently introduced a wireless hotspot service – user pays wireless internet access within the vicinity of the Visitor Centre. It has also introduced a podcast guided tour.
- use of events to deliver interpretive messages. RTBG has begun aligning events to desired perceptions, such as the introduction of Tread Lightly (environmental sustainability) and the Spring Tulip Festival (social and wellbeing), however, events could become a stronger interpretive medium through their actual concept and design, as well as the opportunities they present for direct delivery of messages.
- synergies with other relevant government agencies and organisations, including Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service, Arts Tasmania, Heritage Tasmania, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, Wellington Park Management Trust and Environment Division of the Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts. For example, RTBG already partners with Arts Tasmania for Living Writers Week and the Storytelling Festival, while a potential joint venture may include the establishment of plant annexes at selected National Parks, connecting Tasmanian plants in their native environment to the RTBG work with the State's endemic flora.



4. Interpretation policy and standards

A stand-alone Interpretation Policy document has been prepared (see Attachment A). The policy provides high-level direction-setting, principles and guidelines for planning, development and delivery of the RTBG interpretive program. It identifies responsibilities, definitions, standards and related policies. This Interpretation Plan reflects the Interpretation Policy.

As the principles provide the foundation for succeeding sections of this Interpretation Plan, they are provided in overview form here. For full details on the principles, refer to Attachment A.

Commitment to best practice

RTBG is committed to interpretation strategies that reflect world best practice. It will take account of contemporary trends and published research on approaches demonstrated to be of the highest standard for communicating effectively with interpretive audiences.

Engaging audiences

The RTBG interpretive program engages its audiences in ways that are meaningful and relevant to the range of audience needs and interests. It uses a multidisciplinary approach that supports a high level of engagement, ranging from personal interpretation to publications, educational programs and interactive activities.

Research

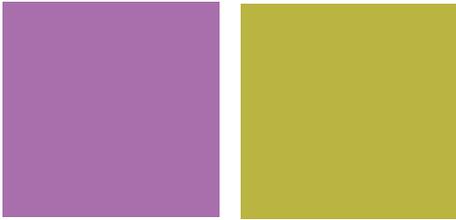
Interpretation will be accurate and based on sound research and scholarship

Commitment to monitoring and evaluation

RTBG is committed to ongoing monitoring of and regular evaluation of its interpretive program, to ensure that resources and effort are directed to the most effective outcomes for the interpretation investment.

Interpretation delivery & sustainability

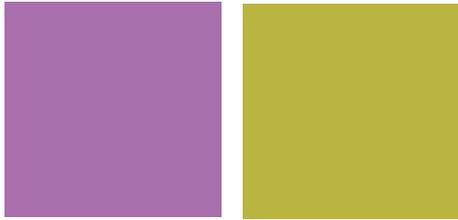
The interpretive program is a vital means for protecting and sustaining the RTBG values and its delivery will not in any way impair those values.

**Community involvement**

RTBG recognises the significance of the site, its collections, assets and role to the local community. The interpretation program seeks to foster local involvement to nurture the local connection and also as an important mechanism for delivering interpretation.

Inclusivity

While RTBG has a legal obligation to abide by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, it acknowledges that its interpretive program represents a key strength in meeting the needs of those with ambulant, sight and hearing impairment. The interpretive program will represent equality of opportunity and experience.



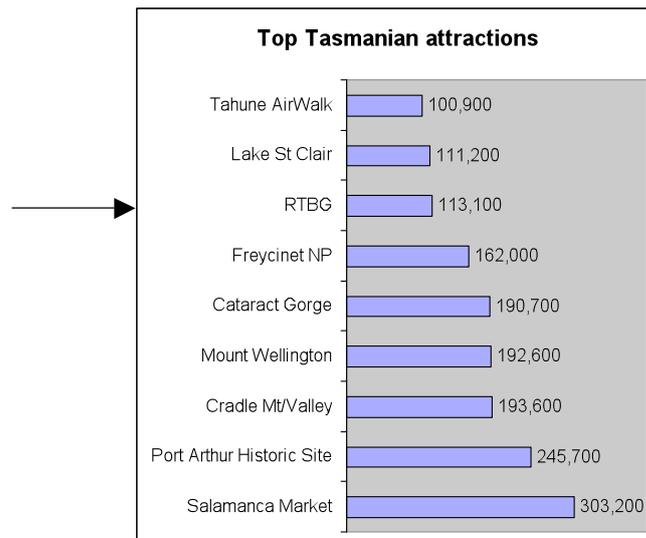
5. Audiences and desired experiences

5.1. RESEARCH

More than 400,000 people visited the Gardens in 2005-06, with the greatest portion being (about 70%) Tasmanian visitors.

According to recent Tourism Tasmania data from the Tasmanian Visitor Survey (TVS), 113,100 tourism visitors spent time at the Gardens, making it the seventh most popular Tasmanian attraction of those recorded in the survey. The TVS is an exit survey of international and national visitors to Tasmania.

Figure 4 – Tourism Visitor Attractions

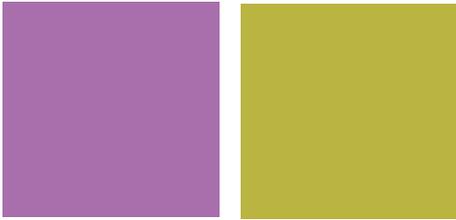


Tasmanian Visitor Survey, March 2007

According to a survey conducted as part of preparation of the current Strategic Master Plan during 2007, the Gardens attracts a generally older audience, with only 12% in the 20-29 years age bracket and 13% aged from 30-39 years.

The peak periods occur from September-October to the end of April.

Of the local users, a significant number are likely to be repeat visitors who visit the Gardens for social reasons or passive recreation and are more likely to be accompanied by children. Local users exhibit a generational continuity of use, with children who visit with their families later returning in their own right or as parents themselves.



Tasmania's tourism visitors generally travel as couples, in small social groups, or as independent solos, and families represent a low percentage of the market.

According to TVS figures for the last financial year, 20% of the international and interstate visitors who travel to Hobart visit the Gardens. Of these, holiday/leisure visitors represent 66% of the overall tourism visitor market, followed by internationals and nationals in the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market at 21%.

Intrastate visitors – Tasmanians from other regions – travel to Hobart and surrounds mainly for short breaks and to visit friends and relatives. There is currently no data available on the proportion of intrastate visitors compared to International & National Visitors and local users.

In addition, the RTBG is popular with schools and attracts adult learners who include work experience students for horticulture, landscaping and nursery activities, as well as providing training for teachers in integrating sustainable gardening and basic plant science into the school curriculum.

5.2. AUDIENCES, NEEDS AND DESIRED EXPERIENCES

Interpretive audiences are generally broader than market segments. While marketing segments are defined on the basis of how they can be attracted through influence their decision-making process, interpretive audiences are defined on the basis of the way they move around and their use of the site once they arrive.

The four RTBG interpretive audiences, their defining characteristics, needs and desired experiences are –

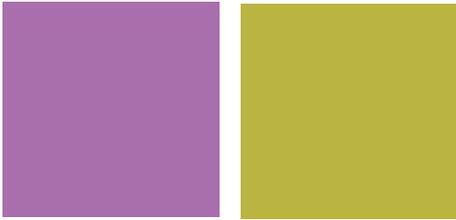
5.2.1. International & National Visitors

Tasmania has historically been a touring destination but the introduction of increased air capacity and cheaper airfares in recent years, combined with a propensity for people to take shorter holidays, has led to structural changes in the Tasmanian tourism market.

Fundamental to this is the decline of the traditional tourers who go everywhere in Tasmania and see everything and the emergence of a new Getaway segment. This segment stays for up to a week, based in one Tasmanian destination and exploring from that base.

The decline of the multiple destination touring market and the growth of the Getaway segment means that increasingly, tourism visitors need a competitive reason to visit the Gardens and the provision of an experience that is easy to access and targeted to their needs, particularly the time they have available.

This audience includes international and national visitors who are at the Gardens as part of a touring holiday, a short break or a destination-focused holiday. They are generally well-travelled and have experienced interpretation at a range of other sites.



The RTBG currently positions itself as a place that has beautiful gardens, layers of cultural heritage and is a place where you can relax, refresh and learn about plants.

As indicated in *Section 3.4 Issues* and *Section 3.5 Interpretive Potential*, the site has a number of core strengths in relation to international and national visitors that are currently not well communicated. These strengths have been drawn through in the development of interpretive themes and are expected to support the Gardens' repositioning with the visitor market.

Needs and desired experience:

This audience is reasonably discerning and will need a motivation to visit that is stronger than that of other competing attractions and clearly articulates the RTBG's differentiation and the key strengths of the experience available.

Once on site, the audience desires to make a connection with the significance of RTBG – with 'what makes it tick' – and they therefore have a high propensity to seek out interpretation, which they expect it to be of a reasonably high standard.

They have time constraints and are not as likely to spend as long in the Gardens as those who live locally. While a survey – conducted at the Gardens in 2007 as part of the process for developing the Strategic Master Plan – showed that the average time spent in the Gardens was just under two hours, the average duration of visit for the International & National Visitors audience is likely to be less than that. Members of the Gardens' Friends group who provide services as volunteer tour guides have reported, as an example, that the time coach tour operators allow for their groups to visit can be as little as 20 minutes.

The on-site visitor survey showed that, of specific sites within the Gardens, the most visited were:

- Conservatory (62%);
- Japanese Garden (56%);
- Pete's Vegie Patch (53%);
- Lily Pond (49%);
- Friends Mixed Border (37%);
- Anniversary Arch (36%);
- Subantarctic Plant House, Tasmanian Native Plant Garden, Visitor Centre shop and gallery (each 35%);
- Friends Cottage (34%);
- Arthur Wall, Chinese Collection (each 32%);
- Herb Garden, Fuchsia House (each 31%);
- Visitor Centre Restaurant (30%);



- French Memorial Garden (29%); and
- Cactus House, Fern House (28%).

It is likely that this audience has greater representation in figures for Gardens sites in proximity to the main lawns or the route between the main gates and the Lower Domain Rd entrance, such as the Conservatory, or those that are clearly differentiated, such as Pete's Vegie Patch, the Subantarctic Plant House and the Japanese Garden.

5.2.2. Local Users

Local Users seek out the Gardens as a place for health and wellbeing, social gatherings and passive recreational activities. Many are regular visitors to the Gardens, as indicated by 46% of respondents to the on-site survey conducted in 2007 who reported that they had visited the Gardens two to five times within the previous 12 months.

The on-site visitor survey reported 43% of visitors indicated that they learned something new while at the gardens, with 42% indicating that they had not. At the same time, almost 75% of respondents indicated that they were "very happy" with their visit.

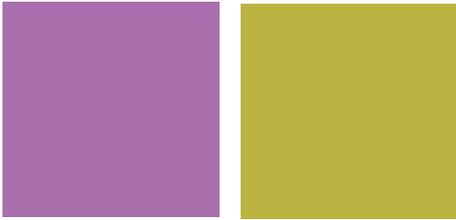
This is likely to reflect the type of experience that Local Users seek, which is not predicated on discovery and learning but on enjoyment of the Gardens' ambience, aesthetic and its opportunities for social gatherings.

Because of the experience they seek, this audience is more likely to be the main users of lawn areas. They are likely to spend more time on-site than other audiences (with the exception of Schools and Adult Learners) and to use the sites that are more distant from the main route between the main entry and the lower entry.

Sub-sets of this audience are characterised by their use of particular sites. They include playgroups and parenting groups, who tend to gather at the 'Playground' (the area below the Gazebo) where it is flat, shaded and close to toilets; special interest groups, who visit particular collections or plant houses; those with mobility issues, who because of the grade of a number of paths are only able to access particular areas; and restaurant patrons, who spend much or all of their time in the dining area or on the restaurant deck.

Recreational activities include viewing of plants and other features; picnicking; relaxing on lawns; walking and jogging; socialising; photography and art; and meditation and tai chi.

Local users will, however, visit collections or features that are refreshed or significantly updated, such as the Conservatory's changing floral displays, major seasonal changes, or exhibitions in the Visitor Centre gallery.



It is noted that school groups accessing the Gardens for recreational or social purposes, as opposed to formal educational purposes, are considered to be part of the Local User audience.

5.2.3. Event Participants

This audience focuses on the specific event site or sites within the Gardens. There are two sub-sets within this audience:

Intrastate Visitors

This audience sub-set generally aligns with the characteristics and desired experiences of the International/national Visitor audience when it is at the Gardens as part of a visit with friends and relatives.

However, what sets this sub-set apart is the fact that major events, such as the Spring Tulip Festival, Huskies Picnic and high-profile theatre and concerts, are important triggers for a visit to the Gardens.

Local Residents

This sub-set may access the Gardens on a regular basis for recreational purposes, during which they fall into the Local User audience definition and are reached via interpretive media targeted to that audience.

However, as an Event Participant they are generally confining their movement within the Gardens to the site where an event is occurring or the Visitor Centre Restaurant. They participate in major and community events and activities. This sub-set may also include those who are visiting only for the event and have no interest in the Gardens themselves.

School groups visiting the Gardens for theatre that is purely entertaining are considered to be part of this sub-set.

While this audience and its two sub-sets are unlikely to actively pursue interpretation as part of its desired experience, the communications processes and tools at pre-visit and on-site stages of events should be considered for their capacity to deliver key interpretive messages directly or through integration with marketing communications. The integrated delivery of these messages should be appropriate to the audience needs and the selected media.

5.2.4. Schools and Adult Learners

This audience is one that seeks out formal learning or training in the form of a tailored, personal and immersive experience.

It includes school groups from kindergarten to Year 12; work experience students; participants in the School Holiday Activity Program; teachers undertaking training in



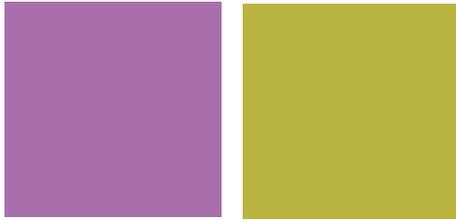
plant conservation and horticulture; community members seeking to expand their knowledge; migrants; and groups from nursing homes, hospitals and care facilities taking part in horticultural therapy.

RTBG staff, as part of consultations for preparation of the *Living Collections Plan*, have given the highest rating for educational value to the Subantarctic, Tasmanian and succulent collections, Easy Access Garden and Pete's Patch.

The Schools and Adult Learners audience is motivated not only to understand the significance of RTBG but to go beyond that understanding to apply the learning in a range of ways, from educational and skill outcomes (e.g. applying water conservation techniques or planting native Tasmanian species) to improving their wellbeing (e.g. creating a home vegetable garden or adopting organic gardening practices).

Teachers have an expectation that there will be an education program that targets curriculum requirements and provides access to resources geared to the needs of their school groups.

This audience, overall, seeks access a greater depth of expertise than other audiences. The quality of the experience for mature age members of this audience is substantially dependent on learning that is provided by RTBG 'experts'.



6. Goals and outcomes

6.1. OVERVIEW

The RTBG interpretive program aims to achieve a range of goals which are directly linked to the strategic objectives of the organisation.

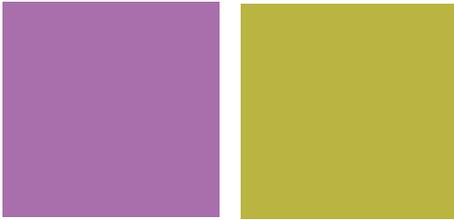
Goals 1-3 are core goals for the Interpretation Plan, while interpretation will make a significant contribution to Goals 4-6, in conjunction with other RTBG management functions.

6.2. WHAT DOES INTERPRETATION AIM TO ACHIEVE?

A range of interpretive outcomes have been identified to define the outcomes for specific audiences for each interpretive goal. These outcomes will form the basis of the interpretive monitoring and evaluation program.

Figure 5 – Table of Goals and Outcomes per Audience

GOAL	AUDIENCE	OUTCOMES
1. Provide interpretive experiences that support positioning of the RTBG	International & National Visitors Event Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visitors have an understanding of what is distinctive about RTBG at one or more levels – local, State, national or global Event Participants have a greater understanding and appreciation of RTBG Both audiences have an understanding of the role of botanical gardens in general
2. Enhance visitor experiences	International & National Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors report that interpretation added to their enjoyment and experience while on-site. Visitors report that they are inspired about RTBG site values Visitors express a desire for one or more repeat visits Visitors report a desire to engage in word-of-mouth recommendations of the RTBG experience
3. Contribute to local sense of place and identity	Local Users Event Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Users and Event Participants report having a greater awareness of the way in which RTBG has shaped the cultural landscape for the city and the State



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Users and Event Participants will express a sense of appreciation or pride in regard to RTBG
4. Achieve positive public and stakeholder support for RTBG	Local Users Schools & Adult Learners Event Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Users, Schools & Adult Learners and Event Participants will have a positive view of the interpretive presentation of RTBG and of the organisation's role in managing the Gardens Those in the three audiences will personally recommend the RTBG experience to others Those in the three audiences will become advocates for RTBG and its values
5. Stimulate spend at the Visitor Centre	International & National Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors will buy interpretive and other merchandise that reminds them of their RTBG experience
6. Minimise visitor impacts	All audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audiences will not impair site values, in particular remove plant materials, or damage or remove heritage features/artefacts or interpretive installations

6.3 FUTURE INTERPRETATION GOAL

Over time, as RTBG formalises and refines its interpretation planning, processes, program and interpretive communication, there is scope for the introduction of an additional goal in conjunction with its marketing and events communication activities.

The proposed goal and outcomes are –

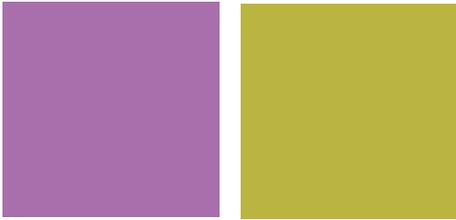
Increase the public contribution to RTBG activities

- All audiences will seek out opportunities to contribute to either identified projects or the ongoing operation of the RTBG.

While RTBG currently enjoys strong support from its Friends group, the above goal aims to capture a far wider support base, particularly financially and in-kind.

To legitimately set this goal – and achieve its outcome – it will be necessary to design a dedicated communication program that is integrated into the interpretive program and aims to achieve pre-determined behavioural outcomes.

It is essential that this concept be credible, have substance and avoid being tokenistic, as people are increasingly discerning and will need to believe that any contribution will make a genuine difference and be used to good effect. For this reason, the model of a dedicated foundation may be a relevant one, providing independence as well as

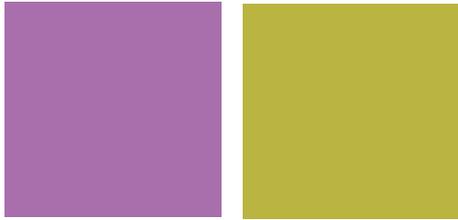


separation from government. Individual benefactors and private companies are generally unwilling to contribute to government organisations.

Support for a foundation is generally motivated by philanthropy, while corporate sponsorship of an organisation is generally undertaken with a view to attracting a measurable 'rate of return'. Foundations often arise where there is a perceived need not adequately met through normal funding allocations.

Regardless of the approach adopted, for interpretation to be an effective vehicle in attracting support, communication will need to provide a high level of motivation through cause and effect, and be designed for specific outcomes.

The Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service has begun exploring this approach, both in relation to philanthropy and in engaging support from the wider public.



7. Themes

7.1 ROLE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THEMES

Themes sit at the heart of the interpretive program. They form a set of ‘launching pads’ from which the entire program is developed and delivered.

They allow for considerable creativity in developing the program, providing for varying levels of layering and depth, while weaving together a range of topics – all geared to the delivery media, audience and location.

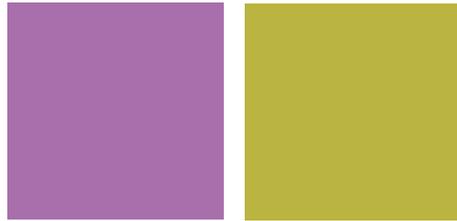
The RTBG themes have been developed in a staged process that has included:

- theme-writing by participants at a representative interpretation workshop that included a wide range of RTBG staff;
- a review of content of current interpretive materials produced by the Gardens, as well as reports and publications provided by the Project Manager;
- a review of outcomes from *Strategic Master Plan* consultation sessions;
- a review of the disturbance history and thematic history prepared by Lindy Scripps as part of the *Conservation Management Plan* process; and
- extensive discussions with the RTBG Director and the Manager of Botanical and Public Programs, as well as key consultants involved in the *Strategic Master Plan* development process.

Themes are presented with a range of underpinning ideas for context. The diversity of these underpinning ideas indicates the considerable opportunity for rich layering of interpretive content.

It should be noted that the way themes are expressed in this Interpretation Plan is unlikely to be the way that they are expressed to RTBG’s interpretive audiences. The way in which the themes are stated here is designed to capture the intent of their messages.

Themes, their underpinning ideas and a rationale for each theme are outlined in Figures 6 and 7.



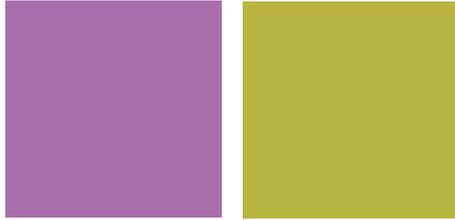
7.2 FOUR PRIMARY THEMES

The following themes are considered primary because together they convey what makes RTBG distinctive in relation to other natural or cultural areas and other botanical gardens in Australia and overseas. In this way, they contribute to RTBG’s competitive advantage. They establish the key ideas about RTBG and what ‘makes it tick’ for the audience most interested in interpretation – International & National Visitors.

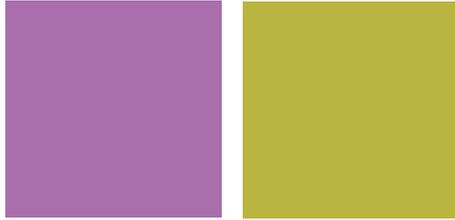
In addition, P1 and P2 communicate that RTBG is leading edge, has an incredibly valuable role that no-one else can replicate, and is sharing its knowledge and expertise with the local community and specialist ‘communities’ nationally and overseas.

Figure 6 – Primary themes and explanation

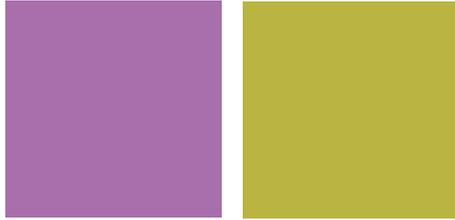
PRIMARY THEMES	UNDERPINNING IDEAS	RATIONALE
<p>P1 Without the work of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, our biodiversity would suffer – and so would we.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTBG is more than a beautiful park – because plants are critical to life, it’s helping preserve quality of life for Tasmanians and others through protecting our native species. • Its role in conserving Tasmanian and other cool climate Southern Hemisphere species is part of a major world force in conservation e.g. biology and propagation of selected rare and threatened species in conjunction with the Department of Plant Science at the University of Tasmania; propagation of rare and threatened species for revegetation of mine sites; part of the Millenium Seed Bank project, collecting seed from rare and protected Tasmanian flora. • It not only plays an active role in conservation of Tasmanian flora but contributes to the knowledge and skill bank of other organisations and individuals. • The experience world-wide shows that botanical gardens like the RTBG are pivotal in maintaining plant diversity at a time when we are seeing the greatest rate of species extinction in earth’s history. More than 2,500 botanical gardens globally have almost 30% of the world’s plant diversity. No plants, no people! • Tasmania has iconic species that are vulnerable. RTBG is the last repository for some plants under threat. 	<p><i>Encompasses three levels – the ‘big picture’ or generic importance of plants and of the role of botanical gardens in general; point of difference for RTBG; and scope for a range of detailed content.</i></p> <p><i>Links to other local attractions that feature Tasmanian/ Gondwanan plants, such as Mount Wellington.</i></p>



	<p>Tasmania's flora is distinctive and has Gondwanan connections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTBG is part of a global network and is working with partners locally. • The Tasmanian Seed Conservation Centre is intrinsic to the ex-situ conservation of Tasmanian species. • Biodiversity matters! All life depends on plants yet plants are an at-risk resource. Plants are also the basis for most eco-systems. Plants have played a key role in human history (food, art, bio-prospecting, trade, resources etc.). • The gardens have played and continue to play an important role in the exchange of plants with other sites around Australia and the world and this continues today with the Seed Bank. • We can learn about the purposes for plants e.g. medicinal. • RTBG collections illustrate the connections between Tasmania's flora, other southern hemisphere flora and the ancient flora of Gondwana. 	
<p>P2 The Royal Botanical Gardens is a leader in Tasmanian horticultural practices, opening the world of plants for you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTBG plays an important role in training the botanists and horticulturalists of the future, helping to ensure that excellence in Tasmanian horticultural practices and flora conservation is maintained. • It also excites, inspires and educates people about growing plants and can be used to foster a sense of fun (plants can be exotic, weird, wonderful and have extraordinary stories waiting to be told). • The RTBG horticultural practices are not just about edible plants e.g. it has cultivated some Tasmanian species never cultivated before. It is the only place in the world growing Subantarctic flora in a controlled environment. • Its horticultural therapy program was one of the first in Australia. • From the early development of Van Diemen's Land – particularly from the period when RTBG came under the auspices of the Royal Society of Van Diemen's Land for Horticulture, Botany and the Advancement of Science – it has been a focus for the island's horticultural research and practices (linking to early technology, such as Arthur Wall). 	<p><i>Relates to sharing knowledge and expertise and in this way, being directly relevant to the local community.</i></p>



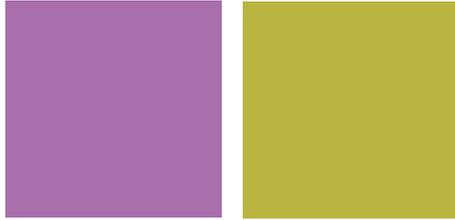
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of collections and plants reflects an immense world of plants e.g. at a recent World Harmony Day, at least one plant representing almost each of more than 80 migrant communities was identified. 	
<p>P3 The story of the Gardens has gone full circle, from survival on a local scale back then to the survival of every one of us in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site began with a focus on survival, through food gathering and food production for subsistence. This led to introduction of exotic plants for the colony and has now returned to a focus on more global survival – such as the conservation of Tasmanian plants as part of retaining the world’s biodiversity and ensuring the ongoing survival and wellbeing of all of us. The history of human occupation of the Gardens goes back more than 35,000 years to the original Tasmanian Aboriginal inhabitants. The Mouheneenner people sourced shellfish from the Derwent River and foodstuffs from local plants on the site and gathered there to cook and eat it. The British then used the site in the early 1800s, in the fledgling colony of Van Diemen’s Land, as part of a farm. The then-Governor Sorell refused to recognise the title for the farm and part of it became a Government Garden. This initial phase was focused on subsistence in a new, remote settlement through production of edible plants. The next main phase was its development and expansion, under the authority of the Royal Society of Van Diemen’s Land for Horticulture, Botany and the Advancement of Science, as part of a thirst for knowledge. The focus shifted to: sharing of specimens, science and research, cultivation of “useful plants”, and acclimatisation and supply of trees, fruits and plants introduced to the colony. Members of the society had privileged access for a number of years but by 1848 the Gardens were freely available to the public and became a popular place for recreation and education The Gardens fluctuated, with periods of being run down interspersed with periods of revitalisation. By the early 1900s, a focus was emerging on facilities for visitors such as “a retiring place for ladies and children” and “...tables provide, and a brick fireplace erected, with wood and water at hand. Visitors are now able to boil their 	<p><i>Cultural heritage, couched in a message that relates to us today, is the focus. This links to P1.</i></p>



	<p>kettles ...".⁷</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the late 1800s, the Gardens provided thousands of plants for landscape development throughout Tasmania, including Franklin Square in Hobart, Cataract Gorge and Port Arthur. • All of the built heritage has its own story to tell (e.g. Arthur Wall, Friends Cottage, Conservatory). And so has the built heritage that has disappeared or is out of sight (there are many layers here). • The plants also have many stories to tell – not just botanical but also relating to social history. • The Gardens are a product of a continually-evolving landscape. They have always been and are a 'work in progress', right back to the early days when they were used by Government House as a farm and including the reclamation of the bay as part of the Gardens site. • They are one of only six 'Royal' botanical gardens in the world (along with Kew and Edinburgh in the U.K., Hamilton in Canada, Sydney and Melbourne). • The circle has returned to survival in the form of global issues like climate change and sustainable horticulture and while these affect far more than the Tasmanian community (unlike the issues around in the early days of the Gardens) they are ultimately also highly personal, too, in terms of our quality of life and lifestyle. 	
<p>P4 It took unskilled convict labour to establish these gardens – and takes specialist skills and knowledge to keep them thriving now.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gardens were part of the Van Diemen's Land convict system, with the labour force largely consisting of convicts until 1858. • The gardens may ultimately be a product of genteel Victorian ideals and aspirations. Yet it was the lowest level of early society that brought the ideals to fruition. • The availability of cheap, unskilled convict labour was the only means in the early days of preventing "the Gardens from falling into a state of decay".⁸ (leads to the Royal Society's role in introducing specialist skills and expertise). 	<p><i>Enables RTBG to tap into existing strength of tourist interest in the convict story and to build on experiences visitors are likely to have had elsewhere.</i></p> <p><i>Also is a legitimate way to showcase, appropriately, RTBG as a centre of excellence.</i></p>

⁷ From Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Thematic History, prepared in 2007 by Historian Lindy Scripps as part of the RTBG Conservation Management Plan.

⁸ From Thematic History prepared by historian, Lindy Scripps, in 2007 as part of RTBG Conservation Management Plan.



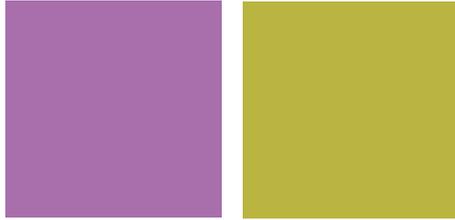
- Today, RTBG staff are recognised for bringing a high level of expertise and specialist knowledge to the care and development of the Gardens and to vital conservation work.
- The Gardens are part of a wider Tasmanian convict story that can be experienced at other sites, including Hobart’s Cascades Female Factory, Port Arthur Historic Site, and Sarah Island.

7.3 THREE SECONDARY THEMES

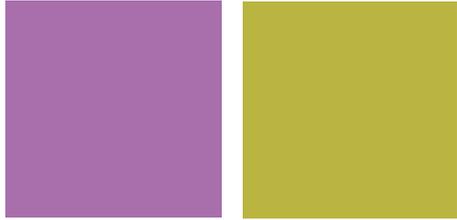
Secondary themes are no less important, in their own right, than primary themes. However, they either put ‘flesh on the bones’ – communicating the depth and richness of the RTBG experience – or are less relevant to the main interpretive audience.

Figure 7 – Secondary themes and explanation

SECONDARY THEMES	UNDERPINNING IDEAS	RATIONALE
<p>S1 The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens shows you how to make a difference when it comes to environmental change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTBG is an historical record of climate change issues. Plant adaptations have occurred as a result of the planet’s historical climate change. • Through the Gardens, I can discover that I have an important part to play in the health and wellbeing of myself, others and the planet – through the Gardens’ waste management/recycling practices to the compost heap in Pete’s Vegie Patch and direct learning on-site. • The environment is fragile, essential and susceptible and there are things you can do to work with this. • RTBG is a centre for finding out information on environmental issues. It is a place where you can learn and get excited and it is an accessible source of environmental knowledge e.g. being water wise, learning about weeds and which plants shouldn’t be in your garden, discovering organic gardening. • RTBG offers formal educational programs and informal learning. 	<p><i>Highlights the RTBG’s active role in contributing to quality of life for locals and others.</i></p>

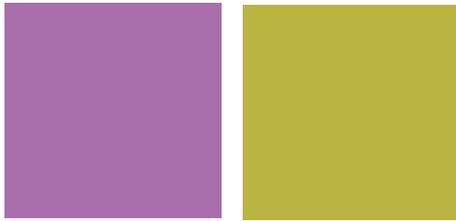


<p>S2 For many locals, this place is like a member of the family.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many locals consider the Gardens as a supportive 'relative', coming here for comfort in hard times, to slow down or cheer up, to enjoy the sense of safety, to have fun, or to feel a sense of belonging and place (e.g. Antarctic expeditioners on return). • The Gardens are a repository of local memories. They are a witness to the beginnings, endings and the cycles of our lives – visiting as children, courting, weddings, scattering the ashes of loved ones. • Even when they don't visit, locals feel good knowing that the Gardens are there when they want or need to experience them. • The Gardens are an important part of local identity and the image of Hobart. • These are Tasmania's botanic gardens and we are proud of its history, its condition and the unique Tasmanian flora within it. 	<p><i>Personalises the significance of the Gardens to the local community.</i></p>
<p>S3 The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens have the power to inspire us and provide sanctuary in our busy lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gardens are a uniquely inspiring place for reinvigoration and reconnection – physically, emotionally and spiritually. "It gives us the chance to reconnect with ourselves, others and nature." This is a place that nourishes our imagination. • It is a powerful place because of its sensory richness. • It is a place of recreation and relaxation, with opportunities for individual and group expression/experiences. • The gardens are freely accessible to all. • This is a place of life! We can listen to – and be refuelled by – the story that nature tells us about the cycles of life. • Among all the destruction and destructive processes on the planet, the RTBG shows us that humans can still create something beautiful. The Gardens shows that everyday effort (on the part of those who work here and are passionate about it) can create extraordinary outcomes. • The Gardens are a rich and dynamic environment that is here for everyone. We can all share in the ownership 	<p><i>Informs the way RTBG is developed over time. S3 is delivered largely through implicit rather than overt means e.g. the provision of intimate or social spaces; opportunity/facilities for contemplation.</i></p> <p><i>Also highlights the importance of sensory elements in the interpretive program.</i></p>



of them and can be part of the Gardens community.

- They remind us that every day above the ground is a good day – they are a place of uncomplicated love (somehow life and what’s important all seems simpler, here).
- In exploring the themed Gardens, we are informed about our own identity and the different identities of other cultures.



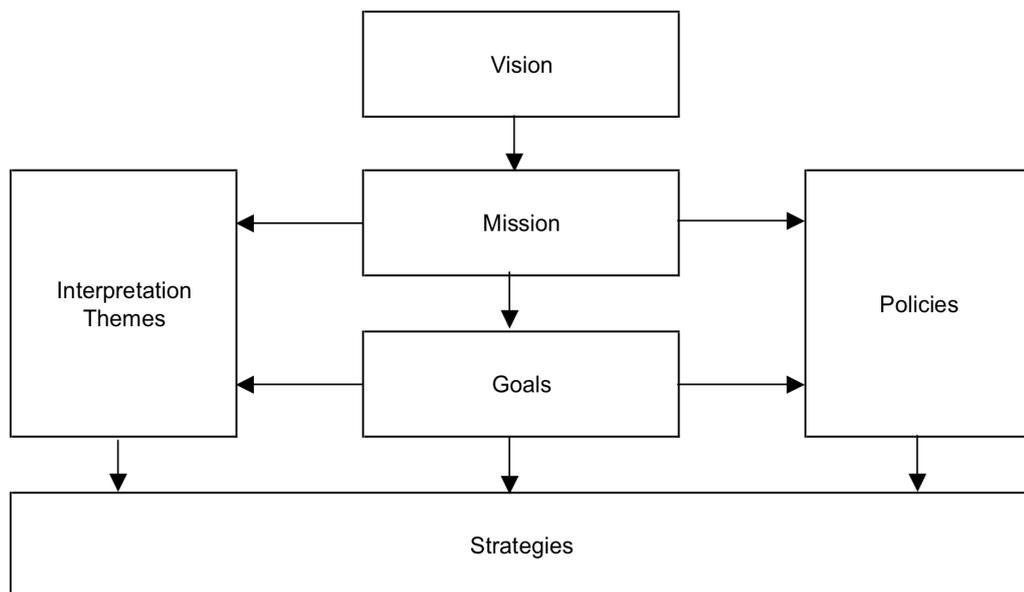
7.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THEMES

7.4.1 Strategy and site development

In adopting and delivering the identified themes, RTBG will need to consider – beyond the interpretive program – the implications of these themes for strategic management and site development.

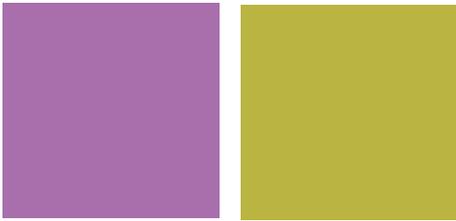
As part of the integrated approach to the *Strategic Master Plan*, the themes have raised a number of questions. For example, what changes are needed to present RTBG's conservation and horticultural roles in a more 'front-of-house' manner, and what implications are there for the living collections? One effective way to deliver Primary Theme 1 might be to establish a rare and threatened species garden. Primary themes also suggest a much stronger emphasis on Gondwanan and Subantarctic plants and the Tasmanian Fern House.

To address this, the *RTBG Strategic Master Plan* recognises synergistic benefits from incorporating themes into the strategic management framework for RTBG. The following diagram indicates the recommended location of themes in the RTBG framework –



Linkages between themes and the master planning process, including preparation of the *Living Collections Plan*, have influenced recommendations that include:

- the need to retain and expand the Tasmanian and Southern Hemisphere Collections;



- significant redevelopment of the Subantarctic and Tasmanian Ferns collections as major visitor attractions within the Gardens; and
- greater emphasis on species of conservation significance.

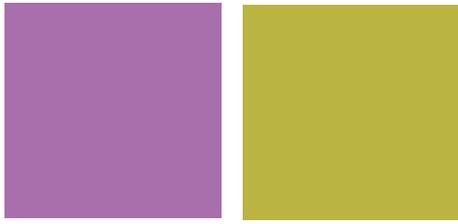
7.4.2 Marketing communications

While RTBG has not formalised its brand or a brand management process, the themes inform marketing communications, particularly its central messages.

In particular, themes indicate the 'zone' in which central messages should be developed and consistently applied across marketing communications to position RTBG in the minds of its customers and stakeholders. At present, this positioning could be expressed as –

The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens is more than a beautiful park – it has a powerful and pivotal role in conserving Tasmanian plants, in horticultural practices and in shaping the local sense of place and identity.

As indicated in the *Strategic Master Plan*, the development and adoption of an identified brand and positioning would enable RTBG to actively manage all of its communications, including interpretation, in a more strategic manner.



8. Delivery

8.1 THE MAIN CHALLENGE

The essential challenge in refreshing and building on the RTBG interpretive program is to introduce greater engagement with interpretive audiences in all forms of delivery, bringing the interpretive program to life in a range of ways.

A range of general options are summarised in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Interpretation Policy document (*Attachment A – 5.3 Visitor Engagement*).

Specific recommendations aimed at greater visitor engagement are incorporated into delivery checklists – known as media matrices – for each audience (Figures 5-8).

Use of stories in static and face-to-face interpretation is a crucial tool for introducing greater engagement. Stories are ‘containers’ for sharing values and meaning and speak to all nationalities and ages.

8.2 ORGANISATION-WIDE INTERPRETATION SYSTEM

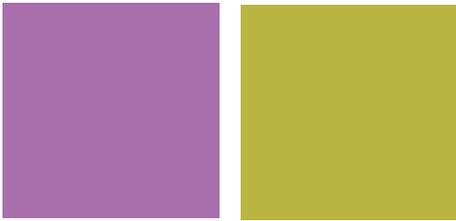
The organisational ‘system’ for delivering interpretation is vital, particularly as RTBG’s overarching strategic goals suggest that interpretation is core business.

A system-wide approach is essential for:

- change management necessary to deliver an evolving program of interpretation over time, linked to business goals;
- fostering an understanding across the organisation that everyone has a role to play in interpretation;
- integration of processes, responsibilities and budgets to ensure that interpretation is an effective management tool and does not become an add-on;
- appropriate allocation of resources;
- ensuring that relevant position descriptions and recruitment practices clearly articulate partial or dedicated interpretation responsibilities and skills; and
- incorporating continual improvement.

In particular, adoption of the Interpretation Plan will necessitate:

- fostering of stakeholder support for interpretation development and delivery;



- fostering internal support for interpretation planning and activities through internal RTBG communications;
- a review of the role and statement of duties for the existing Interpretation Officer position, which is currently vacant, to encompass the strategic focus for interpretation, as well as project management skills;
- a review of roles with partial interpretation responsibilities to ensure that existing interpretation resources are directed in the most efficient manner; and
- strengthening of partnerships and recruitment of sponsors, particularly for innovative, new interpretation, such as interpretive theatre.

8.3 FRESH APPROACH TO VISITOR CENTRE ZONE

Visitor Centre

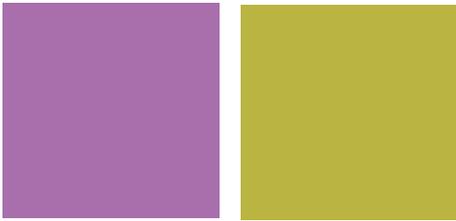
The Visitor Centre currently attracts a relatively low proportion of visitors, particularly tourism visitors, largely due to its location away from the main entrance and the major path network.

To ensure that it fulfils its potential as an important interpretive facility, it is necessary to:

- create better links between orientation and interpretive information and the centre;
- offer a more compelling reason for visitors to make the effort to go there, including a heightened sense of place for the Visitor Centre, as proposed in options outlined in the *RTBG Strategic Master Plan* (Section 6) for a more inspiring visitor services hub; ;
- establish a clearer sense of arrival at RTBG and stronger physical connections between the centre and major entrance/path, as indicated in the *RTBG Strategic Master Plan* (Section 6); and
- build awareness of the importance and role of the Visitor Centre.

Interpretation can assist in a number of ways. There is capacity for:

- a more holistic approach to the Visitor Centre & Restaurant, recognising that interpretation communication occurs in a wide range of ways and the entire facility can play a part;
- the development, over time, of the retail/interpretive area as an activities centre where visitors book guided tours, go for presentations and engaging interpretation, find out about activities in the Gardens and seasonal highlights. The activities centre concept will necessitate redesign of the retail/interpretive areas; and



- having a clear, differentiated focus for the interpretive gallery – it is the place you must go to for a key part of the RTBG story.

Recommended actions include:

Physical orientation

- strengthen visual cues on the site map and associated signage and print materials so that it is presented as a central feature or focus rather than one of a number of features.
- incorporate into all key interpretive materials (e.g. orientation signage) a consistent motivational message and 'call to action' for visiting the centre.
- establish a stronger visual connection from the building to the main pathway – opening up the window area so people can see and be attracted to activity and animation within.

Floor plan

- prepare a new floor plan to open up the retail area/gallery so that it invites entry – the existing counter is a barrier and gives a 'no entry' message.
- integrate interpretation into the retail area.

Interpretive gallery

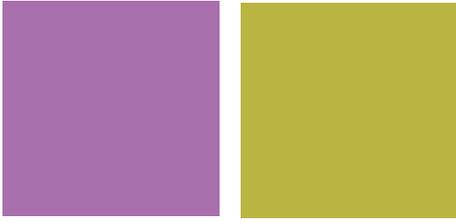
- Establish the main purpose for the gallery. Its strength is that it can deliver aspects of themes that are difficult to observe and/or access. This means it has a particular role in engaging visitors in relation to the significant conservation role and activities of the Gardens, particularly relating to endemic species. In addition, the gallery should be a space where fresh things happen regularly.

The Friends Cottage historical displays provide insight into aspects of cultural heritage that are not visible in walking through the Gardens. The Visitor Centre interpretive gallery can reveal with a sense of immediacy the other 'hidden story' – of the global conservation effort happening on site, right alongside visitors.

The gallery would deliver conservation-related themes via a badged, interpretive product concept (e.g. Cracking the Code-type concept suggesting a secret life of Tasmanian plants and those who work to protect them).

Interpretive zone – main entrance to Visitor Centre

The zone between the main entrance and the Visitor Centre sets the tone for the interpretive experience in the Gardens and as the main pathway into the site, should be considered the priority area for initial engagement with site visitors and users.



The style of engagement that occurs in this zone should aim to establish a sense of the personality of the place and the experience – friendly, accessible, fascinating and passionate.

In this zone it is recommended that:

- Interpretation have a personal flavour; and
- opportunities to convey a sense of engagement in a conversational style be considered e.g. quotes, casual style of presenting the ‘what’s on in the Gardens today’ info, use of faces and names, information presented as though directly speaking to visitors and site users.

It may be considered appropriate to adopt a more formal tone with interpretation elsewhere in the Gardens – with the exception of the proposed Children’s Garden – but the experience on entry is that RTBG reaches out to make a connection.

8.4 ABORIGINAL INTERPRETATION

While there are 17 middens within the RTBG boundaries, it is essential to consult with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to determine its views on and seek input into interpretation relating to the site.

The Gardens are a European-style landscape and represent a fundamental difference in perceptions of cultural landscape, language and naming, as demonstrated in the example of the Grampians in Victoria:

We meet here in the middle of the Grampians. In the state of Victoria we also have a range called the Grampians. They reminded the explorer Major Thomas Mitchell, born in Stirlingshire, of his home in Scotland. Our history books record that on his 1836 journey across South Eastern Australia he discovered and named many geographic features.

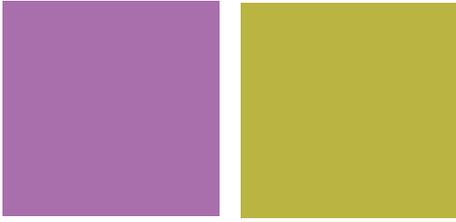
Except that he didn’t discover them. They were already discovered. He didn’t name them, he re-named them. They already had a name, Gariwerd. Every feature of the land was already named, known, sung about, loved and incorporated into a coherent system of knowledge and culture.⁹

8.5 TOURS

Tours, over time, are a key way for RTBG to engage with its audiences. Research nationally and internationally shows that face-to-face interpretation is consistently ranked by audiences to attractions and public facilities as the most satisfying form of interpretation.

There is scope for RTBG to develop a range of tour products, with orientation or general tours offered free-of-charge and more specialist tours or those packaged and marketed as tourism products provided on a commercial basis. One example of a potential

⁹ From report by Rachael Faggetter to *Building Blocks* 2007 Interpretation Australia conference in Sydney in November 2007, on Australian representation at The Vital Spark international heritage interpretation conference in the Scottish Highlands in October 2007.



tourism tour is the concept of a Director's Cut tour – a personal behind-the-scenes tour led by the Director, with opportunities to chat with specialist staff and the tour including lunch and wine in the Restaurant.

Tours will comply with section 6.6 Tour Standards, outlined in the Interpretation Policy document.

As tour products are developed, RTBG will need to consider the creation of a dedicated tours co-ordinator role on a volunteer or paid basis.

8.6 ROVES

Roving interpretation has a number of advantages for RTBG from a management and a visitor point of view. Because it is informal and flexible, it means that face-to-face interpretation can be responsive to peak periods or changing activities in the Gardens. For the visitors, it can represent interpretation that is personal and appears to occur spontaneously.

Volunteers can be trained as roving interpreters and may have special interests to share or are more comfortable engaging with visitors and answering questions than conducting formal tours. It may also be possible, during peak periods, for staff to act as roving interpreters on a rotational system for an occasional, defined period (e.g. 20-30 minutes).

Roving interpreters can carry props such as photos and this can be a way to provide interpretation at a specific site without the need for permanent installations. Roves should either occur at key features or areas where audiences seeking interpretation are likely to congregate (e.g. the Conservatory) or where the interpreter is visible and easily accessible, such as in the vicinity of the Visitor Centre.

Roving interpreters must be trained, as with guides, in visitor engagement techniques and should have a capacity to read body language – leaving those seeking quiet enjoyment of the site to themselves.

It is noted that roving interpretation already occurs in a number of instances, with visitors and locals spontaneously engaging with outdoor workers. These interactions are highly valued by visitors and locals alike.

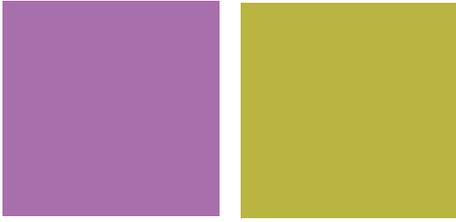
8.7 GUIDE TRAINING

Guide training for volunteers is currently arranged by the Education Officer in conjunction with Drysdale Institute of TAFE. Adoption of this Interpretation Plan will require the incorporation of Thematic Interpretation techniques and skills into guide training.

8.8 SELF-GUIDED WALKS

Visitors have expressed a desire to have a range of self-guided walks available. Of those surveyed as part of consultation for the *Strategic Master Plan*, 44% indicated that they would like to have access to a choice of self-walks.

Self-guided walks should be identified on the basis of:



- capacity to deliver themes;
- alignment to timeframes and major visitor attractions within the Gardens; and
- a loop walk so that visitors do not double back on the same path.

Initially, they could include an orientation-type self-guided walk that starts and ends at the Visitor Centre and up to three walks that deliver particular themes (e.g. the convict connection; Tasmanian plants/rare and threatened species; Subantarctic and Gondwanan plants).

8.9 PUBLICATIONS FRAMEWORK

A review of all RTBG interpretive publications should be conducted for the purpose of establishing a publications framework to guide delivery of themes via printed materials, taking into account the publications standards specified in the Interpretation Policy document.

The critical criterion for identifying the need for a publication, whether book, brochure or fact sheet, is its strategic role in delivering a theme or themes.

8.10 SIGNAGE REVIEW

8.10.1 Signage plan

The age and relevance of signage across RTBG varies. It is recommended that a signage plan be prepared, covering the life of this Interpretation Plan. Preparation of the plan should include:

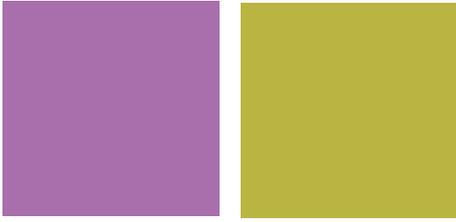
- a review of all interpretive signage and assessment against its relevance to themes;
- preparation of a table identifying all signage, its purpose and the degree to which it delivers themes;
- preparation of a signage plan that identifies gaps in relation to themes, remaining 'shelf life' of signage, and provides a timeline determining what should be refurbished, improved, introduced or removed.

8.10.2 Style manual

Interpretive panels represent a significant investment in interpretation and can play an important role in the delivery of effective outcomes.

At present, RTBG has a wide range of signage styles represented across the site. While it is important to provide sufficient flexibility in the look and feel of signs to address requirements dictated by the proposed location and the content, it is also important that signs:

- provide visual cues to the audiences in relation to the type of content; and
- give the appearance of being part of a seamless interpretive experience related to the place.



A style manual is required to achieve this.

The style manual – and any development process for interpretive signage – should encompass an approach to signage that is engaging, while aligned to audience needs and RTBG resources.

Ideas that can be explored include:

- incorporating three-dimensional casts within the body of the panel (e.g. a bird's nest), bringing a tactile experience to the sign; and
- low-key interactive panels that can be positioned outdoors with touch-sensitive audio or screens using trickle-charged batteries fed by discrete solar panels.

8.11 INTERPRETIVE THEATRE

Interpretive theatre has appeal for the Schools & Adult Learners audience as well as International & National Visitors and is a fresh, adaptable way to deliver interpretation. Clever script development can provide for interactive elements (as in the example of Strahan's long-running play, *The Ship That Never Was*) and can be developed as a one or two-hander for cost effectiveness.

However, it is important that the brief for development of any interpretive theatre specifies interpretive objectives and gives direction on the themes and associated messages to be delivered. This will ensure that it delivers interpretive outcomes and is not delivered only for entertainment purposes.

8.12 DIGITAL INTERPRETATION

RTBG is already exploring ways to deliver interpretation on-line, including an introductory podcast audio tour and development of a new Flickr photo gallery that aims to foster connections with the Gardens. There is also capacity for RTBG to:

- establish a strong on-line educational stream;
- extend the range of podcasts;
- develop email-based alerts that link to new offerings on its website or to news about fresh activities, milestones and staff successes; and
- make use of social networking websites, particularly in aiming to reach a younger audience.

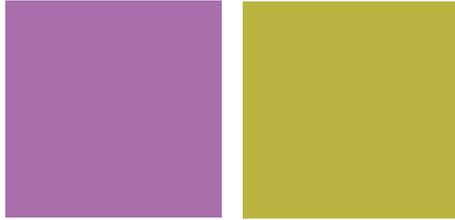
8.13 INTEGRATE MANAGEMENT MESSAGES

The interpretive program will include the identification and integration of management messages, particularly relating to plant materials and heritage features.

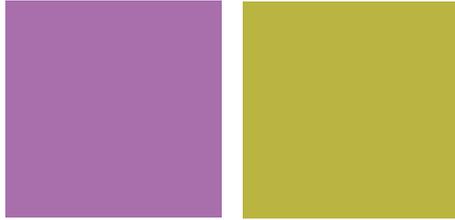


Figure 8 – Media Matrix for International & National Visitors

MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
PRE-VISIT							
RTBG website & downloads	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Review messages on relevant websites (e.g. www.discovertasmania.com) and provide new content where needed	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Review messages in tourism publications and guide books (e.g. Travelways, Treasure Islander, partner brochures etc) and provide new content or editorial	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Develop on-line strategy as per 8.12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
ON-SITE							
Orientation signs							
A. New orientation sign at Main Gates. Positioned so that it is facing visitors as they enter, with sufficient space in front of it for small groups to gather without impeding visitor flows. Site assessment required (location on corner of existing flower bed opposite gates? Allows for directional signage in two directions to be included)	✓	✓		✓			✓



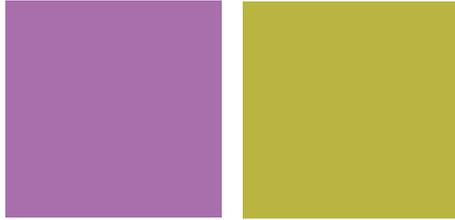
MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
<p>Content incorporating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updated map geared to visitor needs; • providing clear, top-line directional cues; • focusing on 'reasons' for going to Visitor Centre; • packaging suggestions of what to do if you have 1 hour or less; 2 hrs or less; and with • essential information presented in layered approach <p>B. Scaled down version of orientation sign inside Lower Entrance.</p>							
<p>Visitor Centre & Restaurant</p> <p>See 8.3 Visitor Centre. There is potential to deliver all themes in some way within the Visitor Centre as a whole. Consider all opportunities for communication. Note suggestions for Restaurant in Local Users media matrix.</p> <p>Interpretation gallery to focus on bringing the conservation story to 'front-of-house' and present it in a highly personalised way. The essential understanding should be "this is about you!".</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>What's on today</p> <p>Portable, self-supporting signs (x 4?) that convey 'What's on today', providing a sense of immediacy and new things happening:</p>	✓	✓			✓		✓



MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one near the two major entrances • others placed in specific locations near seasonal changes/ activities <p>These should be updated regularly, preferably daily. They should include a 'call to action' linked to the Visitor Centre.</p>							
<p>Interpretive signage</p> <p>As per <i>Section 8.9.1 Signage Plan</i>, with themes identified accordingly.</p>							
<p>Self-guided brochure</p> <p>Develop new self-guided brochure, incorporating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updated map; and • options for self-guided tours 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Publications suite</p> <p>Subject to 8.8. Publications Framework. Provision of a range of publications ensures that RTBG meets the range of audience needs.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
<p>Podcasts</p> <p>Develop series of podcasts, building on initial introductory audio tour and available for download on RTBG website and at Visitor Centre (I.T.kiosk?).</p> <p>These could include overview or specialist podcasts that are free and some that are commercial. These</p>	✓		✓	✓	✓		



MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
podcasts could feature brief interviews with or commentary by RTBG staff.							
Interpretive theatre – see Figure 8 Media Matrix for Schools & Adult Learners	✓			✓	✓		
Commercial guided tours geared to the product needs of the tourism market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate feasibility of/trial 'Director's Cut' concept, incorporating a personal behind-the-scenes tour, the chance to chat with specialist staff, and lunch and wine in Visitor Centre Restaurant; investigate feasibility of/trial special interest tours. 	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Roving interpretation Potential sites for roves are the sites of high visitor interest, in the main Gardens precinct eg.g. the vicinity of the Visitor Centre, Conservatory, Pete's Vegie Patch, Arthur Wall, Subantarctic Plant House.	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Children's self-guided brochure/sheet While the representation of children in this audience mix does not currently necessitate the development of a children's interpretive program, it remains important to provide some form of tailored interpretation.	✓		✓		✓		



MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
This could take the form of a simple discovery game on a self-guided brochure or sheet.							
Interpretive merchandise This should be relevant to themes and could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plants – e.g. Tasmanian rare and threatened species (it is essential to develop freight information and packaging services for this audience) DVD product, particularly revealing aspects that are not observable or cannot be accessed (history and historic photos used as time lapses to now; behind the scenes etc.) Colourful Characters of the Gardens postcard series, interpreting through personal stories (historic and contemporary) 	✓	✓	✓				
	✓		✓	✓			✓
			✓	✓		✓	

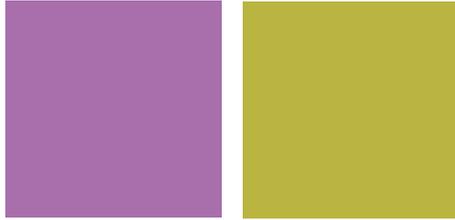
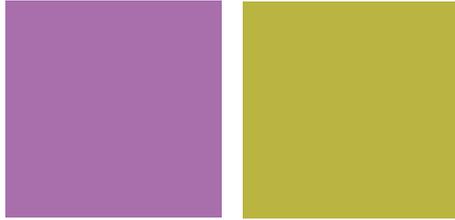
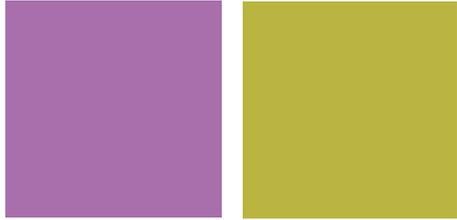


Figure 9 – Media Matrix for Local Users

MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
PRE-VISIT							
As for International & National Visitors							
RTBG local communications e.g. daily media, email lists, local or special interest newsletters	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Brief/informally communicate shift in emphasis to stakeholders	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
ON-SITE							
<i>** It is noted that there will be a 'spill' effect from interpretation targeted to the International & National Visitors audience, in that much of it will have relevance to those in the Local Users audience who have an interest in interpretation.</i>							
Events program –							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build program to provide fresh incentives for Local Users to visit and to broaden their understanding of the significance of the Gardens. Develop a signature event that highlights what makes RTBG more than a park. 	✓	✓			✓		



MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
RTBG Restaurant – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Dress’ the restaurant to convey and reinforce top-line, differentiating messages. This can be relatively low-key, such as interpretive wallpaper that focuses on imagery and use of menus; • Plant display demonstrating one or more themes, with temporary interpretation (laminated sheets/posters on corflute etc.) e.g. threatened species • Develop a ‘Did You Know’ interpretation board that features Gardens staff, their achievements, topical aspects of the work happening at the Gardens, current newspaper or magazine stories on RTBG – change the content regularly. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>		
Dedicated children’s space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a children’s interactive garden (Tasmanian natives) in Education and Economic Collections Precinct, based on similar principles to the Ian Potter Children’s Garden at Royal Melbourne Botanical Gardens . While this area must be a fun space for children, it should give different visual cues to that of a playground and should aim to deliver interpretive outcomes. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>				



MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
Tasmania's Discoveries Guide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue participation in annual guide, with activities that provide interpretive outcomes 	✓	✓			✓		
Contemplation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain existing intimate and contemplation spaces, and preserve their values by avoiding programming interpretation activities in those areas. • Where possible, incorporate contemplation spaces into new developments within the Gardens. 						✓	✓

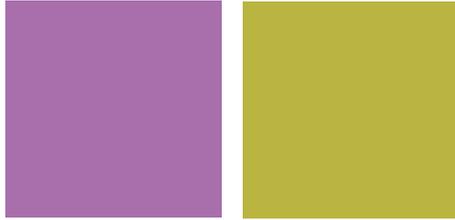


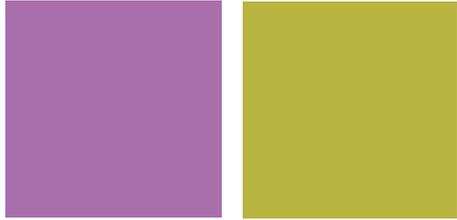
Figure 10 – Media Matrix for Event Participants

MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
PRE-VISIT							
Promotional materials Where possible, incorporate top-line themes that serve to differentiate RTBG into event promotional programs and materials. Make connections between the event and the Gardens.	✓	✓	✓		✓		
ON-SITE							
Incorporate interpretation into events Determine opportunities to incorporate interpretation into the event activities as an enhancement to selected events – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g. Tulip Festival roves, tours, temporary displays or banners promote new interpretive activities to Event Participants. 	✓	✓			✓		
Develop a signature event (see Fig. 9 Events Program – Local Users media matrix).							

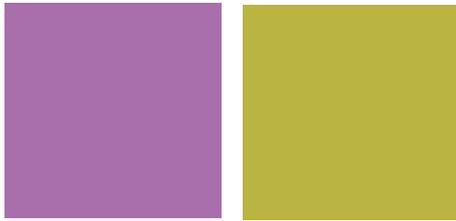


Figure 11 – Media Matrix for Schools & Adult Learners

MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
PRE-VISIT							
Education & community program Current Grow a Brain schools program and community classes, as well as materials provided at pre-visit and on-site stages, are targeted to the needs of this audience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is scope – subject to budgetary considerations – to expand the program, including the provision of on-line materials. 	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Ensure that relevant themes are communicated as part of promotional and support materials for the education and community program.	✓	✓	✓		✓		
ON-SITE							
Interpretive theatre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop pilot interpretive theatre targeted to school groups. 'Theatre in a Wheelbarrow' developed by Wollongong Botanic Garden provides a useful model for one or two-hander interpretive theatre. 	✓		✓		✓		



MEDIA	P1 theme <i>Biodiversity</i>	P3 theme <i>Horticultural leader</i>	P3 theme <i>Full circle</i>	P4 theme <i>Convict labour vs now</i>	S1 theme <i>Enviro. change</i>	S2 theme <i>Gardens as family</i>	S3 theme <i>Inspiration & sanctuary</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject to a successful trial, the concept could be extended to a suite of interpretive theatre productions. • It also has capacity for adapting as a commercial product for the International & National Visitors audience during the peak tourism season. 							



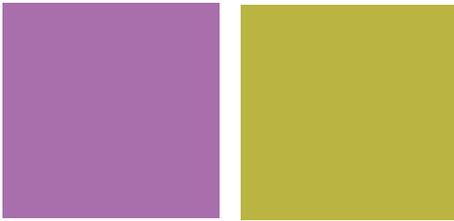
9. Implementation

Detailed implementation of the Interpretation Plan will occur through annual delivery plans determined on the basis of strategic priorities arising from the RTBG five-yearly Strategic Management Plan, and linked to availability of budget and resources.

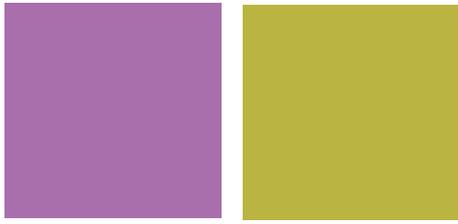
The delivery plans will take into account any identified opportunities to attract partner funding, commercial sponsorship for projects or in-kind support. The following action plan identifies key implementation steps –

Figure 12 – Action Plan for Implementation

ACTIONS	KEY RESPONSIBILITY	TASKS
Based on the Interpretation Plan, determine organisational response	Board/RTBG management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieve stakeholder and internal support for an overarching interpretation strategy, as determined in this plan. • adopt a system-wide approach to interpretation. • achieve organisational support for an overarching interpretation strategy, as determined in this plan.
Develop a holistic focus on the Visitor Centre & Restaurant as an interpretive medium	RTBG management Manager Botanical & Public Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the entire facility and identify its capacity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – transition to an activities centre; and – deliver interpretive messages in a way that is appropriate to the facility's range of uses. • prepare floor plan for retail area/gallery to improve visitor flows and the capacity to deliver dedicated interpretation and exhibitions
Signage review	Interpretation Officer, in conjunction with Manager Botanical & Public Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review all interpretive signage and assess against its relevance to themes, identifying gaps. • prepare a signage plan that identifies remaining 'shelf life' of signage, and identifies with a timeline what can be refurbished, improved, introduced or removed. • develop a signage manual



<p>Based on the Interpretation Plan, identify priorities for implementation of the interpretation strategy and interpretive products</p>	<p>Manager Botanical & Public Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review role and responsibilities for Interpretation Officer and any related positions • priorities ranked short-term, medium and long-term and responsibilities identified. • management messages identified and carried forward into annual delivery plans for integration into interpretive program.
<p>Investigate external funding sources for interpretation projects</p>	<p>Board and Director RTBG, in conjunction with Manager Botanical & Public Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leverage off Interpretation Plan by identifying and pursuing external funding sources, such as Federal and State tourism grants programs, commercial sponsors and State Government partner funding, either through the Friends of the Gardens group or in the organisation's own right.
<p>Develop an annual Interpretation Delivery Plan</p>	<p>Interpretation Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specify what will be achieved during 12 months, including development of interpretive media. • determine costings (research, design, manufacture, installation). • identify what will be addressed in-house or out-sourced. In the case of the latter, prepare briefs. • establish timelines and, if necessary, project plans. • integrate monitoring/evaluation tasks into delivery plan and assess any outcomes of monitoring/evaluation in relation to interpretive program.
<p>Foster community and stakeholder support</p>	<p>Board/RTBG management Marketing & Events Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to support and acknowledge the contribution of Friends of the Gardens. • encourage active community and stakeholder involvement in RTBG activities and participation in events and programs.



10. Monitoring and evaluation

RTBG's investment in interpretation is likely to grow over time and it is essential that its delivery system includes a monitoring and evaluation program, elements of which can be incorporated into visitor survey activities (see *RTBG Strategic Master Plan Visitor Survey Policy*).

Monitoring is an ongoing process of gathering feedback on one or more aspects of the interpretive program, while evaluation is a more formal process that typically occurs once a year.

Monitoring and evaluation enables continual improvement and ensures that the interpretation budget is directed to the most effective outcomes.

While some organisations and attractions conduct evaluation of interpretive programs through customer satisfaction surveys, the results are often too general to have adequate value for interpretation.

It is recommended that RTBG develops a program that monitors and evaluates the interpretive program against the achievement or otherwise of goals and goal outcomes identified in this Interpretation Plan. For ongoing monitoring and evaluation to be adopted in a timely manner, the program must be achievable within the available budget and resources.

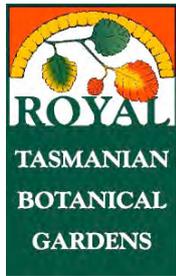
Monitoring and evaluation techniques include:

- front end evaluation;
- exit surveys;
- focus groups; and
- observable outcomes.

RTBG may wish to explore the use of the *Tasmanian Interpretation Evaluation Toolkit*¹⁰ developed specifically for measuring the effectiveness of face-to-face interpretation programs.

¹⁰ Developed by Prof. Sam Ham and Prof. Betty Weiler (Monash University) in conjunction with the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre, the toolkit was released in 2005.

ATTACHMENT A



ROYAL TASMANIAN BOTANICAL GARDENS

Interpretation Policy

July 2008



1. INTRODUCTION

The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG) is a major cultural institution charged under the *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Act 2002* with responsibility for managing, conserving and enhancing significant plant collections and heritage assets. As part of this responsibility, RTBG meets recreational, educational and tourism needs.

It is a publicly-funded organisation with a seven-member Board. Its organisational structure comprises five business units – Gardens Operations, Assets and Infrastructure, Business Services, Catering Services and Botanical and Public Programs, with the latter incorporating the RTBG's education, training and interpretation functions.

2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

Interpretation is a powerful element in meeting both the organisation's strategic goals and the needs of those who visit and use the RTBG.

The purpose of this policy is to assist in taking the organisation's strategic aims and translating them into a working interpretive program. The policy provides a high-level focus and establishes a general direction for the interpretive process – planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Manager Botanical and Public Programs will have responsibility for implementation of this policy across RTBG. Dedicated interpretation/education staff will have responsibility for participating in the development of and for carrying out the implementation of the interpretive program within this policy framework.

This policy also acknowledges the close links between the interpretation function of the organisation and the role of the Marketing & Events Officer. Both interpretation and marketing involve communicating with stakeholders and those who visit the RTBG. Liaison between staff with primary interpretation and marketing responsibilities will ensure that there is consistency in the communication.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. Interpretation

Interpretation provides "a means of communicating ideas and feelings which enrich people's understanding and appreciation of their world and their role within it".¹¹

Interpretation reveals new perspectives in an enjoyable way, engaging the audience and going beyond entertainment or the provision of facts that may be soon forgotten.

¹¹ Interpretation Australia Association, 20004

The 'Father of Interpretation', Freeman Tilden, in a 1957 publication, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, provided a definition that has stood the test of time:

The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

4.2. Interpretation Plan

A document that provides specific direction for development, delivery, evaluation and monitoring of the interpretive program over a set period.

It sits below the Interpretation Policy and forms the basis of delivery or action plans.

4.3. Interpretive media

These are the mechanisms or vehicles for delivering interpretation. They may include such things as printed materials, guides, signs, and art or theatre that is purposefully designed to provide insights and learning.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1. Commitment to best practice

RTBG is committed to interpretation strategies which reflect world best practice. It will take account of contemporary trends and published research on approaches demonstrated to be of the highest standard for communicating effectively with interpretive audiences.

5.2. Engaging audiences

The RTBG interpretive program engages its audiences in ways that are meaningful and relevant to the range of audience needs and interests. It uses a multidisciplinary approach that supports a high level of engagement, ranging from personal interpretation to publications, educational programs and interactive activities.

The program recognises wide-ranging types of engagement through interpretation, including:

- *Physical Engagement*

Encouragement for exploration of the site and heritage structures; opportunities to touch plant materials, as well as objects.

- *Intellectual Engagement*

Providing thought-provoking interpretation that makes connections and enhances the sense of place.

- *Emotional Engagement*

Providing opportunities for audiences to empathise with people who have had strong connections in the past and today with the Gardens; and interpretation that evokes an emotional response either through implicit or direct means.

- *Social Engagement*

Provided through free access to the site, interpretation that reveals the social evolution of the site and related attitudes, and through a program of events.

- *Interactivity*

Making interpretive products as involving and interactive as possible in design and content and encouraging audiences to increase the range of activities and uses for the Gardens.

5.3. Research

Interpretation will be accurate and based on sound research and scholarship

5.4. Commitment to monitoring and evaluation

RTBG is committed to ongoing monitoring of and regular evaluation of its interpretive program, to ensure that resources and effort are directed to the most effective outcomes for the interpretation investment.

5.5. Interpretation delivery & sustainability

The interpretive program is a vital means for protecting and sustaining the RTBG'S values and its delivery will not in any way impair those values.

5.6. Community involvement

RTBG recognises the significance of the site, its collections, assets and role to the local community. The interpretation program seeks to foster local involvement to nurture the local connection and also as an important mechanism for delivering interpretation.

5.7. Inclusivity

While RTBG has a legal obligation to abide by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, it acknowledges that its interpretive program represents a key strength in meeting the needs of those with ambulant, sight and hearing impairment. The interpretive program will represent equality of opportunity and experience.

The following options should be taken into account as part of the design development phase for any interpretive tools, subject to budgetary constraints, to ensure that RTBG interpretation meets the needs of those in its audiences who have disabilities –

- providing face to face interpretation;
- captioning of key audio-visual elements;
- selection of high-contrast detailed photographs and clear text on signage and graphics;
- identifying information that could be made available in large print formats;
- integration of sensory features for touch, sound, smell and physical interaction;
- virtual access to elements of the Gardens' experience that cannot be accessed by those with mobility issues, through the RTBG website

6. STANDARDS

6.1. Planning framework

An Interpretation Plan will be prepared and/or reviewed every three years and will be underpinned by annual Delivery Plans that specify implementation or action priorities for the year as they relate to evaluation findings, resources and budget.

The Interpretation Plan will clearly state goals and objectives, any changes affecting the RTBG interpretive environment, current understanding of audiences and their needs, program priorities, and monitoring and evaluation processes.

6.2. Thematic Interpretation and the TORE™ model

All RTBG interpretation will conform to the Thematic Interpretation model of TORE™, as developed by international interpretation specialist, Professor Sam Ham (for background see the *Tasmanian Thematic Interpretation Manual* at <http://www.tourismtasmania.com.au/tasind/>)

The model determines that for effective interpretation to occur it must be –

- i. *Thematic* – organised around identified themes, which are whole ideas or meanings that provide ‘launching pads’ around which the interpretive program is planned.
- ii. *Organised* – information is organised to make it easily accessible by the audiences. This may include techniques such as sequencing of text and images (ideas and information build on each other and are not simply isolated facts); the use of verbal transitions on tours so that it is seamless for the audience (such as through techniques of foreshadowing; or asking a question at one stop and answering it at the next).
- iii. *Relevant* – interpretation should be meaningful and personal for audiences. It should relate to what they understand and know, providing bridging from what they know to new understandings and knowledge.
- iv. *Enjoyable* – interpretation should be enjoyable in a wide range of ways, from the fun of tours or interpretive theatre, to the quiet absorption of reading or the tactile/sensory pleasure of being hands-on. Any humour is used to get attention for the purpose of making a point, making it different to pure entertainment.

Stories are an important technique for delivering themes in an organised, relevant and enjoyable manner. Stories have a format that is familiar to most people, regardless of place of origin, age or interest. While cultural history lends itself easily to storytelling, effective stories can be created from nature and objects.

6.3. Visitor satisfaction

The RTBG interpretive program is considered to achieve its overall interpretation standard when evaluation of the interpretive program indicates that 75% or more of those who visit the Gardens report high to very high satisfaction with the program. It is noted that the evaluation process will need to take into account the type of experience sought by the audience of Local Users and the fact that much of that

experience is provided through implicit delivery rather than overt delivery of interpretation.

6.4. Publications standards

- The purpose, design and content of interpretive publications must be targeted to an identified audience need that fits within the current Interpretation Plan and its annual delivery plan or addresses an emerging need.
- The role of a particular publication in the interpretive mix must be clearly identified and assessed. It must not duplicate existing resources, its strategic role in relation to other interpretive media must be clear, and there must be a distribution process or system identified for each publication.
- Publications must align with any RTBG visual style requirements, including use of logos.
- The design of any maps must:
 - where possible, have the perspective oriented to the direction the map user is facing;
 - contain important information related to the user needs but not have excessive information (keep it simple!); and
 - use a layered hierarchy of visual cues and text that is geared to providing the most critical information first.
- The quality of each publication will be determined using the following criteria:
 - the role of the publication in the interpretive mix and the way that role relates to audience expectations (e.g. major self-guide brochure needs to be of a higher quality than a fact sheet);
 - how long its intended 'shelf life' will be;
 - if it is a commercial publication, what the price point will be and audience expectations relating to that; and
 - budgetary considerations in relation to the required print run.
- All self-guided print products will be tested at the mock-up or proof stages with the audience. This is critical for quality control, as errors or confusion in orientation or presentation of information can be readily identified before a costly print run occurs. Testing can be easily done by providing photocopies to a sample group of visitors on entry and obtaining feedback at the end of their visit (with a free coffee or other enticement included!).
- Unless images are copyright to RTBG, a copyright check must be undertaken. Copyright clearance must always be obtained for the use of historical or contemporary images.

6.5. Signage standards

- The purpose, design and content of interpretive signage must be targeted to an identified audience need that fits within the current Interpretation Plan and its annual delivery plan or addresses an emerging need.
- Design and manufacture of interpretive signs must conform to any signage guidelines adopted by RTBG, including any style or materials requirements.
- Text on interpretive signs must have a clear communication hierarchy – theme/critical message, key message, and supporting information – with the layering designed to address different learning styles of those in interpretive audiences.
- The design must not dominate the text, images or illustrations and make them difficult to read or see.
- The word limit for interpretive signage may vary according to the identified audience needs. However, based on communications psychology research and the experience from interpretive programs at other sites, the recommended word limit is:
 - one-off panels, 250 words
 - panels within a series, 100 words
 - plant labels, 30 words
- Where possible, interpretive signage will demonstrate the theme and/or elements of supporting messages visually.
- Placement of signage should take into account visitor movement, potential for intrusion on viewlines or impairment of the location aesthetic.
- Mock-ups of completed designs for signs will be tested in situ to ensure that they are effective in orienting audiences to features and accurately relate to their surroundings. This does not necessarily involve temporary installation but can be achieved by taking proofs to the installation location.
- Signs must be maintained in good physical condition and will be inspected/assessed at least once a year. Signs which are not in good condition will be refurbished, replaced or removed.
- Unless a temporary installation, signs will be constructed for the purposes of a minimum functional life of 3-5 years.

6.6. Tour standards

The following standards apply to guided tours:

- Those responsible for taking tour bookings will provide a description to guides of the group type, special interest or demographic in advance of the tour, assisting guides to tailor their tour to the group's needs;
- RTBG will provide guides with an outline specific to each tour type, providing a description of the tour and its purpose and indicating duration of tour, key tour

stops, themes and supporting messages. This outline will be prepared as part of the development stage for any new tour.

- RTBG will provide guides with a resource list and/or background materials as a source of additional information relating to the tour. It is the responsibility of guides to familiarise themselves with information to ensure accuracy in their tour delivery and in answering questions from participants.
- Before starting as tour leaders, guides are required to take at least two RTBG guided tours as a participant.
- Tour delivery will avoid jargon and use words that are relevant to the audience.
- Guides will understand the difference between an interpretive tour and a presentation and will encourage participants to get involved in the tour.
- Guides will adhere to timeframes established for each tour type, recognising that the tour will be part of a wider formal or informal itinerary for participants.

6.7. Outsourcing interpretation

- The engagement of external interpretation practitioners, such as designers, writers and illustrators, will be subject to preparation of a brief for the work. The brief will be approved by the Manager Botanical and Public Programs.

7. RELATED POLICIES

Cultural Heritage Policies

As outlined in the *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Conservation Management Plan*.

All RTBG policies are outlined in the Policy Attachment to the *RTBG Strategic Management Plan*.