

INFORMED GUIDING

discovering the mystery & magic of our gardens



CANBERRA 2017 OCTOBER 15 - 19
Australasian Botanic Gardens Volunteer Guides Conference

Final Report

Introduction

The 2017 biennial conference of volunteer guides from Australian and New Zealand botanic gardens was held at the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra between Sunday 15 October and Thursday 19 October, with a one-day post conference tour on Friday 20 October.

The theme of the 2017 conference was 'Informed Guiding – Discovering the mystery and magic of our Gardens'.

- 'Magic' reflects our sense of wonder and excitement about the special and different aspects of our gardens.
- The 'mysteries' of the unknown and the unexpected in our gardens are being progressively solved and explained by science.
- 'Informed guiding' reminds us of our role in interpreting the Gardens to visitors so they leave still with that sense of magic but with some of the mysteries solved.

The conference was organised by the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, working in collaboration with the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Governance

The gardens delegates' meeting held at the Christchurch conference at the end of October 2013 awarded the 2017 conference to the ANBG. We held a preliminary meeting on 20 May 2014 and at that meeting it was agreed that a conference steering committee should be established and that a planning meeting open to all would be held on 28 July 2014. At that meeting it was decided that the preparation for the conference would fall into two phases: big picture planning in the period to the end of 2015 (after the Sydney conference) and then implementation through to the conference in late Spring 2017. Having a committee for each phase would enable people to make more manageable commitments to the conference.

A Planning Committee was established consisting of Glenys Bishop (convenor) Fran Johnson, Christianna Cobbold, Linda Beveridge, David More and Ros Joslin. Over time this changed; Lee Fuller replaced Linda and Lesley Jackman (or her deputy), Marguerite Carrington and Jonette McDonnell attended. A Program subcommittee, coordinated by Fran Johnson, also met regularly. This

committee and subcommittee were wound up at the end of 2015, having established the conference structure, a conference website, the conference date and theme and having produced a promotional video and save the date cards. There was also a suite of suggestions for speakers and tour visits.

In January 2016 a Conference Organising Committee was formed. It consisted of Glenys Bishop (convenor), Christianna Cobbold (guides convenor), Ros Joslin, Judy Collett (later replaced by Jill More when Judy moved interstate), Helen Elliot (Friends treasurer), Lee Fuller (record keeper). This committee met monthly until October 2017. Sub-committees were established, as and when required as follows: ANBG tours (i.e. themed walks, Flora, visits to ANBG facilities and workshop), Out and About Day tours (excursions on the Wednesday), Post Conference day tour, Publicity, Registration, Catering, Cultural Institutions. Each sub-committee worked with one or more members of the Conference Organising Committee.

The conference convenor reported regularly to the Friends of the ANBG at Council meetings and met on several occasions with the Executive Director of the ANBG, Dr Judy West.

Finances

The Friends Council did not want the conference to make a loss; nor was it expected to make a profit. The budget used to set the fee was based on 150 registrants. The set fee was \$385 for early bird registration. The Friends Council agreed to subsidise the conference fee, for each ANBG guide who registered, an amount of \$75, provided they registered by the early bird date. So ANBG guides paid an early bird fee of \$310. The regular fee was set at \$435 for everybody.

A sponsorship of \$500 was obtained from Botanica World Discoveries. Capital Wines provided enough wine for the night tours and for the Welcome drinks function. Tom Butt offered a 20% discount on all gifts purchased from either the Botanical Bookshop or Australian Choice.

Donations were made in cash or kind by a number of guides. The total income was \$84,896.57. The total expenditure was \$74,230.76. These figures differ from those provided by the Friends Treasurer because I have included all money paid to Conference Online in income and their fees in expenditure. These figures exclude the subsidy by the Friends. Clearly this is not required.

Reasons for the larger than expected profit are twofold. 175 people registered instead of the budgeted 150. A number of the expenses that had to be estimated at the time of setting the fee turned out to be over-estimates. I will illustrate with a few examples. \$1400 was allowed for snacks for Tuesday and Wednesday but we only spent \$750 and there were enough left over to be used on the Post conference tour as well. The post conference tour aimed to break even with 30 people but 40 came, each paying \$95. The numbers of extras (speakers and other guests) for each meal was over-estimated too. The budget for afternoon tea on Sunday was \$800 but with all the donations of food, only \$120 was spent.

The final budget is shown in Appendix 1.

Numbers

The committee determined that the maximum number that could be accommodated was 175. In fact the three coaches for the Out and About tours would only hold 171 passengers. The Shine Dome could hold 186 comfortably but that would include speakers and guests and the ANBG tours could cope with 150 visitors, allowing for the fact that local guides would be leading or assisting with tours.

A small number of local guides opted out of the Out and About tours so that we had enough places on the coaches.

Program

The program endeavoured to address the conference theme by devoting Monday morning to scientific discussion, and Tuesday and Thursday mornings to discussions about guiding. At other times during the conference there were magical tours of our gardens and also other gardens around Canberra. We also included guided tours of six major national cultural institutions. The full program is attached to this report in a separate document.

Publicity

A message from those attending the Sydney conference was that potential registrants needed to have early information about conference content, the likely fee and suitable accommodation. One of the aims of the committee was to reach people who guide in smaller gardens and do not have the training and development opportunities offered by the larger gardens.

We expended a lot of effort publicising the conference. We adopted the following strategy:

- Publicise widely to attract attention
- As they become available, add details to the conference website
- Establish a list of interested people
- Send regular emails to the list notifying them of additions to the website

We publicised widely by emailing those who attended the Sydney conference and also Botanic Gardens in Australasia, asking staff to alert any guides, by sending emails to Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AAFBG) member gardens, by attending the AAFBG conference in Geelong in late April 2016, showing a poster and promotional video, by speaking at the AAFBG AGM in May 2017, by writing articles for Eucalypt, the AAFBG magazine, and for BGANZ.

By the time registration opened, we had over 200 interested people on the mailing list. This did not include ANBG guides, for whom we already had a mailing list.

Engaging Local Guides

The organising committee considered it important for ANBG guides to have a sense of ownership of the conference. We also wanted to involve non-guiding Friends. We held information sessions open to all guides and other Friends on March 2 2016 and on November 21 2016. From July 2016 until October 2017, there was a standing conference item at every monthly guides' meeting. At one meeting, I asked guides to choose the post conference day tour from a list of five possibilities. At another they were given the University House dinner menu and asked to choose courses. We also put up lists of tasks for which people could volunteer. In the end, 59 guides and 12 non-guiding Friends were involved in one or more conference tasks. In addition 43 ANBG guides and two non-guiding Friends attended the conference.

Help from the ANBG Staff

We could not have conducted this conference without the help of the ANBG staff. Judy West, Sabrina Sonntag and Helen McHugh gave really good talks at the conference. Janine Chandler, Chris Cargill, Tom North, and Joe McAuliffe and their staff prepared the library, cryptogam herbarium, the seed bank and the plant nursery for our visits. David Taylor and the horticultural staff worked closely with the ANBG tours coordinator to make sure that areas and plants being featured in the tours,

looked good. They also picked the beautiful flowers which were on display in the Crosbie Morrison during the week. Many of our visitors commented on them.

All the staff, in particular Peter Byron, Dan Marges, Kate Adams, Bruce Driver, Helen McHugh and Tamryn Marek were very helpful, ensuring gates were unlocked, parking was available outside the Crosbie Morrison for volunteers, parking permits for visitors were issued, Flora Explorer was reserved and running and rooms were booked, not only for the conference but for all of the committee and subcommittee meetings, our guides received night training and all the lighting was set up for the night tours.

Project Management

Early on, I found a conference help website from which I downloaded a set of project management tasks. The Planning and the Organising committees used this pro forma to establish a set of tasks, specific to our conference. We added tasks, as time went on, and it served as a useful checklist to make sure we had done everything. We also established a risks document with mitigating strategies. We used Drop box to share files. This was a way of ensuring that all committee members had access to all the information, an insurance against a key person falling ill. We also had two email addresses, one that could be seen by all members of the organising committee and the other by all members of the registration team. A roster system meant that emails could be dealt with promptly by a member of the group.

In the last month we constructed detailed running sheets for the speaker sessions, for each of the out and about day tours and the cultural institution tours. These ensured that everybody with a role to play knew exactly what was required and when.

Post Conference Survey

The results of the **post conference survey** are shown in Appendix 2. In summary the main complaints were about the lack of transport between University House and the ANBG and the entertainment at the conference dinner.

The **transport** issue was relevant on Tuesday morning, when we bussed people from the ANBG to the National Library and on Wednesday morning when we departed for the out and about tours from the ANBG. It was also relevant on Tuesday and Sunday afternoons when visitors had to walk from the ANBG to University House. We had arranged transport between the Shine Dome and the ANBG during the conference proceedings. The coach drivers dropped people off at University House on Wednesday afternoon after the Out and About tours. Local guides gave many visitors a lift on Sunday evening and at other times.

In retrospect, I think we should have hired a self-drive minibus for the duration of the conference. We had at least two offers from people who were prepared to drive it. We could have ferried people when necessary. Nonetheless there was nothing to stop visitors from calling a taxi if they really could not walk; we provided a taxi business card in the conference bag and a taxi phone number in the conference program.

The conference dinner entertainment consisted of two young comediennes, early in their careers, who performed gratis and were not appreciated by a substantial proportion of the rather conservative audience.

There were a few other comments in the survey to which I think I should respond. We were disappointed with the guided tours at the National Museum (NMA) and there was a slight misunderstanding at the National Gallery (NGA). Unfortunately our contact person at the NMA had to have urgent surgery and her deputy, who was briefed, seems to have ignored us altogether. Our initial contact at the NGA moved to another job, and despite phone calls, emails and copies of letters to her replacement, this second person misunderstood what we thought we had agreed on.

Although a Welcome to Country is delivered by an Aboriginal person, we did not have this. We had an Acknowledgement of Country, which according to ACT government guidelines, is a demonstration of respect and appreciation of the Ngunnawal peoples, which can be performed by non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

I do not understand the comment that there was no opening or closing ceremony. On the Monday morning, I welcomed everyone, Lesley Jackman welcomed everyone and Marlina Jeffery formally opened the conference. The closing ceremony, perhaps more low key, involved the handing over of the bell to the Kings Park conference convenor. The committee was of the view that we did not want speeches while people were meeting and greeting or farewelling each other while partaking of lunch or afternoon tea.

Glenys Bishop, Conference Convenor

Appendix 1. Final Budget

INCOME

	No.	Price	Amount
Registrations			
ANBG guides	43	\$310.00	\$13,330.00
ANBG guide overpayment	1		\$75.00
Other early bird	129	\$385.00	\$49,665.00
Other late	5	\$435.00	\$2,175.00
Night walks	75	\$12.00	\$900.00
Dinner	111	\$110.00	\$12,210.00
PC Tour	39	\$95.00	\$3,705.00
Total paid to Conference Online			\$82,060.00 Conference Online
Companion payments	15		\$1,745.00 companion payments
Extra people			\$428.50
Sponsorship			
Capital Wines			7 doz bottles wine
Botanical Bookshop donation			\$113.07 discount on gifts \$50.00
Botanica			\$500.00
TOTAL INCOME			\$84,896.57

EXPENDITURE

Administration

COL fee	177	\$9.90	\$1,752.30
credit card fees			\$1,770.40
overpayment refund	1	\$75.00	\$75.00
Excursion refund	1	\$75.00	\$75.00
night walks refunds	2	\$12.00	\$24.00
conference refund	1	\$378.10	\$378.10
conference refund	1	\$214.50	\$214.50
conference refund	1	\$146.50	\$146.50
partial dinner refund			\$66.00
admin charge	3	\$27.50	\$82.50

Venues

Monday			\$1,650.00 Shine dome full day
Tuesday			\$480.00 NLA 4 hours
Thursday			\$950.00 Shine dome, half day

AV

Monday			\$1,600.00 full day Shine Dome
Tuesday			\$294.00 NLA
Thursday			\$1,175.00 half day Shine Dome

Coaches

	Murray's Tues & Wed incl water			\$7,963.00 3 @ 57 seaters each day
Catering				
	Sunday			\$119.80 afternoon tea
	Monday			\$7,240.00 Edge Catering, 5 extras
	Tuesday MT, lunch			\$7,734.50 Bookplate, Poppy's, Broadbean
	Tues, Wed snacks			\$756.75
	Wednesday coach trips			\$1,421.00 OPH lunch coach 1
				\$1,344.00 Lanyon lunch & MT coach 2
				\$1,111.00 Lunch coach 3
				\$1,287.00 MT coach 3
				\$469.95 Arboretum MT coach 1
	Thursday MT			\$2,568.50 Edge
	Thursday lunch			\$4,806.00 Pollen
Functions				
	Night walks refreshments			\$159.44
	Night walks training			\$170.00 2 staff for 2 hours
	Night walks staff			\$220.00 1 staff 3 hours (Sun)
	Welcome drinks	180	\$24.50	\$4,445.00 Pollen food, bar service, soft drinks
	Dinner meal	123	\$110.00	\$13,530.00 \$85 food, \$25 drinks
	Dinner entertainment			\$0.00
	Coach tour fees			\$872.48 Lanyon, Arboretum
	Coach tour donations			\$240.00 Fetherston, Wanna Wanna
Post Conference Tour				
	coach			\$990.00 48-seater
	catering & entry fees			\$1,616.00
	hall hire			\$60.00
	petrol			\$50.00
	local guide			\$25.00
	afternoon tea			\$78.25 augment with left over snacks.
Publicity				
	Video			\$550.00
	Poster			\$45.00
	Save date cards			\$0.00 Canberra Convention Bureau
Sundries				
	Parking			\$72.00
	Survey Monkey			\$27.25
	petty cash			\$56.50
	bell engraving			\$19.00
	shuttle bus			\$400.00
	Conference bags	180	\$1.00	\$180.00
	Name badges	177	\$6.60	\$1,168.20
	Companion tags			\$0.00

Gifts	\$565.35
Printing	\$675.70 program, handouts
Postage	\$36.98 name tags
Signage	\$123.81 65 numbers poles
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$73,930.76

Appendix 2. Post Conference Survey

A questionnaire was designed using Survey Monkey and sent to all conference registrants on November 2 2017. There was a follow up reminder one week later. Responses were received from 116 people, of whom six people only answered one question. They were asked 12 questions and given a space for comments on any aspect of the conference.

Results

	SD	D	A	SA	NA
Q1. The conference sessions addressed the theme well	2	7	59	33	15
Q2. The scientific sessions (two keynote addresses and the panel discussion) provided information that will be useful in my guiding.	0	9	58	41	8
Q3. The talk about how much science a good tour needs helped me to reflect on what I do as a guide.	0	3	62	41	10
Q4. The session on guiding at other institutions inspired me to think about other ways of guiding.	2	18	62	27	7
Q5. The session on how we guide in our gardens was informative and useful.	0	11	65	29	11
Q6. The visits to national cultural institutions were interesting and worthwhile.	1	8	59	35	13
Q7. The tours of the Australian National Botanic Gardens were well-structured with interesting themes.	0	3	51	51	11
Q8. There were enough opportunities during the conference to mix with guides from other gardens.	0	5	61	41	9
Q9. The food served during the conference was varied and tasty with sufficient to eat.	1	6	42	58	9
Q10. The printed program was clear about what to expect each day.	0	5	52	51	8
Q11. The online registration form was easy to follow.	0	13	65	27	11
Q12. The volunteers at registration were helpful.	0	0	50	56	10

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, NA = Not Answered

Individual Comments

Thank you to all the Canberra volunteers for their hard work. I thoroughly enjoyed the week.
Transport to accommodation should have been provided National library tour disappointing Fewer lectures and more walks. Overall well organised and some very impressive speakers
It was my 7th conference and I enjoyed a theme that was somewhat different to the other conferences. I particularly liked the ongoing after/before hours mingling with other guides that was possible by staying at a common venue, ie University House.
Initially when I linked through to University House and subsequently rang to make a booking, I was informed they were fully booked for the period requested. I found other accommodation but was disappointed not to stay at U H. My mistake in not asking about the conference.
Extremely well-organised, with careful thought to every aspect from toilet stops to water bottle provided on bus tours. A huge thank-you to the army of cheerful volunteers, esp Jonelle who rescued me on Sunday & not only drove me to my accommodation but also delivered me to Floriade in time for a quick look before it closed. (It would have helped to have a volunteer on the gate to direct people to the Crosbie Morrison Building!) The volunteers who led walks in the ANBG also put in many hours to perfect their tours. Well Done.
i enjoyed the conference
The young stand-up commediennes at the Dinner were not a good idea. They didn't hit the mark with the audience.

No
Well done
Fantastic conference! Wish I could have stayed in wonderful Canberra for longer
One negative comment. I think the comedians at the dinner were appalling and entirely inappropriate for the occasion. Otherwise, an excellent conference!
It was a great conference, extremely well run, very friendly hosts, great speakers, and a credit to yourselves. Thanks.
Transport arrangements between university house and Anbg and after excursions. Many guides found the walking a challenge
Post conference tour was well designed. Commentary on board coach was a good addition. GpPrivate garden hosts were delightful. My favourite experience was the Art themed walk in the NBG - great research and a beautiful team effort in delivery. Good on you for having a go at stand up comedy at dinner. FYI. A Welcome to Country should have been delivered by an Aboriginal representative. Well done to all involved. I look forward to welcoming you to Perth. Cheers Sue
It was an excellent conference, very interesting, informative and enjoyable.
Would have liked some break out small group sessions.
1. Some people found walking to and from the venue excessive. Some more thought to alternative modes of transport would have been useful. (or even hand-out bus routes and timetable) 2. Alternative themed work-shops (rather than walks) would have been beneficial to cater for diverse range of interests. I thought the Conference was exceptionally enjoyable and beneficial to my work as a Volunteer and congratulate those involved. You also did a great job with the weather! The post conference day tour was exceptional but I do know interstate people who did not get in. Maybe Canberra volunteers could have undertaken this trip at another time.
There was no welcome or farewell event ie an opening and closing ceremony. Needed a map to show how to get to venues from University House.
The positive feedback we received for our walk was wonderful and the collegiate and supportive approach we had preparing for our walk has cemented friendships. The preparedness of some institutions for our visits was poor, specifically the NMA and NGA which is disappointing.
Questions not answered did not give a chance to be 'in between. Not everything is black and white but another question answer in between agree and disagree would be helpful to answer as the attendee wanted. If having to agree with everything would have given a false overall answer for me. Transport was not in the questions.
Perhaps allow a little more time for networking.
I felt the excursions were excellent especially the Post-Conference tour. The Shine Dome was a lovely venue as was the NLA. More free time spent at the ANBG would have been appreciated. The Post-Conference dinner venue was excellent especially drinks outdoors beforehand. Menu was good. The entertainment however was totally inappropriate and lowered the tone of the evening. Over all, it was an outstanding success. Thank you.
As the only Northern Hemisphere delegate, I thought the conference content was relevant and informative; the organisation could not have been bettered; and the welcome I received from everyone was fantastic. I left Canberra with many happy memories and determined to try and replicate your event over here!!! Big thank you to all the organisers!
Congratulations - an excellent conference and great support from our guides
Lack of transport to Conference venues from accommodation made for exhausting days for many.
Would have liked choice of some workshops or small group talks with opportunities for questions. Post conference tour with 3 properties very good. Conference inner good with tables of participants from different gardens but could have done without entertainment.
I found the long walk each day to and from the venue annoying. The lack of followup on the Guided walks in other venues. No feedback or discussion or what we should have been observing. Only 2 Botanic walks and such a great garden I would have loved to have done more walks in the Botanic Garden. It would have been good to have had a welcome to Guides from different gardens and a

farewell at the end of the Conference. Great accommodation.
It was a really wonderful few days. Everything I attended ran on time, the content was useful and interesting and varied, the volunteers were totally fab. Well done to you all. A marvellous conf.
Very enjoyable. Very well organised. The least useful was the Wednesday all day tour to the gardens beyond Canberra. The bird walk was great but the garden visits were less informative. Still very enjoyable, but I did not feel that they added a lot to informed guiding.
Our group got a very poor guide at the National Museum. As a result I know nothing about the place and have no desire to return there. A pity.
A wonderful conference in all regards. Staying at University House was a bonus as helped with socialising. More mini buses from there to ANBG would have been helpful. But only a small issue. Congratulations and thanks to all the organisers and guides. Margot Henry
Needed more transport between accommodation and gardens. Sandwich lunch every day a bit too much repetition.
I think that there could have been a bus pick up from University House on the out and about days when we boarded the bus at the Gardens. It was helpful that there was some flexibility at the end of the day to drop people off at Uni House as the majority of people stayed there. The entertainment at the Dinner was the only blot in the proceedings - not appropriate at all.
the conference program showed the high level of thought and hard work that went into planning the event.
List of participants & botanic gardens not provided. Late registration resulted in a limited range of available tours. But, excellent talks from Sabrina Sonntag, Rod Lamberts and Christianna Cobbold. Great tour guides Max Bourke (Nat Arboretum) and Pam Cooke ("Time Travel" ANBG). Shine Dome and National Library were good venues.
I would have appreciated more workshops covering horticulture and Botanic themes
Congratulations on delivering a very informative and wonderful conference.
I felt the talks, although interesting were not always relevant to guides. I was disappointed to find my first choice tours were mostly booked out. Despite these criticisms, I still enjoyed the conference and congratulate the organisers on a well run conference.
Not enough walks in the BG on offer
I would have liked more walks in the ANBG
Great conference, well done
The only thing I was under impressed with was the entertainment at the conference dinner. It was not up to the quality of the rest of the conference.
The accommodation at University House was excellent.
I particularly enjoyed the Wednesday trip to Queanbeyan gardens with bird watching start, and the post conference tour. Many thanks to organisers!
Overall outstanding. All sessions and walks were very very worthwhile!! Exception being the session involving other institutions: this was a missed opportunity - it would have been useful to hear how each selected, trained and managed volunteer guides e.g. governance structure etc.
It was a very rewarding experience and I'm sure all of those attending went home with new ideas and new acquaintances. Well done!
Clear signs at gates would have been more helpful. Water provided early in the day would be best next time!
I think all the speakers were excellent. More choice on out and about activities rather than another lecture. Food was excellent and the venues great.
University House was a good place to stay. Met lots of Guides there except ANBG Guides. This survey does not allow much space for comments.
Having University House was a great advantage for those who managed to stay there – I met heaps of guides at breakfast and at Happy Hour. I got a lot of exercise moving between the various venues (this is not a negative comment but probably explains why I was so knackered when I got home). Thank you. I enjoyed all of it.

I do not think this survey adequately assesses the many aspects of the conference nor allows for useful evaluation of the overall program.
A job well done by you all. Forward thinking of organising for accommodation to be available at ANU was great. Unfortunately it seems many who did stay at ANU felt the Walk from there to ANBG to then be 'picked up' to be taken to other venues was a tough call. I personally enjoyed the walk but I don't have knee, hip, back etc problems. Keeping the speakers and activities to rigid timeslots kept us all punctual too - well done! Your second speaker from CSIRO was outstanding - very vibrant and enthusiastic - so making the Key Note Speaker - who did portray interesting information - seem a little bland! I did not attend dinner so cannot comment on that though what I did hear was disappointing for you I'm sure. I was sad there was no 'formal FAREWELL' at the end of Conference. I realise it was continuing on after lunch even though many did leave prior to final walk up Black Mountain and Friday's extra activity. Consequently it was not possible to thank YOU - the Canberra Group - at that lovely final lunch get together. So from me - A BIG THANK YOU - AS A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS YOU RAN A SPLENDID CONFERENCE AND I FEEL SURE WE ALL LEARNED PLENTY TO USE IN OUR LOCAL BOTANIC GARDENS. Do hope you can sit back and relax a little now - you deserve to!
I felt there was not enough free time to explore on our own and to mentally process all the information we were being presented with.
Everything else about the conference was wonderful but I was most surprised by the crudeness of the dinner 'entertainment', which all at my table agreed was most inappropriate. It was embarrassing for me to hear it as a member of the host team.
While the conference was excellent, the least satisfactory for me was the Conference Dinner. It was expensive and the entertainment was not appreciated
I did not participate in the whole conference but I thought that it was excellent, very well organised and with very interesting content. Well done everyone
A very small part was the entertainment at dinner, a bit inappropriate for the audience Overall, an excellent conference. Made me want to come back to Canberra. Thank you
Dinner entertainment missed the mark Utilising ACT assets only you could do - well done
The distance between conference were rather far from each other and there were time that were a bit rush to get to next venue. Also the suggest accommodation were even further away from shops and supermarket which made it hard when trying to get daily things. But the actual venues were good and guides were wonderful and friendly. Food were very good, particularly the fruit platters. But would be even better if having less greases food, sandwiches and deep fried food, and replaced with some more plane food such as sushi rolls, rice roll, etc. On the whole, it was a wonderful, informative and fun Conference. Thank you so much to all of you for your hard work preparing it.
Lack of transport from accommodation to main venue (ANBG)
I thought the Conference was well presented and caused me to review how we do it at Cranbourne. I have been asked to report to the Friends group there as to what we have learned, and I think we may be lacking the continuous learning that I think you do well at ANBG. Many thanks!
You did a fabulous job!
Thank you very much for a FABULOUS conference. It was a wonderful mix of important information, interest, personally rewarding and fun. You really have added extra fire to my enthusiasm for guiding at the Gardens and I will now be making my talks more interesting.
What was the point of this survey? You have made it easy to tick a few boxes but avoided all the important issues. While the content was generally good, the planning was often quite amateur. I wondered whether any professional events advice was taken? Particular strangenesses included using the ANBG at the starting point for buses etc. Forcing often elderly guides to walk up or down the hill from University House while the buses went past this location without stopping on the way to the ANBG was cruel! Admittedly this policy was changed on the last day! No delegate list supplied was weird. Why not? As a WA guide who had to pay considerably for flights and accommodation as well as conference registration, I found the transport policy impossible to understand. Would have

<p>been much happier to pay an extra \$50 or whatever rather than walk up and down the hill each day. And the conference ended with a whimper not a bang. It seemed to end at the Shine Dome but then we walked up the hill for a BG tour and lunch. Oh, and we should get a group photo! Pity it was not planned properly. Overall, I kept wondering why some professional advice had not been sought on many aspects.</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>I would like to congratulate the Canberra guides for giving us all such a useful and extremely well run experience</p>
<p>I think more frequent pickup and /or delivery to ANU on those days when buses were engaged and since so many of us stayed there, would have been helpful, The conference dinner entertainment was barely suitable. I found the week to be most interesting, well planned, well supported and has given me plenty to think about. I thought the Nat Bot Gdns along with the rest of Canberra to be a great showcase of things Australian. Well done!</p>
<p>I did not participate in the whole conference but I thought that it was excellent,very well organised and with very interesting content. Well done everyone</p>
<p>The weather co-operated fully!</p>
<p>1. Would have liked a longer Question time after keynote addresses and other presentations. 2. Because venues were far apart (i.e. University House/Shine Centre and ANBG), shuttle buses could have been better employed.</p>
<p>I enjoyed the out and about tours on the Wednesday and appreciated seeing gardens in and around Canberra. Only criticism would be that there was too much crammed in the one day.</p>
<p>Organisation was excellent and everything ran very smoothly. The Canberra guides did a wonderful job in showcasing the ANBG and I was most impressed with their knowledge and presentation skills.</p>
<p>Interesting and providing food for thought to share with my garden guide colleagues. Very well run, excellent organisation and managing logistics.</p>
<p>As most of us were staying at Uni House it would have been great for a bus pick up there Not nearly enough Walks in the actual ANBG .I found the Conference very top down No time for small group discussion at least with so many staying at Uni House there was lots of time to talk and mix with other guides I didn't attend the Dinner as I find them expensive as I don't drink alcohol Glorious BG Great accommodation Friendly people Loved the day visiting the 3 Country Gardens Appreciated that we started Sunday and so had time to go to Floriade Did like all the venues for the talks The delegates meeting was a waste of time too rushed and no real time for useful discussion .But I wouldn't have missed the Conference for anything and the weather was perfect Thanks</p>
<p>A most enjoyable well-organised conference, making full use of Canberra's institutions. One comment though is the lack of formal welcome and farewell to round off the conference</p>
<p>I totally enjoyed myself and particularly enjoyed the Post Conference Tour. A very worthwhile and enjoyable week away.</p>
<p>I was impressed with how well planned it was, and with mix of information and enjoyment.</p>
<p>The organisation was generally excellent. There was insufficient information to be of help in my guiding in the open session . I understand previous conference have had expert workshops in botanic topics - these would have been useful</p>
<p>I enjoyed the conference very much, especially as I met guides from the smaller Gardens and Arboretums for the first time. I had thought on looking at the programme before the conference that I would miss the fact that there would be fewer walks in the ANBG than usually occurs at a conference. In the event the programme was so interesting that I didn't miss them. I had spent an afternoon in the ANBG before the conference, and a little more time after the Bush walk on the last day, so had explored on my own.</p>