

BGANZ Member Bushfire Update

The impact of the bushfires across Australia on human life, property, live stock and communities has been severe. The fires are also having a devastating impact on the environment and our native plants and animals. Millions of hectares of habitat have been impacted by fire and hundreds of millions of native animals are estimated to have been affected, including threatened species. Some botanic gardens have already been directly impacted by the recent fires, and others are still be at risk.

BGANZ Council is aware of fires impacting some gardens, but as the fire season is ongoing, full details are yet to be released, so we are relying on media reports at this stage.

[The Blue Mountains \(Mount Tomah\) Botanic Gardens](#), NSW, has received fire damage.

[The Blue Mountains Rhododendron Garden](#) was also impacted

[Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens](#) have had varying levels of damage to collections and with fire still a threat. Remarkably the new Visitor Centre which hadn't been officially opened yet survived intact.

Booderee Botanic Gardens, Jervis Bay, NSW, Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra, have had significant program cancellations, garden closures and loss of revenue over the summer season, as severe smoke on many days has made it particularly difficult for employees and visitors to be outside – and in some cases administration staff have also been sent home. Further fire threat is expected in coming days and weeks.

Sydney basin and Melbourne, and Victoria and NSW more broadly, have also experienced significant smoke pollution over the last few weeks.

Other gardens in many states across the country may have also been impacted. We will provide further updates as we receive news, so please send through any additional reports you have to secretariat@bganz.org.au so that we can keep members informed.

I would like to commend, on behalf of our BGANZ Council and members, the outstanding dedication all emergency services personnel, both professional and volunteer, have made in all states, as well as the continued efforts of botanic gardens staff under extremely adverse conditions.

Despite such long and devastating fires, and I note the fire season is a long way from over, we've seen amazing stories of firefighters, community generosity and kindness from so many.

Members have asked how they can donate.

As impacted gardens and parks commence recovery in coming months, in some cases with the redevelopment of lost or damaged living collections, the collaboration of our network will be needed more than ever. BGANZ Council will have a strong focus on how we can coordinate assistance effectively and will provide more information on that soon.

At this point we direct members to organisations assisting survivors of bushfires, of which there are many.

All our thoughts go to those impacted and those in areas with continued fire activity.

Stay safe



Chris Russell

BGANZ President