

# MEDIA RELEASE

Media enquiries, interviews, photo and video available

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## More visitors to botanic gardens than ever before

**Major events and celebrations, combined with an injection of funding for upgrades and new facilities have driven visitation to new heights across Sydney's major botanic gardens, said Kim Ellis, Executive Director of Botanic Gardens & Centennial Parklands, today.**

Mr Ellis today released visitation statistics for the 2016-17 financial year showing unprecedented growth in visitation and engagement across Sydney's three major botanic gardens – Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan and Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah.

"For the first time, the **Royal Botanic Garden Sydney** has hit 5 million visitors in a year. The key drivers for visitation have certainly been the Garden's 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations and its involvement for the first time in Vivid Sydney," said Mr Ellis.

"Vivid Sydney alone attracted more than 500,000 visitors over 21 nights. It was an incredible coup to attract such a significant event to the Garden."

"While the Garden is Australia's oldest botanic garden, major facility improvements, the celebration program and the opening of The Calyx has ensured interest has never been higher in this beloved green space on Sydney harbour foreshores."

"While horticulture, science and conservation remains central to the organisation, it is the new areas of engagement and interaction with visitors and the wider community that has been met with high levels of praise and enthusiasm. A new horticultural exhibition centre, major upgrades to its website and social media channels, an enhanced tour program and a revised community and formal education program have given this grand old garden a new lease of life."

Not to be outdone, the two western Sydney botanic gardens have also passed record visitation.

The **Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan** is Australia's largest botanic garden, and right in the heart of the major population growth areas of south-western Sydney. Around 400,000 visitors passed through its gates this year – a 21 per cent increase from this time last year, but this represents an amazing 203% increase on 2013/14.

The hidden gem – the **Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah** – has also quietly passed its record with approximately 250,000 visitors for the first time.

"This visitation growth shows an important trend within our community – greater interest and engagement with public open spaces. These spaces will only become more crucial to the health and wellbeing of our population and environment over coming years."

-ENDS-

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## VISITATION STATISTICS

SITE	2013-14	% Change	2014-15	% Change	2015-16	% Change
Royal Botanic Garden Sydney	3,977,031	-	3,885,643*	-2%	4,997,670	+29%
Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan	260,498	-	326,150	+25%	395,597	+21%
Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah	170,938	-	201,840	+18%	249,569	+24%

\* Visitation during 2014/15 was negatively impacted through closure of QEII Gate due to Sydney Opera House forecourt works during the year.

## IMAGES AVAILABLE

- Royal Botanic Garden Sydney: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/botanic-gardens-sydney/albums>
- Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/140252462@N07>
- Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/botanic-gardens-sydney/albums/72157644852108778>