

COUNCIL OF HEADS OF AUSTRALIAN BOTANIC GARDENS INC.

CHABG Inc. GPO Box 1777 CANBERRA ACT 2601 | www.anbg.gov.au/chabg/

STATEMENT

Australia's major botanic gardens united to assist ecosystem restoration in response to recent bushfires

The impact of the recent bushfires on our native plants and animals has been severe. Millions of hectares of native habitat have been burnt, putting at risk the survival of plant and animal species.

While much of the Australian bush and its plants are well adapted to fire, the ferocity and extent of the bushfires this summer, and predicted frequency for coming years due to climate change, are unprecedented. Some plants will recover depending on the timing and extent of rains, but some ecosystems require carefully managed intervention. For those animals that did not perish in the fires, loss of plant habitat and food presents a particular risk. However, it is critical that any reintroduction of native species to the environment delivers the right plant species, in the right place, at the right time, in a manner that has no detrimental impacts on the environment.

The **Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens** is a not-for-profit Association established for the purpose of supporting the protection, conservation and enhancement of Australian plants and their ecosystems, including research about plants and plant communities to provide information and education for communities around Australia.

Council members stand ready to work with the Australian Government's Threatened Species Commissioner and with all Commonwealth, State and Territory research and management agencies and organisations to assist delivery of a measured, targeted, timely and sustained response to this ecological emergency.

The Council, working with Australian Government and State Environment Departments, is well positioned to contribute to the recovery effort through the combined expertise and experience held in the country's major Botanic Gardens and Conservation Seed Banks coordinated by the [Australian Seed Bank Partnership](#).

Partner members, accessing insurance populations of seeds held in Partnership facilities and the living collections of all Botanic Gardens will work hand-in-hand with government departments, NGOs and academia to reduce threats to recovery (such as from invasive species like weeds, pests and pathogens), and to collect seed and cuttings from fire threatened regions. Such efforts give our plants – and the animals that depend on them - the best chance of recovery.

The network of seed banks and propagated resources are Australia's insurance policy for its flora, and we must continue to invest in their maintenance and growth. The Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens members share the goal to protect and use these collections for the benefit of future generations. In achieving this, members are committed to the most impactful use of our collective resources and capabilities, and to minimise any duplication of effort.

Recently, the Council welcomed the UK Government's support, and Partnership members will work with Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in London to implement targeted emergency bushfire seed conservation and research.

We do not underestimate the scale of the task ahead. It will take a sustained, coordinated effort over many years to restore impacted ecosystems. CHABG members will steadfastly advocate for action based on sound scientific analysis of needs. We will use our expertise and influence to support effective decisions and coordinated action to give the best chance of successful ecosystem-based restoration of our precious native plant species.



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Websites

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/chabg/>

<https://www.seedpartnership.org.au/>

<https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/Stories/2020/The-impact-of-fire-on-plants>

Background on CHABG

The Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens Incorporated (CHABG) is a not-for-profit Association established for the purpose of supporting:

- the protection, conservation and enhancement of Australian plants and their ecosystems
- the provision of information and education and undertaking research about plants and plant communities,

through working with Australian botanic gardens and other institutions to achieve the following objects:

- supporting and carrying out research into the diversity, conservation and [ecosystem] values of Australian plants and their communities
- supporting the ex situ and in situ conservation of threatened Australian plants, including through the development and use of seed banks
- promoting knowledge sharing about plants and plant communities
- promoting education about plants and plant communities
- providing a forum to enhance and promote the botanical, horticultural, educational and environmental work of Australian botanic gardens.

The Australian Seed Bank Partnership, governed by CHABG, is an alliance of twelve organisations, combining expertise from Australia's leading botanic gardens, state environment agencies and non-government organisations.

CHABG Inc. is a member of the [Global Partnership for Plant Conservation](#) (GPPC), which brings together international, regional and national organisations in order to contribute to the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC). CHABG Inc. also works closely with [Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand](#) Incorporated (BGANZ). BGANZ is the chief body representing the interests of botanic gardens in Australia and New Zealand.