



ROYAL  
BOTANIC GARDENS  
VICTORIA

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## Media release

### **INTERNATIONAL TOURISM AWARD FOR AUSTRALIAN GARDEN**

The Australian Garden this week received the International Garden Tourism Network's (IGTN) 'Garden Tourism Garden of the Year' award for 2016.

The 2016 IGTN awards were announced earlier this week at the annual conference of the network held at the Suncheon Bay National Garden in South Korea.

In announcing the awards IGTN President Dr Richard Benfield said that there are over 300 million garden tourists worldwide. Tourism is the world's fourth largest industry.

The awards are judged by an international jury and are presented to organisations and individuals who have distinguished themselves in the development and promotion of the garden experience as a tourism attraction. They seek to highlight the world's most dynamic garden experiences.

Judging is based on the quality of the garden experience offered to tourists; level of readiness to host, service and market to tourists; integration and connection to the tourism industry; contribution to the destination's tourism sustainability; and, level of public and media recognition.

Director and Chief Executive of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Professor Tim Entwisle welcomed the award and said he was delighted to receive yet another international award for the Australian Garden.

"The Australian Garden provides a stunning display of Australian plants in an evocative setting at our Cranbourne Gardens."

This is the 30th award since plans for the Australian Garden were developed in the mid-1990s and the 23rd since stage one opened in 2006. The awards recognise the architectural, landscape, environmental and business excellence of the Australian Garden and this latest award builds on a number of tourism awards, including the Australian Tourism Award for Best New Tourist Destination received in 2006.

Professor Entwisle said that the popularity of the Australia Garden as a tourist destination is growing with visitation peaking in 2014-15 at over 160,000 to the Australian Garden and whole-of-site visitation to Cranbourne Gardens exceeding 210,000.

"It is only three years since its completion, but this botanical landscape is turning heads and changing attitudes towards growing native plants. It's still a young garden and over time we can make it an even better one."

Other award winners announced by the IGTN included:

- Hangzhou Botanical Garden, China (Garden Tourism Festival of the Year)
- Corso Zundert, Netherlands (Garden Tourism Event of the Year)
- Kent, United Kingdom (Garden Tourism Destination of the Year)
- Suncheon Bay National Garden, South Korea (Garden Tourism Experience of the Year – The Moselle Award)
- Rosstours.com, Australia (Garden Tourism Website of the Year)
- Dr Kiat W Tan, Singapore Gardens by the Bay (Garden Tourism Person of the Year).

**ENDS**