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MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW CALYX SIGNALS A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR BOTANIC GARDENS

Environment Minister Mark Speakman has announced a round of changes that will transform the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust into a more efficient and responsive organisation.

The changes follow the operational integration of the Botanic Gardens with the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust, which already has resulted in more customer focused organisations.

Mr Speakman made the announcement as he revealed the name of the Royal Botanic Garden's planned architectural centrepiece, which will become a world leading horticultural display centre when opened next year.

Mr Speakman said The Calyx in the Royal Botanic Garden would set a new benchmark for the public display of horticulture and would provide a stunning new education and interpretation facility for Sydney.

The word "Calyx" refers to the sepals of a flower collectively, forming the outer floral envelope that protects the developing flower bud.

The Calyx, which replaces the now demolished horticultural display centre, will open next year as the centrepiece of the Botanic Gardens' 200th anniversary.

Mr Speakman said while the announced organisational changes would transform the Botanic Gardens, the government remained committed to ensuring that science, education and horticulture continued to be central to the Botanic Gardens.

"Almost \$23 million has been allocated to capital projects across the sites managed by Botanic Gardens," he said. "The Trust's overall budget of \$70.4 million for 2015-16 is a 26% increase on the 2014-15 revised estimate."

"This investment is part of a major modernisation program underway across these parks and gardens that will create a world-class, sustainable operation for generations to come."

The announced organisational changes, under the leadership of Executive Director, Kim Ellis and his team, have three key objectives:

1. To transform the organisation into a world-class scientific institution, creating engaging and relevant science and horticulture for the community.
2. To create a sustainable organisation – environmentally, socially and financially – capable of on-time delivery of projects at value-for-money to the taxpayer.
3. To build new capabilities and services that do not currently exist in areas such as tree management, science communication, education and visitor services.

However, to achieve these aims the Botanic Gardens must reduce inefficiencies in its operations, and create and sustain new streams of revenue.

As part of this process, some positions will be abolished, with new roles created to ensure the Botanic Gardens' ability to deliver on core responsibilities is not impaired.

For example, lawn-mowing services currently conducted in-house will be outsourced.

These measures, along with creating multi-site maintenance contracts, will give the Botanic Gardens greater bang for its buck.

There will be a net reduction in staffing levels of around 15 positions across both the Botanic Gardens and Centennial Park Trust, with more than 240 roles maintained and enhanced.

Mr Speakman said the community could expect to see an improvement in services and facilities and greater engagement through education as well as greater access to the Gardens' facilities such as the Pathology Lab and Botanic Library.

“Australia's oldest scientific institution is set for a bright future as it looks towards the next 200 years.”

Video <https://vimeo.com/133012480>

Image: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/botanic-gardens-sydney/sets/72157653326131423/>

The Calyx

