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**NATIONAL  
ARBORETUM  
CANBERRA**

## National Arboretum Strategic Direction Consultation Summary

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In March 2016, the National Arboretum Canberra commenced a process to explore the views of a wide variety of stakeholders about its future. This was driven by a need to clarify what stakeholders and the broader community valued about the Arboretum and how they saw its future unfolding. The results of this consultation process will be a key consideration as the ACT Government defines the strategic direction of the Arboretum.

The views of stakeholders and the community were sought in several ways. Small group workshops were held with identified key groups including recreational users, tourism industry representatives, Arboretum volunteers, key site partners and suppliers, young people, horticulture and arboriculture experts, gardening specialists and Arboretum staff. Over 20 one-on-one discussions were held with key individual stakeholders with a strong interest in the Arboretum, including critics. In all, 95 stakeholders attended consultation sessions and put their views forward.

The responses from these workshops and discussions reinforced that the Arboretum has very diverse roles and functions as well as a great deal of untapped potential. The responses highlighted high expectations among stakeholders to maintain and continue to develop the Arboretum's potential and the consequent challenges to keep meeting these expectations in a sustainable way.

In June and July 2016, a public online survey invited the general public and visitors to provide feedback about their experiences of the Arboretum, as well as gathering demographic information. Over 2,400 people responded with overwhelmingly positive views of the Arboretum and a strong theme of optimism for its future success.

Just under 93% of respondents rated their visit as excellent (42.2%) or good (50.6%). Respondents valued the Arboretum most highly as (in descending order): a beautiful, natural place to visit; a place for the conservation of rare and endangered trees; a place to experience the outdoors by picnicking, walking, cycling or other outdoor activities; an important tourist attraction for Canberra; a place for scientific research.

The findings of the consultation process provide a strong endorsement of the Arboretum and highlight a broad community consensus that it has an even brighter future if its full potential as an important place with an international profile and reputation, is realised.

The findings of the consultation process will be used by the ACT Government in defining a strategic direction for the Arboretum in late 2016. Such a community-focused perspective complements the technical information contained in the Forest Review and together these two sources will form the key components of the information base for decision making.

### Key findings of the public survey

- People rated their visit to the Arboretum exceptionally highly:
  1. 92.8% rated their visit as excellent (42.2%) or good (50.6%)
  2. 5.93% rated their visit as average
  3. 0.81% rated their visit as poor
  4. 0.43% rated their visit as terrible.



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- The most important roles of the Arboretum for people were (in descending order):
  1. A beautiful, natural place to visit
  2. A place for the conservation of rare and endangered trees
  3. A place to experience the outdoors by picnicking, walking, cycling or other outdoor activities
  4. An important tourist attraction for Canberra
  5. A place for scientific research.
- 84% of respondents said it was ‘highly or extremely likely’ that they would recommend the Arboretum to a family member, friend or colleague. These “active promoters” contributed to a **Net Promoter Score (NPS)** of 51.47% which is exceptionally positive. The NPS is used internationally to benchmark customer satisfaction for a huge range of companies, including many Fortune 500 companies. See <https://www.netpromoter.com/know/> for more information.
- These findings underline the diversity of values the Arboretum provides for people. Importantly, the trees and forests are central to the values considered most important.
- People identified the views, Pod Playground, the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection, the trees, the Pod Playground and the walks as their “most liked” features of the Arboretum.
- The most common way visitors heard about the Arboretum was through ‘Friends, colleagues or family members’ (45.3%), followed by ‘Newspaper, TV or radio’ (28.7%). These findings suggest that the word-of-mouth recommendation for the Arboretum is very positive.

### Sample demographics

- 95.3% of respondents had visited the National Arboretum Canberra.
- Gender: 58.6% female, 40.6% male and 0.7% non-specified gender.
- Age: 31 to 50 year olds are the largest age group of respondents (45.7%), followed by 51 to 70 year olds (33.2%), followed by 19 to 30 year olds (14.7%) and over 71 year olds (4.9%).
- Residence: 99.5% of respondents reside in Australia.
- Residence in Australia: A large majority of respondents live in Canberra (83.1%), followed by NSW (14.4%), then Queanbeyan and Jerrabomberra NSW (4.9%). The next largest group reside in Victoria (1.6%), followed by a few visitors each from NT, SA, WA and Tasmania. The survey was held outside the school holiday period which would probably effect this result.