

MEDIA RELEASE domestic/tourism



Essence of Australia garden at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show is a first for Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and partners

Australia will take centre stage for visitors at this year's prestigious RHS Hampton Court Flower Show in London. An inspirational **Essence of Australia** show garden will be presented for the first time by the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne in partnership with Tourism Victoria, Tourism Northern Territory, Qantas and leading UK tour operator, Trailfinders.

The Essence of Australia garden celebrates Australian flora and contemporary design as seen at the multi-award-winning 15-hectare Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, a division of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. The show garden will evoke the relaxed feel of Australia and Australians' love of outdoor living as well as celebrating the states and gardening landscapes of Victoria and Northern Territory as two key travel destinations for British holidaymakers.

The Victoria Minister for Tourism, Louise Asher, said:

“Victoria has long been known as ‘the garden state’, so we are delighted to be collaborating on a show garden at the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show with respected Melbourne-based gardener, Jim Fogarty. Victoria is home to 100 national parks and reserves, which – due to our state’s compact size – are all an easy drive from Melbourne, from the rugged mountains of the Grampians, to the temperate rainforests of Cape Otway National Park on the Great Ocean Road. In Melbourne, gardens form a huge part of our urban culture, connecting our vibrant, cosmopolitan city with the outdoors seamlessly. I hope the Hampton Court show garden inspires UK visitors to visit Victoria for themselves.”

The Northern Territory Minister for Tourism, Matt Conlan, said:

“The Northern Territory is home to some of the world’s rarest plants and spectacular landscapes. It is also home to the world’s oldest living culture, and it’s a magnificent tribute that one of the iconic symbols of our Aboriginal culture – the Rainbow Serpent – has inspired this garden. The Northern Territory can offer a rich cultural and outback nature experience like nowhere else in the world. I

hope the show makes the Territory a ‘must do’ destination for holiday makers across the United Kingdom.”

Professor Tim Entwisle, Director and Chief Executive of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, said the Essence of Australia garden will allow visitors to see just how beautiful and diverse Australian flora can be:

“This show garden is just a taste of what people can see at the Australian Garden in Cranbourne, a landscape already celebrated around the world for its remarkable design and contemporary feel. Being part of such a popular garden show also gives us a chance to highlight stunning Australian plants suitable for growing in the UK.”

The Essence of Australia garden has been designed by the respected Australian landscape designer, Jim Fogarty. Jim previously won a Gold medal at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2011 for his Australian Garden for the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

This is the first time he has designed a garden for the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show which will feature all native Australian plants. He will also use several native species that can grow in the UK.

The overall Essence of Australia garden design takes inspiration from the Rainbow Serpent – an iconic creature from aboriginal culture which is often seen in aboriginal art and continues to be an influence today.

The Rainbow Serpent features in aboriginal dreamtime stories credited with forming the mountains, ridges and gorges as it emerged from beneath the ground across the landscape.

Towards the rear of the Essence of Australia garden, visitors will be introduced to Melbourne, the ‘Gateway to Australia’, and the country’s cosmopolitan arts hub with simple, clean and stylish lines that are symbolic of contemporary Melbourne. The structure will also reference inland rock formations of the Northern Territory such as Uluru, the MacDonnell Ranges and the charcoal timber blades which depict the water that cascades off these rock features in times of rain, providing a source of nourishment for Australia’s vast flora and fauna.

As visitors follow the Rainbow Serpent deck, they will be inspired to envisage diverse natural attractions and landscapes including rock seams and outcrops, where the endless roads delve deeper into rich aboriginal culture, red sands, and an amazing array of Australian plants. The further inland they explore, the more evident the importance of rain is to the survival of many Australian plants. The deck in the Essence of Australia garden will even include a ford crossing, commonly found on outback roads that flood in the wet season.

The Essence of Australia garden will be constructed in the most environmentally conscious way possible. Most of the construction can be recycled, or reused to reduce wastage. All materials will be sourced in the UK to reduce the environmental impact and all plants in the garden will be donated to Kew Gardens.

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