

W-7 Raising Rarity: creating meaningful and sustainable conservation outcomes through community-based outreach

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Duration: 90 minutes

Target audience: Conservation horticulturists, Educators, Participants working in outreach and programme development.

Objectives:

- Share knowledge and experience from existing conservation outreach programmes. What worked, what were the challenges, what were the solutions?
- Challenge traditional conservation work in isolation and highlight opportunities to involve a broader section of the community.
- Address the challenges of resourcing and funding ‘start up’ conservation programs within Botanic Gardens.
- Better understanding of the value of multidisciplinary teams and how to make this work (horticulture, science, engagement).

Abstract: We are in the midst of a global biodiversity crisis, with numbers of threatened plant species continuing to rise. Are existing plant conservation programmes enough? How can we increase community engagement at a time of global environmental challenges? How can we harness community support to create sustainable conservation action?

Raising Rarity is a community-based plant conservation outreach programme run by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV). This innovative programme reimagines the way in which we approach plant conservation in botanic gardens through the direct involvement of targeted community sectors in sustainable plant conservation solutions.

The programme is multidisciplinary, harnessing the experience and skills of horticulturists, plant science staff and community engagement / educators in its delivery.

There are four key focus areas to the Raising Rarity programme, each driven by creating meaningful conservation opportunities, connections, and support to the following community sectors.

- Schools outreach
- Local government outreach
- Regional Botanic Garden outreach
- Home gardener outreach

Underpinning each of these elements is the aim for the programme to be self-funding, directly generating revenue to support programme development and implementation.

The goal of this Raising Rarity workshop is to provide an overview of the Raising Rarity programme and to encourage all participants/organisations to look at their plant conservation initiatives and explore community outreach activities. Participants will hear case studies, share knowledge across attending organisations through active

discussion, identify obstacles in reaching goals and as a group develop strategies to overcome setbacks.