

30 August 2011

Ms Mairead O'Connell
Town Planner (Development Branch)
Camden Council
PO Box 183
CAMDEN NSW 2570

Dear Mairead,

DA660/2011 PLANTBANK – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – BIO-SECURITY MEASURES

Further to my letter of 3 August 2011, and subsequent telephone discussion with Ryan Pritchard, please see below further information prepared by the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust in response to your queries about bio-security measures proposed for the PlantBank facility.

We would like to emphasise that the facility will be used for the storage of Australian flora and in particular New South Wales Species. With a focus on Australian flora the proposed facility does not pose a biological safety hazard to local, state or national ecosystems.

The information below sets out the principles that will be adopted as part of any future bio-security strategy for the site:

The Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust is a statutory body governed by an Act of NSW Parliament, *Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust Act 1980*, with a defined list of principles. Those principles are identified under Section 7 of the Act as follows:

- (a) to maintain and improve the Trust lands, the National Herbarium and the collections of living and preserved plant life owned by the Trust,*
- (b) to increase and disseminate knowledge with respect to the plant life of Australia, and of New South Wales in particular, and*
- (c) to encourage the use and enjoyment of the Trust lands by the public by promoting and increasing the educational, historical, cultural and recreational value of those lands.*

When acting in pursuance of its objects, the Trust shall give particular emphasis to encouraging and advancing the study of systematic botany, and to plant conservation.

The Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust (RBGDT) encompasses three estates namely the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney (including the Domain), the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah and the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan. Mount Annan differs significantly from its sister gardens in that its mandate is to display and conserve only Australian native species. Our collections include our remnant native vegetation and living collections including horticultural areas, the nursery and the NSW Seedbank. In contrast, the other estates of the RBGDT display the diverse biodiversity of the world's flora.

The RBGDT is responsible for the exchange of biological specimens through an Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) approved process. In addition the RBGDT has its own Plant Disease Diagnostic Unit (PDDU) that has been constructed to a Quarantine Containment (QC) Level 2

facility. These activities are delivered through infrastructure located within the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney and not at the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan.

The RBGDT research programs are diverse including, but not limited to, systematic botany, molecular genetics, plant pathology, ecology and horticulture. The RBGDT undertakes these research programs to understand the world's flora to enable us to better understand, display, conserve and share that knowledge with the scientific and broader community. However, our emphasis is on Australian flora and in particular New South Wales Species. The RBGDT does not undertake studies involving genetic engineering nor house plants that would constitute genetically modified organisms. These activities are typically undertaken by groups like universities and other government agencies including the NSW Department of Primary Industries.


With a focus on Australian flora the Australian Botanic Garden does not pose a biological safety hazard to local, state or national ecosystems. PlantBank will undertake research involving the propagation and cultivation of Australian species, through horticulture, ecology, seed physiology & seed banking research to understand and conserve, long-term, the nation's floral biodiversity. It will make use of its laboratories to learn and document the intricacies of our plants and utilise the cryogenic store and long-term fridge and freezers to conserve seeds and plant parts in an animated state. PlantBank will not deal, culture nor house crop germplasm or any associated agricultural disease.

The security features of PlantBank are designed principally to provide protection to a highly valuable State asset, currently valued at over \$20M. The PlantBank seed stores will house seed in double walled hermetically sealed packets and will then be secured within a vault wall purpose built to protect the seeds from destruction. The block-work wall and concrete ceiling and floor, in conjunction with a double layer electronic security access system, will provide protection from fire (rated to four hours), flood, earthquake and theft. In addition the vault and security mechanisms will provide restricted access to only authorised and trained personnel. The need for these facilities is critical as our existing infrastructure is an agricultural farm shed with failing infrastructure and security in the form of a single padlock. Without PlantBank there is no future for our seeds.

I trust that the above information satisfactorily addresses Council's requirements and that assessment of the development application can proceed.

If you have any queries in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact me on ph. 8233 9963.

Yours sincerely,



Norelle Jones
Senior Planner - Planning & Design