



MEDIA RELEASE

NT Researcher Daydreams of Eden

A daydream is about to come true for Alice Springs Desert Park horticulturist Petria Brown, who will travel to the United Kingdom to work with a team as part of the world leading Eden Project.

Ms Brown visited the UK on holidays in 2005 and was so excited by the Eden Project that she suggested an exchange of her ASDP skills in habitat management to an Eden Project manager.

“I was so excited by the Eden Project and its progressive approach to horticulture as an educational tool that I became determined to find a way of working there,” Ms Brown said.

“The Eden Project is a garden that uncovers the connections between people, plants and places.

“By showcasing plants from around the world in accordance with the people that use them, Eden emphasises that plants are the world’s riches; our most important resource.

“This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for me to gain specific knowledge into cutting edge horticultural practices from the ultimate green team.

“Sustainability is the underpinning factor in all decisions made at Eden and is a goal it shares with the ASDP.

“During my three month exchange I will learn about Eden’s sustainability policies and waste neutral program with a view to adapting these to the Desert Park, helping to reduce our ecological footprint.”

Following Ms Brown’s three month exchange, UK horticulturist and researcher Ian Martin from the Eden Project will travel to ASDP to work with staff to research and input into design plans for a proposed semi-arid Biome.

Mr Martin said the new biome called “the Edge” will explore people and plants around the world that live in arid regions and how they manage water, energy and resources.

“What we will hope to include in “The Edge” is a display of the ways in which plants have evolved to cope with extreme climates, and all the ways that people (and animals) have learnt to make use of them,” Mr Martin said.

“At the ASDP I will learn about interpretation of desert habitats, particular needs of arid zone plants in amenity gardens, minimising irrigation and nursery techniques.

“Over a billion people live in semiarid and arid regions, and along with their relations to the plants and resources of their regions, understanding the dynamics of their environment should teach us important lessons for the UK.

“Issues such as climate change, the use of scarce resources, and sustainability, can be brought out starkly in these climatic regions.

“We will aim to relate "The Edge" to local concerns and needs; despite the geographical separation of Cornwall from the semiarid and arid regions such as Alice Springs.

“It also aims to detail what lies ahead for desert communities and how will they respond to challenges such as drought and climate change.”

The Eden Project Foundation Director Dr Tony Kendle, who will travel to Australia to visit ASDP in March, said Eden and the ASDP share values such as plant conservation and education, as well the importance of connecting people with their local environments and cultures.

“We get more requests than the size of the team can accommodate, but the Desert Park is so relevant and I hold it in such regard that I would love to see this happen,” Mr Kendle said.

“Establishing closer links would be beneficial for both organisations as there are only a few bio-parks in the world, so we need to learn from and support each other.

“Ultimately we are sending the same messages to our visitors, to look at our natural environments with educated eyes and learn how to treat them with the respect they deserve.

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Media Note – For more information contact Petria Brown via Gary Dinham on 8951 8740.

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