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MEDIA RELEASE

Some New Friends of the Gardens

Seventeen large cycads and palms arrived at the Botanic Gardens this morning from Queensland. The plants were salvaged by a commercial nursery as the result of road clearing and were obtained using a combination of Gardens' funds and funding provided by the Friends of the Gardens.

The plants were purchased as part of a project developed by Gardens' horticulturists, Toby Golson and Stuart Donaldson, to enhance the main entrance display and the Rainforest Gully.

"During field trips we have collected many species of palm to display in the Rainforest Gully – but the majority are mostly seeds or tiny seedlings which, in Canberra's cool climate, will take years before reaching maturity," Mr Golson explained.

"When the Friends provided the means to purchase some larger palms, we couldn't resist the opportunity of giving visitors the chance to experience more of what the rainforest environment is like," he added.

Three species of cycads (*Macrozamia moorei*, *Cycas communis*, *Cycas media*) and two species of palms (*Livistona nitida* and *Livistona decipiens*) have been planted.

The plants are not only striking landscape features but also have a significant heritage and conservation value *Macrozamia moorei* is listed in Appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) legislation. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction and trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

The arrival of these new plants is timely because it has taken place during the Summer Concert Series period, which continues until the end of February. The concert series is the Friends of the Gardens' major fundraising activity and all proceeds raised are used to fund a variety of projects.

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