

WOMBAT HILL BOTANIC GARDENS MASTER PLAN

February 2017

Produced on Behalf of Hepburn Shire Council
BY L & L DESIGN





*view north through arboretum
Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, July 2015*

*cover image: horse chestnut and cannon
courtesy: Friends of the Wombat Hill
Botanic Gardens*

Executive Summary

The Master Plan for the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens looks to take the framework of the 19th century Botanic Garden and use this to create a dynamic, engaging tourist attraction, responsive to both the history and stories of the place and 21st century expectations of a Botanic Garden. The inspiration of this design is drawn from the attributes of Daylesford and the Gardens themselves; the history, topography, location and sense of place. This is expressed through a series of spaces which, through design, tell stories of Gardens and surrounding regions.

Central to the new design is the redevelopment of the covered reservoir into the central *Garden of Night and Day*. The elevated nature of the hill and inland location makes it perfect for star and cloud gazing and the new Garden design embraces the concept; inspired by the work of local astronomers. The new Garden transforms the unsightly covered reservoir into a dynamic and interactive space with central roof garden, viewing lawn, formal parterre and space for telescopes. Planting of the surrounding embankment will reinstate the formal tradition of decorative surrounds.

Adjacent to the Garden of Night and Day is the circular *Day Basin*; the original town reservoir and water source for the Fernery. This now empty basin is to be restored as an ornamental lily pond and connected by an open rill to the *Fernery Cascade*. The *Day Basin* and adjacent *Pioneer Memorial Tower* will be linked through decorative planting beds and the redesign of the top carpark to reduce its visual impact and provide a more sympathetic entrance. The Master Plan restores the Tower's original design, as facing the reservoir, by adding a strong axial path connecting the two spaces.

The Fernery Cascade together with the 1880s carriage drive are the primary surviving features by the prominent 19th century designer William Sangster. The Master Plan adds new path connections to the existing Fernery to allow increased access and encourage use. A new viewing platform will be added above the cascade to provide visual connection from the summit, and the cascade will be relinked to the Day Basin through an open, shallow channel. Below the original cascade this rill will continue down the hill, through the fern gully until it discharges in a series of stone cascades reminiscent of the Franklin springs. These cascades will provide a strong statement at the Wombat Hill Botanic Garden's main entrance.

On the northern slopes of Wombat Hill the existing arboretum is to be retained and augmented through bulb planting and the *Garden of Adventures*, an interactive nature based play space constructed from timber sourced from any trees which require removal. This play space will be a series of stepped and crossing logs to create an immersive play experience which reflects the site's roll as a Botanic Garden. Amongst these ground level play elements will be three large viewing towers, designed to appeal to older children and teenagers and capturing the tree canopy and magnificent views from the Gardens to Mt Franklin.

At the Garden's south-east corner will be the *Garden of Views*. This garden will be a series of sculptural grassed mounds creating viewing points of the open landscape and providing a place for community bonfires in the tradition of the famous 1863 celebratory fire.

Along the southern slopes of the Gardens and capturing the 19th century ornamental gardens will be the *Victorian Garden*. This garden takes all the existing garden beds and trees of historic value and augments them by increased planting. This provides a more Victorian gardenesque style through serpentine garden beds with a strong design sense. In the centre of this garden is the *Curator's Cottage and Conservatory*. These structures will be embedded strongly in the landscape by the modification of the entrance drive, increased planting, and the eventual construction of a new, architecturally designed conservatory attached to the curator's cottage. To the rear of the Cottage the works and nursery area will be expanded and concealed behind a clipped hedge.

Each of the Garden's entrances will have a strong botanical theme, presenting the Gardens strongly to the street and reflecting an aspect of the Garden's history. As well as the main entrance this will include a Victorian Entrance, the Wildwood Entrance, the Palm Entrance and a fifth entrance, the Railway Entrance. The Master Plan also proposes the continuation of these planting themes throughout the Daylesford township, allowing the Garden to "pour" down the hill, and providing the opportunity for increased streetscape planting.

Pathways within the Gardens respect the historic paths and carriageways and the steep topography, working with the existing contours to provide better connections around the gardens and an intuitive circulation system which directs visitors in a logical way. The primary new pathway will be the *Climb to the Skies*, a "thousand-steps" style pathway from the main entrance, across the hill and down the northern slopes to join the *Wildwood Entrance*.

Parking and Vehicle access within the Gardens has long been problematic and will be resolved through a series of small-scale parking areas which double the existing provision and formalise the parking to provide more efficient use of the space. By having these bays as a series of small scale spaces their visual impact will be reduced. The existing carpark at the top of the hill will be replaced with a large circular loop which provides bus and special-needs parking only, with all other car parking pushed to the southern slopes. Vehicle access to local residents will be retained and will be reconfigured to allow both access and egress via the southern roadway.

To support the major projects a series of recommendations are made in relation to planting design, pathway layout, furnishings and visitor facilities including new shelters and toilet upgrades. In response to visitor demand a new community room is also to be added to the former curator's cottage and summer concerts in the park are to be recommenced.

It will be essential that adequate staffing levels are provided to maintain the Gardens and it is recommended that an additional, one year position be established to address a short term maintenance backlog. It is further recommended that staff be upskilled in the management of Botanic Gardens, the role of "curator" or "head gardener" be re-established and that staffing levels are periodically reviewed upon the completion of landscaping works.

In order to manage the Wombat Hill site as a Botanic Garden, as opposed to a public garden or pleasure ground, the Master Plan makes a series of recommendations addressing plant collections, labelling and research, including the development of a formal collections strategy to address these points. Additionally, a whole of site tree replacement strategy is required as a high priority in order to address safety concerns relating to the aging tree canopy and to provide a tree succession program.

In order to effectively manage the Gardens long term it is essential that their reliance on potable water for irrigation be reduced and ultimately removed. To this end recommendations are made in relation to the upgrading of the irrigation system, accessing local spring water and reducing water consumption through effect and intelligent water management practices.

Management of the cultural heritage of the Wombat Hill site will be essential, and the Master Plan makes recommendations in relation to the 2007 *Conservation Management Plan* to create a new, summary document that is user friendly and suitable for everyday use.

These recommendations look to reinvigorate the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, transforming them from a popular local landmark and tourist stop-over to a destination in their own right and exciting regional drawcard. By undertaking these works the Gardens will remain relevant to a 21st century and millennial audience and help introduce a new generation to the joys of Victoria's regional Botanic Gardens.

Acknowledgements

Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design would like to thank everyone who took the time and effort to participate in the production of this master plan. In particular, we gratefully acknowledge the contribution made by the following individuals and groups:

Hepburn Shire Councillors

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This report was produced by Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design on behalf of the Hepburn Shire Council who commissioned the project with the assistance of the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens.

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*View east across the Dalysesford Township
Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, January 2016*

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction to the Master Plan

This Master Plan has been prepared to guide the development of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens over the next 20 years. Its preparation is a direct result of a recommendation made in the 2007 Conservation Management Plan and will allow the Gardens to undertake work in a planned and considered way, with projects following in a logical progression and with due consideration to the wider site conditions, user requirements and Council's long term vision for the site.

The Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens are one of a string of iconic 19th century Botanic Gardens developed across the state of Victoria. The recommendations made in the Master Plan looks to take this historic framework and use this to create a dynamic, engaging tourist attraction, responsive to both the history and stories of the place and 21st century expectations of a Botanic Garden. This Master Plan has been developed in consultation with Hepburn Shire Council, the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens and the local Daylesford community.

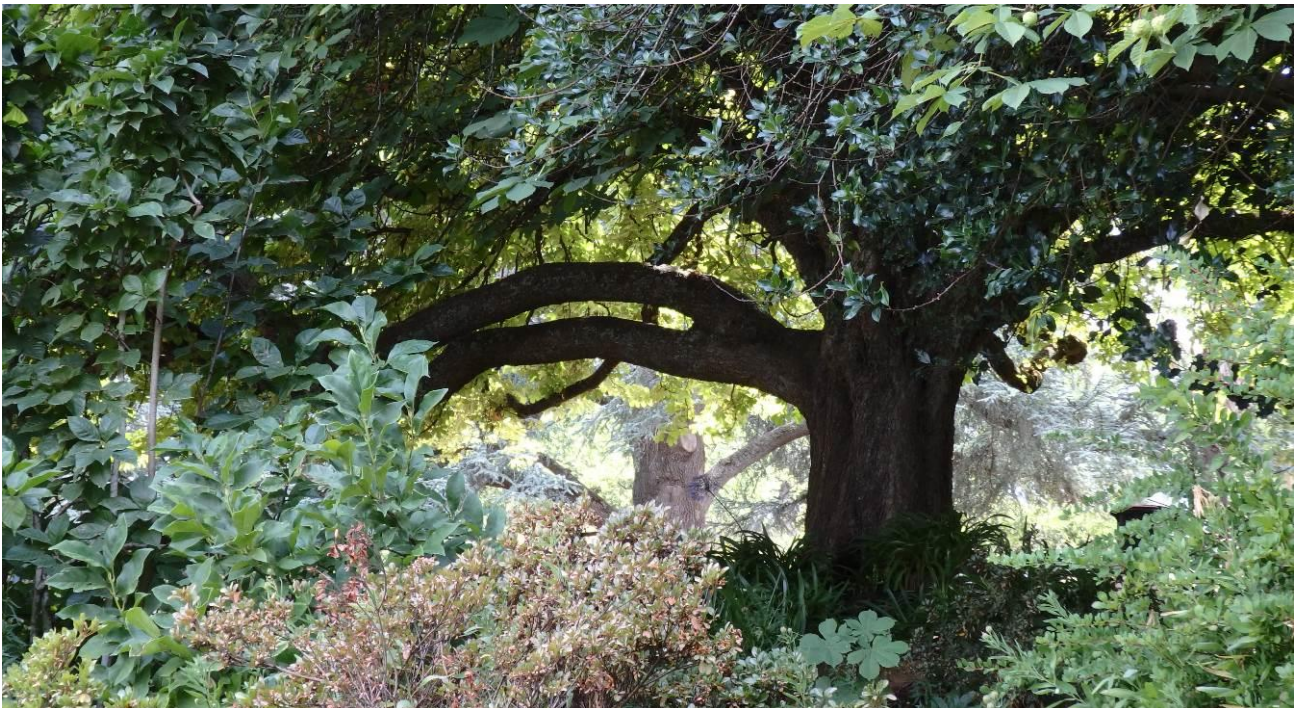


Figure 1: Horse Chestnut and Cedar near main lawn

1.2 Introduction Wombat Hill and General Site Analysis

Founded in 1862, Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens towers above the township of Daylesford, a 12ha site which has a commanding presence in this popular regional town. One of a string of nearly twenty Botanic Gardens established during Victoria's Gold Rush, Wombat Hill contains a fine collection of trees, 19th century features such as the fernery cascade, and an impressive art deco viewing tower designed by the respected architect Edwin Peck.

The Botanic Gardens 670m elevation and steep slopes provide a unique and challenging layout and, in all probability, has protected the gardens from many of the intrusions suffered by other regional sites. Caravan Parks, Sporting Ovals and Zoos have all infiltrated other regional Botanical Gardens, yet its topography has allowed Wombat Hill retain its focus as a regional Botanic Garden of national significance.

In 2007 a Conservation Management Plan together with a survey of over 1100 trees on the site was produced. This document is exhaustive and reveals a great deal about the history of the site and how it should be managed. The tree report is especially telling, revealing a vast collection of rare and unusual species ranging from various shrub collections, extensive native New Zealand plantings to a conifer collection of over 70 identified taxa.

Unfortunately, while Wombat Hill Botanic Garden's tree collection is impressive it is also one of the site's greatest limitations. The magnificent views for which the Gardens were once famous are now largely obscured by rampant tree growth and the dense shade of the northern slopes limits the opportunities for shrub and ground cover plantings. In particular the proliferation of Douglas Fir seedlings (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) needs to be checked with 68 individual specimens identified in 2007.

The southern slopes of the Botanic Gardens are the focus of the Gardens shrubberies and planting beds. These include an ornamental 19th century cascade and Fernery designed by William Sangster and an interesting collection of shrubs, however much of the planting, particularly at ground level, lacks botanical interest and diversity. There is extensive scope for expanding the number and diversity of garden beds across much of the site.

The Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens' other main challenge is the topography of the hill. At an average grade of 20% on its southern slope and 30% on its northern, the Botanic Gardens has many steep paths and all abilities access is extremely challenging and in some cases impossible. Existing pathways are extremely steep, and in many cases in poor condition. The refurbishment of these to create a safer and more accessible site is a primary focus of the Master Plan. The steepness of the site does have some advantages however, as it provides magnificent views over the entire region and allows the site to be used for physical training.

Another challenge is the covered reservoir at its summit. For over 100 years this reservoir, has been used as a retention basin for the town's water supply and an open air picturesque lake. A picturesque feature with the dual purpose of providing gravity fed town water and an ornamental feature to the Gardens, complete with fountain and ornamentally planted embankments. However since 1990 this feature has been covered to prevent contamination by rubbish, and is now an eyesore in the centre of the Gardens, confined behind a cyclone wire fence. The Master Plan aims to restore this feature as the rightful showpiece and centre of the site.



Figure 2: Curator's Cottage and Cafe

Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens is one of the few Gardens to retain an ornamental curator's cottage, now the focus of a popular café, Wombat Hill House. This café is an important feature of the Gardens, attracting many additional visitors to the site and under the same management as the award winning and immensely popular Lake House. The ornamental and peaceful nature of the Gardens for walking together with this café draws many local residents to the Gardens to enjoy their beauty, serenity, views and fine collection of plants.

1.3 History of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens

Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens sits atop Wombat Hill in Daylesford. Founded in 1862, the site of the botanic gardens was once littered with gold mines, dug into the side of the hill and still remaining as flooded tunnels beneath the current Gardens. It was the discovery of gold to which Daylesford owed its early prosperity, but as the gold dwindled tourists, drawn to the “fine views and bracing air”ⁱ of the region, created a new industry, tourism, for the town. Indeed, so often photographed was Wombat Hill that it “effectively became a logo for Daylesford and the general area – inseparable from the township and its attractions.”ⁱⁱ

Like all Victoria's gold rush era major regional centres, Daylesford decided to establish a Botanic Garden. At the time the volcanic cone above the town was a natural and ready-made landmark and had been set aside as the “Camp and Police Reserve” in 1854. In 1860 Council mooted a motion to set aside this land for the purposes of “a Botanic Garden and recreation ground” and temporary reservation for this purpose was granted in 1862. At this time very little work was done in establishing the Gardens, and as late as 1864 a new mining tunnel was dug beneath the hill. In 1863 two Royal Oaks were planted to commemorate the wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and a bonfire – one of a string of such fires across Victoria – was lit on the hill to celebrate the wedding. This fire included 1000 tonnes of timber with 20 trees judiciously removed from the hill to fuel the blazeⁱⁱⁱ.

Until 1869 development of the site was limited, but records exist of a limited number of plants being received from the Melbourne Gardens in 1865 and it is apparent that fencing and some walks had been installed by this time^{iv}. However at the end of 1869 Michael Kennedy a “labouring gardener” was appointed to the Gardens and more serious works began. This included planting of conifers, oaks, ash, elms, poplars, cypresses and blue gums, and the laying out of more paths.

In 1867 land was reserved in the centre of the Botanic Gardens for the purposes of a town water supply, and the first reported “Service Reservoir” was constructed in 1882. This still exists as the empty “Circular Day Basin” near the base of the Pioneer Memorial at the crown of the hill and was linked with Sangster's c.1885 Fernery as it supplied the water that made possible the cascade^v. The central Oval Reservoir was constructed around 1888/89 and for many years was a central, ornamental feature of the Garden in keeping with the Picturesque landscape style popular at the time. The reservoir was roofed in the 1990s in response to litter being thrown into the town's water supply^{vi}.

In 1884 the Daylesford Borough Council commissioned the eminent landscape designers William Sangster and Robert Taylor to lay out the Public Gardens. A plan for this work was received and still exists – a rare example of a plan by one of Victoria's foremost 19th century garden designers. Sangster, a contemporary of William Guilfoyle, started his career in Scotland before immigrating to Melbourne where he worked at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens before becoming gardener and overseer at the Como estate. In 1856 he left Como and went into partnership with fellow Scot, Robert Taylor, founding *Taylor and Sangster's Nursery*. In this partnership Taylor ran the production nursery, first at Toorak and later also at Mount Macedon, while Sangster was involved in landscaping -

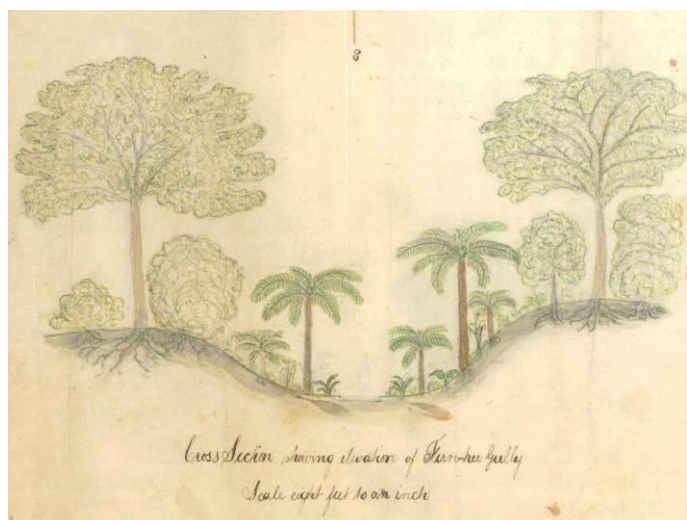


Figure 3: Sangster's drawing for the Ferngully, 1884
Source: Hepburn Shire Council

designing eminent gardens including *Rupertswood*, Sunbury; *Ard Choille* at Mount Macedon; *Victoria Gardens*, Prahran; *Studley Park*; and making alternations at *Ripponlea* and the *Carlton Gardens*. Unfortunately, while beautiful, much of Sangster's design of Wombat Hill is impracticable (working against the contours of the hill) and it appears that the fernery and cascade are the only remaining elements of his design. It does appear however that Sangster spent a considerable amount of time on site personally overseeing the layout of the gardens, and while contrary to his plan, the second, lower carriage drive appears to have been at his direction^{vii}.

It is not the purpose of this Master Plan to provide a full history of the Botanic Gardens, as this is comprehensively provided in the 2007 *Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens Conservation Management Plan* (Lee Andrews and Associates) and the above information is intended only to provide some basic background to the history of the site. For a full history of the Botanic Gardens please refer to Lee Andrews and Associates full report.

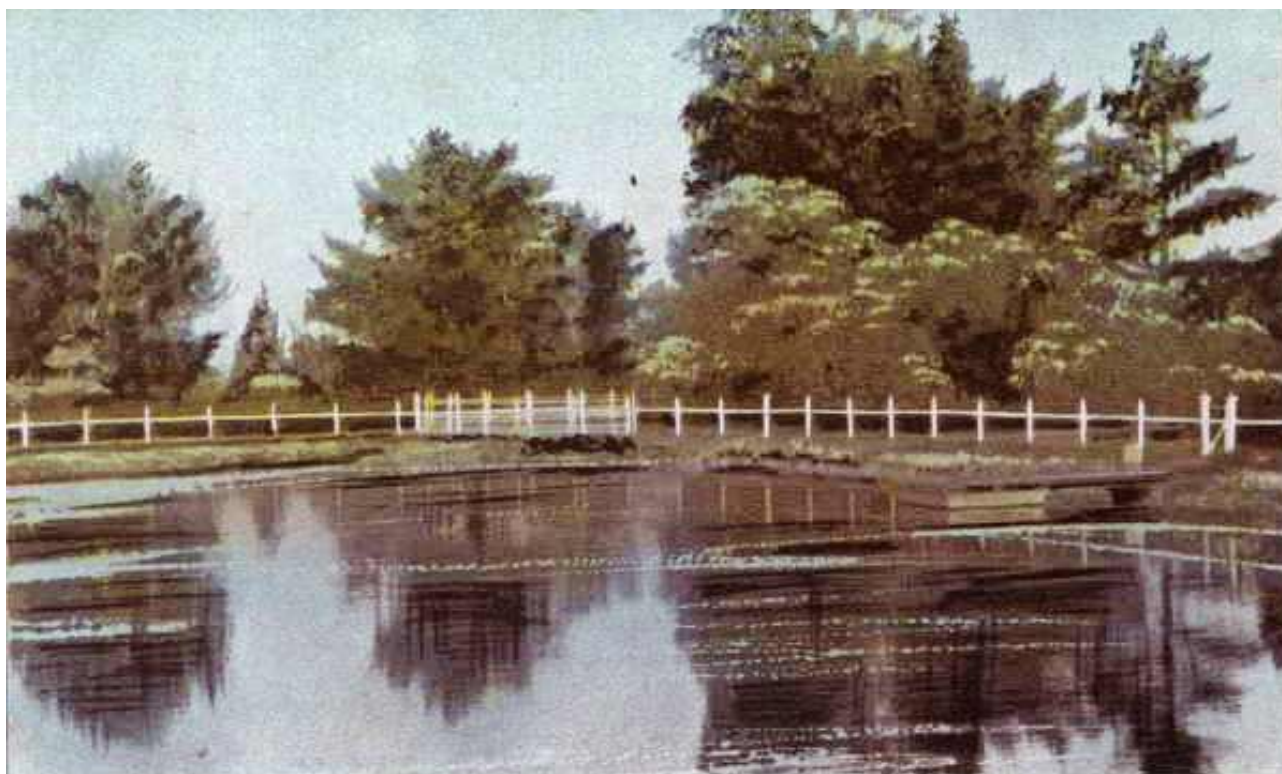


Figure 4: Service reservoir looking east c.1907

Source: Lee Andrews and Associates, 2007 pg 494 from the State Library of Victoria Picture Collection

1.4 2007 Conservation Management Plan

In 2007 an exhaustive *Conservation Management Plan for the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens* (CMP) was produced by Lee Andrew's and Associates. This document is over 500 pages in length and provides extensive information on the history, significance and recommended management of the site. While this is an extremely valuable resource its length and depth makes it impracticable for use as a daily management document.

The Master Plan for the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens draws extensively on the CMP and implements a large number of its recommendations with the aim of providing a more practical document for everyday use. Indeed the production of such a Master Plan was a recommendation of the CMP. However, in the nearly 10 years since the CMP was produced there has been a shift and reinvigoration of the many of Victoria's regional Botanic Gardens and the possibility exists for restoration and landscape works beyond the scope envisaged at the time of production of the CMP. For this reason, while the Master Plan is heavily guided by the CMP it is not

limited by it, and makes a series of recommendations in relation to new projects that while historically sympathetic, were not foreseen or discussed by the CMP.

The following two key points, highlighted in the CMP's executive summary are of particular relevance to the Master Plan, in that they are supportive of the two key drivers behind the Master Plan design:

- *"Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens continues today to have great capacity to tell many 'illustrated' stories about ways of life, traditions, and intellectual and economic endeavour in Daylesford's and Victoria's past. This story telling, which is at the heart of all cultural heritage, is made possible by the Gardens' collection of important landscape elements, many of which are intact and in good condition."* pg 11
- *"In light of the Shire's growing population and buoyant economy, the Gardens, situated in the heart of Daylesford, is ideally placed, both geographically and culturally, to be embraced and promoted as a regional asset of the highest order, and an integral part of the suite of tourist attractions on offer in the area."* pg 12

Appendix 2 provides a summary of the recommendations provided by the CMP with a discussion of how they are to be implemented in the Master Plan.

1.5 Scope of the Master Plan

This report is intended to support the accompanying *Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens Landscape Master Plan*. It was not commissioned as a full master plan / management plan in its own right and is only intended to function as a working aid to understanding the Landscape Master Plan and its implementation. This document briefly touches on management considerations and makes recommendations where further work is needed without providing extensive background detail.

1.6 Methodology

This Master Plan was produced in consultation with council staff, stake holders, the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens and the public. The following contains an outline of the process to date and will be completed following public comment:

- Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design held a briefing meeting with Hepburn Shire Council Staff on site to discuss the project followed by an in-depth briefing meeting with the Project Control Group in June 2015
- A public consultation session was held in the Botanic Gardens in August 2015. This was open to all members of the public with special invitations sent to owners of adjoining properties. An opportunity was also available to provide written feedback through a short survey. A summary of this feedback is provided at
- Background information was collected through the consultation process and review of existing documents. This continued throughout the design process.
- A preliminary draft of the master plan concepts was developed and presented to the PCG for discussion and preliminary approval in October 2015
- The preliminary draft master plan was presented to Councillors in December 2015 and approved for further development. A rough preliminary costing was also produced at this time.
- The site was revisited by Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design and the draft Master Plan concept and background document was developed further for distribution to the PCG and Council staff for discussion and approval in February 2015
- Following internal approval the Draft Master Plan and Report was finalised together with a full costing for presentation to Councillors.

2 Master Plan Design

2.1 Design Overview

The Master Plan for the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens looks to take the framework of the attractive 19th century Botanic Garden and use this to create a dynamic, engaging tourist attraction. The inspiration of this design is drawn from the attributes of Daylesford and the Gardens themselves; the history, topography, location and sense of place. This is expressed through a series of spaces which, through design, tell stories of Gardens and surrounding regions.

Central to the new design is the redevelopment of the covered reservoir into the central *Garden of Night and Day*. The elevated nature of the hill and inland location makes it perfect for star and cloud gazing and this feature embraces the concept; replacing the unsightly reservoir cover from the 1990s with a show piece garden.

Adjacent to the *Garden of Night and Day* is the circular *Day Basin*; the original town reservoir and water source for the Fernery. This is to be restored as an ornamental pond and connected by an open rill to the *Fernery Cascade* which will be extended down the hill to the front entrance.

On the northern slopes of Wombat Hill the existing arboretum is to be retained and augmented through the *Garden of Adventures*, an interactive nature based play space constructed from fallen timber in a series of stepped and crossing logs to create an immersive play experience which reflects the site's roll as a Botanic Garden. Amongst these ground level play elements will be three large viewing towers, designed to appeal to older children and teenagers.

At the Garden's south-east corner will be the *Garden of Views*. This garden will be a series of sculptural grassed mounds creating viewing points and providing a place for community bonfires in the tradition of the famous 1863 celebratory fire.

Along the southern slopes of the Gardens and capturing the 19th century ornamental gardens will be the *Victorian Garden*. This provides a more Victorian gardenesque style through serpentine garden beds with strong planting design. In the centre of this garden the *Curator's Cottage and Conservatory* will be embedded strongly in the landscape by landscape and planting works.

Each of the Garden's entrances will have a specific botanical theme, presenting the Gardens well to the street and reflecting an aspect of the Garden's history. As well as the main entrance this includes a Victorian Entrance, Wildwood Entrance, Palm Entrance and Railway Station Entrance.

Pathways within the Gardens respect the historic paths and carriageways and the steep topography, working with the existing contours to provide better connections around the gardens and an intuitive circulation system which directs visitors in a logical way around the gardens.

Parking and Vehicle access within the Gardens has long been problematic and will be resolved through a series of small-scale parking areas which double the existing provision and formalising the parking to provide more efficient use of the space. The existing carpark at the top of the hill will be replaced with a large circular loop which will provide bus and special-needs parking only. This redesign allows the Pioneer Memorial Tower to again face the reservoir as it was originally designed to do. Sealed, on street car parking will be provided at each entrance to the Gardens.

Vehicle access to local residents will be retained and will be reconfigured to allow both access and egress via the southern roadway. This removes the need for access along the 1880s Sangster Carriageway – therefore providing better protection for the trees and increased pedestrian safety.

Drawing 1: Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens Master Plan
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Drawing 2: Garden of Night and Day, Tower and Cascade
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Drawing 3: Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens Master Plan: Vehicle Access
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2.2 Pathways and Roads

Pathways

Pathway design for the Master Plan looks to honour the heritage paths and existing contours of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens while providing a more logical, safe and connected path system for the Gardens. In particular, the 1869 and 1880s carriage ways have been retained in their entirety, with new connections added at either end to more logically tie them into the pedestrian circulation system and provide better access. As discussed below, the 1880s Sangster carriage way will be closed to vehicle traffic to provide protection for trees, increase safety by removing vehicle/pedestrian conflicts and prevent access issues such as cars becoming bogged.

Wherever possible pathways work with the existing contours, which makes them more logical and accessible and reflects the historic design. The main exception to this approach is the new, lineal pathway running north-south across the site and referred to as the "Climb to the Skies". This pathway will be a "1000 steps" style pathway which will become a popular climb for local and visiting fitness enthusiasts, and provides direct access across the Gardens from the main entrance to the Wildwood entrance on the northern side. With approximately 250 steps needed to traverse up and down the hill it will also function as a possible venue for local fun-runs.

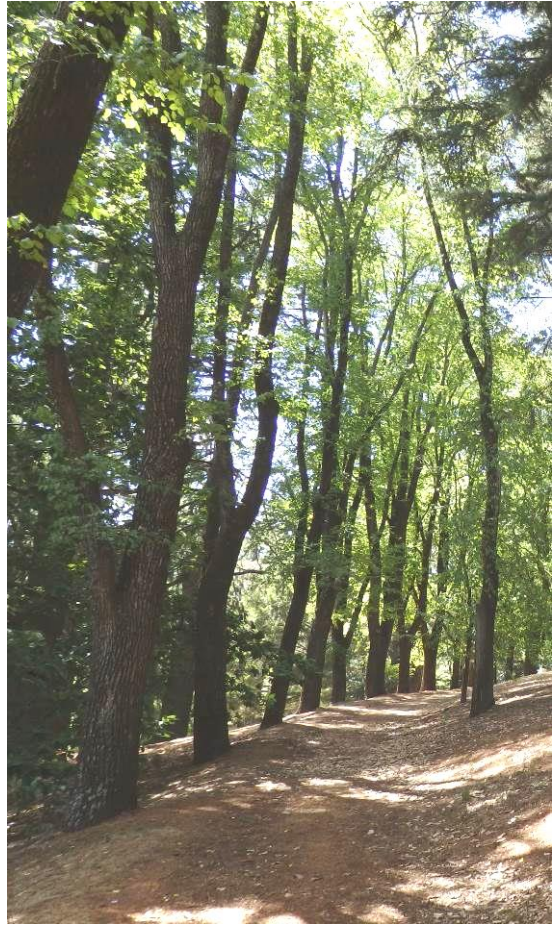


Figure 5: Elm lined 1869 Carriageway

New pathways have been provided to create a more logical connection to key points of the garden, including entrances, café, water features and viewing points. This is especially evident around the Garden of Night and Day (lower reservoir pathway), to the Fernery and in the new paths from the railway entrance. Additional, gardenesque style, serpentine pathways have also been provided through the Ferngully and Victorian Garden to enhance the visitor experience and increase access.

Reinstatement of Lost Pathways

The CMP makes recommendations about the reinstatement of historic pathways that have since been lost, but provides very little information on their locations meaning that reinstatement could not be addressed in the Master Plan. Where the location of historic pathways can be determined and fits with the overall aims of the Gardens these should be reinstated, but the future use, development and accessibility of the Gardens should not be compromised by the need to reinstate lost heritage fabric.

The final location of pathways, particularly in association with major projects will be addressed as part of detailed design work (see section 4.1) and this should include consideration of and respect for the historic layout. In particular this applies to the upper and lower perimeter paths to the reservoir and the missing path under the arbour at the Victorian entrance.

Accessibility

Providing all abilities access to the Wombat Hill site is highly problematic due to the excessively steep grades. All abilities access will be available from the café/conservatory car park through parts of the Victorian garden and on to the Sangster carriage ways. Access to the Garden of

Night and Day, Day Basin and water rill will be available from the Pioneer Memorial carpark. By increasing the number of on-contour pathways throughout the gardens all abilities access will be increased across the site.

For visitors who are mobility impaired but still ambulatory (including elderly visitors), the quality of the pathway surfaces will be increased by re-asphalting to remove trip hazards and by repairing steps. As part of this work the steepness of the paths is to be reduced by the use of stairs wherever appropriate. By reducing the steepness of paths and adding steps the risk of slipping is reduced and the paths will be more trafficable. This is especially important at the Victorian and Palm entrances. As a general rule paths should not be steeper than 3-4% unless they are providing all-abilities access, in which case they are to adhere to the Australian Standards and Building Code.

Size and Materiality

The steepness of Wombat Hill requires that the majority of pathways be asphalt as gravel will not be practical across much of the site. It is recommended that a roadway hierarchy be developed in line with the following recommendations:

- **Primary roadways:** All carparks and dual carriage way roadways, including that to the summit, are to be 6.0m in width and asphalt as detailed below. Carparks and busparks are to adhere to Council minimum sizes.
- **Secondary roadways:** All single way roadways are to be 3.5m in width and asphalt as detailed below. Design, visibility and turning circles to adhere to Council guidelines. This includes the turning areas at the summit, Garden of Views and Café
- **Local vehicle roadways:** The local vehicle access road is to be 3.5m in width and vehicle gravel as detailed below. A layoff bays in line with Council guidelines is to be provided as per Drawing 3, page 9.

It is recommended that a roadway hierarchy be developed in line with the following recommendations:

- **Historical carriageways and drives** (Sangster, 1869 and fire access): Pedestrian only pathways in granitic gravel with mild steel edges. Current widths to be maintained. Extension to the 1869 pathway at either end to match. Consideration should be given to maintaining the 1869 pathway in its current, unfinished and unedged state, with the pathway only being gravelled if circumstances require.
- **Primary Pathways** (Victorian and Palm entrances, climb to the skies, pioneer memorial axial path and key linking pathways): 1.5m wide asphalt pathways with mild steel edges as per below
- **Secondary Pathways** (e.g. within gardens including the Fern Gully and Garden of Night and Day, also including railway entrance and wildwood entrance): 1.2m wide gravel pathways with mild steel edges as per below.

The decision on whether a particular pathway should be asphalt or gravel should consider the practical, linking and aesthetic requirements of the pathway. Generally speaking all asphalt pathways should be interlinked and any areas which are particularly steep or difficult to traverse should be asphalt. Asphalt should be avoided in informal areas and on historic carriage ways. In these areas cement stabilised granitic gravel is the preferred option. All asphalt areas are to have a crisp edge (either steel or sawn) and asphalt is to have a rough surface to help prevent slipping when paths become icy.

Steps should be well formed and durable and in either mild steel or timber. On the wildwood entrance steps will all be timber cut from logs as discussed above.

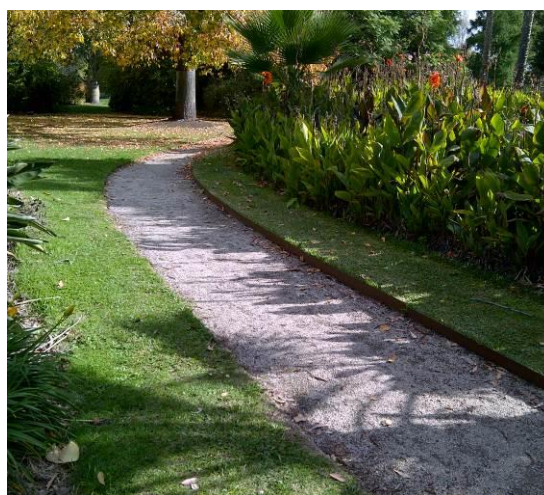


Figure 6: Example of mild steel edged gravel path at Williamstown Botanic Gardens

Car Parking

Car parking and accessibility is perhaps one of the biggest challenges for the Wombat Hill site, where the steepness of the slope both limits opportunities for parking and makes access by cars necessary for those with restricted mobility. The current arrangement of allowing car access and parking to the summit is undesirable as:

- it visually dominates the site when both empty and full
- the roadway cuts through the gardens creating a physical and visual barrier
- parking space is limited leading to people parking on the verges with the associated problems of compaction
- it discourages access and exploration of the rest of the gardens as it "funnels" tourists to the top of the site, away from many of the key features
- Summit parking is informal and therefore a highly inefficient use of space

Currently parking is also provided at near Wombat Hill House (former curator's cottage), but this is limited and with the exception of one space adjacent to the cottage does not provide all abilities access.

The Master Plan recommends removing vehicle access to the summit with the exception of allowing drop off and limited parking for buses and for those with special needs. In this case, given the steepness of the hill, it is strongly recommended that "special needs" be expanded to include the elderly and all those that are mobility impaired, in line with the definition used by Public Transport Victoria (as opposed to those with disabled parking permits). To compensate for the loss of parking on the summit new, pocket parking locations are to be provided on the southern slopes of the Gardens. This has been carefully chosen to avoid damage to existing trees, but will still need careful final design in line with tree protection recommendations in section 3.3. New parking is illustrated Drawing 3, page 9 and includes:

- 21 new spaces near the Garden of Views and the main entrance, all being on-road (mix of parallel and angle parking).
- A new carpark with the capacity for another 21 spaces near the cottage
- Current parking near the cottage will be formalised to provide 8 designated spaces
- 2 disabled parking spaces will be provided immediately adjacent to the café/cottage
- 3 disabled parking spaces and busparking to be provided on the summit

This parking allocation doubles what is currently available on site and can be augmented during peak periods by on-road parking on surrounding streets. Parking outside the gardens is to be encouraged by upgrading the entrances and providing good directional signage (from the streets to the Gardens and within the Gardens themselves).



Figure 7: Current inefficient and poor parking at the summit

Vehicle Access

Vehicle access within the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens is a contentious issue. Access by cars, particularly to the "scenic drive", causes a number of problems including compaction, damage to trees and bogging of vehicles in wet weather. The Conservation Management Plan supports restricting access to cars only and public consultation for the Master Plan supported removing vehicle access altogether. However, a number of private properties adjacent to the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens rely on this roadway for access to their properties, having no other options for vehicle access.

It is therefore proposed to restrict all vehicle access beyond the new café carpark (see below) to "Residents Cars Only". This will reduce damage to the historic elm walk, increase safety and restore pedestrian priority to the Gardens. It is recommended that this is done by removing all signage relating to the "scenic drive" and installing a "Private Road: Strictly Local Access Only; buses strictly prohibited" sign. This should remove the majority of the traffic. This roadway is to allow both access and egress to local residents, so that they no longer exit their properties via the Sangster Carriageway. A passing lay-off is to be provided half way along the residents access road and a turning point at the entrance to the Sangster Carriageway to allow lost vehicles to turn around.

Dual access carriageways are to be retained to the summit and café carpark discussed above, with single direction turning circles provided at these points and at the Garden or Views to discourage through traffic and aid circulation. Vehicle access is illustrated on Drawing 3, page 9.

Management of Parking

In the past parking on verges and under trees during peak periods has been highly problematic. This can cause significant damage to the fabric of heritage gardens by compacting the soil around heritage trees. By providing additional parking and rationalising access it is hoped that this will be reduced, but inappropriate parking is always a problem with public gardens with vehicle access. It is therefore recommended that parking restrictions be clearly signed and strictly enforced. If necessary, parking infringements may need to be introduced if the problem persists but it is recommended that a public information campaign be the starting point with signs similar to those used in other Botanic Gardens, along the line of "*Please Protect our Heritage Trees by not Parking on Verges*". The largescale use of fences or bollards should be avoided as they are expensive and unsightly.

Recommendations

1. *Repair unsafe pathways (e.g. trip and slip hazards)*
2. *Close the Scenic drive to visitors and construct layoff to allow resident access*
3. *Modify existing pathways to increase accessibility*
1. *Extend paths in line with the Master Plan to improve circulation and connections*
2. *Provide new car park to the Café and rework roadway around the cottage*
3. *Provide new pathways across the site in conjunction with new projects and as funding permits*
4. *Close the top carpark and provide new turning circle (in conjunction with Garden of Night and Day)*
5. *Provide new carpark near the Garden of Views*

2.3 Garden Beds

Garden beds in the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens are concentrated around the southern slopes and the Master Plan continues this tradition. A number of new garden beds are proposed throughout the Victorian Garden to provide a better sense of mass and void and reinforce the serpentine, gardenesque character of the Garden (see Figure 8). These garden beds have been laid out to capture all the significant existing garden beds and trees and incorporate them into the beds.

The banks of the reservoir are to be replanted, in line with historical precedent and this planting will extend into the Victorian Garden and onto the upper portions of the northern slope, especially where they are capturing existing planted areas. Planting is also to be expanded around the Fernery and at each of the main entrances.

It is not proposed to install any new garden beds on the northern slope of the Gardens, although new plantings of bulbs and other woodland plants should be installed in large drifts. The reasons for restricting new planting in this area include the unfavourable micro-climate, the limited resources for maintaining garden beds, and the preservation of the historic design which focuses garden beds in the southern gardens. Furthermore, it is recommended that the overgrowth along the northern boundary be controlled in line with recommendations below.

All garden beds (both existing and proposed) are to be edged with mild steel for longevity and as it provides a similar look to the labour intensive 19th century practice of the spade edge.

The lower reaches of the northern slopes of the Gardens are currently an undefined mass of large woody shrubs including weeds such as blackberries, Portuguese Laurel and Laurustinus. This material requires judicious thinning and clearing to remove weed species and replace them with appropriate woody shrubs. The extent of this overgrowth is also to be reduced although a buffer is to be retained along the northern boundary to screen the neighbouring properties and provide enclosure. The extent of this buffer is approximately shown on the Master Plan drawing (see page 7). Strategic replacement of the buffer over time would ultimately see the removal of all weed species and their substitution with more suitable cold-climate shrubs.

The Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens contains a large number of Portuguese Laurels which until the 1990s were clipped into elegant, tall hedges. This hedging is to be reinstated, with the extent to be guided by Council's heritage officer. Judicious thinning will also be required to ensure self-sown seedlings are removed.

Planting design and character are addressed in section 3.4 as well as under the individual garden areas discussed below.



Figure 8: Gardenesque arrangement of serpentine beds to frame views Singapore Botanic Gardens.

Recommendations

1. *Thin woody shrub growth along the northern boundary and remove weeds*
2. *Clip overgrown Portuguese Laurels back into tall hedges*
3. *Gradually roll out installation of new, professionally design garden beds across the site in line with the Master Plan*

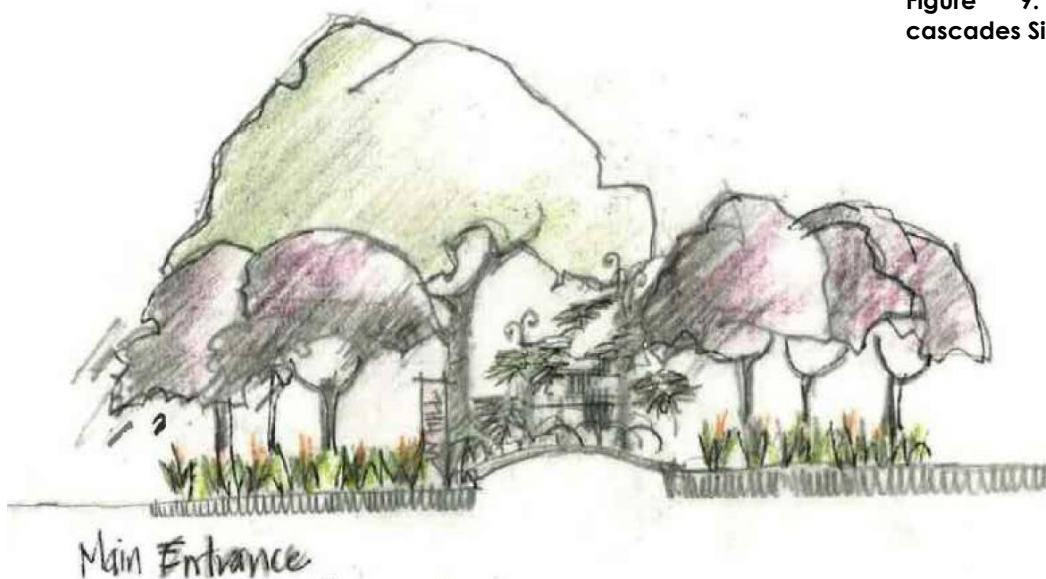
2.4 Entrances

Main Entrance (Central Springs Road)

The main entrance to Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens is to be upgraded as a botanical show piece and fitting entrance statement to the Gardens. Taking its cue from the two magnificent Sycamore Maples (*Acer pseudoplatnus*) at Central Springs Road, a new Bosque of botanically interesting trees will be planted to create an avenue like entrance statement. The historic picket fence is to be reinstated (see Figure 26, page 31) and botanical interest is to be provided in shrub and groundcover plantings, with a focus on Victorian foliage plants. Once within the Gardens the existing roadways are to be modified to provide a more intimate arrival experience which invites and directs visitors into the Gardens. Behind the fine, large Monterey Pine which currently dominates the entrance will be a series of planted cascades which provide a strong entrance statement and a spectacular conclusion to the Ferngully above (see section 2.6, below for more detail).



Figure 9: Planted water cascades Singapore BGs



Drawing 5: Main Entrance

Palm Entrance (Daly Street)

The palm entrance off Daly Street is the principal pedestrian link to the main township. Currently this entrance is a very steep, simple bitumen path and very difficult to traverse. As part of the broader concept of linking the Botanic Gardens into the main township it is proposed to upgrade this entrance with a zig-zagging formed pathway interspersed with soaring Washington Palms (*Washingtonia filifera* or *W. robusta*). These palms are sympathetic to the Victorian character of the Botanic Gardens and will, once established, create an eye-catching and iconic feature which dominates the skyline and leads people towards the Gardens. Decorative under planting will be added beneath the Palms, creating ground level interest and providing an appropriate entrance to the Botanic Gardens. Adjacent fences will be



Drawing 4: Palm Entrance



Figure 10: Palm Avenue at Williamstown Botanic Gardens

screened out by shrubby hedges. The new pathway will still be steep, but by zigzagging it across the entrance and providing stairs where appropriate it will be more easily traversed and an architectural feature in its own right.

Beyond the Botanic Gardens signage from town will direct users towards this entrance and pathway access from the town centre is to be improved. It is also recommended that the Palm planting continue down these access pathways wherever possible to continue the effect of the Garden “pouring down” the hill and into the Daylesford township. Twelve new on street, parallel car parks will be created near the Palm Entrance to improve access.

Wildwood Entrance (Hill Street)

The Wildwood entrance will take the existing, wild and picturesque walkway from Hill Street and rework it into a more useable entrance to the Gardens. The existing low key and wild character of the pathway will be retained, but the path reformed with cement stabilised gravel and log steps so that it is safer and more easily trafficked. Elements of the “Garden of Adventures” see (2.7) will also be added along the sides of the path and crossing it as steps. A new entrance arch in a similar style to the “Garden of Adventure”, made from reclaimed wood and decorated by a local artist will finish the entrance. External to the gardens a new pathway and clear signage is to be provided. Eight new on street, parallel car parks will be created near the Wildwood Entrance to improve access.



Drawing 6: Wildwood Entrance



Figure 11: Log trail at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. Image, “wake up and smell the joy” website

Victorian / Gardenesque Entrance (Central Springs Road)

The main pedestrian entrance off Central Springs Road is to be developed as a formal extension to the Victorian Garden (see section 2.8, page 24) and as a showpiece for Victorian era planting styles – in particular the gardenesque and bedding plant traditions. The current unsafe pathway is to be replaced with a new bitumen path on the same alignment, but this time broken up with small flights of steps to reduce tripping hazards. To either side of this path, and in line with the steps will be a series of terraces, planted out in a style reminiscent of Victorian era bedding, but using less labour intensive species. Large, Victorian urns with dramatic foliage plants will provide a strong design statement along the axis. Consideration could also be given to installing low hedges lining the paths in line with those in a historic photograph of the entrance (see Lee Andrew's and Associates, 2007, pg 514). Eleven new on street, parallel car parks will be created near the Victorian Entrance to improve access.



Drawing 7: Victorian Entrance



Figure 12: Victorian era urn
Source: Donna Lynn,
Landscape Design

Railway Entrance

The final entrance to the Gardens is the Railway Entrance. This entrance formalises an existing, but low key access point to the Gardens near the lower reservoirs on the northern boundary. This entrance does not have a strong design theme, but instead formalises garden beds and provides a new access track to allow easier access from the Railway Station and Sunday Markets. Planting to this entrance should be decorative in nature with botanic interest and a focus on Victorian foliage plants in line with the planting design guidelines provided at section 3.4. Twelve new on street, parallel car parks will be created near the Wildwood Entrance to improve access.

Recommendations

1. Install planting and palm trees to Palm entrance
2. Undertake planting to Main entrance
3. Construct log trail, steps and arbor to Wildwood entrance
4. Install planting and urns to Victorian entrance
5. Provide new pathways to railway entrance

2.5 Garden of Night and Day and Pioneer Memorial Tower

Central to the new design of the Master Plan is the redevelopment of the covered reservoir into the central *Garden of Night and Day*. Until the 1990s the Reservoir was a major feature of the site, forming the dual function of being the town water supply and providing the serpentine lake essential to any self-respecting garden laid out upon picturesque principals. In early days this



Figure 13: Star gazing
Source: lovethispic.com

included a fountain and had white quartz beaches and banks lined with “blooming flowers”^{viii}. Unfortunately, due to the risk of contamination the reservoir was covered in the 1990s, and instead of being the focal point for enjoyment of the Gardens it became a major eyesore in the centre of the site.

Due to ongoing risks of contamination, public safety, and a need to reduce water evaporation it cannot be expected that the reservoir can again become a major water feature as it once was. Instead it is proposed to convert it to a large scale, ornamental roof garden and new focal piece of Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens.

The elevated nature of the hill and inland location makes Wombat Hill perfect for star and cloud gazing and the Garden of Night and Day embraces the concept; inspired by the work of two local astronomers, WE Stanbridge in the 19th century and J Morieson in the 1990s who documented the astronomy of the local Aboriginals. The new Garden transforms the unsightly covered reservoir into a

dynamic and interactive space with central roof garden, viewing lawn and formal parterre. These areas will all be constructed on a new roofed area, suitable for use as a public space and roof garden and providing complete cover to the reservoir. For practical reasons this may be slightly domed and will cover the water at approximately the same elevation as the current roof.

This Garden of Night and Day will focus around the central planted area at the apex of the Climb to the Skies. This new garden will feature a viewing lawn dotted with reclined timber seating (see Figure 15) to allow cloud and star gazing. Off set from the centre of the lawn, and at the junction of the two main axial pathways will be a large paved area suitable for setting up telescopes. A sundial, or possibly an interactive astronomical chart will adorn the space which can also tell the Aboriginal stories of the night sky. On the northern side of the lawn will be crescent shaped garden of “plants of the night” featuring botanically interesting planting with special night features such as night flowering, scent, or “glowing” leaves (Figure 14). Surrounding the lawn will be a series of parterre roof gardens – allowing the Botanic Gardens to contribute to cutting-edge horticulture (Figure 16).

In order to reduce engineering weight and keep maintenance within manageable levels the majority of the new roof will be an off-limits ornamental parterre created from materials such as coloured fake turf, stone, and other non-living materials. This parterre will not be accessible to the public and will be designed to be viewed from the tower above. Pedestrian access will be restricted to the two main axial pathways, the circuit path and central parterre. Limitations to pedestrian access will primarily be enforced through level changes which make access difficult, but can be augmented by low signs. The historic circuit pathway will sit at ground level, below the height of the Garden of Night and Day.

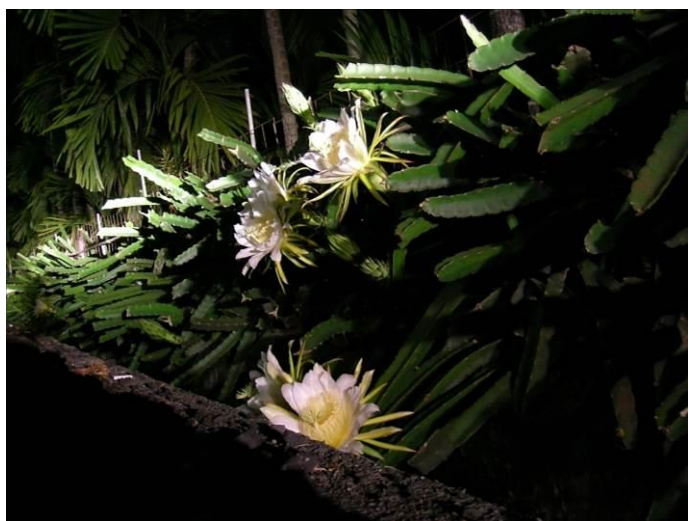


Figure 14: Night blooming plants
Source: Kada's Garden

Two main pathways cut through the garden, the north-south Climb to the Skies and the east-west axial path from the Pioneer Memorial. This art-deco tower was constructed in the 1930s and was designed by prominent Maryborough architect Edwin Peck^{ix} to front the reservoir – a feature that has been lost due to changes in the layout and focus of the Gardens. By creating this long, axial path the original design intent of the tower is reinstated and access to the Garden of Night and Day increased. It will also be the primary means of provide all-abilities access to the Garden. The two maturing Norfolk Island Pines framing the tower are to be retained and will help reinforce the axial symmetry. New gravel pathways and plantings will link the tower to the Day Basin and access drive to its rear.

Planting of the surrounding embankment will reinstate the formal tradition of decorative surrounds and will use highly decorative yet low maintenance plants. This planting should be designed as a modern interpretation of Victorian gardenesque design principals.



Figure 15: Lounge style seats in New York's Highline Park
source: inhabitat.com

Recommendations

1. Commission a feasibility study into the replacement of the Reservoir roof and construction of the Garden of Night and Day
2. Commence discussions with Central Highlands Water about the feasibility of proposed works and the practical implications
3. Construct the Garden of Night and Day and link with surrounding pathways
4. Plant the edges of the Garden of Night and Day



Figure 16: Roof Garden at University of Melbourne, Burnley
Source: Gardendrum

2.6 Day Basin, Fernery and Cascade

Adjacent to the Garden of Night and Day is the circular *Day Basin*; the original town reservoir and water source for the Fernery. This now empty basin is to be restored as an ornamental pond and connected by an open rill to the *Fernery Cascade*. The *Day Basin* and adjacent *Pioneer Memorial Tower* will be linked through decorative planting beds and the redesign of the top carpark to reduce its visual impact and provide a more sympathetic entrance. The Master Plan restores the Tower's original design, as facing the reservoir, by adding a strong axial path connecting the two spaces through a series of parterres. The pond will display water lilies and other water plants of seasonal interest.

The Fernery Cascade together with the 1880s carriage drive are the primary surviving features by William Sangster. The new Master Plan builds on the current by providing new path connections to allow increased access and encourage use. Above the cascade a new pond and viewing platform will be added to provide visual connection so that visitors can enjoy the full splendour of the fernery from the summit. The Fernery will be connected to the Day Basin by an open, contemporary style rill (see Figure 17). Below the 19th century cascade this rill will continue down the hill through a fern gully and crossing path system, until it discharges in a series of stone cascades reminiscent of the Franklin springs. These cascades will provide a strong design statement at the Wombat Hill Botanic Garden's main entrance.



Figure 17: Rill and pond in gravel at Rousham, UK
Source: gardensonline.com.au

Recommendations

1. Commission a feasibility study into the restoration of water to the Day Basin and the best methods for achieving this
2. Restore pathway connections to the Ferngully
3. Increase the size of the Ferngully through additional planting
4. Connect the Day Basin to the Ferngully cascade through an open rill with viewing platform and upper pond
5. Provide a lower rill through the Ferngully and connect to new Cascades at the Gardens' entrance

2.7 Garden of Adventures

Across the northern slopes of the hill and amongst the arboretum will be the new children and teenager's space – the Garden of Adventures. The conceptual idea for this area is in line with recommendations made in the 2007 Conservation Management Plan and takes its inspiration from the recently completed children's Log Trail at the UK's Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (see Figure 11, page 17). As an extension of the Wildwood Entrance, a series of logs for balancing and clambering over will form a trail through the lower reaches of the arboretum. These logs will primarily be from trees within the gardens that have been lost in storms or require removal for health or safety reasons – but they may be augmented by logs from other trees from around the Shire. This approach allows a sensitive recycling of timber from significant trees and creates an engaging feature for children and their families which leads them through the Gardens and will reinvigorate the northern slopes. Logs would be artistically laid, cut and carved and would be placed so that softfall mulch is not required.

Augmenting the log trail will be a series of hammocks or other swings set throughout the Arboretum. These swings will be a modern interpretation of a Victorian idea (indeed Wombat Hill Botanic Garden's had a swings in the late 19th century), and by being placed en masse become an art feature – similar to the swings placed throughout the Frangipani forest in Singapore's World Heritage listed Botanic Gardens (Figure 18). These swings would be placed so that do not impact on tree health.



Figure 18: Victorian swings in Singapore Botanic Gardens Frangipani Forest

The final feature of the Garden of Adventures will be a series of three viewing towers aimed at teenagers. These will again be designed so that soft fall is not required, and will be sympathetically designed timber, steel and net structures that require a degree of skill to navigate and capture the stunning views to the Gardens' north. These towers will provide an attractive space for teenagers to hangout or play in and will be linked by net bridges. One tower will be designed to be accessed by steps while the rest will require rope climbing.

Recommendations

1. *In the short term commence construction of the log train and slowly expand as timber becomes available*
2. *Install a series of hammocks or swings sensitively placed throughout the log train area*
3. *Install three interlinked tree viewing towers*



Figure 19 and Figure 20: Garden of Adventure Viewing Towers

2.8 Victorian Garden

The Victorian Garden encompasses the 19th century ornamental gardens across the southern and western slopes of Wombat Hill. This part of the site was the focus for development in the 19th century and contains the highest diversity in tree species and all of the formal garden beds. Unfortunately, over time much of the diversity in the shrub and groundcover layer has been lost.

The Master Plan design for the Victorian Garden takes the existing paths, garden beds and significant trees and incorporates them into a new design with a focus on introducing new garden beds and improving circulation and access. These new garden beds incorporate all of the existing beds and the significant trees; therefore reducing lawn/tree conflicts and aiding the tree's preservation. These new beds introduce a sense of mass and void and reinstate the Victorian ideas of picturesque framing, serpentine beds and gardenesque elegance (see Drawing 1 and Figure 18, pg 22). Planting in these new beds would be in line with the recommendations made in section 3.4 with strong planting design, botanical diversity and a consideration of gardenesque principals of plant display. Consideration should also be given to a modern interpretation of Victorian bedding using perennial species.



Figure 21: Typical Victorian planting with urns and foliage plants. Government House Sydney.
Source: sydneyemeraldcity.com

Essential to the interpretation and understanding of the Victorian Garden will be the Victorian Entrance off Central Springs Road (see Drawing 1, page 7) and the redevelopment of the Curator's Cottage, Conservatory and Nursery (sections 2.10 and 2.11) which will be designed to sit sensitively within the Victorian Garden and complement its landscape character.

Recommendations

1. Increase botanical diversity to existing beds in line with planting design recommendations
2. Gradually role out installation of garden beds and paths across the Victorian Garden as funding permits
3. Ensure that Garden bed and planting design reflect a modern interpretation of Victorian era design style
4. Modify the circular garden bed and path to summit in the short term and allow modification of cottage surrounds to continue at a later date in conjunction with the redevelopment of the conservatory

2.9 Garden of Views

The Garden of Views is a series of sculptural lawn areas that provide viewing points which capture the Garden's south-east outlook. These sculptural lawns are inspired by the landscapes of Charles Jencks, the story of the 1863 celebratory bonfire held in the Wombat Hill Gardens and the volcanos of the region. The lawns will be a series of sculptural, volcanic shaped mounds with the largest forming the centre of a vehicle turning circle and becoming a lookout point which captures the views towards Blackwood and Lerderderg. This primary mound will also contain a central space suitable for community bonfires.



Figure 22: Sculptural mounds by Charles Jencks
Source: Stuff Edinburgh, image at Jupiter Artlands

Recommendations

1. Install a series of sculptural lawn mounds to the Garden of Views with due consideration for the protection of the existing trees.

2.10 Curator's Cottage and Conservatory

Curator's Cottage and Cafe

The curator's cottage was constructed in the late 1940s as a replacement for an earlier building and is of primary significance as a curator's cottage in a Botanic Gardens, although the building itself is only of contributory significance. This building is now leased as a café, with Wombat Hill House being locally popular and under the same ownership as the award winning Lake House restaurant. The Master Plan recommends retaining the cottage as a café while expanding its use and improving its landscape presentation.

Currently the café sits poorly in the landscape and lacks a relationship to the surrounding Victorian era landscape, opening directly onto asphalt roadways and with service areas being prominently displayed. The Master Plan proposed reworking the roadway and garden beds around the cottage to increase accessibility and ground the cottage in the landscape. Service facilities will be removed to the rear of the cottage and the area screened by hedge planting so that rubbish bins and entrance ways are no longer visually intrusive. It is recommended in the short term that rubbish bin storage be relocated to the rear of the cottage or another, less visually intrusive position. Toilet provision to the cottage / café is currently poor and recommendations for improving this is discussed in section 2.18, below. To protect the visual amenity and heritage of the place any modifications to the cottage are to be architect designed.

Community Room

During the consultation process the desire was expressed for an all-weather community facility in the Garden that can be used by local community groups (e.g. botanical art, reading, mothers group). It is recommended that either an existing room of the cottage be made over to this purpose or that a sympathetic extension be added to the rear of the building. This should become part of the design brief for the cottage refurbishment / conservatory redesign (see below).

Alf Headland Conservatory

The Alf Headlands Conservatory was constructed in 1988 but continues a long tradition of having climate controlled plant houses in the Gardens, especially for the display of tuberous begonias. The fabric of the current building is not considered to be of significance, but its location, association with past caretaker Alf Headland and its display of tuberous begonias are considered to be of primary significance.

The current conservatory structure lacks design finesse and is left vacant for much of the year. In the short term it is recommended that additional seasonal displays be developed to give the conservatory year round relevance. Options for these displays including orchids, carnivorous plants, ferns or succulents – all of which will have collector appeal.

Once the current conservatory structure requires replacement it is recommended that a new, architecturally designed building be developed as an extension to the curator's cottage. This new conservatory will be purposely designed for the display of plants and should allow public access to the collections. It may also be designed to incorporate a small event space/upgrade to the café eating area and should be internally accessible from the cottage. In line with the heritage significance of the place it is recommended that the name Alf Headland continue to be associated with the conservatory in some form and that the tuberous begonia displays be continued and enhanced.

Recommendations

1. Relocate rubbish bins to the rear of the cottage in the short term
2. Provide a series of seasonal plant displays in the conservatory in the short term
3. Promote the tuberous begonia displays as a tourist attraction
4. Reconfigure garden beds and roadways around the cottage to improve landscape presentation (see also section 2.8, Victorian Garden)
5. Provide an externally accessible public toilet attached to the cottage (see also section 2.18, Toilets)
6. Provide a community room in the cottage
7. Construct an architecturally designed conservatory/café attached to the cottage

2.11 Nursery and Surrounds

The presence of a nursery and works depot is essential to the function of a Botanic Gardens and the current area is considered to be large enough for current requirements but is poorly articulated with the gardens, particularly with the entrance off the side of the curator's cottage. It is recommended that the current nursery and works area be expanded to allow sufficient space for future functional requirements, the Friends growing area and nursery. The entire area is to be hedged to fully conceal it from the public and sit more sympathetically within the Gardens. Internal to this hedge will be sufficient fencing to provide security.

The entrance to the nursery and works area is to be relocated further to the west to reduce its visual impact on the cottage. It is recommended that low key gates be installed to unobtrusively provide security.

Recommendations

1. Relocate the entrance to the nursery and works area
2. Hedge the current nursery fence in the short term
3. Plant new hedging plants in preparation for the expansion of the nursery footprint
4. Expand the nursery footprint
5. Provide all necessary infrastructure within the nursery and works area (as advised by the Wombat Hill gardeners)

2.12 Arboretum and Northern Slopes

The northern slopes of Wombat Hill contain a large arboretum / pinetum of various species of conifers and occasional deciduous species. Over time this area has become overgrown, and in particular Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) seedlings have proliferated to the exclusion of other plants. It is recommended that this part of the Gardens be maintained chiefly as an arboretum, but that judicious thinning of existing trees take place to open up views and allow sufficient space for the planting of the next generation of trees. Section 3.3, *Management of an Ageing Tree Canopy*, provides further information on this process and the tree replacement strategy that will maintain botanical integrity and climatic suitability in the tree canopy.

The area under the canopy of the trees is to be maintained chiefly as a lawn area, with the addition of the new *Garden of Adventures* (section 2.7). Within this lawn area a mix of climatically appropriate, non-weedy bulbs are to be planted in drifts to provide seasonal display.

2.13 Historic Structures: Rotunda and Trehwella Pavilion



Figure 23: Rotunda c.1905 with the Monkey Puzzle tree in the foreground.
 Source: Lee Andrews and Associates, 2007 pg 491 from the Daylesford and District Historical Society

A rotunda on the site of the current structure dates from the 1900s and was thought to have been relocated to Central Springs Reserve in the 1920s¹ and demolished in the early 1980s (see Figure 23). Rather than being fully demolished, this structure was dismantled and stored by Council before being sold to a local resident who continues to have it in storage. The Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens are planning to restore this structure using a combination of the original timbers and fretwork and new pieces fashioned on using the original templates.^x It is recommended that this structure be restored to its

¹ May have been in garden until at least 1940s, sources in the CMP conflict, see description pg 179 and image from 1940s on page 522

original location in the Gardens and the current rotunda (dating from 1993) be relocated to another park in the Hepburn Shire.

Donated by Mayor Trehwella, a structure known as the Trehwella Pavilion was constructed in 1911 on a flat area of ground below the 1869 carriageway on the Gardens' north-western slope^{xi}. The structure was also known as the "Twilight House"^{xii} and was demolished c.1983^{xiii} after it fell into disrepair. In accordance with the 2007 CMP it is recommended that a new picnic shelter be constructed in this location. The new shelter should be in the artistic style discussed in section 2.17 and have a stylistic reference to the "Twilight House" name.

Recommendations

1. Restore the original Rotunda and reassemble in Gardens
2. Relocate the existing Rotunda to another location within the Shire
3. Construct a new picnic shelter on the location of the removed Trehwella Pavilion
4. Relocate Trehwella plaque to the new picnic shelter

2.14 Furnishing and Infrastructure

When working with historic Botanic Gardens it is important that a consistent and sympathetic palette of furniture be used throughout the site. Hepburn Shire have a streetscape strategy which provides standardised designs for streetscape furnishings and which is suitable for use in the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens. The following provides recommendations on the location and design of furnishings for use throughout the Gardens with special reference to this streetscape strategy.

Fixed Seats

Community consultation indicated a strong design for more seating in the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, particularly in sheltered locations. The steepness of the site makes it important that seating be provided at suitable intervals around the Gardens to aid accessibility. Generally speaking seats should be at intervals no greater than 100m to allow resting points. Fixed seats would generally be located on the edges of paths.

Seat design should be as per the seat detailed in the Hepburn Council streetscape strategy (see Figure 24). Detailing on seat ends should preferably contain Wombat Hill branding.



Figure 24: Standard seats for use in the Gardens
Source: Outlines, 2014 Hepburn Shire Streetscape Designs

Relocatable Seats

A number of moveable garden seats are to be positioned in key viewing locations (e.g. lawns and garden bed edges). These seats would not be fixed and would be regularly relocated by the gardeners. These seats would be of the same design as the fixed seats with matching Wombat Hill branding (see Figure 24).

Picnic Shelters

It is recommended that three new decorative picnic shelters be constructed. One on the site of the Trehwella Pavilion (see 2.13), one on the promontory near the Garden of Views and one to

service the Garden of Adventures. Additional picnic tables should also be placed under the shelter of the Pioneer Memorial. These structures will replace the current log cabin style picnic shelter, which should eventually be removed.

New picnic shelters are to be specifically designed by local artisans with a contemporary "arts and crafts" feel and whimsical design which is also respectful of the Gardens 19th century history. Shelters could vary in detailing, but should have a consistency of style and materiality. Seat shelters (see below) would also be designed to match.

Seat Shelters

Wombat Hill's exposed location and inclement weather means it is important to provide adequate shelter. This was strongly expressed during community consultation. A number of the fixed seats are to be within small, specially built weather shelters. These would be in the same design suite as the picnic shelters with an artistic, whimsical design but at a smaller in scale.

Picnic Tables

A picnic table should be developed for use within the Gardens with the design being consistent with Hepburn standardised designs used elsewhere. Picnic tables should only be placed within shelters and beneath the Pioneer Memorial tower. Placement of picnic tables elsewhere is inappropriate in a historic botanic garden.

Rubbish Bins

It is recommended that rubbish bins not be used and that the Gardens implement a "take in – take out policy". This reduces maintenance and the need for access by Garbage Trucks which can damage heritage fabric.

Bollards and Interpretive Signs

Bollards are to be kept to a minimum and should only be used where there are no other options for controlling vehicle access. Bollard design should be as per the seat detailed in the Hepburn Council streetscape strategy (see Figure 25). Detailing on seat ends should preferably contain Wombat Hill branding.



Figure 25: Bollards and interpretive signs for use in the Gardens
Source: Outlines, 2014 Hepburn Shire Streetscape Designs

The Hepburn Shire Council streetscape strategy provides the same design for bollards and interpretive signs (see Figure 25). All signage should comply with these specifications whilst using Wombat Hill branding.

Recommendations

1. Ensure all new furnishings reflect Hepburn Shire Council design standards
2. Install additional seating across the Gardens to aid accessibility
3. Construct new Picnic Shelters starting with the Trehwella Pavilion site
4. Install picnic tables under the Pioneer Memorial

2.15 Lighting and Power

Lighting will be required to a number of locations within the Gardens for safety and accessibility purposes. These include:

- Parking areas
- historic Rotunda
- Garden of Night and Day
- Toilets

Lighting should be kept to a minimum and only be triggered during events or at specific times. Lighting is not recommended in the remainder of the Gardens as it tends to encourage vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Lighting design within the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens will be complex as it must provide for safe public access while not interfere with astronomical visibility. For this reason it is recommended that a lighting designer be engaged to design an appropriate system.

Three phase power for use during events should be provided to the restored Rotunda and the Garden of Night and Day. This is to be provided using below ground cabling, with installation to be carried out so as not to damage existing trees and other infrastructure. See section 3.3 "Tree Protection during Development Works" (page 37) for further details.

Recommendations

1. Engage a lighting designer / electrical engineer to design access lighting
2. Install three phase power to the Rotunda

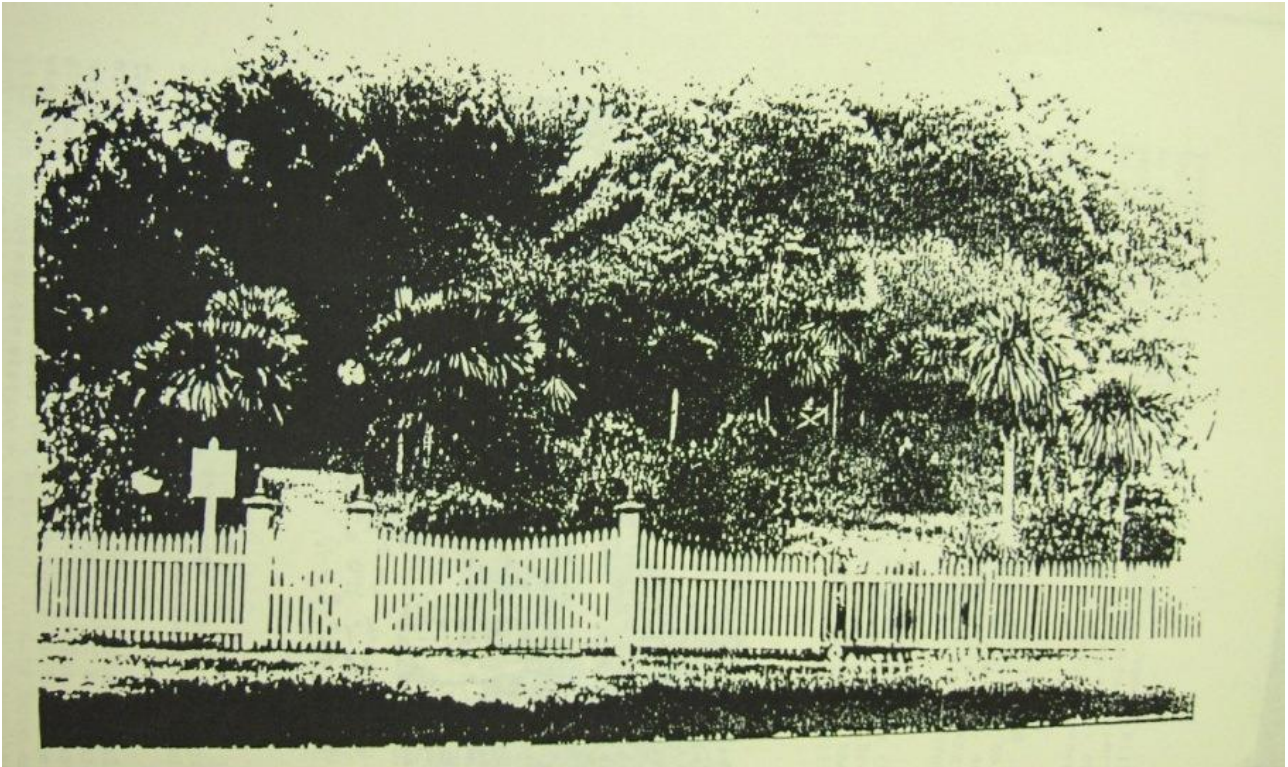
2.16 Fences

A simple fence with a picket detail is to be provided at all of the Gardens entrances. These fences are to have a simple, consistent design to help presentation and branding while at the same time being subtly different at each entrance to reflect the individual entrance character. For example, the Wildwood entrance may have an unpainted, sculptural detail. This will require replacement of the existing entrance treatments. Fences should reference the historic fabric of the site but not necessarily replicate it. All fences are to include Wombat Hill entrance signage.

Fencing around the remainder of the Gardens is to continue in a mix of styles including hedging, which has been identified as historically appropriate in the Conservation Management Plan (Lee Andrews and Associates, 2007 page 81).

Recommendations

1. Design new fencing treatments for each of the entrances and install in conjunction with entrance upgrade works
2. Install decorative picket fencing to the main entrance using photographic evidence (see Figure 26)



**Figure 26: Historic entrance to the Gardens from the main entrance at Central Springs Road.
Source: Lee Andrews, page 484, National Trust File, no date**

2.17 Art

Landscape projects should include local artists and artisans in their design and construction. Generally speaking individual art/sculptural pieces have not been recommended, but it is anticipated that constructed elements would have an artistic layer which would ensure the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens have a distinctly local feel. Examples of where this could be applied include:

- Design and construction of the picnic and seat shelters
- Carving of the Garden of Adventures timbers
- Detailing at entrance gates
- Design and construction of decorative Victorian urns
- Detailing in the Garden of Night and Day (e.g. sundial, paving design)
- Detailing and construction of bonfire pit in Garden of Views
- Detailing of viewing platform and rill to the Ferngully



**Figure 27 and Figure 28: Example of artist designed landscape detailing
Source: L&L Design, Euroa Arboretum**

2.18 Toilets

The Gardens currently contain two sets of toilets – the 1930s Art Deco style ones designed to match the Pioneer Memorial and located near the top carpark, and a recent set behind the café. The new toilets have functional problems, are difficult to access and are exposed to the weather. It is recommended in the short term that these be replaced with externally accessible toilets either within the former curator's cottage or constructed as an extension to it. This is a more central and practical location and will ensure that toilets are accessible to all users in all weather and are easier to maintain.

The existing Art Deco toilets are visually appropriate to the site and are considered to be of primary significance. As such they should be retained, but it is recommended that the interior be upgraded to ensure they meet accessibility, functional and hygiene requirements.

It is recommended that the provision of toilets be reviewed following the completion of major projects such as the Garden of Night and Day and Garden of Adventures to ensure that they keep up with rising visitor numbers. Further consideration should be given to providing additional toilets elsewhere in the Gardens if current facilities are insufficient.

If Hepburn Shire Council produces a toilet strategy in future, all toilets, both current and future, within the Gardens should be considered as part of this work.

Recommendations

3. *Relocate the toilets to the rear of the Curator's cottage into the building*
4. *Upgrade the interior of the 1930s Art Deco toilets and provide all abilities access*
5. *Continue to review the provision of toilets in conjunction with the development of major projects*

2.19 Daylesford Township

Central to the design of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens Master Plan is the sense of the Garden "pouring" down the hill and into the township. Due to its iconic geography Wombat Hill has long been an iconic feature of the township, and with the advent of photography and the influx of tourists in the 19th century the Gardens were so well photographed that they became synonymous with the tourist town.

In the last decade urban planning has recognised the importance of trees and green spaces in cities – with the City of Melbourne being a world leader in this field. Daylesford currently lacks planted interest in its streets, despite the beautiful gardens on the Hill and in many private residences. With the development of the Wombat Hill Gardens as a major tourist attraction the opportunity exists to combine the development of the Gardens with a greening of the township, where new trees and decorative planting could be added to the wide streetscapes, providing beauty, shade and a botanical and historical link to the Botanic Gardens.

It is recommended that the following botanical works focus on Central Springs Road, Stanhope Street (opposite the Main Entrance) Hill Street, Wombat Street (opposite the Wildwood Entrance), Vincent Street (main street), the Midland Highway and Albert Street and its pedestrian extension to the Palm Entrance. To start with Vincent Street and the Midland Highway should be the main focus and as funding permits these measures could then be rolled out across other parts of the township. Proposed street scape works include:

- Development of a street tree planting scheme using botanically unusual taxa. This strengthens the Gardens role as a Botanic Garden and allows trialling of new species for use as street trees in Victoria. Trees to be labelled as discussed below.

- Addition of decorative planted beds in traffic islands, roundabouts and as cut outs in paving. Planting to include botanically interesting taxa and in areas of pedestrian traffic plants are to be labelled.
- Incorporate tree and groundcover planting into car parking along Vincent Street.
- In keeping with the Botanic Gardens' educational role, key street trees and other planted areas are to be labelled. These labels are to include Botanical and Common Names, country of origin. Labels should include a reference to Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens.

Further Design Work

It is recommended that a planting Master Plan for the Daylesford Township be commissioned. This will identify locations for tree and groundcover planting in accordance with the above recommendations. The tree planting plan can also be produced as part of this document.

Recommendations

1. *Develop a street tree and general planting scheme for the Daylesford Township and stage roll out across the town*
2. *Label trees and plants with reference to the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens*

3 Management of Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens

Treatment of the landscape design and infrastructure is only one element of the successful development of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens. Good management practices and adequate staffing levels will also be essential to the success of the next stage of Wombat Hill's development. This section of the document discusses and makes broad recommendations in relation to the management and operation of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens.

3.1 Role as a Botanic Gardens and Plant Collections

What is a Botanic Garden?

Botanic Gardens are not the same as public gardens. While Botanic Gardens are places for recreation and enjoyment, they are also repositories for plant collections, playing an important role in plant conservation, education and display. To fulfil this function it is essential that they develop and maintain actively curated plant collections. As a gallery is more than just a collection of pretty paintings, so a Botanic Garden is more than just a collection of beautiful plants.

Commonly agreed criteria of "defining characteristics" for Botanic Gardens were outlined in the *Botanic Gardens Conservation Strategy 1989* and endorsed by IUCN, WWF, and UNESCO. These are provided in Table 1. These criteria, while useful in defining a Botanic Garden, are somewhat problematic in the Victorian context, as many of the botanic gardens established in the 19th century are now little more than pleasure grounds, with their role as Botanic Gardens with living collections being largely ignored. This was not always the case however, and in early times many times plants were carefully labelled, and the gardens had a role to play in trialling new species^{xiv}, especially through the work of von Mueller. This was especially true of Wombat Hill, which was one of a series of Central Victorian sites used by von Mueller to trial the forest plants he saw as being essential to the economic success of Victoria's mining industry^{xv}. Evidence of this still remains in the Gardens impressive collection of coniferous trees.

Table 1: List of criteria that may be met in part or whole by any institution that is considered to be a botanic garden.

"Defining characteristics" for Botanic Gardens

1. A reasonable degree of permanence
2. An underlying scientific basis for the collections
3. Proper documentation of the collections, including wild origin
4. Proper documentation of the collections, including wild origin
5. Monitoring of the plants in the collections
6. Adequate labelling of the plants
7. Open to the public
8. Communication of information to other gardens, institutions and the public
9. Exchange of seed or other materials with other botanic gardens, arboreta or research institutions
10. Undertaking of scientific or technical research on plants in the collections
11. Maintenance of research programs in plant taxonomy in associated herbaria.

Today many regional Botanic Gardens are facing the decision on the extent to which they wish to function as scientific Botanic Gardens, or whether they continue as largely Public Parks, albeit with a botanical bent. The major limitation to the management of proper scientific collections is the limited budgets of many rural Councils and lack of horticultural expertise in the staff, although these are somewhat offset by enthusiastic and dedicated Friends groups.

Operation of Wombat Hill as a Botanic Gardens

Wombat Hill has an outstanding collection of botanically diverse trees and shrubs as identified in the 2007 tree report. This includes a nationally significant pinetum^{xvi}. These existing plantings provide an ideal starting point for the development of a proper collections policy and management plan.

To cement its role as a scientific Botanic Garden it is recommended that the following measures be put in place. These are discussed in greater detail below:

- Developing a scientific focus for collections in line with the collections policy
- Documentation of plant collections
- Strategic labelling of plants in the Gardens with a focus on trees and collections
- Networking with other Botanic Gardens through BGANZ
- Trialling of new species

Recommendations

1. *Enhance Wombat Hill's role as a Botanic Gardens through the development and implementation of a Plant Collection's Policy*

3.2 Plant Collections Policy

It is recommended that a proper Plant Collections Policy be developed by the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens. Preliminary work for this has already been undertaken by Friend Robert Hewat and can form a starting point for any future work. However, as discussed above, lack of funding and resources are the major limiting factors in the development of plant collections, and it is therefore essential that the collections plan for Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens be kept as simple as possible. A plan of this nature will have the most chance of being successfully implemented in the short term and surviving through the long term variations in budgets and staffing.

It is recommended that the Wombat Botanic Gardens develop a formal plant collection policy through a series of workshops held in consultation with the Council and the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, with consultation also taking place with the WHBG Gardeners, the Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia (GPCAA) and Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ). This collection policy should address:

- What plant collections the Gardens are to curate. This should start with two, maximum three collections which the Gardens can focus on in-depth.
- A simple procedure for accurately labelling plants including a strategy for prioritising and focusing labelling (e.g. starting with trees and collections)
- A simple procedure for documenting the collection including the location of individual specimens within the gardens, their identification and provenance (BGANZ is developing a template for regional Botanic Gardens which may assist with this work)
- A simple procedure for monitoring the health and condition of plants within the collections (e.g. documented twice yearly assessments)

In addition to these collection based works the plan should also address the following points in relation to plant management and function as a Botanic Garden:

- Approaches for networking with other Botanic Gardens including plant exchanges
- A simple procedure for identifying and managing environmental weeds within the Gardens
- A simple procedure for assessing and documenting the success of trial species (e.g. documented twice yearly assessments)
- Succession planning and managing for landscape transition (see below)
- Ensuring historic suitability in species selection and planting design
- A simple procedure for accurately labelling plants

Landscape Succession Planning

Landscape succession planning for Botanic Gardens looks at the gradual change of Gardens' species composition to be able to better cope with changing climate. It is recommended that the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens develops a simple succession plan as part of the plant collection policy to inform species selection – the aim being to select species which are appropriate to Daylesford's climate both now, and under predicted climate change conditions.

Recommendations

1. *Develop and implement a Plant Collection's Policy*
2. *Develop and implement a simple procedures for documenting the collection and plant trials*
3. *Develop and implement a simple procedure for weed management*
4. *Develop and implement a simple landscape transition plan*

3.3 Management of an Ageing Tree Canopy

Many of Victoria's older gardens are facing the problem of a senescent tree canopy. This is due to many of the trees being planted over a short time period, leading to little variation in the age of the population and many of the trees popular during the Victorian era proving to have a life expectancy of approximately 80 to 120 years in this climate. This puts many 19th century gardens at risk of losing much of their character and charm as their trees are lost. It also puts a heavy cost burden on managers, as older trees (and their young replacements) are more expensive to maintain, especially given the increased risk posed by trees as they decline. Implementation of a tree replacement strategy reduces many of these problems.

Tree Assessment Risk Management

The existing tree stock in Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens is one of its most significant and valuable features, and regular assessments and maintenance works are needed to preserve and protect them. Furthermore, trees of this age pose an increased risk to park users, as older trees are more likely to fail than young, healthy trees. The failure of large trees in the Gardens has been seen during recent storms.

It is therefore strongly recommended that a program of annual tree inspections by a qualified arborist be commenced, and that works recommended during this assessment be carried out within the timeframes specified. This will require an increase to the maintenance budget of the Gardens to allow these works to occur but will be essential for managing the risk profile of the Gardens and the longevity of the heritage trees. This needs to be undertaken as a matter of high priority as it is a public safety concern.

Tree Replacement Strategy

It is recommended that a tree replacement strategy be developed for the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens to manage the aging tree canopy and provide a sympathetic and planned approach to new plantings. This strategy must be founded on a good quality arboricultural assessment that looks at the botanical identity, age, safe useful life expectancy and heritage significance of every tree in the Gardens. An assessment of this nature was carried out in 2007, but at nearly 10 years old will require updating and mapping against the 2015 survey plan. This new assessment will then be used to develop an itemised replacement strategy that nominates an expected removal date for each tree, and locates proposed new plantings and their recommended species. This replacement strategy will be informed by the collections strategy, and will help ensure that botanical diversity and heritage value are not lost.

The replacement strategy must consider the problems posed by the existing tree canopy. The current tree canopy is too extensive and populated by self-sown seedlings. Early photographs of the site show an open character with extensive views of surrounding areas. The thick trees now covering the site block views and create a densely shaded micro-climate, uncondusive to the

establishment of both lower story plants and a new generation of replacement trees. As part of the tree replacement strategy it is important to look at the judicious thinning of the tree canopy (especially Douglas Firs) to provide more light and open up views.

Once the tree replacement strategy has been produced Hepburn Shire Council should submit it to Heritage Victoria for approval. If approved, all works in accordance with the strategy could be undertaken without further consultation with Heritage Victoria, making the implementation of works more efficient. It is important that this replacement strategy be produced as a matter of high priority to allow as much growth by new trees as possible before the existing canopy goes into wide spread decline.

Tree Protection during Development Works

The Master Plan for the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens recommends a number of changes to built infrastructure, especially in relation to pathways and the new landscape projects. Building and landscaping works have the capacity to cause extensive damage to existing trees unless sympathetically carried out in full consultation with a qualified arborist. The greatest risk posed by new works is damage to the trees' root system, especially by the removal of anchor and feeder roots through excavation and trenching, or the reduction in oxygen and water availability through fill or machinery compaction.

The Australian Standard AS4970-2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites* specifies how construction work is to be carried out while preserving existing trees. It is essential that all new development work take place in accordance with this document.

Recommendations

1. Undertake a full tree assessment of the entire site including mapping as a high priority
2. Develop and implement a tree replacement plan for the entire site and seek Heritage Victoria approval for a permit exemption for recommended works
3. Carry out regular risk assessments and maintenance works for all trees on site
4. Ensure that development works adhere to AS4970, Protection of Trees on Development Sites

3.4 Planting Design Guidelines

It is important that planting design within the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens reflects the gardenesque character of the place and is carried out with consideration for horticultural suitability and botanical richness. Plant selection should consider the maintenance and water requirements of the various species, with the aim of avoiding plants that require excessive inputs. By correctly choosing plants to suit prevailing environmental conditions and by grouping plants with similar requirements maintenance and irrigation can be reduced.



Figure 29: Example of good planting design

Planting within the Botanic Gardens should be aesthetically pleasing, with consideration being given to texture, form and colour, used in balance to create a visually interesting and pleasing effect. This planting

should have gardenesque² references to the 19th century origins of the Gardens and the design style illustrated in early photographs. This being said, it is important that planting design still have a contemporary freshness which references the past without being dictated by it.

Good planting design requires a level of horticultural and design expertise and it is strongly recommended that a professional designer is engaged to produce planting plans, especially for key garden beds. In specific areas, namely the new entrances, the *Victorian Garden* and the *Garden of Night and Day*, the engagement of a professional horticultural designer will be critical to the success of these projects.

Recommendations

1. *Ensure that planting design is carried out in accordance with these recommendations and by professional designers, especially in key locations.*

3.5 Water Management and Irrigation

Water management and drought proofing is an important part of the management of historic Botanic Gardens. In the case of Wombat Hill, yearly rainfall totals 870mm and irrigation is currently provided from mains water. A potentially secure water supply is available from a bore accessing local springs beneath the Gardens (including a flooded gold mine) it is not fully accessible. It is recommended that works be undertaken to ensure that this can be regularly used as a matter of high priority. The primary work required will be the provision of a holding tank and pump to allow adequate water pressure to be provided for site irrigation. Design of this tank and pump should be considered as part of the broader irrigation strategy. This work will remove Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens reliance on potable (mains) water

Irrigation and In-house Management Practices

The existing irrigation system is an aging and dysfunctional manual system which requires redesign and a staged approach to upgrading across the site. The new system should be in line with best-practice, and be designed to minimise water consumption by zoning areas to provide only the water required (requiring an understanding of micro-climate variations across the site); providing the most effective method for water delivery (e.g. trickle irrigation) and connecting the system to a local weather station to ensure it only operates on local weather patterns. This system will require design by an irrigation specialist.

In addition to redesigning the irrigation system, planting design, as discussed in section 3.4, above, will be an extremely important part of the Gardens' long term water management, and all new plantings should aim to reduce the Gardens' reliance on irrigation except in specific, justifiable circumstances. The use of good quality, free draining mulch will also reduce water requirements.

Recommendations

1. *Commission a professional audit and redesign of a new irrigation system and water management plan*
2. *Stage the roll out of the new irrigation system starting with areas where the most water saving will occur*
3. *Provide a holding tank and other infrastructure to allow the Garden's to use spring water instead of potable water*
4. *Redesign garden beds to zone planting and reduce water requirements*

² Note: this refers to gardenesque in the Australian context as expounded by Edward Kemp, not to the European definition.

3.6 Commemorative Features and Monuments

The Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens is largely free of commemorative plantings and monuments, the Alfred Headland Conservatory being the main commemorative feature. It is recommended that commemorative features continue to be excluded from the Botanic Gardens as these can detract from the Gardens primary focus and limit future developments, as they cannot be easily altered or removed without causing offence. The exception being very specific circumstances such as in the case of a large philanthropic donation or a community memorial with broad social interest. This recommendation is in line with current best practice for public gardens.

Recommendations

1. *Limit commemorative planting or features except in specific cases where it is in the broad public interest*

3.7 Signage and Interpretation

Interpretation

The need for further signage and interpretation in the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens was a popular topic during public consultation. This fell into three broad categories

- The need for clear directional signage from the township to the Gardens and the Gardens to the township and adjacent attractions (e.g. the convent);
- The desire for more plant labelling and,
- The desire for more interpretative signage on the history and features of the Gardens

Directional and Naming Signage

The provision of good directional and naming signage to and from the Gardens is a priority. Signage should be simple and in keeping with standard Hepburn Shire Council and (where applicable) VicRoads style guides but must be clearly displayed and of sufficient quantity. In particular directional signage should be clearly displayed in the town centre (Vincent Street) and railway station showing pedestrian and vehicle access ways to the Gardens. Entrance naming signage should be at all five entrances to the Gardens. Reverse signage back to the town is also to be provided in the Gardens.

Within the Gardens directional signage to facilities (e.g. toilets, café) and key points of interest needs to be provided through the installation of simple, low impact directional signs. This should also include a map board near the Pioneer Memorial and at the two lower carparks. Directional signage to features of interest outside the Gardens (e.g. the convent and markets) should also be illustrated on this map including directional signage.

All directional signage within the gardens needs to be of a simple, consistent style in keeping with interpretative signage and must not be visually dominant.

Interpretation

The provision of interpretive signage can be problematic, and while many users requested further information, these reflected a broad range of interests and highlights some of the problems in interpreting a place. The provision of some interpretive signage is desirable, especially when focused on the history, however it is easy to "over-interpret" a site and the provision of extensive written information can detract from the enjoyment of the place itself.

It is recommended that an interpretation strategy be developed for the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens that focuses on providing information in a number of formats. With many people having access to smart phones the provision of a good quality, mobile friendly website is the simplest and most cost effective way to provide information on the Gardens. This should be augmented using more traditional methods with the interpretation strategy covering:

- Signage, with the focus being on the history of the site and limited to key locations
- Provision of a detailed, mobile friendly website with information on a range of topics including history, botanical collections, trees, wildlife, opening hours, what's on etc. References to this website should be provided at key signage points (e.g. on the map boards). Note, development of an app is not appropriate due to the excessive cost and platform limitations.
- In the short term, the development of a basic website for the Gardens with the history of the place, a "what's on" section and seasonal photographs – possibly managed through a linked Flickr page by the Friends and Gardeners would be a low cost solution to providing increased interpretation.
- Garden tours by the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens or others

In addition to the interpretation strategy a signage strategy should be developed which covers the following points:

- Ensuring no-alcohol and dogs on leads signs at entrances are discrete so that they do not detract from the historic setting
- Design of the map boards and interpretive signage so they are consistent and appropriate
- Design of the directional signage
- Provision of simple, visually appropriate signage detailing the "take in – take out" rubbish policy
- Signs should be of durable quality and regularly cleaned as part of Gardens maintenance

Plant Labels

Plant labels should continue to be rolled out across the Gardens in the same style as is currently used.

Recommendations

1. Provide good directional signage from the Daylesford township to the Gardens
2. Provide good directional signage from the Gardens to the Daylesford township and key features
3. Develop an interpretation and signage strategy
4. Increase plant labels
5. Provide a limited number of historic and directional signs in the Gardens
6. Provide a good quality, mobile friendly website for further information on the Gardens' and their history and plants
7. Provide photocopied handouts on the history of the Gardens
8. Commence Garden tours by the Friends

3.8 Event Management

Currently event numbers in the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens are relatively low, being limited to weddings and a handful of community events. However with the new works to the Gardens it is expected that the number and type of events will expand. The proposals for the new glass house and cottage extension will also provide access for a new community space suitable for use by the Friends and for workshops, classes and other activities. This is desirable in line with a Botanic Garden's educational function, however it is important that they are site appropriate.

Other Botanical Gardens have had significant problems when it comes to event management and impact on the Gardens and it is therefore recommended that an *Event Management Plan* for the gardens be produced to pre-emptively manage the type, scale and function of events in the Gardens. This document should include the following considerations:

- Events should be relevant to the Gardens in either a botanical, historical or social context
- Events will only be allowed when they will not damage the fabric of the Gardens. This means heavy vehicles must be excluded as they can damage paths and trees.

- Large scale events should be avoided in the winter months as wet soil easily compacts, potentially causing long term damage
- As a general rule events should not dominate the Gardens or limit day to day public use except as occasional "feature" events (e.g. fun-runs)
- Limits should be placed on the number and / or size of events which can take place each year – including weddings.
- Special consideration should be given to weddings, with the requirement for weddings and wedding photography to be booked and a limit placed on numbers.
- A booking fee should continue to be charged and be regularly reviewed with funds channelled back into the Botanic Gardens.

It is recommended that a "conditions of use" document be produced to inform event organisers on what activities are and are not permitted in the Gardens and Council's procedures in the event of damaging occurring.

Concerts in the Gardens

It is recommended that Sunday concerts in the bandstand or similar music events be reinstated during the summer months. There was considerable support for this during public consultation and it is also a recommendation of the CMP. Concerts should be held in the bandstand in the short term and in the restored Trawalla Pavilion (see 2.13) once it is available.

Recommendations

1. *Commence summer concerts in the Gardens*
2. *Develop an Event Management Strategy*

3.9 Management and Staffing Levels

In order for any Botanic Garden to be successful it is essential that a sufficient number of suitably qualified gardeners be employed. Currently the Gardens employ a full time experienced gardener (0.9 position) and an apprentice. The current gardener has been at the Wombat Hill site for twelve months and is still in the process of undertaking remedial maintenance work as over the previous 10 years maintenance levels had dropped and the Gardens become overgrown. For ongoing management of the site this number of gardeners is considered sufficient, however additional help is needed during the rejuvenation phase and once new landscape features are developed.

Standard staffing levels in regional Botanic Gardens usually sit between 0.5 and 1.3 gardeners per hectare. At two gardeners for 12.7ha (or .16 gardeners per ha) the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens is very much below this level. The relatively low number of ornamental garden beds (much of the site being arboretum) would contribute to this lower number of staff. While staff levels are largely sufficient in the short term they will require review in the near future.

The following recommendations are made in relation to staffing at the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens:

- Re-establishment of a "Head Gardener" or "Curator" role. This person needs to have sufficient horticultural experience or training to care for a historic Botanic Garden.
- A temporary 12 month full time position be created in the short term to provide the additional manpower needed during the rejuvenation period.
- The number of gardeners be reviewed following the completion of the new landscaping works or the installation of new Garden beds. The eventual aim being to provide between 0.5 and 0.75 gardeners per hectare of ornamental gardens.
- All gardeners (with the exception of the apprentice) are to be sufficiently skilled in the care of ornamental public gardens either through having appropriate experience and/or qualifications, or additional training provided by Hepburn Shire Council.

- Consideration should be given to staffing exchanges / training opportunities with other Botanic Gardens in the region (e.g. Ballarat, Kyneton) to improve staff skill levels
- All trees to be maintained by suitably qualified and experience external arborists

Recommendations

1. Create a temporary, 12 month, position to address the current maintenance back log
2. Reinstate the Curator / Head Gardener Position
3. Upskill current staff in the management of Botanic Gardens and ensure new staff are suitably skilled
4. Review the number of gardeners employed following the completion of the new landscaping works or the installation of new Garden beds with the eventual aim of providing 0.5 to 0.75 gardeners per hectare of ornamental gardens
5. Explore options for staff exchanges

3.10 Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens

The Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens were established in 1995 and have been actively involved in the care and management of the Gardens since this time. The Friends are currently well provided for in terms of physical resources and through fundraising provide a considerable amount of funding for works to the gardens.

The Friends are a valuable resource for the Botanic Gardens and should continue their current work with Council in the role out of projects across the Gardens.

Recommendations

1. Support the Friends in their continued work in the Gardens

3.11 Management as a Heritage Site

European Cultural Heritage

Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens is classified as being of historical, scientific (horticultural) and aesthetic significance to the state of Victoria, and are included on the Victoria Heritage Register as H2202.

Heritage Victoria is the responsible body for the management cultural heritage at the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, and a permit will be required for any works other than general garden maintenance. Additionally, a Conservation Management Plan was produced by Lee Andrews and Associates in 2007 and provides extensive detail on the management of the site's heritage value.

As discussed in Section 1.4, above, the 2007 Conservation Management Plan, while excellent, is too long and detailed to be practical for everyday use. It is therefore recommended that the following works be undertaken to make the CMP more accessible and user friendly for managers of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens:

1. All elements of significance (as per Appendix 2) be identified and mapped on the 2015 Survey Plan
2. The existing tree report be updated and the numbers mapped on the 2015 Survey Plan. This will be required for the Tree Replacement Strategy (see 3.3) and to manage tree safety.
3. A condensed written history of the site be produced by the Friends of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens. This could be as an extension of the brief history provided in this Master Plan and will summarise in prose form the extensive information provided as a timeline in the CMP.
4. Recommendations of the CMP (as per Appendix 2 and elsewhere in the CMP) be summarised in a short (maximum 5 page) document with cross references back to the

original CMP and to the Master Plan. To aid clarity tasks that are already completed or covered by the Master Plan should be excluded. Notes should also be made of any minor points where the Master Plan and CMP recommendations differ.

These new works are simple and with the exception of the Tree Report can be produced quickly and at relatively low cost. Once complete they will make the implementation of the CMP easier and should be followed at all times, including in the detailed design of landscape projects and in the production of planning documents.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens is not listed as a place of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*^{xvii}, however care should still be taken during any construction works and it is recommended that the Hepburn Shire Council get further advice (e.g. through contact with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria) on the status of Wombat Hill under the Act. It is important to consider that Aboriginal cultural heritage values may be present in the landscape, and these should be identified through working with the local Aboriginal clans themselves. Work to identify such values is currently taking place in the City of Melbourne and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and similar work would be desirable at Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens.

Recommendations

1. *Map all elements of significance identified in the 2007 Conservation Management Plan*
2. *Produce a condensed version of the CMP recommendations as an everyday use document*
3. *Produce a condensed written history of the Gardens*
4. *Ensure appropriate permits are sort from Heritage Victoria for all required works*
5. *Ensure detailed design work and planning documents consider the recommendations of the CMP and implements them where practicable or necessary*
6. *Seek clarification on the Gardens' status under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
7. *Seek further information on the Aboriginal cultural values of the place*

4 Review and Implementation

4.1 Implementation

The Master Plan has been designed as a strategic document intended to guide the development of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens over the next twenty years. Further design development work will be required to allow the implementation of projects outlined in this document and on the Master Plan drawing (page 7). This design work should be undertaken by suitably skilled professionals and in consultation with Council.

4.2 Review

Although this document is for a 20 year Master Plan, it is recommended that the Master Plan be reviewed in ten years time (2027) to allow for any changes in circumstances and to incorporate new developments which have hopefully occurred. Some projects recommended in this report will not have been completed at the time of the review, and if appropriate these should be rolled over into the new Master Plan.

i Lee Andrews and Associates, December 2007, pg 11

ii Lee Andrews and Associates, December 2007, pg 11

iii Ibid pg 21, quoting *Daylesford Express*, 21 May 1863

| | |
|------|---|
| iv | Lee Andrews and Associates, December 2007, pg 23 (note on leaving gates open and "fresh walks...extend...space available for promenading" indicating that some already existed) |
| v | Lee Andrews and Associates, December 2007, pg 160 |
| vi | Ibid. pg 167 |
| vii | Ibid. pg 67 |
| viii | Ibid. pg 163 |
| ix | Ibid. pg 11 |
| x | Ibid. pg 179 |
| xi | Pers. comm. with Patrick O'Shea |
| xii | Ibid. pg 43 |
| xiii | Ibid. pg 205 |
| xiv | Watts, 1983 pg 59 |
| xv | Mandy Jean, pers comm |
| xvi | Lee Andrews and Associates, December 2007, pg 11 |
| xvii | Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2015 |

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Additional

Bureau of Meteorology Climate Data

Historical information supplemented by Mandy Jean, Heritage Advisor to the Hepburn Shire Council

Appendix 1: Priorities and Costings

The following is a prioritised and costed list of works recommended in the Master Plan. Items are generally listed in order of priority, with the exception of ongoing works, which should continue to be rolled out as funds persist. Priority has been determined based on the following considerations:

- Addressing safety and areas of particular management concern
- The need for background and planning documents to be prioritised
- Providing the greatest benefit for dollar cost for users of the Botanic Gardens
- Addressing issues identified during consultation
- Preservation of the site's heritage value
- The useful life of existing buildings and their need for replacement
- The need for certain projects to occur in specific order or in tandem with other projects

This list of priorities will be subject to change, especially if unexpected opportunities arise, allowing the fast tracking of particular projects. It should be noted that the Master Plan drawing (page 7) and recommendations made in this report express a long term vision for the Gardens. These works will need to be staged, and will happen gradually to achieve the Master Plans' final aims.

| Item | Immediate (2016-17) | Short term (2017-20) | Medium term (2020-25) | Long term (2025-) | Cost |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Background Works and Planning Documents | | | | | |
| Full tree assessment | ✓ | | | | \$18,000 |
| Establish Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Status | ✓ | | | | in-house |
| Mapping of CMP elements of significance | ✓ | | | | in-house |
| Summary of CMP recommendations | ✓ | | | | in-house |
| Tree replacement strategy | | ✓ | | | \$15,000 |
| Production of condensed history of the Gardens | | ✓ | | | in-house |
| Event management plan | | ✓ | | | in-house |
| Interpretation strategy | | ✓ | | | \$15,000 |
| Irrigation design | | | | | \$15,000 |
| | | | | TOTAL | \$63,000 |
| Operation as a Botanic Garden | | | | | |
| Plant collections policy | | ✓ | | | \$8,000 |
| Documentation of plant collections | | | ongoing | | in-house |
| Labelling of plants and trees | | | ongoing | | in-house |
| Trialling of new species | | | ongoing | | in-house |
| Networking with other BGs | | | ongoing | | in-house |
| Ongoing tree risk assessments | | | ongoing annual or biannual | | recurrent |
| | | | | TOTAL | \$8,000 |
| Visitor Experiences | | | | | |
| Restart concerts in the Gardens | ✓ | | | | Income generator |
| New picnic shelters | | | ongoing | | \$75,000 |
| New sheltered seats | | | ongoing | | \$30,000 |

| Item | Immediate (2016-17) | Short term (2017-20) | Medium term (2020-25) | Long term (2025-) | Cost |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| New bench seats | | ongoing | | | \$22,000 |
| New picnic tables | | ongoing | | | \$37,000 |
| Relocation of toilets into cafe | | | ✓ | | \$60,000 |
| Modifications to cottage to provide community room / facility | | | ✓ | | \$150,000 |
| Refurbishment of 1930s toilets | | | | ✓ | \$150,000 |
| | | | | TOTAL | \$549,000 |

Signage and Interpretation

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--------------|----------------|
| Directional signage to Gardens | ✓ | | | | unknown |
| Development of an interpretation strategy and signage design suite | | ✓ | | | unknown |
| New entrance signage | | ✓ | | | unknown |
| Directional signage within Gardens | rolled out in conjunction with major projects and pathworks | | | | unknown |
| Map board at the tower | | ✓ | | | unknown |
| Basic website | | ✓ | | | unknown |
| Tours by the Friends | | ✓ | | | in-house |
| Detailed, mobile friendly website | | | ✓ | | unknown |
| | | | | TOTAL | unknown |

Management and Staffing

| | | | | | |
|--|---------|--|---------|--------------|-----------------|
| Temporary full time position to rejuvenate Gardens | ✓ | | | | \$54,000 |
| Re-establish Head Gardner or Curator role | | ✓ | | | unknown |
| Upskilling and training of Gardens' staff | ongoing | | | | in-house |
| Review of staff numbers as ornamental gardens expand | | ongoing in conjunction with infrastructure works | | | unknown |
| Staff exchanges | | | ongoing | | in-house |
| | | | | TOTAL | \$54,000 |

Daylesford Township

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---------|--------------|-----------------|
| Development of street tree planting scheme and streetscape Master Plan | | ✓ | | | \$35,000 |
| New tree planting and labelling | | | ongoing | | recurrent |
| New shrub and ground cover planting and labelling | | | ongoing | | recurrent |
| | | | | TOTAL | \$35,000 |

Pathways and Roads

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|-----------------------|
| Repair of unsafe pathways (trip and slip hazards) | ✓ | | | | unknown (as required) |
| Closing of scenic drive, and construction of layoff for residents | | ✓ | | | in-house |
| Modifications to existing pathways to increase accessibility | | ✓ | | | \$34,000 |

| Item | Immediate (2016-17) | Short term (2017-20) | Medium term (2020-25) | Long term (2025-) | Cost |
|---|------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Extension pathways to aid connections | | ✓ | | | \$30,000 |
| New carpark to cafe | | ✓ | | | \$32,000 |
| Asphalting of roadway beyond cottage | | ✓ | | | \$28,000 |
| Entrance pathways (Victorian and Palm) | | ✓ | | | \$35,000 |
| Secondary pathways | | rolled out in conjunction with major projects | | | \$67,000 |
| Closing of top car park and construction of turning circle and remaining new parking at Garden of views | | in conjunction with Garden of Night and Day | | | \$112,000 |
| Climb to the Skies | | | ✓ | | \$32,000 |
| Making good surfacing and edging to carriage ways | | | | ✓ | \$270,000 |
| TOTAL | | | | | \$640,000 |

Garden beds

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|------------------|
| Restoration of northern boundary | ✓ | ongoing management | | | in-house |
| Garden beds – Day basin, fernery and cascades (supply only) | | rolled out in conjunction with major projects | | | \$80,000 |
| Garden beds – Garden of Night and Day surrounds (supply only) | | rolled out in conjunction with major projects | | | \$78,000 |
| Garden beds – Victorian Garden (supply only) | | rolled out in conjunction with major projects | | | \$62,000 |
| Garden beds – Trawalla Rest house beds (supply only) | | rolled out in conjunction with major projects | | | \$14,000 |
| Garden beds – Railway entrance (supply only) | | rolled out in conjunction with major projects | | | \$23,000 |
| Garden beds – wildwood entrance (supply only) | | rolled out in conjunction with major projects | | | in-house |
| New tree planting (supply only) | | ongoing | | | \$2,500 pa |
| TOTAL | | | | | \$257,000 |

Major Projects

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|-------------|
| Feasibility study for Garden of Night and Day and conversion of Day Basin | ✓ | | | | \$4,000 |
| Restoration of historic rotunda | | ✓ | | | \$120,000 |
| Reworking of garden beds to Victorian Garden | | ongoing as funds permit and in conjunction with major projects | | | see above |
| Garden of Adventures log walk | ✓ | ongoing until complete | | | \$90,000 |
| Garden of Adventures play nodes | | ongoing until complete | | | \$135,000 |
| Garden of Night and Day and associated development | | ✓ | | | \$4,500,000 |
| Garden of Views | | | ✓ | | \$265,000 |

| Item | Immediate (2016-17) | Short term (2017-20) | Medium term (2020-25) | Long term (2025-) | Cost |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Restoration of Day Basin and rill and viewing platform to Fernery | | | ✓ | | \$227,000 |
| Extension of Fernery | | | ✓ | | see above |
| Lower rill and associated ponds | | | | ✓ | \$700,000 |
| Garden of Adventures tree towers | | | | ✓ | \$600,000 |
| Garden of Adventures hammock swings | | | | ✓ | \$136,000 |
| New conservatory / glasshouse | | | | ✓ | \$275,000 |
| | | | | TOTAL | \$7,052,000 |

Entrances

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--------------|------------------|
| Planting of palms to palm entrance | ✓ | | | | \$5,000 |
| New planting to main entrance | | ✓ | | | \$32,000 |
| Log trail, arbour and planting to wildwood entrance | | ✓ | | | \$41,000 |
| Entrance planting to Victorian entrance | | ✓ | | | \$10,000 |
| General planting to palm entrance | | ✓ | | | \$63,000 |
| Remaining planting and Urns to Victorian entrance | | | ✓ | | \$40,000 |
| New pathways to railway entrance | | | ✓ | | see above |
| Cascades to main entrance | | | | ✓ | see above |
| | | | | TOTAL | \$191,000 |

Piece Rates for Individual elements

| Item | Unit | Rate |
|---|----------|----------|
| Trees (supply only) | each | \$250 |
| Steel edging | lineal m | \$35 |
| Ornamental garden bed (plants and materials only) | square m | \$35 |
| Secondary garden bed (plants and materials only) | square m | \$22 |
| Picnic folly | each | \$25,000 |
| Picnic table | each | \$3,100 |
| Bench seat | each | \$1,100 |
| Sheltered bench seat | each | \$6,000 |
| Primary pathway | lineal m | \$153 |
| Secondary pathway | lineal m | \$112 |

Note on costings:

The above figures are an approximate cost estimate for works recommended in the Master Plan. These costs are based on 2016 dollar figures and are provided as estimates only; the intention being to provide Council with approximate figures for the purpose of budgeting and applying for grants. Unless otherwise stated these figures are based on works being competitively tendered and entirely implemented by external contractors. Costs are likely to decrease significantly if council chooses to undertake works "in-house" as is likely for planting and possibly path works. Detailed design and documentation will be required for more accurate costings.

Appendix 2: Conservation Management Plan Recommendations

Introduction

The following contains a summary of the priorities identified by the CMP including a full list of the elements of significance. A basic description with cross-references is also provided on how the priorities are to be implemented by the Master Plan. As discussed above, the Master Plan is strongly guided by the Conservation Management Plan but has not been limited by it. In particular, the Master Plan has not supported the reinstatement of a number of lost objects, although it strongly supports the preservation and rejuvenation of the existing heritage fabric. This approach allows Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens to preserve its heritage roots while continuing to grow and develop, rather than remaining a static object, locked into its 19th and mid 20th century form.

Priorities

Priorities relevant to the master plan (only includes those that effect design directly):

Priority 1:

- Develop a tree replacement and propagation plan as part of a comprehensive plant management program (tree replacement and propagation, weed assessment and management plan, annual general maintenance plan, computer based record keeping).

Recommendations made in relation to an extensive tree replacement policy, weed assessment, maintenance and record keeping (see sections 3.2 and 3.3)

Priority 2:

- Nursery facilities including propagation and hardening off areas (new or improved on existing).

Space provided to the rear of the former curator's cottage to meet nursery requirements of the site. (see section 2.10)

- Plant collections policy.
Recommendations made in relation to the development of a plant collections policy (see section 3.2)
- Retain curators residence and kiosk for staff, friends, café and/or community use associated with the functioning of the gardens
Reinforced and promoted by Master Plan recommendations (see section 2.10)
- Rationalise the path network to provide more logical visitor circulation and linkage of existing garden features
Reinforced and promoted by Master Plan recommendations (see section 2.2 and Master Plan drawing on page 7)

Priority 3:

- Fernery works – reinstate cascade and improve planting
Already occurred and further reinforced and promoted by the Master Plan (see section 2.6)
- Restore the Circular Day Basic (filled with irrigation water) as a major water feature, with fountain, perimeter planting and landscaping
Reinforced and promoted by the Master Plan with minor design modifications which do not affect the heritage significance of the object (see section 2.6 and Drawing 2, page 8)
- Restore a vestige of the visual attraction of the Oval Reservoir and gives suggestions
Supported by the Master Plan but in a much greater degree than envisaged by the CMP (see section 2.5 and Drawing 2, page 8)

- Implement planting based on the comprehensive plant management plan (see above) including shrub beds, borders, trees and floral displays
Reinforced and promoted by Master Plan recommendations (see sections 3.2, Planting Design Guidelines and 3.4, Plant Collections Policy also Master Plan drawing on page 7)
- Reconstruct the rock garden, lily pond and cactus garden at the rear of the Curator's Residence
Little information is available in the CMP on the precise location and design of these objects. The Master Plan does not support their reinstatement at this point in time, however space has been reserved for their reinstatement if required (see sections 3.2 and 3.4).
- Reinstatement of massed flora displays near entrances and in key visitation areas
Reinforced and promoted by Master Plan recommendations (see section 3.4 and Master Plan drawing on page 7) but with emphasis being on decorative planting generally rather than just flora displays.
- Replant missing sections of the early elm avenues and link these with existing pathways at the summit
Would be addressed as part of the recommended Tree Replacement Strategy (see section 3.3) although consideration should be given to whether Elms are still suitable. Linking of pathways strongly reinforced and promoted by the Master Plan (see section 2.2 and Master Plan drawing on page 7)
- Reconstruct the path network where possible to reflect known, but now lost, pathways
Not fully supported by the Master Plan at this stage as little information is available in the CMP on the location of these pathways, reconstruction is supported under specific circumstances (see sections 2.2 and 4.1).
- Reconstruct the decorative picket fence and gates at main entrance and plant area using photographic evidence
Partially supported by Master Plan, with picket fence to be reinstated but planting given a contemporary treatment (see sections 2.4 and 2.16)

Priority 4

- Create a small number of new pathways through the Gardens; in particular to give easier access to areas of the arboretum grounds
Reinforced and promoted by Master Plan recommendations (see section 2.2 and Master Plan drawing on page 7)
- Restrict traffic using the Scenic Drive to cars, with buses and large vehicles restricted to using the right hand fork to the Pioneers' Memorial Tower
Reinforced and promoted by the Master Plan but in a greater degree than envisaged by the CMP, as with the exception of maintenance vehicles, vehicle access shall be removed altogether (see section 2.2 and vehicle access drawing on page 9).
- Improve and extend path access to neighbouring heritage precinct including the Sunday Market, Daylesford Railway Station and Neighbourhood House
Reinforced and promoted by Master Plan recommendations (see section 2.2 and Master Plan drawing on page 7)
- Construct a new picnic shelter on the site of the lost Trehwella Pavilion
Reinforced and promoted by Master Plan recommendations (see section 2.13 and Master Plan drawing on page 7)
- Redesign the landscape surrounding the Curator's Residence and Kiosk area
Reinforced and promoted by Master Plan recommendations (see section 2.10 and Master Plan drawing on page 7)

- Create a fern meadow as an adjunct to the Fernery to display Wollemi pine specimens, hard fern species and provide a new picnic area. Complete the existing path to meet the main fernery path and form a circuit
Not supported by the Master Plan. This is a design rather than heritage consideration and the Master Plan makes alternative landscape recommendations.
- Create a woodland walk, using deciduous tree species, bulbs and understory plants, on the lower south flank of the hill.
Partially supported by the Master Plan. This is a design rather than heritage consideration and the Master Plan makes alternative landscape recommendations including the use of bulbs in the woodland walk.
- Create a children's garden, possibly on the side of the hill facing the railway, using plantings, natural materials and sculptures to create a stimulating play space and extend community involvement with the Gardens
Largely supported by the Master Plan but in a more subtle and informal form (see section 2.7).

For items ranked of **primary cultural significance, conservation is essential** and should take top priority over all other considerations except for safety.

The elements within the Gardens of primary cultural significance are as follows:

- Existing boundaries
- Existing layout which has created a distinctive landscape character based on a clear contrast between the arboretum grounds and highly manicured central zone
- Tradition of fencing the Gardens using a variety of materials including hedges
- Tradition of using hedging to partition areas in the Gardens
- Extant hedging within the Gardens
- Remnant section of picket fence and associated hedging on southern boundary
- (1880s) Carriage drive (Scenic Drive)
- Original (c. 1869) carriage drive (Elm Walk)
- Straight summit path
- Summit walk around perimeter of Oval Reservoir (upper and lower paths)
- Asphalt surfacing and terracotta spoon drains to straight summit path
- Position of pedestrian entry paths
- Fernery path with rock edging
- Tradition of a hierarchy of paths
- Tradition of using rock as an ornamental and practical construction material
- Rock retaining walls associated with Curator's Residence
- Pipe and rock arbours
- Rock work in the Fernery
- Central and South Lawns
- Lawn to the south-west of the Curator's Residence
- Contrast between areas of closely manicured lawn and rough-cut grass
- Tradition of opulent floral displays in garden beds
- Tradition of maintaining and displaying a collection of tuberous begonias
- Tradition of botanical diversity of shrubs and herbaceous material
- National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Register of Significant Trees:
 - *Abies nordmanniana* (Caucasian Fir - File No: T11522)
 - *Abies pinsapo* (Spanish Fir - File No: T11523)
 - *Cedrus atlantica* f. *glauca* (Blue Atlas Cedar - File No: T11524)

- *Pinus coulteri* (Big Cone Pine - File No: T11521)
- *Pinus ponderosa* (Western Yellow Pine - File No: T11526)
- *Pinus wallichiana* (Blue or Himalayan Pine - File No: T11525)
- *Tilia cordata* (Small-leaved Linden - File No: T11527).
- Trees worthy of inclusion on the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Register of Significant Trees:
 - *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Common Horse Chestnut)
 - *Cedrus deodara* (Deodar or Himalayan Cedar)
 - *Cupressus torulosa* (Bhutan Pine)
 - *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Pendula' (Weeping European Ash)
 - *Magnolia grandiflora* (Bull Bay or Southern Magnolia)
 - *Picea smithiana* (West Himalayan Spruce)
 - *Pinus canariensis* (Canary Island Pine)
 - *Pinus pinaster* (Maritime Pine)
 - *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine)
 - *Pinus wallichiana* (Blue or Himalayan Pine)
 - *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas Fir)
 - *Quercus petraea* (Sessile or Durmast Oak)
 - *Quercus robur* (English Oak) – the Royal Oak 1863
 - *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (Giant Redwood)
 - *Ulmus X hollandica* (Dutch Elm)
 - 1869 Elm Avenue
 - 1880s Elm Avenue
- Tradition of tree collection comprising high proportion of conifers
- Tradition of rhododendron and camellia collections
- Overall distinctive landscape quality provided by the tree collection
- Tradition of ascending Wombat Hill for views
- View lines from the Gardens, especially to the north and east
- View lines to Wombat Hill from the town
- Pioneers' Memorial Tower views
- Directional plate for Tower
- Fernery location, rock work, path, and cascade
- Tree canopy over Fernery
- The Circular day basin's brick fabric and infrastructure, including remnant piping
- Oval Reservoir, including infrastructure
- Tradition of fencing the Oval Reservoir
- Tradition of planting the banks of the Oval Reservoir
- Original fabric of the Pioneers' Memorial Tower, including unpainted finish, remaining cyclone wire panels and pipe
- handrails, stone foundation plaque and brass direction plate
- Location of present Rotunda
- Trees associated with the Rotunda, especially the Monkey Puzzle, Atlas Cedar and Weeping Ash
- Location of present Conservatory
- Association of the Conservatory with past caretaker Alf Headland and traditional display of tuberous begonias raised in the Gardens.

- Tradition of providing picnic shelter facilities in the Gardens
- Original Trehwella Pavilion plaque
- Tradition of a Curator's Residence located in the Gardens
- Tradition of providing refreshments in the Gardens
- Tradition of a suite of buildings where horticultural tasks related to the Gardens can be conducted
- External façade and fabric of 1938 Tower toilet block
- Cannon, carriage and present location (1922)
- German mortar
- Provision of picnic tables and benches
- Provision of park bench seating
- Tradition of providing modest play facilities for children

For items ranked of **contributory cultural significance, conservation is desirable**, except where the item's removal would allow an item of primary significance to be revealed.

The elements within the Gardens of contributory cultural significance are as follows:

- Section of disused path along the southern Gardens boundary (may be Primary Significance)
- Extant fern collection
- Style and fabric of present rotunda
- Current (1948) Curator's Residence, including associated crazy paving, rock seat and garden areas (may be Primary Significance)
- Existing brick Kiosk
- Existing Kiosk extension incorporating the patio
- Provision of a works area
- Location of general nursery facilities
- Pipe arbour
- Climbing roses on arbours

Items of **no appreciable cultural significance may be retained or removed**, depending on other priorities. The elements within the Gardens of no appreciable cultural significance are as follows:

- Current cyclone fencing and gates
- Current layout of paths (except for those mentioned as of primary significance)
- Carpark at base of Pioneers' Memorial Tower
- Timber retaining walls
- Design and location of shelter, including fixed tables and bench seating
- Fabric of current Works Depot Complex
- Kiosk toilet block
- Current picnic tables and benches

Items ranked as **intrusive should be removed or altered** to minimise adverse impacts.

The elements within the Gardens which are intrusive are as follows:

- Cyclone fencing around the Oval Reservoir and Circular Day Basin
- Watering system suspended above fern canopy
- Roofing of the Oval Reservoir
- Fencing around cannon

Items whose **alteration or loss has reduced or jeopardised the cultural significance of the place should be reconstructed** if at all feasible, and if reliable documentary evidence of their original form exists to guide reconstruction. **The elements within the Gardens whose alteration or loss has reduced or jeopardised the cultural significance of the place are as follows:**

- Loss of decorative picket fence and carriage gates at entrance to Gardens
- Lost paths, terracotta spoon drains and rock edging
- Loss of lily pond and rock garden
- Loss of rock edging to paths
- Loss of lawn on the eastern side of the summit
- Loss of massed shrubberies and garden beds
- Loss of horticultural diversity and richness of plants in garden beds
- Some loss of view lines because of tree growth, including from the lower platform of the Pioneers' Memorial Tower and across the Gardens to the west
- Loss of views across and down onto the (until recently) uncovered water of the Oval Reservoir
- Removal of directional plate from Pioneers' Memorial Tower
- Loss of diversity of ferns originally in the Fernery
- Loss of decorative timber lattice-work roof over Fernery
- Loss of functioning cascade and goldfish pool
- Loss of scoria path surfacing in Fernery
- Loss of seating along Fernery path
- Loss of the Circular day basin's water
- Loss of the Circular day basin's central fountain
- Loss of the Circular day basin's working association with the Fernery cascade
- Loss of the Circular day basin's function as a garden ornament
- Loss of visual experience of open water provided by the Oval Reservoir
- Loss of the Oval Reservoir's fountain
- Loss of planting on banks of the Oval Reservoir
- Loss of upper perimeter path of the Oval Reservoir
- Incomplete state of lower perimeter path of the Oval Reservoir
- Replacement of original pipe railings and cyclone mesh panels in Pioneers' Memorial Tower with new railings and door c.2004
- Additional plaques (?) removed from walls of Pioneers' Memorial Tower
- Seating around walls inside ground level entry area of Pioneers' Memorial Tower
- Lack of evidence on the present Rotunda which distinguishes it as not original
- Loss of early Rotundas
- Loss of use of Rotunda for musical performances
- Loss of Trehwella Pavilion
- Loss of early Curator's Residence
- Loss of garden elements to the rear of the current Curator's Residence
- Loss of early collection of works buildings
- Loss of path leading under arbour north of the pedestrian entrance on Central Springs Road
- Loss of simple sturdy timber park bench seating
- Loss of adequate park bench seating throughout the grounds
- Loss of seating in Fernery recesses
- Loss of early plant houses used for both plant propagation and display

- Loss of the flagpole
- Loss of Lily Pond and Cactus Garden, including vernacular rock structures and plant collections

Reconstruction of missing fabric should only be carried out where:

- (a) the interpretation of the Gardens is significantly enhanced
- (b) this would be sympathetic to the immediate surrounding area
- (c) there is significant documentary and physical evidence and
- (d) the work is carried out in accordance with the *Burra Charter*

Where there is **insufficient information to assess cultural significance** of certain elements, attempts should continue to be made to discover sufficient information to assess cultural significance in the future. Until this time, decisions to remove or reconstruct these items should be postponed.

The elements within the Gardens for which there is insufficient information to assess cultural significance are as follows:

- Existing 'Victorian style' park benches
- Extant main entry gates
- Sundial donated to the Gardens c. 1885
- Rain gauge procured for the Gardens c. 1886

Appendix 4: Public Feedback

Below is a summary of the key points provided during the initial public consultation for the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens (August 2015).

What is Working Well? (note, most of these were frequently commented upon)

- Maintenance and presentation is improved. It is looking well cared for and beautiful
- Glasshouse is popular
- Tower is popular
- Café is popular and has drawn more people into the gardens
- Trees are popular
- Fern gully is well loved
- Views are popular
- Enjoyed as a place of tranquillity and as somewhere to relax

What do you think could be improved?

- More seating is needed – perhaps including covered ones due to the cold
- Appearance of reservoir is unsightly
- Close vehicle access to the lower ring road
- Parking needs to be improved and to keep people from parking on the verges
- Provide for sculptures and local art work in the gardens
- Signage needs to be improved. Especially directional signage from the town to the gardens and the gardens to the town
- North side of the garden needs care and improvement. Concerns about weeds as well. Couple of suggestions that this would be suitable for natives.
- Bins around café entrance is ugly
- Succession planning for the trees
- Conservatory needs to be modernised. Displays all year round and access inside
- Steps – access be maintained / updated. Wombat Hill Street Steps falling apart and dangerous
- Toilet out the back of the café is deteriorating and had no weather proof access. Should be connected to café or café should have its own.
- Get the cascade working again

What is missing and could be added?

- Maximise pedestrian entrance from town. Like Dandenong's 1000 steps (see note above on directional signage)
- Aesthetically pleasing playground (lots of calls for a playground of some type with many comments about wombat play sculptures)
- Inclusion of indigenous / native plants
- Lots of calls for increased interpretation / signage providing information on a whole range of topics including history, people who contributed, native fauna, directional sign at top of tower etc.
- More plant labels
- Occasional events like summer Sunday concerts
- Outdoor function space for community members
- Security to be improved
- Reinstate the old pavilion which the friends have in storage