Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
Melbourne Gardens Master Plan 2019-2039

Melbourne Gardens Master Plan

DRAFT

Note: This is a draft document released for comment. It is not a fully proofed document, and should not be treated as such. It contains only some of the images required by the final Master Plan and should be read in conjunction with the summary document which provides images and plans for major projects. This document is subject to change to reflect feedback received.
Title Page

Title information, acknowledgements and foreword to be completed for final document

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Terminology and Naming

Traditional Custodians: The landscape was part of the lands of Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of the land. The three organisations that represent these two tribal groups are Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Boon Wurrung Foundation and Wurundjeri Tribe Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council.

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria or RBGV: the whole organisation including the sites at Melbourne and Cranbourne, the National Herbarium of Victoria and the State Botanical Collection.

Board: Refers to the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria, the body responsible for corporate governance under the Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991.

Director: Refers to the Director and Chief Executive, the person responsible for the day to day control and management under the Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991 of all parts of the organisation.

Melbourne Gardens: Refers to all of the South Yarra land under management of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Includes the National Herbarium of Victoria, land formally known as the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden and the Melbourne Observatory. Also referred to as the “Gardens”.

Melbourne Observatory: Refers to the parcel of land to the Gardens’ south-west which is managed by the RBGV. Also referred to as the “Observatory”.

Traditional Gardens: The parcel of land east of Dallas Brooks Drive which was the extent of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne until 1992.

Botanic Gardens or Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne: Historical terms for the site.

Children’s Garden: Refers to The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden located adjacent to the Melbourne Observatory.

National Herbarium of Victoria: Refers to the physical building on the corner of Birdwood Avenue and Dallas Brooks Drive that holds the State Botanical Collection.

State Botanical Collection or SBC: Refers to the scientific collection of plants, algae and fungi held by the National Herbarium of Victoria including the specimen, library, archive and botanical art collections.

Cranbourne Gardens: Refers to all of the Cranbourne land under the management of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria including the remnant bushland and the Australian Garden.
1. Master Plan Overview

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Melbourne Gardens are widely admired as a living work of art and one of the world’s most beautiful botanic gardens. Picturesque vistas across lakes and sweeping lawns punctuated with magnificent specimen trees and intricately detailed garden beds provide a cool oasis, and a site which is both a scientific resource of over 8000 taxa and a place of respite for Melbourne and its visitors. The site has been part of the lands of the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung peoples for millennia and the indigenous history continues to inform our understanding of the site. For over 170 years the Gardens have been Melbourne’s playground and retreat. Bearing witness to the city’s changing history, society and character as a venue for both major societal events and the individual experiences of daily life. The place of the Gardens is deeply ingrained in the Melbourne psyche, and is part of our reputation as one of the World’s most liveable and green cities.

Our aspirations for the future are to build on this legacy, maintaining the essence of the Gardens, while allowing us to meet our scientific obligations, improve our landscape and protect the Gardens from detrimental change. Melbourne is a rapidly growing city in a changing world, and the Melbourne Gardens need to respond to this. The Master Plan has been developed against a backdrop of a changing climate, increased recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage values, construction of the new Anzac Station, the City of Melbourne’s Domain Parklands Master Plan, and the evolving role we play in the broader life and health of the city.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria’s biggest challenge is stewardship of the State Botanical Collection. Housed in the National Herbarium of Victoria building on Birdwood Avenue, this collection of over 1.5million preserved specimens of plants, fungi and algae is invaluable to conservation, botany, medicine and other scientific pursuits. A new, state-of-the-art herbarium is to be constructed to house this collection, addressing the critical issues arising from a lack of space and adequate storage conditions in the current building. The new herbarium will be sensitively constructed around the original 1934 building and form the hub of the new Nature and Science Precinct, to be created by the Gardens as a new destination space for Melbourne to complement the Arts & Culture and Sports & Entertainment Precincts flanking the Yarra River.

The new National Herbarium of Victoria building will transform the Gardens arrival experience, with a sensitively designed below ground structure housing the herbarium functions and storage vault, and the remodelling of the historic 1934 building into a public space with entrance courtyard along the current Dallas Brooks Drive alignment. With strong connections to the Traditional Gardens, Melbourne Observatory and The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden, this space will become the Gardens’ “destination meeting point” and a fitting entrance to the Melbourne Gardens.

The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden will be expanded northwards and link to the new Learning and Participation Centre and urban horticulture hub to be established in the current Visitor Centre and restaurant building. The Melbourne Observatory and current car park are to be returned to public open space, with broad sweeping lawns connecting it seamlessly to the Domain Parklands. This provides an appropriate setting for the Great Melbourne Telescope House and other historic structures.

Over the last twenty years the Gardens have seen many significant new projects including The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden, Guilfoyle’s Volcano, Long Island Redevelopment and Working Wetlands, all carefully guided by the Master Plan. The next twenty years provide the opportunity to continue this work. The A Gate precinct, long an eyesore at the Gardens second most used entrance, is to be redeveloped into a series of terrace gardens with a focus on health and wellbeing and a strong, lush, contemporary design. Meanwhile a new entrance gate is to be created between A Gate and H Gate, punctuating the Gardens’ long northern border and creating a direct connection to the upgraded ferry launch on the river. This entrance, known as Birrarung Gate,
will explore the indigenous landscape in all its forms, with strong connections to Long Island, vistas over the Ornamental Lake and a new shelter.

Huntingfield Lawn, a finger of land between Government House northern border and Alexandra Avenue, has long been underused. Barely recognised as part of the Gardens by the general public, this area is to be gently recontoured to create a venue for small scale performances such as Shakespeare in the Gardens or a string quartet. Following the ridge line from Huntingfield Lawn, Hopetoun Lawn is to be developed into a Wild Wood: a natural bush kinder area, relieving some pressure on the Children's Garden and providing families with a natural, unstructured play space rarely found in cities.

A primary influence on the Master Plan has been the Gardens' need to respond to climate change, a process guided by the Gardens' world-leading Landscape Succession Strategy. The driest and hottest part of the Gardens is its south-east corner, home to Guilfoyle's Volcano, the Arid Garden and other dry climate collections. This area is to be developed into an Arid and Dryland Precinct with the rejuvenation of tired infrastructure and a new Arid Garden which will showcase the valuable Robert and Ralph Fields cacti and succulent collection donated to the RBGV in 2016.

All the projects discussed above respond to a direct need, and in many cases have been identified in previous Master Plans. However, this twenty year plan provides the opportunity to look beyond our immediate needs and way in to the future. One of these opportunities, is the provision of a new Lakeside Conservatory on the current site of the Terrace Tearooms. In time, this will become a new destination space for Melbourne. An indoor pleasure garden bursting with plants, where people can come at all times of the year to work, rest, play, socialise and meet in a landscape environment which provides an intrinsic and profound connection to nature. Sitting sensitively in the landscape as a grand folly, this structure will become part of Melbourne’s life and a reflection of the work which is done throughout the Gardens.

The Master Plans’ suite of new projects is rounded out by a series of smaller scale projects including garden bed rejuvenations, infrastructure restorations and conservation work. These include the new Sensory Garden, Herb and Medicinal Garden, triangle beds, reworking of the Ellis Stones Rockery, rejuvenation of the islands and picturesque rockeries and replacement of the bridges with ornamental structures. Creating more fitting landscape settings for the historic lodges, follies and Gardens entrances, the artistic treatment of our “fallen giants” and new relaxations spaces will also be considered.

The Master Plan isn’t limited to new projects, it also addresses the day-to-day use of the Gardens, improving accessibility and comfort for everyone who uses them. This includes reconsideration of how and where events are conducted, locating larger events on the Gardens’ boundaries for improved serviceability and reduced impact on passive users. The movement of maintenance and service vehicles around the site is to be enhanced, together with reconsideration of materials storage. The Master Plan also supports other Gardens values, providing guidance on the preservation of the picturesque landscape, improvement of the living collections and supporting the Gardens’ role as an urban green space and wildlife refuge.

This Master Plan provides an agreed vision for the Gardens and a continuation our long and responsible stewardship of the site, one which will guide its development over the next twenty years, as we continue to respond to a changing world and the preservation of plants for the wellbeing of all people.
2. Guiding Principles

In developing the new Master Plan it is important that all recommendations support the core values of both the organisation and the Melbourne Gardens. To assist with this, the following guiding principles were developed, identifying what is important to the Melbourne Gardens and informing our vision for the future. The principles align to the organisation’s purpose to safeguard plants and plant knowledge for the wellbeing of people and the planet.

For people

*Our Gardens exist to support the wellbeing of all people*

Our Gardens are for people. They are accessible and welcoming to everybody, providing a place of sanctuary against the backdrop of an expanding global city. The Gardens offer opportunities for diverse experiences such as discovery, learning, quiet reflection, family celebration and inspiration, alongside providing physical and emotional connections with nature. Social benefit and engagement is integral to all that we do. We recognise our distinctive role as a place that has been cherished by successive generations of local, regional and international visitors, and offers unique programs and events for communities to thrive and connect.

For science and discovery

*Our Gardens are living landscapes which contribute to scientific innovation and educational excellence*

The living landscapes support the community’s investment in scientific innovation and plant knowledge, providing a vehicle for botanical and wider research. Our landscape management, public engagement and design processes are informed by science and the knowledge created through scientific endeavour. Melbourne Gardens provides a living laboratory for researchers in many disciplines, and an opportunity for children and visitors of all ages to engage vibrantly and easily with our work as a scientific institution.

For the environment

*Our Gardens are a valuable urban green space which allow us to protect our environment for the benefit of everyone*

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria recognises the critical importance of environmental stewardship, and the interconnectedness of all our actions on the planet. The responsibility to care for our Gardens extends beyond minimising inputs: we work to have a positive net benefit on the environment. Our Gardens are a valuable green space, providing tree canopy, cool air, refuge and green lungs for the expanding city. Through best practice, we improve habitat for all living things, and collaborate with the City of Melbourne and other organisations to support environmental research in the state of Victoria.

For horticultural stewardship

*Providing outstanding care for our living landscapes*

A love of plants and a sense of pride is reflected in the landscape maintenance standards and horticultural curation. Our living collections are curated to represent a diverse array of plants from around the world, and carefully managed to inspire and educate visitors on the important role plants play in all our lives. We are responsible custodians for these collections, embracing our role as an industry leader in landscape curation and management. Living collections evolve continuously, responding to environmental pressures and remaining contemporary and relevant in planning and design.

For future generations

*Preserving and celebrating all aspects of our cultural heritage*
The Gardens’ history is deeply engrained in the living landscape. Our heritage is multi-layered, built by a succession of land managers starting with the Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples. The iconic landscape, established by Ferdinand von Mueller and transformed by William Guilfoyle, makes our Gardens unique and the history of scientific endeavour at both the Gardens and Observatory provides an ongoing legacy. The Gardens’ culture and heritage is a living thing, where the past is valued and preserved whilst at the same time change is embraced, in order to develop our social, aesthetic and scientific value for all visitors.

**For beauty**

*Supporting what is important in our Gardens through good design*

We view good design, and the sense of beauty and wellbeing it inspires, as integral to our role as stewards of Melbourne Gardens. Guilfoyle’s original design, with its picturesque style and sweeping views is an extraordinary legacy which continues to inspire us. Meanwhile, Melbourne Gardens must continue to change in response to contemporary community needs - we use creative and adaptive design as a means of showcasing plants and facilitating public engagement. Our design work is innovative and responsive, a reflection of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria’s contemporary role as custodians of a cherished public landscape.

**For excellence**

*Being aspirational in our goals as a world leader in botanic gardens design and management*

We strive for excellence in all that we do, through scientific endeavour, landscape care and management, programming and audience development. We share and collaborate with others, including regional, national and international botanic gardens, health, science, education and cultural partners, to establish strong relationships that inform and support the work of ourselves and others.

### 3. Background

Established in 1846, the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV) Melbourne Gardens is recognised as one of the most beautiful botanical gardens in the world. Established under the Directorship of renowned botanist Ferdinand Mueller, and designed and overseen by William Guilfoyle between 1873 and 1909, the Gardens are an iconic picturesque landscape, planned as a single Garden which supports and nurtures the collection of over 8,000 species of plants from across the globe. This design results in the Gardens being a living work of art, one which supports the scientific work of the organisation while also providing a much-loved refuge and leisure ground for the 1.9 million people who visit the Gardens each year.

#### 3.1. Purpose of the Master Plan

From their establishment in 1846 until 1997 the design, layout and development of the Melbourne Gardens was overseen by a series of Directors. However, by the late 1990s it was recognised that a more formal approach to change was needed, driven by increased external pressures and more complex regulations. As a result the first Master Plan was produced in 1997. This document highlighted the need to conserve and enhance what was important about the Gardens, whilst allowing them to respond to the changing conditions of the 21st century. The 1997 Master Plan and its following document, the 2008 Master Plan Review, succeeded in their aims, directing many positive changes including Guilfoyle’s Volcano, the Long Island redevelopment, Working Wetlands, new public toilets and the Fern Gully restoration amongst many others.

*Insert image*

**Caption:** Guilfoyle’s Volcano, opened in 2010 and a recommendation of the 1997 Master Plan

Today the Melbourne Gardens are facing a new series of challenges. Some of these are internal to the Gardens, but many are the result of external pressures, beyond our control. Internal challenges
include the urgent need for a new herbarium to house the expanding collection of preserved plant, fungi and algae specimens; the planned return of the Great Melbourne Telescope and the desire for a new display conservatory. External demands include responding to a changing climate, increased recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage values, construction of the new Anzac Station, the City of Melbourne’s Domain Parklands Master Plan, and the evolving role we play in the broader life and health of the city.

To respond to these challenges a new Master Plan is required to guide us through the next twenty years; identifying and preserving what is important, while responding to a new set of pressures and capitalising on opportunities that arise.

3.2. Scope of the report
The Master Plan provides an agreed and comprehensive plan to guide the development of the Melbourne Gardens over the next 20 years (2019-2039). It is a planning document that focuses on the physical landscape of the Melbourne Gardens, and guides the changes required to fulfil the aims and vision of the RBGV and all its users. It does not address management issues except where they relate specifically to landscape and infrastructure.

The Master Plan is intended to be a working document that provides agreed solutions to problems and opportunities identified during inquiry and consultation. The Master Plan provides design resolution at a schematic level only, with further consultation, design and research required in order to implement each of the recommendations.

The primary area of land to be addressed by the Master Plan is the footprint of the Melbourne Gardens, including the Melbourne Observatory site, the National Herbarium of Victoria and The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden.

Insert existing conditions plan
Caption: Plan of the Melbourne Gardens 2019

The Master Plan also considers our interface with our neighbouring land managers to help expand and improve the presence of the Gardens beyond the historic fence line. Implementation of these projects provides opportunities for us to strengthen our partnerships with industry and our neighbouring land managers and support the work of the City of Melbourne as they implement their own Master Plan for the Domain Parklands.

It is of course impossible for the Master Plan to anticipate all possibilities that may arise in the next twenty years. While its aim is to be comprehensive, from time to time new challenges and opportunities will arise that were not considered in the Master Plan. These proposals are not necessarily inappropriate – The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden being a case in point, as the opportunity was presented after the completion of the 1997 Master Plan, and the project was an ideal fit for both the RBGV and the Melbourne Gardens. Any new proposals should be considered in a similar way – reviewing their merit within the context of the aims of the RBGV and the Master Plan.

Insert land managers plan
Caption: Plan of land managers within the Domain Parklands

3.3. Report structure
The Master Plan for the Melbourne Gardens is structured across two volumes: the main report and a volume of supporting documentation.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Melbourne Gardens Master Plan 2019-39 is the main report: a self-contained strategic document that details our direction and priorities for the future. This
will be a working document used in day-to-day operations at the Gardens and shared within the industry.

The second volume of the report, titled *Melbourne Gardens Master Plan 2019-39: Supporting Material* provides appendices and background documentation to substantiate the Master Plan. This document will provide additional reference material for Gardens staff.

### 3.4. Master Plan Consultation

The Master Plan was developed internally by Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria staff and overseen by an External Reference Panel (ERP). Members of this group were chosen to provide a broad range of expertise and are listed in (ref to Appendix with acknowledgements). This group guided the development of the Master Plan and were consulted throughout the project.

The Master Plan is a collaborative document, informed by an extensive consultation process and developed by working closely with stakeholders. Two formal consultation phases were conducted, with additional collaboration throughout the project with the Board, Executive Team, RBGV staff, and key external stakeholders such as the City of Melbourne and Heritage Victoria. This informed all Master Plan proposals, but was especially important in the development of the Nature and Science Precinct. This collaborative process is illustrated in (add reference to figure), with findings discussed below.

*Insert image of consultation flow chart*

**Caption:** Process for the development of the Melbourne Gardens Master Plan 2019-39

**Preliminary Consultation**

Consultation to support the development of the Master Plan was carried out with staff, key stakeholders and the public between July and September 2016. This work was conducted as an open consultation process with a focus on what people loved about the Melbourne Gardens, what needed improvement, and what new elements would they like to see included.

The areas of interest differed slightly among the general public, staff and stakeholders, but many common ideas emerged including:

- A deep love and appreciation of the Melbourne Gardens as a public place and a beautiful garden in the city;
- Preservation of the rich Aboriginal and natural heritage;
- Preservation of the iconic William Guilfoyle landscape that offers vistas and areas of relaxation;
- Preservation of the Melbourne Observatory and improvement of the Observatory landscape and setting;
- Continued excellence in horticultural and arboricultural maintenance standards;
- A continual focus on plantings, including existing and new collections;
- An expanding interest in food plants and food security;
- Improvements to Gardens entrances, including grander iconic entrances;
- Providing exciting new built elements;
- Providing interactive spaces for children and adults;
- Integrating the Gardens landscape with neighbouring sites such as the Observatory, Domain Parklands, and Shrine of Remembrance;
- Making use of the prominent city location to the Gardens’ advantage;
- Improving public transport accessibility to the Gardens;
- Effective wayfinding and design considerations for the elderly and people with limited mobility;
- Promoting active collaborations with educational institutions and the community.
This feedback provided an important insight into what people valued and wanted preserved in the Melbourne Gardens, as well as areas for improvement, collaboration, redesign and transformation. The consultation methodology and all findings were included in the Consultation Report which may be found at [refer to appendix].

**Internal review**

The Master Plan was developed working closely with the Board, Executive Team, RBGV Staff, and the City of Melbourne. Other key stakeholders such as Heritage Victoria, Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Government House were also engaged on proposals, especially for the Nature and Science Precinct. The first half of the Master Plan process was focused on determining the scope and location of the new Herbarium, with the final location being informed by this process. Focus then shifted to the Development Guidelines, and finally the remaining Master Plan projects. In each case, preliminary proposals were reviewed by relevant staff and stakeholders and their feedback incorporated into the final proposals.

**Consultation on Draft Master Plan**

Consultation on the Draft Master Plan commenced in September 2018, with presentations to RBGV management groups and key external stakeholders including City of Melbourne, Heritage Victoria and Government House. Due to the extensive collaboration already undertaken feedback was mostly positive. Consultation then moved to remaining RBGV staff, stakeholders, and neighbours before public consultation in March 2019. To be completed following the conclusion of public and stakeholder consultation.

4. **History of the Melbourne Gardens**

The following chapter outlines the history and development of the Melbourne Gardens, including the National Herbarium of Victoria and the Melbourne Observatory. This history draws on a number of sources, in particular the 1997 *Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Master Plan*, the 2018 Context Pty Ltd *Conservation Management Plan* and *Aboriginal Heritage Values* documents, Pamela Jellie’s 1996 *Chronological Landscape History of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne* and the 1997 *The Old Observatory Site Conservation Management Plan* by Allom Lovell & Associates Pty Ltd.

4.1. **Development of Botanic and Public Gardens**

The European colonisation of Australia corresponded with a time of increased botanical and horticultural interest within the British Empire. Previously unknown species of plants were being collected from newly discovered areas of the world and botanic gardens were being established as adjuncts to educational institutions in England (at Oxford) and on the Continent (Padua). With the abundance of new species being introduced to horticulture, plant collection and display, especially of the new and unusual, became somewhat of a British national passion; and nowhere was this passion more publicly displayed than in botanic gardens.

*Insert image of Padua*

**Caption:** Botanic Garden at Padua, Italy. 19th century lithograph of a 16th century print.

In the south of England this enthusiasm for plant collection centred around Kew, encouraged by Royal patronage. By the time of European settlement of Australia, Kew Gardens had become a scientific centre, spurred on by both economic and scientific pursuits. The influence of Kew became critical in the establishment of botanic gardens in Australia and by the 1850s major botanic gardens had been developed in Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne and Brisbane.

In their original context botanic gardens were scientific centres, where plants were displayed according to various botanical systems, rather than as objects of ornamentation. Herbariums for the collection of pressed specimens were attached, as were botanical libraries. These gardens were
important for the new colony, as they provided a scientific institution for the collation and description of botanical discoveries, as well as centres for trialling exotic species of potential economic and agricultural importance.

Over time, and especially in the Australian context, botanic gardens developed a secondary function as pleasure grounds and places for public use and enjoyment. As the industrial revolution led to cities becoming increasingly overcrowded and unhealthy, new ideas emerged as to the importance of providing parkland for the recreation of the people. Green spaces were seen to have moral and health benefits, providing respite from the polluted and crowded cities and places where all classes could mix freely. The result of this 19th Century emphasis on public open space can be seen throughout Australia, and in Melbourne’s inner ring of public parks. The design of the Melbourne Gardens represents the culmination of this way of thinking, where Ferdinand Mueller’s rigid scientific layout was remodelled by William Guilfoyle into a picturesque landscape that merged both scientific function with public enjoyment.

4.2. Aboriginal

The site of Melbourne Gardens and area around Birrarung (the Yarra River) and Tromgin (the Aboriginal name for the Gardens’ lagoon) is part of the traditional lands for the Aboriginal peoples, today described as members of the Kulin Nation: specifically the Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples. The land to the south of Birrarung was associated with the Yalukit Willam, a Boonwurrung clan, with Woiwurrung clans also identifying with Birrarung. The boundary and extent of the area shared between these peoples remains unclear, however the land holds strong connections for all the Traditional Custodians and there is a long history of Aboriginal people living in the landscape.

The connections of the Traditional Custodians are to Country – that is to the lands and waters traditionally held by the tribes and clans. For the Melbourne Gardens this particularly includes the higher land to the east and west, folding down to Tromgin and Birrarung. Links to the surrounding landscape are extensive, although not all can be seen today. However, views from the high points within the Melbourne Gardens and Government House look out to the Tanderrum ceremonial site to the north of Birrarung as well as surrounding high ground including the Dandenongs, Arthurs Seat, Macedon Ranges, Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) and Batmans Hill. The high point itself, now the site of Government House, is an important site to the Traditional Custodians, where corroborees are known to have taken place.

**Insert image**

**Caption:** 1874 Sketch of Birrarung following its original course along the sedimentary escarpment

From the important high ground the land sloped steeply away to Tromgin, a rich hunting ground. Birrarung, later to be artificially straightened, wound into the Gardens following the sedimentary escarpment that now rises steeply from Alexandra Avenue to the Temple of the Winds. The original alignment of the river still remains, being present beneath the Gardens as an alluvial aquifer with the river’s southern bank following what is now the northern edge of Long Island. A second water source in the form of a creek ran through the Gardens, flowing into Tromgin to eventually feed Birrarung, a natural drainage line which can now be seen in the Fern Gully and at the northern end of Nymphaea Lily Lake.

The indigenous landscape of the Melbourne Gardens included the Ecological Vegetation Classes of grassy woodland on the hill tops and plains grassy woodland on the slopes. The southern bank of Birrarung was made up of swamp scrub, with tall marsh within and around Tromgin and riparian woodland along the Birrarung corridor. On Birrarung’s northern bank was damp sands herb-rich woodland. Together these landscapes provided a rich and fertile environment which supported the people. Indigenous vegetation was dominated by River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*), Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina*).
verticillata) and Kangaroo Grass (Themeda triandra) amongst other taxa. Remnants of some of these species can still be seen today.

The site of the Melbourne Gardens would have been a plentiful and varied source of food and other important material for Aboriginal people: abundant with water birds, fish and eels, a range of small to medium or large mammals (kangaroos, wallabies, possums), tubers and fruits; as well as useful plant fibers from rushes and reeds and the bark of Eucalyptus camaldulensis for canoes. This land was used by Aboriginal people for hunting, fishing, and ceremonial purposes, and was an important place where Aboriginal people visited, lived and were possibly both born and buried. This life changed forever with the arrival of European settlers in 1835.

In 1836 a government mission reserve for the Aboriginal people of Melbourne was established on the south bank of the Yarra with the objective of ‘civilising’ and protecting them. This site occupied nearly 900 acres, including north-eastern parts of the Melbourne Gardens, and was known as the “Yarra Mission”. At the mission, administered by George Langhorne and his wife, Aboriginal children were fed and adults were provided with rations in exchange for work. The mission operated until 1839 when Lonsdale ordered that it be closed after an altercation with Langhorne. It is unclear where the Aboriginal people went upon closure of the mission, but some people continued to camp at Tromgin within the site of the present-day Melbourne Gardens.

Land for the Gardens was reserved for botanic gardens purposes in 1846 and the same year a new Aboriginal mission site was established on the Merri Creek, with many of the Aboriginal people in Melbourne moved to the new mission. It is likely that Aboriginal people continued to camp at Tromgin into the 1850s as it was an established camping site, and away from the CBD, where Aboriginal people were discouraged.

By the 1850s the number of Aboriginal people in Melbourne had fallen dramatically, and the Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples were relocated elsewhere. In 1863, after the failure of an Aboriginal reserve at Acheron, a large area near Healesville known as Coranderrk was selected and set aside for an Aboriginal reserve. Amongst those who settled there was William Barak, who had attended Langhorne’s school at the Melbourne mission.

Following the Yarra Improvement Act of 1896, intended to reduce damage caused by flooding, the course of the Yarra River was straightened. This enabled the acquisition of a large portion of land to the north side of the Gardens, and the main lagoon to be separated from the river to form an enclosed lake. Through this process much of the native vegetation and landscape was lost, although today a small number of ancient River Red Gums (Eucalyptus camaldulensis) and thickets of Swamp Paperbark (Melaleuca ericifolia) survive.

As the land now occupied by the Melbourne Gardens and Domain Parklands remained undeveloped for many decades it continued to be used by the Aboriginal people for much longer than most places in central Melbourne. To this day, the Gardens continue to represent a remnant, albeit an altered one, of the Aboriginal landscape and a link to past Aboriginal land use. The Aboriginal Heritage Values document, commissioned by the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in 2017 and developed in consultation with the Traditional Custodians, identifies these associations and painted a strong picture of a living landscape with ongoing connections to Country for the Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples.

4.3. European Settlement of Melbourne

The settlement of the Port Philip District of the colony of New South Wales was authorised by Governor Sir Richard Bourke in 1836, one year after the Tasmanians John Bateman and John Pascoe Fawkner had individually arrived and established unauthorised, and initially competing
claims on the territory. The first township was established at Williamstown, but due to a lack of fresh water a new location was selected further inland on the northern banks of the Yarra River, where a small set of falls provided a barrier between the fresh water in the river and the saline in the bay. In 1837 the central grid of streets was laid out, the first land sales conducted, and the new town Melbourne, named in honour of the English Prime Minister, was born.

Insert image
Caption: Sketch of Melbourne by Robert Hoddle taken in 1840, one year before the reservation of the Domain.

Almost immediately land started to be set aside for public parks and gardens, in keeping with Victorian ideas on the benefits of public open space. Flagstaff Gardens, although originally a cemetery, was a popular public resort by the 1840s, Fitzroy Gardens was reserved in 1848, Royal Park 1854 and Carlton Gardens in 1855. However the first of these dedicated public Gardens was the Domain, reserved as parkland in 1841.

In keeping with the British idea of establishing large park lands, or ‘Domains’, around royal or aristocratic estates, 83 acres were set aside on the southern banks of the Yarra for ‘Government House and Grounds’. The site was selected by Superintendent Charles Joseph La Trobe, in anticipation of the Port Phillip district eventually becoming a separate colony. The provision of large tracts of publicly accessible, landscaped grounds around vice regal residences can be found in many cities including Sydney, Adelaide, Cape Town and Vancouver. Frequently these Domains also became the site of botanic gardens, with Hong Kong, Sydney and Hobart botanic gardens all being located within the Governor’s Domain. When a previous proposal to reserve Batman Hill (near present-day Spencer Street) for a botanic garden lapsed, Superintendent Latrobe selected an alternative site of 92 acres on the banks of the Yarra, adjacent to the Domain.

4.4. History of Melbourne Gardens

Selection of the Site
The site of the present-day Melbourne Gardens was reserved in 1846, just eleven years after the foundation of Melbourne. The land had been withdrawn from sale by Superintendent La Trobe during the depression of the 1840s, and when a new site was needed for a botanic gardens the land was identified by La Trobe as an appropriate site. The site was well-suited for development as a botanic garden; the shelter and northerly aspect of its small valley provided favourable horticultural conditions, its proximity to the town and new suburbs enhanced its accessibility, and the undulating topography and small stream flowing into a lagoon promised attractive landscape scenery. The reservation of the lands for botanic gardens was formally approved by New South Wales Governor Gipps in 1846, a date taken as the establishment of the Gardens. In the same year the Botanic Gardens Committee met for the first time, funds were allocated for the commencement of works and John Arthur was appointed the first Superintendent, a position he held until his death in 1849.

Beginnings: Arthur and Dallachy 1846-57
The first plan for the layout of the Gardens is thought to be by Henry Ginn, Clerk of Works to the Port Phillip District (1846-51) and later Colonial Architect (1851-53). As Secretary to the Botanic Gardens Committee, Ginn is thought to have drawn up a plan of the Domain and Botanic Gardens in 1846 and later designed the under-gardeners cottage (Plant Craft Cottage). He also produced the Gardens’ first two annual reports.

Insert image
Caption: 1855 Clarke plan overlaid with the Garden’s current boundaries. The parterre is visible in the Gardens’ south-east corner.
Initial improvements of the Gardens were undertaken by the Scotsman John Arthur, who was appointed Superintendent in March 1846. Initial works included planting around the lagoon, and fencing and cultivating the ground below Anderson Street on a slope now known as Tennyson Lawn. This planting included the extant *Ulmus procera* on Tennyson Lawn, once a group of four trees known as Arthur’s Elms and amongst the oldest surviving exotic specimens in the Gardens. To embellish the eastern entrance of the Gardens a formal parterre garden with circular beds and ornamental plantings was developed with views over the lagoon to the city beyond. This parterre can be seen on the 1855 plan of the site (add image reference).

When Arthur died of cholera in 1849, just three years after his appointment, he was immediately replaced with another Scottish landscape gardener, John Dallachy who consolidated and extended the established framework. Dallachy maintained Arthur’s parterre and continued to implement Ginn’s plan of the site. Major works included the development of a network of parallel paths that fitted the contours of the site, excavation of the lagoon and straightening of edges following severe flooding in 1849, construction of an under-gardener's residence (Plant Craft Cottage) in 1850, and a propagating glasshouse and nursery c.1851.

With regard to planting, Arthur and Dallachy exploited the natural aspects of the site and combined exotic plants with indigenous vegetation, much of which was initially retained: a practice common in the early days of many of Melbourne’s Parks. Dallachy in particular is credited for bringing a great interest in exploration and plant collecting to the Gardens. He made several expeditions across Victoria and New South Wales, and is reputed to have found the headwaters of the Yarra River. When Henry Ginn produced his 1852 report it included a catalogue of 1,420 taxa growing within the Gardens, including many native genera.

During this period the Gardens served not only as a place of science, but as one of the few perceived pleasant public spaces available to the early settlers of Melbourne. The Gardens became a focal point for socialising, recreation, public celebrations and charity functions. When the declaration announcing Victoria’s colonial separation from New South Wales was announced in July 1851, it was made under a spreading River Red Gum in the Gardens known since as the “Separation Tree”.

**The Botanist: Mueller 1857-73**

In 1857 Government Botanist Ferdinand Mueller, later Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, was promoted to the role of Director of the Botanic Gardens. Mueller had been working closely with Dallachy, while Dallachy became curator and concentrated on plant collecting.

Mueller’s 1853 description of the purposes of botanic gardens as ‘an establishment for the diffusion of knowledge, for the experimental introduction of foreign plants into our adopted country or for multiplying the treasures which our flora offers and as a healthy locality for recreation’, formed the basis of his vision for the Gardens. The Gardens’ size, complexity and importance as a research centre for the colony grew rapidly under Mueller’s directorship. Through his plant collecting and exchanges Mueller built up a significant collection of plants for the Herbarium and Gardens. He also established international and regional links with other botanical institutions.

Mueller carried out an ambitious program for the Gardens’ scientific development. An early project was the development of an elaborate parterre system garden in the western area of the Gardens. A wide range of plants were also cultivated for experimental purposes, including plants of possible economic value to the colony, or of broad horticultural interest. In addition, Mueller grouped native and exotic trees in collections, the most notable being a pinetum on the western slopes of the reserve now known as the Hopetoun and Huntingfield Lawns.
An extensive building and landscaping program was undertaken including a substantial network of tree-lined walks, an iron perimeter fence, a conservatory and propagating house, offices and residences, the Yarra foot bridge (later replaced by Morell Bridge), an aviary, animal enclosures, and the Museum of Economic Botany.

A new bandstand was built which became a focal point for social occasions, alongside other ornamental features such as bowers, rockwork, grottoes, rustic bridges and flower borders. The lagoon was treated as both a picturesque landscape feature and a sanctuary for birdlife, with the north-east area developed as a picnic ground.

While Mueller's scientific achievements were widely recognised there were increased public grumblings about his horticultural expertise and taste in landscape gardening. Mueller believed plants to be naturally lovely, and did not see the creation of a beautiful landscape to be an object in itself; instead aiming to educate the public through the creation of a system garden and plant labels32. However, this did not mean that the public were unwelcome, as he saw the Gardens as a healthy location for public recreation and people still visited in their thousands.

Mueller's lack of concern with landscape beauty and recognition of public taste in Gardens was eventually to be his downfall. By 1870 public discontent had increased to the point where a Board of Inquiry was set up to review the Gardens’ management, with the ultimate finding that while Mueller had assembled a valuable plant collection, he had not managed the gardens “as to give general satisfaction”. In 1873 Muller was asked to resign as Director, although he continued his work as the Government Botanist, a position he held until his death in 1896. His eventual replacement as Director of the Botanic Gardens was his talented young protégé, William Guilfoyle.

The Designer: Guilfoyle 1873-1909

Born in Chelsea, London in 1840, Guilfoyle already had extensive experience when appointed ‘Curator of Botanic and Domain Gardens’, although aged only 33. As the eldest of eleven surviving children he had worked at his father’s Double Bay nursery from a young age, and undertaken a number of plant collecting trips to northern NSW and Southern Queensland. In 1868 he joined a British war ship on a five month tour of the South Pacific, producing a series of water colour sketches and detailed account of the journey which so impressed Mueller that he forwarded it to London for publication. On his return the family selected 250 hectares of land on the Tweed River as a sugar farm and experimental nursery, and it was his work at the nursery and tropical garden that lead, through an encounter with James Casey, Victoria’s Commissioner of Crown Lands, to his appointment at Melbourne.

Although Guilfoyle shared Mueller's views on the scientific purposes of the Gardens, he believed its design should be balanced by recreational and aesthetic considerations, say ‘No necessity exists for allowing botanical correctness and landscape effect to clash in the development of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. To combine the two ... has been my design from the beginning ... I have every confidence that the results will be a garden in which the facility of research and scientific classification will combine with the sterling beauties of the scenery.’
Towards this end Guilfoyle swept away the initial garden layout, and extensively re-modelled the site to enhance its beauty. He favoured the picturesque tradition of eighteenth century English landscape gardens, where landscape elements were arranged to produce scenic views and resemble landscape paintings. This meant elegant, sweeping lawns, bold curves, handsome tracts of water and picturesque elements such as summer houses and arbours creating focal points in the landscape. Guilfoyle’s genius partially lay in his ability to rationalise the High Victorian taste for ostentatious ornamentation with a gardenesque elegance and sensibility. The result was a “well-controlled rationalisation of Victorian garden ideals”33, and the public lapped it up.

Guilfoyle reorganised Mueller's straight paths, lines of trees and isolated specimens into naturalistic clumps and massed plantings. He replaced the extensive tree-lined walks with a simplified network of curvilinear paths, established spacious lawns and transformed the lagoon into a clear, reflective lake. Significantly, Guilfoyle dispersed the taxonomic collections throughout the landscape to create picturesque effects. This approach, while by no means surrendering their scientific purpose to aesthetics, was inspired and created the integrated landscape that we know today.

The introduction of many gardenesque elements satisfied popular expectations of a pleasure garden including elaborate floral displays, specimen trees on lawns and ornamental garden structures including large pots as focal points in rockeries. Guilfoyle adopted the ‘subtropical’ bedding style that was widely used in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, with an innovative interpretation of the style using southern hemisphere plants. This interpretation established a distinctive, lush planting character. It is probable that Guilfoyle’s experience of the subtropical flora of the Tweed River Valley and the Pacific Islands strongly influenced many of his landscape designs. Such influences are still visible in the volcano like design of Guilfoyle’s 1876 bluestone reservoir: a cone shaped feature built at the Gardens’ highest point and with lava flow like garden beds cascading down the hill to the mounds.

**Insert image**

*Caption: Relocation of one of Mueller’s cedars to conform to Guilfoyle’s picturesque vision*

In 1875, additional land was added from the Domain to Gardens southern boundary, part of which Guilfoyle was later to develop as the Australian Border featuring mainly rainforest plants. Following the *Yarra Improvement Act 1896* the Yarra River was deepened and straightened to control flooding, with works being completed in 1900. This substantially altered the northern boundary of the Gardens and prompted major redevelopments in the area, including the final stage of the lagoon’s transformation into the Ornamental Lake. Guilfoyle’s legacy of unified landscape gave the Gardens a strong design framework for its future development. This framework has endured under successive Directors and defines the character of the Gardens to this day.

**Consolidation: Cronin, Laidlaw, Rae, Jessep 1910-57**

When William Guilfoyle retired as Director of the Gardens in 1909 the landscape bore little resemblance to the botanically correct, but architecturally rigid landscape of Mueller’s time. One of Guilfoyle’s final tasks was the production of a plan of the Gardens showing the “*Alterations and Additions Effected since 1873*”. This plan shows a cohesive, ornamental landscape with strong gardenesque and picturesque characteristics and has formed the basis of future understanding of the landscape and interpretation of Guilfoyle’s design.

**Insert image**

*Caption: Guilfoyle’s 1909 plan, which informs our understanding of the Gardens to this day.*

Guilfoyle’s successors, John Cronin (1909-21), William Laidlaw (1923-41), Frederick Rae (1923-41) and Alexandra Jessep (1941-57) oversaw a time of relative stability for the Gardens, faithfully maintaining the inherited landscape design - albeit with some difficulty during the war years. However the influence of personal horticultural preferences had a considerable impact on the
planting character. Some of the most obvious changes occurred under Jessep's direction. Many boldly planted rockeries were exchanged for massed displays of finer textured plants, particularly camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons; while palms, a favourite of Guilfoyle, were disliked by Jessep who instructed that they were no longer to be used as memorial trees. A small land parcel (0.7 hectares) was added to the north-west area of the Gardens from Government House Reserve in 1933. The site was treated essentially as an arboretum with conifers and some eucalypts and was named the Huntingfield Lawn.

**Insert image**

*Caption: The Arid Garden, c.1946*

In 1934, a new herbarium was constructed as a gift from Sir Macpherson Robertson, an Australian businessman and philanthropist, to celebrate the centenary of European settlement in Victoria. The new Herbarium development included the addition of extra land to the Gardens and the erection of new gates (F Gate) that had originally stood in Carlton Gardens. In 1946 a cactus garden, now called the Arid Garden was created on the site of Guilfoyle's Eastern Lawn Palm House.


In 1958, the Gardens were granted the 'Royal' prefix. Guilfoyle's landscape framework remained largely intact over the next 40 years, although the effects of time, modernisation, ad hoc development and shifting expectations of the landscape resulted in some changes to its overall character. As vegetation matured the scale and sense of enclosure within the Gardens altered. Diversity in the understorey was lost as trees matured and pressure to find suitable locations for new trees put pressure on the landscape, leading to inappropriate tree placement and the loss of significant views.

**Insert image**

*Caption: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II planting a Lophostemon confertus on Hopetoun Lawn in 1954*

This period saw a dilution of the distinct taxonomic groupings that characterised Guilfoyle's era and an increase in geographic, ecological, conservation and horticultural themes, reflecting the wider scope of modern scientific enquiry and the changed role of botanic gardens. Meanwhile, there was a reduction in the number of feature floral displays, possibly due to changing tastes and the need to reduce maintenance.

Under Pescott’s Directorship a number of alterations occurred which diluted Guilfoyle’s picturesque landscape. These changes responded to larger maintenance problems and were typical of the era. The cruciform Bougainvillea Rest House was demolished and replaced with the Clematis Shelter, A Gate Lodge was demolished and the original Gardens’ residence at B Gate Lodge was replaced with a modern building in 1964. Perhaps the most significant of these changes was the replacement of Guilfoyle’s romantic, single arched Eel Bridge and those on Long Island with strictly utilitarian and low maintenance concrete and steel structures in 1966-67. Another development during this period was the rockery constructed by celebrated landscaper Ellis Stones in 1967. This rockery was intended for small, European rock plants, but the micro-climate was found to be unsatisfactory and it was replanted in 1970.

In 1970 Pescott retired, and was replaced by David Churchill in 1971. Churchill was the last Director to live in Gardens House and held the post for fifteen years. Developments under Churchill included the Herb Garden (1983), Grey Garden (1985), and most significantly, the construction of the Tea Rooms. The lakeside location had been used as a Tea House since 1900, however the 1975 development was considerably larger than the small kiosk destroyed by fire in 1970. In 1981 Plant Craft Cottage was established in the 1850 Under-gardener's Cottage near H
Gate, on the edge of the Bluff Rockery. Churchill retired in 1986, and was replaced by John Taylor, who was appointed Manager and Acting Director pending appointment of the Board.

During this general period there was a growth in education and interpretive services, which served to explain the collections and the Gardens’ history and roles to the public. This period also generated considerable community support for the Royal Botanic Gardens, with the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne established in 1982. This group continues to be a generous supporter of Gardens’ projects.

Outdoor performance commenced during this period. The first production of Shakespeare in the Gardens taking place in 1987, followed by the annual live performance of *Wind in the Willows* two years later. Moonlight Cinema on Central Lawn, overlooking the Central Lake commenced in 1994.

*Insert image*  
*Caption:* Wind in the Willows has been popular with generations of visitors

In the 1980s a Government inquiry recommended the establishment of a Board to manage the Gardens for the people of Victoria: the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria was subsequently established as a statutory authority under the *Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991*, which also made provision for the roles of Director and Chief Executive of the Gardens and Chief Botanist.

As a result of the Act, 1992 saw a raft of changes at the Melbourne Gardens. During this year the Gardens came under the responsibility of the Board, management of the 2.4Ha Melbourne Observatory was transferred to the Gardens and Dr Philip Moors was appointed Director and Chief Executive, a post he would hold until 2012.

**The Last 27 years: Moors and Entwisle (1992-2019)**

The last twenty-seven years have seen a number of popular new developments in the Melbourne Gardens and an increased recognition of the importance of bringing good planning and scientific process to the management of the landscape. Early projects from this period include the automation of the irrigation system (1993-4), the Australian East Coast Rainforest Collection (2000), Long Island (2004), Public Toilets (2006), Guilfoyle’s Volcano (2010), Working Wetlands (2012) and Fern Gully Restoration (2015). Another significant change in this period was the appointment of a Landscape Architect, who became responsible for the design of the site, replacing the Director’s role as designer in chief.

At the initiative of Dr Moors, the first Master Plan for the Gardens was produced in 1997 and outlined a number of projects which would be implemented over the next 20 years, including the Perennial Border renewal (1998), Green Organics Recycling Centre (1998-99), Species Rose Collection (2000), Long Island (2004), Public Toilets (2006), Guilfoyle’s Volcano (2010), Working Wetlands (2012) and Fern Gully Restoration (2015). Another significant change in this period was the appointment of a Landscape Architect, who became responsible for the design of the site, replacing the Director’s role as designer in chief.

Completed in 1999, Observatory Gate was a significant new development to link the Melbourne Observatory to the Traditional Gardens. Works included a new western link path through Western Lawn, a new entrance gate (Observatory Gate), and the award winning building housing the Observatory Café, Visitor Centre and Gardens Shop. In 1998 another opportunity opened for the Gardens, with the transfer of a parcel of land from the Kings Domain between the Melbourne Gardens and the Melbourne Observatory to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, connecting the Gardens and Observatory sites. This 0.7ha site became The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden, which was opened to great acclaim in 2004. The Garden was designed by Landscape Architect Andrew Laidlaw and a team of internal and external designers, and has become the benchmark for nature-based children’s play in Australia. Both Observatory Gate and the Children’s Garden fell outside the scope of the 1997 Master Plan, but were in keeping with the planning objectives.

The 1990s saw the Gardens face new challenges in responding to an outbreak of the highly infectious pathogen fire blight (*Erwinia amylovora*) in 1997 (since eradicated) and the over-population of the Gardens colony of indigenous Grey-headed Flying Foxes. This colony had begun
to gather in the Gardens in the 1980s and had grown rapidly, to the point that it was causing significant damage to the mature trees in the Fern Gully and on Oak Lawn. In 2003, with the assistance of the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the bats were systematically relocated from the Gardens to a native bushland area in Yarra Bend Park. Meanwhile the first stage of the award winning Australian Garden was opened at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria’s Cranbourne Gardens in 2006, with the second stage completed in 2012.

On the retirement of Dr Philip Moors, Professor Timothy Entwisle became the new Director and Chief Executive in 2013. Professor Entwisle brought a new vision for the Melbourne Gardens, instigating planning for both an iconic new conservatory, and a Nature and Science Precinct to reinvigorate the Observatory and tell a wider story of both the Observatory and Gardens. He oversaw planning of a new vision and mission (2014) and visual identity (2015) for the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. In 2014 the Children’s Garden celebrated its ten year anniversary with festivities to mark the occasion.

By this time one of the few remaining Master Plan recommendations to be fulfilled was the restoration of Guilfoyle’s historic Fern Gully. This iconic and much-loved landscape had languished under the pressures of drought, Flying Fox infestation and pathway deterioration. Works for the pathway restoration were completed in 2015, and the Fern Gully again become a show piece of the Melbourne Gardens. Designed by Andrew Laidlaw, initial works included the installation of accessible steel boardwalks, timber seats, ornamental bridges and new plantings: followed by the construction of three health and wellbeing gardens in 2018-9. These gardens added another layer to the Melbourne Gardens experience: being intimate, personal spaces in the middle of a public garden.

In recent years the Gardens have struggled with vandalism. The William Tell Rest House and Lakeview Rest House were set alight in 2014, and there have been attacks on a number of historic trees and valuable plants, especially around the Arid Garden and Guilfoyle’s Volcano. Most significant of these attacks were the 2010 and 2014 ringbarking of the historic River Red Gum known as the Separation Tree, which ultimately lead to its death in 2015.

Of more widespread threat to the Gardens is the ongoing risk of Climate Change, with the RBGV at the forefront worldwide of botanic gardens landscape succession planning. The Landscape Succession Strategy Melbourne Gardens 2016-36 provides for the transition of the landscape to one more suitable to future climate predictions, while still maintaining the important and much loved Guilfoylian character and qualities of the Gardens.

### 4.5. History of Melbourne Observatory

Midway through Mueller’s tenure as Director, and while the Melbourne Gardens was at the height of its early development, the Melbourne Observatory moved from its original site at Williamstown to a new location just up the hill from the Gardens, on the southern boundary of Government House.

Overseen by the first Director, Robert Ellery, the original portion of the Melbourne Observatory was constructed between 1861 and 1863, and continued to be expanded until the first decade of the 20th Century. The Observatory acted as the centre for all scientific measurement in the colony. As well as including astronomical equipment it also carried out weather forecasting, time setting, setting of weights and measures standards and provided fixed records for the surveying of Victoria and beyond. The Observatory staff provided critical scientific data, essential for the smooth running of industries ranging from shipping to farming, business and politics.

For over 80 years the Observatory carried out important scientific work and was associated with a number of prominent scientists such as astronomer’s Robert Ellery, Pietro Baracchi and Joseph Baldwin. The Photoheliograph and South Equatorial House were constructed to allow observations to be made of the Transit of Venus in 1874; part of a concerted, world-wide project that yielded information new to science. The Observatory also played a vital role in the exploration of Antarctica.
in the early 20th Century, by providing the basis for magnetic surveys and time signals used to determine the location of Mawson’s base camp. The Great Melbourne Telescope, designed by a group of British astronomers, was installed in 1869 and was the second largest telescope in the world, and the largest in the southern hemisphere. Although plagued by problems such as tarnishing and flexure in the mirrors, it continued to be operated by dedicated observers until 1892. In 1875 Sir George Biddell Airy, the Astronomer Royal, concluded that “the Melbourne Observatory had produced the best catalogue of stars of the Southern hemisphere ever published.”

Caption: Great Melbourne Telescope with the roof retracted, c.1880

In 1915 intensive surveys were commenced to find a new home for the Observatory, and by 1919 a site had been identified at Toolangi, equipment installed at the new site and observations commenced. Encroaching light pollution from the growing city of Melbourne was making astronomical observations increasingly difficult, and from this time work at the Melbourne site was gradually scaled down. In 1945 the Observatory was finally closed, the Great Melbourne Telescope sold to Mt Stromlo Observatory in Canberra and the temporary reservation of the site for observatory purposes was revoked.

From a landscape perspective the Observatory site has had continuous management input from the adjacent Botanic Gardens, with Ellery going so far as to (unsuccessfully) propose in the 1880s that the Botanic Gardens take over responsibility for the Observatory grounds. Although Mueller originally opposed the construction of the Observatory on the site and had to modify his plans for the Domain to accommodate it, he was later instrumentally involved in the early planting of the site.

In its earliest days suppression of dust from the neighbouring St Kilda Road, which interfered with equipment and observations, was the primary concern of Government Astronomer Robert Ellery, and Mueller consequently provided a “rapid-growing W. Australian Eucalyptus calophylla (Marri) and of eligible elegant pines for the purpose.” Ellery continued to expand the shrubbery and planting, frequently calling for more planting to suppress the dust, and continuing to work with Guilfoyle after Mueller’s dismissal. It was not until 1889, 27 years after Mueller’s above letter that Ellery was satisfied with the landscaping: the extent of which is visible in an 1885 plan of the site. Around 1900 however, the new Government Astronomer, Pietro Baracchi, was less concerned with dust suppression and arranged for the removal of a number of trees which were interfering with views of “celestial objects at low altitudes.”

Caption: 1908 postcard of the Main Observatory Building and manicured landscape.

In 1978, the land was re-reserved as a site for Public Park, Gardens and Herbarium and in 1992 the land was formally transferred to the management of the RBGV Board. In 1999 a significant redevelopment was carried out. Known as Observatory Gate this work cost $2.9 million and included a new entrance to the Melbourne Gardens, an entry forecourt and a new building housing a café, the Gardens Shop and Visitor Centre. As part of this work a number of ancillary buildings were removed from the Observatory including Zeiss House, used by John Monash, and the permanent chain standard.

From 1936 to the current day the Astronomical Society of Victoria have had a presence on the site, and from its closure in 1945 they have worked with Museum Victoria and RBGV to open the buildings to the public and conduct astronomical demonstrations and night sky tours. This function still continues, and the society is now working with the Museum on the restoration of the Great Melbourne Telescope, which was badly damaged in the 2003 Canberra bushfires. The return
of the telescope to its original home is planned for 2023, with the Gardens receiving funding in 2017 and 2018 to commence restoration of the building and reactivation of the retractable roof.

4.6. **History of the National Herbarium of Victoria**

The National Herbarium of Victoria was commenced by Ferdinand Mueller on his appointment as Government Botanist in 1853, and while always physically connected to the Melbourne Gardens was under separate administration for a period of fifty years.

As Government Botanist Mueller was employed specifically by Governor La Trobe to undertake a scientific survey of the native flora and to create a publicly owned herbarium collection, the first such collection in the country and the first time someone had been appointed to such a role. Prior to this time all specimens (including those from Cook’s and Flinders’ voyages) had been sent to European herbaria. While a number of people before Mueller, such as Allan Cunningham at Sydney, had held the role of Government Botanist, their brief had been to collect specimens for British herbaria, and not, as was Mueller’s case, to create a public record to remain in the colony.

In 1860 the first Herbarium Building was completed in what is now the Domain Parklands. Referred to by Mueller as the “Botanical Museum” the bluestone building was to the rear of the current day public toilets, near the Shrine of Remembrance. The rest of the year was spent fitting out the building, and the herbarium collection was moved in January 1861. Almost immediately Mueller recognised that the building was too small, but it was not until 1883-84 that the building was substantially extended. An iron annex was added to accommodate the material of the Sonder herbarium, which Mueller, after 22 years of lobbying, had finally convinced the Victorian Government to purchase.

*Insert image*

**Caption:** The original bluestone herbarium in the Domain c.1927-1934 with construction of the Shrine in the foreground

In 1896 Mueller died in office and George Luehmann succeeded him as Acting Curator. At his death the herbarium contained nearly one million specimens. In the December of that year the herbarium was officially named the National Herbarium of Victoria, and a third wing of the building was added three years later in 1899.

When Mueller was dismissed as Botanic Gardens Director in 1873 the administration of the herbarium was separated from that of the Gardens. In 1892 Guilfoyle went so far as to open his own Museum of Economic Botany and Plant Products inside F Gate. It was not until 1823, when the Government Botanist William Laidlaw was appointed Acting Director of the Botanic Gardens that the administration was again combined.

In 1934, a new Herbarium building was constructed inside F Gate, a gift from philanthropist Sir Macpherson Robertson in celebration of Victoria’s centenary. In 1935 Guilfoyle’s herbarium, maintained by the Botanic Gardens, was amalgamated with the National Herbarium collection and the specimens and library transferred from Mueller’s herbarium in the Domain to the new building. The original building in the Domain was eventually demolished (date unknown).

In 1988 the Herbarium was again space restricted, and a circular annex and basement was added to cater for the growing collection as part of Australia’s bicentenary works. The Extension required the layout of Western Lawn to be modified and was funded by the R.E. Ross Trust. By 2007 RBGV again identified issues with Herbarium overcrowding. Ten years later these space constraints had reached critical levels, with invaluable scientific specimens being stacked on top of shelves, stored on tables and filling all sundry spaces in the Herbarium. This lack of proper storage facilities led to irreparable damage to the specimens through a series of pest infestations in the non-secured collection. As a result, the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria 2014-19 Corporate Plan prioritised planning and seeking of funding for a new herbarium building.
20 O'Callaghan T (1927) *Scrap of Early Port Phillip History*, Victorian Historical Magazine vol 11, issue 44, 207 quoting Lonsdale W letter to the Colonial Secretary 21st October 1836 sourced from State Library of Victoria
22 Context (2018) *Conservation Management Plan Melbourne Gardens & Melbourne Observatory Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria* vol 1, 17 at the time of writing but check (section 3.1)
23 Context (2018) *Conservation Management Plan Melbourne Gardens & Melbourne Observatory Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria* vol 1, 18 at the time of writing but check (section 3.1)
34 Allom Lovell & Associates (1997) *The Old Observatory Site, Conservation Management Plan* 90, 92
40 Allom Lovell & Associates (1997) *The Old Observatory Site, Conservation Management Plan* 20, 89
44 Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (2016) *Protecting Victoria’s Botanical Heritage* DRAFT (internal unpub.), 7
5. Melbourne Gardens Today

5.1. Gardens Surrounds
Melbourne Gardens sit within the Domain Parklands, contributing to the network of parks and gardens encircling Melbourne and reserved for public use in the 19th Century. In addition to the Domain, these include the Fitzroy, Treasury, Flagstaff and Carlton Gardens adjacent to the city grid; Yarra Park in Richmond; Fawkner Park in South Yarra; Albert Park in South Melbourne and Royal Park in Parkville. In most cases this ring forms an open space boundary between the commercial city centre and the residential inner suburbs.

Insert plan “gardens context”
Caption: Surrounding land use showing the Melbourne Gardens in the context of both the Domain Parklands and the wider city.

Domain Parklands forms a continuous swathe of over 120ha of public open space starting at the southern end of the city grid. Government House, the Sydney Myer Music Bowl, the Shrine of Remembrance and the RBGV Melbourne Gardens all sit within the Domain and are separately managed. Parkland within the Domain is managed by the City of Melbourne and is comprised of the Alexandra Gardens, Henley Reserve, Queen Victoria Gardens, Kings Domain and Kings Domain South. The Domain Parklands are generally planted in the gardenesque style, with a predominantly European tree canopy, sweeping pathways, decorative planting beds and landscape follies. The exception being the classically derived Shrine of Remembrance.

The Melbourne Gardens are at the eastern end of the Domain, approximately 2km south-east of the Melbourne CBD. The site is bounded by Alexandra Avenue and the Yarra River to the north, the Anderson Street residential area to the east, Birdwood Avenue and Domain Parklands to the south and Government House to the west. Small fingers of Melbourne Gardens land extend around the northern and southern boundaries of Government House and connect directly to the Domain Parklands. Domain Road and a small commercial shopping strip lie approximately 100m to the south, separated from the Gardens by Kings Domain South. Two schools, Melbourne Grammar and Melbourne Girls Grammar abut the Domain. A popular 3.8km running circuit known as the Tan Track encircles the Garden and Kings Domain and is used by approximately 4000-6000 visitors every day.

5.2. Reaching the Melbourne Gardens

Getting to the Gardens
The Melbourne Gardens are easily accessible by vehicle with car parking provided on all road frontages, and bus parking on Anderson Street near A Gate and on Birdwood Avenue opposite the Shrine. Trams run regularly along St Kilda Road, however the nearest stop is a 600m walk uphill and is not wheelchair accessible. The shortest accessible route from public transport is 900mm along Domain Road and through Kings Domain South to F Gate. The nearest train station is Richmond, an 800m walk from A Gate across Goschs Paddock. A taxi rank is located on Birdwood Avenue, near the intersection with Domain Road. (add reference to figure “accessing the gardens”, below) illustrates all means of reaching the Gardens.

In 2017, construction commenced on a new train station to be located on the corner of St Kilda and Domain Roads and called “Anzac Station”. Once completed this station will be the closest to the Gardens and provide an opportunity to increase accessibility and visitor numbers. Opening of the new station is expected by 2025, together with the return of Tram 8 to Domain Road. In the interim, there will be significant disruptions to the tram network and road access along St Kilda Road, although the long-term benefits for the Melbourne Gardens are considered to greatly outweigh the short-term reduction in access.
Arriving at the Gardens

Melbourne Gardens are accessed by ten public gates in addition to four staff only vehicle entrances. Public gates are named alphabetically, starting with A Gate in the north-eastern corner and running clockwise around the Gardens ending with H Gate on the northern boundary. Two gates are individually named: Lych Gate, formally part of Government House, and the 1999 addition of O Gate at the Melbourne Observatory. Gate use varies across the site with O Gate, opposite the Shrine of Remembrance and contiguous to the Children’s Garden, having the greatest use with 400,000 visitors annually, followed by the tour bus accessible A Gate (300,000) and the historic main entrance at F Gate (206,000). D Gate, the entrance for outdoor cinema has 196,000 visitors annually.

Historically, the Gardens have been fenced since at least 1862, and are open from 7:30am to sunset each day. The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden is separately fenced and has its own opening hours which include two months’ closure for maintenance each winter and exclusive use for Learning and Participation programs two days a week. All parts of the Gardens are open to the public, with the exception of the works yard, car park on the Observatory site and the buildings and their immediate surrounds. There is no charge for admission to the Gardens, however fees are charged for venue bookings and to access services such as public programs.

Navigating the site

Within the Gardens movement is generally via a network of broad, gently curving asphalt pathways. These paths, laid out by Guilfoyle, are an essential component of the landscape character discussed below and provide an enduring framework for the various landscape elements. Generally speaking they follow the topography of the site, with some notable exceptions where they plunge down the hill near the Temple of the Winds, and around Hopetoun and Tennyson Lawns. The system creates a series of loops which link all parts of the Gardens and provide a myriad of ways to traverse the site. Coupled with this; the open lawns and swathes of garden beds invite visitors to step off the pathways and wander informally.

In addition to the main path network, a series of secondary paths provide a more intimate experience and greater exposure to the plant collections. These pathways are narrow and frequently gravel surfaced, although in recent years exposed aggregate concrete and steel boardwalks have been used, while some older pathways remain asphalt. Examples of these secondary pathways are the enclosed walks within the Australian Forest Border, Southern China Collection, and Long Island; the access pathways to the Herb Garden and Perennial Border, and the new steel boardwalk through the Fern Gully.

Guilfoyle’s curving path system, while providing a beautiful and flexible means of exploring the site, does not fully lend itself to intuitive wayfinding. The natural topography of the site and constantly looping paths help somewhat, but signage at major junctions is still used to assist wayfinding. Even in more recent developments within the Gardens, especially around the Observatory, many visitors inadvertently end up in staff-only areas due to the confusing hierarchy of the path system.

Generally speaking the pathways are free of steps and other obstacles, and effort has been made in a number of locations to provide lay-back kerbs to lawn areas and secondary path junctions. The new fully accessible boardwalk through the Fern Gully has done much to improve accessibility to the site, providing a fully accessible pathway from D Gate to the Ornamental Lake. However the topography of the site still poses significant challenges for people with impaired mobility, especially around Hopetoun and Tennyson Lawns where paths are steep and steps are sometimes required.
5.3.  **Landscape Character**

Melbourne Gardens occupies 38.6 hectares on the banks of the Yarra River and are made up of three historically distinct land parcels: the original 35.4ha Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne; the 2.5ha Melbourne Observatory site and a 0.7ha area of Kings Domain added to the Gardens in 1998 and now The site of The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden. Dallas Brooks Drive, a road currently managed by the City of Melbourne, separates the Traditional Gardens from the Observatory and Children’s Garden.

The overall landscape design of the Melbourne Gardens derives much of its qualities from the topography of the site. Occupying a hill on the banks of the Yarra River, the site falls approximately 28m from the high points at the Volcano and Observatory to the Central Lake. A further high point exists along the top of a rock escarpment below Temple of the Winds, the original southern bank of the Yarra River. A drainage line for the Yarra sweeps through the centre of the Gardens, providing a natural focus in the Fern Gully and lakes. This sense of serenity, and a secluded, contemplative atmosphere is reinforced by the dense plantation of evergreen trees, which surrounds the site and creates a buffer to the city: emphasising the Gardens’ inward-looking aspect. Within the Gardens, wider views punctuated by soaring conifers provide a pleasing juxtaposition of greenery against the Melbourne skyline.

**Traditional Gardens**

**Design and Character**

The layout and character of the Melbourne Gardens today owes much to the design and stewardship of William Guilfoyle, who used the natural beauty of the site to create a garden which epitomises the best of the picturesque/gardenesque landscape style. The genius of this design lies in its ability to reconcile the potentially competing functions of a high-level public open space and a scientific institution. By placing the botanical collections within a cohesive and designed setting, Guilfoyle was able to create a unified landscape which met the aesthetic and recreational requirements of a public garden and the scientific obligations of a botanic garden.

“*No necessity exists for allowing botanical correctness and landscape effect to clash in the development of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. To combine the two… has been my design… I have every confidence that the results will be a garden in which the facility of research and scientific classification will combine with the sterling beauties of the scenery.*” William Guilfoyle

Within the Gardens the scenic landscape is made up of a series of highly planned views framed by trees and ornamental garden beds, all laid out with a strong sense of balance between the mass and void. The main component of the mass is the plantings, including the remnant and historic trees, decorative garden beds, indigenous vegetation and the living collections; complimented by the buildings. Guilfoyle’s unified approach to planting design allows this mass to be artfully contrasted against the open void spaces of the paths, lawns and lakes – all of which provide the canvas for displaying the beauty of the plant collections.

Specimen trees, including palms, are used throughout this landscape to provide vertical emphasis and horticultural interest. Placement of these trees is critical, as they are positioned to enhance and frame the important views, not to obscure them. Serpentine pathways, typical of the picturesque style, emphasise these view lines by taking visitors on a meandering journey which carefully directs attention and gradually unfolds vistas of the landscape. Meanwhile island garden

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1 Internal note (to be deleted from final report). All numbers as per the GIS data on boundaries provided by David Cash and have been checked multiple times. 38.6ha is the official size for the whole garden provided by DC and is consistent with measurements taken from the plan.
beds frame views and encourage visitors to step off the pathways and into the landscape. The overall result is a garden of immense beauty.

Another component of the landscape character is the arboretum style plantings. The art of Guilfoyle’s design is that the arbore tusms do not dominate the landscape, as occurs in the Domain, but rather sit seamlessly within the broader picturesque style. This occurs across Hopetoun, Huntingfield, Eucalyptus, and Oak Lawn. In all instances there are strong plant themes that tie the spaces together and prevent the arbore tusms becoming too diverse.

The natural attributes of the site are further emphasised by the placement and character of the plant collections. Cacti, succulent and arid collections are set amongst rockeries in the dry, exposed conditions of the higher ground. The sheltered drainage line to the Yarra has become a luxuriant, semi-tropical fern gully. The steep hillside near Government House is home to a woodland arboretum, and the dry ridge line of southern boundary holds a collection of Australian forest specimens which provide shelter for the Gardens. Within these collections garden beds adhere to the best principals of planting design, creating an ever-changing display of colour, texture and botanical richness.

### The Picturesque / Gardenesque Landscape

The Melbourne Gardens are a designed landscape in the picturesque / gardenesque style. These terms relate to popular 18th and 19th century landscape design styles, however the meaning of the terms is often poorly understood. The Gardenesque style developed out of the English Picturesque movement, however interpretations of both terms varied across time and continents, and even contemporary understanding was clouded by heavy philosophical discussion. In regards to the Melbourne Gardens the terms are considered to mean the following:

- Influenced by the work of Lancelot “Capability” Brown and his English Picturesque landscapes: designed to appear as an idealised view of nature, an idyllic pastoral landscape, punctuated by carefully framed focal points and landscape follies
- Influenced by the Gardenesque notion of the garden as a work of art, and Kemp’s definition of the Gardenesque as “beauty of lines, and general variety. Roundness, smoothness, freedom from angularity, and grace rather than dignity or grandeur”
- Displaying Picturesque notions of the arrangement of the landscape so as to create a series of artfully composed and framed views or “pictures”
- Displaying Picturesque notions of the artful contrasting of the sublime (that which is natural, rough, awe-inspiring and surprising) with the beautiful (that which is gentle, smooth and polished)
- Displaying Gardenesque notions on the arrangement of individual plants and specimen trees in the landscape to optimally display their character

### Recent Developments

In the twenty years since the first Master Plan a number of new, modern additions and redevelopments have occurred. These have been in response to pressures including revitalising tired infrastructure, landscape succession planning and meeting modern visitor expectations. They include the Fern Gully Restoration, Guilfoyle’s Volcano, Perennial Border, Long Island, Working Wetlands and The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden amongst others.

All recent projects have been designed by the Gardens’ Landscape Architect, Andrew Laidlaw, working with the horticultural and other RBGV staff. They have all been implemented to display the best of contemporary design and a strong sense of place, being inspired by and responding to the Gardens’ landscape and its visitor’s needs. Of particular importance is the way these elements, while clearly contemporary, sit sympathetically within the Guilfoyle design, with the hardscaping being subservient to the display of the plant collections, and the rigorous control between mass and void being carefully maintained. These new developments are an important layer of the
landscape character and are amongst the most popular visitor destinations in the Melbourne Gardens.

**Planting Character**
The character of the Melbourne Gardens is dominated by the picturesque landscape as discussed above, and relies heavily on the tree and shrub layer to provide the necessary “green curtain” to frame the landscape. This green curtain wraps around and defines the open void spaces, and provides critical screening of the site boundaries and works areas. It makes up the vast majority of the Gardens’ planting and is critical to the ambience and beauty of the site. The green curtain is absent on the Observatory site, and for good reason, as the buildings need to maintain the historic, unencumbered site lines which were essential to their scientific work. Consequently the plant and landscape character of the Observatory is very different to the rest of the Gardens, being comprised of lawns and specimen trees, with a limited number of low garden beds.

The Gardens’ green curtain is augmented by a number of other planting styles, which while not defining the character of the landscape, are no less important due to the layers and richness they provide. These include the subtropical foliage plants, arid and rockery plantings, indigenous and remnant vegetation and the fern gully.

**Green curtain**
The green curtain (or wallpaper) is the dominant style of planting across the Melbourne Gardens, providing the mass that defines and frames views, encloses and reveals spaces, and provides unity across the site. At a distance, other than the occasional projecting palm or strong foliage focal point, the green curtain appears as a single mass, primarily comprised of evergreen trees, shrubs and ground covers. On closer inspection however the curtain contains significant diversity within its form, with many of the living collections being embedded in this planting. The Southern China, Australian Forest Walk, Southern Africa and New Zealand collections, as well as the Water Conservation and Rare and Threatened beds all form part of the green curtain.

A characteristic of this planting style is that much of the botanical richness and diversity exists only along its outer edges. Internally spaces can be sparse and lacking in diversity, due to overshadowing and root competition. At the outer edges however, the green curtain becomes more nuanced, with ground cover planting punctuated by vertical planting form. More recently some of these foreground areas have been completely renovated including the William Tell Rockery, Magnolia Bed, Perennial Border, pockets of the Australian Forest Walk and Western Lawn. In all these cases the planting is more intricate and detailed, containing decorative plant combinations and climate-matched plants.

Unlike the other planting styles discussed below, the green curtain is not a deliberately designed style. It has instead evolved from an adherence to picturesque design principles and the practical requirements of maintaining botanical collections in a mature garden. However, within its mass it still contains good planting design. This includes elements of the sub-tropical and arid planting styles discussed below, and a general attention to variation, rhythm and overall appearance, punctuated by soaring conifers and protruding palms. The overall effect is one of great botanical richness, but also great composure. Planting is at times striking, but never overwhelming, and the defining atmosphere is one of order and serenity.

**Subtropical foliage plants**
The subtropical planting style was used effectively by Guilfoyle and continues to contribute to the richness and vibrancy of the Gardens’ planting character. The style was popularised in England by William Robinson in the 1860s, who encouraged people to plant bold foliage plants such as palms, tree ferns and bamboos into irregular groupings, and allow them to naturalise throughout a garden. Guilfoyle’s interest in the style was likely to be influenced by this prevailing fashion and enhanced by his experience travelling through the South Pacific and working in the sub-tropical Tweed River region.
The use of sub-tropical planting in Melbourne Gardens provides a rich foliage contrast and is often used as focal points at edges, or as accent plants in garden beds. It also provides highlights within the green curtain’s foliage mix, with palms and cordylines punctuating the canopy. Of particular interest is where these sub-tropical plants such as European Fan Palms (Chamaerops humilis) and Senegal Date Palms (Phoenix reclinata) were plunged directly into lawn areas. Typically the foliage contrast comes from leaf shape and size, rather than colour, with bold-textured plants such as Native Ginger (Alpinia spp.), Cycads (Lepidozamia spp.), Cordylines and Gymea Lillies (Doryanthes spp.) providing highlights within garden beds.

Insert image
Caption: c.1880 painting of the Mounds by William Guilfoyle exemplarising his sub-tropical planting style.

The best remaining examples of the subtropical planting style are at the top of Tennyson Lawn, on Princes Lawn, the Cycad Beds, around the entrance to the Green Organics Recycling Centre and close to the Herb Garden entrance. These arrangements with their dark green, exotic foliage are unique to the Melbourne Gardens and represent a strong link to the garden fashions of the day and the influence it had on William Guilfoyle. They are also a defining part of the Gardens’ planting character, contributing to the variety and interest that characterises the green curtain.

Insert image
Caption: Alcasia, Tree Ferns and giant bromeliads providing sub-tropical highlights near the entrance of the herb garden

Arid and rockery plantings
Another style which contributes to the richness of the Melbourne Gardens’ plant character are the bold arid and rockery plantings. This planting is always associated with picturesque rustic rock work, and is mostly situated on exposed high ground, reinforcing the visual impact of the site’s topography. It is also frequently associated with the rustic follies situated around the Gardens. Of particular note is the planting and rockwork associated with the Temple of the Winds, William Tell Rest House, the embankment and H Gate, as well as the plantings around C Gate which include Guilfoyle’s Volcano, the Arid Garden and parts of the California collection. Smaller examples of this planting are associated with the grottos at A and B Gates, the Touchwood Ruin, and in proximity to Separation Tree, William Tell and Fern Gully Rest Houses.

The arid and rockery planting style is characterised by large swathes of bold, architectural plant forms such as cacti and succulents. Often the many different forms competing with each other and creating a contrasting appearance: especially along the G Gate embankment and within the Arid Garden. This planting style was more prevalent during William Guilfoyle’s time than it is today. An increase in the availability of irrigation water and a change in both micro-climate and fashion has seen the style diminish, especially since Jessep’s time. This style of planting represents a period of garden fashion when botanical curiosities and plants with bizarre form from exotic parts of the world were highly sort after. Crucially, these were often plants that could cope with a harsh environment and lack of water, making them not only fashionable, but highly suitable for Melbourne’s climate. This made them especially suitable not only in Guilfoyle’s time, but also today, as the Gardens adapt to the effects of a changing climate.

Indigenous and remnant vegetation
Melbourne Gardens contain a number of pockets of indigenous and remnant vegetation, which while contrasting to the predominant planting character of the place, are an important link to the Gardens’ original landscape and make a significant contribution to the landscape character in their own right. These pockets of vegetation are split into two groups, the first being those comprised of the remnant River Red Gums (Eucalyptus camaldulensis) and Yellow Box (E. melliodora), the
copses of Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*) and Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*) on the Observatory site, and the Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) thickets on Baker Island and around the Lion’s Head Tree. The second group is comprised of areas of extensive revegetation and re-colonisation, especially on Long Island and around the lake margins.

The indigenous vegetation by its very nature does not have the contrived, designed character of the Gardens’ other planted areas. The exception is the ‘Ancient Sentinels’. These remnant indigenous River Red Gums are older than the Gardens but were deliberately retained in the early landscape development as they contributed to its picturesque qualities. The character of the indigenous vegetation differs from the green curtain due to its rougher and dryer visual quality and finer texture. These areas are currently unirrigated, and therefore experience more summer seasonal variation than the rest of the landscape.

**Fern Gully**

Fern Gully, lying along a drainage line of the Yarra is another of the distinctive places created by Guilfoyle. This space is characterised by a dense canopy of evergreen trees and palms creating complete enclosure, so that both the atmosphere and microclimate is different to any other part of the Gardens. The majority of the plants are Australian Natives, notably Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*), Kauri (*Agathis* spp.), Bangalow Palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*), Cordylines, Cabbage Fan Palm (*Livistona australis*) and a wide variety of Australian and New Zealand Tree Ferns (*Cyathea* spp.). Another significant part of the Fern Gully’s plant character is the extensive use of epiphytic plants, such as Birdsnest Ferns (*Asplenium* spp.) and Dendrobium Orchids, which grow on the trunks of the established trees and reinforce the forest-like inward focus.

Much of Guilfoyle’s original understory, and therefore much of the plant diversity of the Fern Gully had been lost by the early 2000s due to drought and Grey-headed Flying Foxes. However, this has now been rectified through significant under-planting as part of the Fern Gully restoration project, with the area now displaying 240 taxa, and again having a botanically-rich understorey.

**Insert image**

**Caption**: The Fern Gully showing the enclosed, inward looking character.

**Living Collections**

A living collection is a group of plants grown for a defined purpose; usually serving one or more of the goals of research, conservation, education or ornamental display. These collections are actively curated as a scientific resource.

One of the principal characteristics that differentiates Melbourne from other botanic gardens is the seamless integration of the living collection into the overall design of the Guilfoyle landscape. This differs greatly from the traditional “systems garden” approach favoured by Mueller, where plants are arranged based on taxonomic classification, or the other common approach of attempting to arrange a series of individual designed plant collections across a site. This unified approach contributes strongly to the international reputation of the Melbourne Gardens.

In order to maintain relevance, the makeup of Melbourne Garden’s living collections is periodically reviewed. For example, the New Caledonia collection was retired in (2012) due to climatic constraints and the difficulty in obtaining plant material, while the Victorian Rare and Threatened collection was added in 2008 to expand the Gardens’ conservation work.

The Melbourne Gardens currently hold thirty collections falling under five broad categories: Geographical, Ecological, Research and Conservation, Taxonomic and Evolutionary and Ornamental and Cultural. For a full list of the Melbourne Garden’s plant collections refer to [box text](#) or the most recent version of the Living Collections Strategy [reference to section on this].
**Built Form**

The picturesque landscape is a contrived idealised view of nature, an idyllic pastoral landscape comprising lakes, sweeping lawns and carefully designed pieces of architecture. Buildings are placed as either picturesque follies, creating important view lines, or as complimentary features such as the historic Gate Lodges. A series of follies, carefully located around the Gardens, further shape the view lines, becoming both focal points and destinations. A number of these follies are in the rustic gardenesque style, such as the William Tell, Separation Tree and Fern Gully Rest Houses. Temple of the Winds by contrast is a heroic folly, whose classical proportions and grand position typifies the picturesque style. The siting of these structures is important, as they were placed to catch and draw the eye across the landscape, and were often located in prominent positions such as the lake edge where they were originally complimented by the rustic bridges. The follies are critical in defining the Gardens character and contribute strongly to its picturesque qualities.

A number of other rustic features perform similar roles in the landscape. These include the historic rockeries, grottos and original bridges. These once acted as picturesque focal points in the landscape, providing the sublime natural roughness to complement the beautiful landscaped garden beds, lawns and water bodies. The siting of these was carefully contrived by Guilfoyle who was actively involved in their construction, with their placement in the landscape being particularly repetitive. The somewhat grotesque looking rockeries are placed on promontories projecting into the landscape and designed to showcase dramatic plants, and were often used as entrance statements to areas of the Gardens such as the Fern Gully and along Anderson Street. In a different style, artificial rockeries were created around G Gate and in the drinking fountain at A Gate, complementing the more traditional rustic rockwork in these areas.

> In the first place, there must be no uniformity in the construction of the rocks, and the outline arrangement must be broken by gaps and recesses. Bold crags should be formed here and there, and occasional wide shelves: and also fissures should be provided for soil and plants to place amidst a few loose boulders or large fragments inserted in the ground in the neighbourhood of the main rockery, and will greatly add to the appearance of the latter.ii

Complementing the follies, but performing a different role in the landscape, are the historic lodges. At their best these are charmingly designed 19th century cottages, situated in prominent locations at Gardens’ entrances but still nestled comfortably in the landscape, with an open and inviting outlook. These include E and F Gate Lodges and Plant Craft Cottage, and the demolished A Gate and B Gate Lodges. The complex of buildings and structures making up the Melbourne Observatory (discussed below) also demonstrate historic appeal and a high degree of aesthetic merit. At the other end of the spectrum are the utilitarian, mid-20th Century lodges, including Eastern and Nursery Lodge, both of which jar with the broader landscape. As a result, both buildings are largely screened from view and public access, with the exception of Eastern Lodge’s exposed Anderson Street frontage. Nursery Lodge sits within the Works Yard, which was carefully sited on the higher ground so it could not be looked upon from above. A similar approach was taken in the design of the Green Organics Recycling Centre, which while lower in the landscape is still carefully screened behind mature trees.

Other Gardens’ structures include the grand former residences of the Directors of the Gardens and the Observatory (now Gardens House and Observatory House respectively), the Main Observatory Building and the National Herbarium of Victoria. The Herbarium is the most prominent in the landscape, towering above Western Lawn and presenting an imposing Art Deco façade to Birdwood Avenue and F Gate. Similarly, Gardens House sits prominently in the landscape, acting as an

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ii *Garden Gazette*, vol. 1, no. 8, February 1903, pp. 158-159.
important focal point in a similar way to the Gardens’ follies. Of similar scale to the former residences, but sitting lower in the landscape is the 1975 Terrace Tea Rooms. This building, extended in the 1990s, nestles comfortably in the landscape but does not contribute to its character in any marked degree. Combined, these buildings contribute to the mass of the landscape and emphasise its inward focus.

The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden
The Children’s Garden occupies 0.7ha between the Melbourne Observatory and Dallas Brooks Drive. The site was gifted to the Gardens from the City of Melbourne as part of the Observatory development in 1999, and its transfer connected the Traditional Gardens with the Observatory, creating the site we know today. The aim of the Children’s Garden is to engage with children through their play, fostering a sense of curiosity and discovery and encouraging creative play and a love of plants. The space is inwardly focused, surrounded by a steel fence and dense planting. The area has been deliberately broken down into a series of small, intimate spaces that are linked through the botanically rich plantings. The entire garden is heavily planted except for a small open lawn area and pond. Planting themes are used to define the different areas and include: the Bamboo Garden, Snow Gum Gorge, Rainforest Garden, Indigenous Wetland, Flax Tunnel and Tea Tree Tunnel. In addition to the plantings is a general emphasis on nature-based play, rich sensory experience and responding to a child’s view of the world. The Children’s Garden was opened to the public in 2004, and in many ways has set a new benchmark for the way children interact with landscape, and for nature based play in Australia.

The Children’s Garden is an intense space. Annually, it receives around 330,000 visitors, and has become the central hub for a range of Learning and Participation programs, especially for primary schools. The western portion of the site is dedicated to a large vegetable garden which is open to the public and used extensively for school programs. Adjacent to the Vegetable Garden and opening of Birdwood Avenue is a small Gathering Lawn which allows bus groups to assemble before they are separated for different activities. A new Banana Forest and Desert Island were added for the Gardens’ ten year anniversary in 2014, in part to alleviate pressure in other parts of the Garden.

Melbourne Observatory
The Melbourne Observatory occupies 2.5ha at the highest point of the Gardens, opposite the Shrine of Remembrance. There is a long history of both tension and co-operation between the needs of the Observatory and the Gardens, with successive Directors, including both Mueller and Guilfoyle, being involved in the landscaping around the Observatory. The Observatory closed to official scientific functions in 1945 and since 1992 has been under the management of the RBGV Board, with the area around the Main Observatory building being extensively redeveloped in 1999 in a project called Observatory Gate.

The Melbourne Observatory has an illustrious scientific history and to this day is still used for public night sky viewings. It still contains all the key elements of the 19th Century observatory complex including the Main Observatory Building (1861-1902), Great Melbourne Telescope Building (1869-1904), Photoheliograph and South Equatorial House (1873-74), Magnet House (1877), Meridian Collimating Marker (1886-87), Astronomer’s Residence (1889), Astrograph House Telescope Building (1889) and a Caretaker’s Gatehouse (1902). The combined network of buildings and instruments in this complex demonstrates the significant technical and scientific achievements of the 19th Century and is a living example of “Marvelous Melbourne”. These buildings, situated in manicured lawns, with wide paved areas and low planting define the landscape character of the Observatory. This includes Southern Cross Lawn - the Gardens premier event space.

The Observatory Gate project was in response to the site’s transfer to the RBGV and as a result opened up a significant new entrance to the Gardens. The development included an award-winning architectural restaurant and Visitor Centre design by Peter Elliot and a large, herringbone paved courtyard with the Glen Dunn sculpture Neutrino. Despite its architectural success
the area is climatically exposed and uncomfortable, and passive wayfinding into the Gardens is still difficult, complicated by the confusing need to cross Dallas Brooks Drive.

The rear portion of the Melbourne Observatory, adjacent to the Great Melbourne Telescope House, is currently dedicated to staff car parking. This area, of approximately 8,800sqm is off-limits to the public, and except for a handful of significant trees, has little botanical interest. The car park is primarily accessed through a driveway next to Gate House Lodge, with a secondary entrance from Dallas Brooks Drive at the rear of the visitor centre. With the anticipated return of the Great Melbourne Telescope in 2023 there will be an expectation that this area be redeveloped into accessible public open space.

5.4. Climate and Soils

Melbourne has a temperate, warm climate with relatively even rainfall across the year. Rainfall events are generally heavier and less frequent in summer and lighter and more frequent in winter. Long term maximum temperatures vary from 26.0°C in January to 13.5°C in July with mean minimums varying between 14.6°C and 6.0°C. On average, there is only 1.1 frost days per year, with the lowest recorded temperature being -3.4°C in 1982.

Long term rainfall average, based on 160 years of data, is 648mm per annum. Annual rainfall has shown a steady decrease over time, with the most recent thirty-year average being 603mm per annum. This has corresponded with an average increase in mean maximum temperatures of 0.7°C and minimum temperatures of 2.2°C.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Landscape Succession Strategy has identified climate change as one of the biggest threats to the Melbourne Gardens. The report identifies Melbourne’s future climate as hotter and drier, with increased probability of extreme weather events such as heatwaves and flooding. Future scenarios predict a decrease of 9% in annual rainfall and increase of 3.1°C in annual mean temperatures. If these scenarios eventuate Melbourne’s climate in 2070 could be more akin to present day Dubbo in central New South Wales.

A soil survey of the Melbourne Gardens was carried out in September 1992 and is still current, accepting that the Observatory and Children’s Garden sites were not included. This survey identified three distinct soil types, with one comprised of two sub-sets: deep and shallow loamy yellow duplex, deep sandy yellow duplex and loamy gradational. Soil types and distribution are shown in the reference to “soils”. Soil types are closely related to parent materials and were found to be relatively undisturbed: excepting increased levels of humus in the topsoil as a result of long term gardening. Soils are generally acidic, well-structured and suited to horticulture, although natural nutrient levels can be low. Further information on soil profiles and characteristics can be found in the reference to Appendix.

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iii Köppen climate classification cfb
iv Comparison of Bureau of Meteorology 30year climate averages between the period 1861-1890 and 1981-2010
5.5. Fauna

The Melbourne Gardens is a valuable inner city green space, and one of the few locations in central Melbourne suitable for supporting habitat. As a result, it is home to an array of native birds, mammals, fish and reptiles.

The Gardens’ lakes and their margins provide the habitat most akin to the indigenous landscape and today contain a rich diversity of wildlife. These lakes and wetlands are habitat for eels, frogs, turtles, water dragons and rakali – the indigenous water rat. The bird life ranges from tiny Grebes to a nesting Black Swan population, with the banks providing habitat to many smaller birds. The Gardens shrubberies and trees also contain a rich variety of both resident and transitory bird life, and are home to Brushtail and Ringtail Possums and native bats.

Over the past 15 years the City of Melbourne’s population has grown 250%\(^{13}\), and it is expected to nearly double again by 2036\(^{14}\), with this placing increased pressure on urban greenspace. As such, it is predicted that the Melbourne Gardens’ role as a place of habitat and ecological diversity will become even more important. Especially as green space is lost from private property development.

Animals in the Gardens are popular with visitors. The eels in the Ornamental Lake are often the centre of attention, especially around the Tea Rooms. Native rats, known as rakali, are periodically sited around the margins of Ornamental and Nymphaea Lily Lakes, as are the Gardens’ two resident Eastern Water Dragons. Brushtail and Ringtail Possums, Black Swans, Australian Wood Ducks and Purple Swamphens are usually tolerant of visitors, and can sometimes be friendlier than is desired. The snags and logs scattered around the wetlands of Long Island attract an array of wildlife, including Eastern Long-necked Turtles, Pied Cormorants and Nankeen Night Herons. More unusual sightings in the Gardens include the Powerful Owl, which regularly roosts near the Fern Gully, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and Pardalotes. Unfortunately sightings of Superb Fairy-wrens, popular with visitors, have decreased in recent years.

In addition to the native population, a number of introduced animals are present. These are primarily introduced birds such as Starlings, Blackbirds and Indian Mynas, but also include rats in fluctuating numbers.

5.6. Organisational Overview

Organisational Structure

The RBGV Melbourne Gardens, together with the Cranbourne Gardens and the National Herbarium of Victoria are managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria (the Board). The Board has statutory authority for the management of the Gardens under section 16 of the Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991, with the seven members being appointed by the Governor in Council and serving renewable terms of up to four years\(^{15}\). In carrying out its functions and powers the Board represents the Crown and is accountable to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Representation of the Government’s interest in the Gardens is through the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, otherwise known as DELWP.

The day to day management of the Gardens is overseen by the Director and Chief Executive (the Director), who is appointed under the Act on the recommendation of the Minister and in consultation with the Board.

Royal Botanic Gardens Act

The Royal Botanic Gardens Act was passed by Parliament in 1991 (and amended 2017) to allow transfer of management from a Government department to an independent Board, and the
establishment of the Director and Chief Executive’s position. The organisation’s objectives under the Act are:

- to conserve, protect and improve the botanic gardens and managed land and their collections of living plants;
- to conserve and enhance the State botanical collection and National Herbarium;
- to provide for the use of the State botanical collection or plants or plant specimens at the botanic gardens or managed land for scientific or reference purposes, consistent with accepted international practice;
- to increase public knowledge and awareness of plants and plant communities;
- to provide for the use of the botanic gardens for education, public enjoyment and tourism;
- to provide for the carrying out of and contribution to research into biodiversity; and the conservation of biodiversity.

Melbourne Gardens Structure
Management of the RBGV is divided into five divisions: Melbourne Gardens, Cranbourne Gardens, Corporate, Engagement and Impact and Science, all of which report to the Director and Chief Executive. The Melbourne Gardens Division is under the direction of the Executive Director Melbourne Gardens who oversees four areas: Horticulture, Infrastructure and Facilities, Arboriculture and Landscape Architecture. Implementation of the Master Plan will fall primarily to the Melbourne Gardens and Corporate Divisions, but will have implications for all parts of the Organisation.

5.7. RBGV Documents and Policies
Operations at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria are overseen by a number of internal planning and policy documents. The following documents have direct implications for the Master Plan, with further details provided in Volume 2 {insert official title}.

Insert image relationship of the Master Plan to relevant RBGV Planning and Policy Documents.

Caption: Diagram illustrating the relationship of the Master Plan to other Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria planning and policy documents.

Vision and Mission
In 2014 the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria launched a new vision, mission and values for the organisation. These were developed after comprehensive consultation with staff, supporters and the community and guide the organisation as it cares for the iconic landscapes. As the organisation’s key principles, the vision, mission and values guide the Master Plan development and are provided in full at {insert Appendix reference}.

Our Vision: Life is sustained and enriched by plants
Our vision is a flourishing community and healthy planet, sustained and enriched by plants. Through iconic landscapes, horticultural excellence and scientific eminence we will make an enduring contribution to this vision.

Plants, along with fungi and algae, are fundamental to life on Earth. They provide the air we breathe, the food we eat, many of the medicines that heal us, and habitat and shelter for our planet’s wildlife. They give our lives meaning and inspiration.

We prosper and our planet benefits when we understand, appreciate and protect plants for their life-giving qualities. The actions we all take should be based on our knowledge and respect for plants.

Our Mission: Every interaction with us advances the understanding and appreciation of plants
Our Values:

- Creative: We are inventive and enthusiastic.
- Open: We make time to listen, learn and be clear
- Brave: We have the courage to change things.
- Remarkable: We leave a lasting impression

**Corporate Plan**

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Corporate Plan sets out the priorities and performance indicators for the organisation over a specific period. The current document (2014-19) is the first corporate plan to be guided by the new vision and mission and places the RBGV’s strategy focus under the following four themes:

1. Discovery and sharing knowledge
2. Inspiring plant learning
3. Creating special places
4. Towards a sustainable future.

Each theme is supported by long-term strategies, with actions required over the life of the plan [refer to Appendix]. These actions have implications for the Master Plan, including planning for a new herbarium and conservatory. Production of the Master Plan itself is also an action of the Corporate Plan. **Section to be updated in Final Master Plan**

**Landscape Succession Strategy**

The Landscape Succession Strategy 2016-36 provides a framework to protect the Gardens and adapt the landscape to the likely impacts of future climate change, dwindling water supplies, ageing plant populations and plant health threats. Central to this document is the need to preserve the Gardens’ character while adapting to change. To do this the document identified five key strategies with associated actions:

1. Actively manage and transition the Melbourne Gardens landscape and plant collections
2. Establish a mixed-age selection of plants composed of a high diversity of taxa
3. Maximise sustainable water use and supply security
4. Maximise the benefits of the green space and built environment through landscape design
5. Improve understanding of the impacts of climate change on botanical landscapes

The Landscape Succession Strategy is a key driver of the Master Plan and its listed actions [refer to Appendix] are reflected in Master Plan recommendations.

**Conservation Management Plan**

In preparation for the Master Plan, a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Melbourne Gardens and Melbourne Observatory sites was commissioned from Context Pty Ltd and completed in 2018. The CMP identifies the heritage significance of the Gardens (including the Observatory and Herbarium) and provides conservation policies to protect this significance. It also provides a valuable record of the history and heritage fabric of the place.

Conservation Management Plans are limited in scope, and only address the heritage conservation requirements of the site, and not the wider operational and landscape needs of a Master Plan. The CMP provides actions to preserve the heritage fabric of the Gardens, while allowing for change, recognising that “the continual evolution of this landscape is accepted, and expected to continue over time.” As such, it is important that the policies and actions identified by the CMP be reflected in the Master Plan recommendations.

The full Conservation Management Plan: Melbourne Gardens and Melbourne Observatory, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, is extensive, being over six hundred pages in length spread across five volumes, with the policies alone running to thirteen pages. For this reason, a summary of recommendations is provided separately at [insert reference to Appendix].
Aboriginal Heritage Values

A chief recommendation of the Conservation Management Plan was to undertake further work to understand the tangible and intangible cultural heritage values of the descendants of the Woiworung and Boonwurrung peoples; the Traditional Custodians of the Melbourne Gardens. This work was recognised as being a priority and crucial to the Master Plan, and was therefore commissioned and completed in 2017 by Context Pty Ltd. The resulting document provides a comprehensive and valuable history of the Melbourne Gardens and its associated values to the Traditional Custodians.

The nature of the Aboriginal Heritage Values document is such that it needs to be considered in its entirety, and will underpin both the Master Plan and future development work in the Gardens. In addition to Master Plan outcomes it also identifies opportunities for RBGV engagement, interpretation, Learning and Participation and strategic management. Recommendations and outcomes specific to the development of the Master Plan are described in [insert reference to Appendix], including:

- Identifying Aboriginal pre-contact heritage through the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan
- The importance of recognising and reading the indigenous landscape and acknowledging its value to the Traditional Custodians
- Understanding and acknowledging the importance of the original river (Birrarung) and lagoon (Pomgin) and recognising it in the Birrarung Gate development
- Explore the possibility of creating a ceremonial space in the Gardens
- Using the important view lines to tell the stories of the place
- Interpreting the many seasons of the Kulin Nation
- Working collaboratively and pro-actively with the Traditional Custodians
- Working collaboratively with our surrounding land managers to allow the indigenous landscape to be read as a whole

Strategic Water Plan

The Strategic Water Plan provides a framework for the ecological and socially responsible use of water across the Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens. The current document is due for renewal but still contains relevant actions to be reflected in the Master Plan. These are listed at [insert reference to Appendix]. Of particular relevance is securing alternative, non-potable water supplies to complete the Strategic Irrigation Water project and the establishment of a climate future garden and a dry-shade garden. The current version of the Strategic Water Plan will be a key reference document in the implementation of the Master Plan.

Living Collections Strategy

The Melbourne Gardens Living Collections Strategy 2019-2039 guides the selection, curation and management of the Melbourne Garden’s Living Collections and is reviewed on a five yearly basis. The Strategy is currently under review, with the new document being developed collaboratively with the Master Plan.

The main driver in the future management of the living collections is responding to climate change and implementing the Landscape Succession Strategy. This will result in collections which focus on plants suited to Melbourne’s climate and soil conditions, rather than applying historical practices which significantly alter the growing conditions to suit the plant “as a result, greater emphasis will be placed on displays of flora from climates that are comparable to Melbourne’s, while maintaining the style and character of the landscape”17. The plan provides themes and criteria for assessing collections and identifies current collections which are under threat. It also provides a list of potential future collections. As the document is still in draft form actions have not been listed in [insert reference to Vol 2].
Strategic Tree Plan
The Strategic Tree Plan 2009-18 guides the management of the trees at the Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens. It includes recommendations to protect existing trees, reduce risk, manage age and species distribution and guard the long-term health of the tree canopy. A new Tree Strategy is currently under renewal with the updated document responding to Master Plan recommendations. A list of actions relevant to the Master Plan can be found at [insert reference to Appendix].

Building Master Plan
Summary to be added of near complete KTA Building Master Plan

Domain Parklands Master Plan
Summary to be added of recently released Domain Parklands Master Plan

Other RBGV Documents
In addition to the key documents listed above the RBGV has a number of other documents, policies and planning documents that will need to be considered during implementation of the Master Plan, such as the Plant Sciences and Biodiversity Division Master Plan, Engagement and Impact Strategy, Cranbourne Gardens Master Plan, Risk Management Plan, and The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Values Proposition

5.8 Statutory Context
The following is a summary of the legislative framework and planning controls that apply to the management of the Melbourne Gardens as illustrated in [insert figure “Planning controls map” and reference]. The statutory context of the Gardens is subject to frequent modification, especially in relation to town planning, and therefore this information, while correct at publication, cannot be relied on to be current. This material has only been included to provide background information for the Master Plan. A current planning report can be obtained by searching the planning maps for “100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004”. Full text for the zoning and overlays can be obtained from the City of Melbourne or planning maps online. Full text for State and Federal legislation can be obtained from the relevant Government websites.

The following provides an outline of the implications of each of the planning controls, but the original text should be referred to when making decisions such as whether a permit is required. (review and amend if required before publication).

Insert plan: Planning controls
Caption: Plan illustrating the planning controls applicable to the Melbourne Gardens.

City of Melbourne Planning Scheme: Zoning
Land within the Melbourne Gardens is covered by two planning zones [add reference to figure “planning controls map”]. The main portion of the Gardens is zoned as Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ with no specified schedules), with the Melbourne Observatory and Gardens House zoned as Public Use Zone - Other Public Use (PUZ7). It should be noted that there are anomalies between the historic boundaries and the extent of these planning controls. The two zonings are similar in intent, with the Public Park and Recreation Zoning being the most prescriptive.

Under the Public Use Zone a permit is required to subdivide land, but no other works are listed as requiring a permit. The schedule to the zone does not affect any RBGV controlled land.

The Public Park and Recreation Zone has a specific exemption from permit requirements for works carried out by or on behalf of the public land manager, which includes the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. This means that the RBGV does not require a permit for works.
City of Melbourne Planning Scheme: Overlays

The only Overlays that apply to the Melbourne Gardens are three Heritage Overlays (HO), written to reflect the State registration (see below) and a City Link Project Overlay (CLPO) crossing the site at H Gate. Overlays are illustrated in [add reference to figure “planning controls map”].

The City Link Project Overlay has the intention of providing for the smooth construction and operation of the City Link roads. The area within RBGV controlled land is covered by the overlay due to its proximity to the below ground Domain Tunnel and is not near any visible toll roads. Under the CLPO a permit or permission from the Minister is required for outdoor “Advertising Signage”. As the Melbourne Gardens are not near visible City Link Roads there should not be any valid objections if a permit for advertising signage was ever sort.

The Heritage Overlays covering the Melbourne Gardens (HO396, HO402 and HO398) reflect the three Victorian Heritage Register listings for the place. Under the Heritage Overlay no permit is required “to develop a heritage place which is included on the Victorian Heritage Register” because a permit will instead be required from Heritage Victoria (see below). As a result of this exemption the Heritage Overlays do not have any impact on the management of the Gardens.

City of Melbourne Design and Development Overlay Schedule 15

The Melbourne Gardens landscape is protected from intrusive development on surrounding land by schedule 15 to the Design Development Overlay. Design Development Overlays relate to design and built form, and have the flexibility to respond to site specific requirements. Schedule 15 to the DDO specifically relates to the protection of the Melbourne Gardens and has the following design objectives:

- To preserve the landscape qualities and amenity of the Royal Botanical Gardens (sic) and to foster vegetation growth in the Gardens.
- To ensure that the enjoyment of the Royal Botanic Gardens is not diminishes (sic) by overshadowing or visual intrusion from any new buildings or works.
- To minimise detrimental wind impacts on the Royal Botanic Gardens.
- To ensure that any new development or redevelopment is compatible with the existing scale and character of buildings in the area.
- To protect the residential amenity of the area.

Under the Overlay any permit application is required to demonstrate that it achieves each of the design objectives. A maximum building height of 12m also applies. The DDO only applies to private land on the Gardens eastern and southern boundaries and to the Domain Road corridor west of Hope Street. It does not cover either the Melbourne Gardens or Domain Parklands.

Victorian Heritage Register

The Melbourne Gardens are included on the Victorian Heritage Register under three separate registrations: the Royal Botanic Gardens (H1459), Melbourne Observatory (H1087) and Domain Parklands (H2304). The extent of these registrations is illustrated in [add reference to figure “planning controls map”] and reflects the cultural and historic differences between the three parcels of land now under the joint management of the RBGV. The Victorian Heritage Register is covered by the Heritage Act 2017 and is administered by Heritage Victoria who are the responsible authority for permits and enforcement.

The primary registration for the Melbourne Gardens is H1459, covering the traditional Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. As part of this registration an exemption (with specific exclusions for relocation of the Lakeview Rest House and A Gate works and path changes) has been granted for “all works in accordance with the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Master Plan (1998) (sic) and also subsequent revisions of the Master Plan or its equivalent as endorsed by the Executive Director”\textsuperscript{18}. The Master Plan has been developed in consultation with Heritage Victoria with the intention of gaining a similar level of exemptions.
Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
Sites within the Gardens with the potential to be Aboriginal places are protected under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and its 2016 amendment. The Act provides a number of guidelines to assist land managers in identifying which places are most likely to be Aboriginal Places. For example, all areas within 200m of a current or previous water way have this potential and are therefore designated to be areas of “Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity” under the Act. Regardless of the designation of any site, there is a legal obligation under the Act for the land manager to protect all Aboriginal artefacts which may be found, and to put measures in place to prevent damage to as yet unrecorded artefacts.

The majority of the Melbourne Gardens has been designated as an area of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity due to its proximity to the Yarra River (add reference to figure “planning controls map”). However, the RBGV Aboriginal Heritage Values document, produced in consultation with the Traditional Custodians, recommends that given the topography and location of the Gardens, and their relatively undisturbed nature, that the entire site be considered culturally sensitive and be managed accordingly. The mechanism for doing this under the Act is through the production and implementation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP), developed in consultation with the Traditional Custodians.

National Heritage Listing
The National Heritage List is a Federal level list of “natural, historic and Indigenous places of outstanding significance to the nation.” The list is administrated by the Australian Heritage Council, a division of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and was established in 2004 under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. Upon establishment it replaced previous Federal listings including the Register of the National Estate.

In early 2018 the Melbourne Observatory was given National Heritage Listing as part of the broader “Melbourne’s Domain Parkland and Memorial Precinct”. This was the result of a 2017 emergency listing of St Kilda Road and environs in response to concerns about the removal of St Kilda Road elm trees during works for Melbourne’s Metro Rail Project. The temporary emergency listing included not only St Kilda Road, but also the Melbourne Gardens and Observatory, Government House, Domain Parklands and the Shrine of Remembrance. The RBG Board Victoria made the decision to withdraw from the process. However, the final decision by the Australian Heritage Council maintained the inclusion of the Melbourne Observatory in the final listing.

The Australian Heritage Council’s preliminary assessment, albeit truncated by tight time lines, did indicate that the Gardens met the threshold for inclusion on the National Heritage List under a number of criteria. The Conservation Management Plan produced by Context in 2018 also identified a number of indicators of potential significance.

Other Legislative Controls
The following State and Federal Government legislation also governs the work undertaken by the RBGV. Of particular interest is the Federal Disability Discrimination Act which has significant implications for the supply of equitable access into and around the Gardens and its buildings:

- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Federal)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (Federal)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Federal)
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (State)

Non-statutory Registrations
The National Trust Victoria, a community based, non-governmental organisation, maintains a register of heritage sites, including significant trees. National Trust listing does not come with any statutory authority, although it is a professional assessment and carries significant weight with the public. Of most relevance to the Melbourne Gardens is the National Trust’s Register of
Significant Trees, which includes 37 specimens or groups of trees within the Melbourne Gardens. This gives the Melbourne Gardens the highest concentration of significant trees in the state. For a full list of National Trust registrations see [insert reference to Appendix]

1 pers comm. Cathy Kiss, Senior Open Space Planner, City of Melbourne 25/01/18
4 Context (2018) Conservation Management Plan Melbourne Gardens & Melbourne Observatory Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria vol 1, 108 at the time of writing but check (section 5.4)
5 Guilfoyle, W (1875) Annual Report, 6
6 Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (2016) Melbourne Gardens Master Plan 2017, Consultation Report (Stage 1), DRAFT (internal unpub.), 9
9 Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (2016), Landscape Succession Strategy Melbourne Gardens 2016-36, 6
10 Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (2016), Landscape Succession Strategy Melbourne Gardens 2016-36, 17
11 Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (2016), Landscape Succession Strategy Melbourne Gardens 2016-36, 6
12 Centre for Land Protection Research Department Conservation & Natural Resources Bendigo (1993) Royal Botanic Gardens Soil Survey, 1
13 Australian Bureau of Statistics, profile.id. (viewed 16/06/16), http://profile.id.com.au
15 Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991, Schedule 2, item 2, page 37
16 Context (2018) Conservation Management Plan Melbourne Gardens & Melbourne Observatory Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria vol 1, 155 at the time of writing but check (section 7 intro)
5. Development Guidelines

Development Guidelines, in contrast to the Future Developments discussed in Chapter 6 are not limited to any one part of the Gardens. Instead they provide solutions to identified problems that affect all of site management and which have implications across work groups.

Central to this is the need to find balanced solutions to often opposing demands on the landscape. For example, to balance the demand for commercial enterprise with the protection of the landscape, and the need to recognise the indigenous landscape without compromising the 19th Century picturesque ideal.

The Development Guidelines strive to address these challenges. By working collaboratively across work groups they endeavour to create a landscape that preserves what is important, while supporting the work we do and the experience provided to all our visitors.

5.1. Landscape

Our landscape is precious, and protecting it while allowing for change is one of the Master Plans' most important roles. The picturesque landscape designed by William Guilfoyle inspires a sense of wellbeing and is integral to the heritage, beauty and popularity of the place. The development guidelines for the landscape aim to define and protect what is important, while allowing the scientific and practical functions of the Gardens to occur.

**Key Objectives**
- Preserve the landscape character and plant diversity of the Melbourne Gardens at all times
- Provide high quality built form which compliments the landscape and has exemplar sustainability standards
- Provide high quality water treatment and habitat while preserving the picturesque landscape
- Provide for the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and materials around the Gardens

**Landscape Character**

**Challenges**

One of the fundamental roles of the Master Plan is to define and preserve the character of the Melbourne Gardens and protect it against inappropriate change. All new buildings and major landscape developments must respond strongly to the Gardens' unique sense of place and respect the picturesque traditions. All built components must be sensitive to scale and balance, not dominating, but rather becoming an integral part of the landscape. Recommendations made in the Master Plan aim to improve this important balance.

Melbourne Gardens has a strong and unifying landscape character described in detail in *(insert reference to section 4.3).* The landscape is a contrived view of nature, predominantly created in the picturesque / gardenesque style with sympathetic modern additions, but this character can be easily eroded. Past encroachments include the mass planting of Rhododendrons and Azaleas in the 1940s, the replacement of ornamental buildings and structures in the 1960s and the Herbarium extension in 1988. Smaller, incremental changes have also diluted this character, including garden bed creep, inappropriate tree planting in view lines and, more recently, vigorous wetland planting. In a small number of situations unsympathetic additions such as the Herb Garden and the Ellis Stones Rockery have also come at the expense of Guilfoyle's picturesque design.
In the 1960s a number of decorative Victorian cottages and rustic follies were replaced by utilitarian structures. These included Eel and the Long Island bridges, the Clematis Pavilion and lodges at A Gate and near B Gate - Eastern Lodge. Today, the bridges in particular lack character, and sit prosaically in the landscape with little definition from the main path system and no sense of crossing the water.

**Actions**

1. **Preserve Guilfoyle’s picturesque landscape as described in** *(insert reference to section 4.3)*
   - Restore significant view lines across the Gardens in accordance with *(insert reference to landscape character plan)* and recommendations made in the Conservation Management Plan
   - Restore and maintain important lawn void space by removing and planting lawn specimen trees with respect for the significant view lines and void spaces *(insert reference to landscape character plan)*
   - Respect the Guilfoyle mass and void as generally shown in *(insert reference to landscape character plan)* and interpreted with an intimate knowledge of physical landscape and its picturesque principals
   - Develop detailed concept plans for new landscape projects as detailed in *(insert reference to part 3)*
   - Restore and reshape garden beds, lawn areas and key focal points to restore the Guilfoyle mass and void in accordance with *(insert reference to landscape character plan)*
   - Address narrow, shaded lawn areas by reshaping beds
   - Gradually install steel edging to all garden beds as budgets allow or new projects are implemented

2. **Preserve the planting character of the Gardens as described in** *(insert reference to section 4.3)* and use this to guide the implementation of the Landscape Succession Strategy
   - Develop design intent and planting character statements for all garden beds
   - Create more highlights of ornamental planting focused on colour and textural contrast. These should be placed as focal points in the landscape *(insert reference to projects)*
   - Increase plant detailing at all entrances
   - Continue to improve the planting design detail in garden beds where the green curtain lacks understorey

3. **Restore the picturesque bridges and follies**
   - Replace Eel Bridge and Long Island bridges with new picturesque structures. Each bridge must be designed as a focal point in the landscape while meeting all functional requirements
   - Repair the historic rockeries and restore them as picturesque focal points for displaying feature plants. *(insert reference to projects plans – put them on the landscape character plan)*
   - Relocate Lakeview Rest House from its current position behind the Tea Rooms to the Northern Border opposite the Raintree Bed
   - Restore Tecoma Pavilion as part of the Arid Precinct development *(insert reference to projects)*
   - Replace Clematis Pavilion with a contemporary landscape folly as part of the Birrarung Gate development *(insert reference to projects)*

4. **Relocate the historic Arbours**
   - Relocate the historic arbours to pathway entrances in accordance with *(insert reference to plan)*. Clad internal seats with timber and plant arbours with ornamental climbers
Built form

Challenges
Buildings are placed as either picturesque follies, creating important view lines, or as recessive, complimentary features such as the historic Gate Lodges. It is important that all new buildings sit sympathetically in the landscape and are of outstanding architectural merit.

The sympathetic accommodation of new built form in the landscape is a significant challenge for the Melbourne Gardens over the next twenty years. Not only are there challenges in the management and use of our current buildings, particularly around the Observatory, but there is an identified need for the construction of a number of major new buildings. Most pressing of these is a new National Herbarium of Victoria building (insert reference to NSP section), with a new Conservatory also required to strengthen our work as a world leading botanic garden (insert reference to section). The return of the Great Melbourne Telescope, while occurring within an existing heritage building, will change the dynamic and visitor experience of the Observatory site. Combined, the Observatory and Herbarium will form key components of the Gardens new Nature and Science Precinct development.

Actions

1. Assess the capacity of the Gardens current and planned suite of buildings to accommodate future requirements and commence planning to address any shortfall
   - Repurpose the existing herbarium building and visitor centre in line with the Building Master Plan completed by Kerstin Thompson Architects in 2019
   - Carry out an assessment of remaining built form including the Gate Lodges, Eastern Lodge, Plant Craft Cottage, Works Yard and Observatory buildings and develop a Accommodation Review Master Plan to address accommodation requirements for staff, programs, commercial ventures and the Friends and Volunteers

2. Adhere to best practice in the design and construction of sustainable built form
   - Design new buildings to be exemplar models of whole of life cycle sustainability, including embodied energy, inputs, running costs and maintenance

3. Design all new buildings and structures to compliment the picturesque landscape
   - Working with the Landscape Master Plan develop project specific design briefs for all new buildings
   - Maintain a level or architectural consistency between the building at Terrace Gate (A), the Moonlight Cinema ticketing booth and the information pod.
   - Develop a standard architectural detail for screened, inbuilt tenant storage to be sensitively located within the landscape in accordance with (add reference to plan)
   - Design the hard landscaping of all new projects to be subservient to the display of the plant collections
   - See also (add reference to projects) for design guidelines for specific buildings

4. Renovate the historic lodges’ landscaping to improve their usability and presentation
   - Develop landscape design concepts for each of the lodges to accommodate any new functional and back of house requirements following confirmation of their long term use
   - Rework the landscape around Plant Craft Cottage to improve accessibility, remove unsafe elements and improve the design integrity of the area
   - Rework the back of house landscaping of Observatory Gate Lodge to be less domestic and fit more comfortably within the open Observatory landscape
   - Incorporate F Gate Lodge with the wider Nature and Science Precinct landscaping
Art in the Landscape

Challenges
As a cultural place in Melbourne, the Gardens should strive to be part of the larger arts community within the city. However public gardens are often under pressure to become repositories for art works, in particular sculptures. In recent years there have been a small number of permanent sculptural pieces installed into the Gardens including the von Mueller bust, Guilfoyle sculpture, Neutrino and the Magic Pudding.

Where art is ephemeral or temporary it may have a place in the landscape. However permanent pieces of art must be regarded very carefully. As a botanic garden designed in the picturesque style, the artistic highlights need to be restrained and in many instances provided by dramatic planting or follies rather than pieces of sculpture.

Actions
1. Improve partnerships with other public art institutions
   - Review requests for permanent art works through the Gardens' Arts Committee

2. Support appropriate art work across the site
   - Do not install permanent art pieces unless they serve a wider landscape purpose and/or are integral to the Melbourne Gardens picturesque landscape
   - Where appropriate include artists in the design and construction of new landscape projects
   - Encourage ephemeral art projects such as performance, exhibitions or temporary sculptural works
   - Assess and locate ephemeral works with consideration to the sensitivity analysis described in section (insert reference to section on events)

3. As historic and significant trees are lost develop them as “fallen giants” art projects
   - Develop location plans and briefs for the use of timber from individual trees which have already been lost and work with artists and furniture makers to sculpt them to interpret their stories
   - Interpret the deceased Separation Tree as a fallen giant, using the original tree and site to create something which reflects the tree’s life and significance, acknowledging the significant Aboriginal and European history associated with this tree
   - Ensure all timbers from significant trees are retained and stored appropriately

Lake System

Challenges
The Melbourne Gardens have three main ornamental water bodies: Ornamental Lake, Central Lake and Nymphaea Lily Lake. As picturesque features the lakes were designed to be broad, sweeping planes of still water, providing scale and balance to the Gardens. They are vital natural water bodies, providing habitat for native fauna close to the CBD and were central to the lives of the local Aboriginal people, being important hunting and collecting grounds around a natural lagoon known as “Tromgin”. A tension exists between providing a balance between this healthy habitat and the picturesque effect of the Guilfoyle landscape.
DRAFT LAKE SYSTEM AND ENVIRONMENT

Transform Long Island Bapsoto into an ecological wetland. Marginal wetland planting, increased aquatic plants and snail accumulation encouraged.

Provide access for amphibious harvester to the Backwater

New ornamental bridges

Relocate floating island

Reduce visual impact of marginal wetlands around El Bridge and relocate floating island

New marina for lake tenant and maintenance vessels

New ornamental bridge

Increase foreground water in Nymphaea Lilly Lake by reducing tall planting. Remove tall planting in Elles Stones Reserve to reinvigorate Guilloye's views of the water

LEGEND

- Lakes and water bodies
- Areas to be targeted for dredging and sediment removal
- Locations suitable for marginal wetland planting for water treatment
- Reduce wetland planting to restore views
- Ecological wetland areas (seasonal draw down, indigenous planting and snag accumulation)
- Areas suitable for sub-storey habitat creation (leaf litter, fallen giants, leaf litter accumulation etc.)
- Increase shade trees over paths while maintaining important view lines

14 March 2019
The last decade has seen the implementation of the Working Wetlands project. Water is collected from surrounding streets and treated by continual circulation of the water through constructed wetlands, floating treatment wetlands and a rain garden. These measures are an engineered solution and have been highly successful, reducing algal blooms and eliminating excessive summer draw down and unsightly exposed mudflats. In some cases however, the new treatment wetlands have come at the expense of the lakes’ picturesque view lines. Some of the views across the lakes have been lost due to dense aquatic planting that has naturalised and dominated sections of the water bodies. These have proven challenging to manage, with a need to reduce their extent in certain areas.

In the near future there may be increased demand for the Ornamental Lake to act as a storage reservoir as the Sustainable Irrigation Project is implemented and the Gardens secure a long-term supply of non-potable irrigation water.

**Actions**

1. **Refine appropriate locations for wetlands**
   - Undertake a technical assessment to review the impact on water quality of proposed changes to wetland plantings and use this assessment to guide future works
   - Restore significant view lines and open water in lakes by reducing planting and floating wetlands in accordance with *(insert reference to landscape character plan)*
   - Where required, offset losses of wetland planting by the establishment of new areas of planting in accordance with *(insert reference to Lakes plan)*
   - Allow habitat creation and snag accumulation in the Long Island Backwater

2. **Increase storage and draw down capacity of the lake system**
   - Undertake a feasibility study to determine the technical and cost implications of large scale dredging of the lake, with the intent of commencing a staged process of sediment removal
   - Undertake targeted dredging to maintain open channels for punting and remove build up around key lake margins (e.g. Picnic Point) and drainage lines (e.g. below Dog Flat) *(insert reference to Lakes plan)*
   - Once the Sustainable Irrigation Project is complete maintain the Ornamental Lake’s optimum level at 70-90%

3. **Incorporate species selection into wetland management**
   - Plan indigenous species in areas around Long Island, the Backwater and the indigenous promontory, avoiding tall species that block view lines
   - Plant non-weedy exotic species around the Tea Rooms / Lakeside Conservatory and in Central and Nymphaea Lily Lake.

4. **Create access routes for the aquatic harvester**
   - Develop plans and implement two new access points for the aquatic harvester at Central Lake and the Long Island Backwater

5. **Develop boat/harvester storage facility and Marina**
   - Expand current harvester/boat storage area to cater for Gardens maintenance and tenant needs

**Vehicle Movement and Site Storage**

**Challenges**

Originally Guilfoyle’s wide, sweeping path network was designed for pedestrian use only. However, as the range of activities offered within the Gardens grows there has been increasing pressure to
accommodate more vehicle access and storage space. Some vehicles are required for Gardens maintenance including the Gardens’ truck, utility, gators, buggies and the arboriculture truck. The Garden Explorer started operating in the Gardens in 2014 and provides important access across the site. Other vehicles using the paths belong mainly to contractors carrying out works, or to service tenants such as the Tea Rooms and Moonlight Cinema.

This increased vehicle movement has generated safety concerns, particularly as they enter and exit the site at A Gate, the Observatory and along Dallas Brooks Drive. There is also a continual risk of damage to the plants, especially the large trees, and to the Gardens ageing infrastructure. The congestion also reduces the efficiency of staff, who rely on vehicles to transport materials and equipment around the site, but frequently have their path blocked. This is especially problematic when maintenance vehicles are needed in areas frequented by tenants. Other areas of congestion occur where vehicles enter and exit the Works Yard. All this leads to a dilution of the tranquillity of the site and visitor experience.

Connected to the problem of vehicle movement is the need for adequate storage on site. Storage space at Melbourne Gardens is in short supply, and will reduce further with the proposed changes at the Observatory. Storage is required for bulk garden and construction materials, green waste, general waste, storage of hardware and furnishings and for temporary storage for tenants. Ready access to storage areas can have considerable impact on the efficiency of Gardens staff and contractors. Increasing storage areas will provide the opportunity to strengthen the Gardens’ biosecurity and sustainability protocols by expanding recycling on site.

**Actions**

1. **Streamline the transfer and storage of materials and waste across the site**
   - Develop a strategic plan to deal with storage and green waste across the Gardens incorporating the Works Yard, Green Organics Recycling Centre, Government House / Gardens House northern corner, the Lake service marina and other sites as appropriate *(insert reference to vehicle access and movement plan)*
   - Redevelop the Works Yard to improve storage and vehicle movement *(insert reference to projects)*, possibly in conjunction with the Accommodation Review Master Plan *(insert cross reference)*
   - Consolidate satellite garden sheds, providing permeant tool outstations at the Southern China shed and Eastern Lodge toilets and removing, or repurposing other sheds. *(insert reference to vehicle access and movement plan)*
   - Work with Government House to develop a shared storage and green waste area within the grounds of Government House and the northern end of Gardens House grounds
   - Provide temporary green waste holding bays in strategic positions around the Gardens with reference to *(insert reference to vehicle access and movement plan)*
   - Expand the green waste system to include soil recycling
   - Develop an integrated strategic plan for improving the Gardens’ collection, recycling and treatment of general waste, including from events and tenants, with the eventual aim of recycling or composting all appropriate materials
   - Provide vehicle wash down facilities in the Works Yard and direct all contractor vehicles through this area to strengthen bio-security controls *(relocate dot point)*
   - Provide purpose-built tenant storage with reference to *(insert reference to vehicle access and movement plan)*

2. **Redevelop the Works Yard to improve work place efficiency and increase storage**
   - Develop a new plan for the Works Yard which holistically looks at building and works area layout to maximise the use of the space
   - Increase efficiency in vehicle movement and parking, including providing a drive in, drive out access roadway
   - Appropriately locate the fuelling stations and vehicle wash down areas to ease access
• Provide a wash down bay for contractor vehicles to strengthen the Gardens’ biosecurity
• Increase efficiencies in staff accommodation including assessing the uses of the current buildings, with consideration given to the removal of non-heritage structures and the construction of new, fit for purpose buildings

3. Rationalise the movement of vehicles through the site
• Identify and mark access pathways for delivery, tenant and contractor vehicles as per [insert reference to vehicle access and movement plan]. Reinforce asphalt and maintain suitable vegetation clearance along these paths
• Develop the new Birrarung Gate entrance to accommodate small vehicle access
• Incorporate the Dallas Brooks Drive extension to Government House into the Nature and Science Precinct plaza to accommodate vehicle access
• Close vehicle access through the Gate Lodge entrance at the Observatory
• Close Terrace Gate (A) to all vehicles, creating an alternative second Trade Gate via Eastern Lodge
• Restrict hours of access for tenant and delivery vehicles to reinforce pedestrian priority

4. Provide vehicle layoff areas
• Provide a series of reinforced turf layoff areas in appropriate locations along the narrow Northern Border and Southern Border paths, and elsewhere as required along the Garden Explorer route
• Utilise the paved ‘pop-up’ parking spaces in high profile areas as parking bays for the information pod (insert reference to sensitivity plan)

Landscape Infrastructure

Challenges
Integrity and consistency of landscape infrastructure has been maintained through consultation with the Landscape Architect. This has avoided detrimental incremental change, but having a suite of approved landscape details would assist long term planning and ease the heritage approvals process.

There is a considerable amount of infrastructure necessary for the operation of the Gardens. These include roadways, fences, gates, furnishings and services such as power, water, sewerage, telecommunications and stormwater. In particular the Gardens’ stormwater system is not adequate due to age and root infestation, and backflow during high rain events is common. Sections of the Gardens’ boundary fences are also in disrepair and present a poor first impression. Other problem areas include pathway surfaces and garden bed edges, with problems such as gravel erosion, roots lifting asphalt, and garden bed creep. Determining an appropriate materials palette for use across the site allows heritage, landscape aesthetic, maintenance and cost to be considered in an integrated way.

Actions
1. Create a new palette of landscape furnishings
   • Develop appropriate specifications for the full range of landscape furnishings including fixed and moveable benches, drinking fountains, bollards, lights, boundary fences, tree guards, steel edging, edging hoops, handrails and bins
   • Where appropriate, develop consistent, project specific details for individual precincts (previous examples include Fern Gully and Guilfoyle’s Volcano)

2. Develop and rationalise landscape details for the different pathway types across the site
   • Maintain major pathways as asphalt and gradually upgrade across the site, reinforcing sections intended for delivery and contractor vehicles
   • Develop a specification for new concrete kerbs and drainage grates with a lay back design to improve landscape amenity, increase accessibility and reduce stormwater flow
• Develop specifications for minor pathways to be a mix of cement stabilised gravel, exposed aggregate concrete and mild steel decking consistent with existing details
• Where increased paving detail is required (especially at Gardens’ entrances) use large format, random bluestone
• Repair and upgrade historic clay pipe spoon drain in current locations
• Use engineered timber decking to bridge tree roots where they are causing paving disturbance. Where needed this may be combined with slight realignment of paths

3. *Adhere to world best practice in the design and construction of sustainable infrastructure*
• Design new infrastructure to be exemplary examples of whole of life cycle sustainability, including embodied energy, inputs, running costs and maintenance

5.2. **People**

Our Gardens are for people, a place of sanctuary against the backdrop of an expanding global city. It is essential that people can access and enjoy the landscape in a variety of ways, whether for passive recreation, to attend cultural events, or as a place of public science and learning. The development guidelines for people look at providing sensitive solutions to meeting these contemporary demands on the landscape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Objectives</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Support more events and commercial opportunities within the Gardens without compromising the Gardens’ core values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide the facilities to allow high quality programming during all weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflect the Gardens history and place in the naming of its features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduce the need for visitors and staff to use private vehicles by making alternative options more accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide an accessible and inclusive landscape experience for all users</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Visitor Engagement and Commercial Opportunities**

**Challenges**
The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria recognises the need for and benefits that arise from providing events and festivals within the Melbourne Gardens. These are an important revenue source and add to the richness of Melbourne’s cultural life. Wind in the Willows, Shakespeare in the Gardens and Moonlight Cinema having become established summertime events.

However, a tension exists between the need for the Gardens’ landscape to support commercial and cultural events without eroding the core values of the Gardens, which are to provide a healthy, vibrant landscape and scientific resource where people can connect to nature.

Events come into conflict with the landscape when they impact on landscape amenity by disrupting historic view lines, restricting public access and/or creating excessive noise levels. At times this creates conflict with the passive recreation, social values and scientific functions of the Gardens. Other difficulties associated with events include soil compaction, turf damage, vehicle access, storage facilities, habitat disruption and service requirements.

As a result, there is a need for a balanced approach and for the Master Plan to provide additional serviced spaces for events while minimising their disruption. Events need to be assessed to determine their benefit to the core work of the Gardens and their impact on the landscape, matching these to appropriate locations within the Gardens. Non-core high impact activities should be located near the site’s boundaries while, core low impact activities can occur almost anywhere within the Gardens. In some cases it may be possible for events to be modified to reduce their impact and increase the number of locations where they can occur.
There is a long history of marquees being used in the Gardens. Dog Flat in particular has been long used for this purpose, but is poorly serviced and interferes with major Gardens’ vistas. Meanwhile, storage for Moonlight Cinema needs to be addressed so that shipping containers are not obstructing one of the Gardens’ premier lawns and major views. The opportunity also exists to increase commercial opportunities in terms of pop-ups and new commercial operations at the Terrace Gate (A) and Eastern Lodge sites.

**Table:** Graphic version to be produced. Guide to be provided in Appendix on how to use it (discuss)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support for Gardens’ Values</th>
<th>Landscape Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Vehicle and service access needed and requires built form such as stage or marquee. Restricts public access for two or more days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>Vehicle and service access required but little built infrastructure and minimal disruption to public access during daylight hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>Event has no vehicle or service requirements, little or no built form and does not restrict public access for more than half a day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Actions

1. **Increase the number of event and activity spaces within the Gardens but reduce their impact on the Gardens core values**

   - Locate events and activities in accordance with the sensitivity plan and table
   - Exception may be made for events of outstanding merit (e.g. high commercial or social value) and which can be modified to exist within the landscape’s carrying capacity
   - Create a fully serviced performance space within the Observatory
   - Work with the City of Melbourne to develop a contoured, fully serviced performance space on Huntingfield Lawn
   - Eventually remove marquees from Dog Flat and develop new, fully serviced marquee lawn sites in accordance with *(add reference to events drawing)*
   - Utilise the small scale Learning and Participation spaces *(add reference to buildings & Learning drawing)* as venues for low impact events
   - Provide three phase power, vehicle access, bollard lighting, accessible toilets and pathways to all marquee sites and areas with a sensitivity grade of five or higher
2. Expand the Gardens' commercial opportunities

- Develop a feasibility study to assess the case for a commercial Food and Beverage facility at Terrace Gate (A)
- Develop a business case for any proposed redevelopment of the lodge sites
- Develop a series of flat, serviceable spaces for shared use by appropriate pop-up commercial ventures (e.g. beverage carts, ticket sales) and the visitor information Pod (see also, add reference to sensitivity plan)
- Dependant on the outcome of the new Accommodation Review Master Plan, develop business cases for other Gardens buildings as appropriate
- Provide a Gardens’ shop, restaurant and food and beverage facilities at both the Lakeside Conservatory and Nature & Science Precinct

3. Increase the Gardens’ engagement by capturing new audiences

- Develop a community meeting space in conjunction with the Lakeside Conservatory
- Cater to culturally and linguistically diverse audiences through our signage and events
- Create a series of paved photo points at highlight locations within gardens and provide visual (all language) signage to discourage people walking on garden beds
- Explore opportunities to better cater to culturally and linguistically diverse visitors through the food and beverage and facilities provided
- Develop new landscape projects which actively engage older children, teenagers and young adults
- Provide Visitor Centres at the Lakeside Conservatory and Nature and Science Precinct, with a VC outreach / Learning and Participation post at Terrace Gate (A)

Learning and Participation

Challenges
The Melbourne Gardens have a long history of delivering high quality Learning and Participation programs aligned with the Victorian schools’ curriculum. These programs are delivered to all age groups from kindergarten up to VCE and are centred on the Children’s Garden and Oak Lawn. The delivery of Learning and Participation programs requires a specific set of facilities including space to assemble and securely store school bags and easy access to bus parking and toilets.

Learning and Participation programs are currently limited by having no dedicated all-weather facility. Providing a protected space for up to one hundred children would increase bookings and serviceability by allowing the Gardens to guarantee that programs are delivered, whatever the weather. There is also a desire to spread the programs across the Gardens, alleviating pressure on the Children’s Garden and Oak Lawn and enabling children to engage more deeply with other parts of the landscape.

Actions
1. Provide secured storage near the assembly points

- Provide a lockable, weather protected room in the repurposed Visitor Centre to store school bags and class sets of wet weather gear for activities centred around the Children’s Garden
- Provide lockable, weather protected room in the Terrace Gate (A) pavilion for activities centred around the northern Gardens

2. Provide an all-weather Learning and Participation space

- Modify the current visitors centre to provide an all-weather Learning and Participation space for up to 100 children.
- Provide cooking facilities in association with the all-weather space to allow the Learning and Participation team to expand their food programs
3. **Provide a series of Learning and Participation spaces across the Gardens for use by individual classes (up to 30 people)**

- Develop a new gathering space on Terrace Lawn as a meeting point for Learning and Participation activities in the northern Gardens
- Develop a teaching facility within the new Lakeside Conservatory
- Create a new gathering space associated with the Sensory Garden development
- Develop a new gathering space associated with the Wild Wood on Hopetoun Lawn
- Develop the replacement for Clematis Pavilion and renovated Tecoma Pavilion to include all-weather spaces
- Utilise the existing Long Island Bora and Guilfoyle’s Volcano gathering spaces for Learning and Participation programs

**Naming**

**Challenges**

Individual names are used across the Melbourne Gardens to differentiate spaces including large precincts, such as the Ornamental Lake, and individual garden beds, landscape features, gates and follies. This naming system aids management and wayfinding, but in many cases names are organic, having become tied to places over time without strong historic or landscape linkages. There is also a decided bias towards Victorian era sensibilities in the naming. Dog Flat, Ornamental Lake and the Director’s Tunnel are examples of names without good context. The gates too are problematic, and with the exception of Observatory Gate and the whimsically named Lych Gate, are neither memorable nor geographically relevant. The opportunity now exists to consider renaming some of these places, giving greater acknowledgement to the Traditional Custodians and individuals who strongly contributed to the development of the Gardens, whilst also assisting with wayfinding.

**Actions**

1. **Rename landscape features with tenuous historic or place connections**

- Look to rename landscape features whose names do not reflect the Gardens history or contemporary relevance
- Where there is a strong Aboriginal place name for Gardens’ features these should be considered
- Names could reflect the Aboriginal history of the site, with any such names to be chosen by the Traditional Custodians
- Names could reflect individuals who strongly contributed to the development of the Gardens

2. **Rename the Gates**

- Improve wayfinding by naming the Gardens’ gates, as has happened at Observatory Gate. Naming to occur through a formal process, possibly reflecting the new names introduced in the Master Plan as follows:
  - A Gate: Terrace Gate
  - B Gate: East Gate
  - C Gate: Guilfoyle Gate
  - D Gate: Domain Gate
  - E Gate: Tram Gate
  - F Gate: Mueller Gate
  - H Gate: Directors’ Gate
- Create three new gates as follows:
  - Main Gate
  - Birrarung Gate
Reaching the Gardens

Challenges
The Melbourne Gardens are centrally located, close to the CBD, but for such an inner city place are surprisingly difficult to access using public transport. The hill top location which makes the Gardens so beautiful also makes them a challenge to reach. Important entrances are at the highest points, a considerable walk from the tram services along St Kilda Road and the trains at Flinders Street and Richmond Stations. This will continue until the opening of Anzac Station and the return of Tram 8 to Domain Road, expected around 2025. However access from the station over the steep hill will still need to be addressed, especially for those with reduced mobility.

The Gardens are well serviced by on street car parking, with a mix of short-term, half-day and full-day paid parking around its boundaries. Traffic studies by the City of Melbourne indicate that most users of the surrounding roads and parking spaces are not visiting either the Gardens or Domain, but are instead passing through, or are city workers taking advantage of the relatively inexpensive all-day parking. As such they have plans to reduce speed limits, alter parking times and pedestrianise some roads. On balance this will be positive for the Gardens and is expected to aid patronage.

For staff, an extensive, free carpark is provided on the Observatory site, shared by the Friends, Volunteers and tenants. This space will be lost in the next few years as the Great Melbourne Telescope is reinstated and the Observatory carpark is returned to public open space.

The Actions
1. Make public transport more accessible
   - Work with the City of Melbourne to provide accessible pathways from St Kilda Road and Anzac station to the Melbourne Gardens
   - Support the City of Melbourne in working with Parks Victoria to upgrade the river landing at Birrarung Gate
   - Work with the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority and City of Melbourne to give the Melbourne Gardens a visual presence at Anzac station and guide foot traffic along a direct route to the Nature and Science Precinct
   - Work with the City of Melbourne to improve directional signage to and from the CBD and public transport
   - Support the City of Melbourne to investigate options for public transport along Birdwood Avenue
   - Work with the City of Melbourne to direct tour bus drop off areas to Birrarung Gate as well as Terrace Gate (A)

2. Reduce the reliance on private vehicles to reach the Gardens
   - Close the private carpark on the Observatory site and return to public open space
   - Provide bicycle racks at Mueller Gate (F), Domain Gate (D) and Birrarung Gate and connect to the City of Melbourne’s Alexandra Avenue major bicycle route
   - Work with the City of Melbourne to provide car drop off areas at Mueller Gate (F), Domain Gate (D) and Birrarung Gate
   - Work with the City of Melbourne to provide parking permits for staff and tenants who require them

3. Make accessing the Gardens easier for visitors with impaired mobility
• Work with the City of Melbourne to provide accessible parking bays at Tram Gate (E) and Birrarung Gate to compliment those already provided at the Nature and Science Precinct and Domain Gate (D)
DRAFT REACHING THE GARDENS AND NAVIGATING THE SITE

- New raised pedestrian crossing with traffic lights proposed by City of Melbourne
- New Birrarung Gate entrance. Connect to City of Melbourne bicycle network and ferry launch.
- Create accessible pathway from Terrace Gate
- New lake crossing across wetlands
- Upgraded Ferry Launch
- New City Gate entrance
- CITY GATE
- DIRECTORS' GATE
- BUS PARKING
- New botanic plantings at Anzac Station and accessible pathway to Gardens' gates
- New / realigned minor internal path
- New / realigned major internal path
- Bicycle racks
- Realign Dallas Brooks Drive, Western Lawn and Children's Garden pathways to improve pedestrian and vehicle flow
- Rationalise minor paths in the Camellia collection
- Bus Parking
- Create a furrowed garden bed to ease vehicle movement around corner
- Connect minor path network along Australian Forest Walk
- Provide a new vehicle entrance from Eastern Lodge. Consider linking to traffic lights sequencing on Anderson Street.
- Rationalise and connect minor paths as part of the Arid & Drylands Precinct works
- City of Melbourne Domain Master Plan proposals
- Bus parking
- Ferry launch
- Pedestrian zone
- Vehicle drop off zone
- Raised pedestrian crossing

LEGEND
Internal proposals
- New / realigned minor internal path
- New / realigned major internal path
- Bicycle racks

External proposals working with City of Melbourne
- Accessible path connection
- 5-minute car drop-off point
- Accessible parking bays
- Botanic planting beds to aid wayfinding

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Navigating the Site

Challenges
Guilfoyle’s broad network of curving paths provide a beautiful and flexible means of exploring the Gardens and are an integral part of the picturesque landscape experience. However, the continuously looping pathways do not always lend themselves to intuitive wayfinding. From a landscape perspective this is mostly a desirable thing, creating a sense of immersion and a dynamic experience of the site where no two journeys are the same.

The suite of signage in the Gardens is generally good, and has recently been augmented by new precinct signs. Map boards at entrances and major path junctions assist with wayfinding and include map brochures for greater flexibility. Overall, the signage compensates for much of the complexity in the path system. However many visitors still become disorientated when moving through the site. In particular, many visitors entering through the Observatory have difficulty in locating the historic part of the Gardens, often ending up in the staff carpark, Dallas Brooks Drive, or Gardens House. The Master Plan needs to address these duality issues along with the lack of entrances along Alexandra Avenue.

The Actions
1. Modify confusing pathways to aid wayfinding
   - Remove vehicle access from the Observatory and pedestrianise the landscape, creating a series of direct pathways with visually obvious connections to the Shrine, city centre and the Gardens
   - Create a major new entrance along the Dallas Brooks Drive extension to Government House
   - Create a visually obvious pathway from the Observatory, through the Nature and Science Precinct and towards Western Lawn, removing current confusing areas
   - Create a new entrance along the Northern Border between Terrace (A) and Directors (H) Gates to improve access to the Yarra River
   - Improve entrance identity and naming in accordance with (add reference to projects)

2. Create a connected secondary path system
   - Create new secondary paths in accordance with (add reference to drawing pathways) to make sense of the existing minor paths, improve accessibility and create an alternative way of experiencing the Gardens and collections

3. Address further problems in wayfinding through signage and interpretation
   - Develop and implement a Melbourne Gardens Wayfinding Master Plan
   - Develop self-guided walks and interpretive journeys to accommodate the various ways people experience the landscape
   - Explore the use of existing and emergent technologies to assist non-English speaking visitors to navigate the site

Accessibility

Challenges
The Building Code of Australia classifies landscapes as a “Class 10 building”, meaning there is no requirement to provide accessibility, however the Federally legislated Disability Discrimination Act is more rigorous. Under this Act a complaint can be brought by any person who feels that access to a public place has been unfairly denied to them. It is therefore necessary to ask “have we done all that is reasonable to make our landscape as accessible as possible?”
In Melbourne Gardens many of the historic paths were laid out along existing contour lines to reduce their gradient. A number of recent projects have improved accessibility with the Gardens, especially the Fern Gully, which created a crucial accessible link in a north-south direction across the Gardens. The introduction of the Garden Explorer, an electric people mover, has greatly increased accessibility around the site, although access to a number of areas is still made difficult due to steep pathways. Conversely, it is also important that parts of the Gardens remain tactile, enclosed and difficult to access in order to provide respite and tranquillity.

Providing good wheelchair access is only one part of providing an accessible landscape. Additional seating, drinking fountains, provision of more direct routes, tactile markers, braille signage and the need for respite from the weather is all part of making the landscape as welcoming, accessible and inclusive as possible. It is this inclusiveness that is important, providing a range of experiences that do not cater for one user group at the expense of another.

**Actions**

1. **Make all public buildings fully accessible**
   - Provide equitable, dignified access fully compliant with the Building Code of Australia to all public buildings
   - Make certain a fully compliant pathway is available from a Gardens’ gate to each publicly accessible building
   - Explore whether making Plant Craft Cottage fully accessible would result in “undue hardship” due its difficult location. Provide buggy access if fully accessibility is not deemed possible.

2. **Provide universal access to all major Gardens’ features**
   - Provide “assisted wheelchair grade” (max 1:14) access to all major Garden features as per [insert reference to drawing]
   - Provide accessible connecting pathways running north-south, east-west and around the Ornamental Lake to facilitate access

3. **Make areas of the landscape without universal access more user friendly**
   - Provide signage indicating the most direct accessible route where slopes preclude universal access
   - Provide fixed seats and regular landings along steep major access paths as per [insert reference to drawing]
   - Provide handrails to all flights of stairs
   - Gradually replace concrete kerbs with layback kerbs
   - Provide more accessible drinking fountains across (including bottle refills and dog bowls) across the landscape as per [insert reference to drawing]
   - Expand the Garden Explorer service to include the Observatory, Conservatory and Sensory Garden
   - Work with the City of Melbourne to provide an accessible connection from Anzac station
   - Work with the City of Melbourne to increase the number of accessible parking bays at Gardens entrances as per [insert reference to drawing]
   - Provide detailed accessibility information on the RBGV website to aid trip planning

4. **Provide inclusive experiences for visitors with sensory impairments**
   - Create a new, fully accessible Sensory Garden near the Fern Gully
   - Maintain some areas of the Gardens as places for withdrawal and escape
   - Explore providing audial interpretation and Auslan interpreters for selected tours and events
5.3. **Science, Horticulture & Environment**

Our Gardens are a scientific institution, a living laboratory supporting the research work of botanists, horticulturists, academics, students and the wider public. They are a living repository for plants and animals, both a scientific resource and an important ecological green space, to be guarded against the impact of a growing city and climate change. The development guidelines for science, horticulture and environment supports this scientific work, and protects the landscape as a scientific resource.

### Key Objectives

- Provide a landscape which supports scientific research
- Manage the Gardens so that the landscape character and living collections are seamless
- Support the implementation of the Landscape Succession Strategy
- Increase plant diversity in the landscape
- Recognise the importance of habitat in the Gardens
- Optimise tree health across the Gardens

### Landscape Succession and Environment

**Challenges**

One of the Melbourne Gardens key strategic documents is the Landscape Succession Strategy. This document has positioned the RBGV as a global leader in adapting to climate change, and works to build resilience in our landscape and living collections whilst maintaining the character of the Gardens. Together, the Master Plan and Landscape Succession Strategy will be instrumental in guiding the Gardens development over the next 20 years.

Targets for the Landscape Succession Strategy cover species composition, plant diversity, securing a sustainable supply of irrigation water, increasing visitor comfort, and research. A number of specific actions arising from these targets are reflected in the Master Plan.

As an extension of the Landscape Succession Strategy the Gardens place a high value on their role as an urban greenspace and the biodiversity and welfare benefits this provides. The City of Melbourne predicts a population rise in Docklands and the CBD of 250% by 2036, placing even greater pressure on our landscape to act as a refuge for both wildlife and people. Increasingly, research, both horticultural and social, is focusing on the benefits which parks, gardens and other green space provide. This is not only in terms of the physical and mental wellbeing inspired by contact with nature, but also the potential for these spaces to address the detrimental health impacts that come from being in cities – especially pollution and the urban heat island effect.

In addition to caring for our visitors and the wider city, the Melbourne Gardens are an important wildlife refuge, especially our lakes and water bodies. They are also home to around 140 species of native fungi and lichens, with species new to science having been identified in the Gardens. Into the future it is important that the Gardens embrace the role they play in caring for not only plants, but the health and wellbeing of people and wildlife in the city.

### Actions

1. **Support the Landscape Succession Strategy to transition to 100% sustainable water supply**
   - Upgrade infrastructure to connect the Observatory and Children's Gardens to the Sustainable Irrigation Project
   - Continue to maintain some non-irrigated garden beds such as the Arid Garden, Long Island and Volcano
• Maintain a balance between irrigated and non-irrigated areas as a means of cooling the Gardens
• Sensitively locate and accommodate any infrastructure necessary for the Sustainable Irrigation Project

2. Provide quality habitat for wildlife, invertebrates and indigenous flora

• Retain fallen tree material and understorey litter as habitat in appropriate areas (insert reference to drawing)
• Manage light levels to reduce light pollution and preserve the Gardens as a “dark site” refuge
• Restore rockeries to increase the number of free-standing water bodies for frog habitat
• Consider habitating practices to promote hollows and the provision of natural nesting boxes in large, old trees

3. Improve the landscape's ability to provide a safe, comfortable environment for visitors, especially during hot weather

• Increase shade in exposed locations through tree planting, taking care not to block important view lines and maintain landscape character (insert reference to Lake System & Environment drawing)
• Increase access to drinking water across the landscape as per (insert reference to plan)
• Improve visitor amenity in the Observatory by planting shrubs and small trees to mitigate the impacts of temperature, glare and wind
• Capitalise on the Gardens’ microclimates to provide a balance between moderate and low water use plants, including lawn areas, as a means of cooling the Gardens
• Develop the Lakeside Conservatory as a place to promote visitor wellbeing and access to nature during any weather
• Maintain the dense boundary plantings in most areas to reduce vehicle pollution in the Gardens
• Work with the City of Melbourne in the development of the City Arboretum in the Domain Parklands

4. Increase the Gardens capacity to support scientific research

• Work with Science to accommodate research projects across the Gardens

Living Collections

Challenges
The Melbourne Gardens currently supports thirty living collections - groups of plants with a specific theme that are actively curated by a qualified horticulturist. The accuracy and frequency of keeping records on each collection is an essential feature of the work undertaken in botanic gardens. Collections may be found in either consolidated areas or dispersed across the whole site. Unlike many botanic gardens, the collections in the Melbourne Gardens are skillfully nestled in the picturesque landscape.

Each living collection has its own management strategy, while the Living Collections Strategy provides the overall direction for all the collections. Historically, collections occurred opportunistically, often reflecting staff interests, while now they are actively managed and in most cases aligned with the strategic goals of the organisation. Living collections are constantly evolving, responding to changes in climate, management and research priorities.
DRAFT PLANT COLLECTIONS

- Expand Californian Collection into a wider Arid and Drylands collection
- Discontinue Species Rose collection and turn area into a decorative display garden featuring grasses and cycads
- Discontinue Viburnum collection
- Redesign as ornamental beds, possibly exploring future climate plants
- Discontinue Water Conservation collection and redefine Cycad collection
- Incorporate Australian Rare & Threatened collection into appropriate locations across the site
- Expand the Lower Yarra River Habitat collection
- Relocate grass garden and reshape garden beds to create ornamental beds supporting the Fern Gully and Palm collection
- Expand Southern Africa collection
- Incorporate remnant Eucalyptus stand into Observatory landscaping
- Rework the existing Herb Garden and expand into a Herb & Medicinal collection

LEGEND
- Green Curtain Tall Enclosed: Predominantly evergreen tree canopy with dense, enclosing vegetation screen
- Green Curtain Tall Open: Canopy trees with open shrub layer
- Green Curtain Medium: Enclosing shrub layer with some protruding canopy trees
- Subtropical foliage plants
- Arid and Rockery plantings
- Indigenous and remnant vegetation
- Arboretum: Canopy trees in lawn
- Feature Garden beds: Low gardenesque highlight beds or other decorative planting with limited tree canopy
Placement of existing collections usually has historic precedence, and it is rare that these collections would ever be removed. However, it is expected that there will be significant change to the collections over the next twenty years, as the species composition of the Gardens is transitioned through implementation of the Landscape Succession Strategy. When a new collection is formed, or an existing collection expanded, it is important that the Master Plan provides landscape character guidance to direct its placement within the landscape. The challenge is to find a suitable microclimate without compromising landscape character.

Actions

1. **Place all living collections to ensure a seamless relationship with the landscape character of the Gardens**
   - Update all individual Living Collection Management Plans to include design intent statements and planting character information
   - Develop new collections with consideration for the Landscape Succession Strategy and Living Collections Strategy
   - Sensitively place new and expanded collections within the landscape with respect for the Garden's picturesque landscape and planting character (add reference to 4.3, landscape character and plant character plans)

2. **Work with the Living Collections Strategy to develop new and assess existing collections**
   - Make all decisions in relation to the creation, expansion or retirement of collections using the Living Collections Strategy’s criteria and evaluation framework
   - Expand the Southern Africa collection within the existing location
   - Expand and rename the California collection to include a wider geographical area
   - Establish a new Ficus collection located across the entire site
   - Expand the Victorian Rare and Threatened collection to become the Australian Rare and Threatened collection
   - Rework the existing Herb Garden and expand into a Herb and Medicinal collection in accordance with Guilfoyle’s original intent
   - Expand the Lower Yarra River Habitat collection to include plants of significance to the Traditional Custodians
   - Retire the Viburnum, Species Rose, Water Conservation and Grass & Bamboo collections
   - Create a new Arid Drylands precinct centred around Guilfoyle Gate (C) incorporating the Arid and Eucalypt collections and the expanded California collection
   - Explore the appropriateness of developing Northern African and South American collections
   - Develop collections to support the new Lakeside Conservatory and review the existing the Tropical House Collection

3. **Use the Living Collections as a means of increasing diversity in the landscape**
   - Support the target of the Landscape Succession Strategy in achieving plant diversity equal or greater than 8,400 distinct taxa with over 35% wild provenance-sourced plants
   - Work with Science to develop collections to facilitate their work
   - Create an area for the public display of the Terrestrial Orchid collection, potentially as part of the Lakeside Conservatory
   - Investigate the usefulness of providing a quarantine centre in conjunction with the new Conservatory

**Tree Canopy**

**Challenges**
The botanically rich and diverse collection of trees is integral to the landscape character of the Melbourne Gardens. In common with many Victorian landscapes, this tree canopy is mostly mature and needs to be carefully managed into the future. Considerable tree planting has taken place since the 2008 Strategic Tree Plan, but the reality is that the large scale senescence predicted in the Plan has commenced, with several significant losses in recent years. This has obvious implications for our carbon sequestration, as the oldest trees are the greatest drawers of carbon. While there are some management options, over-applying resources to retain trees beyond their useful life is rarely appropriate. Existing climate change is hastening some tree loss, and inevitably the skyline and character of the Gardens will continue to evolve over the life of the Master Plan.

There is a need for new tree planting to support the implementation of the Landscape Succession Strategy. This will move away from the traditional cool climate species composition, to one better matched to predicted future climates. For long lived species, such as trees, this approach is especially important and provides a valuable research tool due to the Gardens meticulous record keeping. This can be done without compromising the landscape character. Of greater potential impact on the landscape is the placement of specimen trees in lawns, and great care needs to be taken so that new tree plantings do not impede views or shade out significant garden beds. This is especially important with commemorative plantings as they often demand prominent locations and removal requires sensitive handling.

As a botanical landscape there is an understanding that the trees in the Melbourne Gardens need to be protected. However there is often a lack of understanding, particularly amongst tenants and contractors, about how easily trees can be damaged, and the care that needs to be taken when working around them. In particular, the extent of a tree’s root system (often 2-3 times the size of the canopy), and susceptibility to compaction and root loss is often poorly understood.

Actions

1. Manage the senescing tree canopy
   - Actively plan for mature tree losses by selecting and planting trees that support the Gardens’ landscape succession and species diversity aims
   - Consider active removal of trees with limited value to increase plant diversity and support the implementation of the Landscape Succession Strategy
   - Consider alternative tree management techniques for signature heritage trees including the indigenous “Ancient Sentinels”. This could include public exclusion and habitation
   - Update the Tree Strategy to include policies for the management of ‘Significant’ and ‘Outstanding’ heritage trees including identifying appropriate replacement species when like for like isn’t appropriate
   - Wherever possible retain the wood from significant trees within the landscape as habitat, art or furniture (insert reference to projects)

2. Protect trees during construction works and events
   - Carry out all construction and infrastructure works in accordance with the Australian Standard and industry best practice through early and continued consultation with the Arboriculture team
   - Embed clear tree protection requirements in all works contracts and tenancy agreements
   - Develop new projects with consideration for the management of existing trees and their failure potential

3. Develop a formal policy to manage requests for commemorative tree plantings
   - Develop a list of pre-approved locations and taxa suitable for commemorative plantings and only plant in accordance with these specifications.
- Explore alternative ways to commemorate visiting dignitaries other than specimen lawn plantings
5.4. Heritage

Our heritage is embedded in our landscape, from the Country of the Traditional Custodians through the landscapes of Mueller, Guilfoyle and successive designers. This heritage is living; embracing and protecting the past while allowing for change. It recognises all aspects of our heritage, expanding beyond the traditional post-1835 approach. The development guidelines for heritage celebrate all aspects of our cultural heritage while keeping the Gardens relevant and contemporary.

**Key Objectives**

- Increase the recognition of the Traditional Custodians in the landscape, their values and connection to Country
- Preserve the value of the European heritage of the site and compliment it through sensitive contemporary design
- Promote our heritage to increase our international profile

**Challenges**

The history of the Melbourne Gardens is deeply valued by visitors and staff. The European heritage is well documented and protected by inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register and National Heritage List (for the Observatory), and by the implementation of the 2018 Conservation Management Plan.

More recently the Aboriginal heritage values of the site have been recognised, particularly those of the Traditional Custodians. In 2017, the Gardens commissioned a report *Aboriginal Heritage Values: Melbourne Gardens* which provides a clear direction and recommended actions. This report includes extensive background and suggests many ways to recognise the long relationship of the Traditional Custodians with the site.

The opportunity exists for the Gardens to further harness our heritage values and consider recognition, through National and World Heritage listing. Existing State heritage registration adds a complex planning layer to projects, but has been eased by works in the Master Plan being granted a permit exemption. The Melbourne Observatory has recently been added to the National Heritage List, but excepting major works, comes with minimal regulatory obligations. Meanwhile, external registration does not always protect the Gardens against the damaging effects of incremental change. The recently completed Conservation Management Plan further clarifies and consolidates the Gardens’ history, while staff knowledge and education is also critical to protecting our heritage.

**Actions**

1. **Recognise the Aboriginal Heritage Values of the site**

   - Engage with the Traditional Custodians and qualified consultants to develop a site wide Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP), preferably as a joint project with neighbouring land managers
   - Develop the Birrarung Gate and Long Island precinct to interpret the Aboriginal values of the place and indigenous landscape
   - Reflect the Aboriginal history of the site in our naming practices
   - Develop or expand a living collection which explores plants of significance to the Traditional Custodians including celebration of the many seasons
   - Engage with the Traditional Custodians in the design and development of new projects where Aboriginal values are present
   - Work with the Traditional Custodians to develop an interpretation program to recognise connections to Country and the landscape
   - Work with the City of Melbourne, Shrine and Government House to interpret the wider landscape
Where appropriate include intangible heritage as a layer in design and interpretation
See also (add reference to vol 2 appendix on the values document)

2. Manage the Melbourne Gardens in accordance with the Conservation Management Plan

- Use the cultural heritage values defined in the Conservation Management Plan (CMP), and its policies (Chapter 7, Volume 1), Statements of Significance and individual assessments to guide all use, management and development decisions
- Use the Guilfoyle 1909 plan to define the aesthetic significance of the landscape and retain all landscape features from this time
- Give priority to the retention and conservation of elements identified as ‘Outstanding’ in the CMP (provide a list in appendices) and manage any proposed changes in accordance with CMP policies
- Retain and conserve elements identified as ‘Significant’ in the CMP (provide a list in appendices) and manage any proposed changes in accordance with CMP policies
- Where possible retain and conserve elements identified as ‘Contributory’ in the CMP (provide a list in appendices) and manage any proposed changes in accordance with CMP policies
- Recognise and define the character differences between the Melbourne Gardens and the Melbourne Observatory landscapes including erecting signage to clearly identify the Observatory
- Replace Significant or Outstanding trees with the same species in the same location where appropriate, or with another species with the same values as the original where the original is not acceptable

3. Recognise the place for sensitive contemporary design in the Melbourne Gardens

- Recognise the living nature of the Gardens’ history, and the need to embrace change to develop the social, aesthetic and scientific value of the site
- Continue to support good contemporary design that respects and enhances the Guilfoyle landscape
- Continue to maintain the landscape and plant collections as the drivers of the built form
6. Future Developments

A series of developments are proposed for the Melbourne Gardens, allowing us to respond to the challenges of the future and remain relevant to 21st century expectations of scientific institutions and public green space. Each project is providing a solution to an identified problem or opportunity, in most cases meeting a range of needs with a single project. These include everything from the Nature & Science Precinct to the repair of our historic rockwork. In contrast to the Development Guidelines discussed in Chapter 5, these projects are site specific, enhancing our Gardens with new projects which sit sensitively within our historic landscape.

6.1. Nature and Science Precinct

Design Statement

The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has a vision to create a new Nature & Science Precinct for Melbourne. This will join the Arts & Culture and Sports & Entertainment Precincts as Melbourne’s third major destination by the Yarra River. Central to this vision is the construction of a new herbarium to hold the State Botanical Collection and the revitalisation of the Melbourne Observatory.

As the RBGV’s most critical and complex infrastructure project, identifying the location, form and functions of the new herbarium building is a major focus of the Master Plan. Coupled with the need to securely house the collection is a commitment to opening and activating the space for public appreciation and enjoyment. Sharing the work of the organisation with a wider audience, providing exhibition space, improving the visitor centre and food and beverage options, creating a dedicated Learning and Participation Centre and allowing night time activation are all addressed as part of the new plan.

The establishment of the new Nature & Science Precinct captures all these opportunities, allowing the RBGV to provide Melbourne with a new destination space, securing the State Botanical Collection and consolidating our position as a world-class botanic garden and Victorian icon.

Conceptual design of the herbarium and Nature & Science Precinct buildings was undertaken by Kirsten Thompson Architects (KTA) working with the RBGV as part of the Master Plan process. The new design builds on the existing herbarium, demolishing the 1988 extension while maintaining the original 1934 structure. This will be repurposed as a publicly accessible building housing the Garden’s visitor centre and shop, a first floor Museum of Nature and a rooftop garden and bar. The north-eastern end of the building facing Western Lawn will become a new restaurant, with glass annex and terrace opening onto the Gardens. A storage vault, curation spaces, laboratories, offices and library will be below ground in a double-winged basement. Natural light and amenity will be provided by a series of light wells and courtyards, some of which will be accessible.

A new pedestrian plaza will be constructed in front of the herbarium and over Dallas Brooks Drive as the forecourt to the Nature and Science Precinct. This new plaza with its striking architectural canopy and giant rainforest trees will create a new and botanically rich entrance to the Gardens. The overall effect is to draw visitors into the Melbourne Gardens, inviting them to explore the Children’s Garden, Observatory and traditional gardens, or enjoy the new experiences in the 1934 herbarium building.
Melbourne Observatory will be restored to public open space, with the removal of the car park and roadways and the restoration of open lawns. The new landscape will be simple parkland linked to the Domain and Shrine of Remembrance and provide an increase in public open space. A new Learning and Participation Centre will be established in the current Visitor Centre building and will provide the opportunity to engage local communities with food and urban horticulture. Planting will soften and provide shade for the existing Dunlop Plaza and include fruit trees, low plantings, and the extension of the existing Vegetable Garden.

**Major Elements**

**Herbarium**

- Demolish the 1988 extension and repurpose the original 1934 building for public use
- Repurpose the ground floor with new entrances and visitor engagement spaces including Visitor Centre, Gardens’ Shop, toilets, café restaurant and kiosk, meeting area and Mueller Hall auditorium
- Develop a Museum of Nature interpretative space on the first floor suitable for curated exhibitions and displaying elements of the State Botanical Collection
- Create a new roof garden bar / function room on the rooftop
- Create two new basements to house the functional aspects and collections of the herbarium
- Provide a first floor of the basement, spread over two wings, containing the light well courtyards, library, offices and spaces for public interface, preparation, decontamination and curation of specimens
- Provide a 1,600m² plus storage vault on the second floor basement, under Western Lawn, to house the preserved specimens
- Create high impact courtyard plantings with strong botanical themes reflective of the herbarium’s work
- Design sensitively to protect the Gardens’ significant trees

**Dallas Brooks Drive Plaza**

- Create a new pedestrian entrance plaza between the herbarium and Children’s Garden along the Dallas Brooks Drive alignment, defined by an architectural canopy
- Name the new entrance Main Gate
- Provide a large, architect or artist designed canopy penetrated by rainforest trees. Canopy to provide shade, scale and definition to the plaza
- Provide a central arrival point for the Melbourne Gardens, encouraging equal movement into the traditional gardens, Children’s Garden and Melbourne Observatory
- Realign Dallas Brooks Drive to reduce its visual impact and maintain it as a Government House access route, otherwise closing it to traffic within Gardens’ opening hours
- Slow vehicle movement by creating a plaza rich with planting and a pedestrian focused paving treatment that includes traffic calming mechanisms such as bollards or barriers
- Create a new entrance to The Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden near a small kiosk offering family focused food and beverage options
- Realign the Gardens’ fence to the rear of the plaza, allowing day and night use of the space while securing the Gardens
- Display a visually rich, botanically diverse plant palette as an appropriate entrance to the Melbourne Gardens

**Western Lawn and Mueller Gate Entrance**

- Connect the herbarium to Western Lawn through a new restaurant / function space and terrace overlooking the Gardens, with strong connections to the landscape
- Rename F Gate, Mueller Gate in honour of Baron Ferdinand von Mueller with planting which reflects his work and that of the herbarium
- Maintain Western Lawn as a significant void space and iconic entrance point to the traditional gardens
- Realign Mueller Gate (F) to its original location to provide a more welcoming and connected herbarium building and restore the historic alignment
- Provide a sensitive architectural canopy over the herbarium's southern plaza, designed to reflect the main plaza canopy while maintaining clear views to Mueller Gate (F)

**Learning and Participation Centre and Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden**

- Expand the Gardens' capacity to deliver high quality programs by providing a dedicated, all-weather Learning and Participation space in the current Visitor Centre, shop and restaurant building
- Create an area focused on urban horticulture and food security
- Restore the historic view line to the Meridian Collimating Mark
- Soften the Dunlop Plaza space through orchard trees, decked seats and low gardens, making the space more comfortable and inviting
- Link the traditional gardens to the Melbourne Observatory and the Children's Garden
- Extend the Children's Garden northwards, with a realigned link path providing service access to the rear of the Learning and Participation Centre and an expansion of the Vegetable Garden
- Use a palette of ornamental plants which provide food crops and biodiversity benefits with strong foliage and striking floral displays

**Melbourne Observatory**

- Restore the Observatory to public open space, removing the car park, roadways and dividing fence
- Increase public access to Observatory buildings including the Great Melbourne Telescope House
- Create an open landscape with low island planting beds and straight link paths surrounded by mowed lawns; reading as an extension of the Domain Parklands
- Function as the Gardens’ premier event space with a fully-serviced open lawn area, including inbuilt storage areas and vehicle access from Dallas Brooks Drive
- Rework the path system and garden beds to create a strong landscape connection across Birdwood Avenue to the Shrine of Remembrance
- Provide ornamental landscape plantings which showcase the indigenous plants of Melbourne and the Western Plains

6.2. **Birrarung Gate**

**Design statement**
A new gate will be created along the northern border, located where the Birrarung (the Yarra River) once flowed through the Gardens. The landscape will begin outside the gates, creating a distinct change in character, drawing people into the Gardens to catch a glimpse of the new Lakeside Conservatory across the lake. This will become a major new entrance to the Melbourne Gardens, celebrating the indigenous landscape; its plants, animals, landform and people. The design will use materials, structure and patterning to communicate the indigenous stories about Country which are deeply embedded in the history of the place.

**Major elements**
- Work with the Traditional Custodians in the design of the space
- Highlight the Kulin Nation’s many seasons
- Provide a seamless connection to Long Island with views to the Backwater
- Use natural materials such as sawn basalt, weathered hardwood and flamed timbers
• Replace Clematis Pavilion with a new shelter, becoming a place for Learning and Participation programs and Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country ceremonies
• Continue landscaping across the Tan, connecting to the nearby ferry launch, bike trails and bus parking
• Guide visitors through the Gardens and across the Ornamental Lake to the new Lakeside Conservatory
• Focus on Victorian and indigenous plants while retaining existing canopy trees

6.3. Terrace Gardens

Design statement
The corner of Anderson Street and Alexandra Avenue is to be redeveloped into a new gathering/entry space for the Gardens with a focus on health and wellbeing. The design will remove vehicles from the area and provide a stronger focus on pedestrian access and plant detail. The existing grand oak tree will be revealed to the Tan Track and there will be a strong focus on colourful, seasonal planting. A new terrace will blur the edges between the Tan and the Gardens, creating a new meeting place with views across the Gardens and access to shaded seating and shelter.

Major elements
• Realign the entrance gates to improve the Tan Track/Gardens interface
• Rename A Gate entrance Terrace Gate
• Remove all vehicles from the precinct, creating a safer pedestrian environment
• Create a green roofed kiosk opening to both the Tan and Gardens
• Provide a small visitor services pod as part of the built form
• Provide a new lawn terrace, open to the public but with the opportunity for scheduled activities
• Create a green roofed garden pavilion suitable for programmed Learning and Participation programs and bookable for small events
• Provide sensitively designed permanent storage facilities for tenants
• Provide an accessible pathway from the entrance gates into the Gardens, connecting Anderson Street bus parking to the Lakeside Conservatory and toilets
• Create a rejuvenating space with reclined seating nestled in bold, seasonal planting displays

6.4. Arid and Drylands Precinct

Design statement
The area around Guilfoyle (C) and Domain (D) Gates, including Guilfoyle’s Volcano, Arid Garden, California collection and Eucalypt Lawn will be developed into a broader Arid and Drylands Precinct. The new design will begin outside Guilfoyle Gate (C), creating an evocative arid and drylands planting theme that will continue throughout the area. This re-focus is consistent with the RBGV’s Landscape Succession Strategy and further expands on the success of the Volcano development completed in 2010. The centre piece of the new development will be the redesign of the Arid Garden, where there will be a strong focus on form, colour and the Fields’ South American cacti and succulent collection.

Major elements
• Beautify the entrance at Guilfoyle Gate (C) and strengthen the Gardens’ presence on Anderson Street
• Rename C Gate entrance Guilfoyle Gate and D Gate entrance Domain Gate
• Restore the Tecoma Pavilion, connecting it to the surrounding landscape and enhancing vistas across Eastern Lawn to the city
• Rejuvenate the California Collection garden, providing views across the landscape
• Extend the Australian Forest Walk around the Eucalypt Lawn, including the minor pathway to meet Guilfoyle’s Volcano
• Refocus the planting design into dry forest species around the Eucalypt Lawn
• Create serviced marquee spaces on Eucalypt Lawn and near the Tecoma Pavilion
• Restore the historic Nareeb Gates at Domain Gate (D)
• Expand rockwork throughout the area consistent with Guilfoyle’s vision

6.5. Huntingfield Lawn Amphitheatre

Design statement
The existing Huntingfield Lawn will be gently profiled to become an open air performance space. The existing Gardens boundary fence will be removed creating a seamless connection to the surrounding Domain Parklands. This allows the existing contouring to inform the design, creating a natural amphitheatre suitable for small boutique performances. A new entrance with an arid planting theme will sit adjacent to the Temple of the Winds, reflecting Guilfoyle’s original vision.

Major elements
• Relocate the existing boundary fence and create a new City Gate entrance at the Temple of the Winds, assisting with wayfinding and orientation
• Create a gently contoured lawn area and stage, forming a space for passive use and providing an area suitable for ticketed events
• Provide screened Green Room and storage for theatre and concerts performance
• Strengthen the Gardens’ connection to the Domain and visibility from the Tan Track
• Improve planting along the Government House boundary to define the space
• Use clear trunked shade trees in lawn areas, strengthening the existing landscape character
• Provide the opportunity to explore the option of a shared toilet facility with the City of Melbourne

6.6. Lakeside Conservatory

Design statement
A new Conservatory is to be constructed by the Ornamental Lake to provide a place for people and plants to meet. This will be a space where people come, regardless of the weather, to meet, work, rest or play in an environment which is brimming with plants. “Habitat for Humans” will provide a plant experience that is unique and inspiring. It will be a world-class, green exemplar conservatory which sits comfortably in the picturesque Guilfoylian landscape with plant collections that supports the science and research of the organisation, and the health and well-being of our visitors.

Major elements
• Replace the Terrace Tea Rooms, and create a new destination meeting place for Melbourne
• Site sensitively within the picturesque landscape on the edge of the Ornamental Lake
• Create an immersive plant experience where visitors can sense the intricacies and abundant richness of plants
• Provide a series of controlled climate ‘pods’ that will support the living collections and curation work of the Gardens
• Provide a meeting place for the whole community Including a restaurant, visitor centre, shop, meeting rooms, event spaces and offices
• Build on the work commenced by KTA architects for the Conservatory
• Restore the lake edge, lawns and adjoining pathways to reflect Guilfoyle's vision
• Provide back of house entry and exit points including nursery facilities for seasonal displays

6.7. Wild Wood

Design statement
The northern reaches of Hopetoun Lawn will be subtly developed to create the Wild Wood. Nestled under a group of giant oaks, this secluded and wilder area is the perfect place for children and their families to engage in nature based play, easing pressure on the Children's Garden. Cubby building, mud play and scrambling will be the main activities and the Learning and Participation team will be able to use the space for Bush Kinder activities.

Major elements
• Provide bush kinder and nature play as an extension of current Learning and Participation programs
• Provide unstructured, immersive play for a range of ages
• Minimise built form and provide definition for the existing space
• Incorporate a log trail and rough pathways
• Provide access to ‘found materials” on site
• Create a small treehouse discreetly built into the oaks
• Provide small scale family seating areas

6.8. Sensory Garden

Design statement
Adjacent to the recently renovated Fern Gully Rest House, a new Sensory Garden has been designed as the final stage of the Fern Gully Restoration Project. The garden will take visitors through a series of immersive plant experiences that are designed to stimulate their senses. Views, beauty, colour, sound, scent, textures and the form of plants will all be exploited to create a remarkable sensory experience. An accessible pathway will be provided and there will also be the opportunity to take your shoes off and find a place of quiet solitude.

Major elements
• Designed for visitors with special needs, creating a range of spaces to support people with physical, mental and cognitive limitations
• Create a deliberate, contemplative and slow moving journey through a series of immersive plant experiences including a bamboo forest, lotus garden, and giant Colocasia garden
• Provide a range of seating opportunities including community rock seats, hanging nets and a lotus jetty
• Include an accessible pathway through the entire space, with a simple bridge to cross the Fern Gully creek
• Use the Fern Gully Rest House to provide a gathering space and sheltered seating
6.9. Hanging Gardens

Design statement
A number of sites in the Gardens including the Sensory Garden, Vireya bed, Tennyson Lawn and Mounds offer the opportunity for hanging nets as an alternative to conventional seating. The hanging nets will appeal to a different demographic and encourage canopy gazing, forest bathing, or simply provide a “hang out space” for young people.

Major elements
- Provide a trial of low nets in various places throughout the Gardens
- Provide nets in a range of sizes, catering to couples, small groups and/or families
- Select sites which are easily accessible and will protect existing plants
- Create mulch pathways around the nets to provide access and reduce compaction

6.10. Herb and Medicinal Garden

Design statement
A new Herb and Medicinal Garden is to replace the existing Herb Garden at the eastern end of the Oak Lawn, the site of Guilfoyle’s 1881 Medicinal Garden. The new design will be a contemporary interpretation of a medicinal garden, seamlessly integrated into the picturesque landscape. The Learning and Participation team will be able to use the space with good access to shaded seating and working spaces.

Major elements
- Explore the contemporary relationship between bio-medical sciences and botany
- Replace the 1985 Herb Garden, which sits awkwardly in the Guilfoyle landscape
- Provide working space and facilities for programs
- Include an all-abilities access path through the entire space.

6.11. Nymphaea Lily Lake

Design statement
The area adjacent to Nymphaea Lily Lake, including the Ellis Stones Rockery, is to be sensitively redesigned to improve views of the lake and restore the lawn sweep reflected in Guilfoyle’s original vision. Significant elements of the original rockery, constructed in 1969, will be retained, but the taller vegetation and large Phormium spp. that block the view will be replaced with lawn, providing foreground and scale to the lake.

Major elements
- Remove tall plantings from the Ellis Stones Rockery
- Reshape the lawn areas to be more sympathetic to Guilfoyle’s original plan
- Manage the vegetation in the constructed wetlands to increase the foreground open water when viewed from the Australian Forest Walk
- Sensitively reshape garden beds at the western end of the New Zealand Bed and eastern end of the New Caledonia Bed to restore the mass and void
- Remove gravel pathways
6.12. **Entrances**

**Design statement**
The Gardens’ entrances are to be renamed and gradually upgraded, assisting with way-finding reflecting their position as entrances to a world-class botanic gardens. Each entrance will have a unique plant theme tied to a botanical collection and/or landscape story. The historic fabric will be maintained and improved, while a new suite of materials and landscape details will replace the existing surfaces and signage. Wherever possible the planting and landscape detailing will start outside the Gardens and involve consultation with the appropriate external stakeholders.

**Major elements**
- Establish three new gates at Main Gate, City Gate and Birrarung Gate
- Develop a hierarchy in the gate system to assist with wayfinding as follows:
  - Primary: Observatory, Main, Mueller (F), Domain (D), Terrace (A), Birrarung and City
  - Secondary: Tram (E), Guilfoyle (C), East (B) and Directors (H)
- Select design themes for each entrance in response to the microclimate and area’s broader themes
- Install a signature bluestone paving detail at all entrances using large format bluestone pavers
- Repair the fabric of the historic gates and fences at each entrance
- Give consideration, where appropriate, to developing new decorative gates
- Develop strongly themed, high visual-impact planting around all primary entrances
- Remove G Gate and Lych Gate and replace them with a new City Gate located near the Temple of the Winds while retaining the historic fabric at Lych Gate

6.13. **Ornamental Bridges**

**Design statement**
The Eel Bridge and the two bridges at each end of Long Island will be restored as picturesque landscape features; focal points to be glimpsed across an expanse of water and places to pause and view the landscape. The design of each bridge will draw inspiration from the landscape: its materials, scale and form will all reflect its place within the Gardens.

**Major elements**
- Create a sense of transition, emphasising the views from the bridges and a feeling of crossing the water
- Work with the Traditional Custodians to rename the Long Island bridges to reflect the indigenous Birrarung Gate precinct
- Design all bridges for the appropriate vehicle loads and sizes and to be fully accessible

6.14. **The Islands**

**Design opportunity**
The six islands in the Gardens: Guerard, Fountain, Dallachy, Baker and Ridout Islands in the Ornamental Lake and Sayce Island in Central Lake all need varying degrees of work. Guerard, Sayce, Dallachy and Baker have been renovated, but require further plant detailing. Changes to these Islands will be undertaken gradually. On the other hand, Fountain and Ridout Islands have had very little attention, and require clear ‘design intent’ statements and more immediate work to manage a range of issues.
Major elements

- Enhance the islands by addressing weed issues and improving planting detail
- Rejuvenate Fountain Island as an indigenous landscape and habitat zone similar to Baker Island
- Rejuvenate Ridout Island as an ‘exotic habitat’ zone
- Maintain Baker Island as an indigenous landscape and habitat zone, a visual extension of Long Island and Backwater landscape
- Develop Dallachy Island as an informal gathering space by re-activating the boat launch and existing decking
- Continue to develop Guerard Island as a planted focal point with strong foliage and colour detail
- Continue to develop Sayce Island as a planted focal point with strong foliage and colour detail and increased foreground planting

6.15. Pavilions

Design statement
In recent years Fern Gully, William Tell and Separation Tree Rest Houses have been restored, complementing the earlier restoration of the Rose Pavilion and Temple of the Winds. Work and relocation to the remaining Gardens’ shelters will further enhance their role as picturesque garden follies. The Tecoma Pavilion will be restored as part of the Arid and Drylands Precinct re-design. The Clematis Pavilion will be replaced as part of the Birrarung Gate redesign and Lakeview Rest House will be relocated to an appropriate location on the Northern Border.

Major elements

- Restore the historic fabric of the Tecoma Pavilion and improve views to the city by reducing bulky plant material adjacent to the structure
- Replace the non-heritage Clematis Pavilion with a contemporary, architect-designed shelter as part of the Birrarung Gate design
- Relocate Lakeview Rest House to a location along the eastern end of Northern Border, restoring its view across the lake
- Restore the landscape around the Temple of the Winds to better reflect Guilfoyle’s original design intent
- Repair the pedestal of the Temple of the Winds and develop a long-term maintenance plan for its care

6.16. Picturesque Rockeries and Ruins

Half page spread in final report with text and images only of historic rockeries and good planting design (no plan)

Design statement
The Gardens’ historic rockeries and ruins are important focal points within the picturesque landscape and are to be restored and replanted. The outstanding Robinette rockery inside East Gate (B), commissioned under Guilfoyle’s direction, and believed to be the work of acclaimed grotto builder Charles Robinette, is to be restored as a picturesque feature and fitting entrance statement. Rockeries at Temple of the Winds, Fern Gully, William Tell Rest House and Five Ways have recently been restored. However, there are still many rockeries and grottos that have fallen into disrepair, or been totally smothered by plants. These are now to be restored and replanted, along with the Bluff Rockery and Directors’ Roll at Directors’ Gate (H).

Major elements

- Restore the Robinette Rockery to showcase bold foliage plants in keeping with Guilfoyle’s vision
- Commission an engineering assessment of the Bluff Rockery rockwork and Directors’ Roll and develop a plan for their restoration and long-term maintenance
- Ensure the Director's Roll has sufficient space for the next twenty years of Directors
- Explore the story of the old River escarpment, working with Traditional Custodians in the display and interpretation of the rock escarpment
- Repair and restore all the damaged or broken rockwork and ruins, including the Touchwood Ruin, Rain Tree Bed Ruin, Terrace Gate (A) and Guilfoyle Gate (C) rockeries. (add reference to landscape character plan)
- Reinstate small-scale plant ledges and refine irrigation
- Reinstate water holding areas within rockeries to provide habitat for small vertebrates, especially frogs
- Restore the original purpose of the rockeries as a setting for high-impact planting displays, with nooks and crannies to be tastefully adorned with a mix of prostrate, and foliage plants
7. Implementation

*Section to be added to final master plan discussing implementation, priorities, and the need for further design and consultation work for each project.*

8. References

*Full reference list and index to be provided in final document*

Appendices (separate volume)