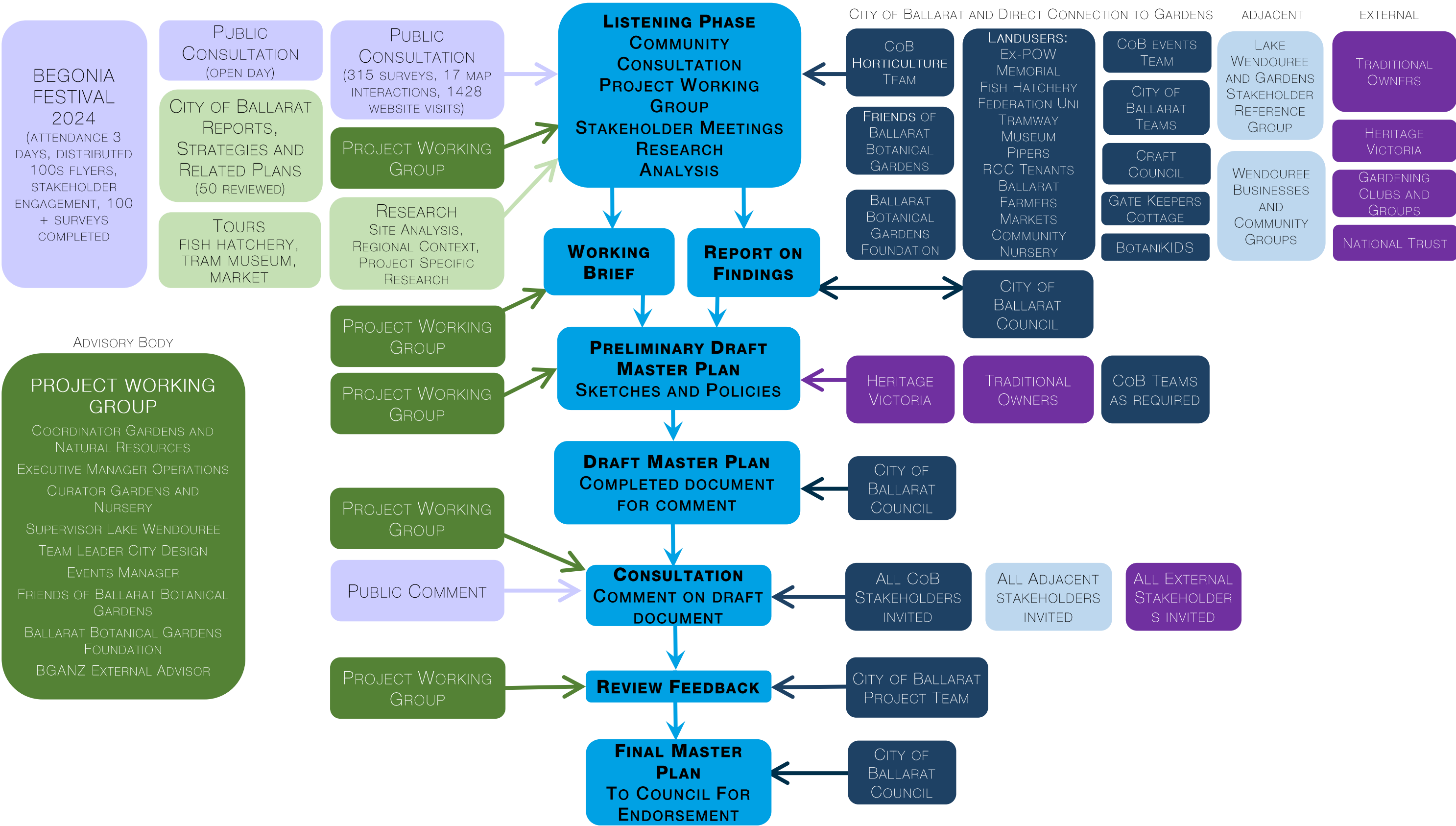




CITY OF BALLARAT

Draft Ballarat Botanical Gardens Master Plan 2025–2045 Summary Document



DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045
PROCESS



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK: WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE GARDENS?

- The staff and the care they give the Gardens
- Beauty of the place and its design, paths, lawns and trees and its peacefulness
- Flowers, particularly colourful bedding displays but also Begonias and Dahlias
- Robert Clark Conservatory and the Fernery
- Events in the Gardens
- Statues, especially the Prime Ministers Avenue
- Seasonality
- History

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK: WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

- Seating
- More native and indigenous plants
- Better signage
- More education opportunities
- More food and beverage opportunities
- A Children's Garden (not a play space)
- First Nations Engagement
- Tree succession / climate change response
- More shelter
- Better accessibility

STAKEHOLDER REQUESTS

- Great enthusiasm and affection for the place
- Expand education offerings
- Positive ambition for the future and what the place can be
- Garden's importance for mental wellbeing
- Current disconnect and need for it to read as a cohesive precinct
- Significant complexities around movement and access
- Provide nature-based play for children
- Native and indigenous plant opportunities in North Gardens
- Stronger event management
- Better connections to Lake Wendouree and more botanically focused plantings

Refer to main report for full details of consultation findings, including complexities.
Topics are listed in general order of popularity

DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 CONSULTATION FINDINGS

Cared for

The care lavished on the plantings and displays contribute to the beauty and respite the Ballarat Botanical Gardens offer. The Gardens are a place of beauty and wonder, enhanced by the changing seasons and stunning plant displays. The horticultural staff are admired, openly allowing people to have a personal connection not just with the Gardens, but with the people who care for it.



Peaceful

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens are peaceful, accessible, open and inviting, and a place of solace, relaxation and joy for many. They belong to everyone, providing equal access to all. They attract people from Victoria and beyond while remaining a special, valued place of respite to the people of Ballarat.



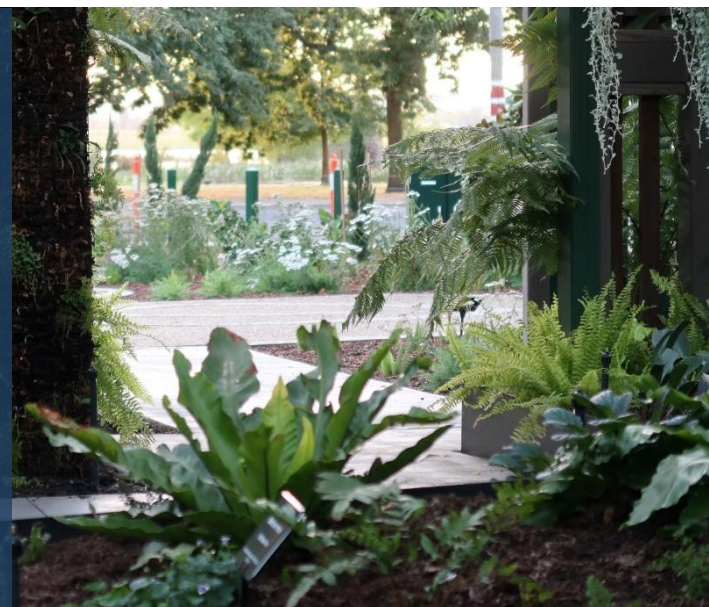
Cultural

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens are a cultural icon of the City, providing free access to history, sculpture, music and the volunteer groups. Events such as the Begonia Festival, Summer Sundays and the Market bring people from far and wide to Ballarat and are an important part of town life.



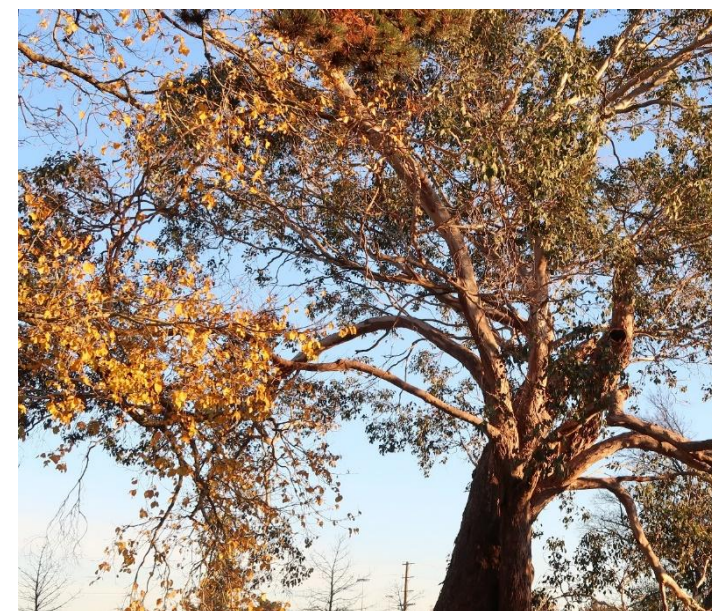
Botanical

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens have beautiful botanical displays, anchored by the begonias, historic trees, Conservatory and Fernery. This knowledge can be shared with people, both local and from afar, bringing greater understanding of plant conservation, history and the richness and joy of plants.



Ecological

Located on the banks of Lake Wendouree and full of wildlife, the Ballarat Botanical Gardens have a strong natural beauty and important ecological functions. This is enhanced by the wetlands in the north and the natural, indigenous beauty of the precinct and its abundant wildlife.





BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 - 2045

Scale 1:2000 @ A1 / 1:4000 @ A3



A Place for Everyone in Ballarat's Botanical Gardens

For generations the shores of what is now Lake Wendouree have been home to the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation who have deep roots and ongoing connections to this beautiful place, a major source of food and drinking water, and an important venue for cultural events.

Since its reservation in as a public garden in 1856, Ballarat Botanical Gardens have been an integral part of Ballarat's town life. One of Victoria's first tourist attractions, they are a source of comfort, joy and pride to the people of Ballarat and attract visitors from around the world.

In 1858 a design competition was held for the site, with a grand vision that was only partially implemented. While the Central Gardens have been lavished with care and attention, North and South Gardens and the Lake Wendouree foreshore have become disconnected in a way that was never intended. Now, in 2024, with the City of Ballarat's population expected to reach over 170,000 by 2041, increasing environmental pressures, a desire to recognise and work with Traditional Owner knowledge, ageing infrastructure and trees and the changing role of botanic gardens, there is a need to strategically plan for the Gardens' future so it can continue to be a place loved and used by all.

The Central Gardens, which includes the location of the Fernery, Robert Clark Horticultural Centre, Prime Ministers Avenue, historic statuary and bedding displays, is the most historically important part of the Gardens and the place most visitors associate as 'Ballarat Botanical Gardens'. People love the rich floral displays, Conservatory, Fernery, walking paths, and the ability to find sheltered and peaceful spots within the Gardens. However, it is known that historically the Central Gardens once achieved these aims to an even greater extent. The Master Plan outlays a vision which retains the character of the place while providing for its future. This includes creating more garden beds, planning for the Prime Ministers and Sequoiadendron Avenues, better pathway connections, restoring a Southern Glasshouse and completing the Fernery landscaping in a sensitive way.

North Gardens, home to beautiful wetlands, are an important venue for the Ballarat Farmers Market and a beautiful, open space that although appealing, is disconnected from Central Gardens by the Fernery, Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Cottage and a disjointed pathway system. There has long been a desire to make this space part of the Gardens – connecting people from the wetlands, through a botanical rich landscape and seamlessly into the Central Gardens while strengthening its use for small scale events and passive recreation. Linking this area to Central Gardens, the Master Plan proposes additional pathways and a Children's Garden around the Gatekeeper's Cottage, which would be expanded to provide a permanent home for the Friends.

At the other end of the site, South Gardens sits disconnected from Central Gardens and has become a place for recreational and third-party features in search of a home. These include a number of visitor drawcards and there is a desire by all involved to connect them into an integrated botanic gardens precinct through better connections, more planting and site beautification works. Part of these works will also include the hands-on learning space, Ballarat's Back Garden. A new landscape project, it provides people of all ages with a welcoming place to learn about gardening and food production.

This entire western precinct is separated from Lake Wendouree by the width and traffic of Wendouree Parade. In its early days the precinct was unified, and the opportunity now exists to focus traffic on those accessing the Gardens, rather than passing through. This will better connect the spaces and make crossings safer for people and wildlife through slowing traffic and providing more practical parking. The addition of more botanically rich planting and better connections to the Lake will strengthen the creation of the Botanical Gardens precinct.

Major projects in the Master Plan include:

- North Gardens Meadowlands, including the Sculpture Park and Wildlife Garden
- New gateways to the precinct
- Children's Garden
- Completion of the Fernery Complex
- Potential elevated boardwalk
- New Southern Glasshouse
- New Rose Garden
- Ballarat's Back Garden learning space
- Improved safety and accessibility works to surrounding streets
- Upgrade of the Nursery

In addition to the above projects, the Master Plan also addresses management issues such as plant collections, responding to climate change, water security, staffing and maintenance, events, expanded education and the important role of the Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens and the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation.

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens Master Plan 2024-2044 has been developed in consultation with the community, stakeholders, site users, managers and the botanic gardens' network to create a new vision for the site that protects and celebrates what people love while allowing it to embrace its full potential as the pride of Ballarat. In particular, it focuses on connecting North and South Gardens and the Lake Wendouree Foreshore back into the botanic gardens story – spreading use, making access and circulation easier and bringing plants and plant stories to an integrated precinct. The aim is for a welcoming, accessible botanic garden that can be loved and used in all weathers, by all people, with something that appeals to everyone.

In making these recommendations, the Master Plan provides a long-term vision for the site, one which allows this beloved garden to continue to be a thriving botanic garden and a place for everyone to enjoy.

DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

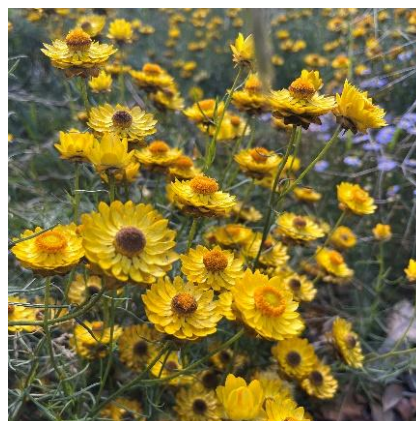
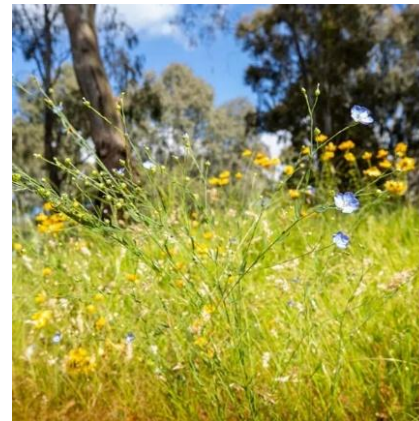


RESPONSE

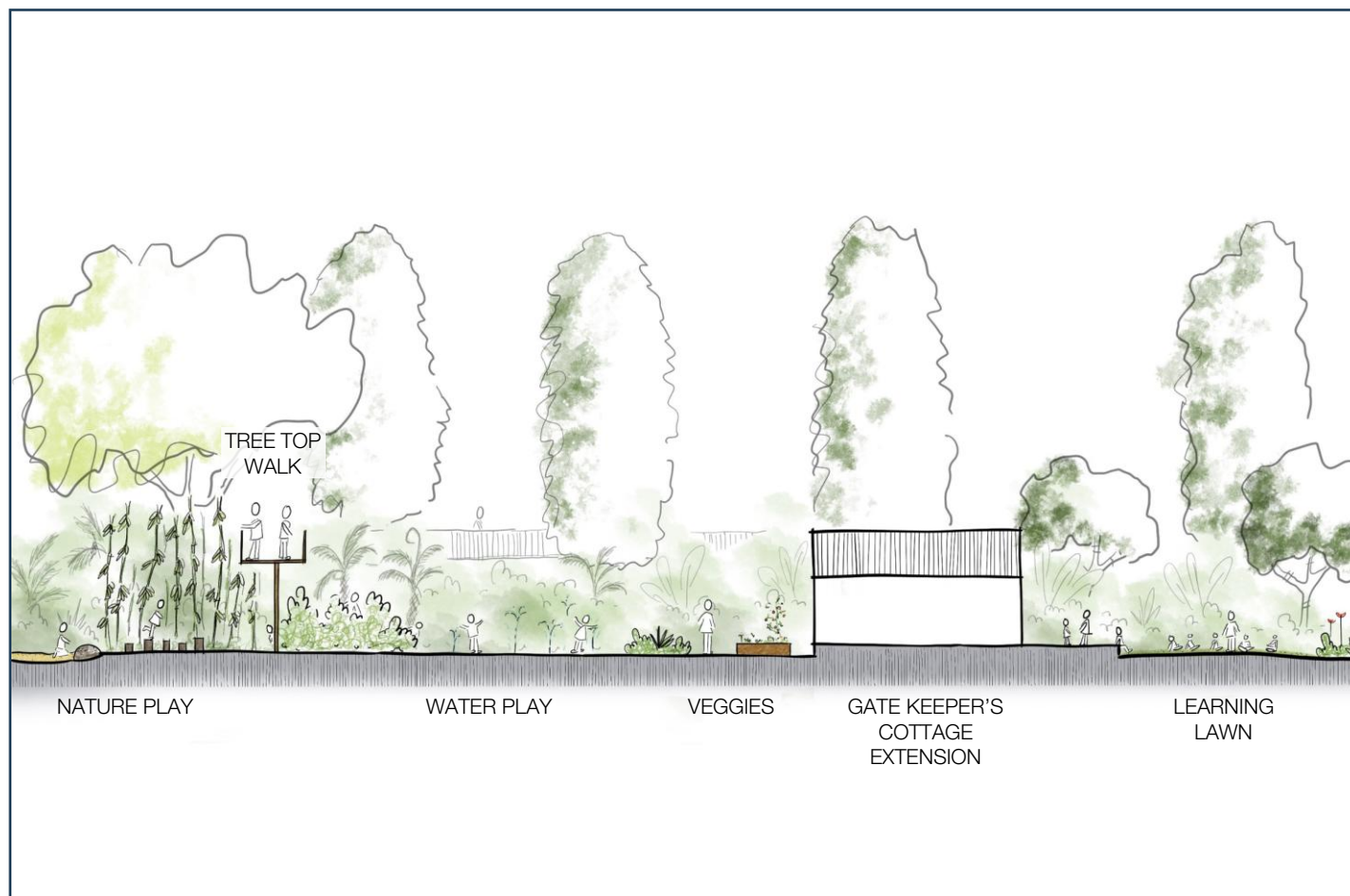
- Beautify North Gardens with indigenous plants, native meadows and more shade trees, expanding its botanic gardens' role while preserving the open character
- Improve facilities for medium sized events and the Ballarat Farmer's Market
- Designed landscape with cutting edge horticulture connecting the natural wetlands to the formal gardens
- Sculptured mounds for framing the space, picnicking and viewing
- Potential for Traditional Owner collaboration
- Improved pathway access and connections to Central Gardens
- Improved facilities for the Farmers Market
- Includes previously endorsed Sculpture Park
- Wildlife Garden around old zoo shelters

REASON

In response to community and stakeholder requests to connect the precinct, have more native and indigenous plants, to make sense of the zoo shelters, improve drainage and functionality, better service the farmers market and to improve pathway connections



DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 NORTH GARDENS MEADOWLANDS

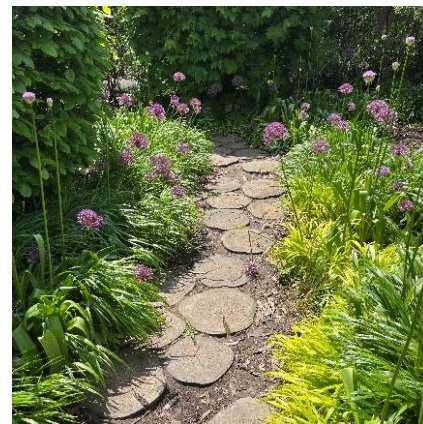


RESPONSE

- New Children's Garden connected to the Gatekeeper's Cottage and BotaniKids programs
- Nature based play such as plant tunnels, rock maze, a water rill, sand play and log play
- Learning lawn
- Potential for vegetable and hands-on gardens
- Potential to extend the Gatekeeper's Cottage to provide an all-weather educational space and permanent home for the Friends
- Good access to toilets, bus parking and the wider precinct, including Fairy Land and the Northern Wetlands for educational opportunities

REASON

In response to community and stakeholder requests for an engaging, garden-based space for children and to improve educational opportunities



DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 CHILDREN'S GARDEN PRECINCT

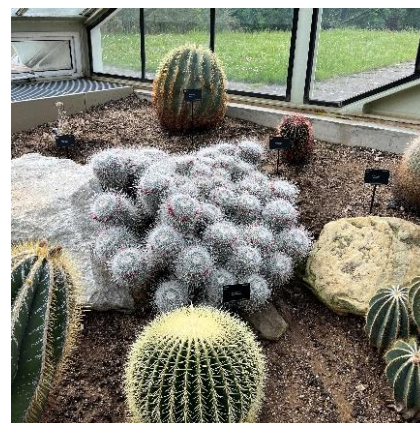
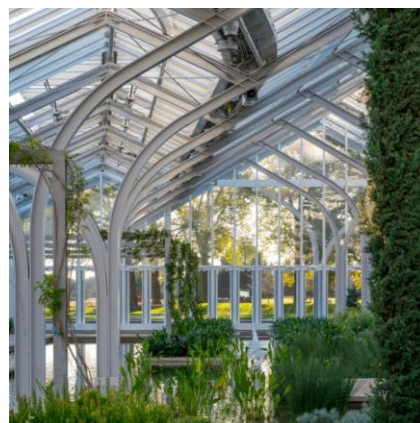


RESPONSE

- Subtle, simple and contemporary architect designed replacement for the end-of-life Southern Glasshouse
- Permanent displays of diverse collections, providing an alternative, all-weather experience to the Robert Clark Conservatory
- Continues the heritage tradition of having two glasshouses in the Gardens
- Opportunity for kiosk style food and beverage outlet with subtle seating within the Gardens
- Opportunity to display the Species Begonia Collection or pursue other species difficult to grow in Ballarat such as cacti or tropical plants
- Permanent attraction at the opposite end of the Central Gardens to spread use

REASON

In response to heritage and practical need to deal with the closed, end-of-life Southern Glasshouse and community requests for more shelter and food and beverage options. Builds on to the high horticultural skills of the Gardens team and the community respect for this and their love of the plant displays



DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 SOUTHERN GLASSHOUSE



RESPONSE

- New, enlarged and fully accessible Rose Garden
- New, fully serviced event space for events such as Summer Sundays
- Contemporary design that works with existing trees in a climate appropriate location while referencing the design of the current garden
- Rose Garden to include layered, companion planting in site better conducive to the health of the roses
- Location activates an under used portion of the Gardens near the Fish Hatchery
- Hedge to the Fish Hatchery to screen security fence
- Promotion of existing daily fish feeding and providing viewing windows to encourage engagement

REASON

Current rose garden is end of life and roses need relocating to address pathogen build up in soil (regular relocation is best practice for roses in southern Australia). Current bed lacks accessible path access. Stakeholder led design to improve visual look of the Fish Hatchery and better connect it to the Gardens.



DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 ROSE GARDEN AND FISH HATCHERY INTERFACE

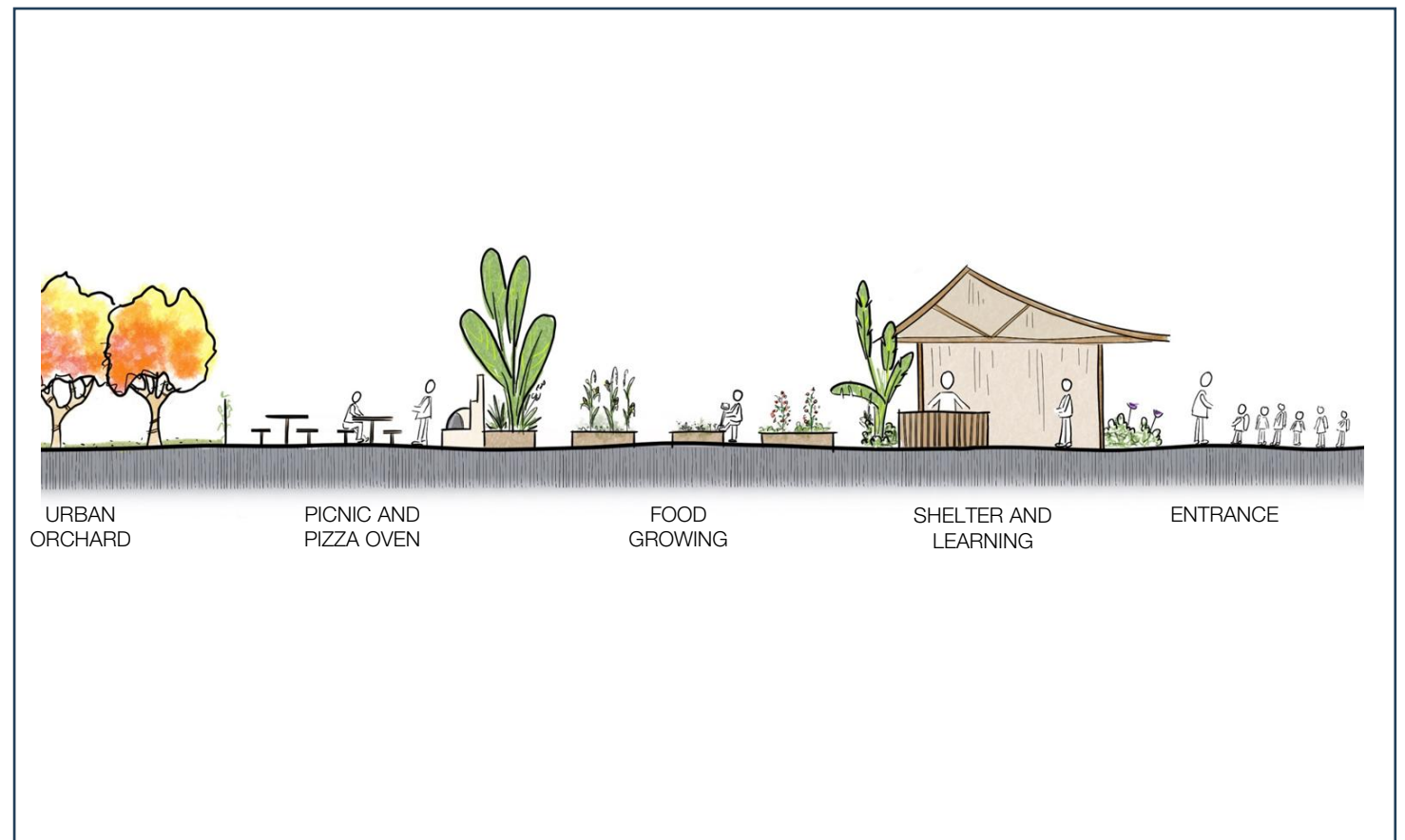
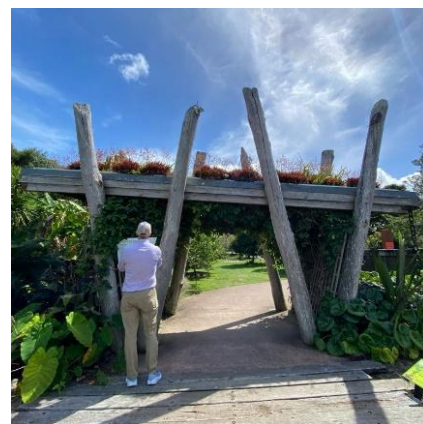


RESPONSE

- New community horticultural education and visitor hub
- All-ages opportunity to learn from City of Ballarat staff on how to grow plants in Ballarat
- Focus on food security including vegetables, fruit and non-traditional foods such as those of migrant communities and First Nations, but also general horticulture
- Located next to Tram Museum, creating a new South Gardens entrance and attraction for local residents and visually softening the Museum
- Picnic area, shelters and possible community pizza oven
- Covered entrance area for classes and possible satellite visitor information point for the entire precinct
- Opportunity to work with First Nations, migrant communities, the Special School, local schools and Federation University
- Final functions and uses determined through further community consultation

REASON

In response to community and stakeholder requests for more educational opportunities, especially “hands-on” education, and the respect they show for the Ballarat Botanical Gardens staff. Creates a sense of precinct in South Gardens and a place for local residents. Appeals to people beyond traditional Botanical Gardens visitors. Screens and integrates the Tram Museum.



DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 'BALLARAT'S BACK GARDEN'

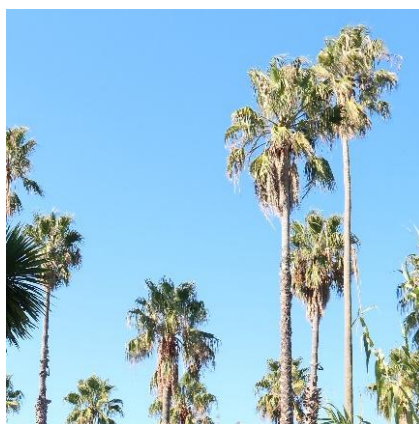
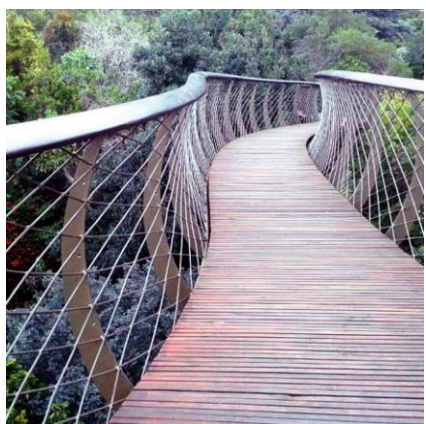
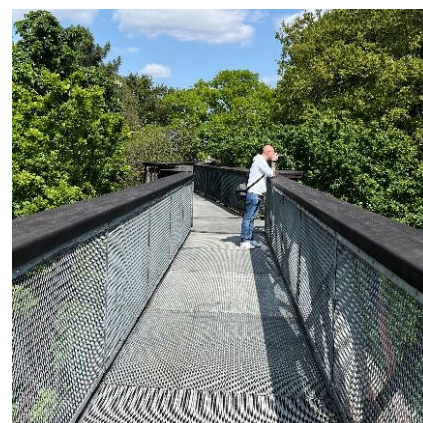


RESPONSE

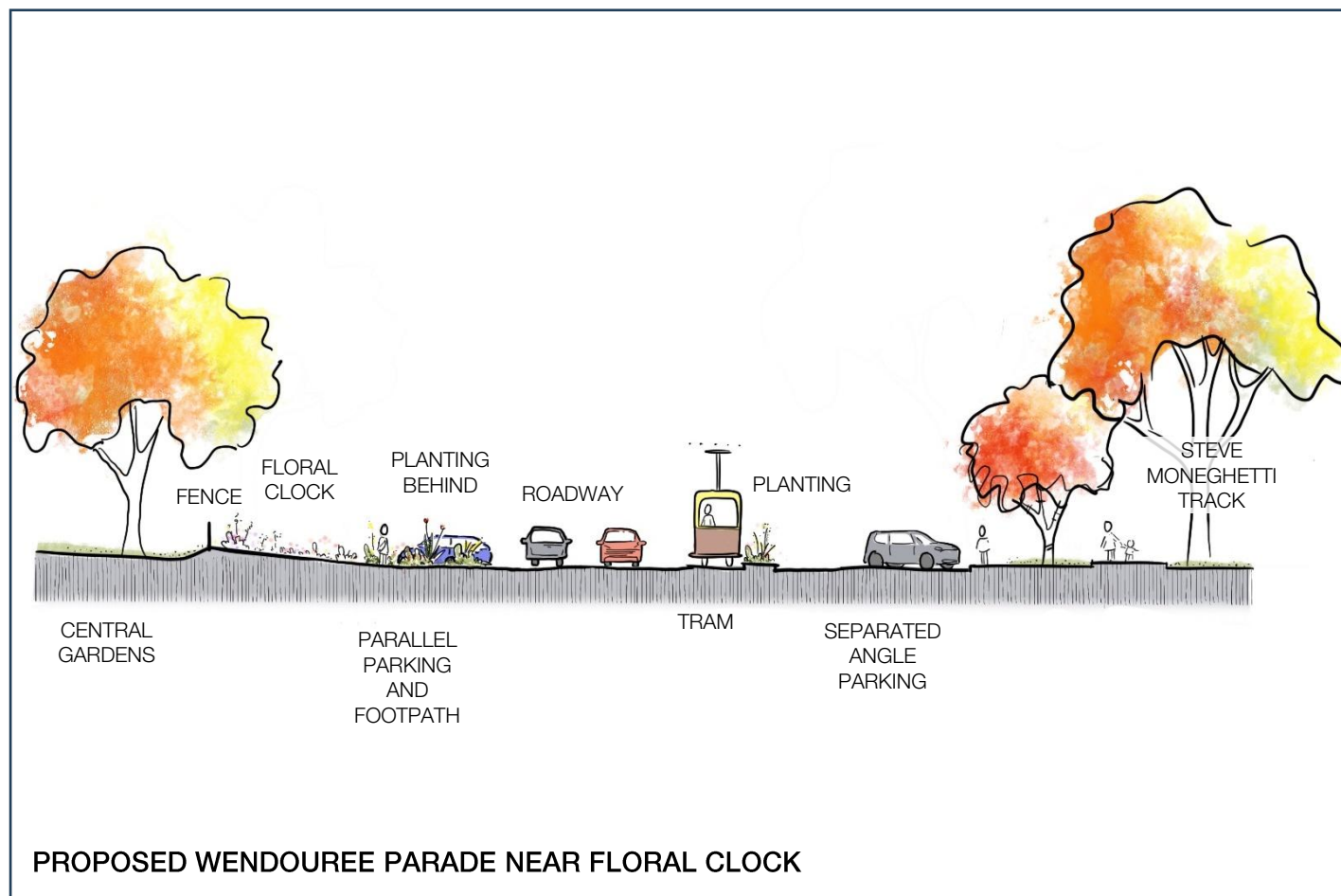
- Subtle, simple and contemporary replacement for the end-of-life 1960s Fernery structure
- Continuation of the 2023 Fernery landscaping design approach
- Rich, fern-based planting with an overstory of palms
- Retains area between the two built wings as a central picnic lawn
- More pathways and extension of planting north and south to better connect Central Gardens to North Gardens
- Opportunity for connecting pillar entrance way with epiphyte plantings
- Opportunity for Stage 2 open pergola. Simple, architect designed contemporary link between the 1995 Robert Clark Conservatory and the 2022 Gothic Fernery while not competing with or imitating either
- Opportunity for later stage elevated boardwalk connecting to Children's Garden

REASON

In response to stakeholder requests and heritage driven need to complete the project. Addresses disconnect between North Gardens to Central Gardens. Heritage appropriate response to completing the precinct. Heritage Victoria have in principle comfort with this approach.



DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 FERNERY COMPLEX AND NORTH GARDENS CONNECTIONS

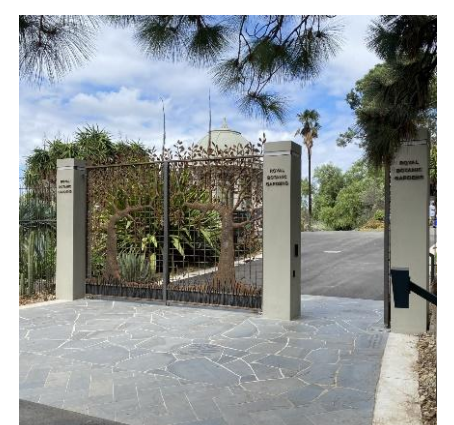
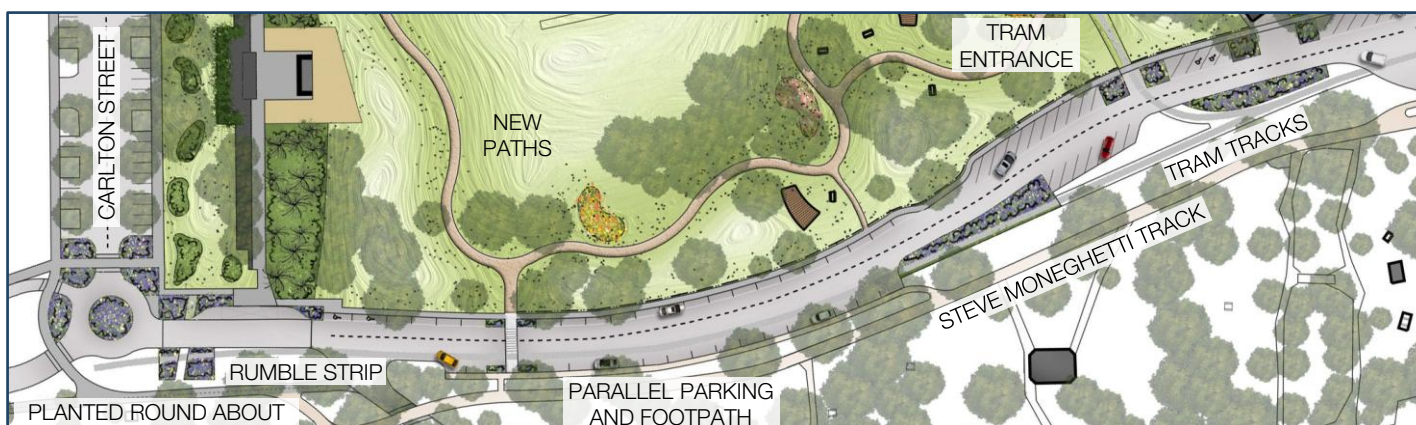
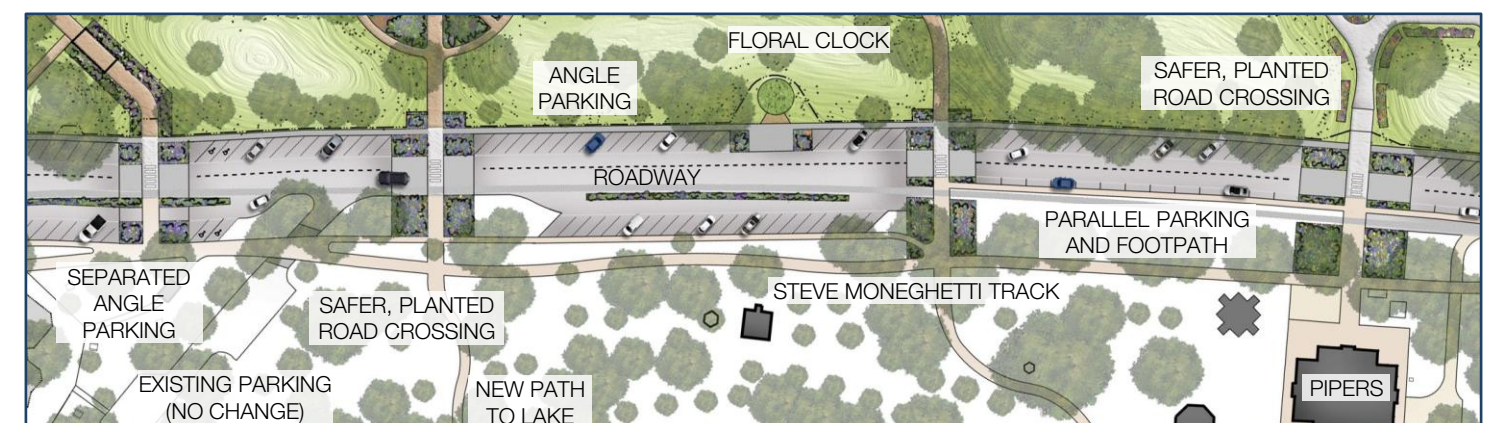
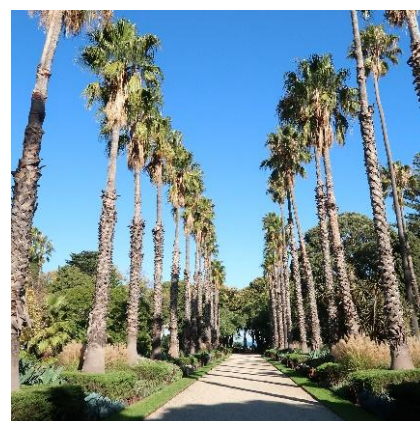


RESPONSE

- Prioritises pedestrians and wildlife over cars in the Botanical Gardens precinct portion of Wendouree Parade
- Refocuses Wendouree Parade as a local road for accessing the Gardens, rather than a through road, while still allowing traffic connections
- Redesigns unduly wide road to provide more planting, more pedestrian crossings, safer crossing points and to reduce tram / car conflicts
- Increases parking on Wendouree Parade while reducing asphalt by being more economical in parking design
- Greater number of accessible and special need parking bays around the Gardens with a focus at key entrances
- More planting to Gillies Street and greater separation between bikes, parked cars and through traffic (subject to VicRoads approval)

REASON

In response to identified safety concerns and to community and stakeholder requests for better access across Wendouree Parade and a more defined precinct



DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 ENTRANCES AND WENDOUREE PARADE

Project	Potential time frame			Potential order of costs					
	Short Term (2025-29)	Medium Term (2030-34)	Long Term (2035-2045)	(2025 dollar figures subject to further consultation, detailed design and business case)					
	Under \$100,000	\$100,000 - \$250,000	\$250,000- \$600,000	\$600,000- \$1,000,000	\$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000	\$2,000,000 plus			
Tree planting, garden bed and climate change response plan	✓			✓					
Ballarat’s Back Garden	✓				✓				
Future proofing the Prime Ministers Avenue	✓					✓			
Upgrade of Fish Hatchery interface	✓					✓			
Offstreet parking for Fish Hatchery and Tram Museum	✓					✓			
Safety works to Gillies Street (with VicRoads)	✓							✓	
Wildlife Garden		✓				✓			
Children’s Garden		✓				✓			
Rose Garden		✓				✓			
Southern Event Space		✓				✓			
Improvements to Wendouree Parade		✓						✓	
Upgrading of Gardens Nursery		✓				✓			
Improved landscaping to Robert Clark Horticultural Centre		✓				✓			
Wendouree Station Entrance		✓				✓			
North Gardens Meadowlands			✓					✓	
Gate Keeper’s Cottage Extension			✓			✓			
Pergola structure to rear Fernery			✓			✓			
Garden to Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Cottage			✓			✓			
Elevated Boardwalk			✓			✓			
Southern Glasshouse			✓					✓	

Shows highest profile projects only. For a full priority list see *Draft Ballarat Botanical Gardens Master Plan 2025 – 2045* by andrea proctor landscapes for City of Ballarat. Priorities open to change based on feedback during community consultation

DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045

PRIORITIES



MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to projects, the Master Plan identifies an extensive list of actions to assist with the management of the place including:

- Working with Traditional Owners
- Heritage Management
- Protecting the character of the landscape
- Improved parking and better access to public transport
- Improved signage and wayfinding
- Improved pathway connections
- New Gates and planting and improved street presentation
- Better 'Access for All' including invisible disabilities
- Replacement of the non-heritage scoria with a more practical surface
- Responding to climate change, especially in relation to heritage trees and the iconic avenues
- Long term plan for adding more busts to the Prime Ministers Avenue
- Better integration of Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Cottage into the Gardens
- Garden furnishings including more seats, picnic tables and shelters
- Supporting with tenants and land users
- Supporting the Friends and Foundation, including a new Friends Nursery
- Opening the City of Ballarat Nursery to public viewing
- Guidance on art in the Gardens
- Living Collections and work as a Botanic Garden including plant conservation
- More and better-quality garden beds
- Improved irrigation, drainage and water management
- Sustainable event management
- Education opportunities
- Staffing and professional development

Further information may be found in the full document, *Draft Ballarat Botanical Gardens Master Plan 2025 – 2045* by andrea proctor landscapes for City of Ballarat

DRAFT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS MASTER PLAN 2025 – 2045 MANAGEMENT



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