



ST KILDA BOTANICAL GARDENS FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Monday 8 July 2009 and Saturday 13 July (5 hrs consultation)

COMMUNITY COMMENTS	HOW COUNCIL RESPONDED TO ISSUE
Principles and values	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan is light on landscape values • Add principle – healthy tree collection • Add principle – creating mystery • Add principle – heritage, harmony, mystery • Add values – value landscape and aesthetics of gardens • Botanical and heritage aspects of equal importance • Values [what we regard as important] • A major community open space, a green area and refuge in a dense suburban setting • An area for passive, and low level unorganised active, recreation • A site of visual diversity • A site of heritage significance • A welcoming setting; a site allowing reasonably unrestricted and therefore equitable access • A site of local botanical interest at and limited botanical/scientific significance • A community resource for diverse activities, recreational social and cultural • a resource for community education • Principles [broadly, what we want to achieve] • Maintain as public open space in perpetuity • Maintain character and cultural heritage significance, while accepting the inevitability of continuing changes in detail • Ensure modifications to hard structures reflect and integrate with cultural value principles, and with existing structures in design, style, colours, materials etc • Maintain and increase botanical diversity • Maintain a healthy tree collection, with a spread of tree ages, through appropriate culling and replanting, recognizing visual values, climatic constraints and the sequence of tree growth and maturation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional principles and values added to future directions plan to reflect comments (highlighted in green) • Principle of healthy tree collection already present



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise and accommodate climatic constraints (particularly water availability) and adapt to them through plant content management, and appropriate engineering interventions Maintain visual diversity and the concept of a matrix of visual precincts Minimise or eliminate visually inappropriate/incongruous elements Provide for passive recreation through appropriate but discreet facilities (lawn areas, discreetly placed rubbish bins etc.), and for limited, unorganised active recreation (open grass areas for play, a path network etc.) Foster community and cultural activities, including education activities Manage cultural resource conflicts through appropriate events management (public and private), major events booking systems etc. Provide a high quality setting through attention to detail in garden, lawn and facility maintenance. Maintain an appropriate level of security, particularly through night-time Garden closures. 	
Signage	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretive signage. Letting landscape speak and excite people. Needs to be an element of curiosity and discovery rather than giving a whole lot of information Provide information in leaflets in conservatory rather than interpretive signs Install unobtrusive plant labels. Build on existing style not new Plants move and change so signs need to respond to this and be easy to move Plant labels must only be scientific and date of planting One information sign at conservatory (perhaps) that is directional Interpretive signage – inflexible, obtrusive. Does not allow for evolution of planting and interrupting to experience of gardens Regulatory signs – other ways eg web site etc. They do not work What is the difference between a park and botanical gardens? (This could be highlighted to encourage better behaviour eg kids not running through garden beds) Do not like regulatory signs. If we must have them, should be a little board near entrance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signage has minimal reference in Plan. It is referred to in plant labels and interpretive signs for indigenous garden p –17. Label for stone fountain p 32 is also referred to in Plan A ‘draft’ signage strategy is under development for open space, including the Botanical Gardens, and the community consultation provided an opportunity to obtain feedback from the community about signage in open space and the gardens In summary, the community wanted limited signs to obtain enough information without domination in the landscape The public want minimal ‘do not’ type signs The gardeners were approached to provide information on most requested subjects. Certain plant species were the most asked subject and plant labels are proposed to be developed for the most requested plants Discussions that some historical information and regulatory signage could be placed on sign outside gardens near Tennyson/Dickens Street entrance seemed to meet need of most people to balance needs and minimal signs, whilst having some information Leaflets could provide effective means to distribute information from conservatory.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs such as ‘this is a neighbourhood garden. A place of rest and contemplation. Please enter in the spirit of community and as a special place to enjoy.’ • Signs outside gardens – not in • Promote educational uses of plants i.e. understand the life cycle of bulbs, organise school seed collecting for propagation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage to be addressed with furniture and signage budget
Eco centre	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance from Herbert Street to Eco centre – need to break down fence and have steps to building – make more welcoming. • Eco centre looks uncared for - needs to be made more inviting, paint inside • Eco centre should be relocated elsewhere eg West Beach and given to Friends of Gardens etc • Eco centre needs to be improved inside and marketed. Needs to bring the public in. Currently crowded and intimidating – hard to know what’s going on. Clean up and market renewables better. Could house environment officer and community volunteers. It is a wasted opportunity • Eco centre – not good use of ‘fit’ with gardens. Poor presentation. Poor colours. Kitchen looks like bachelor pad • Redevelop the Eco centre, needs more use, more youngsters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Eco centre was not a focused part of the Plan, apart form direction for planting in this area e.g opportunity on p. 8 • ‘Fit for purpose’ and presentation of Eco centre was not part of this project. This feedback has been given to the relevant department.
Management and Security of Gardens	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more maintenance staff • Adhoc or continuous management? • Management should be in house not contract • Need a ranger to patrol over weekends – particularly with wedding • Security a massive issue • Gates often left opened • Gardens not for commercial use. Ceremonies acceptable but people also use as a reception eg loud music, rubbish, generators etc • Weddings – must be policed otherwise no point having regulations • Charge users to have someone come in at designated time to clean up, move on and lock up after ceremonies • Free parking an issue at night. People park around there at night to ‘go out’ and come back at 3am to collect cars – loud and noisy • Could the parking have restrictions from 9pm to midnight like elsewhere? • Like wedding and unobtrusive music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions held with meeting and events regarding weddings • Bookings are only taken for ceremony NOT reception • Alcohol, whilst not prohibited, is not promoted (if asked directly, client told one glass of champagne in plastic cup acceptable with all rubbish carried out) • No amplification permitted • Cost has recently been increased, it is less than that charged for Royal Melbourne Botanical Gardens but deemed not of same size and significance as Melbourne. Cost to have someone present after each wedding possible, but would result in significant cost increases. • It appears that many of the issues raised, e.g loud music is a result of non-permitted activity. This is an issue for local laws and reflects ability or otherwise of local laws to patrol the park each weekend



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident that raised parking issue advised to contact assist to ensure an official 'pathway request' recorded and appropriate area could respond to issue
Fencing and Gates	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing could be pulled in from edge to soften – random 'breaks' rather than continuous fence Look at artist who created gates at Veg Out Protect community assets – need new fence and improved security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New fencing is part of five year plan for capital works in the botanical gardens Style to be similar to Royal Melbourne Botanical Gardens, but higher
Plant / Visual comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future directions Plan needs to be scientific based. Important that experts direct development, not just general community. The answer from community depends on way the question is asked. The garden has rhythm and structure in layout and the rest is mystery. We have a tendency to "be informed" Plan missed on landscape aesthetics Quality of grass impacts on user experience Make aesthetics a priority Tension between dry and irrigation. Do we irrigate and keep collection of plants or go dry? Need to develop plant collection or go dry Fantastic to build on role of botanic gardens – scientific What's happening with the dead palm? Will it be replaced? Could relocate 'cockatoo' nest (currently in dead palm) elsewhere in gardens More Autumn colour Cherry blossoms from the Dickens St end have died off. No more silly gums near grassy spots or playgrounds. They are dangerous and ugly and labour intensive Some flowering trees – like Jacaranda Promote more colourful planting in the Playground area. Lady suggested Lilacs, European cottage planting, winter bulbs Promote pocketing of colour throughout the gardens as areas of interest. Plant more edible plants, kale, parsley, herbs and promote harvest St Kilda Botanical Gardens is not a private garden but a place people consider their own – a third space Pond – need plants to improve water quality. Lilies and iris would be good. Keep the 'bog' stream/garden Would Would like to see planting on Herbert Street boundary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future direction plan is a strategic document. Input from the community ensures the document is aligned with community values. Structure, rhythm and mystery to be retained Landscape aesthetics picked up in values and principles Grass is subject to water access. The IMAP water plan recommends sewer mining to secure long term non potable water use – but this comes at a significant expense and needs to be considered by Council in context of other organisational priorities. Irrigation shall be retained, as needs of many suggested plant species higher than average rainfall. However, with climate change, the need to move away from plants requiring greater than 800mm a year is recommended The future direction plan recommends plant selection based on lower water needs Dead palm being tested for Fusarium wilt Retention of Cockatoo hollow to be considered when dead palm removed, so habitat retained Autumn colour shall be provided in selection of some new specimen trees Gums a personal preference – some people love them and other do not. Plan recommends use of some <i>Corymbia</i> cultivars for colour and size Edible plants could be incorporated into Eco centre The plan addresses colour with many suggested 'opportunities' such as planting <i>Brachychiton</i> and iris in pond Pond to be redesigned in 2009/10 Issue of increased maintenance in indigenous garden passed onto gardeners Australian plants such as kangaroo paws have been planted in central core. A mix of suitable low water need plants shall continue



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with new native garden near playground, Tennyson Street boundary • If gardens don't look loved they wont be cared for • Indigenous garden needs more care. Needs regular replanting and care. More Eucalypts needed • Showcase Australian 'cottage garden' plant in centre piece of garden eg correas 	
General Comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure gardens do not become 'dumping ground' for art consultancy • Ensure 'cultural vitality' does not become a dumping ground for art. Art should be ephemeral • Heritage and innovation – tension there • Build partnership with friends group. Not as well developed as it could be • People come to the gardens for different experience – this has huge merit on its own • Place for everyone – it meets those needs • + a partner statue for the fountain. Think he needs a nice woman to accompany him + a dog • Seating made of recycled wood • Some water fountains please. Like the one in Glen Eira rd on the corner... in fact they have the same ones with a doggy bowl at the bottom which are even better. • Sprinklers were watering the paths instead of the garden beds – for years. • Introduce Coffee vans located near the glasshouses on weekends. • Introduce more temporary art, music and theatre in the gardens. • Focus on children specific temporary art, music and theatre. • Discussions about exercise work stations into the gardens, not obvious pieces. • Promote more tai chi. • Promote local school involvement in the gardens. • Have more school groups with specific education of gardens, ecocentre. • Tap into retirees in the area teaching children their horticultural experience and knowledge. • Have wandering minstrels. • A young boy walks his duck at the park in the mornings. A short film of his adventures could promote the gardens. He's about 9 and his name was Giovanni from memory. • Set up a coffee area near the glass houses • Set up a feed the parrots area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan does not recommend art installations • Paint the garden a good example of appropriate art in the garden (temporary) • Plan intends to retain heritage whilst looking to future, as all Botanical gardens do – they are not stagnant but evolving • Friends group now has a main contact in parks and open space to raise issues with • Garden to continue to be a place for everyone • Unlikely that a second sculpture shall be placed in pond – not recommended in plan • Seating to be fit for purpose. However, possible for one of recycled timber seats, particularly as part of future play upgrade • Free water recommended in principles and values • Coffee providers a short stroll down Blessington Street • Issue of temporary art and music to be referred to festivals and events for consideration • Exercise stations are considered an active form of recreation and are a permanent fixture. This type of fixture is best placed in open space other than a heritage garden. • Eco centre to be provided with community feedback and request for more school involvement • Feeding of wild birds not recommended for health of birds • Picnic tables not recommended for botanical gardens – byo picnic blankets



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the gardens by wandering reporters. Provide tables for lunching at. None in gardens currently Seats best placed opposite each other to invite social interaction 	
Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, the public were happy with the future directions plan and understood the proposed tree removal and replacement. The overwhelming feedback related to these two issues: Need more staff to ensure the gardens are maintained to a high standard Security. Currently inadequate, people very concerned about the lack of gate locking and night time access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security partly addressed in Plan by recommendation for improved fencing Details of times/dates when gates not locked being collated to provide to building maintenance to follow up with contractors Service standards will be considered as part of Parks Services Contract Review