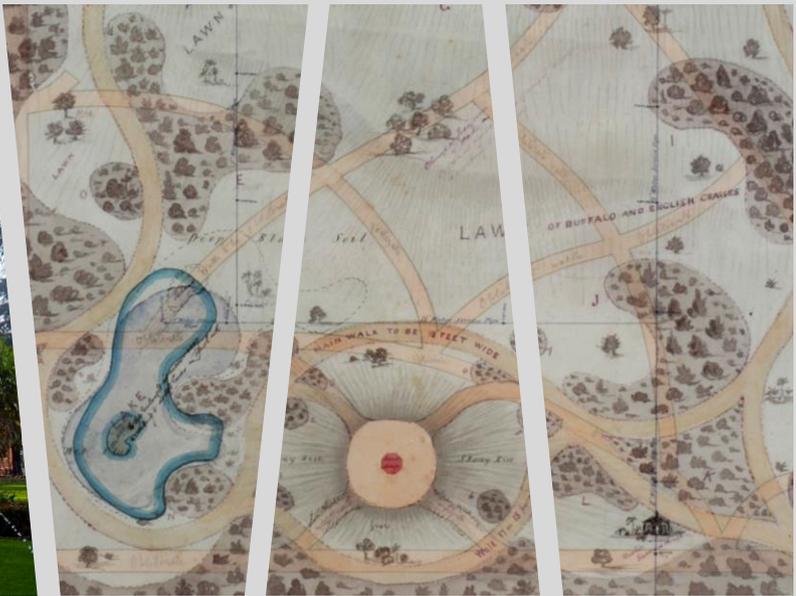


HAMILTON BOTANIC GARDENS

MASTER PLAN

VOLUME 1: MASTER PLAN

April 2015



LIDLAW & LIDLAW DESIGN



*Figure 1: Hamilton Botanic Gardens Lake 1909 and 2014
Source: State Library of Victoria, Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design
Front Cover Left: Thompson Fountain
Front Cover Right: 1881 William Guilfoyle Plan, Source: Hamilton Art Gallery*

Executive Summary

Hamilton Botanic Gardens is one of Victoria's oldest and most intact regional Botanic Gardens. Situated in the centre of Hamilton the gardens are one of a number designed by William Guilfoyle, the long-time director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and one of Victoria's most celebrated 19th century garden designers. In 1881 Guilfoyle sent a plan for the Gardens to the Hamilton Town Clerk, with an accompanying letter briefly outlining the design, how it should be implemented and extensive planting lists. This plan and letter, with the exception of one page, still survives and is held by the Hamilton Art Gallery and has been used to guide the production of this Master Plan.

Today many of the major pathways follow the design intended by Guilfoyle, his lake has been constructed and a number of original plantings still exist, although it would appear that much of Guilfoyle's design was not implemented. On this basis, the Master Plan, where practical, continues to implement the work started in the 1880s, to realise more of William Guilfoyle's original vision. This includes modifying the existing pathways to reinstate Guilfoyle's sinuous curves and adding the "furcated" garden beds he intended at pathway intersections and entrances. To incorporate the existing minor pathways a new, curved circuit has been added has a similar, sympathetic character to the Guilfoyle design.

Existing shrub beds are expanded to create a better relationship between the mass and void, with beds being similar in character to the curved islands original intended by Guilfoyle. In some areas these new beds are along the Garden edges, as per the 1881 design, although it is noted that the open character of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens has become an integral part of the place and has therefore been preserved. Plant collections within the Gardens will be expanded, with consideration being given to current plant collections, collections which are locally relevant and those recommended by William Guilfoyle. This includes a new parterre style Rose Garden in front of the Thompson Fountain. This garden will provide a better context for the fountain, improve the presentation of the French Street entrance, and implement Guilfoyle's specific recommendation for a rose garden in this area.

Hamilton Botanic Gardens has a long history of aviaries and animal keeping, although this postdates Guilfoyle's work and was never envisaged in his original design. In the past the presence of animals in Botanic Gardens was a reasonably common phenomenon, as the 19th century fashion for rare and exotic plants also extended to the collection of animals. Over time however the majority of the menageries have been removed due to changing fashions and animal welfare expectations. At this time only Hamilton is one of the very few which retain their animal enclosures, although they were once common across the state.

Current zoological facilities at the Hamilton Botanic Gardens are reaching the end of their life, and the former animal enclosure along the Martin Street frontage has been empty for some time. In line with changing public expectations it is proposed to remove all animal enclosures except for the flight aviary, which will be replaced with a new structure which can be open at all times and follows best practices in regards to animal welfare. The removal of the large animal enclosure and small aviaries, together with the ability to decrease the size of the depot area, provides the opportunity to create a new Community Precinct in the Martin and Kennedy Street corner of the gardens, revitalising this space and providing new community facilities including a new entrance, public toilet, nature based play area and an all abilities sensory garden and picnic area which will be developed to complement the Council's *Positive Aging Strategy and Community Inclusion Plan*.

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Southern Grampians Shire Council Staff

Brett Holmes	<i>Team Leader – Works (Project Leader)</i>
Kevin O'Brien	<i>Director Shire Infrastructure</i>
Cathy Brady	<i>Manager Planning</i>
Arten Kumar	<i>Manager Engineering & Projects</i>
Michael Matthews	<i>Parks & Gardens Coordinator (current)</i>
Neil Trotman	<i>Parks & Gardens Coordinator (at the time)</i>
Daniel Spencer	<i>Hamilton Botanic Gardens Head Gardener (at the time)</i>

Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens

Leigh Coggins	<i>President and Project Control Group Member</i>
Midge Gough	<i>Project Control Group Member</i>
Jane Hazelwood	<i>Project Control Group Member</i>

Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design Staff

Andrew Laidlaw	<i>Landscape Architect and Partner</i>
Andrea Proctor	<i>Landscape Designer and Horticulturalist</i>
Sarah Laidlaw	<i>Landscape Architect, Partner and Artist</i>

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Introduction to Volume 1

This volume contains the working 2014 Master Plan for the Hamilton Botanic Gardens. It should be read in conjunction with Volume 2, which provides all background documentation including site analysis, history, statutory context and findings of the consultation process.

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Disclaimer: Information contained in this report, including sources of information and images, is accurate to the best of the authors' knowledge at the time of writing. Any information obtained from third parties has been taken to be correct unless evidence has indicated to the contrary. From time to time the master plan refers to documents produced by other parties. The use of these documents, or any recommendations made in relation to them, is done so on the basis of correct professional procedures. This does not indicate an endorsement of the content of any of these documents. Any recommendations made are based on current conditions, and should be reviewed following any substantial changes. This master plan is not a risk assessment document.

1 Introduction: Design Overview and William Guilfoyle's Legacy

Hamilton Botanic Gardens is one of a number of regional Botanic Gardens designed by William Guilfoyle. Guilfoyle, the long-time director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens is one of Victoria's most celebrated 19th century garden designers, and arguably the most influential. In the early 1880s Guilfoyle was commissioned to produce a plan for the Hamilton Botanic Gardens, and in 1881 this plan was sent to the Town Clerk, Mr. William Smith, with an accompanying letter briefly outlining the design, how it should be implemented and extensive planting lists. This plan and letter, with the exception of one page, still survives and is held by the Hamilton Art Gallery. These documents can also be found at Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the Master Plan. The existence of this plan is an invaluable tool for the Botanic Gardens, as the original plans for many public gardens have been lost over time – even when they were produced by influential designers.

Work to implement Guilfoyle's design started immediately, with paths laid out in 1882 and the lake and fountain constructed in 1883. F.W. Niven and Co.'s 1886 "birds eye" view of Hamilton, including the Gardens, clearly shows the implementation of some of Guilfoyle's curving walks, although these are missing at the Kennedy Street end and one of Ferguson's cross walks are still in evidence. Over the next two decades the shrub beds continued to be laid out, but there is no evidence of further involvement by William Guilfoyle, and by 1908 it was clear that works were deviating from his concept with the relocation of the cottage, construction of aviaries and the installation of a bridge across the lake.

Following the 1886 birds eye view the next available plan of the Gardens as a whole was produced in 1963 and shows some of Guilfoyle's pathways. It is clear that when the Thompson Street entrance and the path along the edge of the Emu enclosure were constructed that an effort was made to continue the implementation of Guilfoyle's original design. As late as 1992 a new gate to the Court House was designed by Richard Aitken to add an entrance intended by Guilfoyle.

Today many of the major pathways approximately follow the design intended by Guilfoyle, although it would appear that much of Guilfoyle's design was never implemented, or was only implemented in a limited way. On this basis, the Master Plan takes its design key from Guilfoyle's original concept, and where practicable continues to implement the work started in the 1880s to realise more of William Guilfoyle's original vision. This includes modifying the existing pathways to reinstate Guilfoyle's sinuous curves, adding the "furcated" garden beds he intended at pathway intersections and entrances and increasing the number of Garden Beds.

To incorporate the existing minor pathways a new, curved circuit has been added, which while not intended by Guilfoyle, has a similar, sympathetic character. This circuit incorporates original sections of the 1870 layout of the Gardens by William Ferguson, corrects existing dead-end pathways and allows path access to the hill. The major perimeter path design by Guilfoyle will be subtly altered to improve its line and design flow, more accurately reflecting his intentions. To make these changes practical and affordable they can be made gradually as part of the recurrent works budget.

Existing shrub beds in the Gardens are expanded to create a better relationship between mass and void, with beds being similar in character to the curved islands original intended by Guilfoyle. As for the paths, these beds can be gradually rolled out. In some areas these new beds are along the Garden edges, as per the 1881 design, although it is noted that the open character of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens has become an integral part of the place and has therefore been preserved. In line with Guilfoyle's intentions a new, parterre style Rose Garden is proposed in front of the Thompson

Fountain. This garden will provide a better context for the fountain, improve the presentation of the French Street entrance, and implement Guilfoyle's specific recommendation for a rose garden in this area.

The replacement of the 1970s flight aviary with a new best practice structure allows the reinstatement of the "furcated" entrance intended by Guilfoyle at Skene Street. The changes to the Cottage frontage, works area and animals enclosures also provides the opportunity to alter the perimeter path layout in this area to better reflect Guilfoyle's original intentions.

The removal of the large animal enclosure and small aviaries, together with the ability to decrease the size of the depot area, provides the opportunity to create a new Community Precinct in the Martin and Kennedy Street corner of the gardens, revitalising this space and providing new community facilities including a new entrance, public toilet, nature based play area and an all abilities sensory garden and picnic area.

This new Community Precinct will provide for botanical based activities which are sensitive to the significance of the Gardens and increase their usability and tourism potential. This area will include new public toilets, as requested during initial consultation, and will alter the existing play equipment, replacing it with a nature based children's space and water play area. These type of spaces allow for creative play and foster a love and appreciation of plants and the natural environment and will complement the equipment based playgrounds located elsewhere in Hamilton (e.g. at Hamilton Lake).



Figure 2: William Guilfoyle

Drawing 1: Hamilton Botanic Gardens Master Plan

This page has been deliberately left blank as it is the reverse side of the Master Plan drawing

2 Master Plan

2.1 Circulation, Access and Pathways

Within The Botanic Gardens

It is recommended that the following changes be made to pathways within the Botanic Gardens as per the Master Plan drawing:

- All pathways should continue to be of asphalt construction. When new edging or replacement of the red brick is required mild steel should be used until it is eventually rolled out across the site. Where the pathway is bordered by bluestone garden bed edging this should be retained.
- The major perimeter pathway should be modified to better reflect William Guilfoyle's intentions as per the Master Plan drawing. This path should be narrowed to 4m in width except at the Thompson Street and French Street entrances where it can retain its existing width so that it works with existing infrastructure
- A new internal circuit path is to be constructed to link existing pathways and the hill. This path should follow the design outlined on the Master Plan drawing and incorporate the remnants of the Ferguson layout to the rear of the Thompson Street Fountain. This path should be of a consistent width of 2.0m and of the same materials as the perimeter path.
- All other connecting pathways should be a consistent width of 1.5m and of the same materials as the perimeter path.
- Existing pathways around the ANA Fountain should be retained in their current layout with corrections made only for repair and accessibility purposes. The straight path leading from the ANA Fountain to the native garden should be modified as per the Master Plan drawing.
- The straight path from the play equipment to the native garden is to be removed
- Pathways to the lower toilets are to be modified to connect with the new internal circuit path
- The "furcated" entrances to the Gardens intended by William Guilfoyle are to be added/reinstated. This requires modification to the perimeter pathway near the B.C. Naylor entrance
- The angle of the bridge across the lake is to be altered to provide better foreground context and joining the internal circuit path.
- To make pathway changes cost effective they should be undertaken gradually as part of larger projects (e.g. the Community Precinct or Rose Garden) or as part of recurrent capital works as maintenance is required.

Access to the Botanic Gardens and Parking

Access to the Botanic Gardens is generally good with the following changes recommended as per the Master Plan drawing

- Gravel paths along French and Kennedy Streets to be eventually replaced with asphalt with the same edging as those internal to the Botanic Gardens. Alternatively concrete paths to match existing may be installed with due care for the existing trees.
- The external pathway is to be continued along Martin and Kennedy Streets so that pathway access is available to all sides of the Gardens.
- Disable parking bays are to be provided at the new Martin/Kennedy Street entrance once the community garden is construction. Placement of bays must meet disability access requirements.

- A new bus parking / drop off bay is to be provided at the Martin/Kennedy Street entrance once the community garden is construction. Placement of parking must meet disability access requirements.

Disability Access Requirements

The construction of the new community space must meet all requirements for full disabled access. Additionally, full disability access must be provided from disabled parking bays to each of the toilet blocks. Seats should be provided at regular intervals along the perimeter paths and at steep points on the internal circuit path to aid access. All picnic tables and drinking fountains should be wheelchair accessible and seats in the Community Garden are to be backed. Stairs are to be avoided unless strictly necessary and all abilities access must be provided to the cottage and new flight aviary.

It is acknowledged that the steepness of the site means that it is not possible for all pathways to meet the requirements of the relevant Australian Standards on disabled access, but wherever possible access should be made available from disabled parking bays to key Gardens' features including the hill, lake and Thompson Fountain.

2.2 Entrances

It is recommended that the following changes be made to entrances to the Hamilton Botanic Gardens as per the Master Plan drawing:

- The ornamental gates to Thompson Street, French Street and Skene Street should be repaired and repainted. Paint scrapings should be undertaken to determine the original colour which should be matched.
- The minor entrance along French Street is to be retained for historical purposes but no path is to be added as it is infrequently used and existing small garden beds are to be removed
- The minor entrance off Thompson Street is to be connected to the path system
- A new major entrance is to be provided at the Kennedy Street / Martin Street corner. This should include large, decorative gates (see section 2.5)
- A new minor entrance to the Community Precinct / children's play space is proposed off Martin Street. A local resident has offered to build a reconstruction of the historic fernery gate for the Botanic Gardens, and this entrance would be an appropriate location. (see section 2.5)
- Guilfoyle's "furcated" entrance paths are to be installed / reinstated
- Signage should be rationalised in line with section 3.9
- Planting at entrances should generally be more decorative than other parts of the Gardens in line with section 3.4

2.3 Boundaries and Fences

It is recommended that the Boundaries be largely retained in their current form, with the following recommended changes as per the Hamilton Botanic Gardens as per the Master Plan drawing:

- The high hedge to the rear of the works depot be extended to completely screen it from Kennedy Street.
- The high hedge to the rear of the animal enclosure along

Martin Street be removed and replaced with a low cyclone wire fence, encased in a Euonymus hedge to visually match that along Thompson Street and the lower end of Martin Street. This hedge should then be extended to the



**Figure 3: Courthouse gate
Lower hedge to right to
replace high cypress hedge
along Martin Street**

remainder of Martin Street and around the new Community Precinct to replace the disparate fencing styles in this area.

2.4 Garden Beds

A large number of new and expanded Garden beds are proposed across the Botanic Gardens. These are proposed for a variety of reasons including framing views, creating a better relationship between mass and void, screening and for decorative purposes. The shapes of these beds have been designed to reflect the sinuous island beds favoured by William Guilfoyle. It is intended that these new planting beds will be gradually laid out across the Gardens in conjunction with major work projects (e.g. path works) and as funds allow.

In a small number of cases existing garden beds have been removed, but this is restricted to those that have a poor relationship with the rest of the Garden. Any plants of value in these beds may be relocated to other areas of the Gardens. All garden beds should be appropriately edged as outlined in section 2.12.

2.5 Community Precinct, Friends Cottage and Work's Depot

The removal of the existing animal enclosures along Martin Street and the change of use in the Works Depot has created the opportunity for the development of a new Community Precinct across the Martin Street / Kennedy Street corner of the Gardens. For many years this portion of the Gardens has been dedicated to back of house uses, and is underutilised with poor street presentation and an unsatisfactory relationship to the rest of the ornamental Gardens.

The new Community Precinct will perform a range of functions, opening up this under used area and incorporating it into the Botanic Gardens. The disparate features of the works depot, cottage and flight aviary will be tied together through a consistent landscape treatment, and the new Garden will service various sectors of the Hamilton Community with an especial focus on young people, the elderly and those with special needs. It is anticipated that this redevelopment will become a regional tourist drawcard and increase patronage of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens.



Drawing 2: Section through rock/water cascade and play space

Need for further Design

The below information and the Master Plan drawing on page 3 outlines a proposed approach to the development of the new Community Precinct. This approach reflects the community consultation already undertaken and is considerate of the heritage significance and functionality of the Botanic

Gardens site as a whole. However, this design is only schematic and further design work will be required to formalise the layout of the area and the functions it is to perform.

It is therefore recommended that the Council commission a detailed concept plan for the Community Precinct. This plan should be based on the proposals outline in this Master Plan, but would include additional community consultation and would result in a detailed and fully costed design proposal which can be used for funding applications.

New Entrance

A new, large scale entrance is proposed at the corner of Martin and Kennedy Streets. This entrance will have large, ornamental gates which reflect those provided at the Gardens' other key entrances. These gates would be of a modern design, preferably designed by a local artist or blacksmith. A wide, asphalt path will connect the entrance through the new sensory garden to the new toilet block and the major perimeter pathway. It is anticipated that this new entrance will become widely used for bus tours and out of town visitors to the Gardens.

Works Depot

The current work depot is to be consolidated as per the Master Plan drawing to remove the front machinery shed, retaining the back machinery shed and lunch room. Existing poly and shade houses are to be relocated as required. The configuration of the revised works depot will require further planning in conjunction with the detailed design of the Community Precinct. This will require the input of the Gardeners and Works Team Leader to ensure that adequate space is provided for all Gardens back-of-house activities. The new flight aviary is also to include back of house / animal care areas with rear access from the works depot (see section 2.6).

The design of the new works depot is to allow for screening planting between it and the rest of the Gardens to minimise its visual impact. The gates of the depot should be the only part visible from the rest of the Gardens. The existing tall hedge is to be retained between the depot and Kennedy Street and is to be extended to completely screen the depot from the street.

Friends Cottage

The former curator's cottage is now used by the Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens. The rear of the cottage garden is dedicated to a sensory garden created by the Friends. To incorporate the cottage into the new Community Precinct it is proposed to completely enclose it within a new picket fence, maintaining a small yard to the rear of the cottage for use by the Friends. New pathways would be added to access all sides of the building and connect it to the new sensory garden behind it. The existing sensory garden would be incorporated into the redevelopment were appropriate.

Concerns have been raised by the Friends over the bright colour of the cottage. This paint was chosen based on paint scrapings which indicated it was the original colour. It is recommended that this be further investigated to determine if this colour is indeed correct. If possible the cottage should be repainted in historically appropriate colours which are more sympathetic to the look and feel of the Botanic Gardens. Determination of appropriate paint colours should be carried out in consultation with Heritage Victoria.

The Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens have undertaken considerable work in documenting the history of the Gardens on display boards within the cottage. This is a valuable resource which should be made available for public viewing during key times such as scheduled bus tours or between set hours on weekends. The cottage may also be shared with visitor information services, although it should remain available for primary use by the Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens.

See also section 3.5 for information on the small, curator’s plaque to be installed at the cottage.

Sensory Gardens

To the rear of the cottage a new sensory garden is proposed. This garden will work in with the Council’s *Positive Aging Strategy and Community Inclusion Plan* and will have a focus on providing a relaxing and accessible space for all people, but especially the elderly and those with disabilities. Planting in this space focus on sensory plants (e.g. textured, colourful, scented) and those which attract local birds and butterflies. Lawns near the entrance will be available as an event /



Figure 4: Sensory garden. Image supplied

gathering space and gravel work stations will connect the sensory garden to the children’s space further down the hill. This work stations will be available for botanically themed programs such as propagation classes, botanical art and story time under the trees. Extensive seating and wheel chair compliant pathways will be provided through the garden.



Figure 5: Garden themed educational programs. Image supplied

Nature Based Children’s Play Space

A new, nature based children’s play space is proposed on the slope of the hill on the site of the former animal enclosure. The design of this space focuses on the provision of nature based, non-equipment plan with the central feature being a large water play area and rock cascade. A large, decorative paved area at the centre of the space will feature water jets and clambering rocks with water channelling towards the rock cascade. This cascade will be built using local stone and in a form which reflects the local Grange Burn and Wannon Rivers. The cascade will empty into a stone rill which dissects the lower lawn and will appear to empty into the lake, although water will actually be reticulated back to the treated water play area.



Figure 6: Bluestone shards

A series of stone walls will terrace the play space, with interactive planting, a rock maze, balancing and stepping logs and a bluestone shards forming the remainder of the play space. The water features paved area will also double as an event / outdoor classroom space with an over-ride switch

allowing the water to be switched off during these events. When water is unavailable the rock cascade will act as a climbing play elements. Picnic facilities including a shelter and BBQ, seats and a drinking fountain will service the play space and sensory garden (see section 2.12). Existing mature trees are to be retained throughout the space.



Figure 7: Nature based play

Amphitheatre and Lower Lawn

The lower lawn of the community precinct will act like an informal amphitheatre and will be an alternative venue for concerts and community events. Large basalt rocks will form a gentle embankment to the rear of the lawn and provide informal seating, together with a limited number of bench seats. It is suggested that planting in this embankment area focus on flora of the Grampians.

2.6 Animal Enclosure and Aviaries

The small aviaries between the depot and the Gardens are to be removed together with the animal enclosure (see section 2.5). The existing flight aviary is nearing the end of its life and will require replacement in the next five to eight years. At this time a new structure should be professionally designed and installed generally in line with the design provided in the Master Plan drawing. Design considerations include:

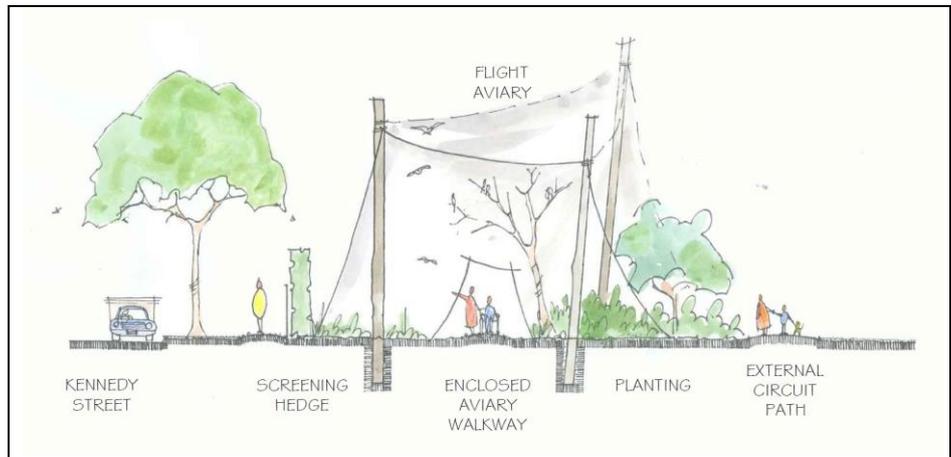
- The new aviary is to meet all best practice guidelines in relation to animal husbandry and the care of caged birds. This will require consultation with experts in the field
- Under cover / back of house / breeding / medical facilities for the care of the birds should be located against the works depot with internal access to and from the aviary
- The new structure should be professionally designed and be of a simple, steel post and wire construction – possibly with a tent like design of netting attached to strained cables
- The aviary should be constructed with a central tunnel to allow pedestrian access to the aviary at all times without risk to the animals, therefore allowing 24/7 access. This approach means pedestrians never have direct access to the birds or are inside the actually aviary but still have interactive aviary experience
- The hedge behind the aviary is to be retained to screen it from Kennedy Street. Low planting should also be provided along the long side of the aviary to provide protection for the birds and integrate the structure into the Gardens

Management

Staff with appropriate qualifications / experience in the care of caged birds must be employed by the Council to care for the aviary. Access must also be available to appropriate veterinary care when required.

Consideration should be given to ensuring that the collection of birds in the aviary has a theme, preferably with local relevance. This could include birds of Western Victoria, although this would need to be confined to common species reared in captivity. The suggestion has been made that the aviary focuses on rare or threatened birds, but this has complications and should only be attempted if a high level of professional skill and care can be provided, with appropriate links to captive

breeding programs across the state. An alternative theme with local relevance would be allowing for the rehousing of injured wildlife, either with a rehabilitation roll with care by local help for wildlife volunteers, and/or as a permanent home for animals who cannot be rereleased due to their injuries.



Drawing 3: Section through new aviary

2.7 Thomson Fountain and Rose Garden

In his original design William Guilfoyle suggested that the furcated entrance near the French Street gates could contain a rose garden. This area of land now sits between the Thompson Fountain and the French Street gates and provides a lack-lustre introduction to this portion of the Gardens. It is therefore recommended that the rose be installed as a historically appropriate and decorative compliment to the Thompson Fountain.

Recommended changes to the pathways in this area will allow for an enlargement of the furcation and a more dramatic introduction to the fountain. New garden beds to the rear of the fountain will provide further framing. The new Rose Garden should be of a modern, parterre design with mild steel garden edges in a series of gentle geometric shapes intersected by gravel paths. Plant selection should be based on the criteria outlined in section 3.4. The rose collection should be developed to have a specific focus with local relevance (e.g. Heritage Roses, those bred in the Western District). The entire project should also be professionally designed.

As discussed in section 3.5, consideration should be given to naming the new garden the “Margaret Laidlaw Rose Garden” as a replacement for the Margaret Laidlaw memorial which is recommended for removal.

The Thompson Fountain is currently undergoing repairs to the decorative structure.



Figure 8: Modern interpretation of a Parterre Rose Garden at Benalla Botanic Gardens

2.8 ANA Fountain and Water Sensitive Garden

The Australian Native Association Fountain is a rock structure dating from 1908 and is now in poor condition with no working water features. It is considered to be high significance to the Botanic Gardens. It is recommended that the structural rockwork be repaired and rebuilt and a working fountain reinstated in accordance with correct heritage principals and in consultation with Heritage Victoria. An image of the original fountain can be found on page 35 of the 1995 Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd report.

To the rear of the fountain is the water sensitive garden. This series of garden beds is criss-crossed by a network of pathways and work well, although some of the paths relate poorly to the main lawn and the rest of the gardens. General changes in pathway and garden bed layout are recommended to the edge of this area in line with the Master Plan drawing, although existing paths are to be retained within the space. Existing arches are of no known heritage significance and can be retained or removed as desired.

2.9 Hill

The hill which sits above Thompson Street is the remains of a natural, rocky outcrop which was largely levelled in the 19th century. The remaining rise is now topped with small scale, bluestone lined garden beds which lack relevance. Paths dating from Ferguson's time are now gone, as is the rotunda / pavilion which once crowned the hill. The hill does feature a number historic trees on its slopes, however recent commemorative plantings to the top have performed poorly.

It is recommended in the short term that the bluestone garden beds be removed, and the hill returned to a simple, grassy swath. As a longer term project the hill is to be connected via the new, internal circuit path to the rest of the Gardens and a simple, planted labyrinth established on its top. This landscape treatment will give the hill greater relevance without over developing the area.

The new path connecting the hill will not rise to the top of it, instead skirting around its base on the eastern side. Access to the top of the hill will require walking across the lawns, with most of the access being up the northern slope which is the gentlest. The new labyrinth is not intended to be a maze, but more a series of clipped hedges which create a meandering system of grass walks around the hill. The top of the hill and the centre of the labyrinth will feature a custom built timber seat where visitors can sit and look over the Gardens and the township of Hamilton.



Figure 9: A simple hedge and lawn labyrinth
Source: www.knowth.com

2.10 Lake

The lake sits in the eastern corner of the Gardens near the Naylor entrance and is generally in accordance with William Guilfoyle's original design. The basalt spalls which line the feature are historically appropriate and the island is well planted. An ornamental bridge, not envisaged by Guilfoyle was constructed as part of large scale works to the Gardens in 1908. This bridge has been rebuilt many times over the years, and although it sits on the alignment of a Ferguson era pathway its alignment and current form is not considered to be of special significance.¹



Figure 10: Lake and bridge c.1920-54 and 2014

Source: State Library of Victoria, Rose Stereograph collection and Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design

It is recommended that the lake be retained in its current form with some additions to the surrounding Garden beds to give a better context. The existing bridge is in need of renewal in the next five years and it is recommended that it be replaced with a realigned structure or more ornamental design. By realigning the bridge it will sit more comfortably in the landscape and have better foreground definition. It will also make the bridge part of the new, internal circuit path. It is recommended that the new bridge be professionally design with a curved surface (as per the current structure) but in a way which meets disability access requirements. The new handrail should be of an ornamental wrought iron or decorative steel design (see Figure 11 over page).

The lake's fountain is currently inactive and should be recommissioned. An image of the original wrought iron structure can be found on page 29 of the 1993 Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken report, but it

is not recommended that this ornate, and somewhat incongruous feature be reinstated. Instead it is recommended that a simple water jet fountain be added in the original location.



Figure 11: Decorative bridge similar to what could be installed at the Hamilton Botanic Gardens Hortensia Garden, New Zealand. Source: www.asatours.com.au

2.11 Country Women's Association Glasshouse

The Country Women's Association Glasshouse is to be retained in its current, historical position on the upper lawn near the aviary. To give this building greater relevance it is recommended that a high quality horticultural display be maintained at all times. This could be simple in nature, but should be visually impressive at all times. Depending on available resources options could be as simple as a regularly, seasonal display of annuals such as impatiens or begonias, or as complex as a permanent succulent or orchid display. Small scale garden beds around the glasshouse should ultimately be removed.



Figure 12: Impatiens as a simple floral display for glasshouse. Source: www.almacs.com

2.12 Furniture and Infrastructure

Paths

Pathway infrastructure has been addressed in section 2.1 above which should be referred to for further detail.

Garden bed edging

Garden bed edging is predominantly made from either rustic bluestone spalls for early edging with later edging being bluestone pitchers. Both these styles are appropriate. The bluestone spalls are historically significant and must be retained. The bluestone pitchers may be retained in their current location or replaced with mild steel. Where existing gardens are unedged they should be formally defined with mild steel edging to create the same visual effect as a spade edge. The same treatment should also be used for new Garden beds. In the long term this edging treatment is more visually sympathetic and easier to maintain than the bluestone pitchers.

Tree Rings

Mulched tree rings should be selectively used where required for either the health of the tree or the safety of the public. Decisions should be made on a case by case basis but tree rings should only be installed where actively required as they impact the aesthetics of the site.

Lighting

The current lighting stock of one street-style lamp and the central uplighting of the Bunya Pine should be retained but no further lighting is recommended for within the Gardens as it tends to encourage vandalism and anti-social behaviour. The street lamp should also be repaired. Lighting may be provided to the lower amphitheatre as part of the Community Precinct development, but this should only be lit during events.

Picnic Facilities and Furnishings

A consistent palette of furniture should be used throughout the site which is sympathetic to the heritage value and character of the place. It is noted that existing fixed picnic tables and fixed and floating bench seats of an appropriate design and could be replicated for future furnishings (refer to Volume 2 for further details). In order to ensure consistency it is recommended that a formal list of furniture designs and materials are compiled including all finishes and paint colours. This specification should take into consideration Southern Grampians Shire Council standards, cost and maintenance requirements.

Elements included in the furniture and infrastructure specification should include:

- Fixed and relocatable bench seats (in line with current design)
- Picnic tables (in line with current design)
- Rubbish Bins (for outside the Gardens only, see below)
- Bike rack (located at the new Kennedy Street / Martin Street entrance)
- Drinking fountains

Rubbish bins should continue to be restricted to those on the Gardens external perimeter. This is to prevent damage to the Gardens' fabric by rubbish trucks which would require access if rubbish bins were internal to the Gardens. The current best practice for the management of public gardens is towards a "take in – take out" policy where rubbish bins are not required. To manage rubbish levels inside the gardens it is recommended that signs in accordance with section 3.9 be developed asking people to please take their rubbish home and that bins at Gardens entrances are regularly emptied.

The Master Plan drawing (page 3) indicates recommended locations for seats and picnic tables in the Gardens. The large number of seats in the Gardens was raised as a concern by the Friends, and consequently the net number of seats in the Gardens has been reduced. Any seats indicated on the drawing in new locations are to be relocated from elsewhere in the Gardens. Seat locations are based on providing all abilities access (regular rest points, especially on slopes), capturing views and servicing entrances and the new Community Precinct. When existing seats need replacement they are a good option for commemorative feature in the Gardens. Section 3.5 should be referred to for more details on commemorative seating.

Picnic facilities are to be limited to the Community Precinct, the current picnic area near the Glass House and small rotunda and near the Melville Oval rotunda (central lawn). The Community Precinct is to include a new picnic shelter and barbeque, picnic tables, bench seats, a drinking fountain and a bike rack at the entrance. If replacement of the existing small rotunda is required then the new structure should be similar to the architecturally designed shelter in the Community Precinct. Consideration could also be given to removing the existing barbeque and drinking fountain when they reach the end of their life. This will rationalise picnic facilities in the Community Precinct, reducing maintenance and allowing the rest of the Gardens to focus on passive recreation.

Retaining walls

Retaining walls near the water sensitive garden have a poor quality finish and probably date from the mid-20th century. These walls can be retained in the short term but as they require renewal should

be gradually replaced with rock breaching. New retaining walls should not be added except where they form part of the play experience in the new Community Precinct.

Play Equipment

All play equipment is to be gradually removed from the Gardens as the Community Precinct is developed. This new precinct will provide for nature and plant based play, a more appropriate type of playground for a Botanic Garden. By removing the equipment the core purpose of the Botanic Gardens and their heritage significance is respected and the Gardens will not compete with other parks such as Hamilton Lake, which has a large, new equipment based playground.

2.13 Toilets

Community consultation indicated a strong desire for additional public toilets at the Kennedy Street / Martin Street corner of the Gardens as the current block is too far from the existing play space. The existing toilets date from c.1935-9 and are not considered to be of significance. These toilets were rated three star by the 2014 "Public Toilet Strategy" and are used by tour buses, making their retention desirable. The Master Plan recommends that the current toilets be retained and upgraded to meet hygiene requirements and provide adequate internal lighting and that a new set of toilets be provided at the Kennedy / Martin Street corner. This approach is supported by the "Public Toilet Strategy".

Once the recommended Community Precinct is constructed there will be a need for good quality male and female public toilets with disability access, a changing area and baby change table, and the provision of such a facility is the long term recommendation of the Master Plan. In the short term however it is recommended that a single disability unit, as recommended in the Public Toilet Strategy, be provided to cater for current demand. Services for such a unit are available in the works area and could be utilised for the new toilets.

Pathways and garden beds around the existing Toilets on Thompson Street are to be modified to improve access and presentation. This includes connecting the toilets to the new, internal circuit path, removing the unsightly water tanks and increasing planting to soften the building.

¹ John Hawker, pers comm

3 Management Considerations

Treatment of the landscape design and infrastructure is only one element of the successful development of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens. Good management practices and adequate staffing levels will be essential to the success of the next stage of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens.

3.1 Event Management

Various events have taken place within the Gardens over the years and a plan is needed to rationalise and control these to ensure that the type and number of events are appropriate. It is recommended that the current permit and booking system for all public and group events (including weddings) be reviewed and that guidelines be developed as a means of assessing the appropriateness and impact of the proposed event. These guidelines should consider the following factors:

- Events should be relevant to the Gardens in either a botanical, historical or social context
- Events will only be allowed when they will not damage the fabric of the Gardens. This means heavy vehicles must be excluded as they can damage paths and trees.
- Large scale events (e.g. markets) should be avoided in the winter months as wet soil easily compacts, potentially causing long term damage
- As a general rule events should not dominate the Gardens or limit day to day public use
- Limits should be placed on the number and / or size of events which can take place each year – including weddings. The decision on the appropriate number of events should be made in consultation with Gardens’ staff and the Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens.
- Conditions should be placed on the staging of certain events if there is a potential risk of damage to Gardens fabric. A refundable Damage Bond of \$300 is currently payable, but consideration should be given as to whether this is adequate, especially for large events (e.g. markets).
- Special consideration should be given to weddings, with the requirement for weddings and wedding photography to be booked and a limit placed on numbers. This will require education – possibly through local celebrants, reception venues and photographers.
- A booking fee should continue to be charged (currently \$145) and be regularly reviewed.

It is recommended that a “conditions of use” document be produced to inform event organisers on what activities are and are not permitted in the Gardens and Council’s procedures in the event of damaging occurring. This document may be in more than one form, dependent on the scale of the event. For example, a “longest lunch” or other large fundraising event may have additional restrictions to a wedding or birthday party.

3.2 Plant Collections and Record Keeping

Many of Victoria’s botanic gardens established in the 19th century are now little more than pleasure grounds, with their role as Botanic Gardens with living collections being largely ignored. In Hamilton’s case the Friends have worked hard to correct this, with good planting labelling and the establishment of the *Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia* Abutilon collection. This means that the Hamilton Botanic Gardens are now in a position to expand this work to create a formal Living Collection Plan for implementation by Gardens staff and the Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens.

According to the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Living Plant Collection Plan, *“It is an essential feature of botanic gardens that they contain accurately identified, documented and labelled collections of plants for the purposes of conservation, reference, research, interpretation, education*

or pleasure. This is one feature of botanic gardens which distinguishes them from other public gardens and parks, and highlights their role as a valuable scientific and cultural resource." Additionally, Botanic Gardens may have a role to play in the trialling of new species and conservation of locally rare and endangered plants.

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

- What plant collections the Gardens are to focus on
- A simple procedure for accurately labelling plants
- A simple procedure for managing the collection including the location of individual specimens within the gardens (BGANZ is developing a template for regional Botanic Gardens which may assist with this work)
- A system for preserving rare plants within the Gardens
- Approaches for networking with other Botanic Gardens
- A simple procedure for managing any environmental weeds within the Gardens
- Succession planning and managing for landscape transition
- Ensuring historic suitability in species selection and planting design

The focus of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens' collections are still to be determined, but consideration should be given to the following:

- Building on existing plant collections - for example *Quercus* could be expanded to build on the rare Himalayan and Californian Live Oaks
- Establishing collections recommended by William Guilfoyle in his original letter. A copy of these lists can be found in Appendix 1 of Francine Gilfedder and Associates 1994 *Conservation Policy and Strategy* which should be referred to for further details on locations. Suggested collections included:
 - Australian plants
 - New Zealand plants
 - Variegated Shrubs
 - Medical plants
 - Plants of economic importance
 - Bulbs and tubers
 - Heaths, native and exotic
 - Palms
 - A rose bed near the Thompson Fountain
- Collections should be relative to home gardeners, where plants suitable for the Hamilton region can be exhibited
- Focusing on the rare and endangered plants of the region, especially the flora of the Grampians
- Consideration should be given to collection plants / genera that are not well covered in other Victorian collections

Landscape Succession Planning

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

3.3 Management of an Ageing Tree Canopy

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

Tree Assessment Risk Management

Trees within the Hamilton Botanic Gardens are currently assessed reactively as problems occur. Plans are in place to commence a program of regular annual inspections and it is essential that this be put in place as soon as possible. The existing tree stock in Hamilton Botanic Gardens is one of its most significant and valuable features, and regular assessments and maintenance works are the only way to preserve and protect them. Furthermore, trees of this age – many of which are over-mature – pose an increased risk to park users, as these trees are more likely to fail than young, healthy trees. This was seen in the failure of the large Oak at the Skene Street entrance during production of the Master Plan.

It is therefore recommended that a program of annual tree inspections by a qualified arborist be commenced, and that works recommended during this assessment be carried out within the timeframes specified. This will require an increase to the maintenance budget of the Gardens to allow these works to occur. These assessments and maintenance works will be essential for managing the risk profile of the Gardens and the longevity of the heritage trees.

Tree Replacement Strategy

It is recommended that a tree replacement strategy be developed for the Hamilton Botanic Gardens to manage the ageing tree canopy and provide a sympathetic and planned approach to new plantings. This strategy must be founded on a good quality arboricultural assessment that looks at the age, safe useful life expectancy and heritage significance of every tree in the Gardens. This assessment will then be used to develop an itemised replacement strategy that nominates an expected removal date for each tree, and locates proposed new plantings and their recommended species. This replacement strategy will be informed by the collections strategy, and will help ensure that botanical diversity and heritage value are not lost.

The tree replacement strategy should consider the following points:

- The replacement strategy should give due consideration to the heritage value of the site. This does not necessarily mean replacing trees "same for same" as has been the current policy – and indeed this approach can lead to the replanting of inappropriate species - but consideration should be given for the existing character, style and species distribution.
- The tree replacement strategy should be seen as a chance to increase species diversity across the site and implement the plant collection policy. Trees should be botanically interesting, historically appropriate and climatically suitable.
- The replacement strategy must consider the problems posed by the existing tree canopy. Establishment of new plantings under existing trees is not advisable, as it can lead to poor establishment but care must be taken that existing open lawn areas are not cluttered with new trees.
- From time to time it may be necessary to remove a relatively healthy tree in order to establish new plantings in an area. Conversely, it may be appropriate to spend additional

resources on preserving a particularly fine individual specimen which would otherwise have reached the end of its life.

- The replacement strategy should show tree removal over a number of time frames (e.g. immediate, 5 years, 10 years, long term retention), but should include enough flexibility to allow for changes.
- The replacement strategy should aim to establish a mixed age population in the tree canopy. Generally speaking the age break down of 10% young, 20% semi-mature, 60% mature and 10% over-mature² is considered to give a good age distribution and reduce management costs.
- The strategy should detail after planting maintenance including irrigation, mulching, formative pruning and other works. Good after planting maintenance is essential for the success of the replacement strategy.
- The replacement strategy should also be reviewed on a ten year basis.

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

Tree Protection during Development Works

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

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

3.4 Planting Design Guidelines

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

Planting within the Botanic Gardens should be aesthetically pleasing, with consideration being given to texture, form and colour, used in balance to create a visually interesting and pleasing effect. This planting should have gardenesque* references to the 19th century origins of the Gardens and Guilfoyle's design style. Consideration should also be given to providing more planting structure and species diversity in existing garden beds, with the introduction of ground cover planting and vertical clumping plants being used as focal points. Consideration must also be given to the existing planting style and species mix of the Gardens and the plant collection policies.

* Note: this refers to gardenesque in the Australian context, not to the European definition.

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



Figure 13: Perennial border RBG Melbourne (left)

Figure 14: Gardenesque succulents at Williamstown Botanic Gardens

Source: L. Callow, City of Hobsons Bay

3.5 Commemorative Features and Monuments

The Hamilton Botanic Gardens currently have a wide range of monuments dating from the 19th century onwards. Some of these are of historical significance but some are relatively recent and obtrusive. As with many botanic gardens, a number of monuments are commemorative trees, although Hamilton Botanic Gardens is distinctive in their quantity and in the use of large bluestone monuments to mark these. The Botanic Gardens’ long history of private funding has also led to monuments such as the Thompson Fountain, Australian Natives Association Fountain, and B.C. Naylor Gates – all of which are of either primary or contributory significance³. The Margret Laidlaw memorial however sits poorly in the landscape and is not relevant to the Botanic Garden setting. The most recent monument is a 1988 bicentennial time capsule and tree to the north of the lake.

Where existing monuments are not of heritage significance or are intrusive, it is recommended that they gradually be removed, or are modified where appropriate to reduce their impact. In particular, it is recommended that the Margret Laidlaw Memorial be removed and that Mrs Laidlaw be remembered in an alternative way. One option for this would be to name the new rose collection near the Thompson Fountain the “Margaret Laidlaw Rose Garden”.



Figure 15: Bluestone obelisk marking a commemorative oak

A request was received during consultation by the family of one of the Gardens’ long standing curators for the reinstatement of a plaque recognising their work. As the Hamilton Botanic Gardens has a history of long serving superintendents/curators who have been responsible for their care this is considered appropriate as long as it is carefully carried out. It is therefore recommended that a simple brass plaque be installed at the

cottage recognising the work of all past curators and superintendents, including their dates of tenure.

It is easy for Botanic and Public Gardens to become repositories for memorials, but if these are not to detract from the Gardens it is important that such commemorations are carefully managed. Furthermore, the installation of memorials in public gardens can limit future developments, as they cannot be easily altered or removed without causing offense. Current best practice is to recommend that no memorials be added to public gardens, except in very specific circumstances. These apply to the Hamilton Botanic Gardens, as the long history of memorials and monuments are part of the significance of the place (see Appendix 1, Volume 2).

It is recommended that commemorative features within the Hamilton Botanic Gardens be limited to trees and park benches and that guidelines be developed to guide and manage commemorative applications. These guidelines should consider the following factors:

- Commemorative park benches are to be in the same style as standard benches, and should be recognised with a simple brass plaque. Benches shall only be placed in accordance with recommendations made in this Master Plan, and will therefore be limited to the replacement of aging seats
- Under normal circumstances commemorative trees will not be marked and will only be planted in accordance with the species and locations outlined in the tree replacement strategy. This is to prevent inappropriate plantings.
- Under special circumstances commemorative trees will be marked, but this should be limited to no more than one tree every five years and only for important events.
- A fee will be charged to cover the cost of installing and maintaining the commemorative item
- Applications for commemorative features must make it clear that items may be removed or relocated as necessary for the management of the Gardens

In certain specific circumstances larger commemorative features may be appropriate, for example if private funding is provided for the implementation of a major project recommended in this master plan. However, it is essential that commemoration be limited to naming rights or a small plaque, and that the aesthetic, practical and landscape requirements of the project are not in any way limited by the commemorative nature of the project.

3.6 Management and Staffing Levels

In order for any Botanic Garden to be successful it is essential that a sufficient number of suitably qualified gardeners be employed. Currently the Gardens employ a full time gardener and an apprentice. This staffing level is considered adequate for current care of the Gardens but will need to be increased as new Garden beds and the Community Precinct are constructed. Eventually this would lead to the requirement for an additional, full time qualified gardener.

Currently staff at the Botanic Gardens are not required to have high level training in ornamental horticulture. However to correctly care for a historic Botanic Garden it is essential that staff have good botanical and horticultural skills, as the care of these sites requires a different level of expertise than public parks and sports fields. A high level of skill in plant identification, care of ornamental species, pest and disease control and glass house management are all important in the Curator position. Good communication skills and an ability to work with other regional Botanic Gardens, the Friends and public are also essential. It is therefore recommended that Council allow for training to increase the skill set of the gardeners where required.

The new Community Precinct will require management from an events, tourism and marketing perspective. Specialist professional care will also be required for the aviaries (see section 2.6)

It is recommended that ongoing staffing at the Hamilton Botanic Gardens meet the following requirements:

- All gardeners (with exception of apprentices) to be appropriately qualified (recommended minimum certificate IV or equivalent qualification) with experience in ornamental horticulture
- Consideration should be given to staffing exchanges / training opportunities with other, city based Botanic Gardens to improve staff skill levels
- If possible the title of “Curator” should be reinstated for the Head Gardener. This is to emphasise the importance of the Botanic Gardens and to attract a higher quality of applicant for future vacancies.
- Staffing levels not to drop below current levels of 2.0 positions made up of the Curator and one apprentice
- Staffing levels to be increased to be gradually increased 3.0 positions at the completion of recommended Master Plan works comprised of the Curator, one gardener and one apprentice. This is comprised of one 0.5 position to care for the Community Precinct and sensory garden and 0.5 position to care for the new garden beds.
- All trees to be maintained by suitably qualified and experience external arborists
- Staffing allowances made for the management of the events / marketing aspect of the Community Precinct (this could be through up-skilling Gardens’ staff or by Council’s marketing/events department)
- Staffing allowances made for the care of the aviary birds (this could be through up-skilling Gardens’ staff or employing an outside contractor)

3.7 Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens

The Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens were established in 1987 and have been actively involved in the care and management of the Gardens since this time. The Friends are currently well provided for in terms of physical resources, having access to the Cottage which should be reserved for this purpose. The Friends are a valuable resource for the Botanic Gardens and should continue their current work with Council in the role out of projects across the Gardens.

3.8 Water Management and Irrigation

Water management and drought proofing is an important part of the management of historic Botanic Gardens. In the case of Hamilton, access is available to a secure water supply from the local reservoir, however measures can still be put in place to minimise water use through effective and intelligent water management practices.

The existing irrigation system in the Gardens has recently been successfully upgraded and consists of pop-up risers to 95% of lawn and garden bed areas. Consideration should be given to gradually changing this over to drip irrigation for Garden beds in order to reduce the Gardens’ water bill and maintenance costs. All new garden beds should use drip irrigation in preference to pop-up risers. The use of good quality, free draining mulch will also reduce water requirements.

The current irrigation system is on a timer, and a local weather station with a rain-cut off sensor should be installed to ensure that it only operates as required. This type of system is readily available and of low cost.

In addition to redesigning the irrigation system, planting design, as discussed in section 3.4, above, will be an extremely important part of the Gardens’ long term water management, and all new

plantings should aim to reduce the Gardens reliance on irrigation except in specific, justifiable circumstances. Where high-water use plants of particular historical or horticultural merit are planted they should be clustered together, to create individual zones of higher water use, so maximising the benefit of the additional water.

3.9 Signage and Interpretation

Interpretation

Interpretation and signage in the Botanic Gardens is currently mixed and should be consolidated into a simple, consistent signage strategy with signs kept to a minimum and focusing on user information (e.g. orientation and restrictions) and plant labelling.

It is recommended that a consistent signage strategy be developed for the Hamilton Botanic Gardens with styles matching the existing history signs along Thompson Street. This strategy should include the following:

- Down grading of no-alcohol signs at park entrances, or shifting of signs to reduce their prominence as they detract from the historic setting
- Replacement of the map board at the Thompson Street gates with a new sign in keeping with the signage
- Restriction of interpretive historical signage to that already in place along Thompson Street, although it could be expanded to include a small, low key signs at the cottage, rotunda, aviary and workers sustenance seats.
- Regular cleaning of all signs
- Retention of the rules of use signs at French and Skene Street entrances. These signs should be replicated where required in other locations.
- Provision of simple, visually appropriate signage detailing the “take in – take out” rubbish policy
- Plant labels should continue to be rolled out across the Gardens in the same style as is currently used
- A simple design for commemorative brass plaques on benches should be developed including guidelines for larger commemorative plaques.
- Signs should be of durable quality and regularly cleaned as part of Gardens maintenance



Figure 16: Good example of interpretive signage in Gardens.

In addition, an interpretation strategy should be developed, with consideration given to the following factors:

- Opening of the Cottage to the public during the day to allow its use as a small scale interpretive centre, similar to what is already occurs
- Provision of photocopied information on the history of the Gardens and plant collections
- Garden tours by the Friends of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens or others
- Development of a website for the Gardens with the history of the place, a “what’s on” section and seasonal photographs – possibly managed through a linked Flickr page.

3.10 Management as a Heritage Place

Hamilton Botanic Gardens is classified as being of historical, scientific (horticultural) and aesthetic significance to the state of Victoria, and are included on the Victoria Heritage Register as H2185. As such, it is important that the site is managed with due consideration and respect for the cultural heritage of the site

Heritage Victoria is the responsible body for the management cultural heritage at the Hamilton Botanic Gardens, and a permit will be required for any works other than general garden maintenance. Additionally, detailed heritage management documents were prepared in the early 1990s, being:

- *Hamilton Botanic Gardens Conservation Analysis*, produced by Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd in association with Francine Gilfedder & Associates produced in 1993 followed by:
- *Hamilton Botanic Gardens Conservation Policy and Strategy for Implementation*, produced by Francine Gilfedder & Associates in association with Nigel Lewis and Richard Aitken Pty. Ltd. produced in 1994

These documents are discussed extensively in Volume 2 of this Master Plan and are both excellent, however they are 20 years old and need review in light of this Master Plan. This especially applies to the *Conservation Policy and Strategy for Implementation*.

This Master Plan has, where possible, followed the recommendations of the two conservation documents, however it has been limited by their age and by the fact that these documents assume a continuation of the status quo, as they did not envisage the production of a Master Plan of this nature or the changes to Botanic Gardens management which have occurred over the last 20 years. Furthermore, they were only intended to last for 10 years before being reviewed.

On this basis it is strongly recommended that these two documents be reviewed and incorporated into a single Conservation Management Plan with due reference to the proposals made in this Master Plan. If possible, this review should take place before the detailed design of the Community Precinct but if this does not occur then Heritage Victoria will still ensure that the Gardens are appropriately managed. The brief for the production of the CMP should consider the following points:

- In the case of the *Conservation Analysis* very little will have changed in 20 years. The main updates will be to the existing conditions and comparative analysis sections with a consequent review of the significance ratings for individual elements.
- Incorporation of the discovery of the Guilfoyle plan into the analysis discussion
- Production of detailed maps showing the location and levels of significance of all items
- Full review of the conservation policies and strategy for implementation to reflect changing practices and the recommendations of this Master Plan

In the interim the conservation documents should continue to guide the management of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens where they do not conflict with this Master Plan.



Figure 17: Thompson Street entrance c.1920-36 and 2014

Note: cannon replaced with George IV bust.

Source: State Library of Victoria, Rose Stereograph collection and Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design

² Royal Botanic Gardens, 1997, pg 112

³ Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, 1993, pg 42

4 Review and Implementation

4.1 Implementation

The Master Plan has been designed as a strategic document intended to guide the development of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens over the next ten to twenty years. Further design development work will be required to allow the implementation of projects outlined in this document and on the Master Plan drawing (page 3). This design work should be undertaken by suitably skilled professionals and in consultation with Council.

4.2 Priorities

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

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

This list of priorities will be subject to change, especially if unexpected opportunities arise, allowing the fast tracking of particular projects. It should be noted that the Master Plan drawing (page 3) and recommendations made in this report express a long term vision for the Gardens. These works will need to be staged, and will happen gradually to achieve the Master Plans' final aims.

Item	Short term 2015-18	Medium term 2018-23	Long term 2023-30
Background and Planning Documents			
Feature survey plan of the entire site	✓		
Locating and identifying existing trees on the survey plan	✓		
Arboricultural assessment of all trees (Urgent)	✓		
Development of a tree replacement strategy (Urgent)	✓		
Locating elements of significance on the survey plan	✓		
Development of a plant collection policy	✓		
Development of standards for furniture and materials	✓		
Interpretation / Signage Strategy		✓	
Review of the Conservation Management Plan		✓	
Built Projects			
Repair of Thompson Fountain (already underway)	✓		
Temporary single unit-disable access toilet near playground	✓		
Demolition of bluestone beds to Hill	✓		
Reintroduction of flower displays to Glass House	✓		
Demolition of Margaret Laidlaw memorial	✓		
New Rose Garden	✓		
Demolition of small aviaries	✓		
New bridge to lake (in need of renewal)	✓		

Item	Short term 2015-18	Medium term 2018-23	Long term 2023-30
Background and Planning Documents			
Repainting of cottage	✓		
Investigation of lake lining and repair	✓		
Minor refurbishment of Thompson Street toilet block	✓		
Repair and repaint Thompson Street gate		✓	
Works to cottage in preparation for Community Precinct development (fences, gardens, paths etc.)		✓	
Demolition of works area in preparation for Community Precinct development		✓	
Community Precinct Landscape Works		✓	
New wire fence to Martin Street and Kennedy Street/Martin Street corner		✓	
New decorative gates to Martin Street/Kennedy Street corner		✓	
New toilets to Community Precinct		✓	
Repair of ANA Fountain		✓	
Repair of lake fountain		✓	
Repair and repaint French Street gate		✓	
Replacement of aviary		✓	
Internal circuit path through Gardens		✓	
Labyrinth and seat to Hill			✓
Repair and repaint Skene Street			✓
Pathway modifications to Hill			✓
Major refurbishment of existing toilet on Thompson Street			✓
New rubbish bins	ongoing		
New tables - wheelchair accessible on concrete slab	ongoing		
Roll out of changes to existing paths throughout garden	ongoing		
Roll out of new garden beds throughout garden	ongoing		

4.3 Review

It is recommended that the Master Plan be reviewed in ten years time (2025) to allow for any changes in circumstances and to incorporate new developments. Some projects recommended in this report may not be completed at the time of the review, and if appropriate these should be rolled over into the new Master Plan.

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For additional references please refer to *Volume 2: Background Report of the Hamilton Botanic Gardens Master Plan*

Appendix 1: Indicative Costings

The following is a cost estimate for works recommended in this Master Plan. These costs should be read with the following considerations in mind:

- Figures are based on 2015 dollar figures and are provided as estimates only; the intention being to provide Council with approximate figures for the purpose of budgeting and applying for grants.
- Figures exclude GST
- Figures have been calculated to reflect the most likely method of construction Council will use for each project. For example, the figures for the aviary are based entirely on construction by outside contractors, while the labyrinth on the hill is based on supply of materials and installation by Council staff.
- The construction method used in calculations is stated for each individual item. If the construction method changes this will effect costs. Use of external contractors will increase bottom line costs. Works undertaken “in-house” by Council will be cheaper.
- Where works are listed as to be undertaken “in-house” but have an associated cost this is to cover materials only (e.g. mulch, plants). No figure has been put on Council supplied labour for any item.
- Given that this is a small, regional Botanic Gardens all costs are estimated at the lower end of probable costs to more accurately reflect likely available budgets.
- For all projects detailed design and documentation will be required for more accurate costings.

Note on Paths and Garden Beds

This Master Plan recommends significant changes to the path network and many new Garden Beds. It is anticipated that these works will be gradually undertaken as funds permit, most probably as part of the ongoing recurrent capital works budgets for the Gardens, and with much of the work by Council staff. For this reason the overall capital costs of these projects are not included, but rates are provided to allow costs for probable costs for individual projects to be calculated.

Rates for Budget Calculations

Item	Unit	Unit Price
PATHWAYS		
<i>Note: Changes to pathways fall into two categories. Some pathways are completely new, and lineal metre rates for these have been provided below. However, the majority of pathway changes are realignments or narrowing of existing paths. In these cases construction costs will be based on a mix of a) demolition and making good where surfaces are no longer required, b) construction of new path surfaces, c) edging, and d) resurfacing of existing paths to match new works.</i>		
Demolition of existing asphalt path surfaces (<i>external contractors</i>)	sqm	\$12.00
Making good of demolished asphalt path areas (deep rip, top dress, sprig with lawn) (<i>in-house by Council staff</i>)	sqm	\$15.00
Resurfacing of existing pathways to make good and meld with new path works (<i>external contractors</i>)	sqm	\$12.00
Construction of new asphalt or gravel pathways including widening or realigning existing pathways (<i>external contractors</i>)	sqm	\$40.00
Steel edging to all pathways (<i>external contractors</i>)	lm	\$36.00

Item	Unit	Unit Price
LINEAL METRE RATES FOR NEW PATHWAYS ONLY		
New 2.0m wide asphalt internal circuit path (<i>external contractors</i>)	lm	\$152.00
New 1.5m wide asphalt connecting paths (<i>external contractors</i>)	lm	\$132.00
New 1.5m gravel paths behind cottage (<i>external contractors</i>)	lm	\$132.00
GARDEN BEDS		
Demolition of existing beds	<i>in-house labour</i>	
Garden bed preparation and irrigation (<i>in-house by Council Staff</i>)	sqm	\$15.00
Planting (<i>in-house by Council Staff</i>)	sqm	\$20.00
Garden bed edging – standard (<i>external contractors</i>)	lm	\$36.00
Garden bed edging - raised mild steel e.g. for Rose Garden (<i>external contractors</i>)	lm	\$55.00
New tree planting (<i>in-house by Council Staff</i>)	ea	\$90.00
Design fees for planting design	10-15% of construction costs	
PICNIC FACILITIES		
New rubbish bins (<i>external contractors</i>)	ea	\$570.00
New table - wheelchair accessible on concrete slab (<i>external contractors</i>)	ea	\$4,100.00
New drinking fountain - wheelchair accessible, ex. service connections (<i>external contractors</i>)	ea	\$1,900.00
New shelter and picnic tables (<i>external contractors</i>)	ea	\$30,000.00
New barbeque (<i>external contractors</i>)	ea	\$8,000.00
New bike rack (<i>external contractors</i>)	ea	\$2,300.00
New timber backed bench seat (<i>external contractors</i>)	ea	\$1,100.00
Relocation of seats and tables within the Gardens	<i>In-house labour</i>	

Background and Planning Documents

Item	Cost
Feature survey plan of the entire site (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$10,000.00
Locating and identifying existing trees on the survey plan (<i>in-house Council staff and/or Friends</i>)	<i>in-house labour</i>
Locating elements of significance on the survey plan (<i>in-house Council staff and/or Friends</i>)	<i>in-house labour</i>
Review of the Conservation Management Plan	\$25,000.00
Development of a plant collection policy	<i>in-house labour</i>
Development of a tree replacement strategy	\$15,000.00
Development of standards for furniture and materials	<i>in-house labour</i>
Interpretation / Signage Strategy	\$15,000.00
Arboricultural assessment of all trees	<i>already budgeted</i>
TOTAL	\$65,000.00

Individual Projects

Item	Cost
Hill	
Hedging for labyrinth (<i>in-house by Council staff</i>)	\$7,500.00
New tree planting (<i>in-house by Council staff</i>)	\$500.00
Demolition of existing bluestone beds (<i>in-house by Council staff</i>)	<i>in-house labour</i>
Pathway modifications	<i>see above note and rates</i>
New garden beds	<i>see above note and rates</i>
Decorative custom seat to top of hill (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$2,500.00
Design fees (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$5,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	\$15,500.00
Lake	
New bridge (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$35,200.00
Repair fountain (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$5,000.00
Pathway modifications including connections to bridge	<i>see above note and rates</i>
New garden beds	<i>see above note and rates</i>
Design fees (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$ 5,000.00
<i>Note: no allowance to repair lake lining as extent of possible work unknown</i>	
SUB-TOTAL	\$45,200.00
ANA Fountain	
Repair fountain (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$ 4,000.00
Repair rock work (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$16,100.00
Pathway modifications	<i>see above note and rates</i>
New garden beds	<i>see above note and rates</i>
Heritage report to guide repairs (p.c.)	\$ 5,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	\$25,100.00
Thompson Fountain Rose Garden / Margaret Laidlaw Rose Garden	
Garden bed preparation (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$5,200.00
Irrigation (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$3,000.00
New raised mild steel edging to garden beds (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$9,900.00
Gravel between garden beds (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$7,800.00
Planting (<i>in-house by Council Staff</i>)	\$10,000.00
Demolition of Margaret Laidlaw Memorial and existing garden beds at fountain	<i>in-house labour</i>
Pathway modifications	<i>see above note and rates</i>
New garden beds to rear of fountain	<i>see above note and rates</i>
Design fees	\$6,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	\$41,900.00
Fences and Gates	
Repair and repaint Thompson Street (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$ 2,000.00
Repair and repaint French Street (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$2,000.00
Repair and repaint Skene Street (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$1,500.00

Item	Cost
New wire fence enclosed in hedge to Martin Street and Kennedy Street/Martin Street corner (<i>external contractors, hedge by Council</i>)	\$12,500.00
New decorative gates to Martin Street/Kennedy Street corner (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$15,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	\$33,000.00
Cottage (works inside new fence line)	
Repaint cottage (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$5,000.00
New picket fence to rear (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$11,900.00
New gates to picket fence (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$2,400.00
Steppers path (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$2,800.00
New deck to back (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$4,200.00
New gravel paths through cottage garden (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$2,450.00
New steel edging to paths and garden beds (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$3,150.00
New plaques commemorating curators (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$1,200.00
Garden bed and lawn modifications in-house by Friends and as required only	<i>in-house labour / as required see note above</i>
SUB-TOTAL	\$33,100.00
Aviary	
Cost for new aviary (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$ 155,000.00
Demolition of old structure (p.c. allowance) (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$5,000.00
Temporary rehousing of birds (p.c. allowance) (<i>in-house by Council staff</i>)	\$3,000.00
Pathway modifications	<i>see above note and rates</i>
New garden beds	<i>see above note and rates</i>
Design fees (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$20,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	\$ 183,000.00
Works Depot	
Demolition of existing structures and small aviaries (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$17,000.00
New shed (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$6,500.00
New screening hedge (<i>in-house by Council staff</i>)	\$ 300.00
New paling fence to boundary (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$7,500.00
New vehicle access gates (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$4,400.00
Pathway modifications	<i>see above note and rates</i>
New screening garden beds	<i>see above note and rates</i>
<i>Note: No allowance for demolition of dangerous building materials</i>	
SUB-TOTAL	\$35,700.00
Picnic Facilities	
New rubbish bins (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$1,100.00
New tables - wheelchair accessible on concrete slab (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$4,100.00
New drinking fountain - wheelchair accessible, ex. service connections (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$1,900.00
New shelter and picnic tables (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$30,000.00
New barbeque (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$8,000.00
New bike rack (<i>external contractors</i>)	\$2,300.00
Additional seats and tables (relocated from elsewhere in Gardens)	
SUB-TOTAL	\$47,400.00

Item	Cost
Community Precinct (note, may be staged)	
Preliminaries, demolition and site establishment	\$22,600.00
New gravel pathways and works stations in sensory garden	\$23,400.00
New and modified asphalt pathways including new entrance	\$46,750.00
Garden bed prep and planting of sensory garden (in-house by Council staff)	\$46,750.00
Design fees	\$12,000.00
Lawns - top dress and sprigged (in-house by Council staff)	\$12,000.00
Retaining and sitting rocks to amphitheatre	\$8,750.00
Garden bed prep and planting of lower amphitheatre (in-house by Council staff)	\$42,850.00
Garden bed prep and planting of play space (in-house by Council staff)	\$57,600.00
Children's play space - rocks, logs, cascade, rill, water play, retaining walls, general detailing	\$ 115,300.00
Water play - treatment, jets, drains, piping	\$41,400.00
Drainage	\$9,400.00
Design fees	\$25,000.00
Picnic facilities	<i>see above</i>
Fences and gates	<i>see above</i>
SUB-TOTAL	\$ 463,800.00
Toilets	
Refurbishment of existing toilet on Thompson Street	\$ 100,000.00
New toilets to Community Precinct	\$ 150,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	\$ 250,000.00
<i>note: costs approximations based on figures in Southern Grampians Shire Council Toilet Strategy</i>	
TOTAL	\$1,173,700.00
CONTINGENCY	\$117,370.00
GST	\$129,107.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,420,177.00
EXCLUSIONS	
Tree protection as an additional cost to works	
Irrigation in the Community Precinct	
Permits	
Demolition other than that specified	
Design fees other than that specified	
Staff training	
New signage	
Location and protection of Council assets	
Arboricultural inspections and regular maintenance work	
Pathways as a total cost (rates provided)	
Garden beds and tree planting as a total cost (rates provided)	
Upgrades to the irrigation system	
GST except in bottom line figure	
Contingencies except in bottom line figure (additional 10% which should be included for all projects)	