

New vision for Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens

Committee for Melbourne long time Not for Profit member, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria could soon be attracting thousands more visitors, with the Andrew's Labor Government to provide a \$5 million kickstart to a proposed new nature and science precinct.

Minister for Environment Lily D'Ambrosio recently announced funding for a feasibility study for a new Nature and Science Precinct that includes the redevelopment of the National Herbarium of Victoria, and the creation of a new nature gallery and learning and participation centre.

Under the plan, the original 1934 Herbarium building will be fully restored and expanded to include a plant identification service. The much beloved Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden will also be expanded, and the Great Melbourne Telescope returned to its home at the Melbourne Observatory.

The proposed new project would see an estimated increase in visitors from 1.9 million to 2.4 million by 2023 and increase school student participation by 50 per cent.

This redevelopment will also allow for the treasures of the State Botanical Collection to be shared with the public for the first time and help preserve the collection for future generations.

"This precinct will bring Victoria's natural wonders to life in the heart of Melbourne and thousands more visitors to our beautiful botanic gardens" said Minister for Environment Lily D'Ambrosio.

"This commitment from the Victorian Government to our Nature and Science precinct recognises the powerful connection between culture, nature and science, and importance of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to Melbourne and to the health of this planet" said Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria CEO Professor Tim Entwisle.

Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne has also received a *Committee for Melbourne* trophy in recognition of 18 years of membership and their outstanding commitment and contribution to our city. Significantly, the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden was conceived and led by 1998/99 CfM Future Focus Group member Simon Warrender with his vision for a CBD based children's garden with a centrepiece sculpture of Norman Lindsay's *'The Magic Pudding.'*

The Magic Pudding sculpture, by renowned Melbourne sculptor Louise Laumen, was funded by the Victorian College of the Arts, who were able to renovate their foundry to accommodate the work. It was unveiled in November 2000 at a gala garden party on the at the site.

The Norman Lindsay Family gave the Botanic Gardens project unprecedented copyright to produce the main sculpture and later approved a limited edition of miniatures that were sold to give seed funding to Simon's next project; the annual Melbourne Prize, also developed through assistance from the Committee for Melbourne.

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Martine Letts presenting Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Director and Chief Executive, Professor Tim Entwisle with the silver membership award in front of the National Herbarium of Victoria



Royal Botanical Gardens Victoria Director and Chief Executive, Professor Tim Entwisle



Tim Entwisle, Minister Lily D'Ambrosio and Penny Fowler with an artists impression of the new Precinct



An artist's impression of the Nature and Science Precinct KT Architects



Simon Warrender and the 1998/99 FFG project group included fellow members Lee Chin Ng and Megan McCracken.



FFG Class of 1998/99