



Dandenong Ranges Gardens

Strategic Management Plan
May 2014

Acknowledgement of Country

Through their rich culture, Indigenous Australians have been intrinsically connected to this continent - including the area now known as Victoria and the State's parks and reserves - for tens of thousands of years. Parks Victoria recognises this connection and acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these areas.

Cover image: Kurume Bowl, National Rhododendron Garden.

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Approved Plan

This Plan for the Dandenong Ranges Gardens is approved for implementation. Its purpose is to direct all aspects of management of the gardens until the Plan is reviewed.

In developing the Plan, Parks Victoria consulted widely with a range of interested community and stakeholder groups and individuals, and was assisted by the Dandenong Ranges Advisory Committee. A draft Strategic Management Plan was published in April 2013. Fourteen submissions were received and have been considered in preparing this approved Plan.

The Plan recognises the valuable contribution of the community to the management of the gardens and seeks to strengthen community relationships and encourage people to continue to be involved by supporting management with their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm.

I thank those individuals and groups who contributed to the development of the Plan and encourage everyone to enjoy and become involved in protecting these precious community gardens.



Bill Jackson
Chief Executive
Parks Victoria

Executive Summary

The Gardens will be managed to enhance their horticultural, cultural and visitor values, and to encourage ongoing community connections, stewardship and involvement in their management.

The Dandenong Ranges Gardens (the Gardens) are a diverse group of seven properties of significant botanic, heritage and tourism value located within the Dandenong Ranges. The Gardens are approximately 50 km to the east of Melbourne and cover a total area of 200 hectares.

The properties that comprise the Dandenong Ranges Gardens are:

- National Rhododendron Garden
- William Ricketts Sanctuary
- Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden
- George Tindale Memorial Garden
- Pirianda Garden
- R. J. Hamer Arboretum
- Mt Dandenong Arboretum.

The site, formerly operated as the Olinda Golf Course also comes under the purview of the Gardens management area and is included in this Plan.

The role of this Strategic Management Plan (the Plan) is to provide a strategic framework and clear direction for the management of the Gardens over the next 15 years. The Plan was prepared in consultation with key stakeholders and the community.

The Gardens play a significant role in the broader tourism offer of the Dandenong Ranges and the Yarra Valley. There are significant possibilities to coordinate with the Shire of Yarra Ranges in the further development of strategic tourism policy and projects for the region.

The Gardens include the following key values:

- significant botanical collection of cool-climate plants, many species of which are threatened, set in a eucalypt forest environment
- nationally significant collection of sculptures set within the culturally modified landscape of William Ricketts Sanctuary
- integrated heritage landscapes that represent and preserve early 20th century hill station gardens and early development in the Dandenong Ranges
- principal natural attraction and tourism destination of the Dandenong Ranges
- opportunities for walking, picnicking, nature appreciation and education based on the Gardens' horticultural, cultural and landscape values
- high local community attachments reflected in a long history of volunteer support and involvement in the operation of the Gardens
- venues that support a range of commercial and community events including weddings, conferences, concerts and flower shows.

During the life of this Plan, the Gardens will be managed to enhance their horticultural, cultural and visitor values, and to encourage ongoing community connections, stewardship and involvement in their management. It is expected the horticultural significance of the Gardens will increase as their role in global conservation and partnerships with other botanic gardens expand. Use of the Gardens by the local community is expected to increase; low-impact recreational opportunities in keeping with the Gardens' values will be provided; and activities will be managed to ensure they are safe, enjoyable and environmentally sustainable.

The National Rhododendron Garden and William Ricketts Sanctuary will be the principal tourism attractions of the Gardens, and that interest will be harnessed to augment and improve the horticultural and visitor values across the other properties. Monitoring of visitor use will provide information to determine longer term recreational and infrastructure needs of the Gardens, and improvement projects will be investigated as necessary.



Kurume Bowl, National Rhododendron Garden.

Location of the seven properties that comprise the Dandenong Ranges Gardens.



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Waterfall at Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden

1 Background

1.1 About the Strategic Management Plan

This Strategic Management Plan (the Plan) establishes a strategic framework and clear direction for the management of the Dandenong Ranges Gardens (the Gardens) over the next 15 years.

The Gardens are a diverse group of seven properties of significant botanic, heritage and tourism value:

- National Rhododendron Garden
- William Ricketts Sanctuary
- Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden
- George Tindale Memorial Garden
- Pirianda Garden
- R. J. Hamer Arboretum
- Mt Dandenong Arboretum.

Parks Victoria, a statutory authority established by the *Parks Victoria Act 1998* (Vic.), manages parks, reserves and other land and water under the control of the State, including the properties that make up the Dandenong Ranges Gardens (see map page iv). Parks Victoria also manages the adjacent area formerly managed as the Olinda Golf Course, which is also included in the Plan.

Prior to this Plan, the Gardens were managed in accordance with the 1998 Dandenong Ranges Gardens Future Directions Plan (Parks Victoria 1998) in consultation with a community advisory group.

Management challenges that have emerged over the past decade necessitated a review of the strategic direction of the Gardens. These challenges include the impact of a changing climate including differing weather patterns, shifting trends in tourism influenced by economic and demographic changes, changing visitor behaviour and demands, and new opportunities presented by technological developments.

The Plan was prepared in consultation with key stakeholders and the community. Developing and establishing the Plan in partnership with the community will ensure that the Dandenong Ranges Gardens have a vision and objectives for their future use and management that are achievable, sustainable and consistent with community expectations.

This Plan replaces the 1998 Future Directions Plan. Its implementation will be reviewed periodically or in response to the emerging challenges in the management of the Gardens. The need for review of the Plan will be considered after 15 years.

1.2 Consultative Framework

Parks Victoria invited submissions from interested stakeholders and other community members to provide initial input regarding the future management of the Gardens.

A 'Have Your Say' information paper was prepared and made available on the Parks Victoria website and at offices in the Dandenong Ranges area. In addition to several meetings with key local community groups, a program of advertising that employed direct mail, email, and local media advertising was undertaken. This resulted in 53 submissions which informed the preparation of the draft Plan.

This Strategic Management Plan (the Plan) establishes a strategic framework and clear direction for the management of the Dandenong Ranges Gardens (the Gardens) over the next 15 years.

The Dandenong Ranges Gardens Advisory Committee, an independent group of community representatives that provide strategic advice to Parks Victoria on the management of the Gardens, also provided input to the draft Plan.

The Draft Strategic Management Plan was released for public comment on 3 April 2013. Community organisations, interest groups, agencies and individuals were invited to make written submissions by 10 June 2013. A total of 14 written submissions were received (Appendix 1), and these were carefully considered and taken into account in the preparation of this final Plan.



Daffodils at Pirianda Garden

2 Regional Context

2.1 Location

The Dandenong Ranges, 45 minutes east of central Melbourne, lie within the Shire of Yarra Ranges. They are the most prominent and substantial hills close to Melbourne. Its dense forested scenery and intimate fern gullies have attracted day visitors since Melbourne's settlement.

Visitation to the Dandenong Ranges has been driven by a mixture of drawcards including hilltop tourist villages, boutique accommodation, and the surrounding natural spaces such as the Dandenong Ranges National Park, public and private gardens, and other similar properties that support various nature-based tourism businesses.

The Gardens are set in the cooler climate of the Dandenong Ranges among homes and tourism businesses between Mt Dandenong and Sherbrooke.

The Gardens contribute to open space and complement the nature conservation role of the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

Visitation to the Dandenong Ranges has been driven by a mixture of drawcards including hilltop tourist villages, boutique accommodation, and the surrounding natural spaces such as the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

2.2 Surrounding Community

Several hilltop townships of the Dandenong Ranges including Kalorama, Kallista, Ferny Creek, and the villages of Sassafras, Olinda, and Mt Dandenong are surrounded by the Dandenong Ranges National Park. The Dandenong Ranges are serviced by four major access roads through the foothill communities of Upper Ferntree Gully, Mt Evelyn, Upwey, Tecoma, Belgrave, Monbulk, The Patch, and The Basin - Burwood Highway, Mountain Highway, Mount Dandenong Tourist Road and Monbulk Road. Metropolitan Melbourne is to the west.

The Gardens share their boundaries with a range of public and private land used for conservation, recreation, business and residential purposes.

2.3 Nearby Parks, Reserves and Gardens

Dandenong Ranges National Park covers 3,540 ha from Mt Evelyn in the north to Belgrave in the south (Melway Map 75 J4). There are a number of visitor sites throughout the Dandenong Ranges National Park, linked by tracks and trails, and accessible by road. The facilities include the tearoom at Grants Picnic Ground, toilet blocks, picnic shelters, barbeques and car parks. It is estimated that the park is visited by approximately two million people a year.

The reserves managed by local committees of management nearby include Kalorama Memorial Reserve and Ferny Creek Recreation Reserve; and Kevin Heinze Garden and Karwarra Australian Plant Garden managed by the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

Private gardens that are open to the public include Cloudehill in Olinda, Katandra Gardens in Wandin, Dragonwyck in Monbulk, and seasonally, Hancock's Daffodil Farm in Menzies Creek and Tesselaar Gardens in Silvan.

2.4 Significant Stakeholders

Several community groups have provided support over many years for the ongoing maintenance, protection and advocacy of the gardens' properties. These groups have been involved in varying capacities such as volunteer maintenance activities, plant propagation, consultancy and advice, and lobbying for protection of botanic and heritage values. Parks Victoria greatly appreciates their valuable contributions.

Members of the following groups have an ongoing interest in the management of the Gardens:

- Australian Rhododendron Society
- William Ricketts Sanctuary Alliance
- Friends of George Tindale Garden
- Friends of Hamer Arboretum.

Parks Victoria has also developed relationships across the local botanic gardens community, particularly with respect to knowledge sharing and exchange of plant materials. Parks Victoria regularly consults with the following botanic gardens and organisations:

- Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne
- Geelong Botanic Gardens
- Botanic Gardens Australia New Zealand Inc.



National Rhododendron Garden

3 Values

3.1 Significance of the Dandenong Ranges Gardens

The diverse collection of properties that make up the Dandenong Ranges Gardens are unique in the Australian landscape and a rare example of exotic botanical collections in a cool-climate. At 600 metres above sea level, the Dandenong Ranges region annually receives on average 400mm more rainfall, and has a mean maximum temperature of 4.2°C less than that of Melbourne. With a huge range of rare exotic species, this environment makes the Gardens one of Victoria's most significant cool-climate public gardens.

In a period of climate change, the Gardens are a repository of numerous exotic species that have adapted to the environment of the Dandenong Ranges and can provide opportunities for research and learning in the adaptability of these species.

Distinct from the garden and arboreta properties, William Ricketts Sanctuary is of national significance as a culturally modified landscape containing a collection of sculptures of high artistic and spiritual integrity.

The Dandenong Ranges Gardens provide a counterpoint to the impressive Dandenong Ranges National Park. Together and individually, they provide a significant tourism attraction in the Melbourne region that supports numerous local nature-based tourism businesses, and complements other tourism products in the Yarra Valley.

The diverse collection of properties that make up the Dandenong Ranges Gardens are unique in the Australian landscape and a rare example of exotic botanical collections in a cool-climate.

3.2 Environmental Values

All life on earth depends on plants. Healthy ecosystems sustain life and are essential to the wellbeing and livelihoods of all humankind. Botanic gardens play a key role in safeguarding the world's plant diversity and educating people in environmental issues.

The collections and variety of species within the Dandenong Ranges Gardens are of national significance, with 72 species in the Gardens listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) 'Red List' of threatened species.

As many as two-thirds of the world's plant species are in danger of extinction this century, threatened by population growth, deforestation, habitat loss, destructive development, over consumption of resources, the spread of invasive species and agricultural expansion. The Gardens play an important role in protecting rare and threatened species, particularly through ex situ preservation, and providing important habitats and wildlife corridors for a wide array of native fauna including the Superb Lyrebird, King Parrot and Crimson Rosella.

The Gardens play an important role in educating about and adapting to climate change. They provide a forum for communicating the impacts of climate change on plants and diversity, and educating visitors about the environmental conditions and horticultural practices in cool-climates such as the Dandenong Ranges.

3.3 Cultural Heritage Values

The Dandenong Ranges Gardens represent some of the most significant cultural heritage sites in Australia.

The sculptural collection at William Ricketts Sanctuary is important not only as a rare example of themed outdoor sculpture but also for its conceptual values and quality of execution. The Sanctuary encapsulates Ricketts' interpretation of the spiritual life of central Australian Indigenous people, and represents a personal response to public and government attitudes to the natural environment and Indigenous people during the pre and post World War II period.

Meanwhile, the Gardens provide a unique post-settlement European heritage experience that reflects a distinctive period in Melbourne's development. Properties such as Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden, George Tindale Memorial Garden and Pirianda Garden represent integrated heritage landscapes that provide a glimpse into early 20th century hill station gardens and early development in the Dandenong Ranges.

3.4 Tourism and Economic Values

Botanic gardens are among our most popular cultural venues and they make significant contributions to local and regional economies as part of the region's suite of tourism attractions.

In Australia, more people visit botanic gardens than art galleries, museums or libraries. Thirty-five per cent of Australian adults or 6.2 million people visited botanic gardens at least once in 2009-10. Botanic gardens are also strong drawcards for domestic and international tourists. Nature-based visitors to Australia stay almost twice as long as other international visitors and spend 80% of international visitor dollars.

The Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Valley region is a major tourism destination, known for its outstanding food and wine, touring and spectacular natural attractions. Visitation to the region has been increasing significantly in recent years with over 1.5 million visitors to the area in 2009.

The Dandenong Ranges Gardens are the principal natural attraction of the Dandenong Ranges, along with the Dandenong Ranges National Park. While visitation to the Gardens has remained relatively consistent over recent years, annual visitation has increased by 208% (80,000 visitors) to the National Rhododendron Garden and 36% (43,000 visitors) to William Ricketts Sanctuary in 2012-13 after entry fees were removed. That effect has flowed on to the other properties, with staff observing a consistent increase in visitation.

A recent study by the University of South Australia found that visitors to botanic gardens comprise a relatively even representation of all age groups, and that they seek to engage in a wide range of activities that support socialising with friends or family. It is therefore important that botanic gardens provide contemporary activities that cater to the requirements of their diverse visitors.

The Gardens currently provide for a range of commercial activities that support visitor experiences. These include retail gift shops at two properties, wedding and filming permits, commercial hire of Gardens' houses for conferences and events, and a seasonal café and year-round function centre at the National Rhododendron Garden, which is operated under a commercial arrangement. The Gardens also host annual community events aimed at supporting tourism to the region, such as the Japanese-influenced Hanami ('flower viewing') Day and Family Fun Day, both of which attract increased visitor numbers each year.

With more visitors choosing the Gardens as their destination, the importance of investigating and supporting compatible and appropriate commercial activities that provide local employment opportunities, stimulate the local economy and generate income to support the ongoing maintenance of the Gardens is greater than ever.

3.5 Social Values

The Dandenong Ranges Gardens are places of natural beauty and must-see tourist attractions visited by over 200,000 people each year. They are places where people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy and appreciate the values of plants, gardens and the natural environment.

People and communities come together in the Gardens for many different reasons - to relax, walk, read, play, meet friends, attend events, and learn about plants, the environment and sustainability. The Gardens are significant community facilities. They engage communities - inspiring, informing and connecting people with each other and with the environment.

The Gardens are friendly, safe, open spaces that are good for the soul. They offer a retreat from busy modern life where people can enjoy fresh air, gentle exercise or quiet contemplation. It has long been recognised that natural spaces provide many, often intangible, societal benefits. Healthy parks sustain healthy people. Parks Victoria's *Healthy Parks Healthy People* philosophy seeks to reinforce and encourage the connection between a healthy environment and a healthy society.

On 1 July 2010, entry fees were removed from all of Victoria's national and metropolitan parks to further encourage Victorians to connect with the environment. As a result, the Gardens experienced a doubling in visitation in 2010-11 across all properties compared to the previous year. This increased utilisation has reinforced the value and importance of the Gardens to the community.

3.6 Fire and Emergency Management

The Gardens lie on the edge of the metropolitan area where small communities are surrounded by areas of Mountain Ash forest. Many of the gardens' properties play an important role in fire protection, particularly R.J. Hamer Arboretum, Mt Dandenong Arboretum and the Olinda Golf Course, which act as fuel breaks to the Olinda and Mt Dandenong communities.

Accordingly, the Gardens are incorporated into the Department of Environment and Primary Industries' annual fire management planning and Parks Victoria's Melbourne Bushfire Protection Program.

Extreme climate and weather events that have occurred in Victoria over the past decade such as drought, bushfire, storms and floods indicate the trend for long term change. Possible extreme weather events in the Dandenong Ranges reinforce the need for emergency management preparation and adaptation measures in the Gardens.



Dark Pink Rhododendron



4 Vision and Objectives

The Gardens will achieve this vision through the following key objectives:

1. Position the Gardens as the premier cool-climate public gardens of Melbourne for species conservation and preservation.
2. Recognise, promote and protect the cultural heritage values that the Gardens contribute to Australia's cultural landscape through formal recognition and community awareness.
3. Enhance the tourism and economic value of the Gardens to support the local economy and ensure the ongoing viability and sustainable operation of the Gardens.
4. Generate community interest and involvement and enhance the social value of the Gardens through improved community awareness, social opportunities and active participation in the Gardens.

The vision for the Dandenong Ranges Gardens is to recognise, promote and protect the cool-climate gardens of Melbourne for the long term benefit of the community.

4.1 Objective 1 - Position the Gardens as the premier cool-climate public gardens of Melbourne

The Gardens collectively boast a significant collection of rare and exotic plants, many of which are endangered, and are adapted to the cool-climate of the Dandenongs.

The National Rhododendron Garden boasts the largest of these collections, as well as the highest annual visitation of all the garden properties. Formally classifying the National Rhododendron Garden as a botanic garden aligns with Parks Victoria's role as a conservation organisation, and would deliver a range of benefits which include:

- improve the profile of the garden, and consequently improve year-round visitation
- improve Parks Victoria's ability to attract horticultural expertise to support botanic management practices
- increase opportunities for strategic partnerships with other botanic gardens, industry and educational institutions.

Parks Victoria has already established strong relationships within Victoria's botanic gardens community. It is an active member of Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand Inc. (BGANZ). To date, these relationships have included knowledge sharing and exchange of plant materials with other public and private gardens. Formally recognising the National Rhododendron Garden as a botanic garden would greatly increase its potential for working partnerships with premier gardens like the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, particularly on projects that align with Parks Victoria's conservation role such as development of research programs in plant taxonomy and associated herbaria.

The other Dandenong Ranges Gardens properties have an equally important role to play as satellite gardens supporting conservation programs and as cool-climate gardens with rare and significant collections in their own right. While it is likely the Dandenong Ranges will be subject to the same changes in projected warming and drying patterns of climate change affecting south-eastern Australia, in relative terms, the region should remain cooler compared with other regions and botanic gardens at elevations closer to sea level. The Gardens as a group of properties therefore have an important role to play as a haven for suitable botanic species threatened by warming climates, and to encourage sustainable horticultural practices in the community.

Strategies to achieve Objective 1

- 4.1.1 Seek to have the National Rhododendron Garden formally gazetted as a botanic garden, including a change of name to include the word 'botanic' in the title.
- 4.1.2 Strengthen partnerships with botanic garden networks, industry and specialist plant groups, including participation in joint conservation or research projects where appropriate.
- 4.1.3 Identify, conserve and interpret rare and threatened species in the Gardens, with a focus on cultivars and poorly conserved cool-climate taxa, including through ex situ conservation and identification of further suitable species at risk from climate change.
- 4.1.4 Improve overall botanical management practices across the Gardens, including development of collections and tree management policies, disease and pest risk management policies, spatial-based botanic database, and succession planning.
- 4.1.5 Work closely with the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne for technical advice to support management of the collections and identification of further suitable species at risk from climate changes.
- 4.1.6 Foster relationships with educational institutions and other management agencies to ensure best-practice techniques are employed in the Gardens.



4.2 Objective 2 - Recognise, promote and protect the cultural heritage values

While the Gardens collectively represent and preserve a broad range of heritage values, those values have to varying extents remained undefined and under-promoted. Various reports have been prepared over the last 20 years highlighting the cultural significance of the garden properties, in particular as preserved examples of post-settlement European heritage. The reports have identified cultural values ranging from regional to state and national significance across each of the Gardens. However, these values have never been formally registered with state or national heritage lists.

A 2004 Values Assessment evaluated the gardens' properties as collectively exemplifying the historic reasons for planting in the Dandenong Ranges, including early land selections for hill stations and agricultural pursuits, specialised collections and arboreta, and development of plant enthusiast gardens. As a group of public gardens linked by common management, the Dandenong Ranges Gardens are of national cultural significance and they need to be both protected and promoted as such.

A Statement of Significance report recently prepared on William Ricketts Sanctuary defined it as a cultural landscape, in that the sculptural elements are integrated into the treed landscape. It noted that there are no sculptural landscapes classified at a national or state level, and that there is only one other site in Australia that may be considered of higher cultural value. The report made several recommendations around heritage listing and the promotion of the collection as a cultural landscape.

Heritage listing brings with it both funding opportunities and community recognition. Parks Victoria will explore available options to formally register the heritage values of the Gardens at appropriate state and national levels to support their ongoing management and reinforce their relevance to the community.

Strategies to achieve Objective 2

- 4.2.1 Seek state and/or national heritage listing for all significant cultural assets and values across the garden properties.
- 4.2.2 Develop a collections policy for the sculptures and moveable objects at William Ricketts Sanctuary, including direction on potential acquisitions to add to the collection.
- 4.2.3 Investigate opportunities to either partner with or seek funding from compatible state bodies such as Arts Victoria or Museum Victoria to support the management of the collection at William Ricketts Sanctuary.
- 4.2.4 Enhance the reputation of the Gardens by promoting their cultural values and historic significance in the local community and broader tourism market.
- 4.2.5 Protect and interpret the social and cultural history of the Gardens to promote the heritage values and enhance the visitor experience.

4.3 Objective 3 - Enhance the tourism and economic value

As previously noted, the Dandenong Ranges are a major tourism destination. The Dandenong Ranges National Park receives around 2 million visitors each year, while visitation to the Dandenong Ranges Gardens has grown by over 200% since the removal of entry fees in 2010 to around 275,000 in 2012-13. This increase in visitation presents both opportunities and challenges.

Most of the Gardens' assets and infrastructure - which also represent much of the Gardens' heritage values - were built in the early to mid 1900s and have received relatively little

investment over the past few decades other than minor routine maintenance. As a result, much of the infrastructure is in a state of decline, with assets such as buildings, irrigation systems and visitor amenities requiring major renewal or replacement. Existing amenities including car parks and toilets are proving inadequate to service the increasing growth in visitation. In addition, with Australia's aging population there is an increasing need to improve access and remove barriers for the aged and mobility impaired visitors. There is therefore a risk the Gardens will lose their relevance to the community if they fail to provide contemporary facilities that cater to today's visitors.

Opportunities also exist within the Gardens to develop improved tourism offerings for the region. The National Rhododendron Garden, which adjoins the Olinda Golf Course and R.J. Hamer Arboretum and is located in walking distance to the Olinda village township, presents potential to be developed as a central hub facility and gateway to Olinda and the rest of the Dandenong Ranges. There is an opportunity to investigate the feasibility of a precinct concept that incorporates all three properties.

Burnham Beeches, a heritage-listed mansion that adjoins the Alfred Nicholas Garden, is privately owned and currently planning renovation and refurbishments as a boutique hotel and world-class restaurant. This presents opportunity for Parks Victoria to develop a partnership with Burnham Beeches to work together to reinstate the historic link between the mansion and the Alfred Nicholas Garden, and improve the profile of both properties as a key attraction of the region.

These opportunities complement the Dandenong Ranges Gardens as a key nature-based tourism destination for Victoria.

Across the Dandenong Ranges, there is potential for Parks Victoria to explore opportunities that will enhance tourism. Facilitating the development of complementary commercial activities that enhance the visitor experience will assist in creating sustainable visitor services that lead to longer stays in the region which, in turn, will stimulate the local economy and provide local employment opportunities.

In consultation with the community, Parks Victoria will continue to investigate commercial opportunities that are appropriate to their setting, and provide high-quality products and services that enhance the visitor experience of the Gardens. These may range from new built assets that improve public facilities to guided walking tours through licensed tour operators.

Retail operations at the National Rhododendron Garden has benefited from the removal of entry fees in 2010, with retail sales growing by 122% in the three years to 2012-13. Parks Victoria refurbished the retail space at William Ricketts Sanctuary in 2011. Enhancing the retail offering at the Gardens will improve ongoing sustainability, and financially support the ongoing management and maintenance of these properties.

Strategies to achieve Objective 3

- 4.3.1** Explore partnerships and investment opportunities to deliver improved visitor experiences and support the ongoing sustainable operation of the Gardens, ensuring appropriate consultation with the community and the Dandenong Ranges Gardens Advisory Committee.
- 4.3.2** Develop master plans for the Gardens based on a priority program as funding becomes available, including research into the drivers behind visitation, to inform development of suitable visitor facilities and signage that will support and enhance the visitor experience to the Gardens.
- 4.3.3** Investigate potential grant and funding opportunities to support the renewal and replacement of critical built assets, and improve accessibility for the aged and mobility impaired visitors.
- 4.3.4** In accordance with Government strategy, work closely with Tourism Victoria, regional tourism groups and local councils to develop tourism opportunities and enhance the reputation of the Gardens as one of the State's key nature-based tourism destinations.

- 4.3.5 Promote the Gardens as a suite of diverse yet complementary properties, and support the development of connections including transport services and cross-promotion between the properties.
- 4.3.6 Enhance the retail offering of the Gardens, including the development of appropriate merchandise, to support the ongoing viability and operations of the properties.

4.4 Objective 4 - Generate community interest and involvement

Community involvement in the Gardens takes many different forms, be they passive enjoyment, attendance as part of community events or education programs, or active volunteering. An engaged community is vital to the future of the Gardens. One fundamental purpose of the Gardens is to provide space for people to connect with the environment and each other. Engagement with the community strengthens the Gardens' relevance to the community.

Parks Victoria relies on the dedicated support of volunteers who contribute thousands of hours annually to the maintenance and development of the Gardens. Several properties, most notably the National Rhododendron Garden, are strongly supported by the community. However, while the Gardens benefit from the regular contribution of active friends groups and volunteers, there is a need to generate interest among the next generation to 'pick up the spade' as the current generation retires. Volunteering nurtures the social fabric of the community, and Parks Victoria will seek contemporary ways to attract new volunteers to contribute towards the management of the Gardens.

The Gardens provide the perfect backdrop for a wide range of social uses, and have hosted various events over the years including flower shows, cultural exhibitions, community open days, musical performances and weddings. The Gardens also offer an ideal setting for the provision of education, and have hosted programs ranging from planting classes for primary school children, to field work supporting students studying for certificates in conservation and horticulture. Parks Victoria will continue to increase community awareness and involvement in the Gardens by promoting the Gardens as venues for a broad range of community events and general participation, including programs of artworks, performances, education and health and wellbeing.

With social use comes visitor conflicts, and there are a range of potential conflicting activities that occur within several properties that need to be resolved, including horse riding, dog walking and mountain biking. It is important that Parks Victoria consider these conflicts as part of management planning, and aim to manage these activities in a way that enhances the visitor experience for all park users.

Strategies to achieve Objective 4

- 4.4.1 Promote and encourage the use of the Gardens as venues for community events including art, sculpture, film, theatre, music, community festivals and social gatherings.
- 4.4.2 Promote and find innovative ways to encourage active volunteering in the management of the Gardens such as conservation volunteers and environmental tourism.
- 4.4.3 Strengthen partnerships with educational institutions to develop educational programs in line with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and relevant horticultural and environmental studies.
- 4.4.4 Investigate and develop recreational management zones in R.J. Hamer Arboretum to provide sustainable and equitable access for dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking and other appropriate activities, ensuring appropriate community consultation.
- 4.4.5 Facilitate and support community involvement in the future planning, management and development of the Gardens.



5 National Rhododendron Garden

The Property

The 42-hectare National Rhododendron Garden was first established in 1960 by the Australian Rhododendron Society for the display and propagation of rhododendrons in an Australian setting. It now features important collections of rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias and other significant collections in a setting of native and exotic trees.

The garden provides a range of high-quality year-round cultural and horticultural tourism attractions.

Status

Reserved as a site for ornamental gardens under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 (Vic.)*.

Planning Scheme Zoning and overlays

Under the Shire of Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, the property is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) and Green Wedge A Zone.

It is also covered by the following overlays:

- Environmental Significance
- Heritage
- Significant Landscape
- Wildfire Management.

Annual Visitation

100,660 visitors recorded in 2012-13.

Location

24 The Georgian Rd, Olinda

Melway map 66 K6

<http://www.whereis.com/vic/olinda/the-georgian-rd>

Web page

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/national-rhododendron-garden>

Values

Horticultural values

- The garden houses Australia's largest collection of Australian and overseas raised hybrids of rhododendrons that cannot be replaced, re-bred or re-imported.
- The garden includes significant collections of other exotic flora including azaleas, camellias, daffodils, paulownias and an avenue of flowering cherries donated by members of the Australian-Japanese community.
- The climate of the garden - cool but largely frost-free, rainfall above the Melbourne average, and fertile volcanic soil - is ideal for rhododendrons from a wide range of climates, in particular from temperate regions, and makes the garden a resource of

A north facing cool-climate botanic garden for Melbourne of national significance. An irreplaceable collection of Australian and overseas rhododendrons with framed views of the Yarra Valley and the Great Dividing Range and a Mountain Ash forest backdrop.

international importance in the ex situ conservation of threatened rhododendron species.

- The garden includes a variety of landscape types ranging from sloping treed walkways to exposed areas with panoramic views.
- Key landscape features include the Kurume azalea bowl, lakes, fern gully and moorland.

Visitor and tourism values

- Year-round visitor experiences of the National Rhododendron Garden include the flowering and colour of the rhododendrons and azaleas in spring, the hydrangeas during summer, maples and cherry trees ablaze with autumn hues, and hellebores and leucadendrons in winter.
- There are breathtaking views over the Yarra Valley toward Healesville and Silvan.
- Activities enjoyed in the garden include walking, learning about plants, sitting and enjoying the garden, picnicking, socialising with family and friends, and sightseeing.
- During the spring peak visitation period, additional services provided include guided walking tours and a fee-for-service 'Garden Explorer' bus tour.

Cultural values

- The ram pump located in the gully is of local historical interest and reputed to be the sole remaining operating example of a piece of equipment once present on many properties in the area.

Natural values

- Provides a local corridor for wildlife in the gully and a food source for native birds.

Community values

- The Australian Rhododendron Society has a long standing association with the garden and continues to support its operations through weekly volunteer support and public advocacy.

Strategic Directions

Horticulture

Formally gazette the National Rhododendron Garden as a botanic garden, including a change of name to include the word 'botanic' in the title.

Improve botanical management practices, including development of collections and tree management policies, disease and pest management policies, spatial-based botanic database, and formalised succession planting.

Make the conservation of both species and irreplaceable cultivars the priority for management of the garden.

Diversify the collections to improve the year-round display, while retaining the primary rhododendron collection.

Identify, conserve and interpret rare plants and specimens in the garden where appropriate.

Maintain, display and enhance the collections of rare plants for public enjoyment.

Strengthen partnerships with botanic garden networks, industry, and specialist plant groups and individual growers.

Encourage and provide opportunities for other organisations to undertake scientific research by providing living specimens for study and comparisons.

Visitor experience and tourism

Plan and design to progressively enhance visitor facilities and provide high-quality passive recreation opportunities and experiences.

Improve understanding of the visitor profile and segmentation to better meet visitor expectations.

Improve interpretive information through signage and plant labelling.

Offer complementary services to broaden the garden experience and improve the year-round appeal of the Gardens.

Investigate options to provide a venue suitable for events throughout the year.

Protect the views from within the garden, particularly at Serenity Point.

Enhance the profile of the garden in the local community and the tourism market.

In consultation with the community, provide opportunities for appropriate commercial ventures that enhance the visitor experience and compliment the values of the garden, to provide a sustainable funding base for the ongoing maintenance of the garden.

Support the development of appropriate interpretive and educational programs.

Maintain the 'no dogs' access policy.

Cultural values conservation

Conserve and interpret the ram pump heritage features.

Natural values conservation

Contribute to global conservation of species including species listed on the IUCN 'Red List' of threatened species, and the conservation of Victorian and Australian cool-climate plants.

Community awareness and engagement

Support community use and awareness of the garden through programs and events and by supporting relationships with community groups, including horticultural societies, art societies and cultural groups.

Continue to support and seek new ways to attract active volunteerism to support the ongoing maintenance of the garden.



6 William Ricketts Sanctuary

The Property

Ninety-two ceramic sculptures created by William Ricketts are located throughout the Sanctuary in the natural surrounds of ferns and Mountain Ash trees.

William Ricketts was born in 1898 in Richmond Victoria, and lived and worked at the Sanctuary from 1934 until his death in 1993.

Having been apprenticed to a jeweller at age 14, Ricketts started working with clay in the early 1930s, and shortly after commenced renting the property. He held his first exhibition in 1935 and began selling small works from a roadside stall at Mt Dandenong on weekends.

Ricketts took freehold possession of the land in 1941. Heavily deforested at the time, he had a clear vision to allow the forest to naturally regenerate, and to create a 'permanent Clay Sculpture Art Gallery devoted to the Australian Aborigine and all Australians'.

The property, known as Potters Sanctuary at the time, was opened to the public in 1942. Between 1947 and 1960, Ricketts made frequent trips to central Australia to live with the Pitjantjatjara and Arrernte Aboriginal people whose tradition and culture inspired his sculptures.

William Ricketts had a successful exhibiting career, extending to at least three overseas venues, including long stays in the USA and India in the 1960s.

The Victorian Government purchased the property from William Ricketts in 1961 and subsequent additions by the Forests Commission increased the area to its present 15 hectares.

In 1962, the Government built a new residence for Ricketts, including a new kiln and workshop, and the property was officially opened as William Ricketts Sanctuary.

Status

Formerly freehold, the land is reserved under the *Forests Act 1958* (Vic).

Planning Scheme Zoning and overlays

Under the Shire of Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, the property is zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ).

It is also covered by the following overlays:

- Heritage
- Erosion Management
- Significant Landscape
- Wildfire Management.

Annual Visitation

43,430 visitors recorded in 2010-11.

Location

Mt Dandenong Tourist Road, Mt Dandenong

Melway map 66 G1

<http://www.whereis.com/vic/mt-dandenong/1402-mt-dandenong-tourist-rd>

Web page

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/national-rhododendron-garden>

A cultural landscape of national significance set in an intimate landscape of winding paths, soft ferns and Mountain Ash. The outdoor collection of sculptural works by William Ricketts represents his interpretation of the spiritual life of central Australian Indigenous people and their connection to the natural environment.

Values

Cultural values

- The outdoor sculptural works and their placement within the heavily treed landscape makes William Ricketts Sanctuary a place of significant cultural value. A 2011 Statement of Significance report defines the Sanctuary as a cultural landscape of national significance, in that the outdoor sculptures are components of an overall theme. Comparison with other known sculptural landscapes has shown that there are very few similar places in Australia. There are no sculptural landscapes classified at a national or state level, and only one other that may be considered of higher cultural value - Inside Australia in Western Australia by the internationally renowned sculptor Antony Gormley.
- The outdoor collection at the Sanctuary is the substantial life's work of William Ricketts and bears testimony to the vision and dedication of Ricketts' campaign for understanding and respect for Indigenous Australians and to protect the environment. According to Thorn (2011), the work represents one man's interpretation of the spiritual life of central Australian Indigenous people, whom Ricketts lived and worked with during his life, and thus encapsulates life values of central Australia in the 1940s and 50s.
- The Sanctuary was classified by the National Trust in 1981 as a site of local significance. It is not on the Australian Government's National Heritage List or the Victorian Government's Heritage Register.
- The Sanctuary represents a personal response to public and government attitudes to the natural environment and Indigenous people at a significant time in the country's history, the years leading up to and following the Second World War. The sculptures represent a European interpretation of Aboriginal spirituality; they do not represent Indigenous cultural values.
- While many of Ricketts' sculptures reside in public and private collections around Australia and overseas, the Sanctuary is the most complete display of his philosophy, where the works are integrated with their intended natural setting as originally conceived, and the closest Ricketts got to achieving his ultimate dream of creating a 'Holy Mountain'. This oneness of spirit and nature, as interpreted by Ricketts, is fundamental to its significance.

Visitor and tourism values

- The Sanctuary represents a significant tourism destination for the Dandenong Ranges region. Visitors can experience the Sanctuary on a personal level. Some obtain spiritual meaning from the experience. Others appreciate the beauty of the setting or appreciate its history.

Natural values

- The site provides a local corridor for wildlife, particularly lyrebirds. Species protected by the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Vic.), including the Powerful Owl, visit the area.

Strategic Directions

Cultural values conservation

Seek to include William Ricketts Sanctuary on the Victorian Heritage Register of historic places and on the National Heritage List.

Develop a collections policy to guide the protection and cataloguing of the sculptures and movable objects, archiving of moulds and movable objects, and provide direction for potential acquisition of other William Ricketts works.

Develop a formal maintenance program for the collection including regular inspection by a qualified conservator, and addressing all aspects of maintenance and repair to preserve the collection.

Subject to additional funding, investigate potential for three-dimensional imaging of all sculptures to assist in the potential future repairs to the collection.

Investigate potential for Parks Victoria to develop partnerships with either Museum Victoria or Arts Victoria in the management of the sculptural collection.

Establish formal relationships with the Indigenous people of central Australia to ensure their support for Parks Victoria's approach to the repair and reproduction of sculptures that depict living and deceased members of their community.

Preserve the flow of water around and through the sculptures as a key feature of William Ricketts' original vision, including improving water capture and circulation in the context of climate change and reduced rainfall.

Visitor experience and tourism

Promote the collection as an integrated cultural landscape to emphasise the Sanctuary's uniqueness as a tourism destination in Australia.

Develop a program to display moveable sculptures held in storage on either a permanent or rotating basis to enhance the existing display and promote return visits.

Monitor visitor trends and determine operational actions as required to maintain the quality of the visitor experience, ensure the protection of the sculptures, and provide suitable infrastructure.

Progressively improve information provided about William Ricketts and the Sanctuary to enhance the visitor experience.

Subject to additional funding, improve visitor access and facilities including safer pedestrian access from the car park to the Sanctuary entry, alternate bus and car parking/drop-off areas, and upgraded toilet facilities.

Increase the retail offer in the entry building including the development of appropriate merchandising, and consider the purchase of intellectual property rights to existing merchandise.

Investigate the potential to expand the use of William Ricketts Sanctuary for appropriate commercial photography and events in line with Parks Victoria guidelines to support the ongoing viability and maintenance of the Sanctuary.

Determine the drivers behind visitation, and why a higher percentage of visitors to the Dandenong Ranges do not visit the Sanctuary.

Natural values conservation

Investigate and, where appropriate, reduce adverse impact on native fauna corridor movement caused by the perimeter security fence.

Remove remnants of exotic gardens in the northern section of the Sanctuary which do not fit with the indigenous vegetation theme of the rest of the property

Community awareness and engagement

Seek to expand the contribution of volunteers to the management of the William Ricketts Sanctuary.

Raise the profile of the Sanctuary via arts societies, and investigate opportunities for appropriate art programs at the Sanctuary such as an artist-in-residence program.



7 Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden

The Property

Originally part of the adjoining Burnham Beeches estate developed during the 1930s by Alfred Nicholas, this was one of Victoria's largest and most impressive traditional hill stations in the 20th century. Its grand scale demonstrates the wealth of the owners and is the only garden of its type to be opened to the public. Given to the Shire of Sherbrooke in 1965 and transferred to the State in 1973, the 13-hectare garden features a Mountain Ash over storey that protects the remnants of a fine horticultural collection of exotic plants. The garden includes an impressive ornamental lake, waterfall and ponds.

Status

Formerly freehold, the land is reserved under the Forests Act, as a 'Community Use Area - Parklands and Gardens'.

Planning Scheme Zoning and overlays

Under the Shire of Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, the property is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

It is also covered by the following overlays:

- Environmental Significance
- Heritage
- Erosion Management
- Significant Landscape
- Wildfire Management.

Location

Sherbrooke Rd, Sherbrooke

Melway map 75 G1

<http://www.whereis.com/vic/sherbrooke/sherbrooke-rd>

Web page

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/alfred-nicholas-memorial-gardens-gardens-of-the-dandenongs>

Values

Landscape and horticultural values

- The constructed landscape is grand in scale and extent and includes an impressive terraced rockery in a steep terrain.
- The landscaped garden is controlled by terraces, paths and water features, and includes large trees and shrubs rather than detail planting.
- Indigenous plants, particularly *Eucalyptus regnans*, were retained as a feature and provide a continuous tree cover.
- Exotic trees, many of which are old mature specimens, and some of the rarest or largest in Victoria such as *Fagus sylvatica*, *Gingko biloba*, *Nothofagus*, and *Kalmias*.
- Consistent use of materials, particularly stone and iron.

An integrated heritage landscape experience of the former Burnham Beeches estate. A timeless, romantic, grand terraced garden with key landscape features that provide a glimpse of a grand hill station garden in the 1930s.

- Structures and features such as the ponds, lake, waterfalls, long vistas, rock walls, slate paths and terraces.

Visitor and tourism values

- Activities include walking, sightseeing, picnicking, photography, a place for solitude or romance.
- The ornamental lake and boat house is regularly featured as the iconic image of the Dandenong Ranges in Tourism Victoria and other promotional materials for the region.

Cultural values

- The garden was developed at great expense during a period of world economic depression, in the tradition of 19th century Australian hill stations. Up to 80 men were known to have worked on the garden construction at any one time, utilising the large 1930s itinerant workforce during the Great Depression of the 1930s.
- A 2004 Values Assessment report considered the garden of state significance as an example of the hill station retreats established in the Dandenong Ranges in the first half of the 1900s. Its significance derives from:
 - the overall size, completeness and attention to detail best exemplified by the comprehensive water reticulation system, extensive rock walling, and terraced rockery and waterfall around the lake
 - the survival of considerable plantings including a fine collection of conifers, mature indigenous trees and exotic shrubs
 - social associations of the local community who worked on the property or visited Burnham Beeches and the owner, Alfred Nicholas.

Strategic Directions

Landscape values conservation

Investigate options to support the ongoing preservation and maintenance of the heritage rock walling throughout the garden, including funding opportunities and strategic partnerships with landscaping and training associations.

Maintain the character of the heritage hard landscaping and plantings throughout the garden.

Integrate and interpret the heritage landscape of the formerly adjoining Burnham Beeches estate.

Increase emphasis on key features between Burnham Beeches and the lake.

Enhance the soft landscaping to complement the heritage features of the garden.

Horticulture

Maintain, display and enhance the collection of cool-climate plants in the garden, for both public enjoyment and to support the conservation of significant and threatened cool-climate plants.

Monitor the health and condition of significant trees e.g. kalmias and ginkgos.

Maintain and continue to enhance the significant features of the individual landscapes of the property.

Encourage scientific research by providing living specimens for study and comparisons.

Visitor experience and tourism

Provide an attractive setting for visitors to undertake passive recreational pursuits such as walking, sightseeing, personal photography, and landscape appreciation.

Subject to additional funding, investigate options to improve car parking and pedestrian access to the garden.

Maintain the visitor experience of a grand hills garden filled with history, romance and stunning landscape features - a legacy of Alfred Nicholas.

Improve interpretive information through signage and plant labelling.

Develop a circulation plan for pedestrian movement around the garden, including design of a circular walk.

Establish a management partnership approach with the neighbouring Burnham Beeches property that provides opportunities to enhance the visitor experience and commercial activities.

Investigate opportunities for commercial ventures that enhance the visitor experience such as establishing a landscaped area for events, including outdoor cinema, concerts and theatre.

Cultural values conservation

Conserve and interpret key cultural heritage features such as the rock walls, lake and boathouse.

Community awareness and engagement

Continue to support and seek new ways to attract active volunteerism to support the ongoing maintenance of the garden.





8 George Tindale Memorial Garden

The Property

George Tindale Memorial Garden is a 3-hectare garden donated to the Victorian Conservation Trust in 1980 by Mrs Ruth Tindale in memory of her husband. The garden has a unique collection of rare plants and shows the former owner's true love for gardening and collecting plants. The garden has two distinct sections - the upper, older section; and the lower section which is testament to the trial of the Tindales in creating a garden under Mountain Ash over storey. The registered collection in the garden comprises a Hydrangea collection.

Status

Formerly freehold, the land is reserved under the Crown Land Reserves Act.

Planning Scheme Zoning and overlays

Under the Shire of Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, the property is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

It is also covered by the following overlays:

- Heritage
- Erosion Management
- Significant Landscape
- Wildfire Management.

Location

33 Sherbrooke Rd, Sherbrooke

Melway map 75 J2

<http://www.whereis.com/vic/sherbrooke/33-sherbrooke-rd>

Web page

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/george-tindale-memorial-gardens-gardens-of-the-dandenongs>

Values

Horticultural values

- A 2004 Values Assessment report considered the garden of statewide horticultural significance as a 'plants man's' garden developed to collect, study, record and display choice and rare cultivated ornamental plants suited to the climate of the Dandenong Ranges.
- The garden contains a significant collection of Hydrangea species and cultivars that are registered with the Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia (GPCAA).
- The Nerine collection has been identified by the GPCAA as deserving of national collection status.
- It is of aesthetic significance at a regional level as an organic garden design of interweaving paths interspersed with a multitude of colourful and carefully contrived garden beds.
- The garden offers a distinctive intimate landscape character of garden beds under a canopy of Mountain Ash trees.

An intricate four-seasons colourful garden set against a Mountain Ash backdrop for public enjoyment.

- An extensive collection of cultivated plants, many of which are considered rare and valuable.
- Four-seasons garden, with vibrant colours all year round.
- The root disease *Armillaria luteobubalina* is a major cause of tree decline in the garden, affecting much of the Mountain Ash over storey. This has implications for gardens and collections management, visitor risk and experience, and asset management.

Visitor and tourism values

- The garden is known as a plants man's garden because visitors can relate it to their own gardening experience.
- The garden has year-round appeal for strolling, sitting and viewing, and particular appeal for picnicking on the lawns during warmer months.
- Various sculptures are placed throughout the upper areas of the garden for viewing.

Cultural values

- The garden, formerly Pallants Hill, was developed as a weekend hill station retreat by various owners from 1893, and cultivated as an extensive garden and plant collection by George and Ruth Tindale from 1958.
- Tindale House is the original dwelling located in the garden, built in 1918 by Mr H R Harper who established an English style garden on the property. It was further developed in the 1940s by the next owners prior to the Tindales who occupied the house from 1958. While it is still usable, the house is in a poor state of repair and requires considerable work to repair and prevent further decline.
- The 2004 Values Assessment classifies the garden as being of social and historic significance at a regional level as one of the original private residential sites settled in the Dandenong Ranges following the release of land in the 1890s, and developed in the tradition of a hill station retreat.
- The garden has an interesting social history, including sculptures created by Ruth Tindale, a noted artist in her own right.

Community values

- The Friends of George Tindale Garden have been working in the garden for many years to continue the legacy left by George and Ruth Tindale. Some of the Friends Group were personal friends of the Tindales.
- Tindale House is utilised widely to support community activities including accommodation for park researchers and interns, teaching space for local educational institutions, and a venue for community activities and events.

Strategic Directions

Horticulture

Develop and implement a garden collections policy and maintenance system with a focus on the registered collections, supported by the transfer of manual records into a new botanical database.

Improve quality and interpretation of the extensive plant collection in the upper garden, providing visitors the opportunity to enjoy an intimate garden experience and re-interpret this in their own garden.

Contain spread of Mountain Ash decline in the lower garden by minimising disturbance by horticultural activities.

Visitor experience and tourism

Revise tree risk strategy for the garden to progressively reopen sections of the garden currently closed to the public for safety.

Review the visitor facilities provided at the garden and, as resources become available, develop a masterplan to provide suitable facilities that cater to the activities and experiences sought by visitors.

Provide opportunities for appropriate events such as weddings and art exhibitions.

Support the delivery of appropriate commercial activities relating to horticulture and art.

Seek opportunities for increasing revenue for community maintenance activities.

Cultural values conservation

Subject to additional funding, repair and restore Tindale House to preserve the heritage value of property, and maintain a venue to support community engagement with the garden.

Ensure the heritage of the garden and its assets are maintained and preserved for ongoing enjoyment by visitors.

Community awareness and engagement

Support community involvement, particularly the Friends of Tindale Garden, in the maintenance of the garden, plant propagation, and annual plant sale events which lead to reinvestment of proceeds into the garden.

Continue to support and develop partnerships with educational institutions that both promote horticultural practices and support the ongoing maintenance of the garden.

Continue to use the house as a venue for a range of community and Parks Victoria activities.



Volunteers at George Tindale Memorial Garden



9 Pirianda Garden

The Property

The 11-hectare woodland garden established by Mr and Mrs Ansell in 1959 contains many botanically significant exotic plants that are rare in Australia. In addition to the numerous specimen trees, the garden features a fern gully walk, terraced garden beds in the valley, and the house built by the Ansell's in 1962. Pirianda Garden is a fine example of a tranquil and secluded hillside garden with magnificent views, providing for passive recreational and retreat experiences within a living collection of specimen trees.

The property was donated to the Victorian Government in 1977.

Status

Formerly freehold, the land is reserved under the Forests Act, as a 'Community Use Area – Parklands and Gardens'.

Planning Scheme Zoning and overlays

Under the Shire of Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, the property is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

It is also covered by the following overlays:

- Environmental Significance
- Heritage
- Erosion Management
- Significant Landscape
- Wildfire Management.

Location

5-9 Hacketts Rd, Olinda

Melway map 122 A12

<http://www.whereis.com/vic/olinda/5-hacketts-rd>

Web page

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/pirianda-gardens-gardens-of-the-dandenongs>

Values

Horticultural values

- A significant and extensively labelled collection of rare exotic specimen trees and shrubs. The many deciduous trees create a splendid display of autumn colours.
- A fern gully walk, a 'four seasons' garden and distant views of the surrounding landscape.

Visitor and tourism values

- Activities include walking, learning about plants and horticulture, bird watching and sightseeing.
- Ansell House is used for commercial purposes, including as a conference centre and venue for private functions.

The garden features a fern gully walk, terraced garden beds in the valley, and the house built by the Ansell's in 1962.

Cultural values

- The 500 metres of stonework is a fine example of stone walling.
- Ansell House is an example of modernist architecture.

Natural values

- The fern gully provides a corridor for local wildlife.

Community values

- The top house at Pirianda Garden is utilised to provide accommodation that supports Parks Victoria programs delivered in the region, including park research and international intern programs.

Strategic Directions

Horticulture

Maintain, display and enhance the collection of cool-climate plants in the garden, for both public enjoyment and to support the conservation of significant and threatened cool-climate plants.

Identify, conserve and interpret key collections of plants and specimens that are rare in cultivation or of particular heritage significance.

Improve the botanic profile of the garden by providing opportunities for others to undertake scientific research by providing living specimens for study and comparisons.

Explore opportunities for additional plantings consistent with the rare and unusual theme.

Investigate and document the significance of the plant collection at Pirianda in the context of Victoria's botanical gardens network.

Visitor experience and tourism

Subject to additional funding, upgrade the entry, car park and road down to Ansell House to improve visitor access and create a sense of arrival.

Display and interpret a collection of specimen trees for visitor enjoyment and as an educational resource.

Maintain a peaceful recreation experience for contemplation, picnics and bird watching.

Provide a venue for appropriate events and group gatherings.

Explore opportunities to increase use of the garden and Ansell House for appropriate commercial activities.

Cultural values conservation

Research and interpret the European cultural heritage significance, the architecture and social history of the Ansell house and hillside garden.

Maintain the integrity of the stonewall features throughout the garden.

Natural values conservation

Contribute to the conservation of indigenous vegetation and the provision of wildlife habitat.

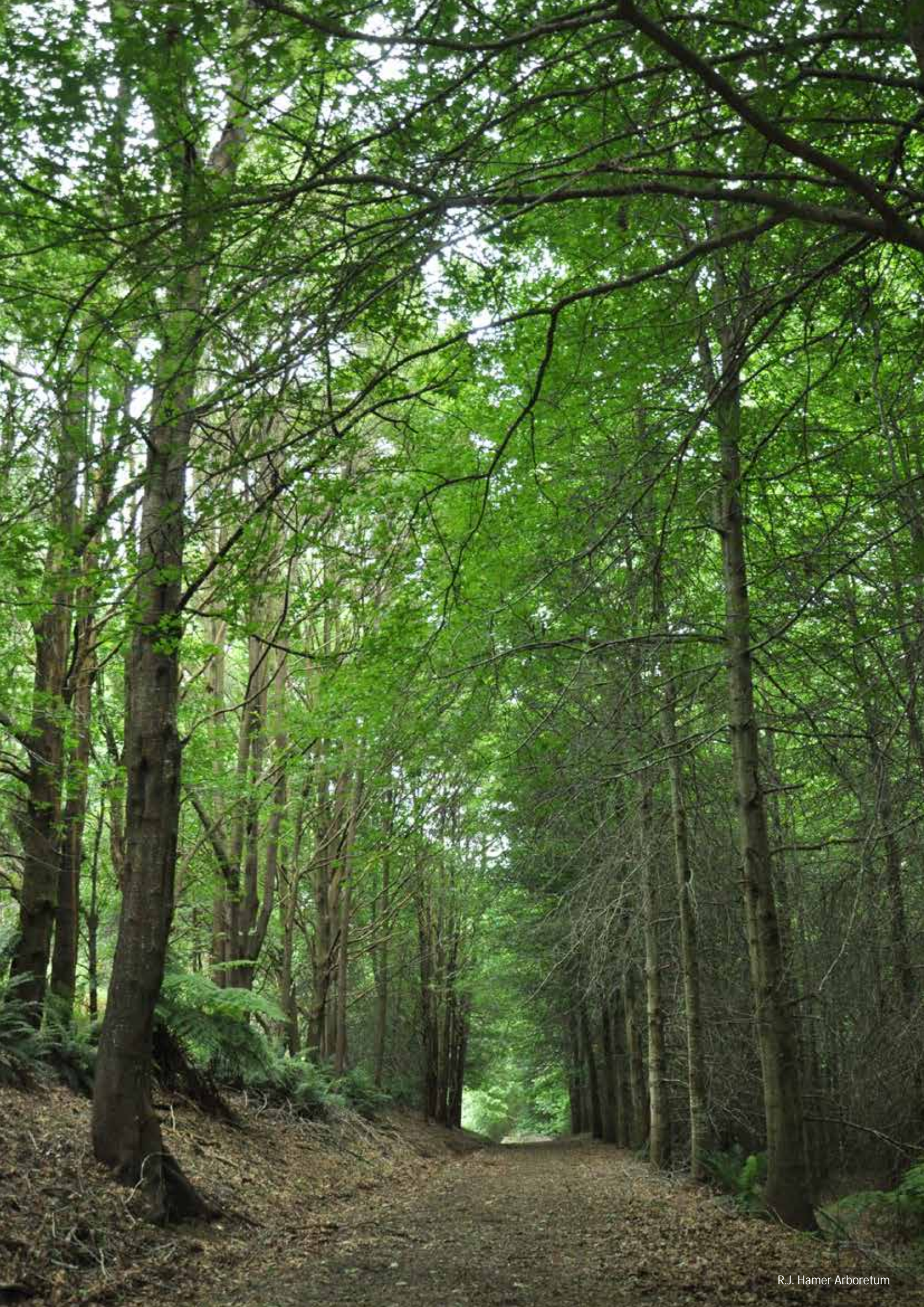
Community awareness and engagement

Continue to support and seek new ways to attract active volunteerism to support the ongoing maintenance of the garden.

Retain the top house at Pirianda Garden to provide short-term accommodation that supports delivery of approved Parks Victoria programs such as research partner and international ranger exchange programs.



Pirianda Garden



10 R. J. Hamer Arboretum

The Property

Originally a pine plantation, the 101-hectare arboretum was established in the 1970s as part of the Forests Commission's fire protection plan for Olinda. It was named in honour of the Victorian Premier at the time, Sir Rupert Hamer, who was a champion of parks and gardens as an essential component to providing quality of life and who was responsible for the promotion of Victoria as 'The Garden State'. Exotic trees were planted with the aim of minimising the flammability of the vegetation as a long term research project.

Regeneration of the indigenous flora within the plantations over recent decades has compromised the exotic collection. A program of removing indigenous trees has commenced to restore the integrity of the plantations of northern hemisphere forest trees.

Status

Formerly gazetted as State Forest for forestry-related use, the land is reserved under the Forests Act.

Planning Scheme Zoning and overlays

Under the Shire of Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, the property is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

It is also covered by the following overlays:

- Environmental Significance
- Heritage
- Significant Landscape
- Wildfire Management.

An impressive broad landscape with bold plantings of exotic trees and distant views of the Yarra Valley and the Great Dividing Range. The forest arboretum is popular with local community and tourists alike for passive recreation.



R.J. Hamer Arboretum

Location

10 Chalet Rd, Olinda

Melway map 122 B9

<http://www.whereis.com/vic/olinda/10-chalet-rd>

Web page

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/rj-hamer-arboretum-gardens-of-the-dandenongs>

Values

Horticultural values

- Large plantings of northern hemisphere forest species (particularly from USA and China).
- Provides a variety of woodland experiences from open landscape, solid plantations of species through to native forest, fern gullies and tall over storey trees.

Visitor and tourism values

- Exceptional views are available over the Silvan Reservoir and toward the Yarra Ranges.
- An extensive network of tracks provides access for picnicking and sightseeing, and opportunities for dog walking, horse riding and bike riding.
- Opportunity to enjoy a forest experience of species from the northern hemisphere including an impressive display of autumn colours.

Cultural values

- A 2004 Values Assessment identifies the arboretum, with its unusual and extensive use of single-species plantations set in contiguous blocks, as being unique in Victoria.
- The location inspired and was the subject of paintings by Arthur Streeton, and the arboretum is a destination on the Heidelberg Artists Trail.

Natural values

- A local corridor for wildlife.
- Fauna species that are protected by the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, including the Powerful Owl.

Strategic Directions

Horticulture

Enable visitors the opportunity to experience and be enveloped by a range of northern hemisphere woodlands.

Maintain, display and enhance the woodlands for public enjoyment.

Review and rejuvenate the existing collection, which has become crowded and overrun in some sections.

Work closely with the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne for technical advice to support management of the collections in the arboretum.

Visitor experience and tourism

Position the arboretum as an attractive northern hemisphere setting providing a range of active and passive recreational opportunities including family and group picnicking, walking and sightseeing.

Develop a signage plan focussed on improving botanic, informational and directional signage throughout the arboretum including both the main visitor nodes and the track network.

Investigate options to provide recreational management zones in the arboretum, with sustainable and equitable access for dog walking, horse riding, and mountain bike riding as examples.

Manage the collections to protect the viewsapes.

Explore opportunities to use the arboretum for compatible tourism and recreational activities, including partnering with tourism or recreational user groups in the development of new opportunities, and ensuring appropriate community consultation.

Cultural values conservation

Interpret the social history of the arboretum's development.

Community awareness and engagement

Enhance community awareness of the recreational opportunities available in the arboretum.

Promote linkage to National Rhododendron Garden and Pirianda Garden.

Continue to support and seek new ways to attract active volunteerism to support the ongoing maintenance of the arboretum.





11 Mt Dandenong Arboretum

The Property

Sixteen hectares near Mount Dandenong was set aside in 1928 to establish an arboretum of national significance featuring conifers and deciduous trees.

The Australian horticultural community supported the establishment of the arboretum by donating most of the original plants. The collection includes spectacular trees from around the world, including eight that are listed in the National Trust's significant tree register. Recognising that there are several arboreta in Australia that feature northern hemisphere collections, since 1999 the focus of the collection has been on southern hemisphere conifers and the creation of a unique visitor experience with greater botanical significance.

Status

Mt Dandenong Arboretum is part of Dandenong Ranges National Park and is reserved under the National Parks Act. The arboretum is managed in accordance with the Dandenong Ranges National Park (DRNP) Management Plan 2005. This subsidiary strategic Plan for the gardens gives more specific directions for this special area of the national park and complements the park plan.

Dogs are permitted, on a leash, on tracks within the arboretum in accordance with the DRNP Management Plan.

Planning Scheme Zoning and overlays

Under the Shire of Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, the property is zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) and Green Wedge A Zone (2 small parts).

It is also covered by the following overlays:

- Heritage
- Erosion Management
- Significant Landscape
- Wildfire Management.



Mt Dandenong Arboretum

A southern hemisphere conifer (Gymnosperm) collection boasting nationally significant trees in a woodland setting. This exotic display within the Dandenong Ranges National Park invites the local community to enjoy passive recreation pursuits.

Location

65 - 67 Ridge Road, Mount Dandenong

Melway map 52 G12

<http://www.whereis.com/vic/mt-dandenong/65-67-ridge-rd>

Web page

http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1park_display.cfm?park=152

Values

Horticultural values

- The arboretum displays a range of exotic conifers and broadleaved trees planted from 1929.
- A collection of spectacular specimens with more than 100 northern hemisphere conifers and 200 broadleaf trees.
- Views towards the Great Dividing Range framed by tall trees.

Visitor and tourism values

- The arboretum provides a setting for quiet contemplation in a relaxing sensory environment under mature tree canopies.
- The walking track links to the Dandenong Ranges National Park walking track network.

Cultural values

- Eight trees are listed in the National Trust register of significant trees.



Natural values

- An area of Mountain Ash provides habitat for native species and a contrast to the exotic trees planted within the arboretum.

Strategic Directions

Horticulture

Maintain and enhance the collection of southern hemisphere conifers.

Identify, conserve and interpret plants and specimens that are rare in cultivation or of particular heritage significance.

Develop and implement a collections policy.

Maintain, display and enhance collections of rare cool-climate conifers for both conservation purposes and public enjoyment.

Encourage scientific research by providing living specimens for study and comparisons.

Visitor experience and tourism

Promote the arboretum as a space for passive recreational opportunities for the community.

Provide an attractive setting for visitors to undertake recreational pursuits such as walking, picnicking and sightseeing.

Improve the horticultural interpretation and signage of the plantings.

Continue to support dog walking on leash in accordance with the Dandenong Ranges National Park Management Plan.

Cultural values conservation

Monitor the condition of significant heritage trees.

Natural values conservation

Contribute to natural values conservation in the Dandenong Ranges.

Community awareness and engagement

Enhance the community awareness of the recreational opportunities available in the arboretum.

Raise awareness and appreciation of the arboreta by providing interpretive information such as signage and plant labelling.



12 Former Olinda Golf Course Site

The site

The site was originally constructed in 1952 as a 9-hole golf course to act as a fuel break for the Olinda village township. The back nine holes were added in later years.

Originally managed by the Forests Commission under the Forests Act, the land was re-reserved in 1989 as a Crown land reserve. Parks Victoria has been the responsible Committee of Management for the land since 1995, and in 2000 leased the land pursuant to Section 17D of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act for a period of 15 years, for the management of the land as a public golf course.

Status

Formerly reserved under the Forests Act 1958, the land is reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, categorised as Community Use Area - Recreation Area.

Planning Scheme Zoning and overlays

Under the Shire of Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, the property is zoned Public Park and Recreation Reserve (PPRZ).

It is also covered by the following overlays:

- Wildfire Management
- Environmental Significance
- Significant Landscape.

Location

75-77 Olinda-Monbulk Rd, Olinda

Melway map 66 K7

<http://www.whereis.com/vic/olinda/75-olinda-monbulk-rd?id=24F2149FB9BDED>

Web page

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/olinda-golf-course>

Values

Visitor and commercial values

- Previously the Olinda Golf Course, the former lessee of the site ceased operation as a golf course in October 2012. Parks Victoria is continuing to maintain the site as a strategic fuel break while the future of the site is being determined.
- An expert evaluation commissioned by Parks Victoria in 2009 concluded that the course is unsustainable as an 18-hole golf course because current water storage capacity and infrastructure are inadequate, and the hilly terrain limits options to improve the course and elevate it to the standard of Melbourne's better public golf courses.

Fire and emergency management

- The golf course was created and still acts as a strategic fuel break for the Olinda township.

Thirty-four hectares of Crown land in Olinda, adjacent to the National Rhododendron Garden and R. J. Hamer Arboretum formerly operated as an 18-hole public golf course.

Strategic Directions

Visitor experience and tourism

Parks Victoria is currently undertaking a detailed options analysis of the future use of the site to ensure that it provides a valuable asset to the community in the long term. Parks Victoria may seek an external party to take on the management of the site under a lease or licence arrangement. In accordance with Victorian Government policy, a public expression of interest process would be undertaken and advertised widely in local and metropolitan newspapers and on Parks Victoria's website.

Fire and emergency management

Ensure that the Olinda Golf Course site continues to be maintained as a strategic fuel break for the Olinda township, and is accordingly included in the Department of Environment and Primary Industries' annual fire management planning process.



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Appendix 1 Submissions on the Draft Strategic Management Plan

A total of 14 written submissions were received on the Draft Strategic Management Plan (April - June 2013), from the following organisations and individuals.

Organisation	Submission No.
Submissions from groups	Total: 5
Australian Rhododendron Society	9
Friends of George Tindale Garden Inc.	5
Friends of Hamer Arboretum	1
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne	10
Yarra Ranges Mountain Bikers	6

Name	Submission No.
Submissions from individuals	Total: 9
Steve Cusworth	11
Neal Hambridge	3
Michael Hammer	4
Peter Hibberd	2
Diane Keating	8
Brian Moxham	14
Jenny Moxham	13
Janet Taylor	7
Shane Watterson	12

