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Euroa Arboretum Masterplan

2026 - 2036

We are proud to acknowledge
the Traditional Owners, the
Taungurung Nation, first
peoples of the rivers and
mountains.

We pay our respect and deep
gratitude to elders past, present
and emerging for their fortitude,
collaboration and commitment
to caring for this land.

Acknowledgement

As we hand this over, I wanted to say thank you for trusting us with the development of the masterplan. It's been a genuinely enjoyable process from start to finish, and we've valued the openness and generosity the committee has shown us throughout.

What has stayed with us most is the quality of the work already happening at the Arboretum — the restoration, the cultural partnerships, the long view being taken on the place. Our aim has been to give that work a clear structure to grow into rather than redirect it, and we hope the masterplan does it justice.

We've done our best to capture everything, but if there's anything we've overlooked or not quite got right, please let us know. We'd welcome the chance to adjust it.

Thank you again for the opportunity.

From About Architecture

A Note From Us

The attached draft recommendations set out the proposed long-term direction for the Euroa Arboretum Masterplan.

You may notice that the recommendations are broader than a list of buildings or landscape works. This is intentional. The Arboretum is a working restoration landscape, nursery, seedbank, learning environment and community place. Its future will depend not only on what is built, but also on how the site is cared for, how restoration is planned, how visitors move through the grounds, how operational areas function and how future opportunities are assessed.

The recommendations therefore include a mix of:
physical works and future projects;
plans, studies and design frameworks needed before works can proceed;
operational improvements;
stewardship and partnership actions;
early improvements that may be relatively simple to deliver; and
long-term principles to guide future decisions.

A Practical test for reviewing each recommendation

Before keeping a recommendation, ask:

Does it identify a clear future decision, action or deliverable?
Does it require its own priority, timeframe or responsible party?
Would the Masterplan lose something important if it were absorbed into another recommendation?
Is it strategic enough to remain relevant for at least five to ten years?

What feedback would be most useful at this stage

Please review the draft with the following questions in mind:

Is anything important missing?
Are any recommendations unnecessary or too detailed for a long-term Masterplan?
Do any recommendations overlap and need to be combined?
Are any recommendations better treated as precinct-specific actions?
Does the balance between ecological restoration, operational needs and community use feel right?
Are there any recommendations that need further committee discussion before they are retained?

Mark-up	Meaning
Keep	Suitable as a headline Masterplan recommendation
Combine	Overlaps with another recommendation
Move	Better suited to a project zone or supporting note
Clarify	Intent is right but wording needs adjustment
Add	Important issue or future action is missing

Executive Summary



Purpose of the Masterplan

This Masterplan has been developed to guide the next phase of the Euroa Arboretum's evolution. As the Arboretum continues to grow in both its ecological role and community reach, there is a need for a clear and coordinated framework to support future development.

The Masterplan establishes a long-term vision and spatial direction for the site—balancing ecological restoration, community use, education and operational needs—while ensuring that growth does not compromise the values that define the Arboretum.

The Arboretum Today

The Euroa Arboretum is a respected and trusted leader in ecological restoration, with particular expertise in woody grassland and broader landscape rehabilitation. It is widely recognised as a go-to organisation for the supply of locally indigenous plants, supported by tailored, place-specific advice and deep technical knowledge.

The Arboretum has evolved into a fully integrated, end-to-end environmental restoration organisation—collecting seed, propagating plants and delivering on-ground restoration works through dedicated bush crews. In doing so, it plays a significant role in regional landscape recovery while also providing meaningful local employment opportunities.

Alongside its environmental work, the Arboretum is a valued community place. Its Bush Kinder and education programs continue to grow, with increasing engagement from early learning, primary and secondary schools. The site is also recognised as a place for wellbeing—supporting connection to nature, community and place.

Key Drivers for the Future

List of Key Drivers For the Masterplan

The Arboretum of the Future

Looking ahead, the Arboretum will continue to strengthen its role as a centre of excellence for ecological restoration and stewardship, while expanding its capacity to support a growing and more diverse audience.

The future Arboretum will:

- Maintain and enhance biodiversity and indigenous species diversity
- Provide spaces for recreation, play and informal use
- Foster deeper understanding of landscapes—encouraging people to see, value and engage with ecological detail
- Expand educational opportunities through immersive, self-directed learning experiences
- Continue to support innovation in restoration practice and knowledge sharing

Learning will be embedded in the landscape itself, encouraging discovery, curiosity and long-term connection to the natural environment.

A Balanced Future

The future of the Euroa Arboretum lies in balancing growth with stewardship.

As visitation increases and the organisation continues to expand its reach, it will be essential to protect what makes the Arboretum distinct—its ecological integrity, its culture of innovation and its deep connection to community.

This Masterplan provides a pathway to achieve that balance. It ensures the Arboretum can grow in scale and impact while remaining grounded in its founding principles of restoration, learning and connection to Country.

This Masterplan provides a framework to guide the Arboretum's future growth and development. It:

Establishes a clear spatial structure for the site

Identifies opportunities to improve access, circulation and visitor experience

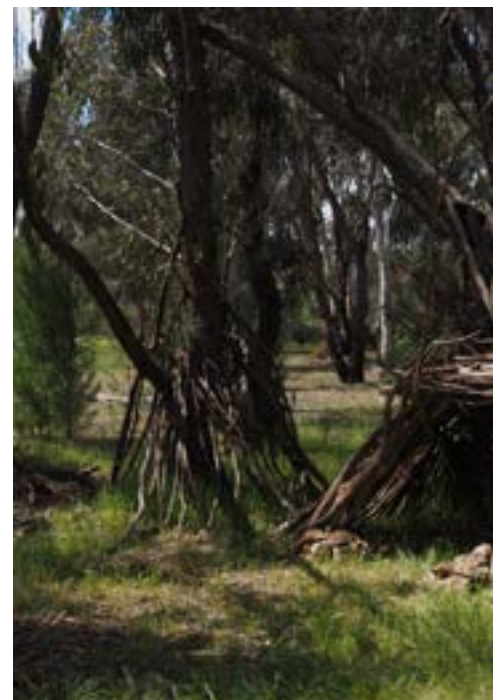
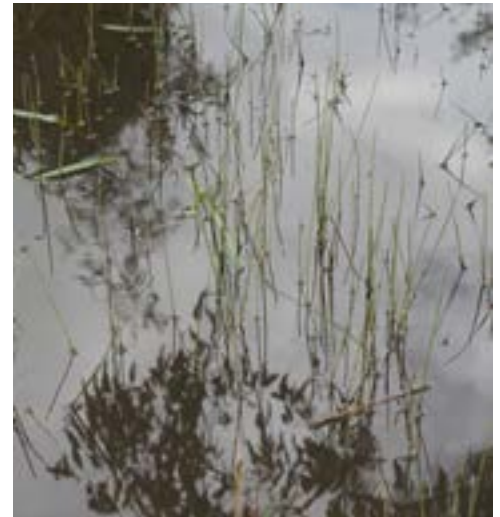
Supports the expansion of education, recreation and community use areas

Strengthens ecological systems, habitat areas and restoration zones

Integrates operational requirements, including nursery, seedbank and restoration services

Provides a staged approach to implementation over time

Importantly, the Masterplan does not seek to redefine the Arboretum, but to support its evolution in a considered and coordinated way.





The early vision for Euroa Arboretum, when it was a sheep paddock with few trees and plenty of weeds, was idealistic and aspirational. It has taken a community to bring that vision to life, and to create a place that is a beautiful haven for people, plants and wildlife.

However, there have been a few individuals who have gone above and beyond, to stay the journey across more than 30 years and contribute in an ongoing way. We would like to acknowledge the leadership of Shirley Saywell, Frank Pierce and Janet Fogarty – the Arboretum is truly their legacy.

We would also like to acknowledge the early vision of Sally Mann in the planting and early design - thank you for the gift you have given.

We also acknowledge Cathy Olive in steering and inspiring the team, to raise the public profile of the Arboretum as a respected leader in innovation & technical excellence, a trusted project delivery entity, whilst remaining steadfast to an ethical working approach.

Acknowledgements

Background & Context

Cultural Context

The Euroa Arboretum is located on the lands of the Taungurung People, Traditional Custodians of this Country. Their enduring connection to land, water, plants and ecological systems underpins the values of care, regeneration and learning that continue to shape the Arboretum today. This connection to Country provides an essential foundation for understanding the site—not simply as a landscape, but as part of a much longer cultural and ecological story.

Site Origins

The origins of the Euroa Arboretum are closely tied to the transformation of the site during the construction of the Hume Freeway bypass between 1986 and 1992. During this period, the land was used as a VicRoads depot, and significant physical changes were made to the landscape, including excavation works that resulted in the formation of the existing 43 megalitre dam .

In 1993, following completion of the freeway works, the 27-hectare site was donated to the people of Euroa as a public reserve. The idea to establish an arboretum was proposed by local engineers and quickly embraced by the community through a series of public meetings, marking the beginning of a community-led vision for the site .

Establishment and Early Development

The Euroa Arboretum Committee of Management was formed in 1994, initiating the first phase of development. Early works included planting programs, along with the construction of basic infrastructure such as toilets and a picnic shelter, delivered through government-supported employment programs .

The Arboretum was officially opened in 1996, establishing it as a recognised public landscape and community asset .

A critical shift occurred in 1997 with the completion of the Arboretum Charter. This marked a turning point in the site's direction, with a clear focus established on:

- Conservation and restoration of woodland and wetland systems
- Expansion of indigenous vegetation
- Transition from general Australian native planting to locally indigenous species reflective of the region

This shift fundamentally redefined the Arboretum as a site of ecological restoration rather than simply a collection of plants .

Growth, Innovation and Environmental Response

From the late 1990s and into the 2000s, the Arboretum evolved into a centre for ecological practice and innovation.

The first Master Plan was prepared in 1999, providing a framework for future development. Shortly after, significant investment through the Natural Heritage Trust supported the establishment of seed orchards, enabling the Arboretum to play a regional role in supplying indigenous seed for revegetation projects .

This period also saw:

- Development of large-scale seed production systems
- Establishment of the Chain of Ponds, reflecting local creek systems
- Expansion of nursery operations producing up to 60,000 indigenous seedlings annually
- Increasing involvement in regional restoration and seed banking initiatives

These initiatives positioned the Arboretum not just as a site, but as an active contributor to landscape-scale ecological restoration.

At the same time, the Arboretum responded to broader environmental pressures. Extended drought, water shortages and major fire events across the region reinforced the importance of resilient landscapes and informed the Arboretum's ongoing focus on adaptation and restoration .



Arboretum Today



A Living Landscape of Community and Learning

Over time, the Arboretum has developed into both an ecological and social landscape.

The introduction of wetlands, grassland restoration projects, boardwalks and habitat areas has strengthened biodiversity outcomes, while facilities such as bird hides and walking trails have supported passive use and environmental engagement .

Equally important has been the growth of community programs and education initiatives. Activities such as:

- Bush Kinder programs
- School visits and field days
- Workshops and training
- Volunteer-led planting and maintenance have embedded the Arboretum as a place of learning, participation and connection to nature .

Contemporary Role and Strategic Direction

Today, the Euroa Arboretum is defined by its dual role as both a site and an organisation.

The current Strategic Plan (2022–2026) positions the Arboretum as:

- A centre of excellence for ecological restoration and stewardship
- A demonstration site for landscape-scale restoration practices
- A provider of plants, seed and environmental services
- A place for education, training and community engagement

At its core is a clear purpose: to restore Country while connecting people with the bush, recognising that environmental outcomes and community engagement are intrinsically linked .

The Arboretum is also described as an evolving showcase of innovative ecological restoration, reflecting its ongoing experimentation, learning and adaptation in response to climate and landscape change .

An Evolving Framework

The Euroa Arboretum is not a finished landscape. It is a continually evolving system shaped by:

- Community leadership and volunteer contribution
- Long-term ecological restoration processes
- Changing environmental conditions
- Ongoing learning and innovation

From its origins as a repurposed infrastructure site to its current role as a leader in ecological restoration, the Arboretum reflects a unique intersection of community ambition, environmental stewardship and adaptive landscape practice.

This Masterplan builds upon that legacy—providing a framework to guide future growth while remaining grounded in the Arboretum's founding principles of restoration, connection and care for Country.

Scope & Purpose

Purpose

This Masterplan has been developed to guide the future growth and evolution of the Euroa Arboretum over the next 10–15 years.

As the Arboretum continues to expand its role as a centre for ecological restoration, education and community connection, there is a need for a clear and coordinated framework to support future development. This includes responding to increasing visitation, expanding programs and services, and strengthening the ecological and operational performance of the site.

The Masterplan establishes a long-term vision and direction for the Arboretum—ensuring that future investment, design and decision-making are aligned with its core purpose of restoring Country and connecting people with the bush.



The Masterplan considers the Arboretum as both a landscape and an organisation. It provides a framework for:

The physical design and spatial structure of the site

Ecological restoration areas, habitat systems and biodiversity outcomes

Visitor experience, access, circulation and places for recreation and learning

Education, community programs and opportunities for engagement

Operational functions including nursery, seedbank and restoration services

Importantly, the Masterplan balances the Arboretum's dual role as a working landscape for restoration and a place for community use, learning and wellbeing.

Staging and prioritisation of future works



Methodology

The preparation of this Masterplan has been informed by a combination of background research, site analysis and community and stakeholder engagement.

This included:

Review of existing documentation, including the Euroa Arboretum Strategic Plan (2022–2026) and historical records

Site analysis to understand existing conditions, ecological systems and patterns of use

Engagement with the Arboretum Committee of Management, staff and key stakeholders

A comprehensive community and visitor survey to capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback

The engagement process ensured that the Masterplan is grounded in both the operational requirements of the Arboretum and the values and expectations of its community.

Participation

To inform the Masterplan and understand key issues and opportunities for the Euroa Arboretum, a combination of stakeholder engagement and community consultation was undertaken. This included targeted discussions with the Arboretum Committee of Management, alongside a comprehensive community and visitor survey.

Community Survey

A community survey was developed and distributed as part of the Masterplan process to capture feedback on how the Arboretum is used, what is most valued, and aspirations for its future.

A total of 108 responses were received. The survey primarily captured the views of visitors, who represented approximately 84% of respondents, reflecting the Arboretum's role as both a local and regional destination.

The survey was distributed digitally through:

The Arboretum's email database

The Arboretum's Facebook page (approx. 2,400 followers)

Strathbogie Shire Council's Facebook page (approx. 5,100 followers)

This approach ensured broad reach across both local community members and visitors to the site.

The input has directly informed the direction of the Masterplan, ensuring it reflects both community values and the long-term vision of the Arboretum.



Demographics

Survey respondents were predominantly older adults, with:

- 45.05% aged 65 and over
- 35.27% aged 55–64
- 3.3% aged 25–34

Participation from younger age groups was limited. This demographic profile reflects the Arboretum's current user base, while also highlighting an opportunity to broaden engagement with younger audiences over time.

Stakeholder Engagement

In addition to the survey, direct engagement was undertaken with the Arboretum Committee of Management to understand operational needs, strategic direction and long-term aspirations for the site.

These discussions provided critical insight into:

Opportunities and constraints for future growth

The Arboretum's role as an ecological restoration organisation

Operational requirements, including nursery, seedbank and restoration services

The importance of maintaining the balance between ecological integrity and community use

Summary

The engagement process demonstrates a strong level of interest, ownership and connection to the Arboretum. Feedback consistently reinforced the importance of:

Protecting ecological values and biodiversity

Maintaining the character of the landscape as a place of quiet connection

Supporting education and community engagement

Introducing measured improvements that enhance, rather than transform, the site

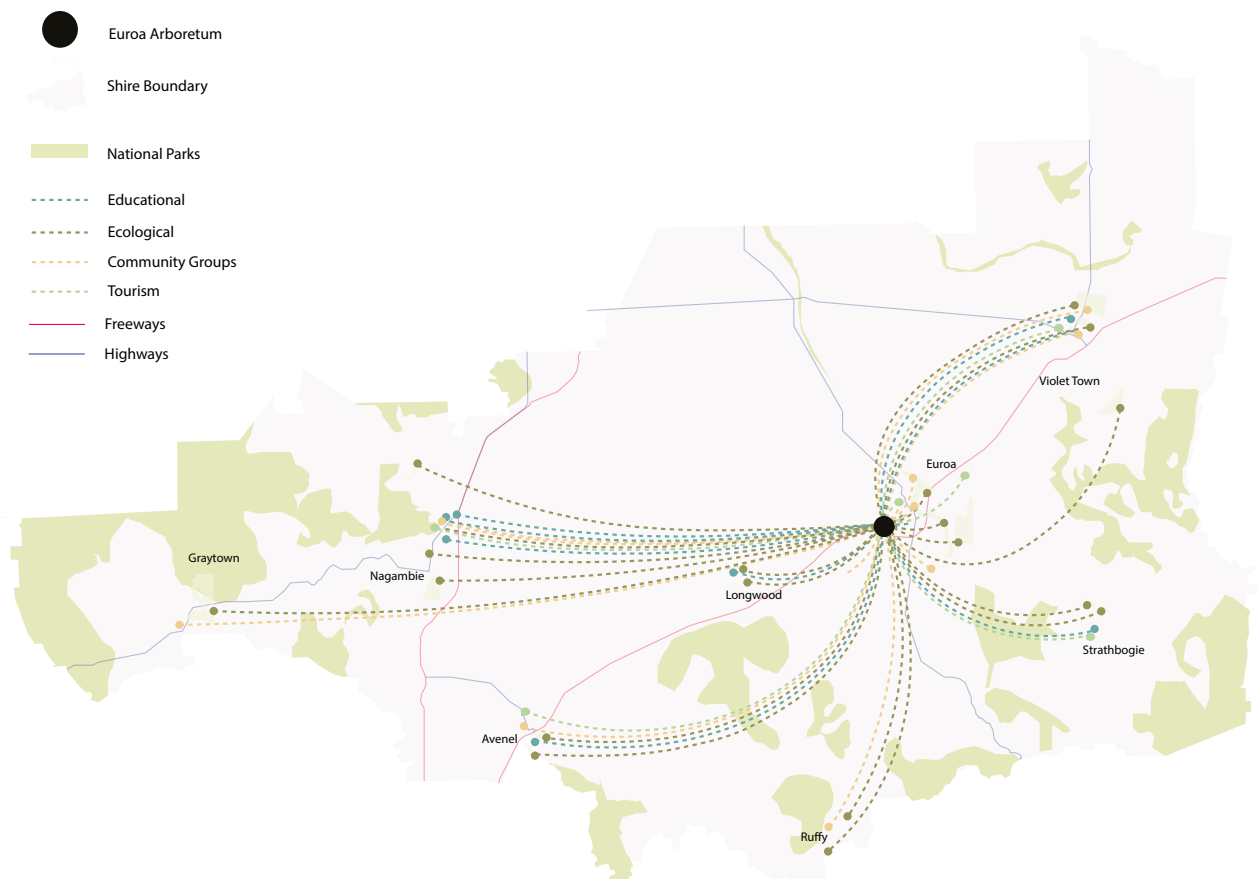


Use & Users

The Euroa Arboretum operates not only as a physical landscape, but as part of a broader and interconnected network of ecological, educational and community relationships. The Arboretum's influence extends far beyond its physical boundaries.

The following diagrams illustrate the extent of these connections—mapping the Arboretum's links across the Strathbogie Shire and more broadly across the State. These include relationships with nearby townships, community groups, educational institutions, landcare networks, ecological systems and regional infrastructure.

At a local scale, the Arboretum is deeply embedded within the surrounding townships and landscapes, with strong connections extending to Euroa, Longwood, Violet Town, Avenel, Nagambie and the wider rural catchment. These connections reflect patterns of use, collaboration and shared stewardship, reinforcing the Arboretum's role as a community asset and regional resource.



Staff & Volunteers Euroa Arboretum Committee
Euroa Arboretum Staff &
Volunteers

Executive & Decision Makers Arboretum Executive
Taungurung Land and Waters
Council
Yorta Yorta Nation
Goulburn Broken CMA
Department of Energy
Environment and Climate Action
Goulburn Valley Water
Strathbogie Shire
Zoos Victoria

Community Partners Euroa Gazette / NE Media

Local Landcare Groups: Longwood Plains Catchment
Management Network
Strathbogie Ranges
Conservation Management
Network
Friends of the Sevens
Friends of Hughes Creek
Friends of Honeysuckle Creek
Friends of Bushland Park
Shadforth Reserve Committee

Local Community User Groups: Euroa Kinder
Goodstart (Euroa)
Avenel Kinder
Violet Town Kinder
Benalla Kinder
Nagambie Pre-School &
Childcare
Euroa Primary School
St John's Primary School
Longwood Primary School
St Joseph's Catholic Primary
School (Benalla)
Euroa Secondary College
Sheila's Gallery (Tess)
Granite Hill
Euroa Community Action Group
(Women 4 Community)
Strathbogie-Euroa Angling Club
My Future Academy
Melbourne University
Chamber of Commerce

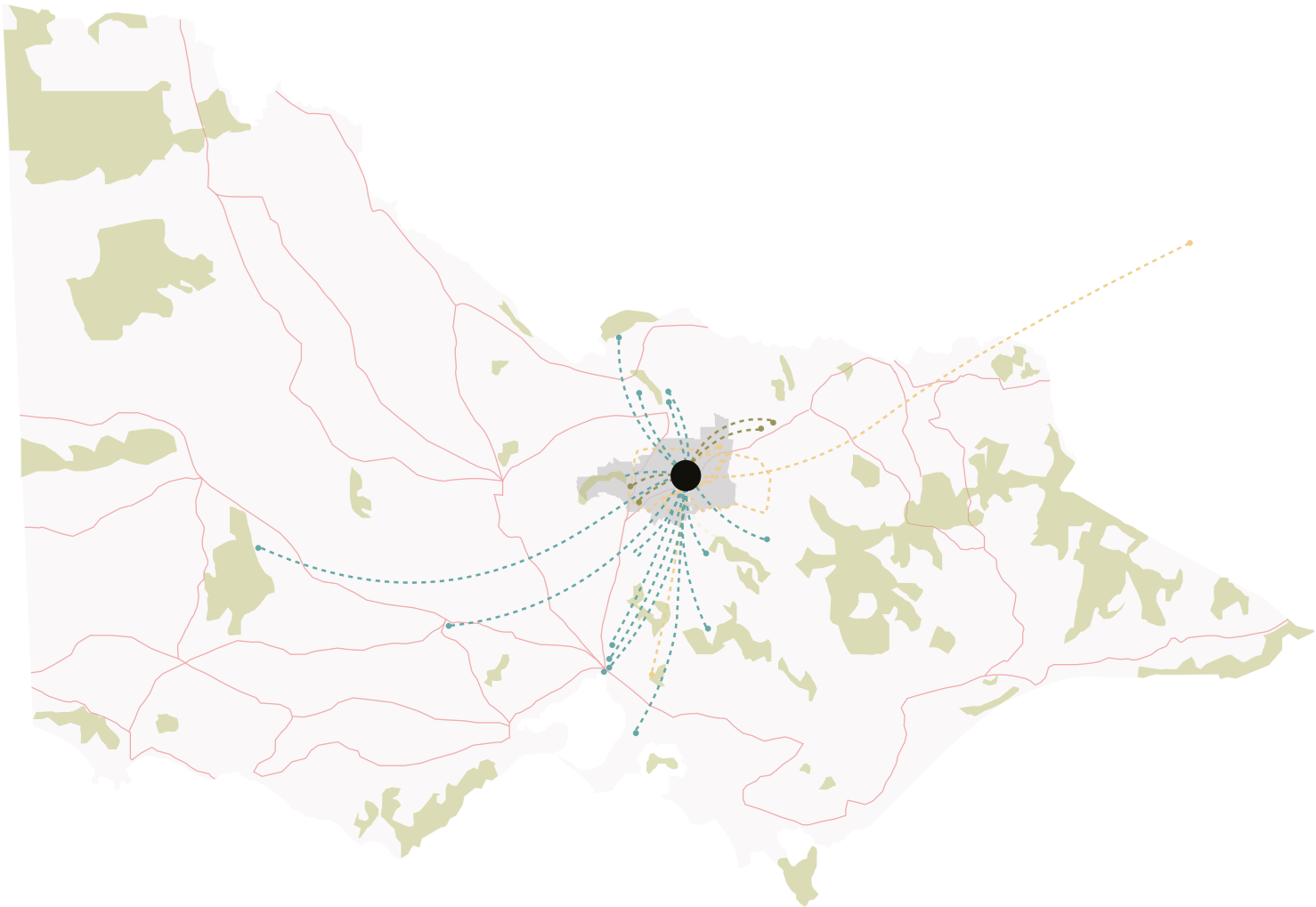


Broader Links

At a broader scale, the Arboretum forms part of a wider network of organisations, landcare groups, educational partners and ecological systems across Victoria . These relationships extend beyond geographic proximity, positioning the Arboretum as a contributor to landscape-scale restoration, knowledge sharing and environmental leadership.

Importantly, many of these connections are non-physical. They are not defined by paths, roads or boundaries, but by flows of knowledge, seed, expertise, education and community participation. This networked role enables the Arboretum to influence landscapes well beyond its immediate site.

- Euroa Arboretum
- Shire Boundary
- National Parks
- Organisations
- Educational
- Local Landcare Groups
- Major Roads



Future Opportunities

These diagrams highlight a significant opportunity: the continued strengthening and expansion of the Arboretum's network.

Future growth is not solely dependent on physical expansion of the site, but on:

Deepening partnerships with community, educational and environmental organisations

Expanding the reach of restoration knowledge, seed supply and on-ground services. Current grant funding enables increased and more sustainable seed supply for the catchment (and beyond where suitable and possible).

Strengthening regional and state-level collaboration & Potential for more seed orchards pending suitable sites and ability to secure future grant/philanthropic funding.

Leveraging digital platforms to share knowledge, engage new audiences and extend educational programs & workshops

Increased demand for Tours of Nursery/Seedbank, general public/hobby group tours of grounds (in addition to tech grassland/wetland tours run by Cath and Bronte on set dates

Plant supply for the catchment and establish a collaborative partnership with other plant nurseries within the catchment to supply quality plants; any potential for Nursery

The Arb as a central point of contact for networks and community when developing land management activities & programs. Provision of hub space for landcare/partner groups

Technology will play an increasingly important role in this expansion—supporting remote learning, digital interpretation, citizen science initiatives and broader access to the Arboretum's work.

By investing in both physical and non-physical connections, the Arboretum can continue to grow its influence, reinforcing its position as a leader in ecological restoration while maintaining its strong connection to place.

Challenges & Opportunities

Analysis of community feedback highlights a small number of consistent and influential factors shaping how the Arboretum is used—and how it can evolve.

The most significant barriers to increased visitation are distance (43.33%) and the Arboretum being “not front of mind” (24.44%). These findings suggest that future growth is not limited by the quality of the experience, but by awareness and reach.

At the same time, current use is strongly aligned with the Arboretum's core purpose. Visitors are primarily engaging through plant purchasing (21%), walking (12%), wildflower viewing (11.11%) and workshops (10%), reinforcing its role as both a working landscape and a place for quiet, nature-based experience.



Challenges

Extending Reach

While highly valued by existing users, the Arboretum has limited penetration into broader audiences. Distance cannot be resolved physically, placing greater importance on improving visibility, awareness and connection beyond the site.

Capacity and Growth

Operational feedback identifies constraints in accommodating larger groups, particularly in relation to parking and supporting infrastructure. While this is not a concern for everyday visitors, it presents a limitation for events, education programs and future expansion.



Opportunities

Strengthening What Already Works

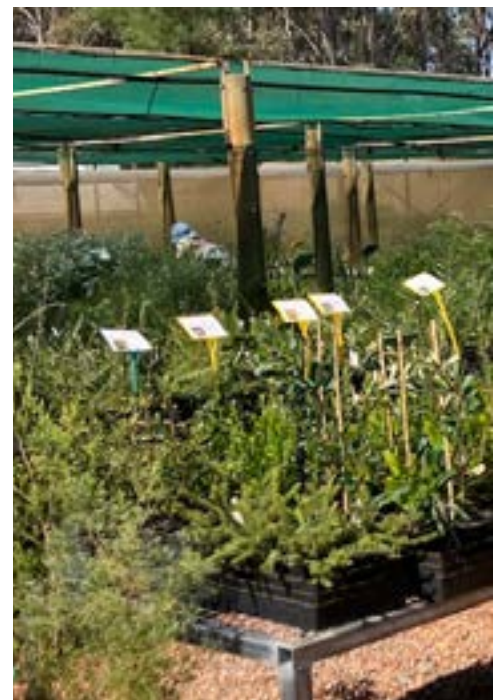
Current patterns of use provide a clear direction for future investment. Enhancing walking experiences, supporting plant-based engagement and expanding workshops and learning opportunities will build on existing strengths rather than introducing competing uses.

Expanding Influence Beyond the Site

The Arboretum's growth is not solely dependent on increasing physical visitation. There is a significant opportunity to extend its reach through Education and outreach programs, Partnerships and regional collaboration, Improved communication and visibility and Digital platforms for learning and engagement

Targeted Infrastructure

There is an opportunity to address operational constraints through targeted, low-impact improvements that support group use and accessibility, without shifting the overall character of the site.



Context

The Euroa Arboretum is located on the southern edge of Euroa, abutting the Hume Hwy on ramp. It has an area of 27.07 hectares and is located approximately 31km from the Euroa Post Office.

The Arboretum sits within the Seven Creeks landscape system, a dynamic ecological corridor that connects town, farmland and remnant bushland. This broader setting reinforces the site's role as both a local community asset and part of a regional ecological network, supporting biodiversity, habitat restoration and environmental education.

The following are regulatory & statutory bodies or requirements that will affect any development of the site:

Strathbogie Shire Council

Zoning

The Euroa Arboretum is located within a Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ). The PCRZ (at clause 36.03-1) requires a permit for most building and works on the land.

Overlays

A portion of the land is located within an Erosion Management Overlay (EMO)

The Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action (DEECA)

The Euroa Arboretum is reserved for the purposes of Public Purposes (arboretum purposes) and is managed by the Euroa Arboretum Incorporated as Committee of Management. Public Land Management and Land Owner Consent is required to be sought from DEECA.

Native Title

Native title is extinguished and no procedural rights apply. No Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA) procedural rights apply either.

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

This legislation provides protection for all Aboriginal places, objects and human remains regardless of their inclusion on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register or whether they are located on public or private land. It also provides clear guidance to planners and developers about when, and how, Aboriginal cultural heritage needs to be considered, and in some situations, work cannot proceed until compliance is met.

Rural Water Corporation: Goulburn-Murray Water

Urban Water Corporation Goulburn Valley Water

Power Distributor: AUSNET



The following are key documents reviewed in the development of this masterplan.

Euroa Arboretum Strategic Plan
2022 - 2026

Euroa Arboretum Website
2026

Council Plan 2025-2029

Feedback on the Mike Bankes
'Euroa Centre' proposal

Date?

The Euroa Arboretum's White
Cypress Climate Ready Garden
Stagg Design LA - July 2020

Seedbank Planning Permit
January 2024

Euroa Arboretum Site Plan
Specifications
September 2014

Subdivision Plan 72 Golf Course
Road
June 2024

EVC Areas
December 2003

Euroa Arboretum Masterplan
Stagg Design LA - February 2021



Vision

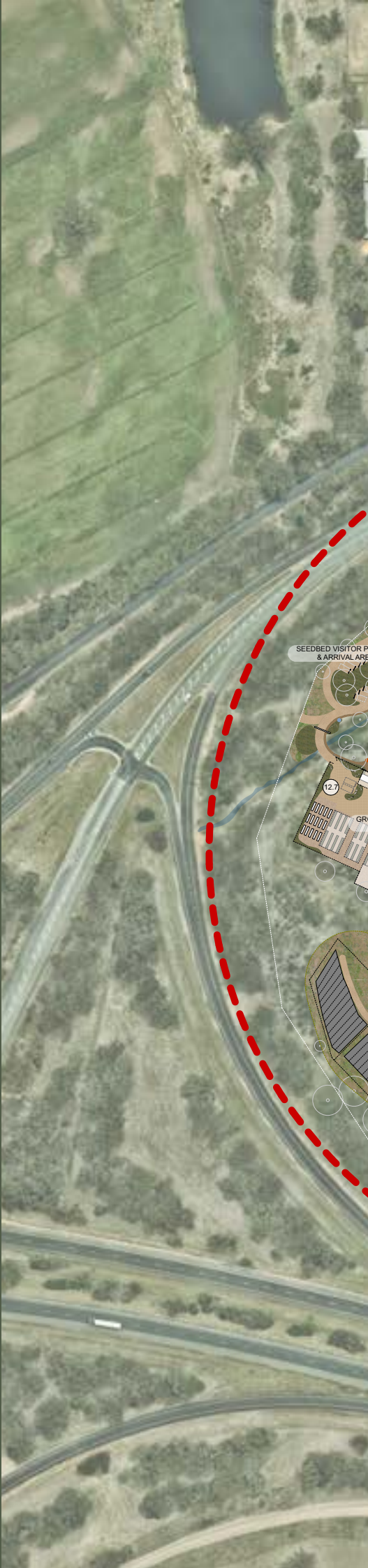
Restoring Country: The Euroa Arboretum is a centre of excellence for ecological restoration and stewardship



Euroa Arboretum is a leader in ecological restoration and land management, grounded in decades of expertise and ethical practice. We restore Country while fostering meaningful connections between people, community, and the bush.

We adamantly believe that health of Country and people go hand in hand, and one can not be achieved without the other. We actively care for our community, we create authentic partnerships, we use innovation and careful observation to restore country, and we engage







NORTH GATEWAY

CHAIN OF PONDS

BUSH DISCOVERY GARDEN

VISITOR & CULTURAL CENTRE

WELCOME CIRCLE

CUTTING GARDENS

WETLANDS

EAST TRAILHEAD

HOWING BACK THE BUSH NURSERY

BOX IRON BARK FOREST

GREY BOX STAG CIRCLE

SEEDBANK

PENNINERVIS PATCH

Country, Culture & Heritage

1.1 Continue and strengthen relationships with Traditional Owners

Continue the Arboretum's relationship with Taungurung Traditional Owners and Taungurung Land and Waters Council, recognising that ongoing dialogue is important to the care, interpretation and future development of the site. Establish a simple annual process to:

- Meet on Country or undertake a site walk to discuss current activities, emerging opportunities and any concerns.
- Review the use and condition of existing cultural elements, including the Daanak Walking Trail and Welcome Circle.
- Identify additional opportunities for continued Taungurung-led cultural experiences, learning programs and events.
- Refer relevant future projects for early discussion, particularly where they involve cultural interpretation, naming, land management or significant ground disturbance.
- Record agreed actions and identify any projects suitable for co-design, partnership or future funding.

1.2 Prepare a Country and Cultural Interpretation Plan

Prepare a coordinated Interpretation Plan for Country across the Arboretum, developed with Taungurung Land and Waters Council and building on the Daanak Walking Trail, Welcome Circle and wawa biik experiences. The plan should identify:

- Which existing interpretation to retain, update or expand, including whether the Daanak QR soundscape extends to further locations and how the Welcome Circle is used and supported over time
- Opportunities to interpret grassland restoration, cultural land management, wetlands, seasonal change and bushfoods
- Opportunities for the meaningful use, harvesting and interpretation of culturally significant plants such as mirnong and weaving plants, developed with Traditional Owners and knowledge holders
- The right balance between signage, digital content, guided experiences and education programs
- Protocols for approving and reviewing cultural content
- Coordinate this with the site-wide interpretation network while retaining a distinct Taungurung-led process for cultural content.

1.3 Identify a next-stage Country-led landscape project

Work with Taungurung Land and Waters Council to select and develop one next-stage landscape project that visibly connects culture, restoration and visitor learning. Rather than nominating the outcome in advance, the masterplan could identify several opportunities for discussion:

- Extending the Daanak trail into a broader seasonal walk
- Developing a cultural planting or bushfoods demonstration area
- Interpreting the relationship between the grasslands, fire and active land management
- Developing a Country-focused wetlands experience
- Integrating a cultural learning area with Bush Kinder or school programs
- Building on the role of the Welcome Circle as a starting point for guided experiences
- Developing a culturally informed plant-use area or program that supports the active care, harvesting and renewal of plants such as mirnong and weaving species.

The agreed project should then proceed through a defined co-design brief, feasibility process and funding strategy.

1.4 Document and interpret the Arboretum's restoration and community story

Expand on the existing and concise record of the Arboretum's transformation from a degraded grazing and storage site into a landscape for ecological restoration, seed production, learning and community connection. The project should collate:

- Historic photographs and maps
- Key milestones since the Arboretum's establishment
- The evolution of the nursery, seedbank and restoration programs
- The development of the chain of ponds, wetlands and grassland areas
- Community and volunteer contributions
- Existing art panels and their stories
- Oral histories with key contributors
- Links between the Arboretum's recent restoration history and its future direction

The resulting material could support a modest digital archive, selected on-site interpretation and future education resources.

1.5 Adopt a site-specific framework for art, cultural expression, memorials and commemorative elements

Prepare a simple framework to guide future permanent, temporary and participatory artworks, cultural expression, plaques, memorial trees, donated objects and named spaces within the Arboretum. The framework should require proposals to:

- respond to the Arboretum's restoration identity and landscape character;
- deepen understanding of Country, ecology, community or the history of the site;
- avoid visual clutter and the accumulation of unrelated objects;
- protect habitat and sensitive landscape areas;
- identify maintenance responsibilities and lifecycle costs;
- consider accessibility and visitor experience;
- follow Council's Public Art Policy where applicable; and
- be developed with Taungurung Traditional Owners where a proposal draws on First Nations knowledge, language or cultural expression. Use the Climate-Ready Welcome Garden as an early opportunity to demonstrate how art and cultural expression can be integrated carefully into the landscape.

Visual Cues



Landscape Character and Spatial Framework

2.1 Prepare a Landscape Character and Spatial Framework Plan

Map the Arboretum as a series of connected landscape zones, each with a clear ecological role, intended character and capacity for change. Use the plan as the site-wide spatial and visual rule book for future works.

For each zone, identify:
existing qualities to retain;
intended levels of visitor use;
suitable and unsuitable future activities;
areas where built form or infrastructure may be considered and areas where intervention should remain minimal;
important views, transitions and landscape sequences;
locations where screening or edge treatments are required; and
principles for paths, furniture, signs, planting, artworks and structures.

Potential zones may include the visitor and community core, dam landscape, wetlands and chain of ponds, grassland restoration areas, woodland and habitat areas, nursery and restoration operations, learning landscapes and boundary interfaces.

Apply the following principles across the site:

keep the restoration landscape visually dominant;
concentrate formal and higher-intensity interventions within the visitor and community core;
use simple, robust and recessive materials;
retain lighter-touch and informal treatments within grassland, wetland and woodland areas;
maintain open views and avoid unnecessary visual clutter;
base landscape design on local native vegetation communities and ecological function;
allow parts of the site to remain seasonal, evolving and visibly responsive to natural cycles;
use planting and landform to soften parking, storage, operational areas and freeway-facing edges;
consider noise-sensitive locations when placing future amenities;
integrate accessibility carefully without unnecessarily suburbanising the wider landscape; and
use the least intrusive intervention that will achieve the required outcome.

Deliverable: Illustrated spatial framework plan, visitor-use intensity overlay, views and landscape-sequence plan, and concise site-wide design guide.

2.2 Consolidate a defined visitor and community core

Concentrate future visitor facilities and higher-intensity activities within a clearly defined core around the primary arrival area, Visitor and Cultural Centre, Welcome Circle, Climate-Ready Welcome Garden, Bush Discovery Garden and nursery interface.

Use this area as the preferred location for improved arrival and orientation, accessible paths and resting places, informal gathering and picnic areas, outdoor learning spaces, workshop and event facilities, Bush Kinder support areas, visitor amenities, retail nursery visibility, temporary event servicing and other modest visitor offerings.

The purpose is not to prescribe every future building, but to establish where facilities can be accommodated without dispersing infrastructure across the wider landscape.

Deliverable: Visitor and community core precinct plan and future development envelope.

Ecological Restoration and Landscape Succession

3.1 Prepare a 5-year Arboretum Grounds Restoration Plan

Prepare a 5-year restoration plan for the Arboretum Grounds that identifies priority vegetation areas, intended ecological outcomes, seasonal works, monitoring requirements and staged management actions. The plan should build on current grounds priorities and address weed control, ecological thinning, nutrient management, seeding, planting, habitat improvement, species preservation and visitor impacts. It should be reviewed regularly so management can respond to seasonal conditions, monitoring results and emerging ecological knowledge.

3.2 Make restoration management visible and legible to visitors

Communicate that the Arboretum is an actively managed restoration landscape, where some works are seasonal, temporary or experimental. Use simple, temporary and moveable interpretation to explain visible management activities such as ecological burns, carbon application, selective herbicide use, weed control, thinning, seeding, planting or seasonal closures. This will help visitors understand why parts of the site may look disturbed, recovering or temporarily restricted.

3.3 Name and map vegetation zones

Name and map key vegetation zones across the Arboretum to create a shared language for planning, works, monitoring, volunteer coordination and visitor communication. The mapping should identify existing and emerging vegetation communities, restoration areas, sensitive zones, visitor-use areas and priority management locations. Use this information to guide future works, signage, interpretation, monitoring and maintenance planning.

3.4 Support meaningful use of culturally and ecologically important plants

Increase the Arboretum's capacity to meaningfully use, harvest and care for selected plants where this supports cultural practice, ecological resilience and stronger relationships between people and place. This may include further development of mirnong patches and weaving plants, in consultation with Traditional Owners and relevant knowledge holders. Consider how harvesting, digging, ash incorporation, watering, monitoring and replanting may form part of an active care regime rather than treating these plants only as display or conservation specimens.

3.5 Undertake targeted restoration works in priority ground-layer areas

Implement targeted restoration works in priority areas identified by the Arboretum Grounds team, including:

Box Ironbark Area — reduce weed cover through spot spraying and hand weeding, reduce annual weed competition by establishing more native grasses, and increase biodiversity through shrubs and peas typical of Box Ironbark forest. Penninervis Patch — reduce Veldt grass cover through spot spraying and hand weeding, establish more native grasses and perennial daisies, and trial an unfenced mirnong patch, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* and *Lagenophora stipitata*.

Grey Box Stag Circle — begin weed control and Grey Box pup thinning around the remnant Grey Box stag and encourage grassland species to establish. (To Be Marked on the Plan)

Stage these works over the next five years, with early attention to the Grey Box Stag Circle and two-year weed reduction and establishment programs for the Box Ironbark Area and Penninervis Patch.

3.6 Map and manage genetics, provenance and species preservation across the grounds

Improve the mapping and management of genetics and provenance across the Arboretum so that genetic information can better inform restoration planning, replacement planting, seed collection and long-term decision-making.

Increase capacity to record and manage this information through GIS tools such as FieldMaps. Use the data to protect local genetic resources, guide propagation and support the relationship between the Arboretum Grounds, Seedbank, Growing Back the Bush Nursery and off-site Seed Production Areas.

3.7 Establish genetic reservoirs and cutting gardens

Create selected genetic reservoirs and cutting gardens for priority species such as *Pimelea* and *Dianella*. These areas should conserve local genetic material, supply material for restoration and replacement planting, and reduce pressure on remnant areas. Locate and manage these areas as part of the broader restoration, nursery and seedbank system.

Water, Wetlands and Climate Resilience

Water as a visible thread. Water moves through the Arboretum as both a practical resource, a constant challenge and a landscape story. The Chain of Ponds, wetlands and dam reveal the changing conditions of the site across the seasons: at times holding water and supporting habitat, at other times exposing the effects of heat, dryness and a changing climate. Future works should strengthen this visible water system through careful drainage design, planted swales, wetland enhancement, water-sensitive landscape treatments and efficient use of captured rainwater. The aim is not to disguise seasonal change, but to respond to it thoughtfully: improving resilience while helping visitors understand how water shapes the life of the Arboretum.

Visual Cues

4.1 Prepare a whole-of-site Water, Wetlands and Climate Resilience Strategy

Assess the dam, chain of ponds, wetlands, drainage, water quality, aquatic habitat, seasonal hydrology, erosion, flood risk, drought resilience and fire resilience as an integrated system.

Identify monitoring requirements, specialist investigations and staged priorities for improvement. Map wet and seasonally boggy areas and, where access intervention is required, prioritise avoidance, low-impact drainage responses or light-touch crossings such as small decks or boardwalks.

Coordinate this strategy with Ecological Restoration and Landscape Succession and with Access, Arrival and Movement.

4.2 Improve irrigation efficiency and water security

Review the existing irrigation system and watering practices to reduce water use and improve efficiency in response to future climate conditions. Consider irrigation zoning, drip irrigation, soil-moisture monitoring, improved controls, leak detection and prioritisation of higher-value planting areas.

Progress this work as a core resilience initiative regardless of whether the Greening Euroa project proceeds.



Access, Arrival and Movement

5.1 Advocate for safer main-road approach and entry conditions

Advocate to the relevant road authority for assessment of safer approach and entry conditions, including a reduced speed limit and a dedicated left-turn slip lane or alternative safe-entry treatment for vehicles approaching from Euroa. The assessment should consider visitor safety, turning movements, sightlines, drainage, signage, the visibility of the entry and the increasing use of the site by volunteers, nursery customers, school groups and visitors.

5.2 Establish the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area as the primary public arrival point

Develop the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area as the principal arrival point for visitors arriving by car, bicycle, minibus or bus. Allow for approximately 40 formal car-parking spaces, based on an anticipated capacity of 136 people and an initial rate of 0.3 spaces per person. Include at least one accessible parking space within this total, with the final number and location of accessible spaces to be reviewed during detailed design.

Provide:

- a bus and minibus turnaround and drop-off area;
- secure bicycle parking;
- a safe pedestrian connection toward the Visitor and Cultural Centre;
- clear orientation signage; and
- a clear transition between public parking and restricted operational access.

Retain informal parking spaces near the North Gateway for limited use where appropriate.

5.3 Define and manage public, operational and service access across the site

End general public vehicle access at the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area. Allow controlled access beyond only where required for nursery customer loading, staff and volunteers, seedbank operations, maintenance, deliveries, waste collection, event and workshop servicing, emergency services, visitors with mobility requirements and approved group visits. Plan nursery loading, seedbank access, staff parking, equipment parking, deliveries, waste collection, emergency access and event operations as a connected system. Use signage, landscape cues and, where required, gates, bollards, locks or low-key boundary treatments to protect operational areas and reduce off-route vehicle movements.

5.4 Establish designated vehicle pull-aside points along the arrival corridor

Provide two clearly defined gravel pull-aside points along the vehicle arrival corridor to allow vehicles to pass, pause or briefly pull over without disturbing surrounding vegetation. Locate one pull-aside point near the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area, positioned carefully to protect the significant existing tree, and one within the existing naturally occurring widened area where the pathway adjoins the road. Use low-key landscape elements such as logs or rocks where further deterrence is required to define the vehicle route and protect adjacent vegetation from soil compaction.

5.5 Establish a connected, accessible and legible movement network

Prepare a staged accessibility audit and improvement plan and establish a continuous, legible visitor route linking the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area with key public destinations and representative landscape experiences.

The primary accessible journey should consider connections to:

- the Visitor and Cultural Centre and the Welcome Circle and Climate-Ready Welcome Garden;
- the nursery retail area;
- the Bush Discovery Garden;

- selected picnic, dam and landscape experiences; and
- accessible parking, drop-off points, amenities, drinking water, seating and rest points.

Map the hierarchy of primary accessible paths, informal walking trails, operational vehicle routes, public vehicle areas, staff-only access and emergency routes. Use consistent and visually recessive signage, mapping and landscape cues so visitors can understand where to park, walk and access public facilities without unnecessary clutter.

Retain more informal trails elsewhere where these contribute to the character of the Arboretum and are appropriate to the terrain and ecological sensitivity of the site.

5.6 Strengthen pedestrian and cyclist arrival and the East Trailhead

Develop the East Trailhead as a legible secondary pedestrian arrival point and improve its connection to the wider walking network. Consider signage, path condition, accessibility, bicycle parking and the relationship between the trailhead, the Arboretum walking loop and future links toward Euroa.

Visual Cues



Visitor Experience, Learning and Community Use

6.1 Develop a site-wide interpretation and self-guided discovery network

Use the Arboretum grounds as a living outdoor classroom where visitors can understand restoration in action: from collecting genetically diverse local seed, to cleaning and storage, nursery propagation, planting, grassland management, wetland repair, habitat recovery, monitoring and long-term care.

Develop a connected series of simple learning stops, self-guided trails and seasonal discovery points across the seedbank, nursery, grasslands, wetlands, dam, visitor landscapes and broader restoration areas.

Potential themes include:

local plant communities, habitat and climate-ready planting;

seed collection, provenance and genetic diversity;

grasslands, wildflowers and seasonal change;

wetlands, frogs, birds and water cycles;

the relationship between nursery plant sales and landscape restoration; and

the Arboretum's off-site Seed Production Areas and broader regional restoration role.

Use a balanced mix of concise physical interpretation, printed material and light-touch technology. Digital opportunities may include QR-linked audio stories, a walking map, seasonal updates, citizen-science projects, live nest-box or habitat cameras and online stories connecting the site with regional projects. Provide a simple physical alternative wherever digital interpretation is used. Include temporary and seasonal interpretation that explains active restoration works as they occur. This may include simple moveable signs, notices or digital updates explaining activities such as ecological burns, carbon application, selective herbicide use, weed control, thinning, seeding, planting or temporary protection of sensitive areas. Coordinate Country-related content with the Country and Cultural Interpretation Plan.

6.2 Support and promote seasonal learning and community stewardship

Build on the Arboretum's existing program of Bush Kinder, cultural experiences, propagation workshops, wildflower activities, guided walks, plant sales, volunteering and seasonal community events. Prepare and promote an annual program that responds to flowering grasslands, seed ripening, wetland cycles, wildlife activity and restoration works. Expand opportunities for visitors, schools and community groups to participate in planting, seed collecting, nursery volunteering, weed control, citizen science and habitat monitoring.

Provide a clear "What's happening at the Arboretum" information point within the arrival area, supported by website updates, email communication, social media, printed information and links with local tourism and community networks. Use seasonal works as learning opportunities so visitors, schools and community groups can better understand that the Arboretum is an actively managed and evolving restoration landscape.

6.3 Provide a connected network of quiet places and nature-observation points

Retain and enhance the Arboretum as a place for calm, reflection and nature connection. Provide a modest network of shaded seating, rest points and small observation areas along key walking routes, particularly near wetlands, grasslands and views across the dam. Design these spaces to support quiet reflection, birdwatching, wildlife observation, informal learning, guided walks, older visitors and people with limited mobility. Avoid over-furnishing the landscape or introducing unnecessary built elements.

6.4 Establish a hierarchy of low-impact gathering and event spaces

Continue to support activities that align with the Arboretum's purpose, including wildflower events, markets, seasonal gatherings, cultural experiences, workshops, talks, tours, volunteer activities, temporary art and small community events. Use the Climate-Ready Welcome Garden and Welcome Circle as the principal flexible outdoor gathering landscape, supported by the Visitor and Cultural Centre. Allow selected low-impact picnic and event use of other areas where this is compatible with ecological protection and quiet enjoyment of the grounds.

Prepare an event management approach that identifies suitable event types, locations and indicative capacities, together with requirements for sensitive-area protection, temporary access and parking, fire danger, emergency planning, waste management, noise, biosecurity and temporary infrastructure. Do not prioritise a standalone amphitheatre at this stage. Design flexible outdoor spaces that can accommodate temporary performance infrastructure when required.

The Arboretum is more than a place to visit. It is a working restoration landscape, an outdoor classroom and a place for quiet connection with Country. Future visitor experiences should make the Arboretum's ecological purpose easier to understand and participate in, while retaining its informal bushland character. New activities and amenities should support, rather than compete with, restoration, seed conservation and long-term stewardship.



Built Form, Amenities and Infrastructure

7.1 Audit, rationalise and progressively renew existing infrastructure

Undertake a site-wide audit of existing amenities and infrastructure to identify what should be retained, repaired, relocated, consolidated or removed as the masterplan is progressively implemented.

The audit should include:
public toilets, picnic tables, seating and BBQ facilities;
drinking-water points, bins and waste storage;
sheds, shipping containers and temporary structures;
gates, fences, bollards, signs and noticeboards;
tanks, pumps and irrigation infrastructure;
power, data and communications infrastructure; and
operational, service and emergency-access routes.

Use the audit to reduce visual clutter, remove redundant items and prioritise achievable improvements while larger precinct projects are developed.

7.2 Deliver a staged program of early amenity and operational improvements

Implement small-scale works that can be delivered ahead of the larger precinct projects. Prioritise improvements that address immediate accessibility, safety, comfort and operational needs while retaining the Arboretum's informal bushland character.

Early actions should include:
repair and minor accessibility upgrades to existing public toilets until replacement amenities are delivered within the Visitor and Cultural Centre;
installation of a small number of shaded seats along key walking routes, with backs, armrests and space for wheelchairs or mobility aids;
replacement of the existing picnic tables on the south side of the dam with durable and accessible settings;
installation of filtered drinking-water and bottle-refill points at selected high-use locations;
consolidation of loose storage and reduction of clutter within operational areas;
provision of a screened and lockable waste and recycling enclosure;
and investigation of a borrowable all-terrain mobility scooter or similar mobility aid;

Deliver these works progressively as funding allows and coordinate them with the longer-term Nursery, Seed Bank, Visitor and Cultural Centre, Bush Discovery Garden and landscape projects.

Built form and infrastructure should support the Arboretum's restoration, research, learning and community functions while remaining secondary to the landscape. New works should be modest in scale, carefully located and designed to retain the informal bushland character of the site.

Where possible, consolidate new infrastructure within existing disturbed areas and project precincts. Apply the Landscape Character and Spatial Framework design guide to all future structures, furniture, signs and service elements.

7.3 Prepare an integrated services, servicing and resilience plan

Develop a coordinated site-wide plan for potable and non-potable water, wastewater, irrigation, rainwater capture, power supply, solar generation and battery storage, communications and data, security systems, future service conduits, waste management, deliveries and servicing.

Coordinate services planning across future project zones to avoid repeated excavation and unnecessary disturbance to vegetation, root zones and restoration areas. Ensure critical operational facilities can continue to function during power outages, heat events and other disruptions.

Include secure and screened bin, recycling and skip storage; safe collection access; loading and unloading needs; separation between public routes and operational activities; and future-proofing for a staff and volunteer electric-vehicle charging point when feasible. Prioritise opportunistic charging from excess solar generation during the day.

7.4 Plan for emergency access and fire readiness

Prepare a coordinated emergency and fire-readiness plan that supports normal operations, public visitation and occasional events.

Identify emergency-vehicle access routes, turning and passing areas, firefighting water supply, evacuation routes, assembly points, emergency signage, access arrangements during elevated fire danger and responsibilities for closures or event cancellation during extreme conditions.

Integrate emergency planning into future precinct design without introducing unnecessary roads or disturbance to the landscape.

Stewardship, Operations and Partnerships

8.1 Establish a masterplan implementation, prioritisation and review process

Establish a practical process for implementing and periodically reviewing the masterplan. Identify responsibilities, staging, priority actions, decision-making pathways and triggers for updating priorities as funding, partnerships, visitor patterns and site conditions change. Undertake a five-yearly review of the spatial framework, restoration outcomes, visitor impacts, operations and emerging opportunities. Clarify ongoing maintenance responsibilities so that new projects remain sustainable over time. Include review of restoration outcomes, vegetation-zone mapping, species preservation actions and genetics/provenance records as part of the five-yearly masterplan review.

8.2 Continue to expand the network of off-site Seed Production Areas

Continue to expand the Arboretum's network of off-site seed orchards and Seed Production Areas to improve regional seed security, support landscape-scale restoration and reduce pressure on wild seed harvesting. Recognise these external sites as an important extension of the Arboretum's stewardship role and broader commitment to caring for Country, including the Avenel site and future expansion where relevant.

8.3 Continue to support a safe, skilled and sustainable volunteer program

Continue to strengthen volunteer pathways across the nursery, seedbank, grounds, grassland management, events and restoration activities. Provide appropriate induction, training, supervision, safety procedures, communications and recognition. Ensure future staff and volunteer facilities support this model of operation, including suitable spaces for gathering, training, amenities, storage and safe day-to-day coordination.

8.4 Develop stewardship protocols for organised groups and monitor visitor impacts

Prepare clear expectations for Bush Kinder, school groups and other organised activities using the Arboretum. Identify sensitive areas, expected behaviour, monitoring arrangements and triggers for review. Monitor shortcuts, trampling, erosion and concentrated use in sensitive areas. Begin with education, clearer routes and light-touch interventions before introducing more restrictive responses such as fencing.

8.5 Maintain a funding-ready pipeline of priority projects

Prepare and maintain concept briefs, indicative costs, approvals pathways and supporting evidence for priority projects so the Arboretum can respond efficiently to grant, philanthropic and partnership opportunities. Review the pipeline regularly and align it with the masterplan priorities, available resources and opportunities for staged delivery.

8.6 Strengthen research, education and delivery partnerships

Continue to develop partnerships with Traditional Owners, Council, schools, Landcare and conservation networks, research institutions and regional landholders. Use partnerships to support ecological monitoring, data collection, education, knowledge sharing, off-site restoration outcomes and the delivery of priority projects. Strengthen partnerships that support ecological monitoring, GIS mapping, FieldMaps use, provenance records, genetic-resource management and long-term species preservation. Use these systems to inform restoration planning, replacement planting, Seedbank priorities, nursery propagation and the management of genetic reservoirs and cutting gardens.





North Gateway



A clearer threshold into the Arboretum

The North Gateway will remain the only vehicle entry into the Arboretum. Its primary role is to provide a clear and welcoming threshold and direct visitors immediately into the arrival corridor leading to the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area.

The gateway should make the public vehicle route intuitive while restricting routine access to the existing loop road extending towards the dam bank. That loop should remain available for CFA, emergency and authorised operational vehicles only.

Recommendations

9.1 Strengthen the North Gateway as the principal vehicle entry

9.2 Establish the Seedbed arrival corridor as the obvious public vehicle route

9.3 Restrict the dam-bank loop to CFA, emergency and authorised operational access

9.4 Provide clear directional and access signage at the gateway

9.5 Review the role of any retained parking near the North Gateway

9.6 Monitor the operation of the revised gateway arrangement

North Gateway

9.1 Strengthen the North Gateway as the principal vehicle entry

Improve the presentation and legibility of the North Gateway so that visitors can readily identify the entrance to the Arboretum and understand where to go next. Use restrained landscape treatments, clear signage and simple road-edge definition to establish a welcoming threshold without creating an overly formal entrance feature. The design should reflect the Arboretum's restoration character and make the transition from the public road into the site clear.

9.2 Establish the Seedbed arrival corridor as the obvious public vehicle route

Reconfigure the internal vehicle approach so that the right-hand turn from the North Gateway into the arrival corridor reads as the natural and intuitive route for visitors. Use signage, landscape cues and road-edge treatments to guide drivers towards the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area. Avoid treatments that visually encourage visitors to continue along the existing dam-bank loop or stop unnecessarily at the gateway. The arrival corridor should retain gravel surfaces and soft vegetated edges wherever practical, with water-sensitive drainage measures incorporated into the detailed design.

9.3 Restrict the dam-bank loop to CFA, emergency and authorised operational access

Install an openable barrier, gate or similar low-key control point to prevent routine visitor access along the existing vehicle loop extending towards the dam bank. Retain access for CFA and other emergency vehicles, maintenance and land-management activities, authorised operational vehicles and other occasional authorised access where required. Position the barrier so that emergency access remains direct, reliable and readily understood. Coordinate the gate type, clear width, turning movements and access surface with CFA and relevant emergency-service requirements.

9.4 Provide clear directional and access signage at the gateway

Install simple and highly legible signage at the North Gateway to direct visitors towards the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area. The signage should identify the Arboretum clearly, direct public vehicles to turn right towards the main visitor parking area, indicate that the dam-bank loop is restricted to emergency and authorised vehicles, discourage unnecessary stopping at the gateway and support pedestrian and bicycle wayfinding where relevant. Detailed visitor orientation information should be concentrated within the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area rather than duplicated at the gateway.

9.5 Review the role of any retained parking near the North Gateway

Review whether any existing parking spaces near the North Gateway should remain once the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area is established. Where limited parking is retained, ensure it does not read as the primary visitor arrival point or undermine the intended movement of vehicles towards the Seedbed area. Consider whether the spaces are required for specific purposes, such as short visits, authorised access or walking-trail users, and sign them accordingly.

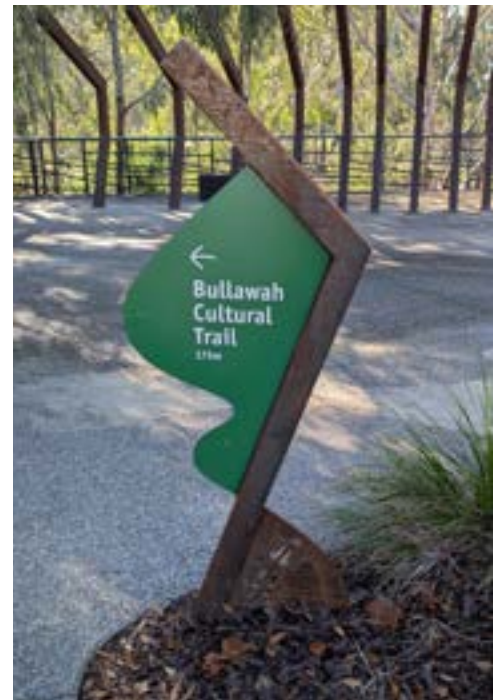
9.6 Monitor the operation of the revised gateway arrangement

Review how visitors respond to the reconfigured entry after the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area is introduced. Monitor whether:

- drivers understand the right-hand turn into the arrival corridor
- visitors continue unnecessarily towards the restricted dam-bank loop
- vehicles stop or park informally at the gateway
- signage, barriers or landscape cues require adjustment
- CFA, emergency and operational access remains straightforward.

Refine the arrangement where required while maintaining the gateway's simple and informal character.

Visual Ideas





East Trailhead

A quiet pedestrian and cycling arrival point

The East Trailhead will provide a new pedestrian entry to the Arboretum from the planned residential area to the east. It will also support a north-east entry point for cyclists travelling from Euroa to the Arboretum by bike.

This arrival point should be simple, legible and landscape-led. It should connect people into the existing path network while protecting the quieter character of the dam and surrounding restoration areas.

Recommendations

10.1 Establish the East Trailhead as a pedestrian entry from the future residential area

10.2 Provide a north-east cycling entry and connection to Euroa

10.3 Connect the trailhead into the existing walking network

10.4 Provide low-key arrival and wayfinding signage

10.5 Undertake vegetation works to strengthen the eastern arrival landscape

10.6 Provide a modest picnic shelter while retaining the quiet character of the dam edge

10.7 Coordinate delivery with future residential development

East Trailhead

10.1 Establish the East Trailhead as a pedestrian entry from the future residential area

Create a clear and welcoming pedestrian entry point on the eastern side of the Arboretum to connect with the planned residential area. The entry should provide a simple threshold into the Arboretum, with a clear path connection, low-key arrival signage and planting that signals the transition from residential edge to restoration landscape. The trailhead should not be developed as a vehicle access point or parking destination.

10.2 Provide a north-east cycling entry and connection to Euroa

Provide for a north-east entry point that supports people arriving at the Arboretum by bike from Euroa. Include a clear connection into the Arboretum's path network and consider a small bicycle pause point with bike parking, wayfinding and a place to stop without obstructing pedestrian movement. The design should support cycling access while maintaining the Arboretum's slow, pedestrian-focused internal character.

10.3 Connect the trailhead into the existing walking network

Provide new paths that connect the East Trailhead and north-east cycling entry into the existing Arboretum trail network. Connections should link intuitively towards the dam walk, Visitor and Cultural Centre, Bush Discovery Garden, Climate-Ready Welcome Garden and Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area. Path alignments should avoid unnecessary duplication and protect sensitive revegetation areas.

10.4 Provide low-key arrival and wayfinding signage

Install simple arrival signage at the East Trailhead to identify the Arboretum and orient pedestrians and cyclists. Signage should indicate key walking routes, estimated walking times, the location of public toilets at the future Visitor and Cultural Centre, and the primary visitor parking area at the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area. Keep signage modest so the trailhead remains secondary to the main visitor arrival point.

10.5 Undertake vegetation works to strengthen the eastern arrival landscape

Use locally appropriate indigenous planting to define the East Trailhead and repair or reinforce the surrounding vegetation. Planting should help create a clear but soft entry edge, guide people towards the intended paths and discourage informal shortcuts through revegetation areas. Where required, use logs, rocks, planted edges or temporary low barriers to protect establishing vegetation.

10.6 Provide a modest picnic shelter while retaining the quiet character of the dam edge

Include a small picnic shelter at the East Trailhead to support walkers, cyclists and nearby residents using this entry point.

10.7 Coordinate delivery with future residential development

Coordinate the timing, alignment and detailed design of the East Trailhead with the planning and delivery of the future residential area to the east. Confirm boundary interfaces, path levels, fencing, drainage, surveillance, maintenance responsibilities and any required developer contributions so that the Arboretum connection is delivered as a coherent public access point rather than an afterthought.

Visual Ideas





Seedbed Visitor Parking & Arrival Area



Arrival shaped by the site's propagation history

The former Seedbed area will become the primary vehicle arrival point for most visitors to the Arboretum. The area should provide a clear and welcoming threshold while retaining the informal qualities of the existing landscape. Its design should build on the character of the former propagation area rather than introduce a highly formalised car park.

The success of this project will depend on establishing the Seedbed area as the natural place for visitors to stop, park and continue on foot. Vehicle access beyond this point should be actively managed so that the quieter landscape areas of the Arboretum are protected from unnecessary traffic, vegetation disturbance and soil compaction.

Recommendations

11.1 Reconfigure the Seedbed area as the primary visitor parking and arrival zone

11.2 Provide a shaded pedestrian gathering and orientation point

11.3 Manage vehicle access beyond the Seedbed arrival area

11.4 Provide a new accessible path to the Visitor and Cultural Centre

11.5 Relocate the main entry and orientation signage to the Seedbed arrival area

11.6 Integrate a designated pull-aside point for buses

Seedbed Visitor Parking & Arrival Area

11.1 Reconfigure the Seedbed area as the primary visitor parking and arrival zone

Develop the Seedbed area as the main vehicle arrival point for the Arboretum. Provide a simple and legible parking layout that supports everyday visitors, Growing Back the Bush Nursery customers, organised groups and occasional events without becoming overly formalised. The detailed design should confirm the number and arrangement of parking spaces, accessible parking and drop-off, a bus set-down and turnaround area, bicycle parking, maintenance and emergency access, and the relationship between pedestrians and vehicles. Retain gravel surfaces and soft vegetated edges wherever practical. Incorporate water-sensitive drainage measures to manage runoff, support planting and maintain the informal landscape character of the area. Provide new tree planting for natural shade and use low-key landscape treatments to soften the presence of parked vehicles. Direct vehicle access to the Growing Back the Bush Nursery should remain available for loading and operational purposes. Limited parking at the North Gateway should remain as a secondary arrival option, while the Seedbed area becomes the default parking location for most visitors.

11.2 Provide a shaded pedestrian gathering and orientation point

Create a modest shaded gathering area close to the principal pedestrian departure point. The space should provide a comfortable place for visitors to pause, orient themselves and gather before entering the Arboretum. Allow sufficient space for bus groups, Bush Kinder groups and organised activities without creating an overly formal forecourt. Coordinate the location with the bus set-down area, bicycle parking, entry signage and the accessible path to the Visitor and Cultural Centre.

11.3 Manage vehicle access beyond the Seedbed arrival area

Test the restriction of general visitor vehicle access beyond the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area so that the new parking area becomes the clear and intuitive point of arrival. Investigate the use of an openable barrier, supported by clear signage, to limit access towards the existing picnic shelter and into the quieter landscape areas of the Arboretum. Retain authorised access where required for maintenance, deliveries, emergency vehicles, events and people with specific access needs. Monitor how the arrangement operates before confirming a permanent solution. The trial should consider whether the existing access route to the picnic shelter should be removed, restricted or retained for authorised vehicles only. Also included in this is loading and unloading areas for the nursery and accessible parking closer to the visitor centre,

11.4 Provide a new accessible path to the Visitor and Cultural Centre

Create a direct, legible and accessible pedestrian path from the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area to the proposed Visitor and Cultural Centre. The route should support general visitors, Bush Kinder groups and organised activities arriving by car or bus. Connect the path clearly into the broader walking network, avoid unnecessary duplication of routes and minimise conflicts with vehicle movements within the arrival area.

11.5 Relocate the main entry and orientation signage to the Seedbed arrival area

Relocate the primary Arboretum entry and orientation signage into the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area so that visitors receive clear information at the principal point of arrival. The signage should clearly identify the Arboretum, orient visitors before they enter the broader site and direct visitors towards the Visitor and Cultural Centre, Bush Discovery Garden, Growing Back the Bush Nursery and key walking routes. It should also support pedestrian and bicycle wayfinding and reinforce the expectation that most visitors continue through the Arboretum on foot.

11.6 Integrate a designated pull-aside point and bus provision into the arrival layout

Provide one of the two designated gravel pull-aside points within or immediately adjacent to the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area, along with bus parking and turnaround. Locate both to protect the significant existing tree, and size the bus turning area so a coach can set down, park and turn without reversing along the arrival corridor. The pull-aside should give a clear space for short stops or vehicles to pass, while discouraging informal stopping elsewhere along the corridor, where vehicles are disturbing vegetation and compacting soil. Use logs or rocks to reinforce the vehicle edge only where further deterrence is required.

Visual Ideas





Growing Back the Bush Nursery



Propagating local plants for restoration and community

The Growing Back the Bush Nursery is a core part of the Euroa Arboretum's restoration work. It propagates a diverse range of indigenous plants for revegetation projects across the region, while also providing local plants and practical advice to landholders and the wider community.

Future improvements should protect the nursery as an efficient working environment, support its capacity to fulfil large restoration orders and retain a modest, welcoming public interface for plant sales and collection.

Recommendations

12.1 Prepare a detailed Nursery Operations Plan

12.2 Provide fit-for-purpose staff and volunteer operational facilities

12.3 Improve public facing plant sales and collection area

12.4 Improve operational access, loading and customer collection

12.5 Improve water security and irrigation resilience

12.6 Establish a clear nursery-seedbank workflow

12.7 Reveal the Nursery's work without compromising operations

12.8 Incorporate biosecurity, waste and climate-ready practices

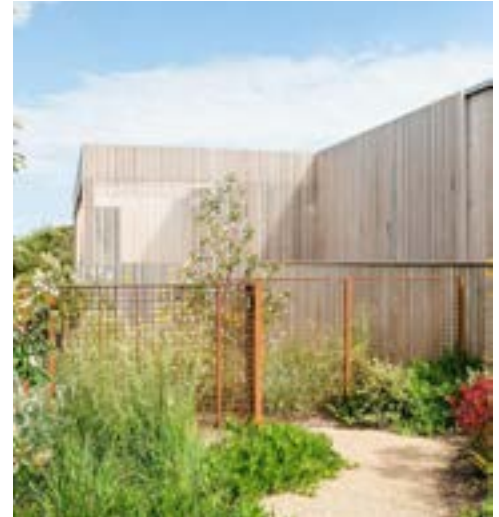
Growing Back the Bush Nursery

12.1 Prepare a detailed Nursery Operations Plan	Undertake a focused operational review of the nursery compound to confirm the current as-built layout, existing infrastructure and future requirements. Map propagation, potting, soil handling, plant growing, order assembly, dispatch, retail sales, water infrastructure, staff facilities, storage, vehicle movement and opportunities for staged improvements.
12.2 Provide fit-for-purpose staff and volunteer operational facilities	Review the compound boundary, including opportunities to replace the dilapidated fencing and expand the boundary to include existing machinery shed to the south east, to improve security and the setting of the significant tree near the entrance to the Nursery. Incorporate landscape screening to screen new boundary fencing. Provide incremental improvement to operations and structures within the Nursery compound, including: Propagation Consolidate the operational facilities required to support staff and volunteers working in the nursery. Retain the existing propagation workflow and general location. Improve shade for volunteers and staff and improve accessible seated work opportunities within the propagation area. Provide an enclosed, still-air propagation space for delicate seed sowing. Storage, sheds and compound planning Provide improved purpose-built storage, with expansion where justified. Consolidate tools, equipment and operational storage close to the Nursery.add inclusion of list Remove or relocate the visually poor storage container at entry to Nursery once a better shed solution is available. Provide covered storage for vehicles and equipment where required. Provide suitable location for soil and mulch storage and delivery. Provision made for expansion of greenhouses to the west of the compound. Confirm suitable external or separately contained storage for chemicals and sprays. Staff facilities, toilet and accessibility Provide separate clean staff break and eating areas from propagation and operational workspaces. Provide a new accessible toilet. Investigate the most practical wastewater solution, including possible new septic connection or suitable standalone system. Remove or relocate Container Offices and provide a small powered hot-desk or private office space rather than a full standalone Nursery office suite. Coordinate these facilities with the Visitor & Cultural Centre so that operational spaces remain within the nursery while public amenities and group-learning spaces are not unnecessarily duplicated.
12.3 Establish a clear nursery-seedbank workflow	Coordinate the Growing Back the Bush Nursery with the adjoining Seedbank as two parts of a connected restoration system. Clearly define where seed collection, cleaning, storage, propagation and plant dispatch occur. Locate climate-controlled seed storage and specialist seed-processing functions within the Seedbank zone while maintaining a direct and efficient working relationship with the nursery.
12.4 Reveal the Nursery's work without compromising operations	Provide carefully controlled opportunities for visitors, schools and community groups to understand how local plants are propagated and used in ecological restoration. This could include a viewing point, occasional guided tours or a visible propagation display near the public edge of the nursery.
12.5 Incorporate biosecurity, waste and climate-ready practices	Review current measures and investigation of appropriate location of quarantine and plant-hygiene area near the nursery entrance for incoming plants, materials and equipment. Explore further opportunities for green-waste separation, reuse of suitable organic material and improved storage of soil, mulch and planting supplies. Design future improvements for hotter and drier conditions through shade, durable materials, efficient irrigation and staged investment in resilient infrastructure.

Visual Ideas

12.6 Improve public facing plant sales and collection area

Continue the nursery's role as a place where visitors can purchase locally appropriate plants. Maintain the location of the existing retail pod and plant-collection area at the edge of the secure nursery compound, close to visitor parking and arrival paths, so that customers do not need to move through operational work areas. Provide power and additional shading to the entrance without impacting vehicle movement within the compound, where practical. Use this area to provide a graphic display of local species, provide practical planting advice and promote seasonal plant sales. Improve Nursery arrival signage so visitors can easily identify the retail and collection areas. Widen entry culvert to allow for pedestrian access beside vehicle access.

**12.7 Improve operational access, loading and customer collection**

Provide a clear circulation arrangement that allows safe movement of utes, trailers, tractors and forklifts, including practical access to potting soil, storage and loading areas. Separate staff parking, deliveries and operational loading from customer parking and plant collection. Allow operational through-movement only where required for servicing, deliveries and large-order collection.

**12.7 Improve water security and irrigation resilience**

Prepare an integrated water-security strategy for the Nursery, Seedbank and surrounding operational area. Review the existing dam-water, tank-water and recycled-water systems, including tanks, pumps, filters, irrigation controllers and distribution lines. Confirm the capacity of the existing system to support current production and future nursery expansion. Identify staged improvements to water storage, filtration, irrigation efficiency, monitoring and backup capacity. Investigate the suitability of separately stored and blended recycled water for landscape irrigation only. Plan for a three-year Nursery water storage buffer strategy ie 3 year water security, and investigate the feasibility of a bore as a backup supply.





Seedbank

Collecting, conserving and growing for Country

The Seedbank precinct will strengthen the Arboretum's role in landscape restoration by providing a purpose-built facility for the collection, processing, storage and supply of genetically healthy and diverse indigenous seed. The precinct will support the Seedbank's work with rare, fragile and climate-adaptive species and its connection with the Growing Back the Bush Nursery and Intensive Seed Production Area.

The precinct includes a dedicated Seedbank facility and a separate office building for staff, committee members and volunteers. As a working area, its future development should prioritise efficient operations, safe equipment movements, water security and renewable energy opportunities.

13.1 Deliver the approved Seedbank shed and operational office facilities

Implement the recently endorsed plans for the dedicated Seedbank facility and separate office building. Develop the Seedbank building as a purpose-built facility that consolidates the full operational sequence: receiving seed, drying, rough processing, fine processing, storage, packing and dispatch. Confirm the detailed operational brief, internal workflow, equipment requirements and future capacity before completing the fit-out so that the facility can support an increased volume and diversity of indigenous seed. Provide an expanded dedicated drying area that allows larger capacity than currently exists. Provide safe, controllable heating and cooling suitable for an unattended operational environment. A split-system arrangement would be suitable. Provide sheltered external or semi-external space for dusty rough-processing tasks and outdoor airing of seed. Allow for equipment storage close to the processing spaces so the workflow is practical and consolidated. Develop the separate office building as a non-public operational facility for staff, committee members and volunteers. The building will provide two enclosed offices, with capacity for four people in total; a hot-desk area; kitchen facilities; an accessible toilet and shower; and ramp access to the building. Provide appropriate signage for the Seedbank building, the Seedbank office and the Intensive Seed Production area.

13.2 Prepare an operational access, parking and circulation plan for the precinct

Prepare a detailed plan for access and movement within the Seedbank precinct and adjoining nursery area. Confirm suitable locations for staff and volunteer parking, including accessible parking for authorised users where required. Review loading areas, deliveries, vehicle turning movements, emergency access and the movement of maintenance vehicles, trailers and larger equipment. Allow for efficient movement of seed, plants, materials and equipment between the Western Gate, Seedbank facility, Office Building, Nursery, Intensive Seed Production Areas and surrounding operational area. Progressively implement the access and movement plan within the Seedbank precinct, Intensive Seed Production area and adjoining nursery area.

13.3 Define the extent of public access to the precinct

Determine which parts of the Seedbank, if any, may be accessed by members of the public and under what circumstances. The office building should remain a non-public operational facility. Any access to the broader precinct should be clearly managed to avoid conflict with staff, volunteer and equipment movements. This may include limiting public access to supervised activities, designated times or clearly defined routes where appropriate.

13.4 Upgrade the service gates through the intensive seed production area

Upgrade the existing gates to the west of the Seedbank buildings to provide secure and reliable operational access. Confirm the required width, turning movements and all-weather access for maintenance vehicles, deliveries and emergency access.

13.5 Maintain and improve existing intensive seed production and daisy growing areas

Maintain the intensive seed production area and daisy growing area, allowing for proportionate expansion and ensuring soil quality is maintained. Improve access to and through this area via widening of existing gate and provision of an all weather road as another option for linking access between the Nursery and the Seedbank.

13.6 Increase rainwater capture and storage within the precinct

Capture rainwater from the proposed roof areas and provide space for additional large-scale water storage within the Seedbank precinct. Provision for two x 24,000L tanks has been made as part of the Seedbank facility. Appropriate locations for future tanks should be investigated and implemented as appropriate. Allow for associated pipework, pumps, overflow management and maintenance access.

13.7 Future-proof the Seedbank for renewable energy infrastructure

Investigate the suitability of the proposed buildings for solar panels and battery system and allow for future installation through appropriate electrical capacity, conduits and infrastructure planning. Coordinate this work with the broader site-wide energy strategy.

13.8 Consider education of the Seedbank's role

Building on current visitor experience, provide opportunities for occasional guided access, to explain the role of seed collection, propagation and restoration.



Visitor and Cultural Centre



Bringing restoration, learning and community together

The Visitor and Cultural Centre will become an important shared place within the Arboretum: a sheltered point for visitors to pause, learn and gather; a base for workshops, demonstrations and cultural activities; and a flexible facility that can support the Arboretum's work as it grows.

The centre will replace the existing picnic shelter and should retain its informal role as a welcoming place to sit, meet and spend time within the landscape. It should not feel like an isolated civic building. Indoor and outdoor spaces should connect gently with the Bush Discovery Garden, Climate-Ready Welcome Garden and surrounding walking routes.

The masterplan should reserve sufficient space and establish a clear functional brief while allowing the detailed building design to be developed through a future design process.

Recommendations

- 14.1 Prepare a functional brief and reserve space for the Visitor and Cultural Centre**
- 14.2 Replace the informal gathering and shelter role of the existing picnic pavilion**
- 14.3 Provide adaptable spaces for learning, demonstrations and community use**
- 14.4 Investigate a natural amphitheatre and gathering slope**
- 14.5 Include accessible public amenities**
- 14.6 Provide operational workspaces and an artist-in-residence space**
- 14.7 Develop interpretation as part of the visitor experience**
- 14.8 Future-proof the centre for appropriate commercial opportunities**
- 14.9 Confirm servicing and limited authorised vehicle access**
- 14.10 Integrate the centre gently into the surrounding landscape**

Visitor and Cultural Centre

14.1 Prepare a functional brief and reserve space for the Visitor and Cultural Centre

Reserve space for a flexible future facility in the location of the existing picnic shelter. Prepare a detailed functional brief before progressing the building design. The brief should consider:

- accessible public toilets
- a flexible indoor gathering and meeting space
- offices and operational workspaces
- an artist-in-residence space
- areas for workshops, demonstrations and learning activities
- a small kitchen capable of supporting meetings and modest functions
- sheltered outdoor areas, including a deck or platform
- storage for furniture, equipment and activity materials
- future opportunities for small-scale events, retail or other appropriate commercial activities.

Plan the building so that spaces can adapt over time as the Arboretum's programs, partnerships and funding opportunities evolve.

14.2 Replace the informal gathering and shelter role of the existing picnic pavilion

Ensure that the new centre continues to provide a welcoming and freely accessible place for visitors to pause, sit and gather within the Arboretum. Provide sheltered outdoor seating and informal gathering areas that can be used without requiring a booked activity or event. Retain the relaxed character of the existing picnic shelter while improving comfort, accessibility and connection to the surrounding gardens. Coordinate this sheltered use with the smaller picnic pavilions and BBQ area proposed within the adjoining Bush Discovery Garden so that a range of casual and organised gathering spaces is available.

14.3 Provide adaptable spaces for learning, demonstrations and community use

Design the centre to support workshops, talks, markets, demonstrations, meetings, small events and cultural activities. Provide flexible indoor and outdoor spaces that can operate separately or together depending on the activity. Consider whether the primary outdoor gathering space should take the form of an attached deck, covered platform or adjoining landscape space suitable for temporary staging. Allow for practical requirements such as durable surfaces, access to water and power, storage, seating flexibility and weather protection.

14.4 Investigate a natural amphitheatre and gathering slope

As part of the landscape design surrounding the centre, investigate modest shaping of the land to create an informal amphitheatre or gathering slope oriented towards the centre's deck or outdoor platform. The space should support talks, performances, outdoor learning and small community events without becoming an overly formal event venue. Use planting and gentle landform to maintain the feeling of gathering within the landscape. Coordinate the amphitheatre with the Bush Discovery Garden and Climate-Ready Welcome Garden so that it does not create a public through-route or weaken the sense of separation required for Bush Kinder activities.

14.5 Include accessible public amenities

Provide accessible public toilets within the Visitor and Cultural Centre to serve general visitors, Bush Kinder and nature-play groups, volunteers and people attending organised activities. These amenities will replace the existing toilet facilities currently located within the Bush Discovery Garden zone. Locate them so they are easy to find and reach from the principal visitor paths while remaining visually recessive within the broader landscape. Consider whether the amenities need to remain accessible when other parts of the building are closed.

14.6 Provide operational workspaces and an artist-in-residence space

Include flexible offices, meeting rooms and workspaces to support the Arboretum's day-to-day activities, partnerships and community programs. Allow for an artist-in-residence space that can support creative practice connected with the Arboretum's landscape, restoration work and cultural programs. Consider whether this space could also support occasional workshops, exhibitions or demonstrations while retaining sufficient privacy for the artist's work. Clearly distinguish public, semi-public and operational areas so that the building can function effectively during both everyday use and organised activities.

14.7 Develop interpretation as part of the visitor experience

Use the centre and its surrounding landscape as an opportunity to explain the Arboretum's evolving story. Build on the informal collection of site photographs currently displayed within the existing picnic shelter by developing a more coherent interpretive approach. Consider interpretation of:

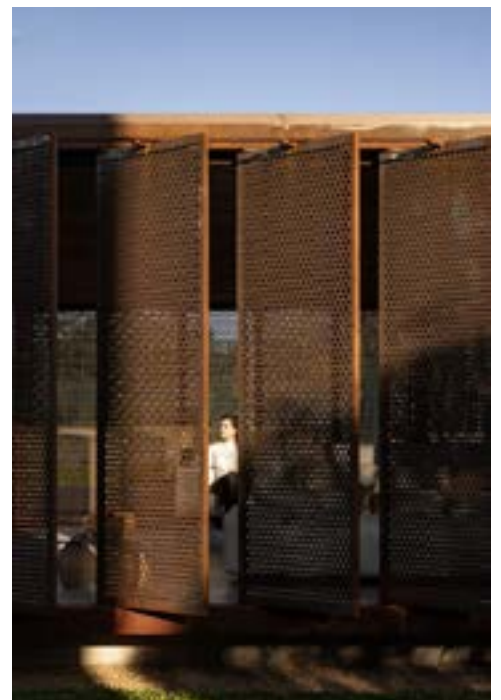
- the Arboretum's history and earlier landscape visions
- the Chain of Ponds and the movement of water through the site
- restoration, revegetation and landscape succession
- the work of the Growing Back the Bush Nursery and Seed Bank
- seed collection, propagation and regional seed security
- caring for Country and cultural knowledge, developed in partnership with Traditional Owners
- seasonal change, climate resilience and the role of visitors in caring for the landscape.

Interpretation should be integrated carefully into the building and landscape without creating visual clutter.

14.8 Future-proof the centre for appropriate commercial opportunities

Allow the centre to support modest future commercial activities that are compatible with the Arboretum's purpose and character. Potential opportunities may include small events, workshops, exhibitions, artist-led activities and limited retail associated with the Arboretum's programs, plants or publications. Avoid overcommitting to a fixed commercial model at masterplan stage. Instead, ensure the building layout, services and storage can accommodate future opportunities where they are shown to be viable and appropriate.

Visual Ideas



14.9 Confirm servicing and limited authorised vehicle access

Ensure that the Visitor and Cultural Centre can be serviced for maintenance, deliveries, waste collection, events and emergency access without compromising the visitor experience or encouraging unnecessary general vehicle movement into the Arboretum. As part of detailed design, assess the need for:

- accessible drop-off or limited closer parking for people with mobility needs
- bus loading or set-down arrangements for organised groups
- event loading and unloading
- waste collection
- maintenance and emergency access
- safe separation between service vehicles and pedestrian routes.

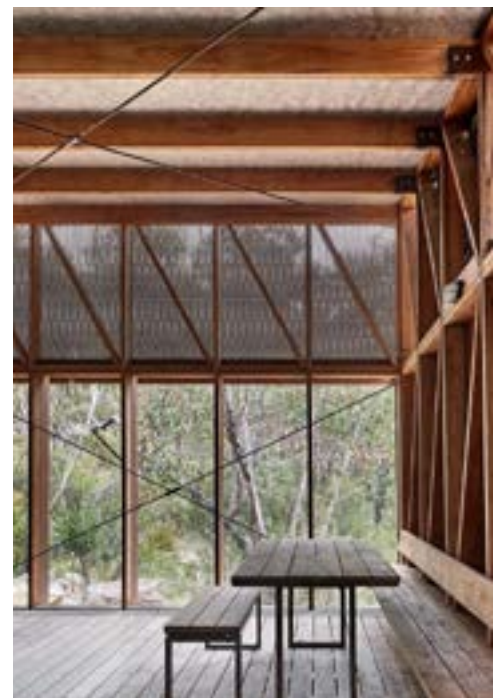
General visitors should continue to use the Seedbed Visitor Parking and Arrival Area. Any closer vehicle access should remain limited, clearly managed and consistent with the broader aim of protecting the Arboretum's quieter landscape areas.



14.10 Integrate the centre gently into the surrounding landscape

Design the Visitor and Cultural Centre as part of a connected landscape rather than as a standalone building.

Coordinate the building, outdoor spaces, paths, planting and landform with the adjoining Bush Discovery Garden and Climate-Ready Welcome Garden. Retain opportunities for shade, informal seating and sheltered outdoor use. Use landscape transitions to support intuitive wayfinding while protecting the quieter, more immersive character of the Bush Discovery Garden. Use mounds to mitigate highway noise and interaction.







Growing connection through play, curiosity and outdoor learning

The Bush Discovery Garden will provide a flexible, landscape-integrated setting for Bush Kinder, nature-play groups and informal family use. Although it will sit close to the Visitor and Cultural Centre and its amenities, the garden should feel like a distinct bushland destination rather than an extension of the main visitor precinct.

The design should use planting, landform and natural materials to create a sense of enclosure, discovery and immersion in nature. The experience of entering the garden should feel like a gentle transition away from everyday visitor activity and into a quieter landscape shaped for outdoor learning and exploration.

Recommendations

- 15.1 Expand the Bush Discovery Garden to support two groups**
- 15.2 Create a distinct bushland threshold and planted transition zone**
- 15.3 Provide a dedicated sand-and-gravel mixing area**
- 15.4 Enhance landscape-integrated nature play and discovery**
- 15.5 Provide small picnic pavilions and a BBQ area within the garden landscape**
- 15.6 Remove the existing toilets and reintegrate the released space into the landscape**
- 15.7 Provide discreet and accessible connections to nearby amenities**
- 15.8 Encourage stewardship and protect areas under revegetation**

Bush Discovery Garden

15.1 Expand the Bush Discovery Garden to support two groups

Expand the existing designated nature-play area towards the north-east, in the direction of the dam, while maintaining an appropriate setback from the dam edge. Create two connected but distinguishable activity areas so that two Bush Kinder or nature-play groups can use the garden at the same time. Use a landscaped mound, retained vegetation and additional indigenous planting to provide gentle visual and acoustic separation between the spaces while maintaining a connected relationship between them.

Position the mound and planting to strengthen the sense of immersion in nature and help screen views towards the Visitor and Cultural Centre and everyday visitor paths without compromising supervision. Provide a fire-pit area within the expanded space so that each group has access to its own fire pit. Confirm suitable setbacks, supervision requirements and fire-safety measures as part of detailed design and operational planning.

15.2 Create a distinct bushland threshold and planted transition zone

Design the Bush Discovery Garden with a clear but understated threshold. Use retained vegetation, additional indigenous planting, subtle changes in path alignment and modest landform shaping to create a planted transition between the Visitor and Cultural Centre and the Bush Discovery Garden. The transition should filter views, reduce visual and acoustic intrusion from everyday visitor activity and reinforce the feeling of entering a more sheltered bushland setting. Avoid locating major public paths through the centre of the group activity areas. Maintain clear sightlines within each group space for supervision while allowing planted edges and landform to create a stronger sense of enclosure.

15.3 Provide a dedicated sand-and-gravel mixing area

Include a dedicated area where children can mix sand, gravel and water as part of nature-based play. Locate and design the space so that this activity is contained within the Bush Discovery Garden rather than occurring within the Climate-Ready Welcome Garden or Welcome Circle. Use robust, low-maintenance materials and allow for drainage, replenishment of loose materials and easy supervision.

15.4 Enhance landscape-integrated nature play and discovery

Introduce subtle and robust nature-play elements that are embedded within the landscape rather than conventional playground equipment. Elements may include:
logs, rocks and stepping elements
climbing, balancing and scrambling opportunities
informal cubby-building areas
sensory planting and opportunities to explore texture, scent and sound
smaller exploratory paths
spaces that feel enclosed, sheltered or quietly separate from the main activity areas
changes in level and moments of surprise.
Use planting and landform to create a sense of curiosity and discovery while retaining clear supervision and avoiding an overly designed playground character.

15.5 Provide small picnic pavilions and a BBQ area within the garden landscape

Provide one or two modest picnic pavilions and a BBQ area to support Bush Kinder groups, nature-play activities and informal family use. Integrate these elements into the bushland setting using simple, low-key structures rather than a large formal recreation shelter. Locate them to provide shade, shelter and convenient access to the play areas while avoiding conflicts with active play, fire-pit areas and pedestrian movement. Include seating and tables that can support group activities, casual picnics and carers supervising children.

15.6 Remove the existing toilets and reintegrate the released space into the landscape

Remove the existing toilet facilities from the Bush Discovery Garden zone. Provide replacement amenities for Bush Kinder and nature-play groups within the future Visitor and Cultural Centre. Reintegrate the former toilet footprint into the landscape as part of the transition between the Bush Discovery Garden and the Climate-Ready Welcome Garden. Use planting, paths and informal gathering space to create a coherent connection between the two areas.

15.7 Provide discreet and accessible connections to nearby amenities

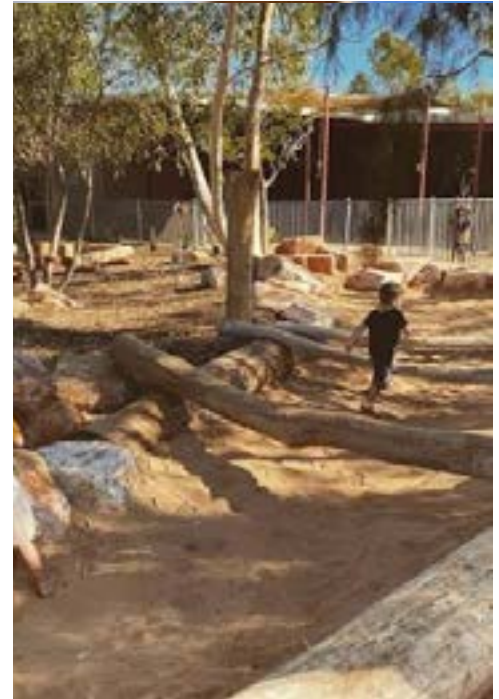
Provide a clear and accessible path between the Bush Discovery Garden and the amenities within the Visitor and Cultural Centre. Design the connection as a short secondary path rather than a dominant public route through the play spaces. Use planting, changes in alignment and subtle landscape screening so that the building and amenities remain convenient but do not dominate the Bush Kinder experience. Connect the Bush Discovery Garden into the broader walking network without encouraging everyday visitors to pass through the centre of the group activity areas.

15.8 Encourage stewardship and protect areas under revegetation

Design the Bush Discovery Garden to encourage children to explore, while gently directing activity away from areas under active revegetation or ecological repair. Use clear but low-key landscape cues to distinguish robust play areas from more sensitive planting zones. These may include logs, rocks, fallen branches, low planted edges, changes in ground surface, informal paths and small areas of denser planting. Avoid unnecessary fencing where softer landscape treatments can provide sufficient protection.

Where additional protection is required during plant establishment, consider temporary low barriers, simple signage or seasonal restrictions that can be removed once planting is established.

Incorporate opportunities for Bush Kinder and nature-play groups to participate in caring for the landscape through age-appropriate activities such as planting, watering, observing seasonal change and learning why some areas need time to recover. Reinforce the idea that exploring the bush also involves looking after it.



Visual Ideas



