

North Gardens Landscape Design – Notes to accompany draft design

The North Gardens, and the constructed wetlands within it, is a significant living cultural and physical landscape to the Wadawurrung and the City of Ballarat.

It is a place to celebrate and respect the environment of the Ballarat plains, and the long-standing relationship the Wadawurrung have with their Country.

It is a place of stories, continuing traditions; of healing, ecologies and a venue for gatherings to celebrate the spirit of the Lake Wendouree landscape.

Serpentine stone walling along the south flank of the gardens announces the new entry to North Gardens, adjacent Zoo Drive. Access to the gardens is from Wendouree Parade, past proposed Basalt standing stones from where ancestral views of Mt Buninyong and Warrenheip can be seen. A little further along Wendouree Parade is the proposed Cultural Education Facility, with potential for classes in Indigenous culture, artistic endeavors, school programs, ecology education to name but a few.

This is an activity space and a cultural statement, before one enters the wetlands. First sight of the wetlands offers sight of Ibis and Black Swan, a rippling stream, and the lower and upper pools. The lower pool hosts an Ibis and Black Swan communities and the upper opens to a wide aquatic ecological system.

The wetlands and stream tell of water cleansing, of an enclosed quiet ecological habitat and refuge to birds, insects, reptiles, mammals, fish and burgeoning vegetation communities.

Walk around the upper wetland and witness the rippling steam, the different water pools, vegetation thickets, the sculptural pole garden and the expansive Murnong grassland. Scattered amongst this walk are various sculptures authored by Aboriginal artists, that narrate stories about this place and the environmental processes occurring.

Witness the seasonal flowers, numerous birds roosting and in flight, landing on the pools, the dragonflies darting in the shallows and the dappled sunlight on the pathways and pool waters.

This is a wetlands and grasslands in transition. A place hosting sculptures talking about this Country and its Aboriginal inhabitants, and about the need to care for this Country; to return its health and to nourish the existing environment.

North Gardens offers a venue to return and appreciate the cultural spirit and ecological significance of Wadawurrung Country around Ballarat. A place to celebrate past and continuing cultures respectfully and of an equally shared concern to enjoy and look after this Country.

It is a place for all, that incorporates universal access pathways and bridges throughout the Gardens and wetlands allowing circulation for ambulatory pedestrians as well as those in wheelchairs or on mobility scooters.

For further information:

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