

Project scope - Reviewing the Management Plans for the Botanic Garden Cluster

1. Introduction

The Council is proposing to review the management plans for the Botanic Garden Cluster and incorporate them into one document.

The management plans to be reviewed are;

- Truby King Park Conservation and Management Plan 1993
- The Combined Management Plan for the Wellington Botanic Garden, Anderson Park and Bolton St Memorial Park 2002, and
- the Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve Management Plan 2007

The review of the plans for the **Wellington Botanic Garden (including Anderson Park), Bolton Street Memorial Park and Truby King Park**, will be comprehensive given the time since their last review. The review will identify key issues, determine community aspirations and establish the best means to provide for them. This will involve developing a vision for each garden and establishing goals to achieve these visions.

The **Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve Management Plan** was reviewed in 2007 so work will focus on assessing achievements over the last five years, and whether there is a need for minor changes in the policies and projects to achieve the vision and objectives in the 2007 plan.

This scoping report provides a framework for the review, identifies the strategic fit of the gardens and the key issues that need to be addressed in the new plan. Following approval of the scope, a draft management plan will be prepared for public consultation.

2. Strategic Framework

Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital is focussed on the development of the city over the next 30 years and is supported by four goals: a people centred city, connected city, eco city, and dynamic central city.

"Our Living City" programme is about achieving this vision and aims to; enhance and showcase our natural resources, transform our economy and reduce impact, and show leadership.

- The Open Space and Recreation Framework for Wellington 2013 -23 'Our Capital Spaces' is part of Our Living City Programme and provides a framework on how Wellington City's open spaces and sport and recreation activities will be managed over the next 10 years. It identifies four key outcomes and several focus areas which will guide decisions relating to funding and use of our open spaces, including the four gardens.

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The outcome, priority and action most applicable to this review is; ***Outcome 3- Contributing to Wellington’s outstanding quality of life.***

PRIORITIES	ACTIONS
3.1 Our natural attractions showcase our environment and conservation values	3.1.1 Otari-Wilton’s Bush, Wellington Botanic Garden, Outer Green Belt, Wellington Town Belt, Skyline Walkway, Zealandia and Wellington Zoo continue to showcase Wellington as an eco-city (Ex)

3. Management Plan Framework

The plan will comprise the following parts:

Part 1 Introduction	Identifies the land covered by the plan, the structure and purpose of the plan
Part 2 Wellington Botanic Garden Cluster	This will include the strategic framework of the plan, legislation and an overview of the cluster. Include relationship with Eco City and living City programme
Part 3 General Management Framework	Outlines the common objectives and policies under the following headings; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education and Awareness, ○ Plant Collections ○ Recreation/ Visitor Experience, ○ Heritage Conservation, ○ Marketing and Promotion, ○ Partnerships and Community Participation
Part 4 Specific Garden Management	This section will comprise the core part of the plan, outlining background information, the values, the vision, specific management goals and policies for each garden.
Part 4 Rules for use and activities that are common	Will identify what activities are allowed, where and how the activities will be managed.
Part 5 Implementation	Will identify what projects/tasks are required across the gardens portfolio and prioritise each task/project

4. Wellington’s Botanic Gardens Cluster

Internationally, our Botanic Gardens work towards the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and its targets 2011-2020. This international strategy has been adopted by many botanic gardens in Australia and New Zealand, and is the foundation for our international working relationships. It sets out five key objectives relating to greater recognition, conservation, sustainable management, education and public engagement of plant diversity.

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The Wellington Botanic Garden and Otari Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush (Otari Wilton's Bush) are gardens of national significance. Both Gardens are involved with a number of national organisations such as Department of Conservation, NZ Plant Conservation Network, Botanic Gardens of Australia and NZ, and various plant association and societies.

All four gardens contribute to the City's open space and recreation framework and are key nature based attractions. They have important heritage, landscape, botanical and conservation values, and are unique places for learning, research, recreation and tourism.

The Wellington Botanic Garden

Plant collections from around the world, set in a heritage garden landscape, offering learning and passive recreation opportunities.

Bolton Street Memorial Park

Heritage cemetery attraction with an old world character, with botanical interests.

Otari Wilton's Bush

Botanic garden exclusively for New Zealand native plants.

"Provides an accessible experience of NZ ancient natural environment, and inspires visitors to value and appreciate our unique native plant taonga (treasure)." Vision page 5 Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve Management Plan 2007.

Truby King Park

Heritage house and garden of Sir Frederic and Lady Isabella Truby King.

There are issues common to all the gardens such as; increasing their educational role, implementing reviews of plant collections, enriching the visitor experience, marketing and promotion, protecting landscape character, heritage conservation, and future resourcing.

- **Increasing their educational role,**

This includes clearly identifying what stories to tell, how to tell them and who to tell them to for each garden. All four gardens would benefit from improved co-ordination and additional resourcing to deliver active educational programmes across the cluster including online/ web based information, interpretation, and better utilisation of key learning facilities.

- **Implementing reviews of plant collections**

Each of the four gardens have plant collections of differing themes, which are described, interpreted and labelled to varying degrees, styles and quality. Plant collections have multiple roles but it's important to be clear about the relevance of each collection and ensure that each garden has unique yet complementary collections.

- **Enriching the Visitor Experience**

A range of experiences are offered across the garden cluster. The emphasis should be on making the visitor experience enjoyable and memorable for each

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garden and /or combination of gardens. This will include; programmes and tours, orientation and way-finding signage, entrance and path upgrades, learning and engagement opportunities, and preventing conflicts between different activities and users.

- **Marketing and Promotion**

Each garden needs; greater visibility, prioritising target audiences, stronger leadership positioning either in environmental education, conservation and/or heritage, and building a network of strategic relationships and /or partnerships. The garden cluster would benefit from a co-ordinated marketing and promotion strategy.

- **Protecting landscape character and vegetation management.**

All four gardens express their own unique sense of place. Their landscape character is derived from a combination of landform, historic features and vegetation. Prioritising each garden's intrinsic values and features and ensuring we protect these is common across the cluster.

- **Heritage Conservation**

All four gardens are rich in heritage. Common issues include; finding sustainable uses for heritage buildings, heritage interpretation, and prioritising conservation/protection management expectations within existing resources.

- **Future resourcing**

The Botanic Garden cluster operations are currently 90% funded from rates with revenue making up the remaining 10%. Capital renewals and upgrades are funded by Council through borrowings. Increasingly capital development projects such as the Children's Discovery Garden are likely to require part external funding for their completion.

If we are to fully realise the Botanic Gardens potential as an environmental education provider and a major tourist/visitor attraction, then external resourcing is likely to be required to support future developments including capital projects, and interpretation and programming initiatives.

5. Key Issues for each Garden

5.1 Wellington Botanic Garden and Anderson Park

The Wellington Botanic Garden is one of Wellington's oldest and most enduring nature based attractions with more than 1.2 million visitors a year.

A botanic garden for over 100 years it comprises 25 ha of heritage garden landscape. Characterised by a series of ridgelines and gullies, heritage features, sculptures and variety of vegetation, including specialist plant collections, floral displays, historic conifers, mature tree collections and native forest remnants.

Anderson Park is an extensively used sports field for both summer and winter codes and its high utilisation is expected to continue. Despite its almost exclusively sports use it is known locally as the 'village green' of Thorndon

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Since the adoption of the 2002 Combined Management Plan, the Council has completed several significant projects, namely the preparation and implementation of the landscape concept plan, plant collections review and tree management plan, modernisation of the nursery and upgrades to the Begonia House, playground and walkways. In addition, ongoing management and ecological monitoring of the native forest remnants.

The key issues facing the Botanic Garden over the next 10 years include; advancing the Garden's environmental education role, managing the heritage tree framework and changes in landscape character, developing a leadership role in heritage conservation, and enriching the visitor experience.

Advancing the environmental education role of our Wellington Botanic Garden.

The 2002 Plan describes the Wellington Botanic Garden as a park with botanical plant collections with an emphasis on promoting appreciation of plants and gardens in general, conserving historic and natural features of a heritage landscape and providing for public recreation in a mixed garden environment.

This is still relevant today but botanic gardens both in NZ and overseas are focussing more on their role in environmental education, conservation and capacity building. The feedback from stakeholders supports this and suggests the Botanic Garden should be more than just a park with botanical collections. It should play an important role in reconnecting people to the world of plants, educating them and showing them models for sustainable living and urban ecology.

The Wellington Botanic Garden, together with the Friends of Wellington Botanic Garden, currently provide several learning opportunities that help promote the importance of plants but there is potential to do much more.

The educational and engagement issues to be addressed in the new management plan include;

- Prioritise the key environmental educational messages.
- Broadening the Botanic Garden audience and researching potential groups and communities who will benefit from this new focus.
- Engage and connect with targeted audiences especially using online technologies and experiences, as well as improving on site interpretation.
- Ensure maximum utilisation of facilities and venues at the Botanic Garden especially the Tree House Visitor Centre.
- Continue developing working relationships and programmes with research institutes and environmental organisations.
- The development of the Children's Garden to become a catalyst for positive environmental change, and inspire young people to understand the role of plants in their lives.

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Managing the heritage tree framework and changes in landscape character.

One of the most recognisable and unique features of the Wellington Botanic Garden is the diverse tree population. There are currently around 1800 identified and recorded trees within the Botanic Garden (excluding the native forest remnants).

The trees are an important part of the Botanic Garden's landscape character providing uniqueness, identity, stature and interest as well as shelter and microclimate.

Detailed information has been captured on the tree population through the 2011 **Tree Plan**. It provides direction for proactive tree management over the next 30 years and recognises the value of the trees in relation to the landscape character rather than just the botanical aspects of each individual tree. Its outcomes and overall recommendations will be outlined in the new management plan.

Key challenges and opportunities identified in the Tree Plan include;

Over maturity and failure particularly with the tall conifer framework trees. Many will need to be removed in the next 5 – 20 years, particularly on Druids Hill and Magpie Ridge. Their removal will create a significant change in the Garden's landscape character.

An over population of trees.

The Tree plan has assessed each tree or group of trees based on criteria comprising tree health, maturity rate, its contribution to landscape and its importance. This assessment will help guide future removal and replanting decisions.

The need for greater tree interpretation.

There is a strong relationship with tree management and environmental education. Our tree stories need further interpretation, including a new tree tagging/labelling system.

Advancing our Heritage Conservation

The Wellington Botanic Garden is listed as a heritage area under the Council's District Plan and the NZ Historic Places Trust. It is also recognised as a Garden of National Significance¹.

Its historic features along with more contemporary features add uniqueness, identity, character and interest to the Botanic Garden and tell the story of how

¹ The notable heritage features of the Botanic Garden include the Constables Cottage 1875, the Historic Path Network 1875, the Gazebo 1914, the Stables and Mess Rooms, the Main Entrance Gate and Fence along Glenmore Street, Historic Conifer Plantings, the Sculpture Collection and the Native Forest Areas (4.6 hectares divided into 7 stands).

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the Botanic Garden evolved and its role in early European settlement in Wellington.

Over the last 10 years the Botanic Garden's cultural heritage assets have been identified, mapped and conservation plans prepared and implemented or implementation is underway.

There is ongoing management of the native forest remnants including pest animal and weed control, planting around the edges and ecological monitoring.

The next stage for heritage conservation in the Botanic Garden is to show leadership by promoting and interpreting heritage conservation practices, and encouraging community interest and action.

Enriching the visitor experience

The Botanic Garden is an important part of the City's open space network and a well known nature based destination for people from the wider Wellington region, local residents as well as NZ and overseas tourists.

Approximately 1.2 million people visit the garden every year for a variety of reasons. The most popular activities includes viewing plants, walking and or exercising, relaxing and enjoying time with friends and family.

The factors that require addressing in the new plan include;

- Managing high use levels and minimising conflict. This includes having a balance between high use and retaining the tranquil peaceful ambience of the garden, and monitoring the impact high visitor use has on services and infrastructure.
- Ensuring the provision of a high quality visitor experience by; investigating value added packages, improving orientation and way finding signage, redeveloping the Cable Car entrance to be a major entrance to the Garden; Improving education and interpretation opportunities that stimulate and connect with the visitor; and reviewing visitor transport options within the Garden.

5.2 Bolton Street Memorial Park

Bolton Street Memorial Park is Wellington's earliest cemetery set in a distinctive 'old world' landscape. It comprises 1334 visible memorials and headstones commemorating early colonial history, and resting amongst a heritage rose collection and mature tree framework. It provides an important green pedestrian link between downtown Wellington and the Botanic Garden.

The key issues facing Bolton Street Memorial Park are; greater recognition including a possible name change, heritage conservation of the graves, monuments and heritage buildings, and balancing vegetation management and landscape character.

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Greater Recognition

The current management plan recognises the cemetery as an inner city park with emphasis on protecting and interpreting colonial and maori history and heritage and promoting an appreciation of 19th Century garden plants.

The Friends of Bolton Street Memorial Park would like to see a name change to Bolton Street Cemetery to recognise its role as an historic cemetery. There are opportunities to increase visitation and develop it as a heritage destination.

Improvements that involve and connect people to our historic cemetery include; marketing and interpretation planning, better orientation and way finding signage and developing community partnerships.

Heritage conservation of the graves, memorials and buildings.

The graves and memorials are the main feature of the Park. Together with the vegetation they make the place special and distinctive. They are a valuable source of local history but many of the memorials and their surrounds are fragile and vulnerable to damage and natural processes of deterioration.

In 2006, the **Bolton Street Memorial Park Maintenance and Repair Guidelines for Graves and Memorials** was prepared. These guidelines provide direction on prolonging the life of the graves and memorials, maintaining their character and fabric and the integrity of their original designs. The philosophy and recommendations within the report will be incorporated into the new plan.

There are two buildings in the Cemetery. The historic Sexton's Cottage and the Memorial Chapel. Further investigations are required regarding long term sustainable uses for the Sextons cottage.

Balancing Vegetation Management and Landscape Character

The vegetation framework within the Cemetery consists of historic trees, heritage roses, mixed exotic and native plantings and closed canopy native vegetation.

Ongoing vegetation management is required to prolong the life of the graves and memorials. The Maintenance Guidelines provides remedial measures to use in differing situations where vegetation is impacting on the graves.

This proactive vegetation management approach has changed the landscape character of the Cemetery by reflecting a more 'managed' than a 'wild garden' theme. One of the significant aesthetic attributes of the Cemetery is the visible evidence of the passing of time, an 'old world' character. Vegetation management is required to preserve the graves but the overall 'old world' character will be retained.

5.3 Truby King Park

Background

Truby King Park is a 1.9 hectare Historic Reserve and heritage listed site located off Manchester Street in Melrose. The Park was once the house and garden of Sir Frederic and Isabella Truby King – founders of the NZ Plunket Society.

The Park contains the original Gray Young architecturally designed homestead, family mausoleum and remnants of the original 1920's garden.

The Council purchased the property in 1990 from the NZ Plunket Society to protect and preserve a significance place of Wellington's heritage. In 1993, the Council adopted the Truby King Park Conservation and Management Plan which has guided a major restoration work programme on both the house and garden since the 1990's. It recommended that;

- The preferred conservation option for the Park was to reconstruct its garden as far as possible to a form and character that best represents the 1940s period, when the garden was at its best.²
- A resident caretaker shall be accommodated in part of the house in order to discourage vandalism and to enhance security and to attend to minor maintenance matters,
- The house should be put to a regular and full use and should be made accessible to as many people as possible. Possible uses of the house include receptions, weddings, functions, conferences, seminars, restaurant, museum or a mix of these uses.
- Adaption of the house to suit a new use shall not involve the loss or excessive modification of important heritage elements.

The level of resourcing required and high levels of maintenance have prevented reconstruction of the herbaceous plantings. In addition the low current and predicted visitor numbers do not justify intensive garden development and reinstatement.

Over the last 20 years, Council's management of the garden has involved;

- Removal of extensive areas of weed growth established as a result of many years of neglect of the garden
- Rebuilding several of the retaining structures and lookouts
- Planning and replanting of large parts of the Rhododendron Dell in species and cultivars. This has been only partly successful.
- Removal of several large conifers and replanting of some original tree features such as the cherry avenue.
- Preparation and implementation of the planting plan for the 'tear drop garden' of the house and mausoleum.

² The reconstruction concept sought to preserve the garden's structural elements such as the walls and brickwork, and proposed that a series of planted themed areas based on Sir Truby King horticultural interests be developed. These areas included; the rhododendron dell, the drive, the rock garden and special themed areas.

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The house has been leased for over 10 years, with the opportunity to allow free public entry via appointment or at the annual public open day.

The house comprises a small self-contained flat, a kitchen area and a series of rooms. One room contains a collection of memorabilia relating to Sir Truby King and the NZ Plunket Society assembled by the Truby King House and Garden Trust.

The Truby King House and Garden Trust was established in 2002. The Trust is a small group of volunteers who in partnership with Council are dedicated to conserving the property's heritage values.

The Park is mainly used by walkers, mountain bikers and dog walkers.

Key Issues

Key factors that require addressing in the new management plan include;

- Reviewing the Parks ongoing role or purpose in our community.
- Prioritising the park's core values including historic, landscape, recreational, educational and residential.
- Finding a sustainable use for the house
- Determining the appropriate level of management/ service for the garden
- **Reviewing the park's role or purpose in our community**

Addressing management options for the house and garden through the management planning process, will give clear direction to the Park's role. Reviewing the Parks' role or purpose is associated with what qualities the Park has to offer the community, its location and context and likely visitor profiles. These qualities are likely to be heritage, landscape, and recreation.

- **Identifying and prioritising the Park's values**

The management plan will identify an approach that preserves the heritage character in a manner that is consistent with its Historic Reserve classification. This includes prioritising the multiple values present within the Park to the extent resources permit.

- **Finding a Sustainable Use for the House**

There are three options for the future use of the house;

- 1) Promote the house as a meeting, special event venue and small museum attraction.
- 2) For accommodation, with occasional managed access.
- 3) Continue to lease to a compatible business

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- **Level of management for the Garden**

A well known feature of the Park is its historic garden landscape. With its path network, extensive brickwork of walls and arches, and various groupings of mature trees and shrubs notably rhododendrons and pines.

These garden features are an integral part of the Park's history and contribute to its aesthetics, authenticity and identity.

The plantings in the garden have been extensively modified and very few of the original plantings remain.

Some of the brickwork structures have not been restored and require extensive structural stabilisation.

The proposal in the 1993 plan to restore the garden is unachievable within existing resources.

The new management plan will provide direction on what level of garden restoration is achievable within available resources.

5.4 Otari Native Botanic Garden & Wilton Bush Reserve

Otari Wilton's Bush is the only public botanic garden in New Zealand dedicated solely to native plants. It is classified as a Garden of National Significance by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. It is one of Wellington's top nature based attractions with approximately 80,000 visits each year.

This unique plant sanctuary and forest reserve comprises 100 hectares of native forest, and five hectares of plant collections. Some of Wellington's oldest trees are here, including an 800-year-old rimu and the largest remaining pre-european forest remnant on the Wellington peninsula. .

In 2007 the Council approved the Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve Management Plan. The vision and goals described in the plan are still relevant today and their intention will be carried over into the new plan. Changes mainly in the form of updates will occur in the detail, particularly in the policies and implementation priorities.

Since 2007, the Council has completed some significance projects, namely the Collections Review 2008 and the Landscape Development Plan 2010. Along with; ongoing active forest management, upgrading the circular walkway to make it more accessible to wheelchairs and prams, developing track connections to the Outer Green Belt Skyline track, and continuing to strengthen community partnerships.

The key areas of the 2007 plan that need addressing and/or updating include;

- Implementation of the Collections Review 2008
- Prioritising implementation of the Landscape Development Plan
- Advancing environmental education

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- Marketing and Promoting Otari with emphasis on its national conservation, science and research roles.

Implementation of the Collections Review 2008

At Otari there are 27 plant collections displayed in thematic groupings of taxonomic, horticultural, ecological habitat, geographical and conservation.

The Otari Collections Review was completed in 2008, assessed each plant collection and clearly defined their relevance and management actions required.

Several plant collections and garden borders will change as a result of this review, which will make the Otari experience memorable and more satisfying for the visitor.

Prioritising implementation of the Landscape Development Plan 2010

The 2007 Management Plan identified the need to prepare a landscape development plan to enhance the Otari experience and to; create a sense of continuity between the forest and plant collections, enrich the visitor experience by improved recreational links, education and interpretation, and assess the best use for existing buildings and facilities, particularly the Curators house.

In 2010 a comprehensive landscape development plan was prepared. There are 10 key projects which require review and if appropriate implementation over the next 10 years including;

- Central Collections Walkway - 2020/ 2021
- Information Centre minor reconfiguration – 2018/19
- Information Centre interpretation upgrade – 2018 /19
- Relocate Nursery and redevelop Banks Entrance
- Solander Entrance and toilets
- Te Wharangi Slopes Entry improvements
- Beech Lookout platform
- Solander lawn toilets and facilities
- Changing the main entrance

Advancing Education

The education goals outlined in the 2007 Management Plan include;

- To promote an understanding and appreciation of NZ plants and natural heritage through education and interpretation.
- To work with botanical, research and conservation organisations to enhance and share knowledge and promote the values of NZ's native flora.

It was identified in the 2007 Plan that there were limited facilities and resources for active education programmes. Some key projects are programmed for implementation over the next few years Linked to the landscape development plan initiatives.

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Key education issues to be addressed in the new plan include;

- Co-ordinating and prioritising key messages consistently those at the Wellington Botanic Garden
- Resourcing an education officer to co-ordinate both the Otari and Botanic Garden education programmes
- Role and use of the Curator's house
- Further developing and implementing the interpretation plan.
- Develop and enhance the online visitor experience
- Develop educational resources and partnerships to support school visits
- Continue to facilitate closer working relationships with nationally focused plant conservation organisations.

Marketing and Promoting Otari with emphasis on its national conservation and science and research roles.

The marketing and promotion objectives in the 2007 Management Plan include;

- To promote Otari Wilton's Bush as a nationally and internationally unique opportunity to experience New Zealand's flora
- To work with botanical, research and conservation organisations to share knowledge and promote the values of New Zealand's native flora by

Feedback from stakeholders is that there needs to be a greater emphasis towards positioning Otari as the Native Botanic Garden of New Zealand.

The new plan will consider a framework that position's Otari to make a greater contribution to plant conservation and research, as well as a national and international destination. Consideration will be given to; relationships, leadership position, visitor targets, greater visibility and developing and implementing a marketing and promotion strategy.