
REPORT 3

**REVIEWING THE MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THE
WELLINGTON BOTANIC GARDEN, OTARI WILTON'S BUSH,
BOLTON STREET MEMORIAL PARK AND TRUBY KING PARK**

1. Purpose of report

To seek the agreement of the Environment Committee (EC) to consult on the draft Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan

2. Executive summary

On 2 October 2013 the Council approved a review of the management plans for Wellington Botanic Garden, Otari Wilton's Bush, Bolton Street Memorial Park and Truby King Park and their incorporation into one plan. The draft Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan 2014 has been guided by visitor research, consultation with key stakeholders, a review of the role of botanic gardens and is consistent with the priorities and actions in Our Capital Spaces, an Open Spaces and Recreation Framework for Wellington: 2013 – 23.

The draft Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan produced following the review proposes some overall changes in approach:

- An increased emphasis on environmental education and conservation leadership locally and nationally
- Working more closely with other nature based attractions such as Wellington Zoo and Zealandia to showcase Wellington as an eco-city
- Improving the visitor experience
- Developing a marketing strategy for the gardens with a focus on adding value to garden visits by increasing visitors focus on education and conservation messages.
- Partnering with external funders to support new initiatives and programmes
- Introducing sustainable management practices for all aspects of the Gardens management.
- Support and resource Friends and community groups to increase their membership and involvement in garden management.
- A new approach to assessing uses and development based on a system of rules.

The Plan also proposes a change of name for Bolton Street Memorial Park to Bolton Street Cemetery.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Environment Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Recommend that the draft Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan (attached as Appendix 1) be approved for public consultation.*
3. *Delegate to the Chief Executive Officer and portfolio leader the authority to approve minor wording, formatting and content changes as agreed by the Committee.*
4. *Instruct officers to meet directly with mana whenua and key stakeholder organisations as part of the consultation process.*
5. *Note that public consultation on the draft Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan will occur from early April for a period of 8 weeks and will be presented to Environment Committee for final approval.*

4. Background

The Reserves Act (1977) requires all reserves, for which the Council is the administering body, to be covered by an approved management plan. A management plan provides the community with certainty about the function and management of reserves and enables the Council to more efficiently manage them under one plan. The Act also requires the administering body, in this case the Council to keep the plans under continuous review so they adapt to changing circumstances.

Management planning process and timeline

On 2 October 2013 the Council approved a review of the management plans for the Botanic Gardens of Wellington (the Gardens) and their incorporation of these plans into one document.

The management plans being 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 statutory process for the review of management plans under the Reserves Act 1977 follows the following process:

1. The Council notifies its intention to review the plans and distributes a **discussion document** asking for written suggestions on the proposed plan. Consultation takes 2 months
2. Officers prepares a **draft management plan** based on the feedback

3. The Council approves the draft plan for consultation. Consultation on the draft plan takes 2 months
4. The Council considers written submissions and if people wish to be heard will hear oral submissions on the draft plan and approves the final plan.

In this case the Council determined that written suggestions on the review outlined in stage 1 would not materially assist in its preparation¹ .

Officers have completed preparation of a draft plan for public consultation.

5. Discussion

The objectives, policies and initiatives in this plan explain the intended methods for the protection, management, development, operation and public use of the Gardens.

The Plan identifies:

- The long term vision and guiding principles for the Gardens
- The general plant collection concept across the Gardens as well as the roles and themes for each Garden
- The general education and awareness messages and delivery techniques across the Gardens
- The overall visitor experience in each garden
- The collective and integrated marketing and promotion requirements
- The cultural and natural heritage features of the Gardens and how these will be protected
- Key Partnerships and community involvement of the Gardens
- Actions required to implement this plan

The draft plan (Appendix 1) is structured around three main sections:

Section one: General policies, including education and awareness, plant collections, recreation, heritage conservation, marketing and promotion, community partnerships and rules for use and development.

Section two: Specific Garden Management Plans

This will include background information, description and historic summary of each Garden. It will include a vision for each Garden and establish goals and specific policies to achieve these visions.

Section three: Rules for use and Development

This section will outline the rules relating to the provision and management of all development and activities with the Gardens. These included activities that are allowed, managed and prohibited activities.

¹ Consistent with Section 41 (5A) of the Reserves Act 1977

In addition a list of implementation actions have been identified for each section. Actions will be prioritised and categorised into; new initiative, existing programme or expansion of existing programme following public consultation and feedback.

Key issues, opportunities and actions

The Plan proposes some overall changes in approach, in particular:

- An increased emphasis on environmental education and conservation leadership locally and nationally
- Working more closely with other nature based attractions such as Wellington Zoo and Zealandia to showcase Wellington as an eco-city
- Improving the visitor experience
- Developing a marketing strategy for the gardens with a focus on adding value to garden visits by increasing visitors focus on education and conservation messages. There will be a particular emphasis on the national profile and role of Otari Wilton's Bush and Wellington Botanic Garden.
- Partnering with external funders to support new initiatives and programmes
- Introducing sustainable management practices for all aspects of the Gardens management.
- Supporting and resourcing Friends and community groups to increase their membership and involvement in garden management.
- A new approach to assessing uses and development based on a system of rules.

In addition there are specific proposals for each garden.

Wellington Botanic Garden (including Anderson Park): A major regional recreation and tourism destination and a major green space close to the CBD. People visit the Wellington Botanic Garden for a range of reasons including viewing plants, walking and exercising, attending events and relaxing and enjoying time with family and friends. Anderson Park is an inner city sports field used for both summer and winter codes.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- Developing the Children's Garden with a theme of people's dependence on plants for life across four principal plant services: food, fibre, construction and medicine.
- Developing the Treehouse as the major visitor centre providing changing exhibitions about conservation, environmental issues and gardening as well as meeting and community space.

In addition the plan proposes;

- Continuing the replacement of the ageing conifer framework
- Reviewing the wider landscape and plant collections between the Play Area and the Duckpond to develop attractive, inspiring, educational themed gardens.
- Developing a landscape concept plan for the Cable Car entrance which recognises its status as a major entrance and encourages visitors to enter and explore
- Improving protection and enhancement of the native forest remnants
- Extending the Herb Garden south towards Serpentine Way to develop a space suitable to hire out for special events including weddings
- Investigating the development of a War and Victory garden on Remembrance Ridge.
- Review planting and interpretation in the Threatened Species garden to better articulate the messages around the pressure on plants and ecosystems.

Otari Wilton's Bush: The only public garden in New Zealand dedicated solely to native plants. It's a place of inspiration, learning and engaging with NZ's natural environment. It plays a leading role in New Zealand ex-situ plant conservation. At 100ha it's the largest of the four Gardens. It contains the largest remaining primary native forest remnant (17ha) in Wellington City and 5 ha of native botanic gardens.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- Managing the native forest at Otari Wilton's Bush as a key native ecosystem and establishing it as part of the Zealandia halo concept
- Establishing the Cockayne Centre in the ex-curators house to support education and research and develop the garden around the Centre to showcase natives as garden plants.

In addition the plan proposes

- Continuing to redevelop pathways through the native botanic gardens with viewing points and links onto the Circular Walk and Nature Trail consistent with the proposal in the Landscape Development Plan.
- Redeveloping the taxonomic collections in the native botanic gardens (below the Cockayne Lookout) around the proposed redeveloped pathways.
- Identifying and testing new interactive trails in particular a family trail (Tamariki Trail) and an ethnobotanical trail.
- Consider reintroducing fauna known historically to have occurred in the Wellington Peninsula forests where possible in conjunction with Zealandia.
- Developing a multi-purpose track naming and identification system

Bolton Street Memorial Park: This historic cemetery was developed from three 19th century cemeteries for the Wellington colony, being the Public, Church of England and Jewish cemeteries. As well as containing the historic memorials, it has an extensive collection of heritage roses and a visitor centre displaying information on the graves.

The main proposal in the plan is to:

- Change the name of Bolton Street Memorial Park to Bolton Street Cemetery

In addition the plan proposes

- Preparing and implementing a five year programme of maintenance and restoration work in consultation with the Friends of Bolton Street Memorial Park.
- Electronically locating all known grave sites and headstones and storing them on the Council Geographic Information System, (GIS)
- Working with the Archdiocese of Wellington to integrate administrative records and maintenance standards between the two historic cemeteries at Mount Street and Bolton Street.

Name change: Bolton Street Memorial Park was developed from three 19th century cemeteries for the Wellington colony, being the Public, Church of England and Jewish cemeteries. The Friends of Bolton Street Memorial Park have proposed a name change to Bolton Street Cemetery for the following reasons:

- The word “cemetery” reflects more closely the history and significance of the area. Although it is a closed burial ground, it continues to be a cemetery because human remains are interred there. It is unusual in New Zealand for a burial ground not to be described as a cemetery.
- The customary usage is to refer to it as Bolton Street Cemetery despite the previous name change.
- The public do not necessarily associate the term “Memorial Park” with a cemetery. This is likely to be exacerbated and also lead to further confusion when the National War Memorial Park is opened in Buckle Street
- Calling the area Bolton Street Cemetery will give it a recognisable identity as a cultural destination.

Naming of open space is guided by the Open Space Naming Policy. This policy only applies to new or un-named open spaces and is not used to rename already gazetted or Council approved names. There is no specific record of the name having been gazetted but it has been given official Council status through the park reopening and its use as an official name through the management plan.

It is proposed to consult on the name change during the consultation on the overall plan.

Truby King Park

This historic property sits on a ridge in Melrose with magnificent views over Evans Bay, Lyall Bay and Newtown. Formerly the home of Sir Frederick Truby King and his wife Isabella it comprises the original house designed in 1923 by architect Gray Young, the historic garden laid out between 1925 and 1935 by Truby King and a mausoleum where Frederick and Isabella Truby King are interred.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- Retaining the essential landscape character of the historic garden by:
 - completing reconstruction of the landscape features particularly the walls and archways around the house
 - Replacing the large pine tree framework with a framework of smaller trees and open up the views over Evans Bay.
 - Increasing use of edible plant and tree species to emphasise the holistic nature of the garden
- Finding a long term sustainable use for the house that enables public access on either a regular or managed basis.
- Developing a schedule of regular open days and guided tours for the house and garden
- Developing a partnership with the Truby King Park Trust and the local community to increase use and visitation as a local community space.

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

The Reserves Act (1977) requires the Draft Management Plan to be publicly notified and available for comment for no less than a period of two months and states that submitters must have the opportunity to be heard in front of Committee prior to recommending the plan for approval by the Council.

Accordingly, the submission period will run from early April 2014 until early June 2014 and will be advertised in Our Wellington page in the Dominion Post.

Anyone who wishes to be heard in support of their submission will have the opportunity to speak to the Environment Committee. This will happen in early August 2014.

The final management plan with proposed amendments as a result of public consultation will be presented to the Environment Committee for approval in August or September 2013.

In addition to these statutory requirements, the communication plan for the Draft Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan includes the use of:

- Media releases
- Council website plus Facebook page
- On-site notices at major Garden entrances

- Direct distribution to key stakeholders and previous submitters and meeting with them if required.
- Distribution to libraries and Service Centre
- Meetings with the Council's Treaty Partners.
- An afternoon information session in the Treehouse Visitor Centre on Sunday 4 May between 2 and 4pm.

5.2 Long Term Plan considerations

The final plan will include a series of initiatives that will be considered for inclusion in the 2015 – 2025 Long Term Plan.

6. Conclusion

The draft Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan has been prepared to replace existing management plans for Wellington Botanic Garden, Otari – Wilton's Bush, Bolton Street Memorial park, Truby King Park and Anderson Park.

It is now proposed to release the draft plan for public consultation

Contact Officer: *Mike Oates - Manager Open Space and Recreation Planning*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

The plan supports Council's overall vision of Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital. In particular it supports the Eco –city and people centred city outcomes).

2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The project is contained in the Council Plan A004 – Open Space Planning. There are no financial implications at this stage

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

The Bill is consistent with the Waitangi Tribunal Report. "Waitangi Tribunal, Te Wanganui ā tara me ōna Takiwā: Report on the Wellington District 2003".

4) Decision-making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General consultation

The Council will consult with the public on the draft Plan.

b) Consultation with Maori

Mana whenua have been consulted and provided feedback that has been incorporated into the draft Plan.

6) Legal implications

The draft plan has been prepared consistent with Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977

7) Consistency with existing policy

The draft plan is consistent with Our Capital Spaces, an Open Space and Recreation Framework for Wellington.