

Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Bill Nicholson said that “Country is living and layered and can only be healthy when *baan*, its waterways, are healthy. The Birrarung shapes Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung *biik* (land).” Under Wurundjeri ownership its banks, billabongs and lagoons were alive with culture, trade and lore. These places continue to hold deep significance today, with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders, Members and land management teams caring for Country and maintaining cultural responsibilities across their waterways and landscapes.

As a resource-rich area, shaded by *beyal* (River Red Gum), supported abundant *iuk* (short-finned eels), *djarg* (common reed) and other sedges and rushes used for basket weaving, spear and *iuk* trap making. Many clans gathered here during *iuk* season for inter-tribal business, trade and ceremony such as *tanderrum* and *buln buln* (lyrebird) dance ceremony. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people continue to practice both ceremonies today.

Features of the garden will include a reference to *buln buln* (lyrebird) which holds deep cultural importance for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. As a key totem, *buln buln* features in stories, songlines and ceremonial practice, and its distinctive tail feathers have long been used, and continue to be used, in ceremonial dress. The *buln buln*'s remarkable ability to mimic and weave sounds reflects its role as a cultural messenger, carrying knowledge of Country and connection between people, place and spirit. The Garden design will also reference other culturally important totems, such as *Waa* the crow, *Bunjil* the eagle and *iuk*, eel.

Signage in the garden will educate visitors about the significance of the landscape and displayed plants to Aboriginal people.

The partners involved in creating the Garden are:

- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
- SKL Gardens
- Petrichor Collaborative
- Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria
- Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show

The Garden can be viewed at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show from Wednesday 25 March to Sunday 29 March 2026. WWHAC and partners are hosting a series of talks, workshops and performances to celebrate the new garden.

The official opening will be held at 9am on Wednesday 25 March. During the opening ceremony, Djirri Djirri dancers will undertake the *buln buln* (lyrebird) dance ceremony.

MIFGS attendees will also receive discounted walks at Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

Images above L-to-R: 1. Andrew Laidlaw's garden design. 2. Ornamental Lake at Melbourne Gardens.

PTO for Event Details, details on Discounted Walks, Photos and About

Photos:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/8mtw8lg4fxpjsxgfpx2yg/ACh6N3mIT5sAppmoK_pXE0c?rlkey=hr75ihjxknoeqpgyeqrb85tb5&st=podql6lw&dl=0

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Event details**Wednesday 25 March**

9:00-9:30 Welcome & Smoking Ceremony

9:30-10:00 Djirri Djirri Wurundjeri women's dance group

12:00-13:00 Wurundjeri Education Session: History & Culture: Bushfoods and Cultural Artefacts. A showcase of

Aboriginal culture, and native plants, including their medicinal and food uses.

14:00-15:00 Wurundjeri Education Session: History & Culture

Thursday 26 March

12:30-13:30 Wurundjeri Education: Botanicals Education session

14:30-15:30 Wurundjeri Education: Botanicals Education session

16:00-16:30 Royal Botanic Gardens: Raising Rarity program and the Cherry Ballart with Meg Hirst

16:30-17:00 Royal Botanic Gardens: Living Collections with Jack Dewhurst

Friday 27 March

11:00-12:00 Wurundjeri Education: Children's Wurundjeri Education Storytelling Session

12:00-13:00 Wurundjeri Education: Wurundjeri Seasons Session Iuk Season

16:30-17:15 Royal Botanic Gardens: Aboriginal Learning Guides

17:30-18:00 Wurundjeri Biik Bolin Bolin Project Design Team Discussion

20:00-21:00 Nocturnal Invertebrates Study

Saturday 28 March

11:00-11:45 Royal Botanic Gardens: Aboriginal Learning Guides

13:30-14:15 Petrichor Collaborative: Storytelling & design discussion

15:00-15:45 Royal Botanic Gardens: Design Talk with Andrew Laidlaw

16:30-17:15 SKL Gardens: Design Session

20:00-21:00 Nocturnal Invertebrates Study

Sunday 29 March

10:30-11:15 David Wong, artist: Artwork, sculptures and design session

14:00-14:45 Global Gardens of Peace: Garden tour

Discounted walks at Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne

Aboriginal Heritage Walk – Now \$35 (Save \$10!)

Explore the Gardens with a First Nations guide. Learn about native plants, their traditional uses for food, medicine and tools, and gain insight into the rich cultural heritage and living traditions of Australia's First Peoples.

Supporting Offers:

\$20 Explorer Bus tour for 2 adults

Explore the Gardens in Style - Cruise the Melbourne Gardens in an eco-friendly minibus and enjoy live commentary on its stunning landscapes and living collections.

Grow your savings further! Show this (voucher, email, ticket) at the Melbourne & Cranbourne **Gardens Gift Shop** to enjoy 15% off.

Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.

Limited time only — offer ends 2 April 2026.

About Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria connects people with nature at both its Cranbourne and Melbourne sites, champions plant conservation and is committed to supporting Traditional Owner aspirations to care for and heal Country and its Waterways.

It plays a leading role in the conservation of plants through biodiversity research, programs to protect rare and threatened plants, and the study of habitats. This work is supported by education and visitor programs about the importance of plants to life.

The organisation encompasses two diverse sites at Melbourne and Cranbourne and the State Botanical Collection housed at the National Herbarium of Victoria. Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria, which is responsible to the Minister for Environment.

<https://www.rbq.vic.gov.au/about-us/>

About Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation is a Registered Aboriginal Party representing the Wurundjeri people, an Aboriginal Australian people of Victoria.

<https://www.wurundjeri.com.au/>

About SKL Gardens

Suzannah Kennett Lister is a garden and landscape designer based in Melbourne, working in both Victoria and South Australia.

Focused on plants and people, SKL believes that gardens are a deeply personal and vital investment in the future.

With an approach that balances the needs of the client with the demands of the site, her gardens celebrate the wild, the wonderful, and the resoluteness of life.

<https://www.sklgardens.com.au/>

About the Petrichor Collaborative

Petrichor Collaborative is a landscape architecture and research practice focused on driving and promoting opportunities for First-Nations led processes, intrinsically tied to place and ecosystems.

<https://petrichorcollaborative.com.au/>

About Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria

Founded in 1903, Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria (NGIV), is the peak industry body for the state's horticultural sector.

NGIV represents the interests of the Victorian horticulture industry, a sector worth over \$2.5 billion that employs more than 24,100 people. Within Victoria, NGIV advocates on behalf of over 1500 committed horticultural business members, and regularly engages with over 6000 additional, moderately engaged businesses,

NGIV maintains strong connections with its members and the wider industry and remains committed to the continued success of Victoria's horticulture industry.

<https://www.ngiv.com.au/>

About the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show

The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show is the ultimate celebration of creativity, nature, and blooming possibilities! Set in the breathtaking surroundings of the heritage-listed Royal Exhibition Building and the stunning Carlton Gardens, this iconic event is a feast for the senses, attracting over 100,000 visitors across its five days.

<http://melbflowershow.com.au/>