



BRISBANE  
Botanic Gardens

Mt Coot-tha

—  
**MASTER PLAN 2018**







## A MESSAGE FROM Lord Mayor Graham Quirk

As Lord Mayor of Brisbane, I am dedicated to making Brisbane the cleanest, greenest, most sustainable city in Australia. The Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha in the leisure precinct of Mt Coot-tha, right on the city's doorstep, is one of our most valued icons.

Guiding the development of Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha with a master plan contributes to keeping Brisbane clean and green, making our city liveable and sustainable for our children, and their children to follow.

During March and April 2017 the community was invited to have their say on the draft Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha master plan. The consultation reached out to residents from the local and broader communities. Brisbane City Council will continue to explore improvements to the Mt Coot-tha precinct, in particular for transport and parking. I was pleased that the ideas and strategies proposed to guide the future development of the Gardens received wide community support.

Over the next 15 years, as visitor numbers to the Gardens continue to grow, this master plan will help to guide future improvements for this green landmark for the City of Brisbane.

Graham Quirk  
LORD MAYOR



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# INTRODUCTION

Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha was opened by Brisbane City Council in 1976. It has grown to become Australia's largest subtropical botanic gardens, featuring more than 200,000 plants that represent approximately 5000 species from around the world. Arid, tropical and temperate plants, both native and exotic, thrive here.

In addition to the 56 hectares of botanic gardens, Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha also includes the Mt Coot-tha Visitor Information Centre, Queensland Herbarium, Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium, Mt Coot-tha Library, Gardens Café, Richard Randall Art Studio and Gardens Auditorium. Not part of the scope of this master plan is the Mt Coot-tha quarry which remains an operational asset providing value to Council.

*Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Master Plan 2018* sets the vision and 15-year strategic framework to guide the next generation of growth in the Gardens.

#### **THE ROLE OF BOTANIC GARDENS**

Botanic gardens are museums of living plant collections, richly endowed with scientific, horticultural, historic, social, aesthetic and design values.

The curated presentation and interpretation of the plant collections to the community encourages learning and increases appreciation of nature.

*More than 700,000 locals and tourists enjoy the gardens every year, with this number expected to grow to 1.7 million by 2030.*

Botanic gardens contribute to biodiversity and long-term conservation of the world's natural resources for the benefit of existing and future generations.

#### **PROTECTING THE FUTURE**

Brisbane's first botanic gardens, City Botanic Gardens, was established in 1855. However a second site was needed after several major floods swept through the city gardens, damaging valuable plant collections, and the collection had outgrown its capacity to expand.

An open woodland site, protected by the eastern slopes of Mt Coot-tha and only six kilometres from the city was selected as a flood-free alternative.

Officially opened in 1976, the 56-hectare botanic gardens is located at the base of the mountain and is open to the public to visit every day of the year.

#### **AN EVOLVING SPACE**

The role of botanic gardens has changed since the 16th Century medieval purpose of physic gardens – gardens which were for the study of medicinal plants – to a current experience of protecting and preserving the environment, connecting plants and people, and enriching the community through education and enjoyment. So has the way visitors use, interact and enjoy botanic gardens around the world changed over time.

Originally designed around a loose theme of 'getting lost among the plants', the current gardens include a complex web of pathways that require visitors to actively choose their own adventure among themed botanical collections and geographical displays. While the Gardens enjoy international acclaim, recent research into visitation and usage trends identified under- and over-used areas, and a trend to return to familiar spots on subsequent visits.

This research highlights an opportunity to enhance the site design to reflect an updated attitude to recreation, wayfinding, education and connection with a focus on increasing the opportunities for enjoyment by visitors now and in generations to come. This would naturally deliver additional economic benefits to the city.

#### **FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT MASTER PLAN**

The draft master plan was developed with key stakeholders. In March and April 2017 the community was invited to have their say. Feedback was received from a wide cross section of the community and was generally positive and supportive. More than 1000 people downloaded the master plan, 144 people completed an online survey and 36 provided a written submission. The feedback provided support for ideas and raised issues and suggestions that have been addressed where possible in the final master plan. Importantly, this is a master plan for the Gardens and while feedback was received about the quarry it remains operational and provides value for Council and is not part of the scope of this master plan. Going forward, wider Mt Coot-tha precinct projects will explore options for improving transport and parking.

# Strategic context

*Our vision is to embrace Mt Coot-tha as an iconic green landmark for the City of Brisbane. Mt Coot-tha will be valued for its unique environmental, cultural and historical qualities, and be celebrated for its biodiversity, diverse learning and recreational experiences and opportunities.  
(Our Shared Vision Mt Coot-tha 2030)*



Brisbane CBD

Brisbane Botanic  
Gardens Mt Coot-tha



## BRISBANE – A SAFE, VIBRANT, GREEN AND PROSPEROUS CITY

A key part of Brisbane's personality is our commitment to being a safe, vibrant, green, sustainable and prosperous city, coupled with an emphasis on leveraging public spaces for community benefit.

Council recognises that environmental sustainability and liveability are fundamental to being a New World City and is committed to pursuing a future that enhances the city's assets for current and future residents. Brisbane's leadership in this space was recognised in 2014 and again in 2016 as Australia's Most Sustainable City by the Keep Australia Beautiful Foundation.

Launched in 2017, *Brisbane. Clean, Green, Sustainable 2017-2031*, brings together in one document the progress and path forward for building the city's liveability and reputation as one of the world's most clean, green and healthy cities.

Mt Coot-tha is one of Brisbane's most unique and valued icons because of its location, resources, historical and cultural significance. Covering 1600 hectares of land, the Mt Coot-tha precinct can be accessed via the new Mt Coot-tha Visitor Information Centre, acting as a gateway to the Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha and Queensland Herbarium, forest reserve, bushwalking, mountain bike trails, picnic areas, library, cemetery, planetarium, summit lookouts, cafes and restaurants.

This large geographical area has played a foundation role in the childhood, teenage and adult lives of many Brisbane locals, as well as being on the 'must see' list and providing memorable experiences to those visiting Brisbane.

### **BRISBANE VISION 2031 DELIVERS AN ENHANCED BOTANIC GARDENS**

Recognising the connection between this important green space and the community, as part of *Our Shared Vision Mt Coot-tha 2030*, Council consulted more than 2800 residents and stakeholders in 2009 and 2010 to help shape the 20-year vision for

the broader Mt Coot-tha precinct. The main priorities for *Brisbane Vision 2031* are to:

- » maintain or improve quality of life for the Brisbane community
- » ensure that Brisbane has the services and infrastructure to meet the liveability and sustainability challenges of the future
- » provide an overarching plan of action for Council, its partners and the people of Brisbane for the next 18 years.

Liveability is underpinned by diverse and accessible green spaces such as the Mt Coot-tha precinct, a landmark project for Council. Planning investigations or research will include: consideration of tourism activities, outdoor recreation planning, land uses, wayfinding and signage, Aboriginal and cultural heritage, transport, parking and connectivity, managing events and commercial activities.

Implementation of this Gardens master plan will be considered in the context of the whole Mt Coot-tha precinct.

The delivery of *Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Master Plan 2018* will contribute to each of the priorities above by outlining Council's plans for the Gardens over the next 15 years.

One of the most significant aspects of this long-term vision is the review and enhancement of the Gardens, positioned at the base of the mountain and acting as a natural gateway to the broader area. The three growth areas have been identified in the development of Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha are:

- » public spaces for community benefit
- » culturally significant
- » economic opportunities.

## THE MASTER PLANNING JOURNEY

### **PUBLIC SPACES FOR COMMUNITY BENEFIT**

Research has indicated that community ownership of Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha is strong, with many residents enjoying long-term memories generated by their time spent there.

The opportunity to strengthen this exists by enhancing the areas that thrive, transforming those that don't and introducing new opportunities for positive connection, association and memories.

Increasing the reasons to discover new areas of the Gardens through recreation, event activation and wayfinding techniques will increase the overall appeal and relevance.

The environmental significance of the Gardens also presents community benefit, with the preservation of plants, historical knowledge and opportunity for continual learning in areas such as botany, conservation and sustainability.

### **CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT**

The Gardens play a critical role in the cultural preservation of both botanical and historical record. Through the collection, cultivation and display of a wide range of plants from Australia and across the world, the Gardens can assist in the long-term preservation of plant species.

Historically, the Gardens have assisted in Brisbane becoming the New World City it is today, firstly by offering a flood-proof alternative to City Botanic Gardens and in more recent decades becoming a destination in its own right.

### **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

In the year ending June 2016, interstate, domestic and international visitors to Brisbane increased by 6.1%, 11.5% and 9.7% respectively.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tourism and Events Queensland, *Brisbane Regional Snapshot, 2016*, viewed 9 January 2017, <https://cdn-teq.queensland.com/~media/28834504774b47f3a79c39331f73b23b.ashx?vs=1&d=20161021T131426>

Further analysis suggests that by increasing the appeal and activation of the Gardens, visitation numbers to Brisbane at a macro level, and the Gardens at a local level could increase. This would deliver additional economic benefit to the city, as well as opening up potential business opportunities within the Gardens. Council has already initiated upgrades across the Mt Coot-tha precinct to enhance the precinct in line with *Our Shared Vision Mt Coot-tha 2030*. The Mt Coot-tha enhancements include upgrading the J.C. Slaughter Falls and Simpson Falls picnic areas, constructing a new trail to connect the Simpson Falls and J.C. Slaughter Falls to improve the trail network and accessibility, opening a new Mt Coot-tha Visitor Information Centre, and installing a zipline attraction (subject to approval). Council is committed to further exploring the Gardens and surrounding precinct's commercial potential while firmly balancing the community and cultural priorities.

### **BRISBANE CITY PLAN 2014**

Within *Brisbane City Plan 2014* (City Plan) sits the Mt Coot-tha neighbourhood plan. *Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Master Plan 2018* has been developed to deliver visitor services and facilities that contribute to Brisbane's sustained prosperity and provide options for learning and leisure.

Aligning with the neighbourhood plan outcomes, the Gardens master plan supports City Plan's strategic framework, and in particular, the strategic intent to contribute to the city's important green space system.





# MT COOT-THA PRECINCT

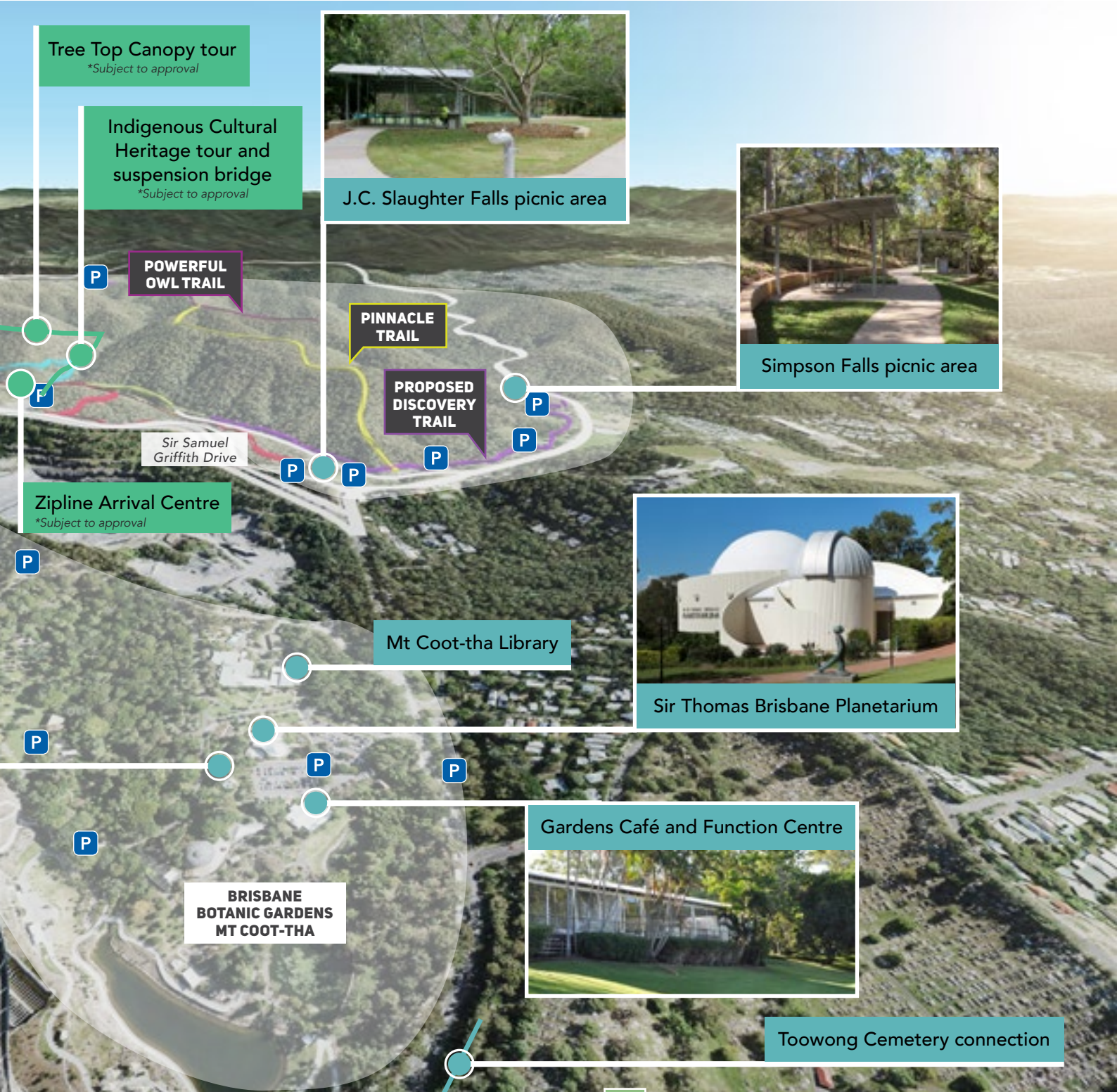
Beyond the boundaries of Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha, which is positioned at the base of the mountain, exist other unique attractions that contribute to Brisbane’s New World City status including a large-scale forest reserve, bushwalking and mountain biking trails, picnic areas, cemetery, TV stations and towers, summit lookouts, cafes and restaurants.

As part of the complete precinct vision, a number of enhancements are underway or planned and will deliver increased precinct integration, increase accessibility and heighten the quality of visitors’ experience. These will include the following.

- » A new zipline attraction (subject to approval) to be installed at Mt Coot-tha will look to be a major drawcard for the city and leverage the breathtaking views over the city from the summit lookout.
- » Upgrading the J.C. Slaughter Falls and Simpson Falls picnic areas with improved facilities, paths and shelters. Visitors to Simpson Falls will also enjoy the benefits of additional car parks and picnic seating.
- » The Mahogany Trail will connect the key destinations of the lookout, J.C. Slaughter Falls picnic area and botanic gardens.
- » The new Discovery Trail will link Simpson Falls to J.C. Slaughter Falls and improve the trail network the mountain offers.
- » Improvement of the Citriodora Trail to provide a strong physical link between the Gardens and the wider Mt Coot-tha precinct.
- » The new Mt Coot-tha Visitor Information Centre, located at the entrance to the botanic gardens, now provides information on the facilities and attractions that can be enjoyed throughout the Mt Coot-tha precinct.
- » A Toowong Cemetery Link – a new path and ramp that will allow visitors to travel safely between the Gardens, Mt Coot-tha Road and the cemetery.



*Mt Coot-tha's importance as a place for a wide range of leisure and recreational activities will increase with our population and tourist growth and our love of the outdoor life and natural environment. Mt Coot-tha offers spectacular views of Brisbane City and glimpses of old and new landscapes beyond.  
(Our Shared Vision Mt Coot-tha 2030)*



# Opportunities and challenges

The enhancement of Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha plays a key role in Council's plan to achieve the community aspirations detailed in *Our Shared Vision Mt Coot-tha 2030*. The planned improvements and attractions, combined with contemporary knowledge on the changing purpose and usage of gardens from around the world, means we have an unprecedented opportunity to transform this space.

## PLANNING FOR VISITORS

With Brisbane's population projected to increase significantly by 2036 and a growing trend for increased housing density, smaller land lots and inner-city living, the role the Gardens plays in daily life is likely to become more pronounced. Positioned conveniently six kilometres from the CBD, the Gardens, as well as its surrounding precinct, will increasingly provide an affordable green respite from busy lives.

Increasing tourism numbers from within Queensland, Australia and across the world also presents an opportunity to showcase a world-leading botanic gardens to more people. Six of Brisbane's 'sister cities' are located within the top 10 source markets that chose Brisbane as a destination in 2017 (Kobe, Japan, Auckland, New Zealand, Daejeon, Korea, Chongqing, Shenzhen, China and Kaohsiung, Taiwan) strengthening the relationships we have with these important partners.

This growth presents an opportunity to further engage with visitors, through major drawcard attractions, as well as world class interpretation and visitor education programs linked to the living collection. Increased accessibility and facilities for all-abilities facilities for all visitors will be a priority.

While the Gardens mirror the role and benefits of public parks, (a place of refuge and respite, open space and an important part of the community matrix) the role of the botanic gardens goes further. With an unequivocal focus on the flora and horticulture from around the world, the Gardens are a place of preservation, education and development. The commitment to botanical and horticultural science means the Gardens become a place of leadership and irreplaceable legacy for future generations.

Across the Gardens, a key focus will be on accessibility, to redesign the flow so that visitors are intuitively guided through the gardens, exploring and discovering without the feeling of 'getting lost'.



Brisbane's projected population increase by 2036

Visitor numbers could increase by

2.4 times

by 2030

<sup>2</sup>Brisbane's key economic facts - 2017, viewed 19 March 2017, <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/about-council/governance-strategy/business-brisbane/growing-brisbanes-economy/brisbanes-key-economic-facts#population>

## PLANNING FOR CONSERVATION

Botanic gardens play an important role in conserving natural resources as well as educating visitors on the importance of conservation, environmental awareness and sustainability. Currently, the Gardens participate in the Australian Seed Bank Partnership and Queensland Seeds for Life project, which banks wild-collected seeds from around Queensland with material sent to the Millennium Seed Bank Project in Kew, United Kingdom. The Gardens' goal is housing 75% of Queensland's threatened plant species by 2020, as part of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. An opportunity exists to elevate this focus and increase conservation activities through the expansion of the seed bank program with increased resources and greater public engagement and education, plus scaling up the seed bank storage refrigerated facilities.

## PLANNING FOR COORDINATION

A diverse array of activities, attractions and recreation are currently being enjoyed at the Gardens, and more are expected with the enhancements of the surrounding area. To ensure all efforts are aligned in the one direction, a coordinated management approach will strive to make the visitor experience the key focus.

### IDEA TYPES

*Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Master Plan 2018* will identify four different categories of ideas, which classify the works according to scale, scope and impact.



#### Recently completed

Projects which have been recently completed.



#### Planned

Committed future projects.



#### Transformative ideas

Key ideas and initiatives that could help the Gardens to evolve over the next 15 years.



#### Garden-building ideas

Potential projects that build and diversify the living collection and strengthen the Gardens scientific role.

### KEY PROJECTS

- ✓ Mt Coot-tha Visitor Information Centre
- Wayfinding signage
- Banks & Solander display
- Tropical Display Dome upgrade
- Bonsai House redesign
- Seed bank
- Activation and programming
- Accessibility
- Interpretation
- Transport – cycle facilities
- Transport – people mover
- Education hub and Council library
- Entry plaza and rain garden
- Car park redesign
- Gardens back of house
- Cacti House redesign

- Asian Sister City Garden
- Plant Families Display redesign
- Asian Precinct
- Tri Continental Tree Top Walk and lookout cafe
- Lookout upgrade
- Children's garden
- Australian Precinct core upgrade
- Eucalypt and Acacia Forest upgrade
- Boardwalk and lookout
- Native Orchid House
- Curated Art Strategy
- Living Collection
- Water independence
- Recycling
- Leisure precinct entry
- Arid Australian collection

- Restaurant upgrade
- Pacific Island collection relocation
- Playground upgrade
- Kitchen Garden upgrade
- Fruit Tree collection upgrade
- Queensland Conservation collection
- Primitive & Fossil plants display upgrade
- Ornamental plants collection redesign
- Freedom Wall setting upgrade
- Bougainvillea collection upgrade
- Conifer collection upgrade
- Fig collection upgrade
- Connection to Brisbane Forest Park
- Bunya Forest collection upgrade
- Brigalow Forest collection upgrade
- Climate sensitive



DISCOVER THE  
LIVING WONDERS

# Vision

*As a community that thrives on growth, Council acts as the custodian of Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha; conserving world-renowned collections, creating environments for connection, respite and recreation, and enhancing the iconic lifestyle opportunities this important living space provides.*





Council recognises the iconic value of the broader Mt Coot-tha precinct and is protecting it for generations to come. Council is committed to ensuring Mt Coot-tha is valued for its unique environmental, cultural and historical qualities, and be celebrated for its biodiversity, diverse learning and recreational experiences and opportunities.

The evolution of Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha is central to this vision. This is due to what the Gardens provide (a place for connection, memories and experiences) and what the Gardens do (preserve, conserve and teach us about flora).

Importantly, this vision will be achieved in partnership with the Brisbane community and the Garden's stakeholders over the next 15 years.

# Themes

Critical insights and data were considered in the drafting of the *Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Master Plan 2018* including:

- » outcomes from the consultation undertaken in 2009 and 2010
- » visitor feedback and observations on how the Gardens are used and enjoyed
- » international trends from around the world.

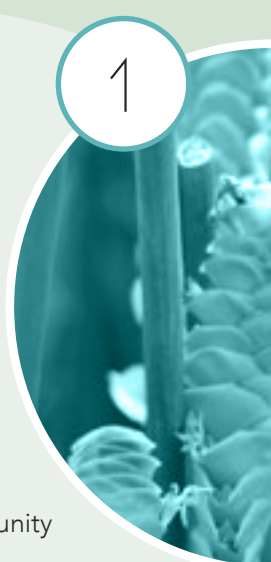
Once combined and refined, five key themes became evident. Each theme plays a crucial role in delivering the vision for the Gardens and directly relates to the protection, advancement and accessibility of the seeds, plants and collections of the botanic Gardens for the benefit of the community.

## Sensational learning

Education is at its most powerful and is almost intrinsic when all senses are used – sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha provides a natural opportunity to grow one's knowledge through the activation of each of these senses.

With a growing focus on conservation and sustainability, the Gardens provide the ideal space to increase learning opportunities in a hands-on environment, particularly for those with a sensory impairment. This open invitation extends to school groups, community groups, informal groups, family groups and individuals.

1



## A green retreat

Less than six kilometres from Brisbane's CBD, Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha invites locals, visitors, groups and individuals to discover the health and environmental benefits available when enjoying this important living space.

With the pace of the world ever increasing, the peace and calm that the Gardens offer are immeasurable. This city asset is available as a natural stress relief for everyone.

2





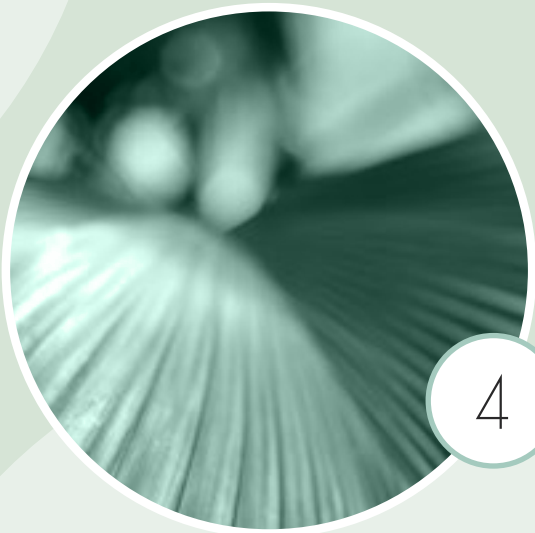
3

## Memorable experiences

Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha has the privilege of assisting in the creation of important experiences for all who enjoy the grounds. To thrive, the Gardens need to be enjoyed in multiple ways and by as many people as possible.

In addition to those who consider themselves plant-lovers, the large grounds provide the opportunity for recreation in many forms. From self-guided walks, to enjoying a picnic with friends or family, visiting the Gardens Café, children's garden or enjoying organised events and workshops, the appeal of the Gardens is broad and varied.

From the random moments to the planned occasions, solo or in groups, a visit to the Gardens will never be forgotten.



4

## Enjoyed by everyone

Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha thrives on the development of the Gardens' community, in every possible adaptation. By prioritising the physical access to paths and facilities, right through to increasing the awareness of collections, features and events, the Gardens will only prosper with a growth approach.

Increased accessibility to and within the Gardens will be a priority, so more visitors can comfortably enjoy the space. Through clever design and a clear system of pathways, artwork and signage, the visitor will be intuitively guided through the living collections to enjoy what the Gardens have to offer.

## Natural insurance

As the custodians of one of the best subtropical collections in the world, Council takes seriously the importance of preserving and protecting natural environments and exotic species for everyone to enjoy, now and in the future.

Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha will continue to expand, fine tune and embellish the existing collections for ongoing appreciation.



5

# THE MASTER PLAN

This *Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Master Plan 2018* sets the vision and strategic framework to guide the next generation of growth in the Gardens.

The delivery of the master plan builds on the foundation created over the last 30 years, reinforcing the Gardens as an internationally recognised, subtropical paradise with a unique and memorable identity and focus on plants.

This master plan balances conservation of the unique characteristics of the Gardens with enhancement, transformation and development so that future generations can enjoy this precious space.

Considerations that have informed the master plan include the following.

- » The need to provide for and encourage world-class scientific research.
- » To establish an international reputation as a renowned subtropical botanic garden.
- » To leverage the Gardens unique location adjacent to the Mt Coot-tha Reserve.
- » A critical need to improve legibility, wayfinding and interpretation of the Gardens so that the entire Gardens are explored and enjoyed.
- » An opportunity to increase education, learning and recreational opportunities.
- » A requirement to adapt the Gardens to be climate sensitive and sustainable.
- » A categorical commitment to ensuring all transformational efforts contribute to the Gardens botanical and horticultural richness and the experience and interpretation of and by visitors.

Five distinct precincts have been identified within the master plan to focus intentions and efforts so that key outcomes are achieved.

## **SITE-WIDE**

Ensures the Gardens are connected via a cohesive and aligned approach to provide a complete visitor experience.

## **ENTRY**

Creating a memorable first impression, the Gardens entry will welcome visitors to a botanic garden they will want to visit again.

## **LAKESIDE**

Leverages the existing Gardens centrepiece and offers a choice of experiences to visitors.

## **CENTRAL**

Profiles the heart of the Gardens to immerse visitors in a botanical experience.

## **AUSTRALIAN**

A place to connect with Australian flora.



AUSTRALIAN



SIR SAMUEL GRIFFITH DRIVE

WESTERN FREEWAY

CENTRAL

ENTRY

LAKESIDE

ANZAC PARK

MT COOT-THA ROAD

17

TOOWONG CEMETERY

# Site-wide ideas

Critical to a cohesive and complete visitor experience are unified site-wide practices. These initiatives weave the collections together into a single journey, encouraging and inviting the visitor to explore the living wonders of Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha.

The broad objectives include:

- » create an integrated journey that encourages exploration throughout the site
- » improve accessibility to major attractions and displays
- » increase both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout the Garden
- » focus on climate sensitivity and sustainability
- » engage visitors of all abilities and ages, and allow them to tailor their experience to suit their personal interests.

● *Planned*

## WAYFINDING

A central design directive may be rolled out across the Gardens to encourage visitors to explore in an intuitive and confident way. Five distinct precincts have been established. Each precinct may include interpretative signage, intuitive mapping, seating and artwork that contributes to the botanical display of that precinct. The wayfinding signage may include walking distances, trail difficulty and accessibility information.

● *Transformative ideas*

## ACTIVATION AND PROGRAMMING

An opportunity exists to extend the enjoyment of the Gardens through the programming of events and activities with a focus on horticulture and flora. The activation of the Gardens will look to increase the connection already felt by visitors, as well as begin a relationship with those not yet acquainted. Facilities, services and amenities may be increased to cater for functions such as weddings and birthdays. Public events will look to attract and diversify visitors, and facilitate the marketing of the Gardens.

## ACCESSIBILITY

While accessibility will be a key consideration for transport with the inclusion of an accessible people mover seven days a week and disabled car parks and drop off points throughout the Gardens, it may be extended into the design and consideration of new collections, facilities and activities.

## INTERPRETATION

Education is a key role of the gardens. Through learning, visitors increase their understanding, are inspired and ultimately enlightened on the wonder of plants. The interpretation of collections, geographical regions and specific plants allow visitors, of all ages and abilities, to increase their knowledge of the Gardens and their world-wide role.

## TRANSPORT

Critical to increasing visitation is the ongoing development and upgrading of transport facilities to and from the Gardens and to the wider Mt Coot-tha precinct. Council will continue to explore improvements across the precinct including better management of car parking at key attractions, improved wayfinding and signage, promotion of alternative transport options particularly at peak times and input to route planning for the planned Mt Coot-tha Shuttle Bus, a loop bus that will run frequently past key attractions.

In the Gardens, the redesign of the current car parks will be undertaken to maximise available spaces for cars and motorcycles, provide cycle racks and drop-off bays. Safe linkages to Ada Street car park and the links with the cemetery are proposed, in addition to bus stop improvements. The focus on cycling accessibility will be further increased through a designated cycle lane on the internal roadways and new cycle racks.

● *Garden-building Ideas*

## LIVING COLLECTION

Critical to the ongoing achievement and currency of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha vision, a 'living collection policy' will be developed to guide the continual improvement of each collection. The policy will be subject to ongoing evaluation and review to ensure the Gardens continue to encourage learning, appreciation and conservation by the community.

## CLIMATE SENSITIVITY

The living collection policy developed for the Gardens will refine the existing collection with a higher proportion of climate-suitable species. A succession plan combined with an onsite propagation and nursery function would allow for mature and rare specimens to be replaced should storm damage occur.

## WATER INDEPENDENCE

The Gardens will seek 100% independence from the city's water supply for irrigation. The number of lakes within the Gardens may be increased, upsizing the capacity to harvest and store water from rainfall. All new car parking areas will look to include water sensitive urban design.

## RECYCLING

The Gardens will look to recycle as much as possible. All organic waste, and food waste from onsite kitchens, may be recycled on site. Recycling bins could be available in picnic areas to encourage visitors to participate in the recycling program.

**CITRIODORA  
TRAIL TO  
MT COOT-THA  
SUMMIT**

**AUSTRALIAN  
PLANT TRAIL**

**BUNYA  
FOREST**

**AUSTRALIAN  
RAINFOREST**

**QUEENSLAND  
CONSERVATION**

**GARDENS  
EXPLORER  
TRAIL**

**LEGEND**

- Major activity area – concentration of active uses
- Major activity node – education tourism and event space
- Indoor activity node – event and tourism (indoor space)
- Outdoor activity node – event and tourism (outdoor space)
- Lawns – informal and/or programmed event space
- Artwork – point of interest

# Entry Precinct

The enhancement and upgrade of the entry to Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha provides one of the greatest opportunities to positively impact the appeal of the Gardens and the experience of the visitor.

The broad objectives of the Entry precinct include:

- » create a landmark arrival experience and positive first impression that encourages the visitor to step inside and discover the living wonders
- » highlight a unique Brisbane character and create an immediate affinity between people and place by integrating water features, striking native rainforest trees and colourful planting collections
- » introduce an intuitive wayfinding and signage program that promotes confidence and curiosity
- » showcase the key attractions and recreation options.

✓ Recently completed

## MT COOT-THA VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

The Mt Coot-tha Visitor Information Centre is the premier facility linking all activities available at Mt Coot-tha, including the planetarium, the lookout and mountain-wide recreational activities. The centre features a large covered area, visitor counter, internal displays, new accessible parking spaces and facilities plus a dedicated volunteer room and workspace.

● Transformative ideas

## EDUCATION HUB AND COUNCIL LIBRARY

This space will form part of the Entry precinct providing a framework that supports the education of school groups, educational bodies and visitors. A single structure may be built to house the library and education centre and connect to the existing auditorium. The establishment of this new structure will contribute to the delivery of *Council's Corporate Plan 2016-17-2020-21-2017* by increasing access to information and opportunities for learning, recreational reading and cultural activities, and ultimately the achievement of a New World City. This new structure and the upgrading of existing buildings would be holistically considered in the Entry precinct to maximise the sharing of space, facilities and amenities, and include formal, informal, structured and unstructured features to increase the capacity to learn and enjoy.



Artist's impression of entry plaza

## ENTRY PLAZA

An inviting landscaped plaza is envisaged for the open space, linking the education centre, auditorium and library with sheltered and accessible welcoming spaces, accessed by all transport modes. Also conveniently grouped in this area would be the entrances to the planetarium, herbarium, the Banks and Solander collection, and a series of rain gardens and water features which will collect roof-water from the surrounding buildings.

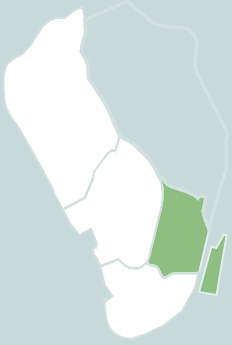
## CAR PARK REDESIGN

Redesign of the car park will look to be undertaken to ensure all visitors travel past the Mt Coot-tha Visitor Information Centre before parking. This could provide a clear pedestrian and cycle spine, increase the amount of vegetation within the car park, in addition to water sensitive urban design. The redesign would look to maximise parking spaces and also provide overflow parking at Ada Street and other precinct-wide car parks. Car parking available across the precinct is shown on the map on page 8 and 9.

## GARDENS BACK OF HOUSE

The back of house depot area and current materials storage areas will be streamlined, rationalised and upgraded to ensure the effective use of the space available. A new nursery area and small propagating facility will be established for potential operation by the Friends of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens and Sherwood Arboretum to allow visitors to take home planted-up species from the collection.





**PROJECT TYPE**

- ✔ Existing/recently completed
- Planned
- Transformative
- Garden building



**LEGEND**

- 1 Leisure precinct entry
- ✔ 2 Mt Coot-tha Visitor Information Centre
- 3 Banks and Solander display
- 4 Entry plaza and rain garden
- 5 Education hub and library
- 6 Arid Australian collection
- 7 Seed bank
- 8 Restaurant upgrade
- ✔ 9 Botanic gardens entry
- 10 Car park redesign
- ✔ 11 Herbarium entry and setting
- ✔ 12 Planetarium
- ✔ 13 Richard Randall Art Studio
- ✔ 14 Australian rainforest
- ✔ 15 Fragrant plants and herbs
- 16 Gardens back of house
- View point for the artists impression of the entry plaza

# Lakeside Precinct

The centerpiece of Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha is the magnificent lakes, creating a natural drawcard. Enhancement of this space would increase the appeal of the lakes and surrounding spaces as a destination, as well as the perfect starting point for ongoing discovery.

The broad objectives of the Lakeside precinct include:

- » enhance and establish living collections that could draw the visitor through the Gardens
- » highlight the picturesque lakes by improving water and edge quality and opening up views
- » provide recreation and activity options to increase the appeal beyond plants.

● *Planned*

## TROPICAL DISPLAY DOME

The large lattice structure known as the Tropical Dome has become the iconic symbol of the Gardens and one of the most popular displays since it was opened in December 1977. The dome is 28 metres in diameter and nine metres high, and provides a tropical climate close to the natural growing conditions for plants that wouldn't normally grow outdoors in Brisbane.

This display may be upgraded and enhanced with a focus on the internal pond, green walls and interpretation signage to explain the unique micro-climate.

● *Transformative ideas*

## CACTUS HOUSE

A custom-designed structure will look to be created, highlighting the popular cacti in unique and creative ways. Achieved by a soaring roof structure and a combination of materials and perspectives, this display will be sure to draw crowds and acclaim.

## ASIAN SISTER CITY GARDEN

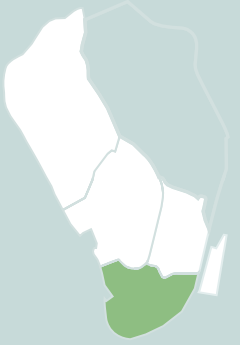
Partnering with a landscape designer from one of Brisbane's sister cities, the existing area surrounding the Bamboo Grove may be transformed into a traditional Chinese garden and could include a pagoda, bridge, rockery and traditional plants.

## A REDESIGN OF THE PLANT FAMILIES DISPLAY

Paying homage to the internationally acclaimed *Plant Families of the World* (authored by VH Heywood), this educational display may be redesigned to create an accessible, interactive and visual collection of plants grouped into their families.



Tropical Display Dome



**PROJECT TYPE**

- Existing
- Planned
- Transformative
- Garden building



**LEGEND**

- 1 Asian Sister City Garden
- 2 Pacific Island Collection relocation
- 3 Cacti House redesign
- 4 Playground upgrade
- 5 Kitchen Garden upgrade
- 6 Fruit Tree collection upgrade
- 7 Queensland Conservation collection
- 8 Primitive and Fossil plants display upgrade
- 9 Plant Families Display redesign
- 10 Tropical Display Dome upgrade
- 11 Temperate Region Plants Garden
- 12 Fern House
- 13 Arid Region Collection
- 👤 View point for the tropical display dome photograph

# Central Precinct

At the heart of the Gardens an opportunity exists to immerse the visitor in a dense and complex forest experience. Multiple trails leading to a large choice of collections offer different experiences throughout the Gardens.

The broad objectives of the Central precinct include:

- » enhance and upgrade existing displays to stimulate multiple senses
- » create a rich experience with high levels of detail
- » ensure wayfinding and interpretive displays create confidence and curiosity in the visitor.

## ● Planned

### BONSAI HOUSE

The Bonsai House may be redeveloped to exhibit the bonsai in a gallery-style format, provide a secure enclosure and a dedicated teaching space. Integrated signage and interpretive information would highlight key aspects of the display.

## ● Transformative ideas

### ASIAN PRECINCT

The newly formed Asian Precinct combines both the Bonsai House with the hugely popular Japanese Garden through the expansion of the visually-striking Bamboo Collection.

The Japanese Garden was designed by one of Japan's leading landscape architects, the late Kenzo Ogata, and has the theme of 'tsuki-yama-chisen' or 'mountain-pond-stream'. The pond and garden were first featured in the Japanese Government Pavilion at Brisbane's World Expo '88, and were relocated to the gardens on 6 February 1989.



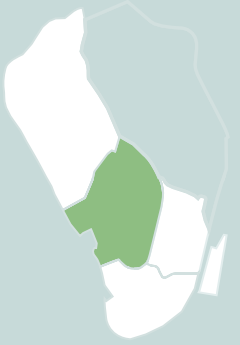
View from the Gardens lookout

### TRI CONTINENTAL TREE TOP WALK AND LOOKOUT CAFE

The existing lookout may be remodeled to allow the rustic log structure to shine. Large viewing decks may be added to make the most of the breathtaking city views through the trees. A tree top walk would invite visitors to walk among the canopy of trees from the Americas, Africa and Australian Bunya Forest collections. A pop-up cafe or coffee cart could cater to those seeking to linger a little longer.

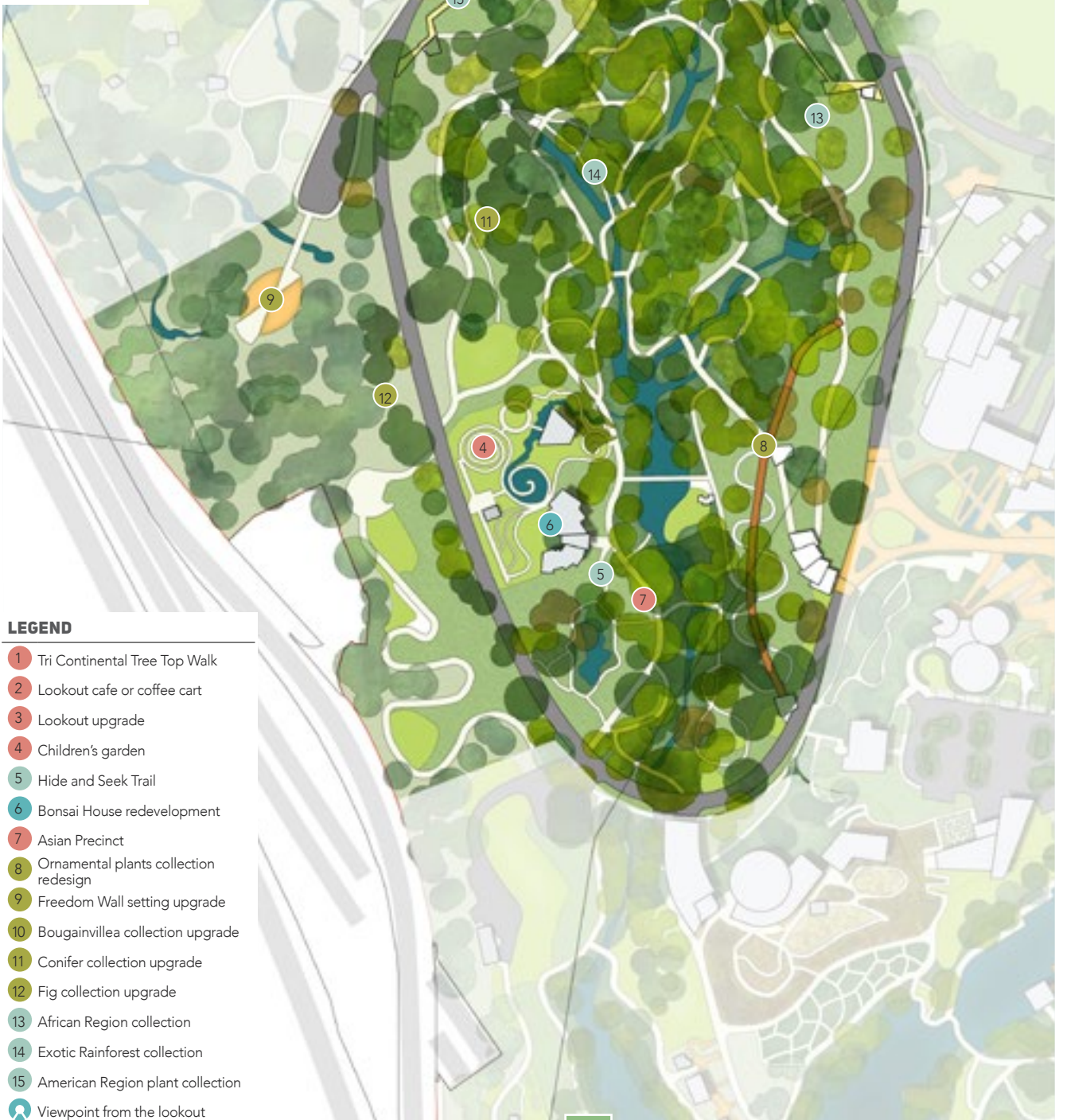
### CHILDREN'S GARDEN

The underused bandstand area could be transformed into a children's garden – a unique sensory botanical haven that would inspire children to learn as they play among the plants. With a hands-on focus, children would connect with the environment, themselves and each other.



**PROJECT TYPE**

- Existing
- Planned
- Transformative
- Garden building



**LEGEND**

- 1 Tri Continental Tree Top Walk
- 2 Lookout cafe or coffee cart
- 3 Lookout upgrade
- 4 Children's garden
- 5 Hide and Seek Trail
- 6 Bonsai House redevelopment
- 7 Asian Precinct
- 8 Ornamental plants collection redesign
- 9 Freedom Wall setting upgrade
- 10 Bougainvillea collection upgrade
- 11 Conifer collection upgrade
- 12 Fig collection upgrade
- 13 African Region collection
- 14 Exotic Rainforest collection
- 15 American Region plant collection
- Viewpoint from the lookout

# Australian Precinct

With the pace of the world speeding up, Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha offers a place of natural beauty in our emerging city. A unique native experience including a tall canopy, detailed understory and a sense of openness combine to allow visitors many moments of magic.

The broad objectives of the Australian precinct include:

- » showcase the best of Australian flora
- » provide a park-like space for visitors to rest and recover
- » create an experience that visitors come back for.

## ● Transformative ideas

### AUSTRALIAN PRECINCT CORE UPGRADE

The zipline attraction (subject to approval) will be a transformational project to Mt Coot-tha. Leveraging breathtaking views of Brisbane City, the attraction will be an holistic eco-tourism offering and provide connectivity to the Garden's living collections, lakes, boardwalk, and tree tops walk. The upgrade of the precinct core will deliver:

- » improved parking, bus drop-off and cycle racks
- » zipline landing
- » picnic settings
- » accessible toilets
- » accessible lookouts over the living collection.

### EUCALYPT AND ACACIA FOREST

The current Eucalypt and Acacia Forest could be improved by planting a wider selection of species, including rare and endangered varieties, as well as indigenous planting. A new garden could also be designed and located within this precinct, that interprets Mt Coot-tha Reserve in its natural regenerating state.

Traffic noise may be muffled naturally through the creation of waterways, complete with waterfalls, ponds and riffles. The ponds would in turn harvest and store water that can then be reused for irrigation.

### BOARDWALK AND LOOKOUT

A boardwalk may be constructed around the edge of the picturesque Australian Plant Communities and lake to increase visitor access and comfort when visiting these world-class collections. The boardwalk would look to cover the embankment to account for the fluctuating water levels of the lake and also cleverly conceal irrigation infrastructure installed underneath.

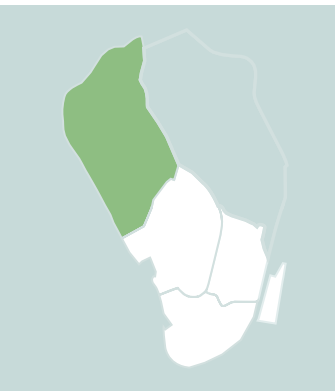
The ring road and car park could be redesigned to minimise the amount of roadway and return asphalt to green space. This would provide an attractive planted car park and give access to a premium lookout and raised picnic shelters.

### NATIVE ORCHID HOUSE

A new botanical drawcard may be added to Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha with the inclusion of a Native Orchid House. Located between the International and Australian gardens, this shaded structure would be cut into the hillside to minimise the visual impact from the lookout and display a wide array of native orchids.



Artist's impression – Melaleuca Lake boardwalk

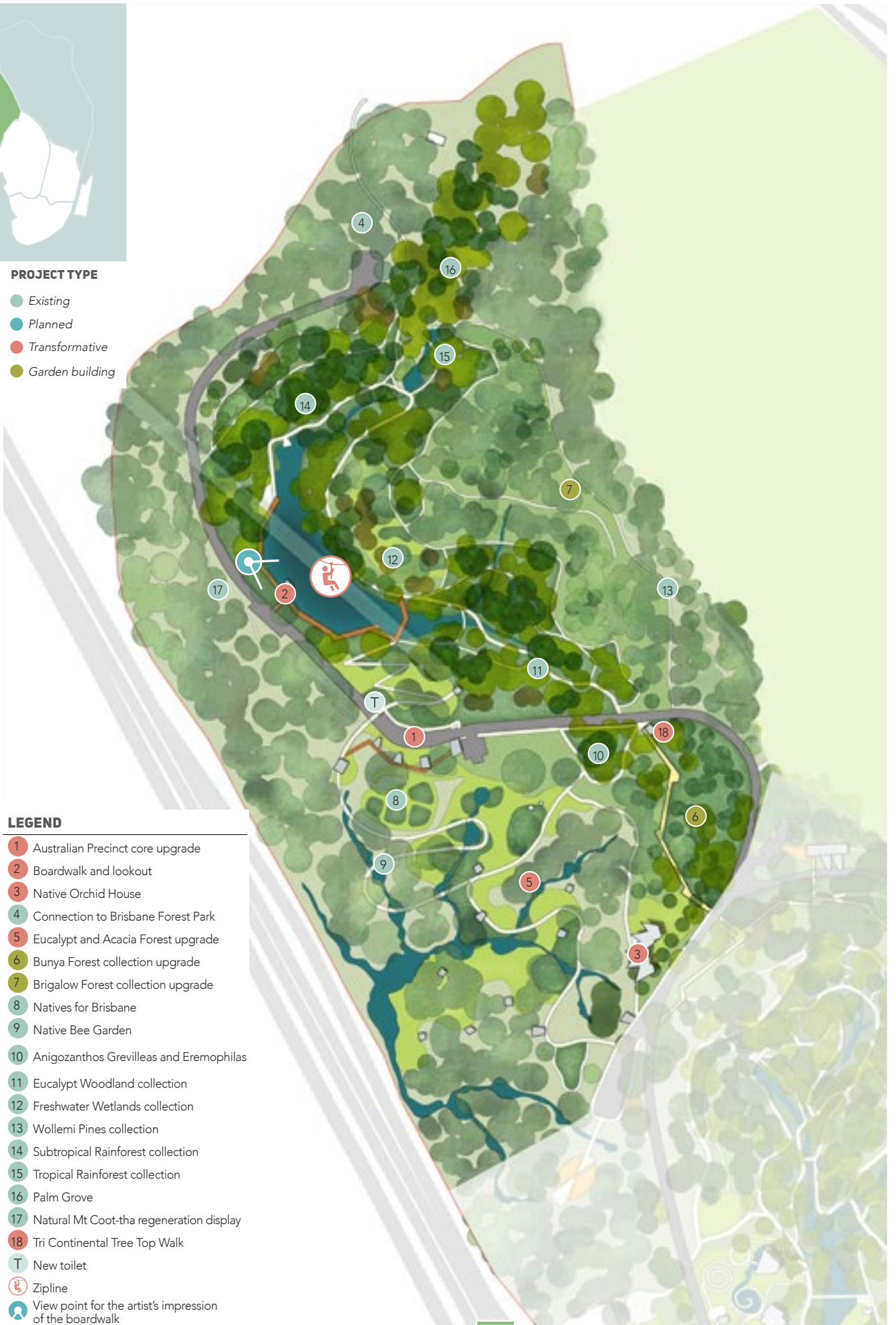


**PROJECT TYPE**

- Existing
- Planned
- Transformative
- Garden building

**LEGEND**

- 1 Australian Precinct core upgrade
- 2 Boardwalk and lookout
- 3 Native Orchid House
- 4 Connection to Brisbane Forest Park
- 5 Eucalypt and Acacia Forest upgrade
- 6 Bunya Forest collection upgrade
- 7 Brigalow Forest collection upgrade
- 8 Natives for Brisbane
- 9 Native Bee Garden
- 10 Anigozanthos Grevilleas and Eremophilas
- 11 Eucalypt Woodland collection
- 12 Freshwater Wetlands collection
- 13 Wollemi Pines collection
- 14 Subtropical Rainforest collection
- 15 Tropical Rainforest collection
- 16 Palm Grove
- 17 Natural Mt Coot-tha regeneration display
- 18 Tri Continental Tree Top Walk
- T New toilet
- ⚡ Zipline
- 👁 View point for the artist's impression of the boardwalk









# Implementation

Delivery of projects and ideas in this master plan will require detailed planning in the years ahead and will need to consider Council's annual budget allocation, partnerships between Council and other levels of government, our sister cities, the corporate sector and operators in the Gardens, the Friends of the Botanic Gardens and members of the community.



**PROJECT TYPE**

- Planned
- Transformative
- Garden building

**LEGEND**

**Council** – Council recurrent budget or future funding bids.

**Partnerships** – Collaboration with State and Federal Governments and the private sector to deliver transformational and Garden-building projects.

**Community** – Working with the Friends of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens and Sherwood Arboretum and the public to facilitate continual ongoing improvement of the gardens.



Note: Timesframes and funding streams are indicative – project delivery is subject to further investigation






**Brisbane City Council  
Information**

GPO Box 1434  
Brisbane Qld 4001

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