



View of the Homestead complex from the Visitor Complex.

ROYAL PARK LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

Second Stage competition entry by
Green Dale & Wright Pty Ltd

ROYAL PARK AND ITS IMMEDIATE VICINITY, located on the edge of Victoria's western basalt plains, were crossed by Burke and Wills, along with other early day Australian explorers. The indigenous landscape they experienced was comprised of open wind-swept 'grasslands with park-like woodlands of she-oaks, gum trees and wattles' on areas of high ground and lower areas where streams and billabongs persisted. Their encounters with native Aborigines, emus and kangaroos occurred within this legendary landscape which captured the images, sounds and aromas of what we have come to romanticise as 'The Sunburnt Country'. As the starting point for many explorations of Australia's great interior and as a place typical of subsequent pioneer homesteads and rural settlements, the vicinity of Royal Park has a strong link with Australia's heritage. Yet this heritage has been largely lost to the metropolitan sprawl. Most Australians no longer experience their landscape heritage within their modest urban habitats and must go some distance into the hinterlands to find some semblance of the past.

Royal Park offers the opportunity to recapture, in part, our landscape heritage and integrate it with the recreation needs of a culture that has changed greatly over the years, but still seeks its link with the historic landscape and its traditions.

Therefore, the proposal for Royal Park's redevelopment attempts to re-establish the essence of its historic sense of place with a number of open grassland (native grasses) areas — reminiscent of plains and paddocks — surrounded by open woodlands with large trees. Enclosed woodlands and wetlands are located where appropriate site conditions exist. Within this bush setting pockets of green irrigated parkland

are provided, as necessary, to cater for more intensive public use. Visitors can walk through the bush, take a horse and buggy ride, have an afternoon tea or engage in any of the existing activities including the zoo, field sports, and golf.

To facilitate the establishment of this parkland setting it was necessary to resolve many long standing planning and design problems associated with the park. The primary objectives which underlie the Master Plan include the following:

- rationalise traffic patterns through and around the park minimizing their impact on the park
- improve pedestrian access to and within the park
- accommodate the recreational needs of the local community
- recognise the regional importance of the park
- obtain a better balance between passive and active recreation opportunities.

A reduced copy of the Master Plan is shown on the next page. Specific areas with reference numbers on the map are referred to in the following description of the Master Plan.

The concept consists of a central park core containing essential regional recreation facilities. This is located between the zoo (6) and cricket meadow hill (8). Access into the park centre is off the proposed MacArthur Road/Elliot Avenue Parkway. Through park traffic is consolidated on the Parkway taking pressure off the roads surrounding the park. A landbridge (2) is proposed in the area to the centre of the park to improve pedestrian access between the north and south areas of the park, while minimizing the impact of the parkway. Around the perimeter of the park a series of strategically located neighbourhood parks (13-19) are proposed to serve the adjacent neighbourhoods. The area



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To Flemington Bridge

ROYAL PARK STATION

10

19

RANSFORD OVAL

MALISTER OVAL

RYDER OVAL

POPLAR OVAL

15

21

18

11

SAIR HUBBY GROUND

7

17

5

6

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between the neighbourhood parks and regional facilities is passive open space comprised of open woodland. A park loop track forms a circuit around the park linking the various local and regional facilities. This loop track is for use by pedestrians, cyclists and a horse drawn carriage.

Regional visitors enter the park via the Parkway, arriving at the park centre which is comprised of the visitor centre (1), the homestead complex (3), explorer's park (4) and the zoo (6). The visitor centre and carpark are located at the entrance and contain information regarding the various activities and facilities within the park.

From the visitor centre visitors can obtain a view to the homestead complex which provides the main new focus within the park. The homestead is the single most important structural addition to the park, providing a strong image and expression of Australian cultural heritage. The homestead is located on the edge of the hilltop grassland and is accessible only by walking. Facilities at the homestead include: tearooms (indoor and outdoor eating), a caretaker's residential area, kitchen, carriage shed, horse corral, small orchards and garden. Horses can be hired here and ridden on a track around the edge of the grassland.

Explorer's park is found between the zoo and visitor centre and provides for a variety of uses. It forms a major picnic and barbecue area in proximity to the zoo and includes a large water play sculpture (5) as its central focus. The inspiration for this structure derives from the mythical inland sea that led many early explorers inland. The main entry drive to this area has been named Burke & Wills Avenue.

Improvements are suggested to the zoo forecourt and a new entry at the rear of the zoo is proposed (10). Carparking which exists in front of the zoo wall has been relocated to form a broad pedestrian boulevard to the zoo entry. An expanded carpark is provided at the rear entry to serve the zoo and various sporting venues.

Cricket meadow hill (8) forms a large multi-use area for horse riding, cricket, football, kite flying and special events. A new roadway is proposed to provide access for carparking and toilets/change room. This road brings visitors to the edge of the space but does not encroach upon the hilltop. Doutta Galla Grove (9) is a simple planting of large trees at the top of the hill in memory of the Doutta Galla tribe that originally inhabited this area.

Streetscape/traffic improvements are proposed for Park Street, Gatehouse Street and The Avenue. Park Street is to be narrowed to one lane each way with parking provided for visitors. Gatehouse Street is to be realigned (within its existing reserve) to form a landscape buffer to the existing housing (see illustration).

For the purpose of preparing the second stage submission we formed a project team with the necessary skills to undertake the project. The various team members and their proposed roles are shown below:

Green Dale & Wright Landscape Architects — Team Leaders responsible for landscape planning and design.

Kinhill Stearns Engineers & Planners — Responsible for project management and engineering issues.

Keith Pearson & Associates — Traffic Planner.

Rural Trees Australia (John Fenton) — Responsible for advice on broadacre tree planting.

Louise Honman — Heritage Architect.



KEY

- 1 VISITOR CENTRE
- 2 LAND BRIDGE
- 3 HOMESTEAD COMPLEX
- 4 EXPLORERS PARK
- 5 EXPLORERS WATER SCULPTURE
- 6 ZOO FORECOURT
- 7 BURKE & WILLS AVENUE
- 8 CRICKET MEADOW HILL
- 9 DOUTTA GALLA GROVE
- 10 NEW ZOO ENTRY
- 11 SPORTS COMPLEX
- 12 BOCCE ALLEY
- Neighbourhood Parks
- 13 • PARKVILLE
- 14 • GRACE FRASER PARK
- 15 • THE AVENUE
- 16 • FRESHWATER
- 17 • ANZAC HILL
- 18 • MANNINGHAM ROAD
- 19 • BRUNSWICK
- 20 WILLIAM BUCKLEY WALK
- 21 PARK ENTRY GATES

Bocce courts.

