

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden

Master Plan Review



AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS
BOTANIC GARDEN



Port Augusta



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Master Plan Review

Revision: A

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
2. INTRODUCTION	4
3. HISTORY	5
4. PROCESS.....	7
5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	8
6. EXISTING SITUATION.....	11
7. MASTER PLAN	19
8. MATERIALS.....	31
9. ACTIONS.....	34
10. APPENDIX.....	36



PortAugusta

CITY COUNCIL INITIATIVE



**AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS
BOTANIC GARDEN**

I. Executive Summary

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is envisaged as the pre-eminent facility for the display of the plant biodiversity of the southern arid zones of Australia.

The Garden is owned and operated by the Port Augusta City Council for the benefit of the local and wider community. The establishment of a botanic garden to display arid flora was first accepted by Council in 1981.

This document is a review of the first integrated Master Plan for the Garden site. The purpose of a Master Plan is to set a direction for future development. Botanic Gardens develop over long time periods as the landscape plantings grow and are replaced.

A Botanic Garden exists to satisfy diverse needs for a range of users. These activities should be provided within a framework that protects, enhances and develops the Garden over time. The philosophy of the Garden development can be summarised into key words and phrases.

- Primacy of the landscape
- Sustainability
- Conservation
- Education
- Community

The development of the garden landscape and the arid zone flora collections is the essence of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden. The established informal landscape and pedestrian character is to be maintained. The character of the garden should be of dispersed points of interest set in the landscape, encouraging exploration by visitors.

The Garden site has a variety of original landscape types within its boundaries. Ongoing works to preserve and enhance their conservation is to continue.

The further development of the flora collection will continue to occur within the intensive garden zones. A focus of development will be the creation of an “immersed” experience of regional zones for visitors.



It is proposed to align existing and future regional planting zones with the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA).

It is proposed to establish additional specific purpose plantings and points of interest to extend the diversity of the garden.

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden has built infrastructure that ranges from pedestrian pathways to a high quality Visitor Centre.

The considered development of all infrastructure provisions over time is critical to maintaining the character of the Garden and its unique visitor experience. Infrastructure development should remain secondary to the landscape as far as is practicable.

The Visitor Centre is the largest infrastructure provision and provides a conceptual development framework. The internal spaces have been modified to suit newer needs and considered planning is required to provide for current and new activities into the future. Future expansion of built development is unlikely and will be considered should it be required.

The materials utilised at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden have a critical role in the determination of the site character and to the messages that visitors will take from the site. The essence of the site is to create a landscape where the flora is the dominant feature and the materials palette is therefore philosophically, aesthetically and functionally responsive to the environment.

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden has been successfully and progressively developed over time to retain its unique character and with appropriate attention this can continue.

2. Introduction

“the arid and semi-arid lands are those remote and sparsely populated areas of inland Australia, defined by the presence of desert vegetation and land forms as well as by low rainfall.”

CSIRO Centre for Arid Zone Research - www.cazr.csiro.au/aridlands.htm

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is envisaged as the pre-eminent facility for activities associated with the display of the plant biodiversity of the southern arid zones of Australia.

Shannon Architects were commissioned by the Port Augusta City Council in 2019 to undertake a review of the 2009 Master Plan for the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden. This review was instigated to examine site developments that have occurred in the 10 year time interval and refocus plans as necessary to reflect both development progress and changed circumstances. In particular long term sustainability based upon current economic constraints is necessary.

Previous Master Plans had been prepared early in the development of the garden and recommendations have been implemented, varied or superseded by subsequent development of the site. Both studies, by necessity, focused upon the need, justification and purpose of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden. As the Garden is now established as part of the “culture” of the Port Augusta and wider community this focus is not a significant part of this document.

Concept planning for built facilities had always been considered within the context of future development however prior to the 2009 Masterplan overall design principles and standards have not been collated into a single reference document. The 2009 Master Plan was the first integrated Master Plan for the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden site and was intended to document the site history and provide a plan for a 5-10 year period.

This Master Plan Review should be read with the following drawings.
Future Site Plan
Future Detailed Plan



3. History

The establishment of an Australian botanic garden, displaying arid zone flora was proposed by Port Augusta's first Parks & Gardens Superintendent, John Zwar in 1981. That same year the proposal was accepted by the Port Augusta City Council with the support of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide.

A site of approximately 250 ha, 2 kilometres along the Stuart Highway north of Port Augusta was selected. It contained significant natural vegetation including Western Myall woodland, chenopod plain and coastal vegetation, including mangroves and samphire on the shoreline of Spencer Gulf.

Public support grew for the botanic garden concept and a State Government Committee was set up in 1983 to investigate the proposal. It reported favourably, but without financial commitment. The following year an active "Friends" group was formed which promoted the garden widely, sought funds and lobbied for development.

During the 1980's, site development was funded by Council and the Friends group with on ground work assistance from Government unemployment relief schemes. A Management Advisory Committee was established in 1988 by the Port Augusta City Council to seek further funding and oversee development.

The 1990's saw the development of a Master Plan, employment of the garden's first full-time staff member, major infrastructure development and the opening of the award-winning Visitor Centre. During this time major sponsorships assisted with the extensive development of infrastructure and plant collections.

Between 2000 and 2010 financial assistance from Government, the South Australian mining sector and the Friends group made possible improvements to infrastructure, expansion of Visitor Centre facilities and garden improvements and features.

Between 2010 and 2020 a variety of the developments envisaged in the 2009 Masterplan have been implemented. These have generally been of smaller scale however have added significant attractions in the garden context.



Visitor Centre Precinct prior to construction

Core annual funding from the Corporation of the City of Port Augusta together with the valuable contributions of the Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden continues to benefit this important facility and arid zone plant collection.

3.1 Development History

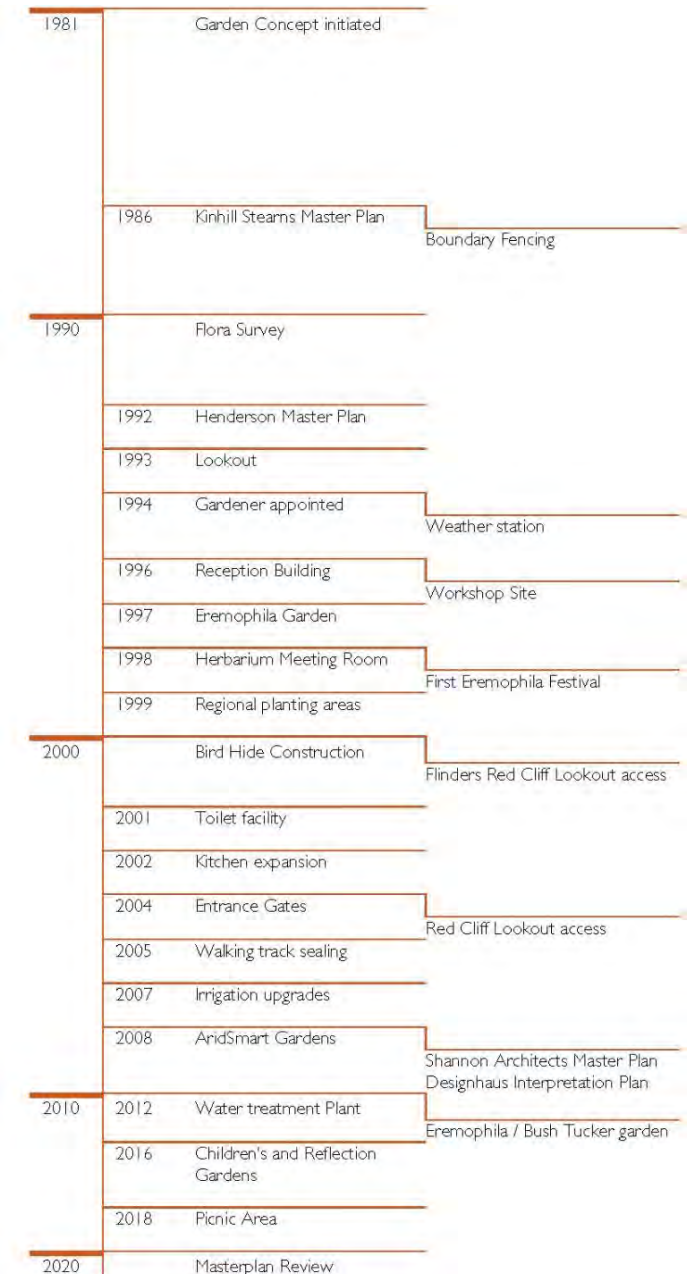
There have been three major site Master Plans prepared for the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden site (Kinhill Stearns – 1986 and Henderson - 1992).

The Kinhill Stearns report was prepared in the early stages of the exploration of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden concept and to a large degree has been superseded by subsequent Master Plans and site designs. It is of interest to note that concepts included arid zone plantings from around the world and proposed a considerably larger intensive garden footprint than is likely to be realised in the foreseeable future.

Henderson focused on more detailed aspects of the Garden. In particular the entrance road route was determined and subsequently constructed based upon this report, effectively confirming the location of the primary visitor facilities. Soils, flora and fauna surveys were undertaken in some detail and remain relevant.

The appointment of Shannon Architects to design the Reception building in 1995 marked the commencement of intensive site development which has been ongoing since that time.

The 2009 Masterplan by Shannon Architects was the first integrated plan for the site.



4. Process

This document is a Masterplan Review and while all elements have been reconsidered a comprehensive re-evaluation of site use and development was not intended nor undertaken.

Consultation was undertaken with Council Management, Garden staff and representatives of the Friends Group.

Participants

Shannon Architects David Shannon

Port Augusta City Council John Banks CEO
Anne O'Reilly
Melissa Kretschmer
Susanne McKell

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Staff

Friends of Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden



5. Guiding Principles

"The mission of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is to provide a facility for the conservation of a collection of Australia's arid zone flora, including threatened species and plant communities. It is to increase popular and scientific understanding of the arid zone environment through education on a regional, national and international level and the promotion of arid zone plants by fostering appreciation and research into their special qualities and horticultural potential."

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Mission statement

A Botanic Garden exists to satisfy a number of differing needs for a wide range of user groups. As a result the activities within the Garden can be and are diverse. These activities, and the facilities that they require, should be provided within a philosophical and management framework that protects, enhances and develops the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden over time.



5.1 Activities

C Stuart Gager, a director of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, indicated five primary purposes for Botanic Gardens. This observation was made in an article published in 1937 that collated surveys from the majority of Botanic Gardens from around the world.

“The early dates of establishment of some of these institutions, still flourishing, emphasize a point the writer has made elsewhere, namely, the great momentum of botanic gardens – their tendency to persist through financial and other discouragements, political and social upheavals, and changes in the place of emphasis in botanical science. This shows that botanic gardens minister to fundamental human needs – scientific, educational, recreational, civic and economic.”

Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record Vol XXVI No 3 July 1937

This observation is still of relevance and offers a framework for the definition and consideration of site activities and philosophies.

There are already a wide range of activities that occur within the AALBG site. These activities will have differing purposes and meanings for varying groups and individuals. It is anticipated that all of these activities will continue and be expanded over time.

5.2 Philosophy

The philosophy of Garden development is discussed throughout this report. These philosophies can be summarised into key words and phrases to avoid an over emphasis on description.

- Primacy of the landscape
- Sustainability
- Conservation
- Education
- Community
- Economic Development

	Now	Future
Science	Research Conservation Conferences	
Education	Interpretation Conservation Observation Festivals Conferences Formal training Exhibitions Tours Children's garden / play space	Indigenous culture
Recreation	Interpretation Picnics Observation Festivals Exhibitions Tours Retail Sales Walking Children's garden / play space	Night walks Events Music
Civics	Volunteering Conservation Festivals Conferences Exhibitions Children's garden / play space	Weddings
Economics	Conservation Research Festivals Conferences Retail Sales Tours Plant sales Exhibitions / Events	Integrated external tours Indigenous culture

5.3 Management

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is owned and operated by the Port Augusta City Council for the benefit of the local and wider community.

The Garden was established under a Deed of Trust in 2002 and operates in accordance with Pt Augusta City Council By Law No 8 of 2019.

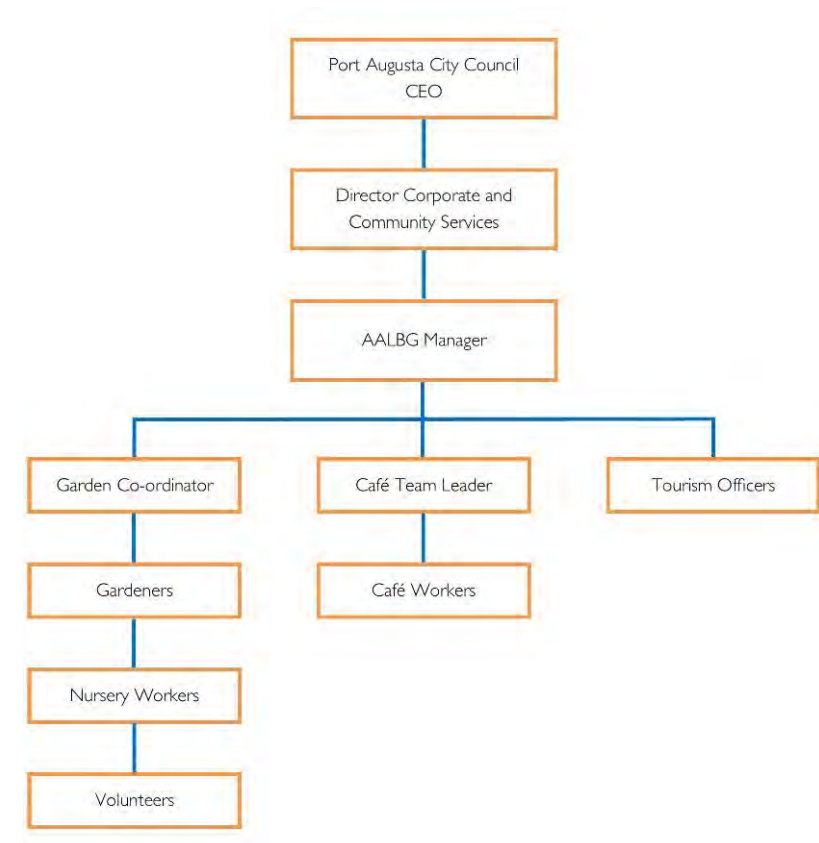
The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden Committee, a prescribed committee of the Port Augusta City Council, meet at least twice per year. The objectives of the Committee are to monitor the implementation of the AALBG Strategic Plan and to provide advice to Council on opportunities for the development of The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden to ensure that it becomes an internationally recognised centre of excellence for AridSmart Plants and outback visitor experiences.

In addition to Council management the Friends of the AALBG were formed in 1984 and have contributed, and continue to contribute, significantly to the development of the Garden.

The Adelaide Botanic Garden has been a supporter and contributor. Corporate partners have included WMC Limited and ETSA.

The purpose of this report is not to provide comment on the management structure however Garden management policies will impact upon site development and management. Current policies include:

- Collections Policy No. 2.6.03
- Environmental Protection Policy No. 2.6.02



6. Existing Situation

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is located on the Stuart Highway on the outskirts of the City of Port Augusta. The primary site of more than 200 Ha is devoted to the Garden itself with the Research Site located on the opposite (southern) side of the Highway. Whilst the entire site is designated as a botanic garden, intensive garden development is restricted to a relatively small portion with the balance devoted to the conservation of the existing landscape.

Development of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden was first proposed in 1981. Over more than 35 years a wide range of projects have been undertaken to improve and enrich the Garden and its facilities to the benefit of visitors.

These developments have capitalised on the natural features of the site that should continue to be preserved and enhanced into the future.

The discussion below describes and offers limited analysis of the current situation.



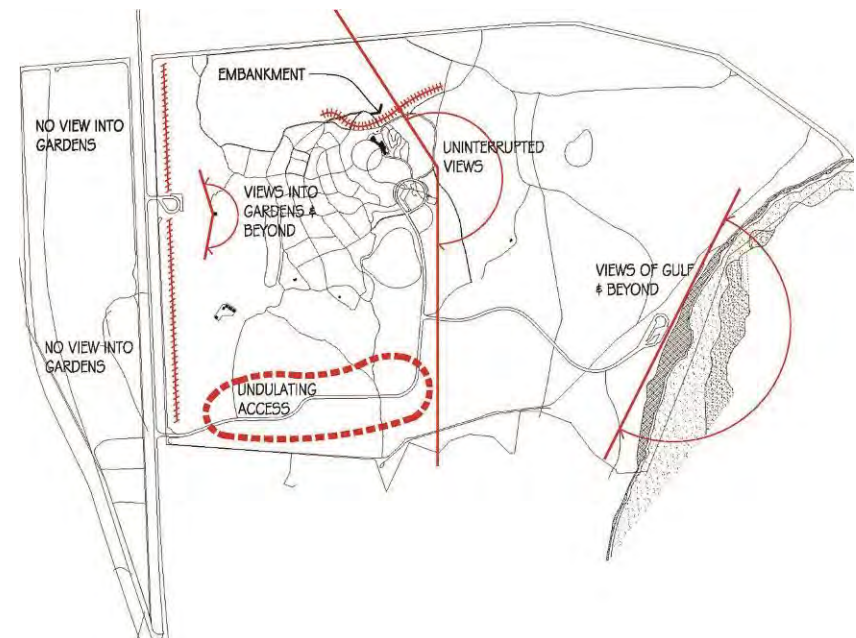
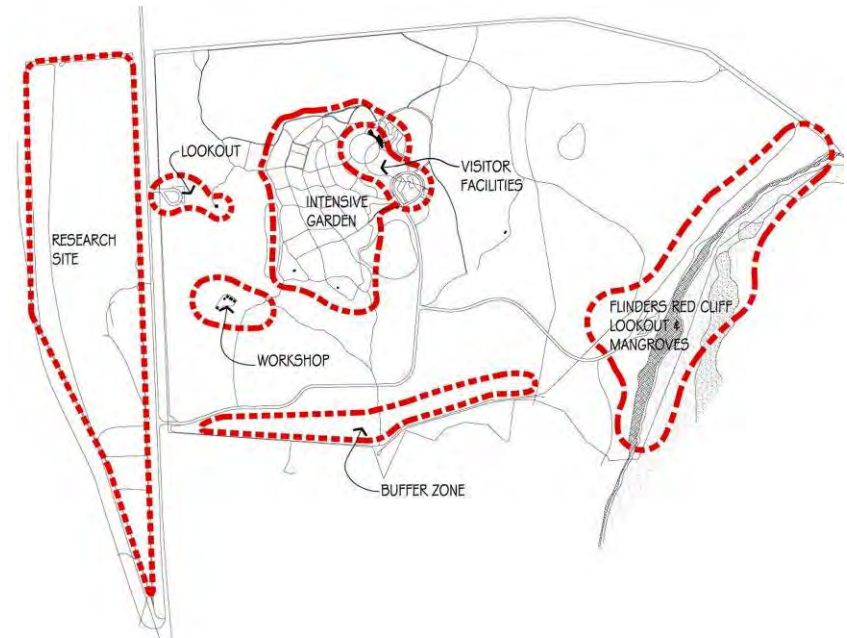
6.1 Setting

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is located on the fringe of the arid zone that it represents. This zone is characterised by median rainfall of about 300 mm per annum.

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden site has the natural advantage of a variety of original landscape types within its boundaries. These include Western Myall Woodland, Chenopod Plains, Dunes and a frontage to Spencer Gulf with associated beach and mangroves.

There are limited significant views into the Garden from the Stuart Highway however a high quality view of the Gardens and landscape beyond is provided at the lookout. This has some advantage for first time visitors who approach through an undulating landscape which at its end offers a spectacular view to the Flinders Ranges. This view to the north is maintained along the access road and the majority of public areas.

Indigenous sites of significance were identified as part of the original Kinhill Stearns report. The boundaries of these sites will require investigation prior to development in adjacent areas.



6.2 Access and Movement

Access

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden is located on the outskirts of Port Augusta and the majority of visitors access the site by motor vehicle. There is one public vehicle access point from the Stuart Highway however access points to the Garden and Research Area are available to staff.

Pedestrian entry points connect with walking routes to Port Augusta.

Vehicles

Public vehicles are constrained to the two major access roads with car parking located at the Visitor Centre, Lookout and the Flinders Red Cliff Lookout. Overflow parking remains in an unconstrained form.

Maintenance staff can access the Garden by a variety of tracks and the pedestrian track network. Areas of the network suffer due to the frequency of these movements. Some high frequency routes are located within intensive visitor areas and are detrimental to the site experience

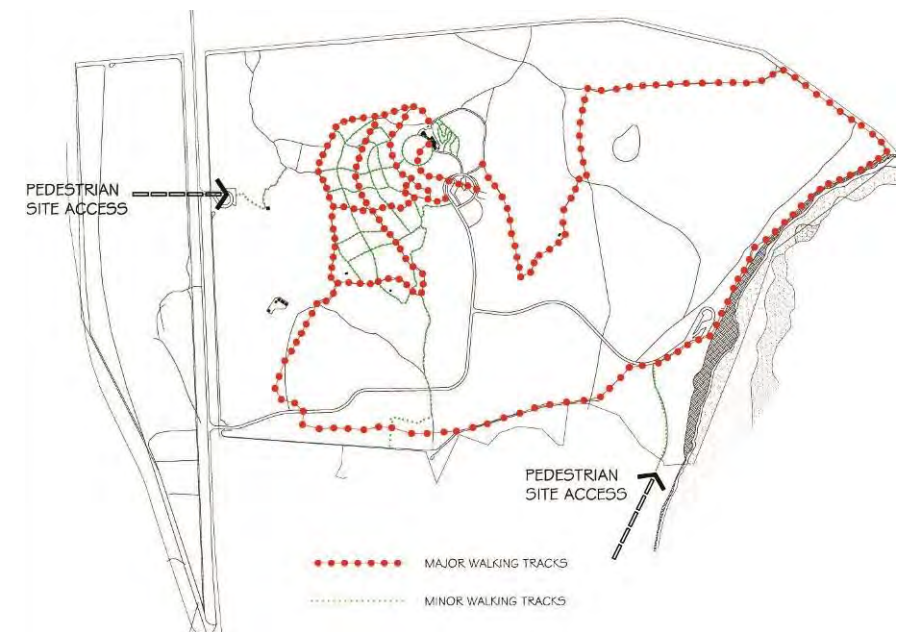
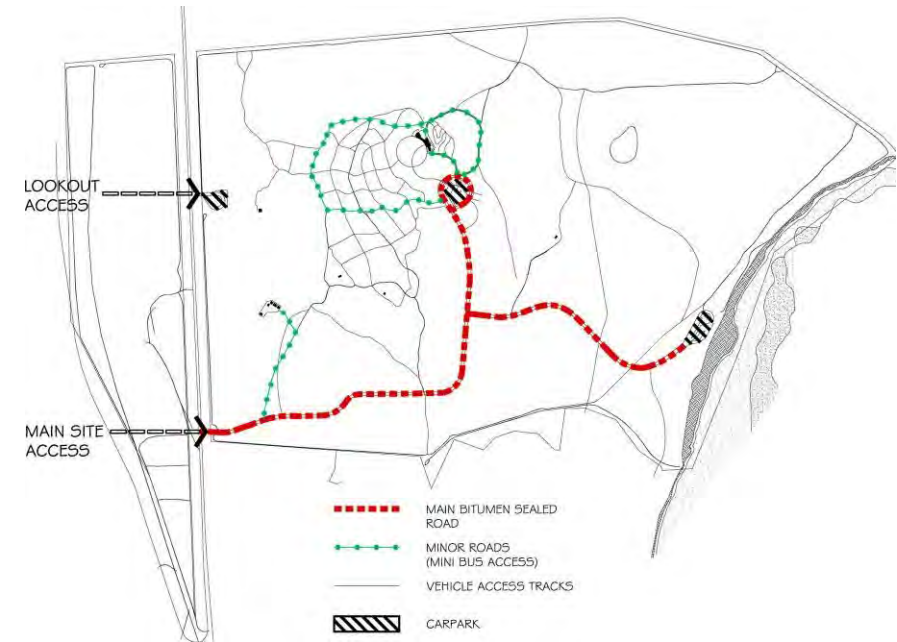
Tour vehicles (small) are able to access the intensive plantings on a designated route by arrangement.

Pedestrians

Access to the Garden and its collections once visitors have parked their vehicles is pedestrian.

There is a primary access pathway connecting the Visitor Centre and carpark. This path relates to original design concepts that have been weakened by the installed route which was appropriate in the early stage of development of the site however now requires attention.

Major circulation track routes have been planned to offer visitors an experience of the Garden. Lesser track planning suffers from an excess of 4 way intersections, some lack of definition and limited immersive experiences which impact on visitor experience and way finding. 4 way intersections provide excessive choice and require complex signage at every junction. The focus for visitors becomes wayfinding rather than the enjoyment of the garden environment.



6.3 Garden

The development of the garden landscape and the arid zone flora collections is the essence of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden. Plantings have been ongoing since the establishment of the site.

For the purpose of discussion landscape types are separated into three categories.

- Conservation zone
- Intensive plantings
- Specific purpose plantings

Conservation Zone

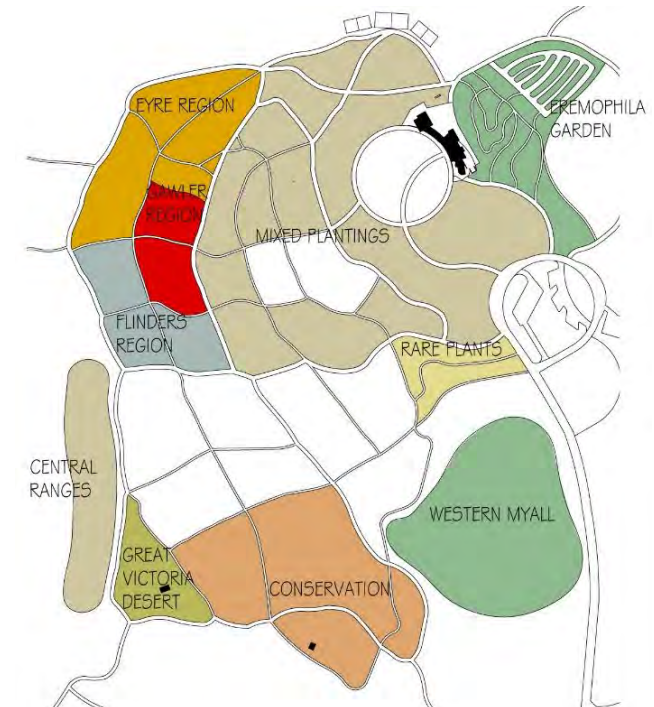
Large areas of the Garden are examples of remnant natural vegetation types. These include Chenopod Plains, Dunes and Western Myall Woodland. These areas have been improved and conserved through plantings, weed control and pest eradication.

Intensive Planting Zones

The development of the flora collection occurs within these intensive zones, the majority of which are located within walking distance of the Visitor Centre. This zone is arranged to include areas of mixed plantings and regional collections as follows:

- Mixed planting and rare plants
- Eremophila Garden
- Eyre Region
- Gawler Region
- Flinders Region
- Central Ranges
- Great Victoria Desert

It is of interest to note that the Henderson Report proposed the arrangement of the collection in six “vegetation associations”.



The current arrangement of plantings provides a primarily “outside looking in” experience for visitors with limited opportunity for an “immersed” experience of regional plantings.

The Brown Collection, which represents specimens collected during Brown's exploration of the region, is associated with the Flinders Red Cliff Lookout due to the historical association with the site.

Specific Purpose Plantings

Within the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden there are zones of vegetation that have been created for specific outcomes utilising arid zone flora that is represented on the site and/or in the collections.

- Buffer zone – visually screens the adjoining urban development from the Garden.
- Roadside plantings – provides visual patterns and interest to reduce the impact of the straight section of the access road.
- Courtyard planting – intent is to provide high visual impact for visitors to create a distinct zone within the Garden.
- AridSmart Display Gardens – provides a public education function to communicate the potential for the use of arid zone plants in urban gardens.
- Research zone – includes limited plantings for research purposes with potential for specific project use.

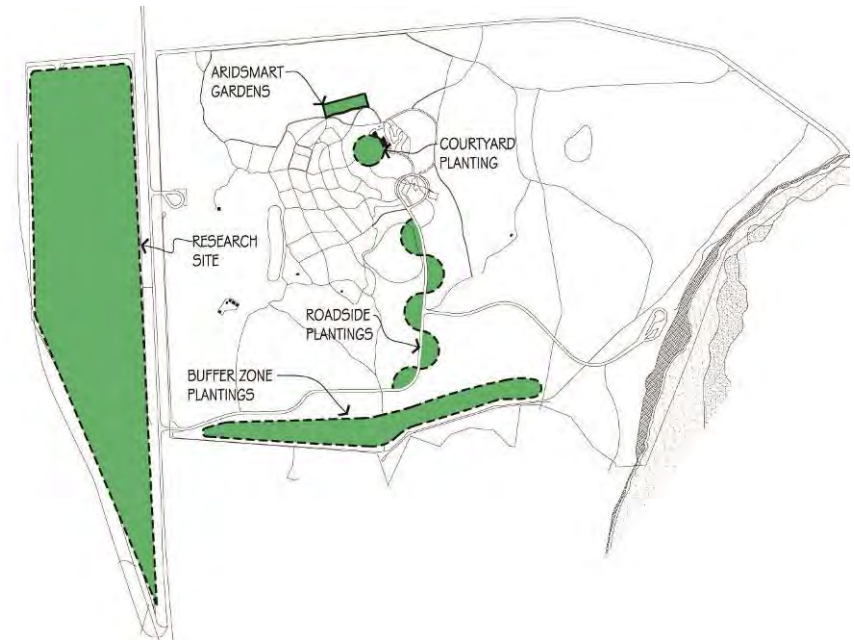
6.4 Infrastructure

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden has built infrastructure that ranges from pedestrian pathways to a high quality Visitor Centre. These facilities have been developed progressively over time.

The purpose of this infrastructure is to support the functions of the Garden and the activities of visitors.

Vehicle Roadways

All public access roads are constructed with grey spray seal finish which clearly and appropriately differentiates them from other surfaces in the Garden.



Pedestrian Tracks

There are three types of pedestrian tracks in the Garden. The formal circulation path utilises a concrete segmental paver and is deliberately the only finish of this type in the Garden.

The primary walking route is also utilised for limited bus tours while there is a network of general walking tracks.

Tracks are a spray sealed finish (vehicle circulation) and rubble. The attempt to provide colour coded circulation paths has been abandoned.

Maintenance traffic at track intersections continues to create larger than necessary footprints at these locations.

Services

The Garden is serviced by mains power and water. Both are connected to the Visitor Centre and Works Depot facility and water is distributed throughout the garden for irrigation. Photo voltaic panels supplement the power supply.

Solar powered site lighting is provided in several locations.

The site has telecommunications connection (NBN). A waste water treatment plant has been installed.

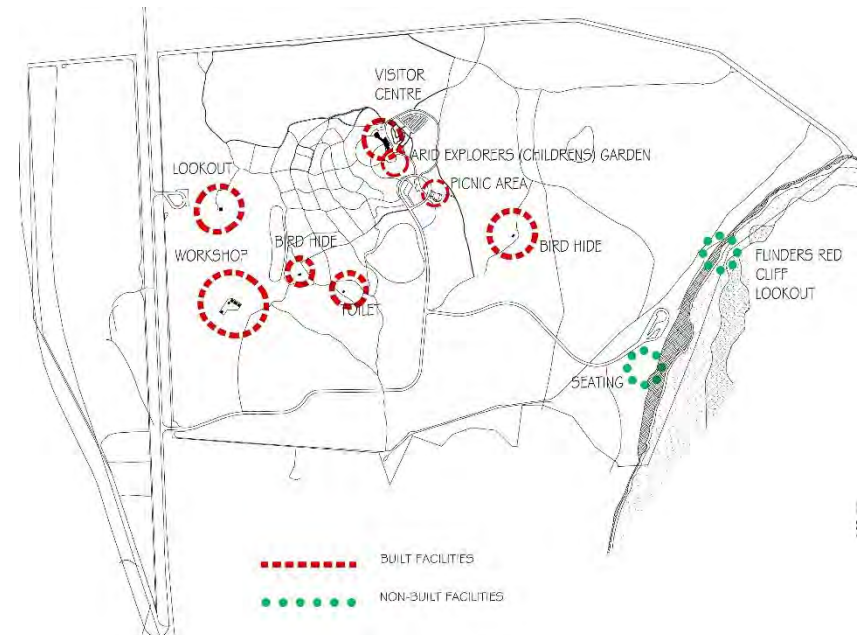
Lookouts

The original lookout is accessed by vehicles from the Stuart Highway. It consists of a roofed shelter with dated interpretive panels in poor condition connected to the carpark via an elevated boardwalk. That requires maintenance / renewal. The lookout is also connected to the Garden track network.

The Flinders Red Cliff Lookout is associated with the carpark that services this area. This site is connected to both the Garden track network and the city walking trail network.

Bird Hides

Two bird hides have been constructed from community donations and Rotary and provide specific purpose facilities for this activity.



Picnic Areas

Whilst it is possible for visitors to have picnics in various areas within the garden a specific area is provided adjacent to the main carpark. The provision of a seating area at the Flinders Red Cliff Lookout also facilitates this activity.

Toilet

A single unisex composting toilet is located within the Garden at a distance from the primary amenities in the Visitor Centre. This facility is available for visitors and staff utilising the track network.

Furniture and small scale facilities

A diverse range of furniture items are provided throughout the Garden. These include seats, bollards etc. The future selection and location of these items should be carefully considered.

Arts Program

Art works have been included in the Garden since the design of the Reception building which incorporates specifically commissioned items. Since that time additional permanent works have been installed and temporary works are included as part of the ARID Festival and other similar events.

Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre is the largest and most complex infrastructure provision in the Garden and was constructed in three primary stages.

- Reception Building
- WMC Herbarium/Meeting Room
- Kitchen expansion

The Reception Building represented the first stage of the project and provided a conceptual framework which has been continued through subsequent construction phases.

Visitors leave their cars and walk to the Reception building extending their experience of the environment and distancing vehicles from buildings and the planting zones. Built development will in the long term surround a large circular courtyard walled in rammed-earth.



The courtyard is central to the concept for the building and the site and provides references to the “walled garden” tradition of many cultures and the indigenous symbol for a food and water source. Courtyard walls give a sense of enclosure in a sparse landscape and conceal and reveal views to the distance.

The building has a formal frontage from the courtyard and building forms are simple where viewed from a distance however become progressively more complex as approached.

The first stage of development incorporated, Interpretive Display, Administration Office, Café / Souvenir Sales / Card, Amenities.

The WMC Herbarium/Meeting Room is located to the west and creates a courtyard between Stage 1 and 2 developments. A portion has been enclosed for plant sales however the majority remains undeveloped.

The success of the café exceeded the original design brief for a kiosk resulting in the expansion of the Kitchen to meet demand. Demand for café seating has been a major ongoing pressure on the use of space within the building. A minor refit of the space was undertaken to increase café seating. The Interpretive space was reduced to accommodate retail and a new Sales / Information counter installed. These works are recognised as being of an interim nature with compromises in layout and positioning of elements.

Works Depot Facility

The Works Depot provides limited facilities for Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden staff and the Friends Group. The small yard and associated buildings provide basic amenities, office, storage and propagation facilities. This site area is constrained due to the close proximity of indigenous sites of significance. Access is via an unsealed track off the main entrance road.



7. Master Plan

7.1 Setting

Development to date has made best use of and preserved the natural advantages of the site. This is to be continued through:

- Maintenance and improvements to conservation zones recognising their importance to the Garden setting.
- Preservation of the panoramic views to the Flinders Ranges.
- Continued focus on the visitor experience on the access road preserving the undulating approach and emphasising the contrasting plantings to either side of the straight road section.
- Continued emphasis on the primacy of the landscape over other development.
- Implementation of buffer zone plantings for long term benefit

7.2 Access and Movement

Access

Vehicle and pedestrian access points are to remain as per the current condition. The potential to improve pedestrian access from the Stuart highway is to be explored.

Vehicles

Public vehicles are to continue to be constrained to the major access roads. Provision of additional vehicle access would reduce the pedestrian character of the garden and disrupt views to the north.

Maintenance access is required. Modifications to tracks and ongoing management are necessary to constrain vehicle movement and reduce both informal movements in conservation zones and the size of the vehicle trail footprint in the intensive garden.

Small vehicles will continue to access the intensive plantings on a designated route by arrangement.



Pedestrians

The pedestrian character of the Garden is to be maintained. It is a feature of design concepts that visitors leave their vehicles to experience the landscape before entering the Visitor Centre.

The formal circulation route connecting the Visitor Centre and carpark is to be extended to link the carpark, picnic area and other features to the original design concepts (Refer diagram page 26). This will improve the prominence of and links to the Arid Explorers Garden.

Major circulation track routes have been established. A priority interpretive walking track linking garden "highlights" should be developed. Lesser track planning should be reviewed for ease of way finding and improvement of the visitor experience as discussed further below.

Bike access to the Garden is to be limited to the existing vehicle roadways or designated tracks to limit the potential for conflict with pedestrians. This policy is common to many Botanic gardens and National Parks and will allow cyclists to access the Garden via the Stuart Highway and the Flinders Red Cliff carpark. Defined access to the track network should be developed and a route is suggested (Refer diagram page 26). Provision of cycle racks at the Visitor Centre is suggested and could occur in the proposed upgrade of the service area.



7.3 Garden

The established informal landscape character is to be maintained and emphasised. The character of the garden should be of dispersed points of interest set in the landscape, encouraging exploration and experience by occasional and regular visitors.

This philosophy has the advantage of maintaining a low scale, low intensity character while also assisting in encouraging visitors to stay longer in the Garden, and as a result in Port Augusta, a key tourism objective.

More recent developments have been intensively located in close proximity to the building.

Developments and improvements are discussed according to the category of landscape below. The establishment of all garden areas should be carefully considered and appropriately designed at the time of establishment.

Conservation Zone

Ongoing works to preserve and enhance the conservation of the flora in these zones is to continue. Appropriately managed, these zones are of interpretive and environmental interest in their own right. The Chenopod plains to the north naturally preserve the significant distant views. Removal of unnecessary access tracks, constraint of vehicle movements and limitation of visible infrastructure should occur. The provision of a designated cycle route could increase the exploration of this area of the site.



Intensive Planting Zones

The development of the flora collection will continue to occur within the intensive zones. A focus of planting and track review will be the creation of an “immersed” experience of regional zones for visitors. The proposed expansion of the Flinders Region collection with the creation of a creek bed feature and modifications to track layouts illustrates this principle.

It is proposed to align existing and future regional planting zones with the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA).

The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) divides the Australian continent into 85 bioregions. 403 sub-regions have now also been defined Australia-wide based on major geomorphic features in each bioregion.

The bioregions and sub-regions are the reporting unit for assessing the status of native ecosystems, their protection in the national reserve system and for use in the monitoring and evaluation framework in the Australian Government's current Natural Resource Management initiatives.

Australian Government-Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
www.environment.gov.au

This regional classification system will allow future collection development to be based upon recognised and defined regional areas.

The existing regional collections include:

- Eyre Yorke Block (EYB)
- Gawler Region (GAW)
- Flinders Region (FLB)
- Central Ranges (CR)
- Great Victoria Desert (GVD)

For the foreseeable future the focus will be to improve and maintain existing regional plantings.

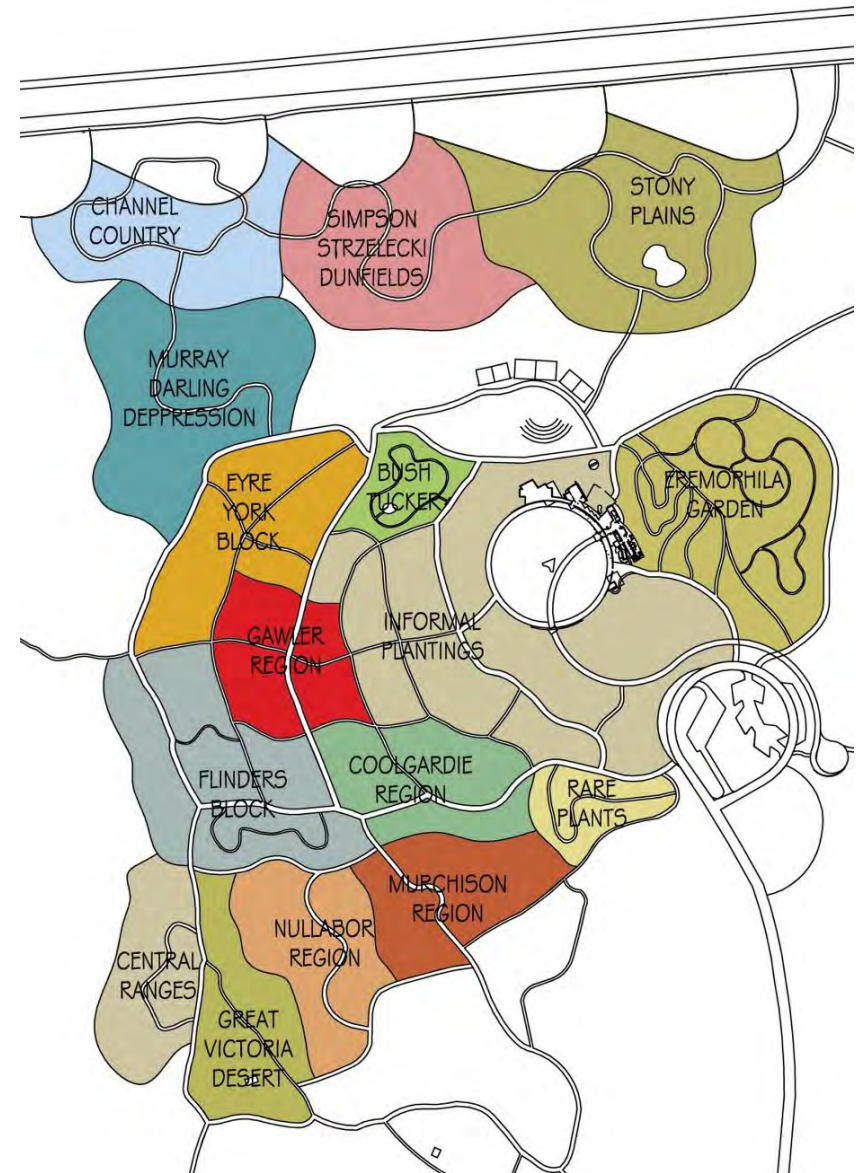


In the future collections may be extended to include:

- Channel Country (CHC)
- Simpson Strzelecki Dunefields (SSD)
- Stony Plains (STP)
- Coolgardie Region (COO)
- Nullabor Region (NUR)
- Murchison Region (MUR)
- Murray Darling Depression (MDD)

The existing non-regional botanic collections will be maintained and extended:

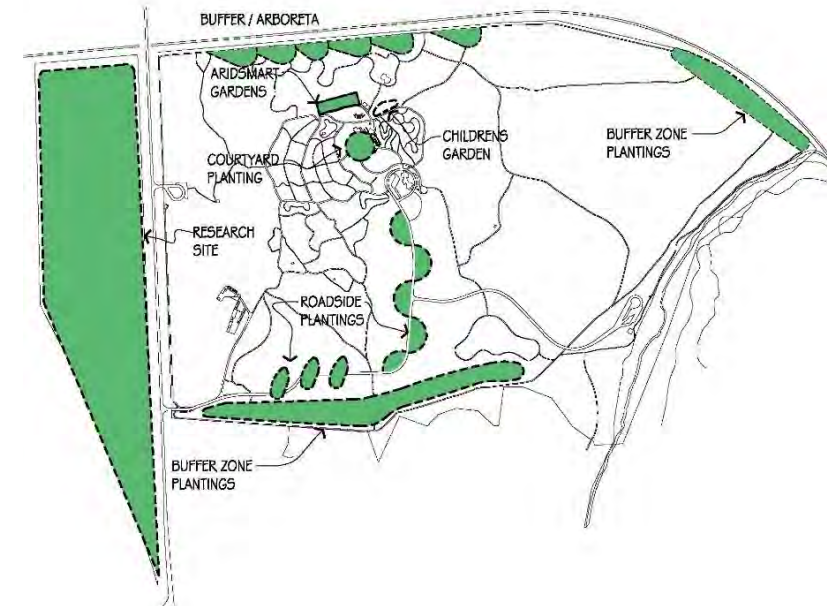
- Eremophila Garden
Modifications to the recent extension should be considered to remove the overly lineal layout.
- Informal planting zones
It is anticipated that the extent of these areas, which contain mixed specimens, will be reduced over time to accommodate extended regional plantings and other elements
- Rare plants
- The Brown Collection
To be maintained and expanded in the vicinity of the Flinders Red Cliff Lookout.
- Bush Tucker and Medicinal plants
Indigenous food and medicinal plant species are planted within the garden. As a point of interest for visitors it is proposed to create a clearly designated collection that communicates the use of these plants as has been envisaged since the early phase of the garden development. This collection would be in the historical tradition of the “physic garden” common to many early Botanic Gardens and may facilitate relationships with the local indigenous community.



Specific Purpose Plantings

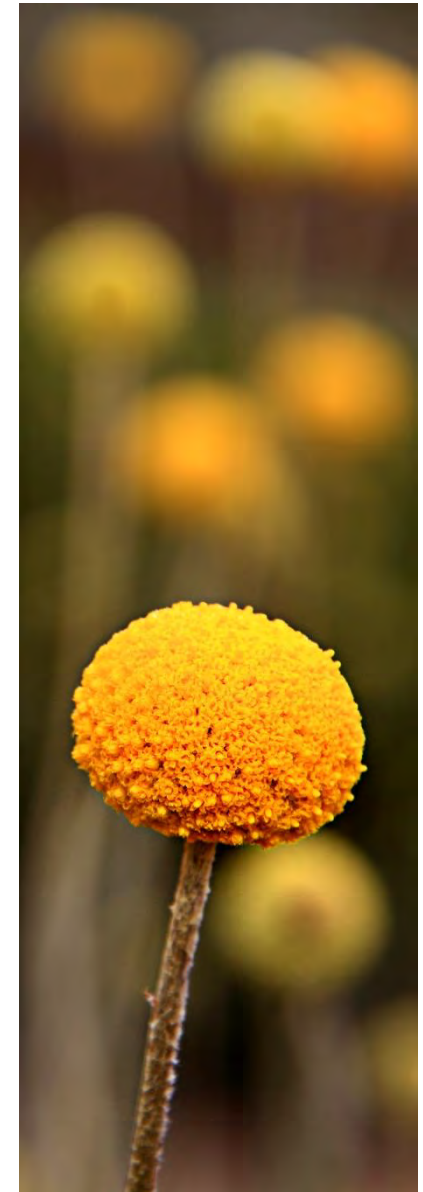
Existing zones of vegetation and points of interest that have been created for specific outcomes include:

- Buffer Zone
Maintain and enhance existing plantings
- Roadside plantings
Existing plantings have failed in some areas and planting to emphasise original design concepts of an alternating and increasing density of planting is to occur. This will occur in two sections. Existing plantings on the undulating approach road section are to be strengthened by addition of plants to increase the density of existing species. The straight section of east west roadway leading to the carpark is to have alternating distinctive plantings re-established.
- Courtyard planting
The courtyard is central to the project and is envisaged to be an open character, planted area that will be surrounded by walls and buildings in a circular form as a hub for the garden. The courtyard is a contemplative space through which visitors pass, in reference to the landscape in which it is placed. Interpretive and other content should be focused elsewhere in the Garden.
- AridSmart Display Gardens
Provide a public education function to communicate the potential for the use of arid zone plants in urban gardens. Replacement of individual designs with new concepts / styles should occur periodically on a rotational basis to provide ongoing change for visitors.
- Research Zone
At present includes limited plantings for research purposes with potential for specific project use.
- Arid Explorer's Garden (Children's Garden)
A children's garden focusing on nature play has been established. There is potential to expand the garden and this process should reverse the current visual separation from the visitor centre.



It is proposed to establish additional specific purpose plantings and points of interest. These features will extend the diversity of the garden. In particular the creation of a garden precinct to the west to build upon the AridSmart garden development is proposed.

- **Arid Arboreta**
This feature would provide a botanic collection of species that may not be of appropriate scale for the intensive collection zones. Tree communities would be grouped in intensive groves to reflect a woodland character and distinctive experience. A location that provides a visual buffer to the west is proposed.
- **Western Buffer Zone**
It is proposed to create a new discontinuous buffer zone through a series of plantings to reduce the visual impact of the railway line. Plantings locations would be selected for highest impact and to coincide with site plantings and track intersections.
- **Grasses Garden**
Grasses are an integral part of the arid landscape. Mass plantings of species has the potential to create a strong visual element in the intensive areas of the garden.
Integration with other elements such as lighting displays and artwork installations could be explored to create a unique, non-traditional feature.
- **Labyrinth**
Mazes and labyrinths are a traditional garden element. A unique example could be examined using plantings, artistic screens and excavation to create a visitor attraction for all ages. A location close to the Arid Explorers Garden is proposed.



7.4 Infrastructure

The considered development of all infrastructure provisions over time is critical to maintaining the character of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden and its unique visitor experience.

The stated goal is that built development should remain secondary to the landscape as far as is practicable. This principal will extend to all external infrastructure including Interpretive Signage and Installations. (Refer to AALBG Interpretation Plan).

The inclusion of the administration functions of appropriate external agencies on the main Garden site, whilst considered in the past, is no longer viable due to the impact upon established garden areas. This function, if appropriate, would be housed on the Research Site.

Vehicle Roadways

Public access roads will continue to be constructed with a grey spray seal finish which clearly and appropriately differentiates them from other surfaces in the garden.

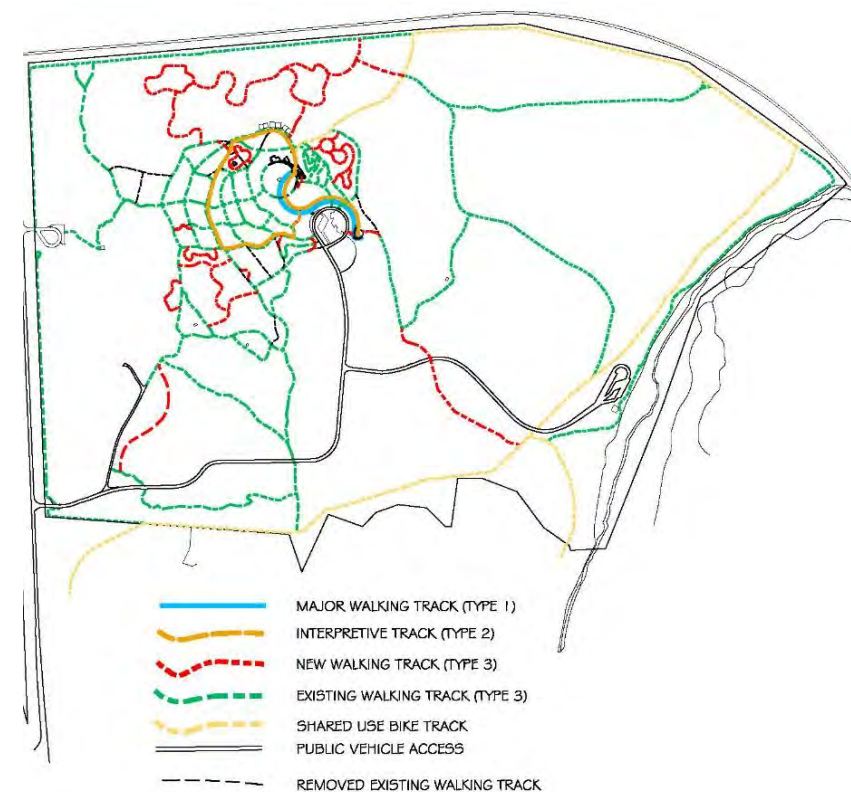
Pedestrian Tracks

The pedestrian track systems are proposed to be reviewed, reworked and expanded over time. This should incorporate the following key principles:

- Creation of legible “loop” walks at both a large and intimate scale
- Creation of “immersed” experiences in regional zones
- Integration of interpretive material
- Careful and considered planning of all tracks prior to implementation

The major circulation path (Type 1) is to be extended in matching materials to provide a structure for future development as originally envisaged.

A major interpretive walking track (Type 2) is proposed. The route of this track may change over time to adapt to the changing environment within the Garden however the intent is to link key existing and new Garden elements as a “highlights” experience for first time visitors.



Pedestrian secondary tracks (Type 3) are to be reworked and supplemented by minor tracks to facilitate

- A reduced number of 4 way intersections
- Create walk-through regional zones to provide an “immersed” landscape experience.
- Provide intimate trails offering a different experience (Type 4)

Treatment of intersections is necessary to incorporate directional signage and reduce the excessive footprint resulting from maintenance access.

The inclusion of shared access bike route is proposed and would increase linkages with the city and encourage exploration of the wider garden. It is important that bikes are restricted to the agreed route.

Services

A continued emphasis on sustainability and conservation is to be maintained. Provision of higher levels of services is not envisaged unless required by increased intensity of development.

Lookouts

The original lookout will require upgrading in the short term. Signage in particular is in need of urgent attention.

The Matthew Flinders Lookout would benefit from the provision of a considered, unique vantage point to reduce damage to the escarpment edge and reduce risk. Creation of beach access is not to occur in the foreseeable future.

Bird Hides

Bird hides are to be maintained and screen plantings further developed.

Picnic Areas

The primary picnic area shall be retained in its current condition with no additional services.

The Matthew Flinders Lookout facility is to be maintained with ongoing shade and screen planting for amenity and to conceal vehicles from a distance.



Amphitheatre

A small scale amphitheatre is proposed in the vicinity of the AridSmart gardens. The location has been selected to make use of the existing natural topography and to allow the placement of a small “stage” area under an existing mature tree. The amphitheatre is to be deliberately informal in character and the “stage” area is also envisaged as a place for small groups to gather (e.g. tour groups) for quiet activities.

Cultural Activities / Bushcraft Zone

This site would be located at a distance to reflect activities that may occur there. It would include a contained fire pit and open space to allow the demonstration of, and participation in, a variety of activities.

Toilet

The development of the Arid Explorer’s Garden has increased demand for toilet facilities outside of the visitor centre. A facility can be considered in conjunction with the expansion of the garden and improvements to the main circulation path. Placement and design must be carefully considered to ensure an appropriate, unobtrusive location.

Furniture and Small Scale Facilities

The selection and siting of small items within the garden can have a major impact on site character. There is potential to establish a suite of “furniture” items such as seats, bollards and drinking points that are consistent with the materials and design principles. The fabrication of interpretive installations should also be consistent with the materials and design principles.

There is potential for the careful siting of shaded seating units with integrated interpretive material within the Garden to capitalise on a particular view or setting. Care is required to ensure furniture does not become overly visually dominant.

Art Works

The considered inclusion of artworks within the Garden should continue. Care is required to ensure the works reflect the Garden character and do not dominate the landscape in both design and numbers.

The integration of interpretive material, art and infrastructure should be pursued wherever possible.



Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre is the largest and most complex infrastructure provision in the Garden.

Future developments can be considered in terms of improvements to existing activities and catering for new activities. In general terms existing activities are well catered for within the building. Recent changes have catered for positive visitation pressures however are largely interim in their configuration and compromises remain.

After more than 20 years of operation internal replanning is appropriate to meet changing needs. The building footprint is flexible and able to meet these requirements. It is proposed that this could be resolved by

- The provision of additional screened external seating
- Redesign of the internal spaces
- Reconsideration of external linkages for new activities (e.g. Plant Sales, expanded Café seating)

New activities within the Visitor Centre precinct are not envisaged. Any future proposal would be considered on its merits and be subject to a business case analysis.

In the longer term it should be recognised that a “building zone” exists to the perimeter of the courtyard. The uses for this space are not known at this time however all future developments must retain the potential for this development to occur.

The courtyard between the Reception building and Herbarium / Meeting Room has been partially enclosed to create a space for Plant sales. Redevelopment of both spaces will facilitate increased use and improved experiences.

Works Depot

The works depot and associated propagation nursery will remain in their current footprint.

Planting of the buffer zone should occur to screen current and future infrastructure.



7.5 Activities

The garden caters for many, predominantly passive and unstructured activities. At present income generation is predominantly via retail sales (food and beverage, souvenirs, plant sales).

Tours of the garden focusing on flora and fauna (birds) occur and provide limited income.

Revenue generation is a significant issue and is not considered by this Master plan however the provision of infrastructure should consider this requirement.

The ongoing provision of quality, well maintained experiences for visitors will continue to encourage the opportunity for retail sales. Continued efforts to expand and diversify visitor attractions is required to maintain and increase visitation and suggestions are included.

Potential Examples

The Master plan review again proposes an expanded “bush tucker” garden. Food experiences over an extended time frame utilising existing infrastructure (e.g. Herbarium / Meeting Room) could be envisaged.

The review includes a number of additional attractions (expanded bush tucker garden, cultural / bushcraft zone, rare plants, grasses garden) that have been placed in diverse locations. A “cultural” loop tour could be envisaged that utilised these features in a structured manner. Partnerships could be developed with the local community and / or commercial tour operators to provide a unique high quality attraction for the garden and city.

Opportunities for activities that generate revenue could include

- Yet to be identified pay for use attraction. It is difficult to envisage an attraction suited to the gardens ethos at this point in time.
- Small scale pay for use attractions can be explored such as:
 - Headset based virtual reality experience utilising small internal footprint.
 - Augmented reality providing extended experience in existing outdoor attractions.
- Expanded tour operations, potentially by licensed external providers.



8. Materials

The materials utilised as part of the development of infrastructure at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden have a critical role in the determination of the site character and the impression on the visitor. Materials use is integral with the messages that visitors will take from the site.

A palette of materials has been developed at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden site over time. This palette was primarily determined during the development of the Reception building as a first stage of development. Other materials have been trialled with varying success and the intent of this section of the Master Plan is to document the materials palette to assist in the creation of a unique and consistent character for the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden.

The essence of the site is to create a landscape where the flora is the dominant feature in a low intensity development. All development and materials selection should recognise and be subservient to this aim. The materials and colour palette is therefore philosophically, aesthetically and functionally responsive to the environment.

Road and Carparks

The existing spray sealed, grey aggregate finish to the public vehicle roadways and carparks defines and is appropriate to its use and should be continued.



Tracks

Tracks have been constructed in spray seal finish and rubble finish. The spray seal finish provides a more accessible, durable and easily maintained surface to high use and priority pathways and compacted road base is being progressively installed.

Rubble paths are appropriate to secondary tracks.

The finish of these surfaces should be in natural tones similar to the existing. Previous attempts of colour coding of the track network have been weakened over time and should be abandoned in favour of greater definition as discussed above.

A third level of informal path is envisaged that would utilise a natural surface (e.g. mulch / sawdust) to provide a varied experience in more intimate areas of the Garden.



Steel

Steel is used functionally in a variety of situations in the Garden. These include structural elements, fencing, signage and cladding.

Steel will either be painted (including pre coated) or rusted. Galvanised finish is not to be exposed.

Timber

Timber is used extensively across the site in both a natural and painted finish. The treatment and selection of timber in built development and site development will vary.

Within the interior and exterior of buildings timber will have either a painted finish or clear finish to expose its natural characteristics. Clear finish timber used to date includes Hoop Pine, Jarrah and Brush box and this palette should not be extended unless incorporated in specific artworks.

Timber used in site development should have either a painted finish or be natural finish white cypress pine. Existing CCA treated timber is inappropriate and should be removed over time.

Timber used in its natural cut form (in trunks) should only be used selectively and with specific consultation to prevent an overly rustic character.

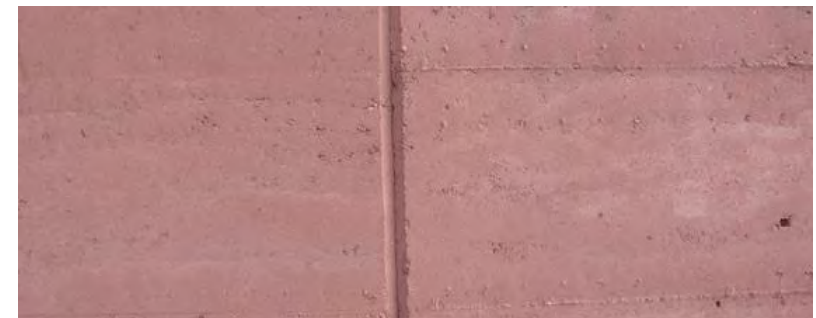
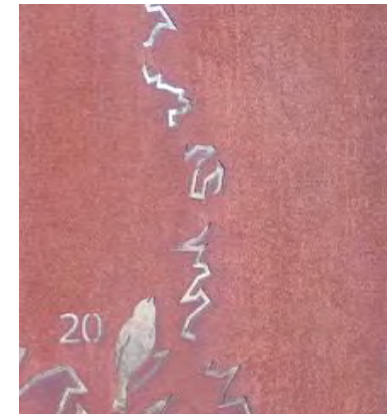
Walls

The primary walling materials are Rammed Earth and colour coated corrugated steel. Natural finish white cypress pine is used in small structures within the Garden. This palette should be maintained.

Replacement with alternative “look alike” materials should be resisted.

Colour

A primarily natural colour palette has been developed which should be continued. Colours can be varied over time however the retention of a natural character that responds to the environment must be maintained.



9. Actions

The purpose of a Master Plan is to set a direction for future developments. Botanic Gardens develop over long time periods as the landscape plantings grow and are replaced.

The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden has been successfully and progressively developed over time to retain its unique character and with appropriate attention this can continue. This Master Plan not only formalises the structure and form of this future development but also identifies projects for the future.

This section of the report provides a framework for this ongoing progressive development over the next five years and beyond. This may vary based upon a variety of factors however the ongoing monitoring of these targets will provide an indication of progress over time.

<i>Immediate</i>	<i>12 Months</i>
Wedding Area	Visitor Interest
Bush Tucker Garden Expansion	
Cultural activities / Bushcraft zone	
Existing Collection enhancements - Eremophila Garden	
Existing Collection enhancements – Eyre Region	
Existing Collection enhancements - Gawler Region	
Existing Collection enhancements - Central Highlands	
Existing Collection enhancements - Great Victoria Desert	

<i>Short Term</i>	<i>1 to 2 Years</i>
Detailed track planning	Sets Structure / way finding / sign rationalisation
Concept planning for Visitor Centre Interior	To allow budgeting, planning and grant applications
Lookout renovation	Increased presentation and undertake required maintenance.
New interpretive attractions for visitor centre	
Western Buffer Zone Arboreta (Screen planting to Railway)	Low cost project ease of implementation
Visitor Centre Interior works	
External Café seating	
Existing Collection enhancements - Flinders Ranges	Manageable and illustrates design principles
Major circulation path extension	Sets structure for future works
<i>Medium Term</i>	<i>2 to 5 years</i>
Labyrinth and Grass garden designs	To allow budgeting, planning and grant applications
Existing Collection enhancements - rare plants	Visitor Interest
Existing Collection enhancements - The Brown Collection	
Amphitheatre	Would include improvements to the picnic area
<i>Longer Term</i>	<i>5+ years</i>
New regional collection - WA	Broadens state representation - first as does not require expansion outside existing "developed zone"
New regional collection - NSW	Broadens state representation
New regional collections - Channel Country	
Corner Country	
Children's Garden expansion	
Courtyard between Stage 1 and Stage 2	Poor presentation and under utilised



10. Appendix

Reduced Drawings

Future Site Plan

Future Detailed Plan

Community Land Management Plan – City of Port Augusta.



PRELIMINARY

Issue	Date	Revision/Description	Drawn	Appvd

SHANNONARCHITECTS

AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS
BOTANIC GARDEN

MASTERPLAN

SCALES 1:5000 DRAWN GJ CHECK DS DATE 07/12/20

DRAWING FUTURE SITE PLAN

DRAWING No. 19009-Sk1 A

43 Glen Osmond Road Eastwood SA 5063 Telephone 08 8373 1611
www.shannonarchitects.com.au

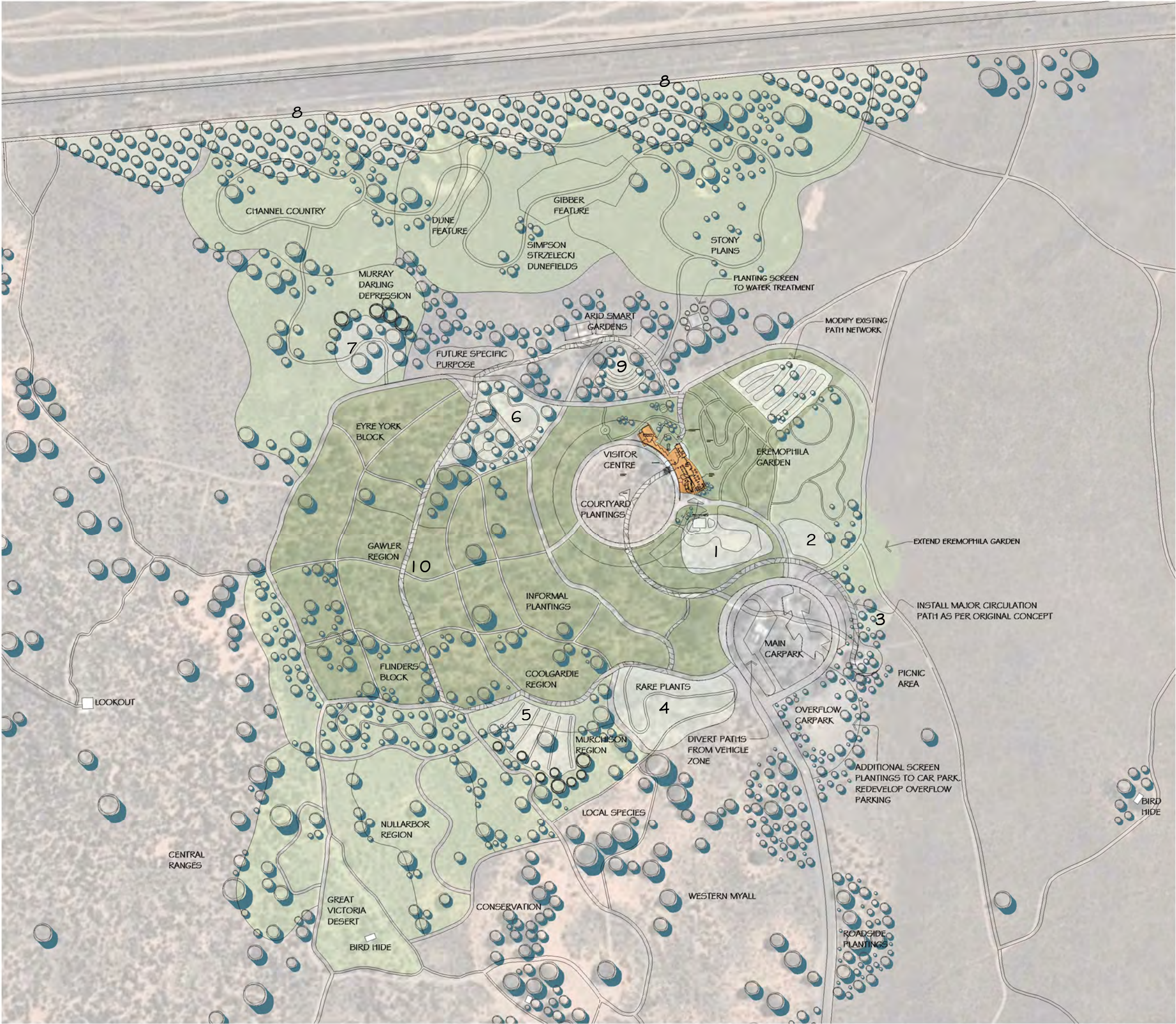
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AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN MASTERPLAN



1. EXTENDED CHILDREN'S GARDEN
2. LABYRINTH / MAZE
3. CULTURAL FIRE PIT
4. EXPAND, MODIFY & DIVERSIFY RARE PLANT ZONE
5. VISUALLY DISTINCTIVE ARID GRASSES COLLECTION
6. EXPAND EXISTING PLANTINGS TO PROVIDE INTENSIVE INDIGENOUS PLANT USE ZONE
7. CULTURAL & OUTBACK ACTIVITY ZONE
8. COMBINED ARBORETA / SCREEN PLANTING
9. LOW SCALE AMPHITHEATRE
10. POTENTIAL "HIGHLIGHTS" TRACK

PRELIMINARY

Issue	Date	Revision/Description	Drawn/Approved

SHANNONARCHITECTS

AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS
BOTANIC GARDEN

MASTERPLAN

SCALES 1:2000 DRAWN GJ CHECK DS DATE 21/07/20

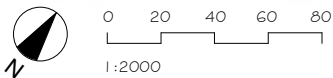
DRAWING FUTURE DETAILED PLAN

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AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN MASTERPLAN



AUSTRALIAN ARID LANDS BOTANIC GARDEN BY-LAW 2019

By-law No. 8 of 2019

For the management of land vested in, held in trust for or under the care, control and management of the Council known as the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden.

CONTENTS

PART 1 – PRELIMINARY	2
1. Title.....	2
2. Authorising law	2
3. Purpose	2
4. Commencement, revocation and expiry.....	2
5. Interpretation	2
PART 2 –	3
6. Administration Charges	3
7. Control of Activities	3
8. Exemptions	6

PART 1 – PRELIMINARY

1. Title

This by-law may be cited as the *Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden By-law 2019* and is by-law No. 8 of the Port Augusta City Council.

2. Authorising Law

This by-law is made under sections 238 and 246 of the Act.

3. Purpose

The objective of this by-law is to ensure the effective management of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden by the Council so it may be enjoyed by the public and appropriately conserved for the benefit of future generations.

4. Operation and Revocation

4.1. The following by-laws previously made by the Council are revoked from the day on which this by-law comes into operation¹:

4.1.1 *Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden By-law No.8 2012*²

4.2. This by-law will expire on January 2027.³

Note-

1. Generally a by-law comes into operation 4 months after the day on which it is gazetted: section 249(5) of the Act.
2. Section 253 of the Act provides that the revocation of a by-law does not affect certain resolutions such as those applying a by-law to a part or parts of the Council area.
3. Pursuant to section 251 of the Act, a by-law will expire on 1 January following the seventh anniversary of the gazetted by-law.

5. Interpretation

In this By-law:

- 5.1. ***Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden*** means the area of land described in the Trust Grant over Allotments 84 and 85 of Deposited Plan 36449 in the Hundred of Copley, Port Augusta West and more particularly described in Register Book V4401 F598;
- 5.2. ***authorised person*** means a person appointed as an authorised person pursuant to Section 260 of the *Local Government Act 1999*;
- 5.3. ***concession card holder*** means a person who is the holder of:
 - 5.3.1 a current concession card issued by the appropriate State or Commonwealth agency;
 - 5.3.2 a current student identification card issued to a student of a secondary or tertiary education institution by that institution; or
 - 5.3.3 any other current concession card approved by the Council;
- 5.4. ***Council*** means the Port Augusta City Council;

- 5.5. **family group** means a group of adults and children not exceeding four in number and not including more than two adults;
- 5.6. **the Garden** means all the land and buildings within the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden.
- 5.7. **the Children's Garden** means the area within the Garden designated as an interactive play space for children.

Note-

Section 14 of the Acts *Interpretation Act 1915* provides that an expression used in a by-law has, unless the contrary intention appears, the same meaning as in the Act.

PART 2 – REGULATION**6. Administration Charges**

- 6.1. The Chief Executive Officer may from time to time determine an entrance fee to the Garden, parts of the Garden or any building in the Garden;
- 6.2. If the Chief Executive Officer considers it appropriate he or she may waive or reduce payment of a fee otherwise payable under this by-law or grant concessions to a family group or a concession card holder.

7. Control of Activities**7.1. Entrance to Garden**

- 7.1.1 The Chief Executive Officer may from time to time give notice of the hours during which the Garden or parts of the Garden are open to the public and the appropriate charges to be paid upon entry to the Gardens. Such notice is to be displayed at the entrance to the Garden or those parts of the Garden open to the public.
- 7.1.2 The Chief Executive Officer may close the Garden or parts of the Garden when it is in the interests of public safety to do so or for any other reason that the Chief Executive Officer deems fit.
- 7.1.3 A person must not without the approval of an authorised person enter or remain in the Garden or a part of the Garden when that area is closed to the public.

7.2. Entrance to buildings

A person must not, without permission, enter or remain in those buildings open to the public unless the appropriate charge (if any) for admission has been paid.

7.3. Buildings

A person must not take food or drink into any building in the Garden unless authorised to do so by an authorised officer.

7.4. Flora

A person must not without permission:

- 7.4.1 remove from the Garden any soil, rock, mineral or similar material; or

- 7.4.2 dig or otherwise intentionally disturb any soil or similar material in the Garden (excluding the Children's Garden); or
- 7.4.3 take, damage, climb on or interfere with any tree, shrub, plant, flower or other plant material in the Garden; or
- 7.4.4 take or molest any bird or fish in the Garden; or
- 7.4.5 take or intentionally damage the nest of any bird in the Garden.

7.5. *Protection of Council's property*

A person must not in the Garden:

- 7.5.1 remove, damage, deface or interfere with any label, sign, seat, statue, building or other structure erected or placed there on behalf of the Council; or
- 7.5.2 step or walk on any garden bed or border (excluding the Children's Garden); or
- 7.5.3 climb over, pass under or break through any gate, fence or hedge; or
- 7.5.4 drive or propel a motor vehicle, unless on an area or road constructed or set aside by the Council for the parking or travelling of motor vehicles; or
- 7.5.5 damage or disturb whatsoever any area constructed or set aside by the Council as walking trails.

7.6. *Animals*

A person must not without permission, bring an animal into the Garden or permit an animal to enter the Garden;

- 7.6.1 Clause 7.6 does not apply to the Encounter Trail or beach areas of the Garden so long as the animal is restrained on a leash not exceeding 2 metres in length at all times while in the Garden.
- 7.6.2 Clause 7.6 does not apply to an assistance dog as defined in the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*.

7.7. *Camping*

A person must not, without permission of the Council, camp or stay overnight in the Garden.

7.8. *Fires*

A person must not without permission light or maintain a fire in the Garden except in a BBQ, stove or other receptacle safely positioned in a place set aside by the Council for that purpose.

7.9. *Fire Arms*

A person must not bring a fire arm, catapult or other weapon into the Garden.

7.10. Sport and other recreational activities

A person must not without permission in the Garden:

- 7.10.1 engage in any form of sport or sporting activity, or in any game involving the use of a ball or any game in which an object is thrown or discharged; or
- 7.10.2 ride or use a skateboard, roller skates or other similar device.
- 7.10.3 engage in any organised sport or organised sporting activity.

7.11. Behaviour

- 7.11.1 A person must not behave in a drunken, disorderly, offensive or indecent manner or create any disturbance or nuisance in the Garden.
- 7.11.2 A person must not throw, roll or discharge any stone, substance or missile or engage in any other activity that may endanger the safety of any person in the Garden.
- 7.11.3 A person must not urinate or defecate in any place within the Garden except in a public convenience.

7.12. Noise

A person must not without permission:

- 7.12.1 use or cause to be used any loud speaker, amplifier, radio, television, video or similar device in the Garden; or
- 7.12.2 play or sound any musical instrument or whistle in the Garden.
- 7.12.3 Clause 7.12.1 and 7.12.2 do not apply if the device or instrument is not audible to any other person except to the person using it by reason of that person's use of headphones, earplugs or other similar device.

7.13. Commercial activities

A person must not without permission:

- 7.13.1 use any part of the Garden for commercial purposes;
- 7.13.2 advertise any goods or services in the Garden;
- 7.13.3 sell any goods or services in the Garden;
- 7.13.4 subject to clause 8, distribute or leave for collection any pamphlet, paper or other written matter in the Garden; or
- 7.13.5 display or erect any flag, sign, hoarding or similar object in the Garden.

7.14. Public assembly or announcement

A person must not without permission:

- 7.14.1 engage or take part in public speaking, or make any public announcement in the Garden; or

- 7.14.2 organise, attend or participate in any public meeting, demonstration or gathering in the Garden.

7.15. *Donations*

a person must not without permission:

- 7.15.1 collect or seek money or other donations in the Garden; or
- 7.15.2 obtain or seek to obtain any promise or undertaking to pay any money or other donation in the Garden.


7.16. *Consumption of alcohol*

a person must not consume alcohol in the Garden, except in licensed premises within the meaning of the *Liquor Licensing Act 1997*.

8. **Exemptions**

- 8.1. The restrictions in this by-law do not apply to any police officer, Council officer or employee acting in the course and within the scope of that person's normal duties, or to a contractor while performing work for the Council and while acting under the supervision or in accordance with a direction of a Council officer.
- 8.2. The restrictions in clause 7.14.4 of this By-law do not apply to electoral matter authorised by a candidate and which is:
- 8.2.1 related to a Commonwealth or State election and occurs during the period commencing on the issue of the writ or writs for the election and ending at the close of polls on polling day; or
- 8.2.2 related to an election under the Act or the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999* and occurs during the period commencing four weeks immediately before the date that has been set (either by or under either Act) for polling day and ending at the close of voting on polling day; or
- 8.2.3 related to, and occurs during the course of and for the purpose of a referendum.

This by-law was duly made and passed at a meeting of the Port Augusta City Council held on the **13 August 2019** by an absolute majority of the members for the time being constituting the Council, there being at least two thirds of the members present.


.....
Mr John Banks
Chief Executive Officer