

Buninyong Botanic Gardens



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Australia's Open Garden Scheme

150th Anniversary for Buninyong

Buninyong Botanic Gardens, one of the oldest botanic gardens in Victoria, will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2010.

The 1901 rotunda is the earliest memorial erected to Queen Victoria in Victoria, preceding the 1903 Beaufort Bandstand and Queen Victoria Statues at Bendigo 1903, Geelong 1904 and Melbourne 1907. Designed by the architect E Smith, the rotunda is an uncommon timber lattice construction and particularly large. Another uncommon feature is the sign and quotation above both entrances.

The 1861 bluestone tank used as a swimming pool since the 1870s, is an early example of this type of structure in Victoria. The entrance gates were opened in 1911 by Mayor John Olgivie.

The particular aesthetic appeal of the gardens stems from the way part of a gully located in a gently sloping site has been landscaped to form a lake, pond and island and a running stream.

The mature conifers with their striking upright and dark green foliage have a dramatic landscape effect. The curved pathway and the location of the gateway, rotunda and the surrounding 19th century buildings contribute significantly to the picturesque landscape. The landscape is further enhanced by the collection of deciduous trees of poplars, willows, lindens and oaks that encircle the water features.

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Victoria
The Place To Be
Department of Planning
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Nearby gardens open as part of the Australia's Open Gardens Scheme,

10 am to 4.30pm on
17-18 October 2009:

Torvil, 4 Garnier Lane,
Buninyong

Kaporiltja, 148 Wiggins Rd,
Scotsburn.

See www.opengarden.org.au

The history of the garden



A public garden site is shown on a plan drawn in 1850 and in 1853, 10 acres was identified for a Reserve for Botanic Gardens with springs and tea tree. Plans were prepared by the town surveyor Robert Harvey and were forwarded to Melbourne in 1860 for approval. It was gazetted in 1861 as a temporary reserve of 50 acres, later reduced to 10 acres.

In 1872 Conrad Fiegbital was appointed curator and between 1872-75 the ponds were completed to a design prepared Robert Allan, prominent resident, benefactor and mayor.

In 1889 the 10-acre site was permanently reserved as Public Gardens.

Mueller of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens supplied trees, as did the local nurseryman Francis Moss of Mossmont Nursery, and Daniel Bunce of Geelong Botanic Gardens.

The people of Buninyong commemorated Queen Victoria's reign by erecting a lattice pavilion in 1901.

The bluestone water reservoir was constructed in 1861 and from the 1870s until 1934 and occasionally in the 1940s, it was used as a swimming pool.

The concrete wall was erected in the early 1920s by returned servicemen under the direction of CCP Wilson, an early advocate for reinforced concrete.

The Bowling Club has used part of the land since 1872.

The Gardens form part of a picturesque historic precinct that includes the 1858 former Court House/Wardens Office, since 1991 included with the Gardens reserve, the 1859 former Police Station, the 1853-58 Catholic Church and former Buninyong Brewery built 1854-55.

What are the distinctive feature of the Gardens?



The Gardens have scientific (botanical) significance due to their collection of plants, especially conifers, with the *Abies pinsapo* as an outstanding specimen of this uncommon species. The two *Acer opalus* subsp. *obtusatum* is rare in cultivations, only three other specimens are known in Victoria and the *Acer platanoides* 'Crimson King' and *Acer platanoides* are outstanding examples of the species.

The Gardens have social significance, attracting picnickers from a wide area to view the gardens and its plant collection and, last century, to drink the spring waters and use the swimming pool.

A row of six trees was planted to commemorate local World War II servicemen and are marked by four cast metal plaques, the same as those in the Ballarat Avenue of Honour.

Victorian Heritage Register

The Register was established under the *Heritage Act 1995* to protect the most significant heritage places in Victoria. It covers buildings and structures, archaeological sites, shipwrecks, precincts, industrial sites, cemeteries, heritage objects, gardens, trees and cultural landscapes.

The Heritage Council of Victoria decides which places go on the Register, based on established criteria for heritage values.

More than 2,000 places and 600 shipwrecks are now on the Register and details of the significance of each be viewed on the Victorian Heritage Register online. There are 14 botanic gardens on the register, including 11 in regional Victoria.

For more information see the website at www.heritage.vic.gov.au

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