

**Wattle Park, 1012 Riversdale Road, Burwood  
H0904, heritage permit application P34848**

**Q&A**

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**Background**

Wattle Park is located in Burwood and is of heritage significance to the State of Victoria. It is the only pleasure park in Australia which was established, owned and operated by a transport authority with the dual aim of promoting its transport services and providing a public recreational facility. Wattle Park was established in the 1920s and includes rustic style buildings and structures in a bush setting.

**What has happened?**

Heritage Victoria has issued a heritage permit for upgrades at Wattle Park. The heritage permit application was advertised from 8 February to 4 March 2022. Thirty-eight submissions were received during the advertising period, six submissions were received outside of the advertising period, and all were considered in the decision making process.

The proposal is part of a broader \$4.3 million project. Some of the works proposed as part of the broader project will be undertaken in the 'parkland', the remnant bushland at the eastern edge of Wattle Park. This area is outside of the extent of registration and those works are not covered by the heritage permit.

Some elements of the original proposal have been removed from the scope and have not been approved by Heritage Victoria. This includes the proposed path from the Riversdale Road tram stop, which would have impacted on the bluestone retaining wall.

The heritage permit approves:

- Construction of a playscape including demolition of the existing 1990s playground and construction of an all-abilities 'playscape', installation of landscaping including garden beds, rubbish bins, seating and BBQ area
- Upgrades to the picnic area including replacement of existing BBQs with disability compliant facilities, installation of disability compliant picnic tables and park benches, and refurbishment of the information shelter and map board
- Trail works including resurfacing of 3.7 kilometres of existing running track, resurfacing of 615 metres of path linkages which are currently informal unsealed paths including a gravel track around the oval, creation of all abilities access trail to picnic areas, like-for-like resurfacing of bitumen trails where they have been damaged by roots, and drainage works
- Works to the main driveway including like-for-like replacement of concrete bollards and cable fencing, construction of a safety crossing at Monsborough Drive, resurfacing of the driveway and pathway
- Other works including lighting along the north-south path from Riversdale Road to Patterson Avenue, and installation of new interpretive and wayfinding signage.

Conditions of the permit require the protection of heritage features on the site including the Lone Pine, and restoration and repair of the trams.

**Why has the permit been approved?**

The *Heritage Act 2017* requires the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria to consider various matters in determining a permit application, including the impact of the proposal on the heritage

significance of the place, the impact of refusal on the reasonable or economic use of the place, and any submissions received in response to public notice of the application.

While the works will result in some change at Wattle Park, on balance they remediate or upgrade existing facilities while adequately responding to the cultural heritage significance of the place. Conservation works including the like-for-like repair of existing accessways and fencing will result in a positive heritage outcome for the place. Work to formalise informal pathways will address longstanding issues of erosion, compaction and impacts to vegetation. While it is acknowledged that the new playscape is larger than the existing, the new playscape will give equitable access and expands on a longstanding use of Wattle Park as a recreation space. Additional interpretation will contribute to people's understanding of the place, and wayfinding and lighting will improve safety and security.

### **What else is happening at Wattle Park?**

Heritage Victoria has raised concerns with Parks Victoria about the condition of buildings and structures at Wattle Park. Parks Victoria has undertaken a condition assessment and has committed to delivering urgent works to the Curator's Office, Stables and Curator's Cottage. The Lily Pond Fountain, which had been toppled, has been temporarily removed to safe storage. Heritage Victoria is working closely with Parks Victoria to ensure the fountain, rockery and environs are restored back to original condition.