

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



Friday, 18 March 2022

BLOOMING MARVELLOUS: NEW UPGRADES AT WOMBAT HILL

Daylesford locals and visitors will soon have another reason to visit the iconic Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, with new upgrades well underway thanks to an investment from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Regional Development and Member for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Daylesford to view the progress of the gardens upgrade project, supported by a \$500,000 grant through the *Regional Infrastructure Fund – Stimulus Round* in partnership with Hepburn Shire Council and Friends of Wombat Botanic Gardens.

The project is on track for completion at the end of this year and is a key part of the Hepburn Shire Council's Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens Landscape Master Plan. The plan aims to protect the gardens' 19th century heritage while ensuring it is equipped with modern facilities to meet the needs of locals and visitors.

The heritage-listed gardens have been a staple of Daylesford's attractions for more than 150 years and were developed during Victoria's Gold Rush. They now attract thousands of visitors to the town each year.

The gardens' day basin, which historically served as Daylesford's town reservoir, will be transformed into an eye-catching water feature as part of the project.

The works will also deliver better access to the gardens through improved pathways, with recently installed stone steps inviting visitors to explore all areas of the gardens including a fernery space.

Glass refurbishments to the Alf Headland Conservatory which is located at the west end of the gardens will allow all-year-round seasonal displays of plants, in addition to the stunning begonia flowers that are a key tourist attraction at the gardens.

Blooming from January to March, begonias are both challenging to grow and rare to find, making the displays at Wombat Hill an exciting reason to visit regional Victoria.

The heritage 1930s art deco toilets will also receive a makeover to modernise the amenities and provide all abilities access.

The *Regional Infrastructure Fund* is part of the Victorian Government's flagship \$156 million *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund*, designed to help businesses create more jobs in regional Victoria, support community projects and support councils to build the infrastructure locals and visitors need.

The Fund is key to the Government's almost \$30 billion record investment across regional and rural Victoria since 2015. Information and guidelines for the *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund* can be found at rdv.vic.gov.au/rjif

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development and Member for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas

"It's great to see these beautiful gardens getting the love they deserve, encouraging more visitors to explore Daylesford while preserving its iconic heritage."

"The revitalisation of the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens will boost tourism to the area, create more jobs and stimulate the economy. These upgrades will be enjoyed by both locals and visitors alike."

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