

PETER FRANCIS POINTS ARBORETUM



The Points

MANAGEMENT PLAN

September 2008

Original plan by Portland
Office, South West Area
Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources 1993

Revised September 2008 by
Arboretum Sub-Committee,
Friends of the Peter Francis
Points Arboretum Inc with
contributions from Neville
Bonney, consultant to the
Sub-Committee



OFFICE

P.O. Box 29
69-71 Whyte Street
Coleraine, VIC 3315
ph: (03) 5575 2222
fax: (03) 5575 2228

ARBORETUM

Hilgay Road
Coleraine, VIC 3315
ph: (03) 5575 2607
enquiries@thepoints.org.au
www.thepoints.org.au

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Peter Francis Points Arboretum is an area of land of 37 hectares on the southern outskirts of the township of Coleraine, approximately 320 km west of Melbourne.

An arboretum “is a reference collection of trees and shrubs cultivated for scientific, horticultural and educational purposes” (J. Gardner 1990). The Peter Francis Points Arboretum concentrates on Australian Flora emphasising the genus *Eucalyptus*.

The area had a history of grazing and sand, gravel and topsoil extraction, prior to the first plantings in 1966 by the Wannon Shire, guided by Shire Engineer, Mr Joe Wright.

In 1970 Peter Francis *BEM* approached the Shire to fence off 13 hectares as a reserve for further plantings. The subsequent work by Peter Francis, with the help of the Wannon Conservation Society members, saw the site develop as an arboretum.

The Peter Francis Points Arboretum was officially opened in October 1980. The Friends Group was formed, and Peter Francis remained the driving force behind the development of the reserve until his death in July 1989.

Sixteen hectares is currently planted out with numerous families of Australian native plants. The arboretum occupies a unique site characterised by varied soils, slopes, aspects and topography. This diverse set of biotic and non-biotic factors has allowed for a planting plan for the remaining area to be developed.

For the many people who visit the arboretum, they should experience a pleasant, natural and educational environment in an ambient setting.

1.1 The Management Plan

The management plan sets out objectives and guidelines for development and future management actions. It describes the types and intensity of activities within the arboretum, and includes a topographic survey, soils survey, botanic resources inventory and a landscape concept plan.

The plan should be reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

PART A: BASIS OF THE PLAN

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Regional and local setting

The main population centres (over 10,000 people), with the distances from the arboretum are: Hamilton (34 km), Mount Gambler (100 km), Portland (90 km) and Warrnambool (150 km). The Glenelg Highway runs through the township of Coleraine. The main approach and access into the arboretum is off the Portland to Coleraine road, on the outskirts of Coleraine. See Appendix 9.1.

2.2 Land Status

The land on which the arboretum lies was classified in 1994 as a "Native Plants Arboretum".

2.3 Significance of the Arboretum

The arboretum has one of the largest collections of the genus *Eucalyptus* in one location and with the remaining area still to be planted the majority of the *Eucalyptus* genus could be represented on-site. The arboretum also has a wide variety of other plantings of Australian species, as well as significant remnant indigenous vegetation. A list of the plant genera by family, with the number of species represented is in Appendix 9.7

The arboretum is considered to be of national significance (Professor Chambers pers. comm 1980). The arboretum has been registered by the Ornamental Plant Collectors Association of Victoria (OPCA) as the arboretum displaying the genus *Eucalyptus*.

2.4 Management Authority

The arboretum is managed by Parks Victoria, West Region, Grampians District.

2.4.1 Building

Investigations are currently in progress into future provision of a building to house:

- The interpretive material currently located in the *Eucalyptus* Discovery Centre
- Offices
- Displays
- Meeting/Presentation/Teaching area
- Relaxation/Recreation facilities

2.5 Natural Resources

The natural resources of the arboretum are its many variable site characteristics that provide a range of growing conditions, landscape value and the scenic vistas that can be gained from a number of vantage points within it. A description and map of the soil types is shown in Appendix 9.3.

Large areas of the arboretum contain native grassland.

Within the inland areas of the South-West 2 study area, periods of severe frost over 2 months of the year and 7-8 months of frost-free months can be expected. The growing season can be expected to range from between 7-9 months of the year.

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Annual mean rainfall is 614mm, median 604mm, average rain days 135.
Hamilton mean temperatures range from max 26.4° (January) to min 4.7° (July).
(Figures obtained from Land Conservation Council Report on the South-West Study Area 1978.)

2.6 Education resource

The arboretum serves as an educational resource for visitors and for students taking part in training through the organisation.

The existing nursery facilities adjacent to the office are available for the use of arboretum staff, and for students by arrangement.

2.7 Recreation in the Arboretum

The arboretum is a recreational destination for visitors to the district.

The arboretum can be used to provide information to many individuals and community groups about the natural ecosystems, tree planting techniques, pattern and species selection for particular sites.

The proper management of recreation within the arboretum is important in order to protect and develop the arboretum to its full potential.

2.8 Friends of the Points

The arboretum is managed by "The Friends of the Peter Francis Points Arboretum Incorporated" (FoPFPA). There are eight members elected to this management body and their term is a minimum of one year.

In addition there are three sub-committees that provide specialist advice to the FoPFPA: Arboretum, Training and Premises.

Funding is obtained through grants from Parks Victoria, The Shire of Southern Grampians and from Mr Geoff Handbury, and additional income is generated by conducting training. Paid memberships to the FoPFPA are also available, currently around 200 financial members.

A manager is currently employed one day per week to oversee the whole organisation's work and to ensure good governance. The organisation aims to become financially self sustainable as a matter of urgency and this perhaps can be achieved through the provision of locally based training.

3 PRINCIPAL MANAGEMENT DIRECTIONS

3.1 Management Objectives

The objects and purposes of The Peter Francis Points Arboretum are:

1. To display a collection of Australian flora concentrating on the genus *Eucalyptus* and the enhancement of indigenous vegetation
2. To develop a centre of excellence for training and scientific discovery, both formal and informal, which uses the extensive and nationally-endorsed native vegetation of the arboretum as a focal point
3. To provide a place of enjoyment and learning

The principal management objectives therefore are:

- To conserve the indigenous plant associations, while developing the *Eucalyptus* collection and a range of other Australian flora.
- To develop the educational and scientific potential of the arboretum.

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- To record and update all plantings in a Botanical Resource Inventory.
- To label appropriate plantings.
- To provide a system of safe walking tracks and vehicular access within the arboretum.
- To ensure protection of the arboretum, life and property from fire.
- To take precautions for the safety of visitors.

PART B: MANAGEMENT AIMS AND ACTIONS

4 MANAGEMENT FOR RESOURCE CONSERVATION

This section sets out the aims and actions for the aspects of the arboretum management in relation to the protection and conservation of its flora.

A Botanical Resource Inventory (BRI) exists to identify, locate and record all the plantings in the arboretum. The arboretum has been broken up into 50 metre by 50 metre grid system and these units are then broken up into four 25 by 25 metre grids. All plantings are then recorded and mapped for their position within this grid and given an individual identification number based on this grid.

A Landscape Concept Plan has been drawn up for the arboretum to identify vegetation types which best suit individual areas based on soil type, aspect and existing plantings. (See Appendix 9.6). Descriptions of the proposed vegetation types have been based on those defined in the book 'Australian Vegetation' edited by R.H. Groves. The location of the full range of vegetation types which have been matched with the site conditions of the arboretum are shown in the Landscape Concept Plan.

4.1 Management of Existing Plantings

The ongoing management of individual plantings and the naturally indigenous plant species and communities will be important in maintaining the educational and recreational benefit of the arboretum.

Aims and Actions

- To develop the general collection with due regard to interpretation and education requirements.

On going	Assess the need for the replacement of existing plants based on the landscape concept plan for the planted area.
On going	Undertake individual plant maintenance based on established horticultural practices.
On going	Monitor the native grass communities and protect using appropriate methods.

4.2 Management of Flora Records

The proper recording of the information relating to the flora in the arboretum is important to provide a basis for present and future planning and management.

The Botanical Resource Inventory (BRI) is the major body of information on the plantings within the arboretum. The information is currently digitally recorded.

An accession number system records all incoming planting material and the incorporation of new plantings into the records.

Aims and Actions

- To provide for the recording of plant information.
- To complete and maintain the Botanical Resource Inventory.
- To label appropriate plants within the arboretum.

High	Label plants within the arboretum based on the standard layout.
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The labels should be located in line with visitor interpretation requirements. Plant labels should be located on or near the plant by an appropriate method, namely: stake, screw or tie.

4.3 Fauna Management

The release of native fauna is incompatible with many of the objectives of the arboretum. The main objective of the arboretum is not to support populations of fauna as the arboretum is not of a size that would be able to support a viable population of most animals.

No fauna is to be released into the arboretum.

4.3.1 Birdlife

The presence of birdlife adds to the character of the arboretum and to the visitor's experience but must not compromise the objectives of the arboretum.

The existing indigenous trees, shrubs and other flora may provide important habitat for the birds seen at the arboretum, listed in Appendix 9.8. Many of the plants provide food directly (nectar and seeds) or indirectly (attract insects) for a large number of the birds at the arboretum.

There are already nest boxes present in the arboretum and some of these are currently used. Birds are further encouraged by the presence of man-made ponds over the site.

4.4 Water Supply/Storage

Currently water is supplied from the Konongwootong Reservoir to the arboretum.

At present two dams are located in the arboretum. They provide additional water for the wetlands area, habitat, aesthetics and future supply if required.

5 MANAGEMENT FOR PROTECTION

The arboretum is a high value asset which if destroyed would be a significant loss.

The threats come not only from fire but also include the possibility of drought and plant pests and diseases.

5.1 Fire Management

Fire management includes the following: suppression, protection from wildfire and deliberate use of prescribed burning for vegetation management, according to current practice.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) has a statutory responsibility to "carry out proper and sufficient work for the prevention and suppression of fire in every national park and protected public land" (Section 62, Forests Act 1958).

The majority of the arboretum was burnt by wildfire one week prior to the Ash Wednesday bush fires in 1983, from a fire originating outside its boundaries.

The presence of areas of native grass species will assist in reducing the fire hazard through lower fuel loadings when compared with exotic grass species (e.g. *Phalaris tuberosa* – Phalaris).

The objectives of fire management in the arboretum are:

- To prevent the occurrence of fire from within its boundaries, but where a fire occurs to limit the amount of damage to the arboretum and adjacent areas.
- To protect the life and property of visitors.
- To protect the arboretum from fires originating outside its boundaries.
- To develop and maintain areas of native grassland as set out in the concept plans.

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5.1.1 Fire Protection

The location of this small area high value asset close to the township of Coleraine and site conditions mean that a close liaison with the local fire brigade of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) is required.

Aims and Actions

- To prepare and adopt plans for pre-suppression and suppression of wildfire within the arboretum.
- To liaise with relevant organisations for the common purpose of fire protection within the arboretum.

High	Co-ordination with the CFA and the Shire of Southern Grampians to ensure protection of life and property within the arboretum.
High	Annual slashing program in strategic areas to reduce fuel quantities.
High	Provide basic fire fighting equipment to assist in quick suppression of wildfire.
High	Develop a fire access plan.
Ongoing	Maintain liaison with the CFA at the local level.
Ongoing	Maintain access points to the arboretum through the northern and western boundary.
As needed	Graze unplanted areas to reduce fuel prior to fire season.
As needed	Locate all walking and maintenance tracks with due regard to fire protection requirements.

5.1.2 Burning for Vegetation Management

The development and maintenance of native grasslands may be assisted by the use of fire.

Aims and Actions

- To develop and maintain the native grassland areas as set out in the landscape concept plan.

As needed Use prescribed burning or other appropriate methods to meet the required objective.

5.2 Problem Plants

The presence of plants that are either declared noxious weeds or are noted problem plants in the arboretum may affect the health and vigour of the plantings.

The potential exists that the introduction of some plants may lead to their becoming a problem in the district.

5.2.1 Noxious Weeds

Parks Victoria is required to treat noxious weeds under the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Act (1958).

Aims and Actions

- To protect the health and vigour of plantings within the arboretum from noxious weeds.

Ongoing	Monitor the arboretum for the presence of noxious weeds.
As needed	Treat noxious weeds with appropriate control measures.

5.2.2 Potential Problem Plants

There are plants within the arboretum which are noted as being potential problem plants; the presence of these plants may not however be a threat to the other plantings or the district.

Aims and Actions

- To protect the plantings and neighbouring lands from potential problem plants within the arboretum.

High	Prohibit the introduction of plants known to be pests in the area.
Ongoing	Monitor potential problem plants within the arboretum for spread.
As needed	Treat or remove problem plants with appropriate methods.

5.2.3 Soil Pathogens and Plant Diseases

Soil and vegetation disturbance may allow problem plants to become established. The movement of soil, gravel or vehicles, for work within the arboretum, may permit introduced plants or their seeds and soil diseases into the arboretum.

Aims and Actions

- To protect against the introduction of soil-borne pathogens or undesirable seeds.
- To monitor and treat plant diseases.

As needed	Ensure that any soil introduced into the arboretum is free of undesirable seed or soil pathogens.
As needed	Test for undesirable seeds or soil fungi in all introduced soils used in the arboretum.
As needed	Implement appropriate control measures where a problem with a plant disease is located with the aim to limit, remove or control its spread.
As needed	Adopt appropriate soil and plant matter hygiene measures for machinery entering the arboretum.
Ongoing	Monitor the plants for the presence of disease.
Ongoing	Monitor the effectiveness of the control measures.

5.3 Pest Animals and Insects

The presence of rabbits can lead to damage or death of plants within the arboretum; especially vulnerable are small plants or those in the establishment phase.

Other animals that have been noted and may cause problems are: hares, foxes, domestic pets, horses and sheep.

Insects that may cause problems especially to young plants are: grasshoppers, saw flies and cup moths.

Aims and Actions

- To protect the arboretum from pest animals and insects.

High	Control rabbits with appropriate methods
Ongoing	Monitor for the presence of pest animals and pest insects.
As needed	Control all pest animals and pest insects in the arboretum with appropriate methods.

6 VISITOR USE

This section treats the questions of visitor access, and then deals with recreation activities and facilities, followed by interpretation requirements.

6.1 Access

Access within the arboretum is at present by a short section of gravelled tracks to the parking area and the look-out. Other tracks within the arboretum are indicated as "Management vehicles and walkers only". A number of walking trails, taking in some of the features of the arboretum already exist. The objectives of an access system within the arboretum are:

- To provide a defined public vehicle access area.
- To protect against tracks initiating erosion.
- To protect the plantings.
- To provide a sense of arrival and entry to the arboretum.
- To provide management and emergency vehicle access over the arboretum.
- To provide a system of safe walking trails to allow visitors to experience the attractions of the arboretum.
- To provide access for people with disabilities.

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The network of tracks within the arboretum will be developed in accordance with the (Parks Victoria) Road Management Act.

The entrance area to the arboretum should:

- Provide a sense of entry and arrival to the arboretum.
- Control visitor use.
- Separate general visitor use from activities specifically related to the arboretum.
- Provide set areas for:
 - Car-parking
 - Picnics and BBQs
 - Toilet facilities
 - Visitor interpretation area
 - Flower/plant beds

Only management vehicles will have access over the entire site. Passenger vehicle access to the lookout is permitted.

Aims and Actions

- To provide an appropriate access system within the arboretum.
- To provide walking trails over the site with emphasis on interpretation/educational requirements.

High Develop and implement a system of tracks in line with the fire protection and visitor use objectives.

High Confine public vehicle access to the car-parking area and look-out access track. Provide (removable) barriers to other tracks open only to management vehicles.

6.2 Recreation Activities

Recreation must be consistent with the aims of the arboretum. The main types of recreation are picnicking, walking, plant study and part of the arboretum is used as a children's playground.

6.2.1 Management of Recreation Activities

The type, level and patterns of use by visitors need to be monitored to manage and plan recreational activities. This will help to ensure that conflict between uses and users does not occur.

Aims and Actions

- To manage recreational use to minimise conflicts between uses and users, and to protect the arboretum.
- To manage organised events and commercial recreation activities to minimise impacts on other users and the arboretum.
- To monitor the patterns of visitor use in the arboretum.

Medium Use standard Parks Victoria visitor forms and procedures to record visitor use.

As needed Use a Permit System, authorised by the Chief Ranger, to grant approval to groups to hold organised events within the arboretum with provision for an entry fee.

Ongoing Assess applications to hold organised events on the basis of possible conflicts with other users of the arboretum.

Low Use vehicle counters periodically to measure vehicle entry in the arboretum.

6.2.2 Control of Recreation Activities

Some recreation activities are not appropriate in an arboretum or may conflict with the management objectives.

6.2.3 Memorials and Plaques

From time to time, members of the community wish to place a memorial (usually to a family member) within the arboretum. Several memorials are already in place, in the form of plaques, seats with plaques, and plantings with plaques.

The arboretum should not be seen as a memorial garden. Future requests for placement of plaques/memorials must be made in writing to the Board of Management.

- It should be clear that the scattering of ashes in the arboretum does not entitle any rights to location of any memorial or plaque
- Applicants will be encouraged to consider donating or sponsoring an item, nominated by the Board, as an alternative to a plaque, with acknowledgement of the donor noted on the item, where suitable
- If approved, the Board will manufacture a plaque to a standard format and wording, and install it, at the applicant's expense

6.3 Visitor Facilities

Visitor facilities are located in the arboretum and include car-parking, picnic facilities, walking tracks, children's play equipment and look-outs.

Aims and Actions

- To provide and maintain visitor facilities to: increase recreational opportunities, increase the enjoyment by visitors and minimise the impact of recreation activities.

On going Maintain and service all sites and facilities and any new facilities developed.
As needed Close any facility that becomes unsafe, prior to repair, replacement or removal.

6.4 Information, Interpretation and Education

The arboretum has the ability to provide a variety of information to a number of different user groups.

Aims

- To provide interpretative material to visitors of the arboretum.
- To provide a range of relevant information to the user groups.

6.5 Commercial Activities

Commercial activities will require the written approval of the Parks Victoria with appropriate conditions. Activities which are inappropriate or conflict with the objectives of the arboretum will not be permitted.

7 FURTHER STUDIES

The opportunity for trials related to plants (e.g. species selection, hardwood plantation, planting design, horticulture, etc.) may be initiated by the arboretum subcommittee or from within DSE or other relevant organisations.

Aims and Actions

- To ensure that trials are in accordance with the objectives of the arboretum.

As needed Requests for trials must be in writing and detail all aspects of the proposal. Permission will not be given if it is in conflict with the objectives of the arboretum. The written permission of Parks Victoria is required.

8 MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Reservation of the land

8.1.1 Unused Road

The eastern boundary of the arboretum presently includes an unused road, the extension of Winter Street. Steps to determine if this road can be upgraded as an entrance could be investigated.

8.2 Curator

A curator is currently employed four days per week to manage the arboretum in accordance with this plan. This position will be subject to the availability of funds, and prior discussion involving both DSE and Parks Victoria.

8.2.1 Caretaker/Curator's Residence

An area has been set aside for a caretaker's residence. This residence could be provided via a variety of sources, including a donor or DSE, as opportunity permits.

8.3 Volunteer Assistance

Volunteers have played a major role in the development of the arboretum and will continue to do so. The utilisation of volunteers must be in accordance with the Industrial Relations Circular, 25 August 1988, No 5/88 issued by the Industrial Relations Unit of DCE, or subsequent updates.

9 Appendices

9.1 Location Plan

9.2 Soil types and reference grid system

9.3 Description of Soil Types

9.4 Shadehouse Concept Plan

9.5 Analysis of existing plant collection

9.6 Concept plan: vegetation type and structure

9.7 Plant List

9.8 Bird List