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Photo: Ballarat Fernery circa 1890

## BALLARAT FERNERY RECONSTRUCTION BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS

**SHOVEL READY**

### The Ask

- \$1.4 million for the reconstruction of the existing structure and to build a gothic entrance for the 130-year-old Ballarat Fernery to create a community space in the heart of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens and Lake Wendouree precinct; and to enhance the gardens' plant collection
- City of Ballarat has committed \$1.2 million to the Ballarat Fernery Reconstruction's first stage

### Overview

The Ballarat Fernery is one of the oldest of its kind in Australia; it has been a fernery - of varying styles - since 1887. The fernery was closed in 2013 and is currently in a deteriorated and decaying state.

The City of Ballarat, in partnership with the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, is committed to redeveloping the fernery. It is recognised by the Victorian Heritage Register Statement of Significance as an outstanding Ballarat Botanical Gardens feature.

The \$2.8 million Ballarat Fernery reconstruction will return this important cultural asset to a wonderful destination for visitors to enjoy.

### Context

Public support for the Ballarat Fernery refurbishment was demonstrated during the *Lake Wendouree Masterplan* public consultation process - over 1800 people identified the fernery as a precinct priority project.

# The Benefits

The Ballarat Fernery Reconstruction will improve the tourism offering of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, the Lake Wendouree precinct, and the broader Ballarat region.

Compelling architecture, weather protection during cold and hot months, a diverse fernery collection, and a beautiful holistic botanical gardens experience creates a wonderful tourism offering. The fernery's core location in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens is important to the tourism offering of the whole precinct which is home to Ballarat's largest annual event - the Ballarat Begonia Festival - which attracts over 40,000 people. Increased visitation to the gardens through the fernery reconstruction will also have benefits for neighbouring businesses including Pipers by the Lake Café and Restaurant.

## The Issue

Engineering assessments have found the Ballarat Fernery's existing steel structure and footing is currently at risk of further deterioration which could compromise the structure's integrity and safety. The structure is missing approximately half of its original cladding and remains exposed.

## The Site

The Ballarat Fernery is located on Wendouree Parade, in the centre of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, and plays an important role in linking the North Gardens to the botanical gardens. The fernery is located adjacent to Lake Wendouree, providing an important botanical offering to the Lake Wendouree precinct.

## Timeframe

Dependent on securing funding, design work and construction are expected to be finished by June 2019. Stage 1 design works to commence shortly with the delivery of the project's first stage - the Gothic Entrance - to be delivered by October 2018.

Timing for the delivery of Stage 2, the refurbishment of the remaining two thirds of the existing fernery structure, will be dependent on securing funding.

## Benefits

### Community

The Ballarat Fernery will provide an opportunity to tell the story of the broader Ballarat Botanical Gardens and Lake Wendouree Precinct, as well as the fernery's history and its varying architectural history over time.

The fernery has been open since the 1880's, making it a rich part of Ballarat's heritage; it is ideally located close to a number of primary and secondary schools that will visit and use the building to help them better understand the Ballarat story.

### Environment

The fernery's increased and continued use also includes a range of specialist plantings which add value and interest to this significant historic garden and surrounds. The fernery has housed significant fernery collections in the past and the refurbishment would allow the current fern collection to be built upon.

### Economic

The \$2.8 million project is estimated to:

- Jobs - generate 16 jobs
- Investment - increase the size of the Ballarat economy by \$2.3 million

## Strategic Alignment

### City of Ballarat

- Council Plan 2017–2021
- Lake Wendouree Masterplan 2017

### State

- Victorian Heritage Register Statement of Significance

### Partners

- Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens
- Heritage Victoria

## Project Status

- Shovel ready
- Concept plans complete
- Community consultation ongoing

## Funding

- City of Ballarat has committed \$1.2 million
- Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens has committed \$200,000
- \$200,000 grant application lodged with Heritage Victoria under the *Living Heritage Grants Program*, submitted 12 April 2018.