

## **PART ONE ■ Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of the Plan**

Under section 41(6) of the Reserves Act 1977 Council approved the Botanical Gardens Management Plan on 25 June 2009.

The purpose of this Reserves Act (1977) Management Plan is to provide a strategic framework (for 10 years or more) for the management of Gisborne's Botanical Gardens under the provisions of the Act. This plan sets out a framework to enhance the Botanical Gardens as a 'botanic garden', including further plant collections, enhancing learning opportunities and providing for passive recreation.

It should be noted that the Management Plan expresses Council policies. Funding of Council activities is directed through the LTCCP and Annual Plans. Inclusion of proposed actions in the Management Plan is no commitment from Council to deliver. All these actions that carry a financial cost are subject to funding arrangements in the LTCCP and Annual Plans.

### **1.2 Meaning of 'Botanic Garden'**

The identifiable character of the 'botanic garden' is their combined roles of being both educational and beautiful. The earliest Botanic Gardens were related to the provision of food and fibre, and subsequently medicine in forms of herbs. Botanic Gardens were used to introduce economic crops, the acclimatisation of plants, advancements in botanical sciences and assisting university teaching, the understanding of plants in the urban environment, and the preservation of rare and endangered plants<sup>1</sup>.

The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975 describes a "Botanic Garden" as:

*"A scientific and educational institution, the purpose of which is the advancement and dissemination of knowledge and appreciation of plants by:*

- ▶ *Growing them in a horticultural setting, and*
- ▶ *Establishing herbarium collections, and*
- ▶ *Conducting research, and*
- ▶ *Providing displays and interpretive services (section 3.0)".*

Gisborne's Botanical Gardens is consistent with the intention of 'Botanic Gardens'. This is reiterated through the proposed labelling of key specimen trees and the development and maintenance of plant inventories for the various gardens. Developing plant collections at the Gardens also establishes the reserves as a Botanic Garden.

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Botanic Gardens, Draft Management Plan, Auckland Regional Council, March 1994.

**1.3 Location Plan and Land Parcels**



## **1.4 Introduction**

Gisborne's Botanical Gardens is located along the Taruheru River, less than a kilometre north-east of the Central Business District. The Botanical Gardens is managed as Gisborne's premier amenity park, and is city's oldest reserve. The Botanical Gardens was set aside in 1874 and parts of the Gardens were purchased as early as 1908. The Gardens has a history of being well-used and is still one of the cities most popular reserves.

The Botanical Gardens is known for its impressive framework of mature trees, meandering wide paths, stunning garden collections including the Sister-City gardens.

An important feature of the Botanical Gardens is the open space – areas of lawn for picnics and gatherings.

The playground is well used and enjoyed by young families and children. Located in the south-eastern corner of the reserve, this area is alongside the Taruheru River. The playground contains several pieces of play equipment and has been developed as one of two playgrounds in the City considered 'destination playgrounds'.

The standard playground kit includes one set of swings, a see-saw and picnic table. Destination playgrounds have several more pieces of play equipment and facilities. <sup>2</sup>The Botanical Garden's playground is popular with young families for its playground, open space, public facilities, and the ducks at the Japanese Garden pond.

The Sister City Gardens are the 'jewels in the crown' for the Botanical Gardens. They were developed between 1997 and 2000. Gisborne has formed Sister City relationships with other Cities from the 'Pacific Rim'. The cities represented at the Botanical Gardens are:

Palm Desert (America), Nonoichi (Japan), and Gisborne (Australia). These gardens include plants endemic to that Country and sculptures which reflect their culture.

Another highly regarded feature of the Botanical Gardens is the free-flying Aviary located within the southern area of the Botanical Gardens. This is popular with the community and visitors to the area. Presently the aviary is home to varied range of birds.

Free-flying Avery's were a common feature of Botanical Gardens in the late 1900's, however this aviary is one of the few remaining in Botanical Gardens' in New Zealand.

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<sup>2</sup> The standard playground kit established on local neighbourhood parks includes one set of swings, a see-saw and picnic table. Destination playgrounds have several more pieces of play equipment and facilities and are considered to provide for City-wide use and visitors to the area. Although staff refers to this definition, this has not yet been included in the Gisborne City's Open Space Strategy.

## 1.5 History

The Botanical Gardens was first set aside in 1874 as a public garden. At the time, this reserve was located just outside the city boundary. By the late 1800s the reserve now known as the Botanical Gardens had been developed into Gisborne's first recreation reserve. Cricket was played here, and by 1884 a Grandstand had been developed (this was gone by 1887, which was most likely burnt down). Cricket continued to be played at this site until 1901, when Victoria Domain was developed and became the home for Cricket. In the late 1880s a number of houses were being built in Whataupoko, including Stout Street. By 1887 a pedestrian bridge had been built providing direct access to the Botanical Gardens from the western side of the Taruheru River. By 1912 this bridge was arched to allow boats to go under. The Taruheru River was well used by this time, and provided access to the Taruheru Freezing Works (built in 1889). The bridge enhanced the Botanical Gardens providing a feature and creating an entrance to the Gardens.

By the 1920's the Botanical Gardens included a grand Band Rotunda. The Botanical Gardens was used for town gatherings, and the photo below shows the town turning out to welcome a noble person (probably a Lord) to Gisborne<sup>3</sup>. Paths were developed and these all lead to the Rotunda. By the 1940s the Rotunda had lost its roof, quite possibly as a result of the 1948 flood<sup>4</sup>.

At this stage the Botanical Gardens covered the area closest to Carnarvon Street, and although the Cook County Borough owned the other half of the reserve adjoining Roebuck Road, other than some trees planted along the Aberdeen Road street frontage, no other development occurred here at this time.



<sup>3</sup> Personal Communication with Sheila Robinson, Local Historian.

<sup>4</sup> Personal Communication with Sheila Robinson, Local Historian.

By the 1960s the poplars which can be seen in the earliest photos from the 1800s were mature, the row of trees along the river front was known as Poplar Ave. The Botanical Gardens was developed as formal Botanical Gardens by this time, with ornate grand entrance gates and wide pathways and rows and rows of flower beds.



During the late 1960s the Council decided to maintain the Gardens as less of a 'Botanical Gardens' and more as a Park. This angered the community and resulted in the Citizens of Gisborne taking the Council to the Supreme Court – to little avail. The flower beds were removed and lawn was reinstated over a majority of the Gardens. This was both cheaper and easier to maintain, and allowed more of Council's reserves budget to be spent on the riverside reserves.

From 1967-1977 a 'Weka' pen was located at the Gardens. The pen became unsatisfactory after a number of other bird species were housed there. At this point, it seems the decision was made to develop a "free flying" Aviary. This was constructed in 1972 and remains popular with the Gisborne community today.

Another popular feature of the Gardens was developed in 1972. This is the year the old pond was created. This became a popular area for brides to have the photos taken. The surrounding rockery to the old pond still exists today.

A species rose bed was also created in 1972. This was maintained by the Rose Society. A collection of 70 species roses had been donated to the Gisborne and East Coast Rose Society. The Botanical Gardens was considered the best location to plant their roses where they could be correctly labeled, pruned and maintained. Some of these roses remain alongside the existing playground.

The Gardens were shifting towards becoming more consistent with the characteristics of a 'Botanic Garden' again, rather than a park as Council had decided in the early 1960's.

Re-establishing itself as a botanic garden continued throughout the 70s when Mr. and Mrs. J B Grieg of Warenga-a-Hika bequeathed their Cacti collection to Council in 1978. Council decided to locate the collection at the Botanical Gardens. A glass house was built to provide protection for the collection. The Cacti have been incorporated in to the Palm Desert Garden.

In 1994 the Gisborne District Council adopted the concept of developing three sister gardens at the Botanical Gardens. Gisborne has sister city relations with cities from around the Pacific Rim. The sister cities represented so far at the Gardens are; Palm Desert, California within the United States of America, Gisborne in Victoria, Australia, and Nonoichi Town in Japan.

### **1.6 Gisborne's Sister City Committee**

Gisborne District Council currently has Sister City and friendly relations with six international cities based around the Pacific Rim. These relationships "foster communication across borders and co-operative programmes of mutual exchange of ideas, people and materials in a variety of cultural, educational, youth, sports, municipal, professional and technical projects".

Gisborne has Sister City relationships with:

- ▶ Palm Desert, California, United States of America.
- ▶ Nonoichi, Japan.
- ▶ Gisborne, Victoria, Australia
- ▶ Mahina, Tahiti
- ▶ Rizhao, China
- ▶ Gamagori, Japan

The Pacific Rim is a geographical term referring to countries which border the Pacific Ocean.

Gisborne Sister Cities Committee was formed in 1981 and includes members of the community and one Council representative. The Committee's Mission Statement is:

*"To actively promote a diversity of people-to-people contact between the communities of the Gisborne District, New Zealand and [Sister Cities] by practicing and sharing this contact locally, we believe we will contribute to bettering understanding and co-operation globally. In Gisborne this Committee and the Gisborne District Council seek a widespread community partnership, particularly with the people of the District, as validation of the relevance of such a commitment".*

The Committee's objectives are formed around educational development, cultural development, business links, and the exchange of Local Government practices and information. Sister City relationships are supported and endorsed through several different mechanisms based around the objectives mentioned above; these include an artist exchange programme, student exchange and teacher exchange programmes, and annual photo competitions.

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Due to the importance of balancing valued open space and gardens, it is proposed that no further sister city gardens are developed at this reserve. Any further Sister City relationships which seek the development of a garden should be suitably accommodated at any number of other reserve sites in the City. Due to the historical and cultural connection between Gisborne and Mahina, Tahiti and the significance of Poverty Bay as the first landing place in New Zealand following Captain James Cook's visit to Tahiti, this Sister City relationship may be better recognised at one of Gisborne's coastal reserves.

### **1.7 Friends of the Botanical Gardens**

The Friends of the Botanical Gardens was formed in early 1998. The group of volunteers came together to support Council and the Sister City Committee to implement some major improvements proposed for the gardens. These improvements included the development of the three sister city gardens.

The group was most active from the time it first formed until the early 2000s. In most recent years the groups has become defunct, awaiting the preparation of a management plan to guide future funding proposals and development plans.