



(c) The Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

The Royal Botanic Gardens

Birdwood Avenue
South Yarra

VISITING TIMES

Mondays to Saturday

April – September 7.30am

October – March 7.00am

Sundays and Public Holidays

May – August 9.00am

September – April 8.30am

The Gardens close at sunset each day

COST

Free

ENTRANCES

At least eight entrances off the surrounding streets: Birdwood Avenue, Anderson Street and Alexandra Avenue.

Gate A: bitumen surrounds but gravel from the "disabled" car park. See parking.

Gates B, C, D and F: bitumen driveway from road to gate.

Gate E: rough bluestone surface for 1 metre from roadway then unsealed

stone surface for 6 metres to entrance gates.

Gate H: here there is a large enough area for set-down or pick-up. However the surface between roadway and gate is dirt/gravel.

Roughly speaking Birdwood Avenue can be thought of as bordering the top of the gardens and Alexandra Avenue as bordering the bottom. If you enter through Gates A (corner of Alexandra Avenue and Anderson Street) or H (Alexandra Avenue) you can move about the lower section of the gardens surrounding the Ornamental Lake without having to negotiate too many hills. Most paths within the centre of the gardens are quite steep and may bank at an awkward angle.

PARKING

Parking can be found along the bordering roads although Alexandra Avenue has restricted parking just west of Morell Bridge.

"DISABLED" PARKING

1. Two, two hour spaces for people displaying disabled stickers at Gate F (Corner of Dallas Brooks Drive and Birdwood Avenue) next to the Visitor Centre. EASE has been advised that during summer icecream vendors sometimes park here illegally.
2. Two spaces on Alexandra Avenue approximately 10 metres from Gate A and recessed off the road. This entrance is suitable for the Kiosk. A sign above these spots declares that "wheelchairs and parking permits [are] available" from the Kiosk. If you wish to park in this bay ring the Kiosk before leaving home: 654 6540. They will prepare a permit. The trip in and out of the gardens is not short so be prepared for a long walk to and fro!

PATHS

Paths about the perimeter (outside) of the gardens are either bitumen or gravel. Along Birdwood Avenue and down Anderson Street they are bitumen, though irregular and broken by roots. The outer path along Alexandra Avenue is gravel.

The main garden paths are bitumen. Paths within garden plots or special areas are either light gravel or irregular brick. EASE has, in the past, received complaints about these gravel paths. The gravel is hard on the hands of wheelchair users. An electric wheelchair is unable to reach some of these plots.

Paths, of course, have to contend with hills and often bank severely to one side. On the day EASE visited the gardens the electric wheelchair (having motor problems of its own) did not cope well with the angle on some banked paths and at one stage ended in the gutter.

GUTTERS

Gutters are, for the most part, concave in shape and would pose extreme difficulty for an unaccompanied wheelchair user. An electric wheelchair gets stuck. EASE and Garden staff discussed the possibility of strategically placed kerb ramps or dropped kerbs. These are being considered by the Gardens. Special garden beds, for example the Perennial Border and the Vireya Rhododendron Garden, pose difficulties for wheelchair users. Please refer to the notes below.

SIGNS

The Royal Botanic Gardens will soon be erecting directional signs throughout

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The Royal Botanic Gardens

Venue Notes Continued

their gardens. At the time this report was written the signs were not in place. Without the new signs it would be easy to get lost. No lines, borders or rails are provided within the gardens for people with a visual impairment. Garden Staff are discussing with the Institute for the Blind special aids to make the gardens more accessible and enjoyable for the visually impaired.

TOILETS

1. Visitor Centre (Gate F – Birdwood Avenue)
2. Below Oak Lawn. Although entries are picturesque, signs are difficult to locate and there are no markings to assist the visually impaired (improvements on the way).
3. Kiosk and behind. See notes on toilets for “disabled” toilets.
4. Female toilet next to Gate D, again off Birdwood Avenue.

“Disabled” Toilets

1. Visitor Centre, next to Gate F, temporary entry from Birdwood Avenue. At the time EASE visited the gardens this unisex-toilet presented some difficulties:
 - a. The door was set at the end of a short but confined corridor and was difficult to open.
 - b. The cubicle included a shower without curtain, basin or suitable ventilation and the shower dripped, consequently the floor was wet and slippery.
 - c. No sign in outer corridor, difficult to locate. Signs will be in place within a couple of months.
2. Kiosk, overlooking Ornamental Lake (closest entrance: Gate A). Unisex toilet accessed via toilet vestibule. This is a confined space. The outer door opens inwards and is hard to push. The toilet door opens outward into the antechamber and does not have an automatic close mechanism, there is no suitable handle to draw it closed. Recommend backing into toilet as there is little space to manoeuvre. No bar behind toilet.

BOTANIC GARDEN BUILDINGS THE KIOSK

Offers hot lunches, Devonshire teas, refreshments and take-aways.
Opening Times: daily 9.00am to 4.30pm during the Winter. Closes 5.00pm Spring, Summer and Autumn.
Phone Number: 654 6540

Garden Entrance

The closest garden entrance would be

Gate A at the corner of Anderson Street and Alexandra Avenue.

Parking

Anderson Street offers some parking, however Alexandra Avenue has limited suitable parking on the garden side. For “disabled” parking see above.

Path

Path from Gate A to the Kiosk is bitumen (gravel outside the gate) and there is a mild slope leading down to the Kiosk.

Kiosk Surroundings.

The Kiosk has brick surroundings, covered in part by a pergola. These bricks are VERY slippery when wet. Steps within this paved area, leading down to the lake front, are unmarked.

Kiosk Entrance

Doors marked for wheelchair access are in the middle of the building. There is a slight rise to these doors with recessed grass-pile matting. Door handles are a bit high.

Snack Bar

Bench high for wheelchair users, and a “crowd control” rail restricts movement. The Kiosk is to undergo alterations.

Cafeteria

Food displays high, shelf reasonable. On the day EASE visited the gardens a table obstructed the exit from the cafeteria counter although it was possible to work around it.

Toilets

See above

Phones

One phone close to wheelchair entrance. But too high for wheelchair users.

Wheelchair Hire

Two wheelchairs can be borrowed from the Kiosk for a deposit of \$20.

VISITOR CENTRE

The Visitor Centre, within the National Herbarium of Victoria, is located next to Gate F. This building houses a display, theatre, information desk and non-lending library open to the public. If you require information from the library it is advisable to ring beforehand on 650 9427. The Visitor Centre has a selection of brochures and booklets and is the best place to gather information and plan your visit. The Centre and Herbarium are undergoing extensive renovations and extensions which should be complete by late 1989. Open daily 10.00am – 4.00pm.

Entrance

1. At the time EASE visited a ramp ran up to the front door from Birdwood Avenue. During winter the doors are closed (but not locked), they are difficult to open from a wheelchair. Once renovations are complete this ramp is to be removed and wheelchair access will be from within the gardens, entry via Gate F.
2. At the Garden entrance a ramp leads up to the door. The hand rail is broken by broad pillars. The door is heavy and opens outwards to the left.

NOTE

The above comments about the Garden side door to the Visitor Centre are relevant because the distance between this door and the steps, which bypass the ramp, is short. The steps come suddenly, are steep, unmarked and without a rail. Somebody with a visual impairment should proceed out the Garden side door with extreme caution.

Parking

See above

Toilets

See above

PLANT CRAFT COTTAGE

This gardener's residence, built in 1851, today houses the Plant Craft Cottage Group whose members practise a wide range of plant crafts. It also houses an interesting reference library.

Entrance

Closest gate: Gate H, however people who cannot negotiate steps will need to move directly in to the gardens and come back up a steep slope. There is one step into cottage hallway.

Toilets

None

Helpful Hints

1. The above notes are by no means comprehensive. The Botanic Gardens are extensive and there are many charming and delightful areas.
2. Manual wheelchair users would be advised to take gloves, as some sections of gravel can be hard on the hands.
3. The majority of seats within the grounds are on the lawns and away from paths.
4. Garden maps which include a calendar of events, is available at each gate. Map boards are also placed at each entrance.

We would like to thank Roslyn Semmler, Interpretations Officer with the Botanic Gardens, for her assistance, guidance, support and concern. Without her patience and advice the above notes would have been impossible to compile.

Venue Guide

EASE and the ACROD Access and Mobility Committee are presently co-operating on the production of a guide to venues in Melbourne. We plan to update and reproduce much of the material already published in the EASE newsletter. Some new venues will be added and we will cover a wide range of popular venues including advice on how to make bookings and how to arrange temporary parking for buses in the Melbourne City Centre.

Please contact us (on 699 8497) if you have any suggestions about what could be included, how to lay out such a guide, or what to avoid. We would also like to know if you want a copy!

EASE HOTLINE:

699 8497

**BIG RIVER, THE ADVENTURES OF
HUCKLEBERRY FINN**

Dates: Wednesdays & Saturdays 2pm,
Mondays to Thursdays 8pm.
Venue: Her Majesty's Theatre

— This Month's Choice Selections —

LES MISERABLES

Dates: from 6th November 1989,
Wednesdays 1pm. Please ring for
information on evening performances.
Venue: Princess Theatre

Tickets

699 8497

BASKETBALL

All Melbourne SIO Tigers home games
Dates: Friday 4 August 8.30pm,
Sunday 20 August 2.30pm, Saturday
26 August 8.30pm, Sunday 3
September 2.30pm, Sunday 8
September 8.30pm.

Venue: Sports and Entertainment
Centre (The Glasshouse)
Cost: \$3.50

The Melbourne SIO Tigers have
Andrew Gaze on their team. As the
matches are sometimes scheduled for
live telecast, the above times may
change.

THEATRE SPORTS

Flying Pig Theatre Company
Dates: 7.30pm every Sunday
Venue: Playhouse Theatre (Victorian
Arts Centre)
Cost: \$6.00

Theatre Sports pits teams of actors
against each other, competing for
audience approval. It's great fun and
addictive.

VICTORIA STATE OPERA SEASON

Venue: State Theatre
Cost: \$14.00

This Year's VSO Season includes five
operas: La Traviata, La Boheme, The
Abduction from the Seraglio,
Tannhauser and The Barber of Seville.
If you are interested in any of these
operas please give us a call. EASE has
access to a limited number of tickets

SANDY BEACH CONCERTS

Dates: Every Sunday at 2.30pm until
3rd September.

Venue: Sandy Beach Community Arts
Centre (Sandringham)
Cost: \$4.00

An exciting concert series with highly
professional artists performing in an
intimate, community setting. Concerts
cover almost the entire range of musical
styles from George Dreyfus and the
City of Moorabbin Band to extracts
from Gilbert and Sullivan

SPOLETO

Dates: 14 to 30 September 1989
EASE has access to tickets to select
events in this year's Spoleto calendar.
The tickets below are only a selection.
Some of the highlights not mentioned
here include the performances of
Laurie Anderson, The Knot Garden and
the Paul Taylor Dance Company.

WALLFLOWERING

Venue: The Studio
Dates: 8pm 15, 19, 21, 23, 26, 28, 30
Sep.
5pm 17, 23, 24, 30 September
Cost: \$12.50

The Canberra Theatre Company
presents a new Australian play by Peta
Murray. A gentle comedy about the
unsettled marriage of two champion
ballroom dancers.

**CHAMBER MUSIC LUNCHTIME
SERIES**

Venue: Assembly Hall
Dates: 1pm 18-22, 25-29 September
Cost: \$6.00
Spoleto hosts an exciting lunchtime
chamber music series throughout the
festival period.

SAMUL NORI DRUMMERS

Venue: Playhouse
Dates: 8.15pm 22, 23 September
Cost: \$13.50
Four artists' energetic celebration of
Korea's ancient, traditional folk music
and dance.

CIRCUS OZ

Venue: Melbourne Town Hall
Dates: 20 September – 6 October
8pm Monday to Saturday
2pm Saturdays
3pm Sundays
Cost: \$7.00
A Circus troupe which should require
little introduction. Circus at its best
without animals and demonstrating the
full range of entertainment with
unbelievable skills, humour and pathos.

HOW TO BOOK WITH EASE

To book tickets with EASE, ring 699 8497, discuss with
Barbara or Chris what you would like to see and where you
would like to sit. Make out a cheque to Arts Access for the
appropriate amount and post it to Arts Access, 109-111 Sturt
Street South Melbourne 3205. We will either hold the tickets
for you, post them or arrange for them to be at the box office –
whichever you prefer. It does help us if you can provide a
stamped, self-addressed envelope.

THE EASE SERVICE FEE

EASE has introduced service fees for organisations.
Organisations wishing to take advantage of the range of
services related to our ticketing scheme are required to pay a
fee depending on the number of people the organisation
services. For more information on these fees please contact
the EASE office on 699 7636 and ask for Chris Milton.

EASE 699 8497**ENTERTAINMENT ACCESS SERVICE**

EASE aims to assist people with special needs to attend Melbourne's entertainment and sporting events by providing information, social support and incentives.

EASE also aims to encourage promoters and venue management to ensure physical access is feasible at all events within the Melbourne metropolitan region.

INFORMATION HOTLINE: 699 8497

Advice about venue accessibility, what's on and booking procedures.

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Information, articles, letters and announcements of tickets available through EASE. EASE newsletter annual subscription: \$15.00.

TICKETING SCHEME

Low cost tickets to a variety of entertainment events. We would like to acknowledge the generous support over the past two months of: Kevin Hanely, Discurio, Midnight Spankings, Bharatam Dance Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Essington Entertainment and The Gordon/Frost Organisation, Melbourne SIO Tigers, Playbox Theatre Company, The Rock Circuit, Sandy Beach Community Centre, Australian Pops Orchestra, Frontier Touring Company, Michael Edgley International, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

A service fee applies to use of the EASE Ticketing Scheme by Organisations. For further information on the service fee please ring Chris on 699 7636.

Jeanette's Farewell

Jeanette Pierce has left EASE. Jeanette was responsible for the bookkeeping and money matters behind our tickets. She did a great job. Jeanette has moved on to a receptionist position with the Ministry for Planning and Environment. The remaining EASE and Arts Access staff would like to wish her well for the future.

A Place to Relax

The Travellers Aid Society, an organisation dedicated to providing support for people travelling in and out of Melbourne, has developed a new service. A traveller, in their eyes, does not have to come from interstate or overseas, they can be visitors to Melbourne's central business district from the suburbs. The Society provides places for people to relax and enjoy a light meal and tea or coffee, rooms for women to care for their children, information on Melbourne and assistance in an emergency.

Travellers Aid has recently employed two workers specifically dedicated to people with disabilities. They are based in the Swanston Street rooms ("disabled" toilet available) and will provide personal care, information and general support free of charge to any person with a disability coming into the city. The two workers will also assist in an attendant care capacity with assistance to the toilet, food preparation and phone calls.

Hours: 9.00am – 4.00pm Monday to Friday
10.00am – 4.00pm Saturday.

Phone: 654 2600

Place: Travellers Aid Society
2nd Floor, 160 Swanston Street
Melbourne
Corner of Swanston and Bourke Streets
(Enter between 'CUE' dress shop and 'TIE RACK' tie shop)

EASE attempts to ensure that all information provided over the phone and recorded in its publications is accurate. EASE and Arts Access Society Inc. cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of this information. We hope that the information is helpful and apologise for any inconvenience an inaccuracy may cause.

ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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