

Nature of Play:

10 years of the Children's Garden

The Ian Potter Foundation

Open: 10am - sunset, Wednesday to Sunday
Seven days per week during Victorian State School holidays
All public holidays

Closed: Monday and Tuesday during Victorian State School terms
Eight weeks for rest and maintenance during winter (from the start of term three)

children's garden



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The Challenge



The Vision

... WHERE CHILDREN
CAN DELIGHT IN
NATURE AND
DISCOVER A PASSION
FOR PLANTS ...

A child needs to touch the earth and be touched by it

Connecting children to nature through immersive experiences.

Play-based approach



2004

2004



A photograph of a lush garden scene. In the foreground, there are large, green banana leaves and other tropical plants. In the middle ground, a large, dense tree with green foliage dominates the center. To the left, a building with a blue and white striped roof is visible. In the background, more trees and a clear blue sky are seen. A large, white, corrugated metal water tank is in the lower right corner. A white circular callout box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text about visitor statistics.

Today

Snapshot:

3.2M+ visitors

10K+ teachers

150K+ students

10K+ visitor programs

Introducing the Children's Garden



Community Engagement





Our learnings:

**child-centred
exploration,
absorbing the landscape**

loose material

dirt digging pit

love of water



Welcome! Help make this a safe and happy place...

Please supervise your children at all times

You are responsible for keeping your children safe while in this garden. The garden features deep water and rocky areas. Wading, swimming in or drinking the water is prohibited.



Slip, slop, slap and keep your clothes on! Please make sure children have adequate sun protection while they play. Children must be clothed at all times.

Children: this is your garden to explore and enjoy!

Care for it so that it will always be a fun place to visit.
Adults: please encourage children to respect the garden while they play.



Our learnings:

- **Safety:**

Nudity

Sun

Signage



Our learnings:

Safety:

Adventure vs risk

**Water – access and
management**

Access for all abilities





Our learnings:

•Comfort:

Parent facilities

Blanket space – turf was designed for rolling!

•Horticultural integrity

Loved to death!

Sophisticated planting

Soil structure is important

Resting the garden

The future

- Vision ✓
- Keep working on reducing barriers to visitation
- Continue outreach programs
- New programs for different audiences

