Project Cultivate

Recreating a flourishing native grassland in Melbourne General Cemetery

Introducing Project Cultivate

- Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT) is exploring ways to sustainably enhance and manage our horticultural assets at our historic and heritage sites, with the environment and the future in mind.
- Project Cultivate is well underway at Melbourne General Cemetery (MGC) and works will be covering around 53% of the site.
- Project Cultivate is converting many currently unplanted monumental areas of the cemetery into a flourishing native grassland, through the application of organic mulch and 500,000 indigenous plants.
- Today, less than 2% of these grasslands remain intact, making them one of the most endangered ecosystems in Australia. This is a unique opportunity to create and protect a large-scale native grassland in the heart of the city for all to enjoy.

For more information about Project Cultivate, please visit our website at smct.org.au/cultivate or contact us at **community@smct.org.au**

What is happening at Melbourne General Cemetery?

While the landscape and gardens of MGC have changed dramatically since opening to the public in 1853, many traditional elements and plantings remain today including significant native and exotic trees, ornamental rose gardens and areas of lush, green turf.

While these traditional plantings have their place at MGC, new plantings must consider broader environmental and sustainability factors.

What is being planted?

Project Cultivate is using over 25 species of locally native grasses, wildflowers, and groundcovers, with 7 plants installed per square metre. Over time, these plants will spread and seed to fill gaps, suppress weeds, and support a natural biodiverse environment. Plantings will include:

- *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass)
- *Rytidosperma caespitosum* (Wallaby Grass)
- *Wahlenbergia communis* (Tufted Bluebell)
- *Chrysocephalum semipapposum* (Clustered Everlastings)
- *Pycnosorus chrysanthes* (Billy Buttons)

Why are we planting indigenous species?

Opportunities for planting at MGC are limited. The volume of graves, monuments and concrete mean there is minimal planting space, and plant choices must be made carefully to avoid damage to monuments and other infrastructure over time. There is also a lack of irrigation at MGC, and the soil is heavy compacted clay, with little topsoil.

SMCT horticulturists, in consultation with industry experts, local government and Traditional Owners have developed a list of indigenous plants for Project Cultivate, many of which would have previously been present at the site.

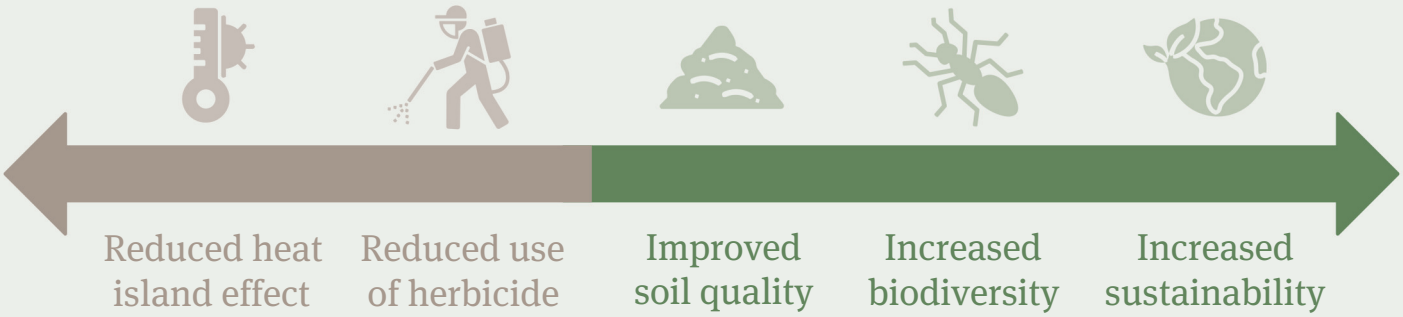
These plants are climate ready and will thrive at the site, tolerating the challenging soil and lack of irrigation. An increase in plant life on the grounds will also help to mitigate the impacts of the urban heat-island effect.

SMCT acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which Melbourne General Cemetery is located and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN CEMETERIES TRUST

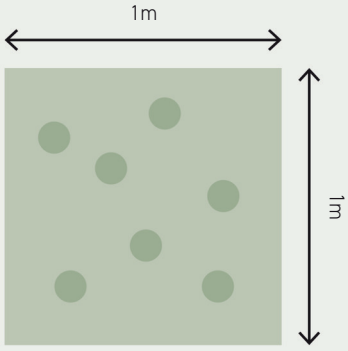
Project Cultivate

Why are we planting indigenous species?



25+ species

of locally native grasses, wildflowers and groundcovers.



7 plants

per 1m2 of land.

Plantings include:

Themeda triandra (Kangaroo Grass)

Rytidosperma caespitosum (Wallaby Grass)

Wahlenbergia communis (Tufted Bluebell)

Chrysocephalum semipapposum (Clustered Everlastings)

Pycnosorus chrysanthes (Billy Buttons)

For more information about Project Cultivate, please visit our website at smct.org.au/cultivate

SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN CEMETERIES TRUST