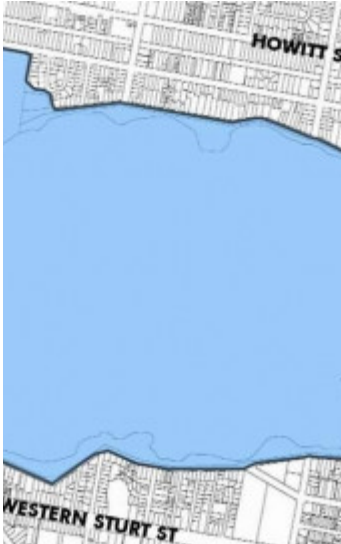


---

# Lake Wendouree Precinct



LAKE WENDOUREE  
HERITAGE PRECINCT

---

## Municipality

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO163

### Heritage Listing

Ballarat City

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The Lake Wendouree Precinct is **historically** significant at a **STATE** Level. (AHC criteria A.4, H.1 and C.2).

*(a) the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;*

*(a.4) the importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, State, region or community;*

*(c) the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history;*

*(h) the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.*

The former Yuille swamp and environs, Lake Wendouree, is historically significant as an important campsite of the Wathawarrung, the Indigenous people of the region. Originally known as Yuille's swamp, the Lake was included in the run taken up by pastoralists Archibald and William Yuille in 1839, but renamed "Wendouree" by W.S. Urquhart, the first surveyor of Ballarat, who camped at Yuille's swamp in 1851. Since that time the Lake has developed as a site for industrial and recreational uses.

The evolution of the Lake as a pleasure garden and its associated manmade features are important for their ability to demonstrate changing community's perception and values in relation to the natural environment and recreational pursuits over 160 years.

Lake Wendouree was the source of the water supply to urban Ballarat between 1852 and 1864 prior to the formation of the West and East Ballarat Water Commissions. The Frys Flour Mill and the Rowlands and Lewis soda water factory were established on the shores of the lake in 1850s. The Ballarat rowing club (the second oldest rowing club in Australia) was established in 1861, and in 1902 a Regatta Rowing Course was established between Viewpoint and Gills Island. Paddle steamers commenced sailing the Lake in 1865, with the "Golden City" the only survivor of 15 steamers that once serviced passengers on the Lake. The Lake is of historical significance as the site for the rowing, canoeing and kayaking events for the regattarowing course in the 1956 Olympics, and subsequent world championships.

The Botanic Gardens developed from 1856-1858 on an extensive site overlooking Lake Wendouree are the oldest inland botanic gardens in Victoria, and one of the best known botanic gardens outside Australia's capital cities. The land set aside for the gardens in 1857, was previously used as the Ballarat Police horse paddock.

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens and Lake Wendouree are also historically significant as they reflect the social aspirations of early Ballarat and provide an excellent example of a gardenesque 19th century layout. A competition was held for the design of the Gardens in 1858, won by Messrs Wright and Armstrong. The first curator of the gardens was George Longley, a horticulturalist trained at Lowther Castle, England, who laid out the original design. A nursery was established in 1859, and used for propagation of plant material received from the Melbourne and Geelong Botanical Gardens. The garden is important as confirmation of civic pride of Ballarat, whose gold riches were transformed into civic and cultural enhancement funded by both public and private benefactors. The chief glory was the "Wellington Walk", a superb avenue of *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (Giant Redwood) other conifers and deciduous exotic trees were freely planted during the early stages. In 1877 the first stages of the fernery was begun and from 1889 tuberous begonias were introduced into display beginning a glasshouse tradition highlighted by the annual Ballarat Begonia festival (1953). The collections of sculptures, in particular the 12 Italian sculptures donated by local stockbroker, Thomas Stoddart in 1887, housed in a statuary pavilion are outstanding.

The Lake Wendouree Precinct is **architecturally** significant at a **STATE** level (AHC Criteria D2, E1).

*(d) the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments; (e) the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.*

The Precinct demonstrates a variety of built forms associated with the recreational and cultural role of the Lake and environs. Of particular architectural significance is the collection of relatively low scale development typically simple vernacular timber structures of the mid to late 19th century and early 20th century boatsheds, picnic shelters, as well as the kiosks such as the Lake Lodge (1891), bandstands and tram shelter that abut the edge of the Lake.

The Lake Wendouree Precinct is **aesthetically** significant at a **STATE** Level. (AHC criteria D.2, E.1 and F.1).

*(d) the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments;*  
*(e) the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;*  
*(f) the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*

The Botanic Gardens and Lake Wendouree are important landmarks, forming a major urban foci of high aesthetic visual appeal that contributes to the historical and cultural setting of the City of Ballarat.

Lake Wendouree with an area of 259 hectares is surrounded by public reserve and is significant as a large shallow picturesque lake in the volcanic basalt plateau, located in the centre of the provincial city of Ballarat. The aesthetic significance derives from the panoramic skyline views across the lake and uncluttered landscape setting; the close visual relationship between the Lake and the Botanic Gardens; and the dominant groupings of mature exotic trees and floral bedding displays, as well as soft landscape treatment of the unsealed footpaths and blue stone kerbs and gutters that surround the Lake.

The Lake Wendouree Precinct is **scientifically** significant at a **STATE** Level. (AHC criteria F.1).

*(f) the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*

The collection of plant material in the Gardens and the plantings around the Lake are of botanical, horticultural as well as scientific significance. Fifty two trees within the garden are of state significance. The Lake is also important for its role in the development of the early town's water supply and drainage.

The Lake is of scientific importance as a habitat for wildlife and for the traditional management of reed beds within the Lake. The Lake and the Botanical Gardens are of scientific significance associated with the acclimatization and zoological gardens movement, and the presence of the Fish Hatchery, which is Victoria's oldest fish acclimatization organization.

The Lake Wendouree Precinct is **socially** significant at a **STATE** Level. (AHC criteria G.1).

*(g) the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

The Botanic Gardens and Lake Wendouree Precinct has social and cultural significance as an iconic landmark of Ballarat, well regarded for its visually aesthetic features and its recreational and horticultural history. It is a cultural landscape of great beauty, and has a long history as an important destination for tourism, recreation and leisure as well as for sporting events.

This area of Ballarat is highly valued by the community for cultural, aesthetic, natural and man-made landscape. It is also a significant destination for visitors from outside the local community, being the setting for one of the most visited provincial Botanic Gardens in Victoria.

Hermes Number 156827

Property Number

---

## Physical Description 1

Lake Wendouree and the Botanical Gardens are located to the west of the town centre. They are both icons of Ballarat, representing a recreational and horticultural history of the Region.

The Lake has an area of 259 hectares and is completely surrounded by public reserve. Dominant visual features are the expanse of the lake itself; surrounding tree plantings; broad grassed areas; structures associated with recreational uses such as rowing; and the footpath surrounding the Lake. There are two major promontories being:

- . View Point located on Eastern Shore
- . Durham Point on northern shore

The Botanical Gardens Reserve consists of forty hectares being:

- . Southern Gardens;
- . Botanical Gardens; and
- . Northern Gardens

The Southern Gardens comprise four hectares of grassed areas used for active recreational purposes bounded by Wendouree Parade, Carlton and Gillies Streets. The Botanical Gardens cover 13 hectares using a formal layout with an emphasis on horticultural displays including avenue plantings of Sequoia and Horse Chestnut trees, flower beds and a conservatory. The Northern Gardens consist of twenty-three hectares bounded by Gillies Street to the west, Gregory Street and the Boulevard to the north while Wendouree Parade defines the eastern boundary.

Lake Wendouree was originally known as Yuille's Swamp, as part of the Archibald and William Yuille pastoral run formed in 1839. The swamp was a favoured campsite for the regions indigenous inhabitants. The lake was also the water supply to urban Ballarat between 1852-1864.

Since that time the Lake has developed as a site for industrial and recreational uses. The Fry's Flourmill and the Rowlands and Lewis soda factory were established on the shores of the lake in the 1850's. The Ballarat Rowing Club (the 2nd oldest in Australia) was formed in 1861 and the Regatta rowing course was constructed in 1902. The Lake was also the site for the rowing, canoeing and kayaking events for the 1956 Olympic games and subsequent world championships. Paddle steamers commenced sailing the Lake in 1865, with the "Golden Steamer" the only survivor of 15 steamers that once serviced passengers in the Lake.

Ballarat Botanical gardens are the oldest inland botanical garden in Victoria. The land for the Gardens was set aside in 1857 and was previously used as the Ballarat Police horse paddock.

A competition was held in 1858 for the design of the gardens, won by Messrs Wright and Longley. An on site nursery was established in 1859 and used for the propagation of plant material from the Melbourne and Geelong Botanical Gardens. The principal tree plantings occurred in the 1860's.

The Botanical Gardens and Lake Wendouree are important historically. They are evidence of the changing community perceptions and values relating to recreational pursuits. The Gardens also reflect the social aspirations of early Ballarat and are also important for their 19th century layout.

The Gardens and Lake are important landmarks, reflecting the historical and cultural development of the City and contribute to the setting of the town. The gardens and the lake play an important passive recreational role for the community.

The collection of plant material in the Gardens and surrounding the Lake are important scientifically. Fifty-two trees in the gardens are of state significance. The Lake is also important for its role in the development of the early town's water supply and drainage and as a habitat for wildlife and its role with the fish acclimatisation society. The gardens also contained a zoological section similar to other botanical gardens developed in this era.

Key landmarks include the memorials, significant trees, pavilions, the Robert Clarke Horticultural Centre, the boatsheds, fountains; and vistas to the lake and along the pathways in the gardens.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*