

FACT SHEET Re-instating the Mount Macedon Memorial Cross Viewscape

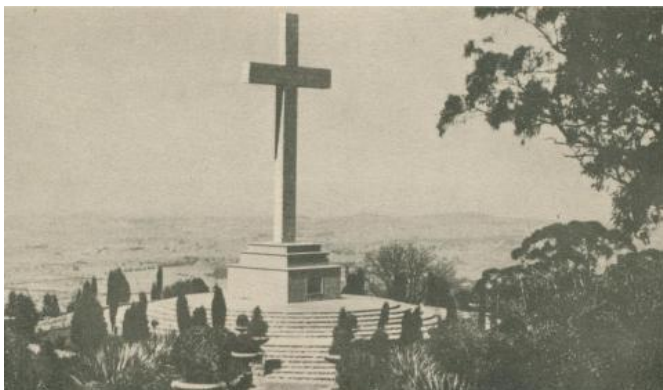
Parks Victoria is re-instating the outlook from and to the Mount Macedon Memorial Cross Reserve to allow it to again hold prominent in the landscape as a beacon of remembrance and grateful reflection for all those that have served.

The Mount Macedon Memorial Cross

History

The Memorial Cross is located on the Lands of the Wurundjeri People, the Traditional Owners of the area. The Memorial Cross and surrounding gardens were constructed in 1935 and donated to the people of Victoria by William Cameron. This war memorial serves as an important place for reflection and remembrance for all Victorians.

As shown on the postcard image below, the area around the cross was largely cleared mid-last century, providing extensive views towards Melbourne and surrounding towns. The Cross was also visible from the Mt Macedon Township and beyond.



The Cross, Mt Macedon in 1949 SOURCE: Postcard Collection Picturesque Views of Mount Macedon

Ash Wednesday bushfires

The 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires extensively damaged the actual cross and gardens, and the area lay in disrepair till the mid-90's when the Grollo Family and generous community members, provided funding to reinstate the cross in its current form. There has been significant tree re-growth around and below the Memorial Cross, which is now obscuring the viewscape to and from the cross.

The Macedon Cross is a registered in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) and is important to the State of Victoria for historic, social and aesthetic reasons.

Re-instating the viewscape

Symbol of Courage and Survival

Many people that visit Macedon Regional Park and the Memorial Cross tell us that it is important to be able to look out again over the landscape. The ability to view it from considerable distances supports the connection to the community and allows the 'symbol of courage and survival' to resonate.

Parks Victoria has received funding from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change (DEECA) as part of the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Program to restore these views.

Planning

Although originally the area around the Memorial Cross was mostly cleared to provide vision in many directions, the re-instated viewscape is considerably reduced from prior times, balancing the community expectation of supporting the forest, the aesthetics and the environment. It will provide a view scape to Melbourne and the Mount Macedon township.

Only tall re-growth vegetation will be removed so people can look out. All remaining native vegetation will be retained and will support a montane grassland with smaller shrubs, herbs and sedges.

Parks Victoria has worked extensively with other partners through a detailed planning process to protect Aboriginal heritage, historical heritage and environmental values around the Memorial Cross. All necessary permits and approvals are being obtained to meet planning scheme requirements, protect heritage, the water catchment and native vegetation as much as possible.

Onground works

A specialist contractor will hand fall the tall regrown of an approximate 0.9 Hectare site below the cross. All tree root balls will remain in the ground to reduce soil disturbance and prevent erosion. Machinery operators will put measures in place to minimise ground disturbance, without compromising safe work practices. Most logs and branches will be removed from site and where possible used as habitat. Works are proposed to take place during November to early December, expecting to take 2 - 4 weeks. The asset protection area below the Cross reserve is included in the works.

Temporary closures

It is expected that the Memorial Cross Precinct remains open and if closures are necessary, then they will only be for a short duration. Parks Victoria will work with the Mount Macedon Memorial Cross Committee of Management if a short-term closure is required. Displayed signage will inform the visitors to the Mount of the works and of any closures. We ask visitors to adhere to any closures for their own safety.

A section of the Macedon Ranges Walking Track between Bawden Road and the Memorial Cross (locally referred to as the Goat Track) will need to be closed during the works to protect visitors. Parks Victoria advises hikers to start or end their walk at the Harbison's Picnic Ground.

Further information

For further information see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on the back of this page.

If you require additional information contact Parks Victoria on info@parks.vic.gov.au or call 13 1963.

Frequently Asked Questions

What works are being planned?

Since the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires there has been significant vegetation regrowth around and below the Mount Macedon Memorial Cross, resulting in its viewscape being obscured. Parks Victoria is planning to remove the least amount of tall timber vegetation directly below the cross as outlined in option 1. This way the viewscape to Melbourne and the Mount Macedon township can be re-instated and enjoyed by those that visit the base of the Cross.

Why are the works important?

The Macedon Ranges are classified as a Distinctive Area and Landscape under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and are subject to the Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy 2019. The Mount Macedon Memorial Cross Reserve has been listed on the Victorian Heritage Register since 1994. The area is recognised for its significant heritage values.

There is a heritage covenant over the Cross Reserve which outlines the expectation that views can be enjoyed from Melbourne and looking out from the cross. These works will reinstate these views.

How is Parks Victoria working with the Traditional Owners?

The Macedon Ranges are located on Wurundjeri Country, Parks Victoria have engaged with the Wurundjeri People to provide them with an understanding of the viewscape re-instatement project and all staff and contractors involved in the project received a Cultural Heritage Induction, delivered by the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

How has Parks Victoria engaged?

Parks Victoria recognises that the community has strong connections to the Macedon Ranges and has been engaging with key stakeholders and community groups to inform them of the works planned.

What is the plan for removing vegetation and how much will be removed?

Parks Victoria has undertaken significant environmental, historical and cultural assessments as part of the project planning. The project will remove approximately 0.9 Hectare of taller tree-growth.

The works will be undertaken using a range of techniques aimed at minimising ground disturbance, with no excavation planned in the works area. Locally indigenous shrubs and grasses will be retained wherever possible and larger trees that are required to be removed will be lopped at the base to prevent ground disturbance. The vegetation removed will be repurposed where possible, or to reseed areas for future habitat for wildlife.

How are Snow Gums being managed through the works?

Some re-growth Snow Gums will be removed to allow views to and from the cross and to protect the historical Mount Macedon Memorial Cross during a bushfire. Only small number of the total Snow Gum trees in Macedon Regional Park will be impacted with the Snow Gums occurring below Major Mitchell lookout and extending around to Camels Hump in their distribution belt.

How will Parks Victoria minimise the impacts to wildlife?

All Parks Victoria operations are carefully planned and managed to meet the animal welfare guidelines. Each morning prior to starting works and during the day at regular intervals, contractors will inspect the work site to prevent impacts to wildlife.

Will there be additional planting during the works?

A tree-less montane grassland is to develop naturally in the project area. Staff will monitor the site to see if additional plantings are beneficial.

When will the works be undertaken?

Works are expected to commence during November to early December 2023 and are expected to take 2-4 weeks, subject to weather conditions, contractor availability and other on-site conditions. Works will be occurring Monday to Friday and will not be scheduled over the weekend and Public Holidays.

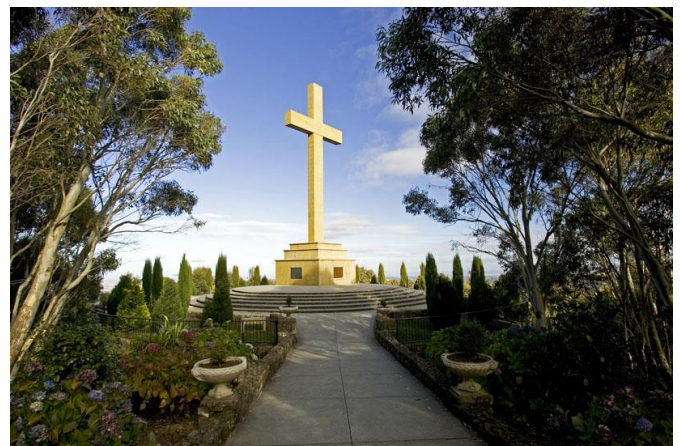
What is the future maintenance plan to ensure the view is maintained?

The way the works have been designed, it is expected that the views will require limited annual maintenance because of the vegetation types and the topography of the site.

Further information

If you require additional information contact Parks Victoria on info@parks.vic.gov.au or call 13 1963.

Visit the Mount Macedon Viewscape Project Page <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects/western-victoria/mount-macedon-viewscape>



Mount Macedon Memorial Cross and heritage gardens, circa 2005