



WHAT IF? WHAT NEXT?

# **SPECULATIONS ON HISTORY'S FUTURES**

## **SESSION 2C**

### **ROUTES TO THE PAST**

**Legacy: Presenting the Value of the  
Past Through Constructed and Cultural  
Landscapes**

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# **MILLENNIAL URBAN PARK DESIGN IN MELBOURNE AND WELLINGTON: HOW DIVERGENT COLONIAL FOUNDATIONS WITHIN THE TRANS-TASMAN BUBBLE IMPACT LANDSCAPE PRACTICE**

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*Despite their shared colonial origins, trans-Tasman comparisons of landscape architecture practice between Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand are rare. An oft-cited critical point of difference is the respective presence (New Zealand) and absence (Australia) of a treaty with indigenous nations of the land at the time of foundation, a scenario that we argue establishes distinct conceptualisations of urban park design during the 1990s and early 2000s. Whereas New Zealand designers are required by the Resource Management Act to respond to the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi, the absence of decolonising legislation limits landscape architects in Australia, where government policy can easily override design aspirations for diverse conceptions of urban parks.*

*With the benefit of hindsight, this paper explores the implications of this difference on urban park design in the 19th-century cities of Melbourne (1835) and Wellington (1839), notably Birrarung Marr and Waitangi Park. Comparable in size, context and age, the parks offer a critical lens to understand how each city's foundation, along with evolving political, economic and ecological pressures, influence landscape practice from the 1990s onwards. At Birrarung Marr, we suggest the continued privileging of Melbourne's colonial landscape aesthetic – and the transformative economic policy of the Victorian Government in the 1990s – strongly influence the spatial, ecological and programmatic attributes of this urban park. While similarly influenced by economic reform, Waitangi Park marks a divergent approach, blending cultural symbolism, active programming and performative ecology enabled through New Zealand's decolonising policy framework. Nevertheless, in the absence of legislative change in Australia, we speculate that emerging climate scenarios have potential for impacting future counterfactual design outcomes in Melbourne, acknowledging the ongoing evolution of the city's multi-layered cultural and ecological systems.*

### Foundational Difference: Contemporary Policy Implications for Landscape Architecture Born of the Settler-Colonial City

The Australasian settler-colonial cities of Melbourne and Wellington intersect with dynamic ecologies shaped by the patterns and practices of indigenous communities. Both countries share near-simultaneous contact between European explorers. However, within five years, two divergent colonial histories are established, shaping race relations between indigenous and settler people specific to each national geopolitical context. For example, New Zealand writes the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi between Māori chiefs and the Crown; Australia declares *terra nullius* in 1835, a legal principle that overlooks Aboriginal peoples' sovereign right to ownership of land and customary laws. As Pacific Historian Kerry Howe suggests, this critical distinction is pivotal to the shaping the policy and legislative framings from the time of foundation and into the turn of the twentieth century, which we argue have instrumentally shaped two millennial urban parks in Melbourne and Wellington – Birrarung Marr and Waitangi Park.<sup>1</sup>

In both countries, cities are contested spaces located at the point of first contact between colonial settlers and indigenous communities.<sup>2</sup> They are understood as sites of indigenous dispossession and landscapes through which history has sought to “naturalise and legitimise settler sovereignty.”<sup>3</sup> This tension poses particular challenges for designers operating in Australia and New Zealand, where the modern imperial project was dependent on the control, occupation, planning and development of urban centres to reinforce colonial economic and political ideals.<sup>4</sup> The following examines how the pre-colonial landscape and colonial speculations for the city collided to produce differing conditions for the production of new urban parks in the twentieth century.

### Colonising Sites of Indigenous Significance: European Influences on Birrarung and Te Whanganui-a-Tara

Before European colonisation the Birrarung / Yarra River catchment, the area commonly known as Melbourne was permanently occupied by the Kulin nation, an alliance of Aboriginal communities that include the Wurundjeri, Boonerwung, Taungurung, Wathaurung and Dja Dja Wrung language groups. The Kulin settled Birrarung as the landscape included essential features for supporting civilisation, including access to freshwater and rich diversity of plant and animal life.<sup>5</sup> Notable fauna included: birds such as Pallid Cuckoos (*Cacomantis pallidus*), Black-and-white Fantails (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) and Brown Falcons (*Falco berigora*); mammals, for instance, Short-beaked Echidnas (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*), Bush-tailed and Ring-tailed possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula* and *Psuedocheirus peregrinus*), Eastern Quolls (*Dasyurus viverrinus*) and Eastern Grey Kangaroos (*Macropus giganteus*); and a thinly timbered savannah dotted with *Eucalypts*, *Acacias* and *Casuarinas* trees and a community of grasses and shrubs.<sup>6</sup> These attributes, together with the region's fertile volcanic soils, were equally influential on speculative pastoralist John Batman's decision to establish a permanent European colony in 1835, as he famously proclaimed the landscape as “a place for a village”.<sup>7</sup>

Melbourne's development was driven by private pastoralists, such as the Port Phillip Association (led by Batman), who ventured north from Tasmania in search of new grazing landscapes.<sup>8</sup> Significantly, Batman attempted to enact a treaty with local Wurundjeri people to purchase (from its perspective) 600,000 acres of land.<sup>9</sup> However, the venture unravelled when governing bodies in New South Wales, and the Colonial Office in London, concluded the treaty had no legal basis, conflicting with the legal doctrine of *terra nullius* – or land belonging to no one – that was enacted by the Crown in 1835, ignoring Aboriginal people's sovereign rights and ownership of land.<sup>10</sup>

The abandonment of the treaty led to swift and widespread ecological modifications of the Birrarung region which the colonial government considered necessary to make the city liveable and support the growth of new industry. The Yarra River was straightened and deepened, streams were redirected underground and numerous wetlands within Yarra estuary (the one exception being South Melbourne Swamp) were reclaimed to build docks and factories.<sup>11</sup> These

improvement works, alongside events such as the 1851 gold rush, later influenced Melbourne's exponential growth. By 1854 the town was home to 236,798 residents that drove the development of major civic institutions and infrastructure, including a public university, a library and formal public parks and gardens situated in the colonial Hoddle Grid.<sup>12</sup>

Akin to Melbourne, the colonial city of Wellington intersects with the Māori landscape Te Whanganui-a-Tara ("the great harbour of Tara"), a large natural harbour located within the greater region of Te Upoko o te Ika a Maui.<sup>13</sup> The 76 square kilometre sheltered inlet covers a seismic landscape marked by two ridgelines, characterised by limited flat territory historically disputed by both Māori and European settlements.<sup>14</sup> Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Te Whanganui-a-Tara's hills and foreshores were composed of dense lowland broadleaf-podocarp forests, with an understory of tree-ferns.<sup>15</sup> However, colonising Europeans rapidly modified the landscape meaning very little of this endemic ecology remains legible in Wellington today.

Unlike the continuous occupation of the Birrarung area by the Kulin Nations, Te Whanganui-a-Tara was territorially dynamic before the arrival of the New Zealand Company.<sup>16</sup> The boundaries of these lands, while disputed, were in part set through the sale of Te-Whanganui-a-Tara to the New Zealand Company by Te Atiāwa chiefs.<sup>17</sup> Several Māori village settlements or pā were located along the harbour, including Te Aro pā (Taranaki and Ngati Ruanui), which was located close to the Waitangi Stream and Lagoon system, which today overlaps with Waitangi Park (formerly known as Chaffers Park).<sup>18</sup>

Whereas Melbourne's colonial settlement was driven by tenacious pastoralists already in situ, the New Zealand Land Company (1839) was formed to arrange a systematic settlement of New Zealand from the offices in London as the "Britain of the South". The Company's settlement plans aspired to the maintenance of English social hierarchy alongside an incentivised opportunity for an aspirational labour class, including provision for formalised civic institutions, squares and public parks.<sup>19</sup> As Captain William Hobson hastily proclaimed New Zealand a sovereign British colony through the Treaty of Waitangi, the New Zealand Company's boats had already arrived to survey Te Whanganui-a-Tara as Port Nicholson.<sup>20</sup>

The systematic colonisation of Wellington established a conflict with the Crown's obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Company's settlement stipulated that in addition to existing village occupations, a tenth of the total plan – known as the 'tenths' – were to be reserved for Māori as part of the New Zealand Company's sales lottery in London.<sup>21</sup> However, the company's strategy resulted in a market bubble, producing a speculative mania for land which negatively affected race relations in the growing city.<sup>22</sup> For example, the Crown's obligations to Māori, that was enshrined in the treaty, opposed the commercial dealings of the New Zealand Company as speculation fuelled demand for the limited flat territory. The contradictions established a pattern of conflict that displaced Māori communities from the city's flat lands. Similarly, it drove a process of industrialisation and reclamation along a new urban waterfront which alienated the city from the sea throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

By way of background, we have outlined the foundational legislative differences between the colonial societies of Melbourne and Wellington, notably the presence (New Zealand) and absence (Australia) of a treaty with indigenous nations of the land at the time of European settlement. As explored in the following section, we suggest that the divergent approaches in Australasian treaties continues to influence the agency of landscape architects in conceiving of urban parks in the 1990s such as Birrarung Marr and Waitangi Park, reflected in response to the legislative agendas of two neo-liberal governments.

### **Transformative Economic Policy of the Victorian Government and its Impact on 1990s Landscape Practice in Melbourne**

Birrarung Marr is a Twentieth Century park located on the southern end of Melbourne's colonial Hoddle Street Grid adjacent to the Yarra River. While centrally located, it is detached from the city

in multiple ways, as illustrated in Figure 1. From its northern edge, the site is disconnected due to the rail lines and its eastern edge is obstructed by a four-lane road. Similarly, Federation Square limits views and access from the west, and the Yarra River separates the site from the southern portion of the city. This disconnection can be traced back to the site's role in the colonial era when landscape originally formed part of a wetland system that dictated Melbourne's settlement patterns. Whereas residential and commercial expansion was focused on higher ground with stable geology to the north, infrastructure such as rail lines and factories were situated on the lower, less buildable wetlands that were perceived by new settlers as less valuable. These attributes informed the oddly shaped site which would become Birrarung Marr following the election of a new Victorian Government in 1992, who planned to develop the site into a Twenty First Century events space.



Figure 1. Birrarung Marr context diagram by authors.

The design of Birrarung Marr was deeply impacted by the economic and political context in which it emerged. The decision to develop the site into a park was closely tied to the incoming neo-liberal government that took power in the early 1990s. At the time of its conceptualisation, Melbourne underwent a considerable economic transition that influenced the design of major civic projects. For instance, the favourable economic conditions of the early 1980s were followed by significant declines as Victoria entered a recession between 1989 and 1992.<sup>23</sup> In 1992, an election year, the community looked towards a new government to reverse the unfavourable conditions which saw Kennett's Liberal government elected with a swing of six per cent.<sup>24</sup>

The change in government drove the widespread introduction of neo-liberal strategies in Victoria. Capital was redirected into new projects and policies such as *Agenda 21: Major Civic Projects for Melbourne* (1993), a program intended to create jobs, establish Melbourne as a desirable business destination and diversify tourist attractions in the city.<sup>25</sup> *Agenda 21* changed Melbourne considerably, delivering multiple projects that operated as civic institutions and tourist attractions, including the Melbourne Museum, Federation Square and Crown Casino. The commitment to development reshaped the state's economic fortunes by generating 13,340 full-time jobs despite the onset of the Asian financial crisis.<sup>26</sup>

Kennett's neo-liberal agenda repositioned the goals of civic projects in Melbourne highlighted by their need to contribute economically as well as civically.<sup>27</sup> The reforms also impacted the landscape discipline's standing in the City of Melbourne; opposed to being the designer of civic spaces, landscape architects were focused on large scale projects and events programming. Ron Jones, a design consultant for Birrarung Marr, notes that "there was a significant change in the scale of projects that came through" due to "increasing budgets" leading to the foundation of the *Birrarung Marr* project.<sup>28</sup> New parks were not exempt from Kennett's agenda. Jones explains that monetary intent established "a different type of design brief" where landscape became a "platform to stage-manage events" instead of civic infrastructure.<sup>29</sup> Significantly, the government's reforms were powerful in shaping the design of Birrarung Marr towards the end of the 1990s.



Ron Jones and Helena Phia, working as consultants for the City of Melbourne, explored the location’s urban character to inform the major design concepts which responded to the site’s central position, its redundant rail infrastructure and history as a wetland.<sup>30</sup> The concept design emerged as a geometric landscape characterised by axial paths, architectonic topography and a densely planted urban forest. Linear paths run through the centre of the park connecting the elevated terraces and referencing the old rail lines. A large water body (which never materialised) reframed the lost wetland system. Lastly, the densely-planted terraces were conceived to perform ecologically while accommodating the brief’s main ambition, the staging of events. Jones explains how events would be held on the “lower gravel area” while the elevated terraces “would have a canopy of trees, structural soil and be a space where you could put up marquees.”<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, an issue arose when the Victorian Government, who financed the park with the City of Melbourne, misinterpreted the role of the forest in a sign off meeting with Rob Adams, the council’s Director of City Design. The decision to foreground planting design over the park’s events capabilities in the concept drawings drove significant design changes.<sup>32</sup> The forest’s inclusion proved to be a point of contention that became apparent when Adams presented the drawings to Planning Minister Rob MacLellan for approval. Adams explains that he was given “five minutes” to present the park concept and MacLellan’s only comment was that the scheme appeared “too cluttered.”<sup>33</sup> Coincidentally, Adams’s team removed the trees and he presented a second iteration to MacLellan for approval.<sup>34</sup>

MacLellan’s directive to declutter the drawings impacted the park’s forest and minimised the landscape’s ability to host diverse programmes. In the forest’s place are large forms composed of grass and compacted granite sands, materials selected to favour the economic potential of the park. While MacLellan’s influence is not unexpected considering that the state government was a principal stakeholder, the exchange between two levels of government suggests that the consultants required a direct line of communication with MacLellan to argue for the forest’s inclusion. The communication process, shown in Figure 2, demonstrates how the consultants’ vision was misinterpreted by Adams who questioned the role of the trees in the park. Adams, who is represented in orange, notes that it “comes down to the environment that we were working in, which was not only a design environment but a political environment”, an observation that highlights the tensions between landscape practice and neo-liberal economics within the municipality, and its influence on the design of Birrarung Marr in the 1990s.<sup>35</sup>

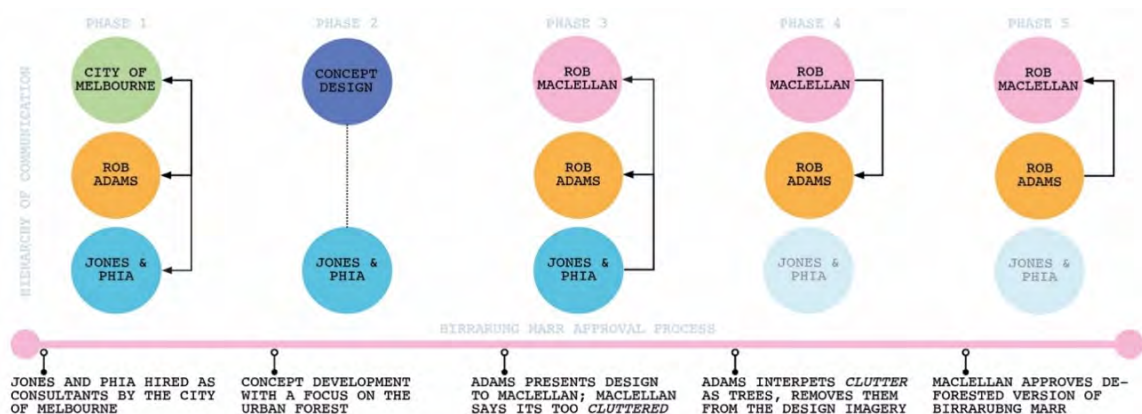


Figure 2. Birrarung Marr’s approval process. Diagram by authors.

Despite this scenario, there is evidence that alternative programs and increased environmental performance are presently being explored in Birrarung Marr. Recent design developments, which are influenced by new municipal policy, suggest that the established appreciations of the park by both levels of government is evolving. The millennium drought, climate change and a stronger commitment to design experimentation by the council have produced novel policy frameworks, such as the Urban Forest Strategy and the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, alongside new

planting designs such as Woody Meadow.<sup>36</sup> These policies and design insertions are driving the most significant changes to Birrarung Marr since the 2000s.

The Woody Meadow is a pilot project that challenges established approaches to planting design and Melbourne's dominant colonial garden aesthetic. The intervention responds to the municipality's newest policies, such as those identified above, while displaying an increased awareness for experimentation by the City of Melbourne. The meadow, a collaborative design, focuses on the performative capabilities of Australian plants and achieves multiple outcomes including an evocative floral display, increased heat tolerance and minimised water and maintenance requirements.<sup>37</sup> The team, led by Professor James Hitchmough, conducted extensive research into heat tolerant native plants that led to the selection of 21 species including *Acacia acinacea* and *Eucalyptus caesia*.<sup>38</sup> The designers considered how flora would respond to the brief's maintenance criteria, considered experimental for the Melbourne context, including coppicing techniques that would influence responses such as "re-sprouting" and the development of "multiple basal stems" that would extend the municipality's colonial garden aesthetic.<sup>39</sup>

The Woody Meadow demonstrates a willingness to experiment with evolved planting design in the particular context of the City of Melbourne. Dissimilar to the city's heritage landscapes, which are strongly influenced by Nineteenth Century European design styles, the meadow's aesthetic is mostly self-directed and requires little maintenance. As Figure 3 shows, the meadow has defined its composition which has emerged following its initial planting. Native shrubs and creepers are shown expanding into an undefined mass that is dictated by the plants' growth patterns. This aesthetic condition is notably distinct to the intensely manicured lawns and garden beds of adjacent colonial landscapes such as Kings Domain and the Fitzroy Gardens. Arguably, the insertion can be considered a balanced attempt at upholding the city's dedication to design excellence while negotiating emerging pressures such as extreme heat.



Figure 3. The Wooded Meadow. Photograph by authors.

Nevertheless, the political implications of establishing a new garden aesthetic in Birrarung Marr is likely to test Melbournian's established values of the designed landscape. The meadow diverges from what City of Melbourne Urban Forest and Ecology team leader David Callow describes as the "Melbourne aesthetic", an expectation of heritage design and maintenance that is demanded by particular sections of the Melbourne community.<sup>40</sup> Jon Rayner, who collaborated on the Woody Meadow, echoes Callow's concerns, suggesting that the public may react negatively to the design when the plants are cut back, stating that an expected challenge will be "gauging the public's response to the ... meadow after coppicing" and "educating the cultured eye to the expression of Australian landscape processes" in a prominent landscape such as Birrarung Marr.<sup>41</sup>

## Decolonising the Waterfront at Waitangi Park

A by-product of colonial processes is the five-hectare waterfront site of Waitangi Park. Prior to colonisation, this landscape was the location of the mouth of the Waitangi Stream and wetland, an equally significant cultural and ecological space to *tangata whenua* Māori.<sup>42</sup> However, the lagoon largely disappeared as a result of the 1855 earthquake and the stream was later piped during the construction of Wellington's stormwater system in 1859.<sup>43</sup> In the city's modern history, the site performed as a morgue, a tram repair yard, a bus depot, the 'Wellington Destructor' incinerator and the Chaffers Te Aro graving dock.

Wellington experienced extraordinary changes at the end of the twentieth century. Nationally, economic restructuring coincided with the cultural and political articulation of biculturalism. Local conditions continued to focus community and governance interest on the land use of the seaward edge of the central business district, with changes to port infrastructure producing new development opportunities along the waterfront. Alongside land speculation there remained an urgent need for public open space in central Wellington. This produced a unique scenario whereby the expansion of open space in the city merged with a national political transformation and community charged with a heightened civic awareness.

In 2002, Wellington Waterfront Limited and the Wellington City Council held an international open design competition for a new urban park at the former Chaffers Te Aro dock site. The competition brief was to meet the aspirations of the newly introduced Wellington Waterfront Framework (WWF). Framed against the Treaty obligations of the Resource Management Act, the WWF is the first waterfront planning scheme to be explicitly bicultural in how it positions culture, heritage and history, linked through the shared value of the harbour to both *tangata whenua* and *tangata tiriti*. Responding to the shared significance of the site, the winning scheme by landscape architects Wraight+Associates alongside Athfield Architects (Wraight+Athfield) proposed a sophisticated hydrological and ecological stream system alongside programmed and passive recreational spaces.

In terms of policy conditions, the new park at the Chaffers site reflects a process of design production enabled by the broader agenda of decolonisation in New Zealand. While previous schemes were scuttled by popular dissent, this project was successful in moving from concept design to design documentation and construction by gaining support with key stakeholders. Critically, the design was supported in the consultation phase and through the resource consent process by Māori stakeholders and the Wellington Tenth Trust, an outcome that allowed the designers to realise their vision. To reinforce the shifting cultural and political attitudes in Wellington, Chaffers Park was renamed Waitangi Park, reflecting Māori values and the importance of the Waitangi lagoon as a shared bicultural space.<sup>44</sup>

The masterplan for Waitangi Park comprises a large flat lawn, enclosed by constructed wetlands and an active edge zone. The lawn is flexibly utilised for music festivals, a weekly farmer's market, informal sports and for general passive recreation. However, this prosaic space is interrupted by circulation paths which operate as punctuations in the gently sloping topography of the boundary zone. As the pathways slice through the mounded edge they generate a series of gently unfolding terraces. These circulation tracks offer threshold access perpendicular to the formal linear spine of the wetland promenade.

The paths are symbolically identified in the design as the 'shadows of waka', impressing the idea of Māori boats being dragged through the lagoon and up the dunes. Drawing on the significance of the beach as a waka landing point and its proximity to Te Aro pā, the designers utilise topographic gestures to integrate cultural interpretation through patterns of spatial circulation and use. As lead designer Meagan Wraight explains, the pathways are "then re-used as they were used" rather than superficially applying surface decoration to denote meaning.<sup>45</sup> This intent is supported through the installation of public art, titled *Te Waka Pou*, by artist Ra Vincent, a pou/waka landing marker that reinforces the relationship to Te Aro pā and the Waitangi Stream.



Landscape Architects Wraight+Associates have a defined practice agenda for designing cultural landscapes which intermingle ecology with social practices – a decolonizing design approach reflective of the New Zealand experience. This design methodology, according to Wraight, is revelatory:

We are particularly interested in how that cultural landscape has evolved, and being able to reveal that story and it comes from also from having a belief in that idea engaging a wide population of people, a wider audience, that if you tap this idea of collective memory that different people will engage into different aspects of how that site has evolved over time.<sup>46</sup>

The designed outcome is reflective of Wraight+Associates' cultural practice agenda in two ways – through ecological performance and program. Both tactics were supported by and aligned with the agenda of the Tenth's Trust, as the key Māori stakeholder group in Wellington. For the Tenth's Trust, the political significance of renaming Chaffers Park to Waitangi Park was key, not only as a reclaimed toponym but as a reflection of the lifting of the drained stream to the surface as a decolonizing act.

The declamation of the Waitangi stream is the largest political and spatial move within the design. Incorporating the pre-colonial and industrial elements of the site, the former graving dock operates as the performative and formal structure of the wetland. Rather than being a dry space, the structure recovers Waitangi Stream by retaining water on site, improving overall water quality and reducing public health risks from discharged stormwater into the harbour.<sup>47</sup> Significantly, this engineered response is aligned to Māori landscape management values, as cues to ecological care.

The graving dock, illustrated in Figure 4, is divided between a broad gravel flat on one side and a series of wetland terraces on the other, evoking the tidal contrast of a stream meeting the sea. This area is composed of seven plant communities from Wellington's wild coasts, carefully researched and collected by the design team.<sup>48</sup> While this insertion could be viewed as a western approach to urban stream restoration, it is in fact a decolonising gesture. As Bryant reflects, "in Aotearoa New Zealand the constructed ecologies have the potential to reveal the hidden narratives of whakapapa because they recognise the cultural and spiritual importance of the stream and its ecology".<sup>49</sup> As such, the curation of indigenous plant communities as functioning ecology is environmentally and culturally meaningful.



**Figure 4.** The former graving dock reimaged as a constructed indigenous ecology. Waitangi Park Graving Dock, 2014. Photograph by authors.

Māori practices are embedded within the park's spatial elements. An example includes the design of a powhiri mound – a raised ceremonial area leading through a processional space – to allow for Māori welcoming rituals. This feature incorporates large rocks selected from Taranaki (*maunga*/sacred mountain of the Te Atiawa iwi) which are axially aligned with distant mountains

in Taranaki and Te Aro pā. Notably, the Māori elements have remained largely untouched by Wellington's dynamic and political urban street art culture. When unplanned modifications are observed, such as graffiti, they are generally accepted as part of the park's temporal and living condition.<sup>50</sup> Importantly, it is through these lived experiences and contemporary uses that Waitangi Park enacts decolonisation in the everyday civic landscape.

### **Decolonising the City: Future Directions in a Changing Climate**

For Australasian landscape architects, Waitangi Park is exemplary in responding to the ambitions of decolonisation policy, particularly the legislative redress of the Treaty of Waitangi, through design. This process is evident through the marriage of symbolic elements, cultural practices and spatial gestures, in addition to the shared ecological agendas of the designers and Māori stakeholders. Critically, the New Zealand approach differs from Australia, which is defined by an absence of a decolonising framework for designers to position themselves in. For Australia, legislative change through constitutional recognition remains uncertain, particularly given the recent political instability at the federal level where debates continue to rage over the shape of Constitutional Recognitions of First Nations.

Overall, Australia is largely in a state of inertia in terms of reconciliatory policy frameworks, particularly in its major cities. While the notion of a treaty has largely evaporated from national political discourse, state and territory governments are working through models. The most notable example includes the Victorian State Government's development of a treaty which began in 2016.<sup>51</sup> Subsequently, in 2018 this government committed its parliament to treaty negotiations through the "Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act"<sup>52</sup>; and in 2019, established the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, an independent and elected body to negotiate a treaty framework.<sup>53</sup> Together with the appointment of Ken Wyatt as Australia's first federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs in 2019, we can be cautiously optimistic that this state model will be more productive to a process of redress for traditional owners.<sup>54</sup>

In the absence of legislative change in Australia, we speculate that the emerging climate crisis will become a powerful agent in evolving cultural attitudes towards the City of Melbourne's colonial landscapes. The success of the Woody Meadow project, along with the council's proactive Urban Forest and updated Climate Change Mitigation frameworks, suggests that an adaptive approach might rapidly necessitate the decolonising of landscape architecture in the city. In this way, experimental planting designs, novel landscape infrastructure and maintenance approaches are likely the first step towards counterfactual design approaches.<sup>55</sup>

### **Conclusion**

We have argued that New Zealand and Australia's race relations during the 1800s, notably the processes of enacting or abandoning treaties with indigenous nations at the time of European colonisation, influence the eco-cultural attributes of Waitangi Park and Birrarung Marr in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Critically, each nation's colonial legacy established diverse political and cultural structures in Wellington and Melbourne that influence how governments, landscape architects and the wider community conceptualise urban parks. In Australia, the absence of a treaty gives the Victorian government significant powers over the planning and design of Melbourne as they are not legally bound to collaborate with Kulin representatives in a design process. In the 1990s, this situation allowed the Kennett government's neo-liberal policy to dominate the concept design phase of Birrarung Marr. As argued, the Planning Minister shifted the consultants' vision for the park from a civic and ecological function to an events landscape when he requested the removal of the park's forest. This directive offers a clear example of the impact of government policy on overriding design aspirations when officials are not held accountable to legislated obligations. Waitangi Park's design process, its living materials, topography and engineered hydrological systems outline a different narrative. The scheme is clearly framed against the local council's obligations to the Waitangi Tribunal, through the RMA and the Environment Court process. Wraight+Athfield applied a declamation strategy to integrate

the waterfront edge with city and sea, alongside programmatic interventions to support lived cultural practices, tactics supported by and aligned with the agenda of the Tenth Trust, the key Māori stakeholder group in Wellington. In this way, the landscape architects defined a practice agenda for designing cultural landscapes, intertwining the romantic landscape with urbanist strategies of ecology and social practice as devices to evoke the imaginary.

## Endnotes

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<sup>5</sup> Gary Presland, "The Place for a Village : How Nature Has Shaped the City of Melbourne," (2008): 206.

<sup>6</sup> *Aboriginal Melbourne: The Lost Land of the Kulin People* (Forest Hill, NSW: Harriland Press, 2001), 163, 68, 72.

<sup>7</sup> "The Place for a Village: How Nature Has Shaped the City of Melbourne," 15; James Boyce, *1835 : The Founding of Melbourne & the Conquest of Australia* (Collingwood, Vic.: Black Inc., 2011), 74.

<sup>8</sup> Boyce, *1835: The Founding of Melbourne*, 16.

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<sup>11</sup> Presland, "The Place for a Village: How Nature Has Shaped the City of Melbourne," 215-18.

<sup>12</sup> William Henry Archer, *Census of Victoria - Population Tables* (Melbourne 1854), 9.

<sup>13</sup> Waitangi Tribunal, "Te Whanganui a Tara Me Ona Takiwa: Report on the Wellington District," *Wellington: Legislation Direct* (2003): 13.

<sup>14</sup> Morrie Love, "Appendix 3 Town Belt Traditional History," in *Wellington Town Belt Management Plan* (Wellington, New Zealand: Wellington City Council, 2013), 208.

<sup>15</sup> Helen Isobel Gabites, *Wellington's Living Cloak: A Guide to the Natural Plant Communities* (Wellington Botanical Society, 1993); Wellington City Council, "Biodiversity Action Plan," *Wellington City Council, Wellington, NZ* (2007): 7.

<sup>16</sup> Wellington City Council, Civic Square, and Wakefield Street, "Issues for Tangata Whenua," in *Wellington City District Plan* (Wellington, New Zealand: Wellington City Council, 2000), 2/9; Love, "Appendix 3 Town Belt Traditional History."

<sup>17</sup> Angela Ballara, "Te Whanganui-a-Tara: Phases of Maori Occupation of Wellington Harbour c. 1800-1840," *The Making of Wellington 1914* (1990): 33.

<sup>18</sup> Wellington City Council, "Nga Waahi Taonga O Te Whanganui a Tara Maori Sites Inventory," (1994): M68; Ruakura Consultants, "Basin Bridge Project Hauwai," in *Technical Report 15 Assesment of Effects - Cultural* (Wellington, New Zealand: Wellington Tenth Trust & Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, 2013), 4.

<sup>19</sup> Derek Whitelock and Anthony Edward Baker, *Adelaide: A Sense of Difference* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2000), 4; Tribunal, "Te Whanganui a Tara Me Ona Takiwa: Report on the Wellington District," 45.

<sup>20</sup> Captain William Mein Smith's survey company arrived in the harbour on the *Cuba* on 3rd January 1840. Hobson didn't arrive at the Bay of Islands until the 29<sup>th</sup> January, with forty Māori chiefs signing the Treaty of Waitangi a week later on the 6<sup>th</sup> February.

- <sup>21</sup> Tribunal, "Te Whanganui a Tara Me Ona Takiwa: Report on the Wellington District," 46-47.
- <sup>22</sup> Roberta McIntyre and David Allan Hamer, *The Making of Wellington, 1800-1914* (Victoria University Press, 1990), 3. See John Owen Miller, *Early Victorian New Zealand* (Oxford University Press, 1958). Michael Turnbull, *The New Zealand Bubble: The Wakefield Theory in Practice* (Price, Milburn, 1959). Patricia Burns, *Fatal Success* (Raupo, 1989).
- <sup>23</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *A History of Victoria* (Port Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 239.
- <sup>24</sup> Brian Costar and Nicholas Economou, "Elections and Electoral Change 1982-92," in *Trials in Power: Cain, Kirner, and Victoria, 1982-1992*, ed. Mark Considine and Brian Costar (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1992), 261.
- <sup>25</sup> Government of Victoria, "Agenda 21: Major Civic Projects for Melbourne," (Victorian Government Printer Melbourne, 1993).
- <sup>26</sup> Department of State Development, *1996-97 Annual Report* (Melbourne: Victorian Government Printer, 1997); *1997-98 Annual Report* (Melbourne: Victorian Government Printer, 1998); *1998-99 Annual Report* (Melbourne: Victorian Government Printer, 1999).
- <sup>27</sup> Kim Dovey and Leonie Sandercock, *Fluid City: Transforming Melbourne's Urban Waterfront* (London: Routledge, 2005), 40.
- <sup>28</sup> Ron Jones, Brent Greene, Personal Correspondence, 2016.
- <sup>29</sup> Personal Correspondence, 2016.
- <sup>30</sup> Personal Correspondence, 2016.
- <sup>31</sup> Personal Correspondence, 2016.
- <sup>32</sup> Personal Correspondence, 2016.
- <sup>33</sup> Rob Adams, Brent Greene, Personal Correspondence, 2016.
- <sup>34</sup> Personal Correspondence, 2016.
- <sup>35</sup> Personal Correspondence, 2016.
- <sup>36</sup> City of Melbourne, *Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Refresh* (Melbourne 2017).
- <sup>37</sup> To realise the project the City of Melbourne collaborated with international researchers and design institutions with expertise in planting design, including Professor James Hitchmough and Dr. Audrey Gerber from the University of Sheffield; and Dr. Nick Williams, Dr. Claire Farrell and John Rayner from the University of Melbourne.
- <sup>38</sup> Megan Backhouse, "Melbourne Gets Its Own 'Wild' Meadow," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/09 2016.
- <sup>39</sup> City of Melbourne, *Woody Meadow Pilot Project: Guidelines to Create Diverse Flowering Landscapes* (Melbourne 2020), 8.
- <sup>40</sup> David Callow, Brent Greene, Personal Correspondence, 2014.
- <sup>41</sup> Claire Martin, "Rambunctious Research: Planning the Life Cycle City," *Landscape Architecture Australia* May (2017).
- <sup>42</sup> This location was a strategic landing beach for returning sea craft and an area to gather food.
- <sup>43</sup> Jo Campbell and Jan Heijs, "Urban Stream Restoration and Community Engagement: Examples from New Zealand" (paper presented at the Stormwater Conference), 16.
- <sup>44</sup> Construction was completed in 2006, transforming the former Chaffers industrial area into a 6-hectare urban park at a cost of \$17 million (NZD). This is substantial in scale and importance, as Waitangi Park is the largest urban park built in New Zealand in 100 years.
- <sup>45</sup> Megan Wraight, interview by Fiona Johnson, Monday April 16, 2013, Wellington.
- <sup>46</sup> Interview by Johnson, Monday April 16, 2013, Wellington.
- <sup>47</sup> Campbell and Heijs, "Urban Stream Restoration and Community Engagement: Examples from New Zealand"; Wraight, interview by Johnson, Monday April 16, 2013, Wellington; Ralph Johns, nbsp, and Shelley Clement, "A Shore Thing; Wraight on Track," *Landscape New Zealand*, no. Aug 2006; p.6-8.
- <sup>48</sup> Geoff Park, "The Remnant Ecologies of Waitangi Park," *Forest and Bird*, no. Aug 2007; n.325: p.36-37.
- <sup>49</sup> M Bryant, "Urban Ecology and Site Histories: Mutually Inclusive Themes of Urban Public Space Design in Aotearoa New Zealand" (paper presented at the WSUD 2012: Water sensitive urban design; Building the water sensitive community; 7th international conference on water sensitive urban design, 21-23 February 2012, Melbourne Cricket Ground, 2012), 964.
- <sup>50</sup> Wraight, interview by Johnson, Monday April 16, 2013, Wellington.
- <sup>51</sup> Australian Broadcasting Corporation, "Victorian Government to Begin Talks with First Nations on Australia's First Indigenous Treaty," (2016-02-26T13:37:42+1100 2016). <https://doi.org/https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-26/victoria-to-begin-talks-for-first-indigenous-treaty/7202492>.



<sup>52</sup> *Australia's First Ever Treaty Legislation Is Set to Become Law*, (Melbourne: Victorian Government, 2019).

<sup>53</sup> *First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria | Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission*, (Carlton, Victoria: Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission, 2019).

<sup>54</sup> Amy Remeikis, "Ken Wyatt Wants Referendum on Indigenous Constitutional Recognition within Three Years," (2019-07-10 2019).

<sup>55</sup> "Urban Forest Strategy - City of Melbourne," (2020), "Water Sensitive Urban Design - City of Melbourne," (2020), "Climate Change Mitigation Strategy - City of Melbourne," (2020). Natalie Marie Gulsrud, Kelly Hertzog, and Ian Shears, "Innovative Urban Forestry Governance in Melbourne?: Investigating "Green Placemaking" as a Nature-Based Solution," *Environmental Research* 161 (2018/02/01/ 2018).  
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