

A photograph of a garden display at the Ballarat Begonia Festival. In the foreground, a curved wooden slat bench sits on a bed of brown mulch. To the left, there are various plants, including purple flowers and green foliage. In the background, several people are walking through the garden. A woman in a dark blue dress is walking away from the camera, and a man in a green shirt and yellow pants is taking a photo of a woman in a light blue dress. The scene is set in a park-like area with large trees and a clear sky.

BALLARAT BEGONIA FESTIVAL

7-9 March 2026

SUSTAINABLE GARDENS DISPLAY

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST 2026

Welcome to the Ballarat Begonia Festival 2026

The Ballarat Begonia Festival is one of Victoria's most iconic and long-standing community events, held annually over the Labour Day long weekend in March. Since its inception in 1953, the festival has blossomed into a vibrant celebration of Ballarat's horticultural heritage, with the begonia flower as its proud and enduring symbol.

Set against the stunning backdrop of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, the festival attracts 40,000 to 60,000 visitors across three days, offering a rich tapestry of floral displays, live entertainment, cultural performances, and interactive workshops. The heart of the festival, the Begonia Display in the Conservatory, is a world-renowned collection recognised globally for its rarity and beauty.

Every year the festival continues to grow, with a strong focus on **sustainability**, **creativity**, and **community pride**. Visitors of all ages come to explore immersive garden installations, enjoy family-friendly activities, and engage with local artisans, performers, and producers.

The City of Ballarat acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung People, and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waterways.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.



About the Festival

2025 Festival Demographic Overview



52,000

2025 attendance*



42.9%

had previously attended*



35-50

highest attendance
age group*



90.8%

overall event satisfaction*



95.7%

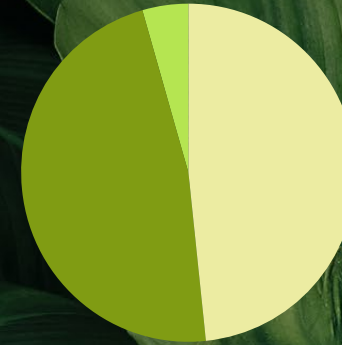
overall likelihood of return*



100%

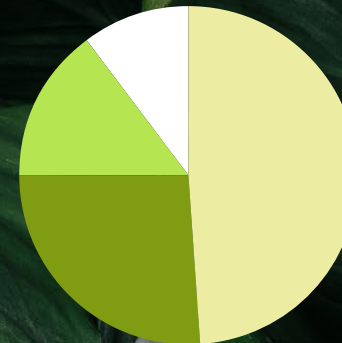
locals likelihood of return*

*Surveyed attendees, 2025



Attendance origin

- 48.4% local (within 25km)
- 47.3% Victorian (more than 25km)
- 4.3% interstate



Reason for attending

- 49.1% Begonia & garden displays
- 14.9% kids activities & entertainment
- 25.9% markets & food
- 10.1% other

About the Festival

2025 Ballarat Begonia Festival Marketing, PR and Influencer Statistics

The Vast Newsprint, Radio and Broadcast Reach

2025 Print Results

- Achieved 56 earned media with a potential cumulative reach of over 8.4 million.

Highlight Coverage Included



The Canberra Times



The Vast Digital Reach

The Ballarat Begonia Festival Total Followers

 10,000

 4,398

2025 Campaign Statistics

Total 2025 Facebook views 2,036,300

Total 2025 Instagram 211,400 views

Total 2025 Social Media reach 639,600

Supporting Begonia Festival META channels are

The Ballarat Begonia Festival

Visit Ballarat

Ballarat In The Know

The City of Ballarat

Online Influencer Reach

Influencers 10

Total views generated 268,567

Total interactions generated 15,016

Total reach 187,695

Sustainable Gardens Display

Overview

The Sustainable Gardens Display invites expressions of interest from both established and emerging local landscape designers and architects to create imaginative garden displays for the 2026 Begonia Festival.

This exciting opportunity provides a platform to showcase creativity, innovation, and style, while offering your business exposure to an audience of 40,000-60,000 visitors.

Theme

In 2026, the Sustainable Gardens Display will celebrate the theme **Circular Gardens**, inspired by the principles of reuse, regeneration, and sustainable design. Participants are invited to reinvent how plants, materials, and resources can be given new purpose, creating striking yet functional garden spaces.

This theme challenges designers to minimise waste, prioritise recycled or repurposed materials, and embrace closed-loop thinking.

Circular Gardens demonstrate that beauty doesn't come from excess, but from thoughtful design where every element has value and a second life. It's an opportunity to showcase creativity, environmental responsibility, and practical ingenuity – while inspiring the audience to see the potential in their own outdoor spaces through a more sustainable lens.

The Brief

The City of Ballarat invites local landscaping companies and trainees to apply for an opportunity to design and construct a sustainable garden display at the 2026 Begonia Festival. This initiative provides a platform to showcase your innovative ideas, environmentally conscious practices, and sustainable landscaping solutions to over 40,000 attendees during the three-day festival.

To expand on our options from 2025, we are pleased to offer two display sizes to choose from.

2.5m x 2.5m (limited sites available)

DISPLAY SPECIFICATIONS

- Space: 2.5m x 2.5m
- Budget: A stipend* of **\$1,500** will be provided to assist with material costs.
- Successful applicants will be required to complete a Ballarat Botanical Gardens bio-security form. Click [here](#) to view bio-security guidelines.
- You will need to build a 'box / border' to surround the perimeter of your site, concealing your pots and any substructure; this will need to be included in your budget. The site locations are on a flat surface, however, given they are in the gardens, some levelling maybe required. Note: Exclusionary barriers and signage will be provided (details to be advised).

5m x 5m (limited sites available)

DISPLAY SPECIFICATIONS

- Space: 5m x 5m
- Budget: A stipend* of **\$2,500** will be provided to assist with material costs.
- Successful applicants will be required to complete a Ballarat Botanical Gardens bio-security form. Click [here](#) to view bio-security guidelines.
- You will need to build a 'box / border' to surround the perimeter of your site, concealing your pots and any substructure; this will need to be included in your budget. The site locations are on a flat surface, however, given they are in the gardens, some levelling maybe required. Note: Exclusionary barriers and signage will be provided (details to be advised).

***STIPEND PAYMENT**

Payment of stipend will be divided into two milestones:

- Assignment of successful submission - \$1,300 (2.5m x 2.5m) or \$2,000 (5m x 5m)
- After successful event delivery \$200 (2.5m x 2.5m) / \$500 (5m x 5m)

The Brief continued...

CITY OF BALLARAT TO PROVIDE

- Stipend of \$1,500 (2.5m x 2.5m) or \$2,500 (5m x 5m) depending on garden size to go towards cost of materials.
- All festival marketing opportunities relevant to garden displays – including signage to accompany the display and recorded interviews with Begonia Festival Host for promotional purposes post event.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

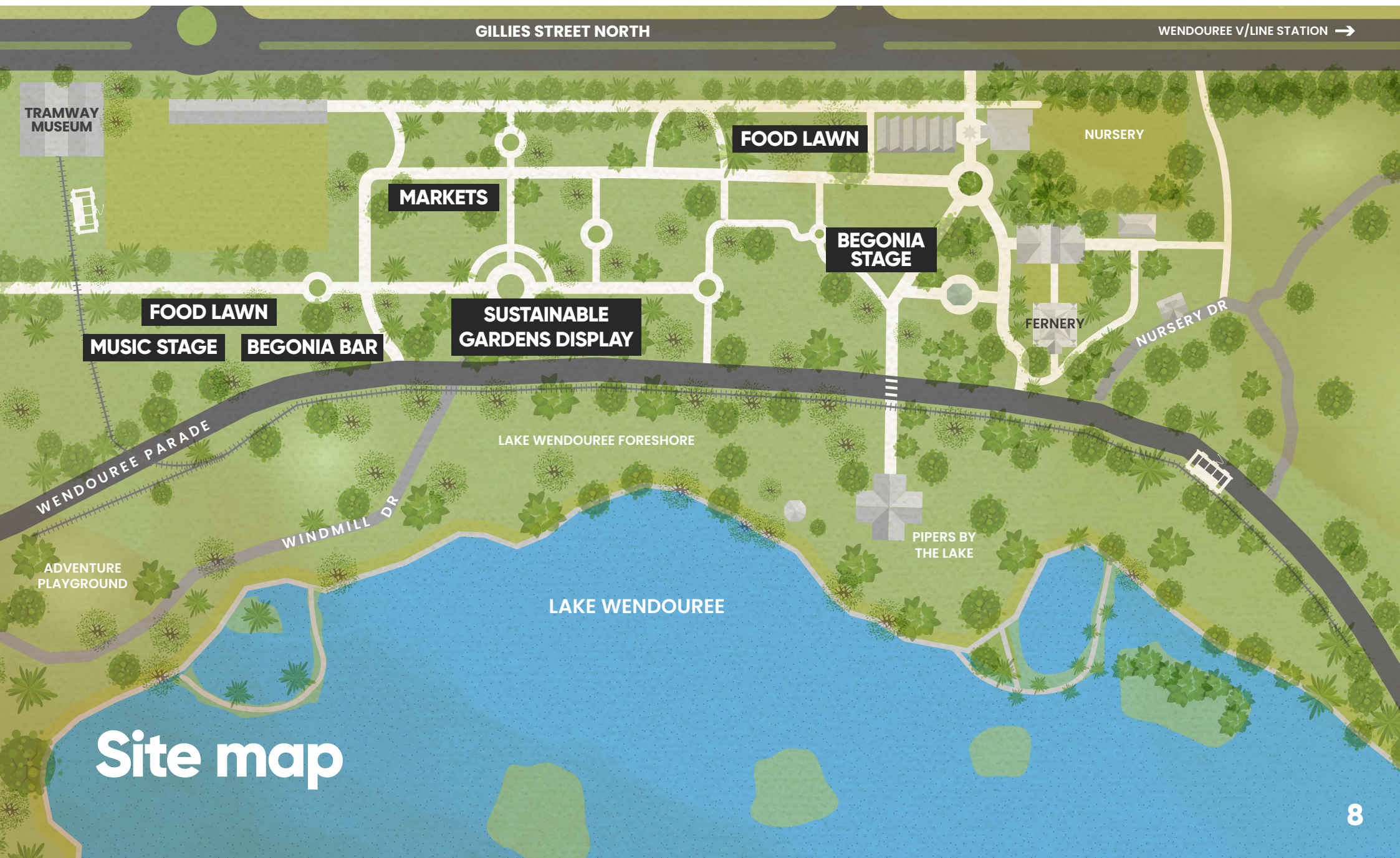
The Ballarat Begonia Festival takes place in the heritage-listed Ballarat Botanical Gardens. The Sustainable Gardens Displays are constructed in the grounds of the Gardens. It is **vital** that the construction of each garden does not impact on the grounds.

- You will need to build a 'box / border' to surround the perimeter of your site, concealing your pots and any substructure; this will need to be included in your budget. The site locations are on a flat surface, however, given they are in the gardens, some levelling maybe required.
Note: Exclusionary barriers and signage will be provided (details to be advised).
- 3 days total available for bump in. In the first 2 days vehicle access to the display location will be available for drops offs only. 2 days allocated for bump out.
- Access to Plant Equipment not available.

Important:

- Garden displays cannot have any construction that penetrates the soil.
- You are responsible for restoring the allocated site to its original condition at the conclusion of the festival.





Site map

2026 Ballarat Begonia Festival Hours

Saturday 7 March – 10am to 5pm

Sunday 8 March – 10am to 5pm

Monday 9 March – 10am to 5pm

Timeline

Expression of Interest deadline	November 30, 2025
Appointment of successful submission	December 5, 2025
Onsite kick-off briefing session	To be confirmed
Bump in	March 4 - 6, 2026
Festival dates	March 7 - 9, 2026
Bump out	March 10 - 11, 2026



Applications

To submit your application, visit the Sustainable Gardens online application form.

Submit your online application [here](#)

Your entry should include:

Description / Brief

Your garden will need a name, and you should also include an explanation of what you have designed, why and how it incorporates the Sustainable Gardens Theme – Circular Gardens. This should be creative and fully explain your vision.

Plans

You should submit as many plans as necessary to explain your design. At a minimum, this should include

- A plan view
- A perspective view
- Planting Plan



Applications continued...

Selection Criteria

A panel of City of Ballarat Officers will select successful applicants from all submitted entries based on the following criteria. Your response will be assessed out of 100 - we have outlined the maximum marks per section that you could be awarded.

Next Steps

To submit your application, please complete this online form, ensuring you include all required documentation and address the selection criteria as outlined.

Submit your online application [here](#)

SELECTION CRITERIA

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (WEIGHTING 30/100)

- Designs should demonstrate a commitment to reducing environmental impact and promoting ecological balance.
- Use of recycled, reclaimed, or re-purposed materials.
- Plant selection that supports biodiversity and habitat creation.
- Water-wise principles.

RESOURCE EFFICIENCY (WEIGHTING 30/100)

- Entries should show smart, practical use of resources to ensure longevity and accessibility.
- Cost-effective solutions that make gardens achievable for a wide audience.
- Efficient use of materials with minimal waste.

LOW MAINTENANCE (WEIGHTING 20/100)

- Realistic for ongoing care and upkeep.
- Planting themes that thrive with minimal intervention.
- Use of durable, resistant materials suited to local conditions.
- Designs that balance beauty with practicality over time.

LOCAL CONTENT AND SUPPLIERS (WEIGHTING 20/100)

- Description of business being represented by the display.
- Locality of sole trader / business to Ballarat.
- Use of local horticultural and Infrastructure suppliers where possible.

OH&S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (PASS/FAIL)

- What Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures does your business implement to provide a safe workplace?
- Provide SWMS for construction of garden.

**We look forward to working
with you at the Ballarat
Begonia Festival 2026!**

Questions and enquiries?
Call 5320 5500 or email events@ballarat.vic.gov.au