

Parkland factsheet

Background

Roma Street Parkland, located on 16 hectares in the heart of Brisbane, is the world's largest subtropical garden in a city centre. The Parkland is situated just 500 metres from the Brisbane City Hall and adjacent to the Roma Street Rail Station in Brisbane.

The Parkland was officially opened on 6 April 2001 by the then Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie and the honourable Robert Swarten, Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology.

It is owned by the Department of Public Works on behalf of the people of Queensland and is operated by QBuild, a business unit of the Department.

Maintaining the Parkland is a team of horticultural, operational, cleaning, security and event staff. It is also supported by a large team of committed volunteers providing visitor support and gardening services.

DID YOU KNOW? The Parkland cost \$72M to develop and was funded by the Queensland State Government. The first earthworks commenced in January 2000 and the project was completed, on time and within budget, by March 2001.

The Parkland has attracted many local, interstate and international visitors. The overall feedback on the Parkland has been very positive, with many visitors returning to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere and pleasant surroundings. Over half a million people visit the Parkland each year.

FACT The Parkland's Volunteer Guides take an average of 200 people on free guided walks each month!

History

The area, now home to Roma Street Parkland, has a long and colourful history. Its central location and natural reservoir made it a popular meeting place for several indigenous groups in Brisbane and surrounding areas.

As the Brisbane settlement expanded in the mid 1800s, the area's uses diversified. The Roma Street Railway Station, formerly known as the Brisbane Terminus, was built in 1874 to accommodate the passage of people and goods travelling between the city, Ipswich and Toowoomba. Since then, it has become a major terminus for suburban, intra and interstate passengers.

From 1884 to 1964, part of the area was reserved for the Brisbane Markets where people could buy fresh produce and live animals.

During World War II, air raid shelters were constructed in the Upper Parkland formerly known as Albert Park. The American Army also occupied a purpose-built clubhouse in the area.

In the late 1960s, following the closure of the Brisbane Markets, the area was partially isolated from the general community and it was used as a goods yard by the local railway.

In 1999, the Queensland Government released its plans to redevelop the area and create Roma Street Parkland. Today, the Parkland reflects the area's many cultural and historical periods and themes.

DID YOU KNOW? The Parkland has been designed to feature different spaces, each with their own unique 'rooms'. These rooms encourage a range of different uses and activities. Water is also a significant element of the Parkland with its large lake and several spectacular water features.

Around the Parkland

The Activity Centre

A central meeting place, the Activity Centre is Roma Street Parkland's main access point for vehicles, rail users and pedestrians. The Activity Centre houses the main administration office for the Parkland and the only restaurant within the Parkland.

It features the 'Carriage Shed', a building which draws inspiration from the traditional railway sheds previously situated on the site.

FACTS Carriage Shed: 2,900m²
Truss Span: 6m

Celebration Precinct

A place for retreat, relaxation and recreation, the Celebration Lawn is a vast area suitable for picnics, playing games or just lazing around and enjoying the sunshine. As the name suggests, Celebration Precinct is a perfect location for large outdoor events and entertainment with capacity for up to 10,000 people.

DID YOU KNOW? Roma Street Parkland hosts a number of major community events throughout the year including the Queensland Multicultural Festival, the Big Qld BBQ and Australia Day Celebrations. All-up approximately 250 events are held annually within the Parkland.

Horticultural features

The Parkland features almost 40 varieties of Australian natives including Queensland native varieties such as the Tree Waratah and various Grevillea.

Species were sourced locally but include plants and trees found throughout the world, in keeping with the Parkland's sub-tropical theme.

Preparing trees for transportation to the Parkland from their natural environment took in excess of 6 months and the Parkland features some awesome Bottle Trees from the Great Dividing Range that were saved from clearing.

DID YOU KNOW? The Parkland has 1,200 mature trees, more than 100,000 shrubs, 1,800 unique specimens and 350 palms. The total value of plants in the Parkland exceeds \$3.2M and many of the species are actually endangered in their natural environment.

Spectacle Garden

As the horticultural heart of the Parkland, the Spectacle Garden provides visitors with the chance to discover the treasures of the subtropical botanic and horticultural world. It features various themed gardens; some of these being Garden of 1000 Lilies, Garden of Native Cultivars, Topiary Maze Garden, the colourful Concentric Garden, Lilly Pilly Garden, Wall of Epiphytes plus many more to explore.

The Forest

Distinguished by species found in Queensland's rainforests, palm forests and open forests, this area features an intricate pathway system and boardwalk over cascading waterways and around steep hills and rocky outcrops. Visitors can walk across the Fern Gully Bridge to the Lookout which provides views over the Forest, the remaining Parkland and the city skyline.

The Lake Precinct & water features

A significant feature of this precinct is the 0.6ha Lake. The lake is constructed of reinforced concrete to provide watertightness, longevity and ease of maintenance and also acts as a retention basin and stormwater quality improvement device, catching most of the stormwater run-off from the Parkland.

FACT The lake has a surface area of over 6000m² and a maximum depth of 2.5m. It holds 11 million litres, which is equivalent to 6 Olympic-size swimming pools!

To one side of the lake is the dramatic Pandanus Headland, featuring Pandanus, Banksia and species found on Australian Coastal Headlands. The Lake Precinct is also home to the Paper Bark Forest and wetlands with species from Australia and around the world. The wetlands that line the lake perimeter at the northern and western ends assist with water quality.

Pumps generate a waterfall and streams, which also assists in maintaining water quality.

FACTS

There are 3 waterfalls in the Parkland, one of which delivers 15mm of water over a 34 metre long weir and has a 6 metre sheer drop.

Upper Parkland

This area, formerly known as Albert Park, has always been a popular Brisbane recreational and cultural precinct. Today, visitors can enjoy meandering through Spring Hill Corner which features Brisbane's first subtropical style urban gardens established in the 1960s by notable landscape architect, Harry Oakman. The area also features the Amphitheatre, an outdoor performance space suitable for small concerts, theatrics and corporate hire.

The playgrounds

Set on a natural slope lined by mature fig trees, the playgrounds are designed for children of all ages. The playground features a jungle gym, swings, rockers, spinning toys, gongs, hand pumps and sound boxes as well as steps, trees and a rock lined dry creek bed for games and exploration.

Other Parkland features

Public art

A total of 16 Queensland artists were commissioned to create a collection of public art for Roma Street Parkland.

Other art pieces have been added to the Parkland since construction and include unique murals and stonework. An existing piece of artwork in the old Albert Park has been moved to the College Close car park. The Parkland has an integrated conservation and maintenance plan for the Artwork.

DID YOU KNOW?

The total value of the artworks at the time was \$1.2 million. The art was commissioned as part of the Queensland Government's 'Art Built-in' policy, integrating art into public buildings and spaces.

Bridges

Roma Street Parkland has several bridges for both pedestrian and vehicular movement through the Parkland. Each bridge has its own look, from the Fern Gully Bridge which is designed to reflect the varied nature of trees within the Parkland, to the Albert Street Bridge which features an unusual structural steel mast for support as well as several works of art. Albert Street Bridge is also the Parkland's major link to the Brisbane Central Business District.

FIGURES

Albert Street Bridge: 237 metres long
Longest span: 25 meters
Yellow mast: 40 meters
Allee Bridge: 114 meters long
Allee blade walls: 7.3 meters
Fern Gully Bridge: 82 long long
Bebo Arch Bridge: 13 meters span