

Media Release

The Hon Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Development Victoria
Minister for Precincts
Minister for Creative Industries



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CITY'S NEW GARDEN 'A BEAUTIFUL PLACE FOR ALL PEOPLE TO VISIT'

The Allan Labor Government is delivering Australia's biggest cultural infrastructure project, revealing the first look of the huge garden that will sit at the heart of the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation.

Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks today toured the area to announce the name of the garden – *Laak Boorndap* – alongside Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Language Elder Aunty Gail Smith.

The urban garden will be roughly the size of the MCG and will connect the creative venues and food outlets across the precinct and be a new home for events and activations to be hosted in the centre of Melbourne.

Laak Boorndap will be open to the public 24-hours a day and will stretch from Hamer Hall to Southbank Boulevard with public artworks, plants, and a water feature.

Designed by the Melbourne studio of international design practice Hassell, in partnership with New York's SO-IL, world-renowned horticulturalists Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough, and Melbourne plant expert Jac Semmler of Super Bloom, *Laak Boorndap* will be one of the most complex designs of any public garden in the world.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung name means 'heaven's beauty' and reflects the garden's role of bringing people together to celebrate culture and community. A First Peoples public artwork will be commissioned for *Laak Boorndap*, which will sit alongside contemporary sculptures from the NGV and Arts Centre Melbourne collections.

Laak Boorndap works are scheduled to start in 2026, with the city-shaping Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation set to bring more people to the precinct, which was visited by 16 million people in 2022-23.

The transformation of the precinct will begin with upgrades to Arts Centre Melbourne, and the final stages of deconstruction of 77 Southbank Boulevard – the future home of The Fox: NGV Contemporary.

Creative industries contribute \$40.3 billion to the Victorian economy, employing nearly 320,000 people, with 11,000 new jobs being created at the arts precinct during the construction of Australia's largest cultural infrastructure project. For more information on *Laak Boorndap* and Project visit artsprecinct.melbourne

Quote attributable to Minister for Creative Industries and Minister for Development Victoria Colin Brooks

"Laak Boorndap will reshape the precinct and bring together nature, culture, art and design — a major investment in our creative industries, tourism and local jobs."

Quote attributable to Aunty Gail Smith, Language Elder from Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

"I gave it the name Laak Boorndap because to me it means a beautiful place for all people to visit and recognise our Country and our Wurundjeri ancestors. It's not just a placename, it brings Sky Country, the heavens, and everyone back together on sacred ground."

Quote attributable to Katrina Sedgwick, Director & CEO of Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation

"We've reached two extraordinary milestones with the final design and naming of the garden, Laak Boorndap. This space will be more than a garden – it is really a creative act that delivers biodiversity, beauty and social connection in a way that is diverse and ever-changing."

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