

# Design Brief #2

## Merri Creek Labyrinth



## **Design brief**

To create a space that enhances the natural beauty of the surrounding area and creates a serene, simple, tranquil, secluded, and calming place.

Using simple aesthetic's that builds upon the already existing structure of the concentric bluestone Labyrinth and general area. While building a native garden that surrounds it to help with the biodiversity of flora and fauna and the connection of nature.

Using natural design principles and materials where possible. It should be low cost, low maintenance, robust and sustainable.

## **Design ethos**

Creating a space that encourages and evokes self reflection and mindfulness and promoting wellbeing within a public/ municipal area.

Where individuals and the wider community can go to for contemplation and reflection with a sense of sanctuary.

By utilising the principles of ecopsychology and developing a space that encourages mental health by helping to heal disconnection, by creating a connection...to yourself, others and the surrounding nature.

## **Background**

The Merri Creek Labyrinth was created by local residents over the 2001-2002. The Labyrinth is a valued local resource for enhancing health and wellbeing. The Friends of the Labyrinth was formed in 2011 to help maintain and care for it.

## **A. Improve the sustainability of the Labyrinth.**

### **Design challenges -**

The Labyrinth is on a slight slope. The low spots become quite muddy during the wetter months and rainy days, which makes it difficult to access and use.

This has been exacerbated over recent years by the use of mulch to help with weed suppression and has caused bluestone pieces to sink into ground.

### **Possible solutions -**

1. Remove Bluestone rocks.
2. Create a circular base of 20mm Bluestone crushed rock and compact (which will help with levelling, water drainage and weed suppression).
3. Replace Bluestone rocks.

## **B. Construct and cultivate a native garden in the area surrounding the Merri Creek Labyrinth.**

### **Design Challenges -**

To create a native garden around the Labyrinth that enhances the structure itself and the natural rhythms of the local landscape.

It should be constructed to be as sustainable as possible, requiring little upkeep from the community and council.

### **Possible solutions -**

The use of organic shaped beds of good quality bark, planted out that Native grasses, ground covers, small/medium plants (\*see list). That helps encapsulates the Labyrinth.



# Improve sustainability of Labyrinth

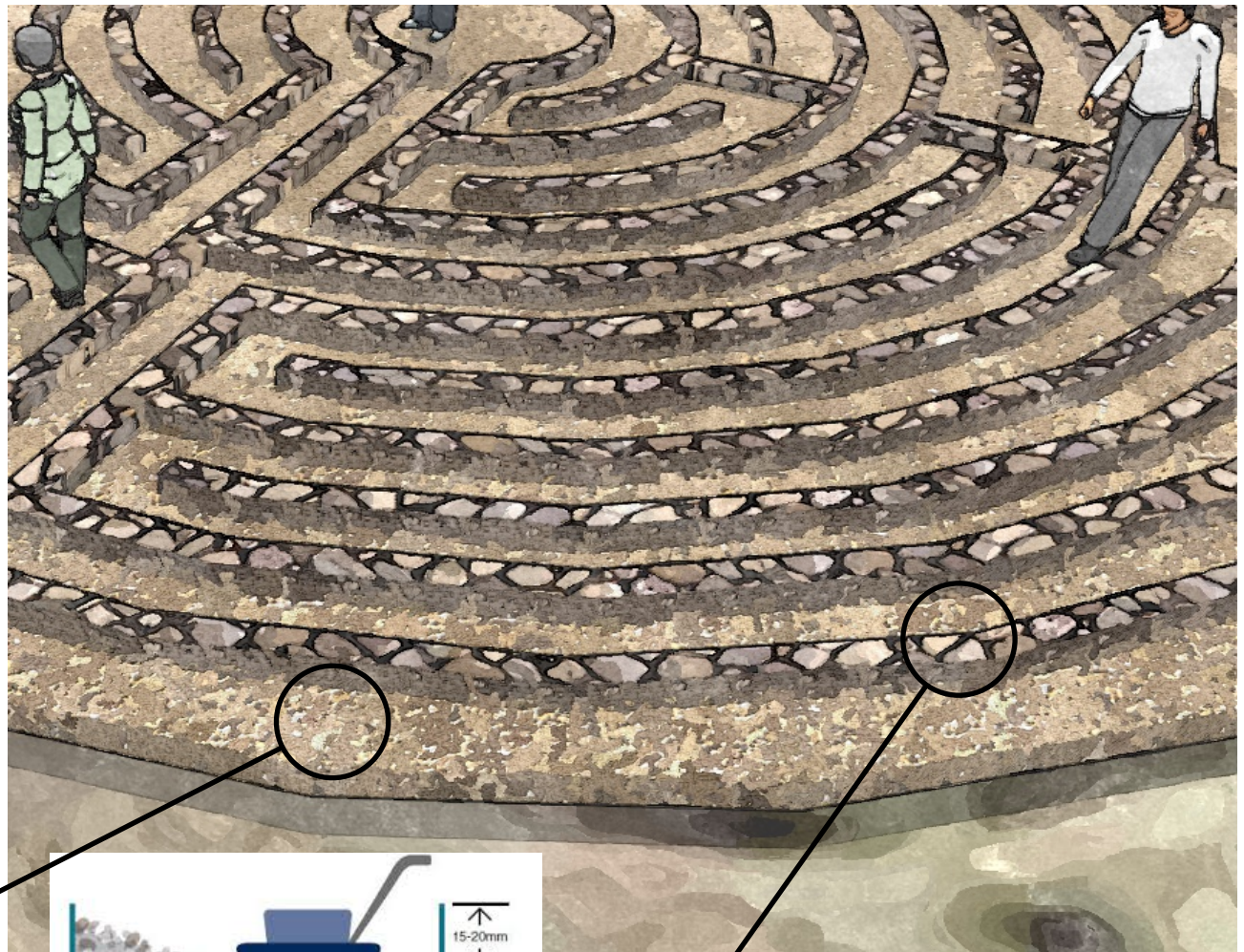
## Design challenges

The Labyrinth is on a slight slope. The low spots become quite muddy during the wetter months and rainy days, which makes it difficult to access and use.

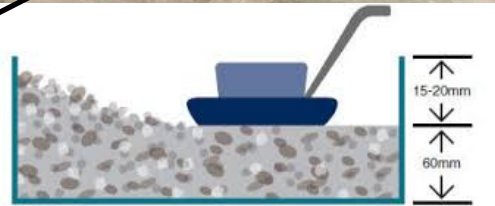
This has been exacerbated over recent years by the use of mulch to help with weed suppression.

## Possible solutions

1. Remove Bluestone rocks.
2. Create a circular base of 200mm Bluestone crushed rock and compact. (For levelling, water drainage and weed suppression) with Agi pipe instillation diverted to garden beds.
3. Replace Bluestone rocks and secure with mortar.



Circular bed of crushed rock



Compacted crushed rock with a curved mound 200mm

Bluestone pieces joined with mortar





# Native Garden

**Construct and cultivate a native garden in the area surrounding the Merri Creek Labyrinth.**

To create a native garden around the Labyrinth that enhances the structure itself and the natural rhythms of the local landscape. Creating biodiversity and increasing wildlife, attracting birds and insects.

It should be constructed to be as sustainable as possible, requiring little upkeep from the community and council.

The use of organic shaped slightly raised garden beds of good quality bark, planted out with Native grasses, ground covers, small/ medium plants. That helps encapsulates the Labyrinth, giving a sense of seclusion and privacy.



\* Photos are from surrounding area



# Design overview

Native garden beds planted out with grasses,  
ground covers, small/medium plants  
\*see planting list



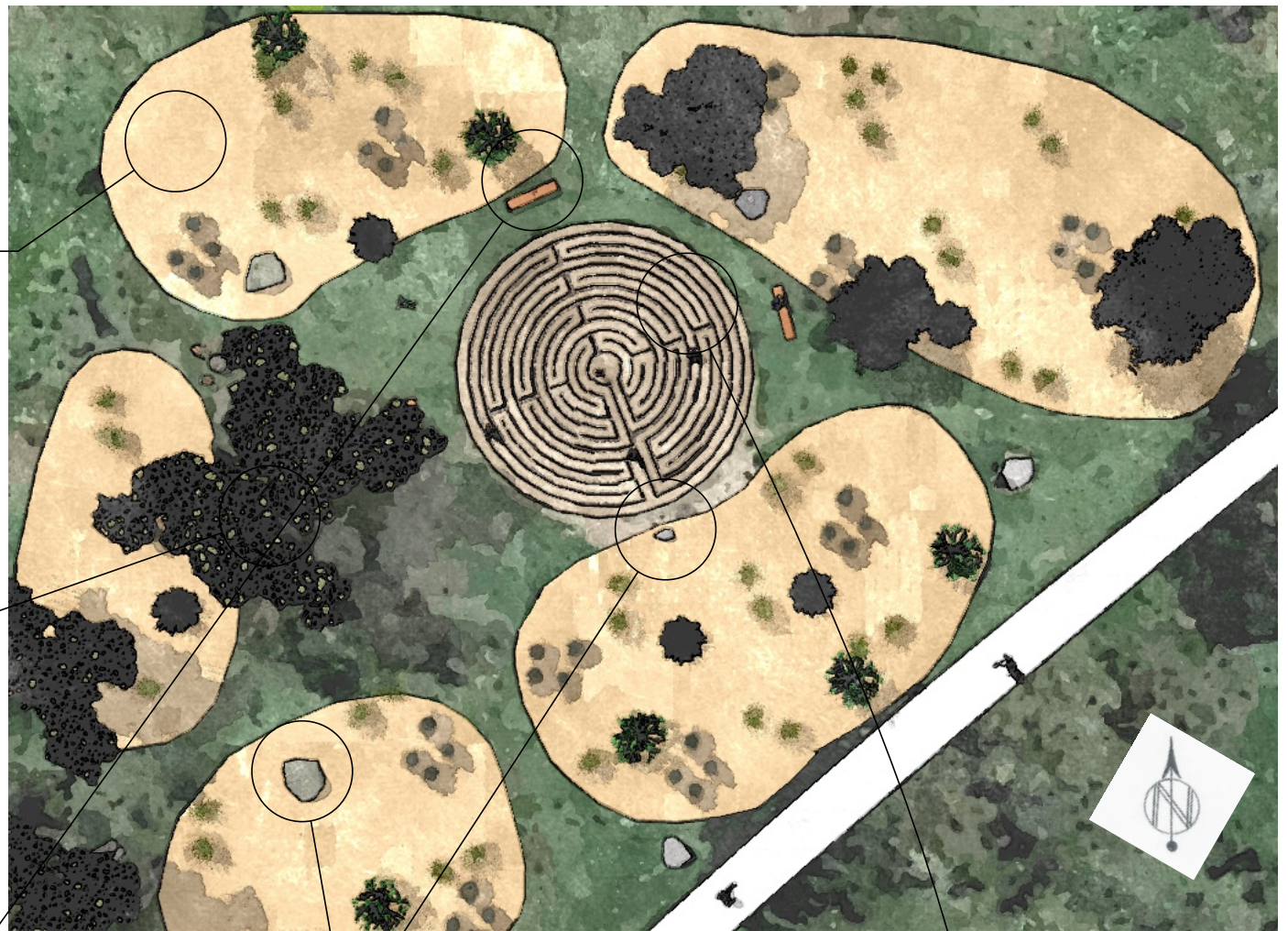
Wishing Tree with messages of goodwill and hope



Simple seating \*recycled train sleepers



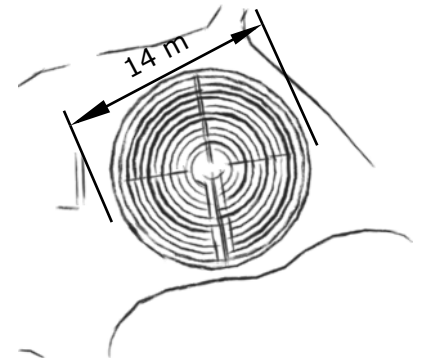
Large rock placements already on site



Poem inscription at entrance of Labyrinth



Labyrinth  
Area 154 m<sup>2</sup>





# Plant Key/List

**Creeper on cliff face - *Clematis decipiens*** •

***Grevillea rosmarinifolia*** •

**Wallaby grass - *Rytidosperma caespitosum*** •

**Snow grass - *Poa sieberiana*** •

**Yarra burgeon - *Kunzea Leptospermoides*** •

**Matted Pea bush - *Pultanaea pedunculate*** •

***Eucalyptus*** •

***Eucalyptus camaldulensis*** •

***Eucalyptus*** •

**Clover tree- *Goodia lotifolia*** •

**Wallaby grass - *Austrodanthonia setacea*** •

**Snow grass - *Poa sieberiana*** •

**Hickory Wattle - *Acacia Impexia*** •



\*The plants shown here are native to area but are just examples to give ideas...further consultation is needed for appropriate suitability for specifics in micro region.

Lots of plants that attract bees, butterflies and birds  
Colour, form, size low maintenance ect....

***Acacia Pycntha*** •

**Hickory Wattle - *Acacia Impexia*** •

***Eucalyptus ovata*** •



# Links and other Ideas...

Planting levels to give sense of privacy ?

Sound - Bird song, flowing water from creek ?

Smell - Fragrance of foliage ?

Sight - Colour of foliage ?

- Wishing tree make fairy door and letter box for wishes, to help minimise litter and graffiti ?
- Vandalism deterrence imbedded in design in general ?
- Bird Boxes
- Circle/Stone sculpture + wind chime ?
- Signs on trees with words of wisdom, hope and strength ?



<https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/health-and-wellness/labyrinths-offer-a-new-path-to-health-20100915-15cs7.html>

<https://www.lawsonresearch.ca/news/walking-labyrinth-path-meaning-insight-and-reflection>

<https://e360.yale.edu/features/ecopsychology-how-immersion-in-nature-benefits-your-health>

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/3148bd80418fca459ed39e5f8c50f44b/HPHP+Mental+Health+and+Nature+FINAL+DISCUSSION+PAPER.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=3148bd80418fca459ed39e5f8c50f44b>



# Materials and costing

\* All guesstimates at this stage...

- Native shrubs small trees and grasses - \$ 3000
- Bark 100 cubic mtrs  
(good quality, replaced every 5/6 years) - \$1500
- Crushed rock 20mm  
(delivery and compactor hire) - \$ 1200 (23 cubic mtrs)
- Agi-pipe - \$500
- Seating (Recycled train sleepers) - \$ 200
- Rock placement - \$ 200
- Consultation/direction ect - \$ 1500

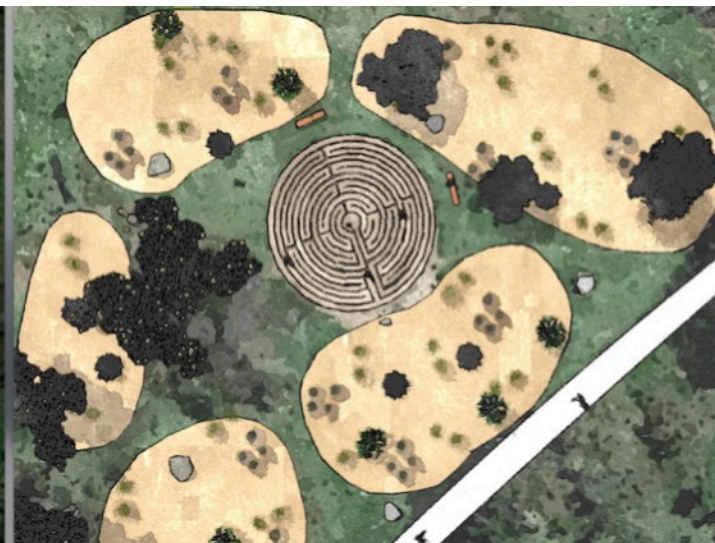
# Cost savings

- The bulk of the manual work will be carried out by volunteers (promoting community inclusion) ie. Planting and bluestone work ect
- The bluestone material for reconstruction of Labyrinth and large rock placement and signage are already on site.

Present



Future





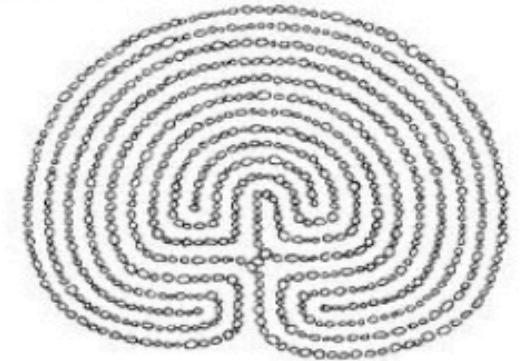
# Existing Signage and poem

*This Labyrinth rests on Wurundjeri land,  
But it is for all to share and enjoy!  
Please Respect it and each other.  
Walk it aware of breath, while  
remembering your  
strengths and that all things shall pass.  
Know you are precious and may paths of  
hope you follow .*

## THE MERRI CREEK LABYRINTH

The Merri Creek Labyrinth was created by the community for the community over 18 Years ago. The Merri Creek Labyrinth was created by local residents over summer 2001-2002. The Labyrinth is a valued local resource for enhancing **health** and well-being. Friends of the Labyrinth was formed in 2011 to care for it. You are invited to take time to walk the labyrinth!  
It's a space where individuals and a **community** can reflectively **meditate** on their lives.  
A place to go that makes you feel better...  
There is a growing **awareness** around the world of the benefits of walking the labyrinth for our modern age. This ancient practice can be useful for balancing stress, giving **space** to reflect on one's life.

It is broader than any creed or religious belief. There is no one right way to walk a labyrinth.  
The path into the **centre** and out again is designed to ground, **balance**, and centre you - a walking meditation helping you to find your way through life.  
You can use anything that happens in the labyrinth as a metaphor for what is happening in your **life**...



***"The labyrinth is thoroughly known ...Where we had thought to travel outwards we shall come to the center of our own existence and where we had thought to be alone we shall be with all the world."**— Joseph Campbell*

The 'Friends of the Merri Creek labyrinth' was formed to help maintain the space and encourage its use as a free public space. We gather for occasional working bees... To keep informed join our email list or social platforms Pls contact us if you have any questions :)  
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