

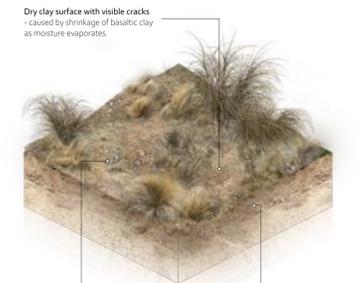


This project repurposes Holden Flora Reserve into a land that adapts to seasonal rainfall. By manipulating subtle topographical changes, the design improves its hydrological cycle and introduces appropriate vegetation species to enhance the site's ecology. As a heavy soil plain grassland (EVC 132\_61), the basalt clay soil within the site experiences significant seasonal variations—cracked and dry in the sunny days, muddy and waterlogged after rain. Rather than attempting to completely alter these conditions, the design minimizes these extremes in soil quality, allowing the site to adapt to all seasons.

A series of gentle mounds, slopes, and shallow depressions reshapes the flat topography, channeling, storing, and releasing stormwater. Elevated wooden broadwalk traverse these new landforms, allowing visitors to walk through the regenerated grassland while maintaining soil permeability. This sequence of elevated broadwalks, viewing platforms, and rain garden basins creates a fluid narrative, inviting visitors to explore the site and foster a deeper connection with the land.

Planting follows the land's hydrological patterns and is drawn from three related ecological vegetation categories: Plain Grassland (EVC 132\_61), Grassy Woodland (EVC 175), and Stream Bank Shrubland (EVC 851). On mounds, drought-tolerant species such as *Acacia implexa*, *Dianella admixta*, and *Lomandra filiformis* stabilize soil and enhance fertility. Along the slopes, transition zones planted with species such as *Ficinia nodosa* and *Lepidosperma laterale* slow surface runoff and filter sediment. In swales, water-tolerant plants such as *Carex appressa* and *Gahnia radula* form living sponges, capturing and purifying rainwater and assisting infiltration into the ground. This planting system restores the natural rhythms of the grasslands and responds to Victoria's changing climate, which is experiencing longer periods of dry weather and increased extreme rainfall. During storms, the swales intercept runoff, preventing direct impacts and reducing erosion. During extended sunny months, deep-rooted vegetation locks moisture in the clay, while shade helps reduce evaporation from the surface, supporting a durable green structure.

The design embraces a light-touch, low-impact approach, embodying Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung's connection to the countryside. It values observation, respect, and preservation as acts of care. Elevated broadwalks protect the fragile ground, while seasonal changes become part of the visitor experience—illustrating how the landscape adapts and recovers. Ultimately, the project aims to transform a flat, fragile terrain into a resilient and instructive one. It balances human activity with grassland ecological processes, transforming extreme climate into a visible cycle of recovery and coexistence.



**Fine gravels exposed**  
- lighter topsoil eroded, exposing basalt fragments that increase heat absorption.



**Vegetation filtering stormwater**  
- species like *Carex appressa* and *Ficinia nodosa* trap sediments.

## Breathing Grassland: The Rhythm of Wet and Dry



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