

Melinda Hetzel & Co. / Niow's

Conservatory - Relaxed guide

Date: 15-18 June 2023

Performance sessions (AEST):

Thursday, June 15	6:00pm to 7.30pm
Friday, June 16	7.30pm to 9:00pm
Saturday, June 17	7.30pm to 9:00pm
Sunday, June 18	6:00pm to 7.30pm

Venue:

Historic Conservatory, Central Park, Malvern
148 Burke Rd, Malvern East, Vic
Australia

Live-stream:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1oVMmVwk-btmW_lpt9S0oA/live

Attending:

This is a free, live event part of [Glow Festival](#). Attend the live stream via YouTube or in person. This durational experience unfolds progressively over the course of four nights. Drop by, or tune in, any time throughout these sessions.

The Glow Festival website has an accessibility function (the person in the green circle in the bottom left corner).

Contact:

Melinda Hetzel & Co: www.melindahetzel.com/conservatory

Niow: <https://www.niow.com.au/conservatory>

Glow Festival: <https://www.glowfestival.com.au>

For technical issues on the day please email: theconservatory2020@gmail.com



The City of Stonnington proudly supports *Conservatory*.

Contents

What is a relaxed performance?.....	3
What does it mean for this performance to be relaxed?.....	3
Attending.....	3
Attending - in person	
- online.....	4
The Site - address	
- venue	
- map.....	4
Photos of the venue.....	5
Venue - tram stop, parking, toilets	
- how to get there.....	6
Suggested Routes - parking to the venue	
- suggested travel route (PTV).....	7
- Burke Rd/ Wattletree Rd tramstop to the venue.....	8
What to Bring.....	8
The Set.....	10
The Lighting.....	11
The People.....	12
Audience Permissions.....	13
The Content.....	15
After the Show & Feedback.....	36

What is a relaxed performance?

A relaxed performance is a performance that has been adapted in particular ways which make it more accessible for a range of potential audience members, including autistic audiences, as well as audience members with sensory or communication conditions or learning disabilities.

See more at: www.a-tistic.com.au/relaxed-performances

What does it mean for this performance to be relaxed?

This performance takes place looking through the windows of a greenhouse in a public park. We have created this guide because we would like to make our performance more relaxed, working within the resources available to us. We are unable to offer a dedicated 'chill out space' on site, however the performance will be simultaneously live streamed and can be experienced from the comfort of your own home.

We want to create a more inclusive experience because we always seek to welcome new people to share in the stories we tell. We don't believe that certain people's opinions or ways of experiencing the world are more important than others. We believe that inclusive practice is key to better art-making and finding new form, which is at the centre of our practice. In developing this relaxed guide alongside the performance, we have been thinking a lot about how much more enjoyable 'suspense', where you know that a thing is coming, can be than 'surprise', where you don't know that it's coming. We are learning more all the time.

This performance has been relaxed in consultation with A-tistic Theatre, with particular thanks to Tom.

Attending:

This is a free, live event. Attend the live stream via YouTube or in person. This durational experience unfolds progressively over the course of four nights. Drop by, or tune in, any time throughout these sessions.

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Drop by, or tune in, any time throughout these sessions.

Attending in person:

Attend in person at the Historic Conservatory. You will be able to sit, stand and view the live performance through the windows of the greenhouse, you will be able to see the live stream on monitors through the windows of the conservatory.

Attending online:

You will need an internet connection to attend the live stream. You can do this from any computer or device. Click the 'Conservatory Live Stream' thumbnail at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1oVMmVwk-btmW_lpt9S0oA/live from 30 minutes before the scheduled start time up until the end of each performance, Thursday 15th 7:30, Friday 16th 9:00pm, Saturday 17th 9:00pm and Sunday 18th 7:30pm. You do not need to book for the live stream.

The youtube comments section will not be active for this event.

The Site -



Address:

Historic Conservatory, Central Park, Malvern
148 Burke Rd, Malvern East, Vic

Venue:

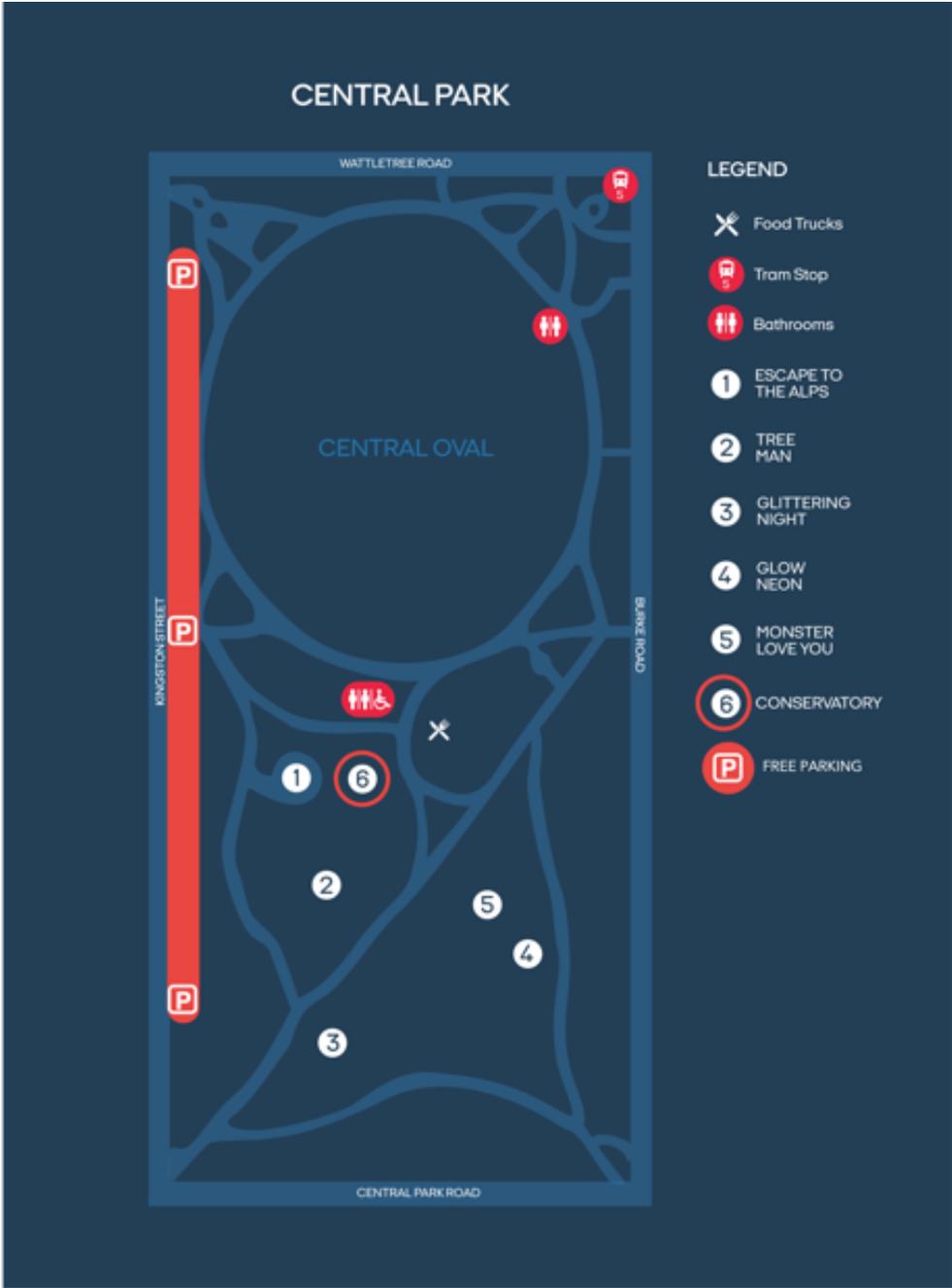
The venue is an historical conservatory located in the centre of Central Park. The performance will take place inside the conservatory. Audience members will either sit on benches or stand outside, looking in.

Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/YsuvvpMx4m9xsPzC9>

Photos of the venue



Map - tram stop, parking, toilets, food trucks, all art installations for Glow Festival



How to get there:

By car to either Burke Road or Kingston Street, Malvern East.

- **Parking** Best parking is on Kingston Street – untimed and unsigned. Reserved accessible parking is located at the Kingston St entrance (opposite 13 Kingston St, East Malvern).

Train The nearest station is 1.5km away - Darling Station (Glen Waverley line)

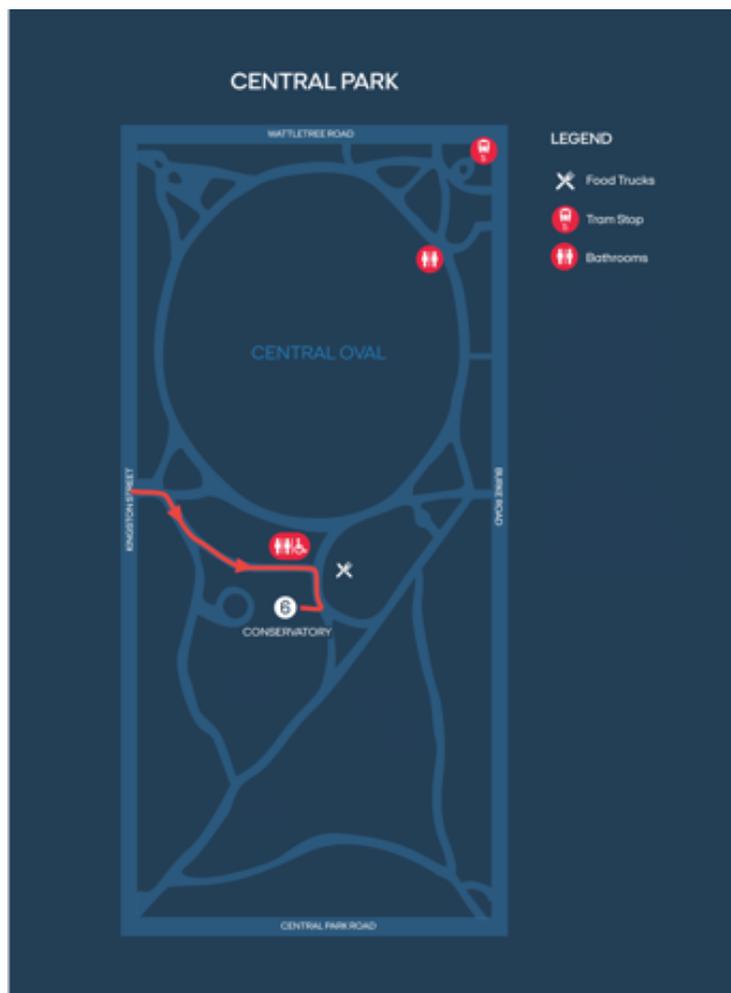
Bus Number 624 stops at Central Park/ Burke Rd.

Tram Number 5 tram stops on Wattle tree road (at intersection of Burke road – approx. 250m walk around to oval to the venue)

Bike Bike friendly – lots of places to chain up a bike

Walking Walking friendly - entrances from all sides of the park, gravel pathways within the park.

Suggested Routes:

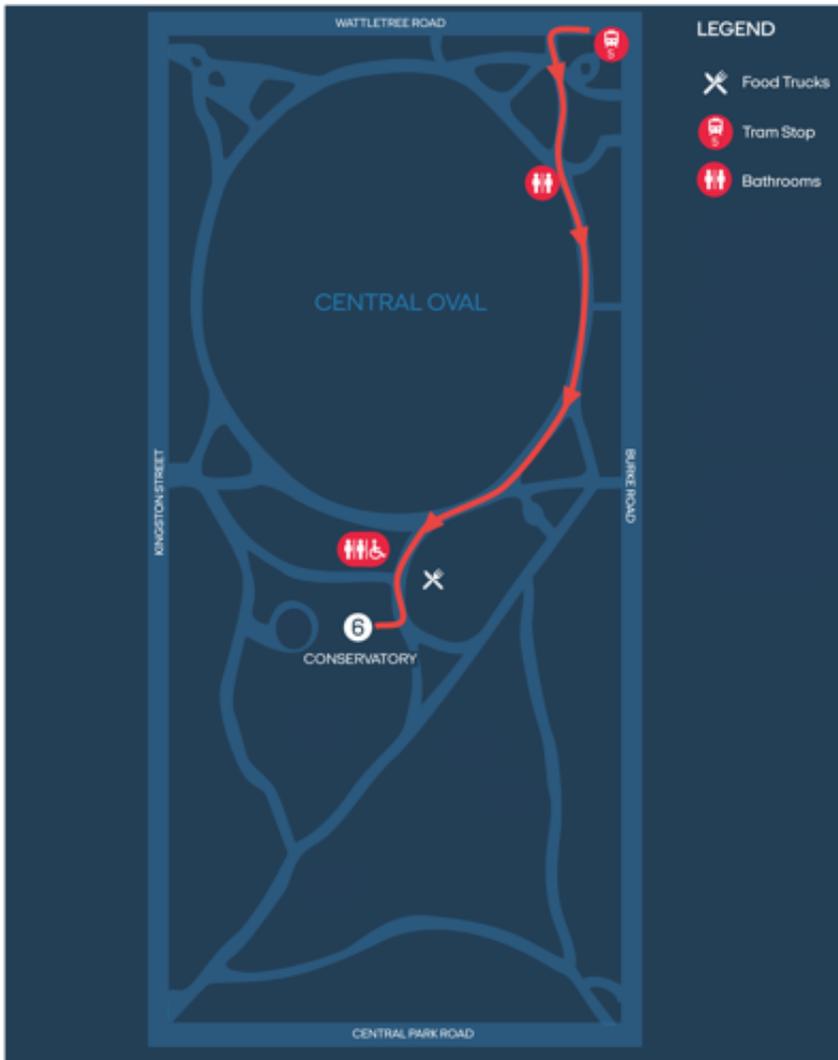
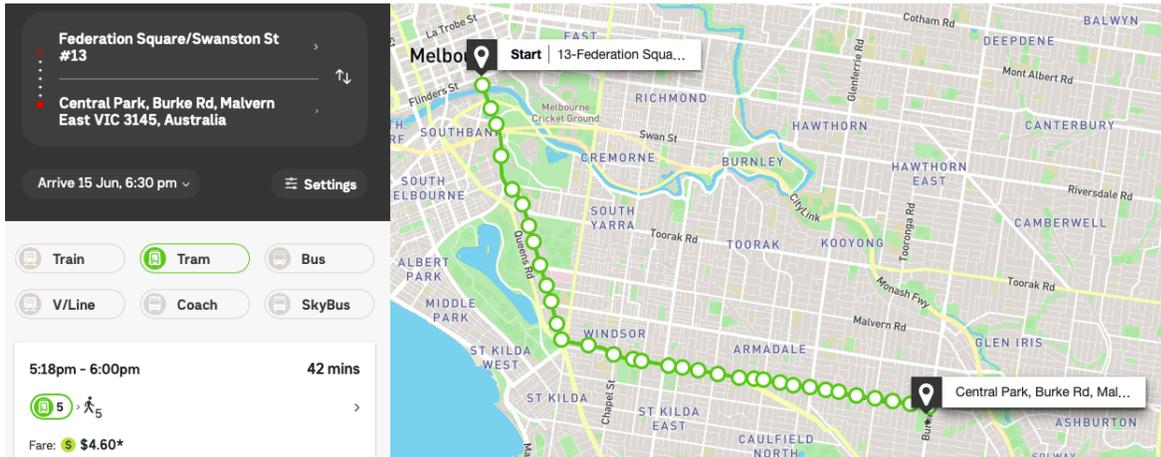


Getting from Kingston St parking to the venue: The approach to the performance site is by gravel pathway through the park, approximately 100m from the Kingston St gate (near parking) to the venue.

Suggested travel route (PTV)

Tram number 5 from Federation Square to Burke Rd/ Wattletree Rd (final stop)

Duration: 42 minutes.



Walking from the Burke Rd/ Wattletree Rd tramstop to the venue - follow the path around the oval approx 250m from the tramstop to the venue along gravel pathway:

What you can bring:

Clothing – the audience will be sitting or standing outside the conservatory. Please dress for the weather, some rain is forecast with lows of around 8°C.

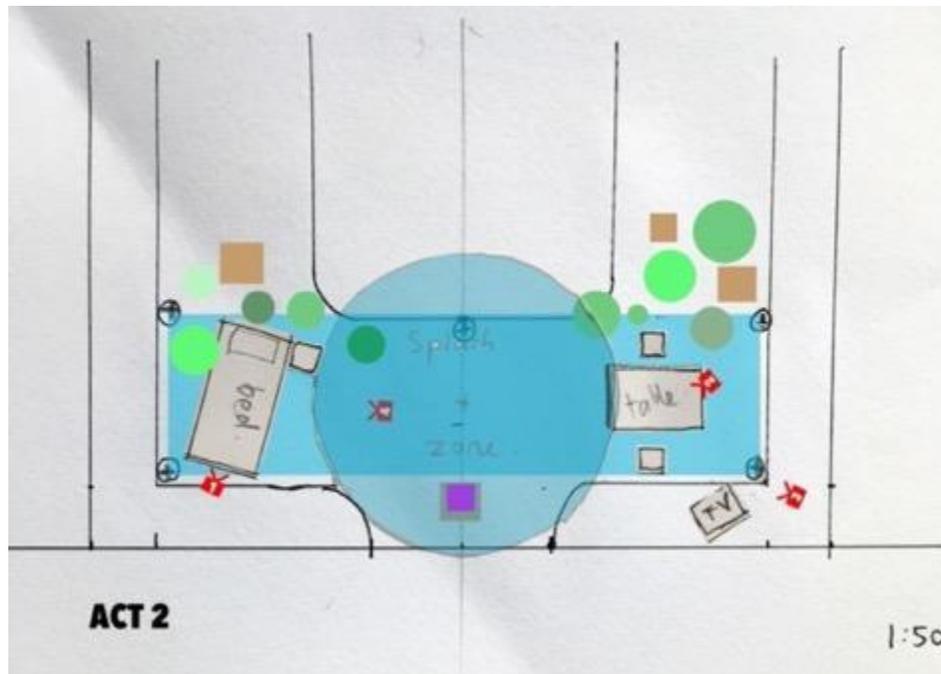
- o Food/ drink (Hot drinks and snacks will be available to purchase at food trucks in Central Park, and a number of the local businesses surrounding the park will be open serving a range of refreshments)
 - o Rain jacket / umbrella
 - o Headphones
 - o Mobile Phones
 - Feel free to photograph the performance
 - Watch live stream simultaneously on your device
 - o Comfort items eg. soft toys, ipad etc.
 - o Torches – we are not providing torches, please bring your own torch if needed.
- Sunset is at 5:07pm and there is some lighting on main pathways within the park.

Covid Management:

You're welcome to wear a face mask while attending the performance however masks are not mandatory so other audience members may not choose to wear them.

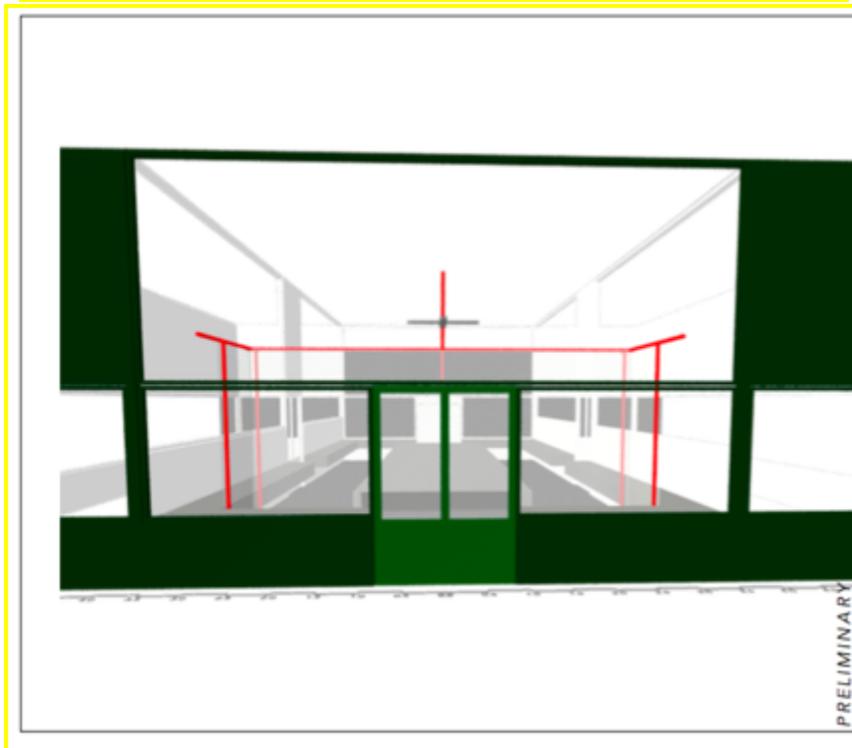
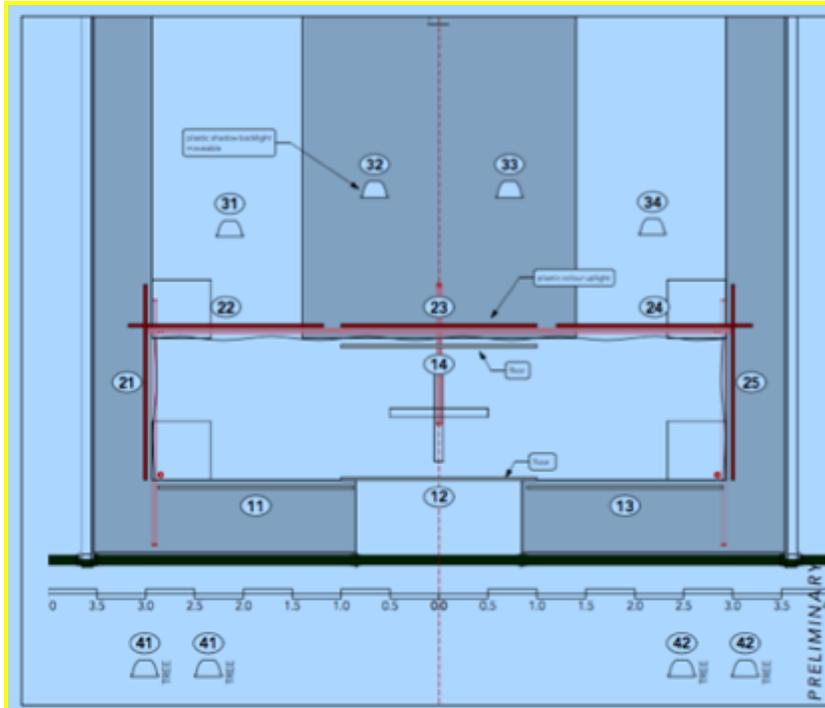
The Set

The set changes throughout the performance. It starts with semi-opaque plastic curtains as 'walls' at the back and sides of the performance space. There are several cardboard boxes containing props, multiple potted plants and a bed, a table, two side tables and two small chairs. These are rearranged throughout the performance. There is also a special wading pool underneath the furniture for when it 'rains' in the space and the pool fills up with water 'flooding' the performance area. This performance uses compostable sticky tape, cellophane and sticking plasters.



The Lighting:

The lighting will also change throughout the performance and be largely improvised to accommodate changing light in the conservatory. Nick Maloney will be operating the lights each night, light was designed by Paul Lim.



The People -



Front of house – Emily Tomlins

Emily Tomlins will be greeting audience members outside the conservatory. She will be the main person to speak to if you have any questions. Emily will be wearing black clothes and will be standing at the entrance to the performance space.

The creatives (visible) -

There will be a single live performer visible the whole time.

Live Performer : Niow



This role is played by Niow (*Cirque du Soleil, Polyglot*). The performer will perform the whole piece by themselves. They will be visible throughout almost the entire performance. There may be some short moments where they disappear from view, for example hiding under the bed, but they will reappear before too long.

The performer will start the performance dressed as a person-in-a-cat-suit and will change costume several times including into: nurse dress-ups, a giant pink bunny suit, pink frilly party clothes, tulle 'cloud' costume, white playsuit, plastic party clothes, cellophane and sticky tape, metallic blue leotard, plastic plant costume with leaf-wings and a fish-bowl-helmet on their head. It will often not be clear whether they are dressed as 'animal' or 'human', 'male' or 'female', 'old' or 'young', these are deliberate choices by the creative team.

The Creatives (invisible):

There will be some creatives who are 'backstage'. You may see them at some times, but you do not need to look at them. They are doing the music, lights and stage management. They will be wearing face masks and black clothes. These 'invisible' creatives include:

Live Sound Artist : Sharyn Brand

Lighting Operator/ Livestream support: Nick Maloney

Stage Manager: Harry Dowling

Director: Melinda Hetzel

Audience permissions -

In person (audience permissions):

If you are attending in person you will sit or stand outside the conservatory and look in through the windows at the performance, there will also be tv monitors playing the live stream. The performer will know that you are there but will not interact with you unless you are present at the very end of the performance, where the performer will exit the conservatory.

- o What you can do:
 - You can come and go as you please!
 - You can make noise!
 - If you need to make comforting noises, those are permitted
 - You can eat food!
 - The drinking restrictions are that of the park
 - Sit or stand
 - Be nice to people

- o And what you can't do:
 - You may not enter the conservatory / the set
 - No interacting with the performer
 - You may not push ahead of other people in the queue
 - If someone is making noise, you don't need to tell them to stop.
 - Be not nice to people (the performer, staff, other audience members)

Live Stream (audience permissions):

If you are attending the live stream, you will stream it via YouTube on your own device with an internet connection (see attending sections for details). If you attend in person you can access the live stream on your device via a QR code on the Conservatory sign. The livestream will also be shown on two screens in the windows of the greenhouse. The live stream will show all four camera angles simultaneously in a screen 'split' into four quarters like this:



The performer will move and adjust the cameras themselves as part of the performance. Sometimes you will not be able to see anything from one or more of the cameras, but this is ok and will probably change again before too long.

- o What you can do:
 - Choose to start or stop watching whenever you want
 - Watch with sound on or off, alone or with friends, wherever you happen to be
 - Watch whichever of the four camera angles is most interesting to you at any time
 - Attend in person and watch the live stream on your own device or at the same time!
 - Screenshots are fine!
 - Share on Social media #conservatory2023 #glowwinterartsfestival :)

The Content -

The Form:

This is an image-based piece, there will be no words spoken. There may be some words in the music used in the soundtrack, but these won't be important to the meaning of the piece.

This is a durational piece spread across four nights. The idea of durational pieces is to make it possible for the audience to choose when and how long they want to access the performance. You are not required to attend the full performance to have a valid experience, both short and long experiences of the work are awesome! In this way you can choose your own start and end time and create your own narratives from the bit of the work that you experience yourself.

We chose to make this piece a durational performance to capture the slowing down of life experienced by many people during lockdown in 2020 and to create space to appreciate the little moments in this one character's life.

Content discussion -

How this performance will work:

This is a semi-improvised, durational, performance installation. This means that there are items and activities that will happen, over a set amount of time. Some of these are known and some of these are 'made up' by the performer during the performance itself.

Below is a summarised running list of some of the events in the performance. We have chosen the key events, which we feel are important for the audience to be aware of in advance. This list represents all significant events that will take place.

Thursday

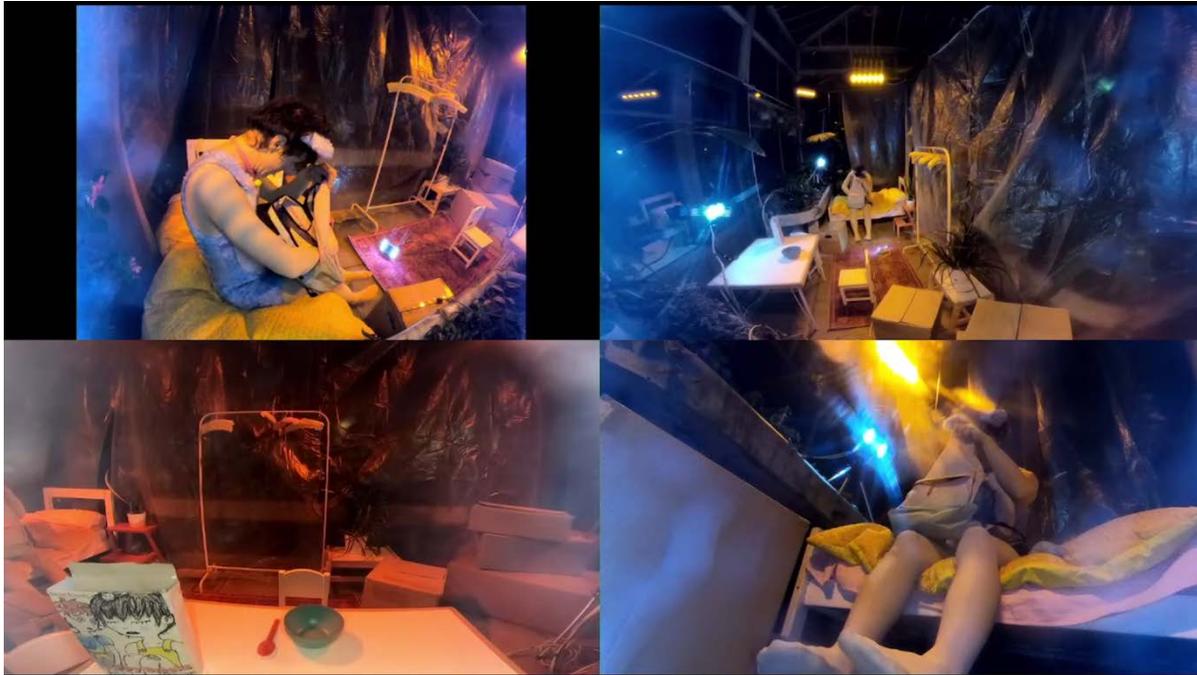
Chapter 1: In the Beginning

A solitary being discovers and creates their world, searches for a friend and finds a magical cloud in an unlikely place.

When the performance begins the cameras will be covered by pink paper, which the performer will remove one by one. It may take a few minutes before you can see the performer. In the greenhouse, the performer will be sitting on a table in the window. They will be in a cubby made of a pink sheet and small mattress. The set will have piles of furniture and cardboard boxes, like someone is just moving in.



There will be a sound effect of a digital alarm clock ringing. It will keep ringing until the character finds the alarm clock in a box and stops it ringing. This will happen more than once. It will not be too loud. This helps the character remember that it is time to do the next thing.



The character will unpack a backpack containing: scissors, matches, tape, bandaids, hairbrush.



The character will unpack a fish bowl with a toy fish in it. It is a robot fish. It will stop swimming sometimes and will float in the fishbowl without moving until the performer takes it out and resets it. Then it will swim again.



The character will pretend to prick their finger on a spiky plant and put a bandaid on it as if it is sore.



The character decides that the bunny needs a pretend operation. They lay the bunny on the table, take scissors out of their backpack and wash their hands in the fish bowl in preparation. They pretend to listen to the bunny's heartbeat with a toy stethoscope.



The character pretends to cut open the stuffed bunny with scissors. The bunny will have a zip that the performer opens as they mime cutting near the bunny with scissors.



The character opens the zip in the bunny and pulls out the stuffing from inside. The character makes a cloud shape out of the stuffing and hangs it up on a hook.



At the end of the session the live stream will end. The performer will stand up and exit 'back stage' through the plastic curtains.

Friday

Chapter 2: Odette's Dream

They try turning into a plush bunny, fall asleep in the clouds and dream a beautiful and strange dream.

This chapter starts with the character reading a picture book. The pictures in this book were the inspiration for this show. This chapter repeats some of the things that happened at the end of 'Chapter 1', but then the action continues and new things happen. This is a bit like when your memory repeats something or when something repeats in a dream. These are some of the things that will be repeated:

The character will pretend to prick their finger on a spiky plant and put a bandaid on it as if it is sore.



The character decides that the bunny needs an operation. They lay the bunny on the table, take scissors out of their backpack and wash their hands in the fishbowl in preparation. They pretend to listen to the bunny's heartbeat with a toy stethoscope.



The character pretends to cut open the stuffed bunny with scissors. The bunny will have a zip that the performer opens as they mime cutting near the bunny with scissors.



The character opens the zip in the bunny and pulls out the stuffing from inside. The character makes a cloud shape out of the stuffing and hangs it up on a hook.

The character moves lumps of stuffing through the air, creating shapes. They then hang lumps of the stuffing up as clouds.



The character pulls more stuffing out of the bunny and gets inside the stuffed bunny suit.



They dance in the bunny. The character then falls asleep on the bed, still wearing the pink bunny suit.

We watch them sleep for what seems like a long time. They kick off the bunny suit and underneath they wear a white playsuit. They toss and turn in their sleep.



They pull a tulle 'cloud costume' out from under the bed and get inside the sack. They can breathe easily inside the sack. They do a dance inside the 'cloud' (tulle sack), as if sleepwalking. It might look like they are stuck inside the 'cloud', but they will be ok.



Before too long they will poke their limbs and head out of the sack. The music will change and they will wrap the sack round themselves and tie it to their body, a bit like a ballerina's tutu. They dance a bit like a ballerina, but a clumsy one. They may bump into things, but they will be ok.

They will find a vine under the bed and pull on it. They will wrap themselves in the vine-covered-rope. It may look like they are stuck for a bit, but they will be ok.



The character in the 'cloud' disappears under bed. This will be the end of the show for the night. They will come out from under the bed and go back stage after the lights have dimmed.

At the end of the session the live stream will end. The performer will stand up and exit 'back stage'.



Sometimes one of the cameras will stop working and a black square will appear on the livestream. A bell will ring inside the greenhouse to alert the performer, who can usually reset the camera and get it working again before too long. We will still be able to see the action through the other cameras.

Saturday

Chapter 3: Fairy floss in the Rain

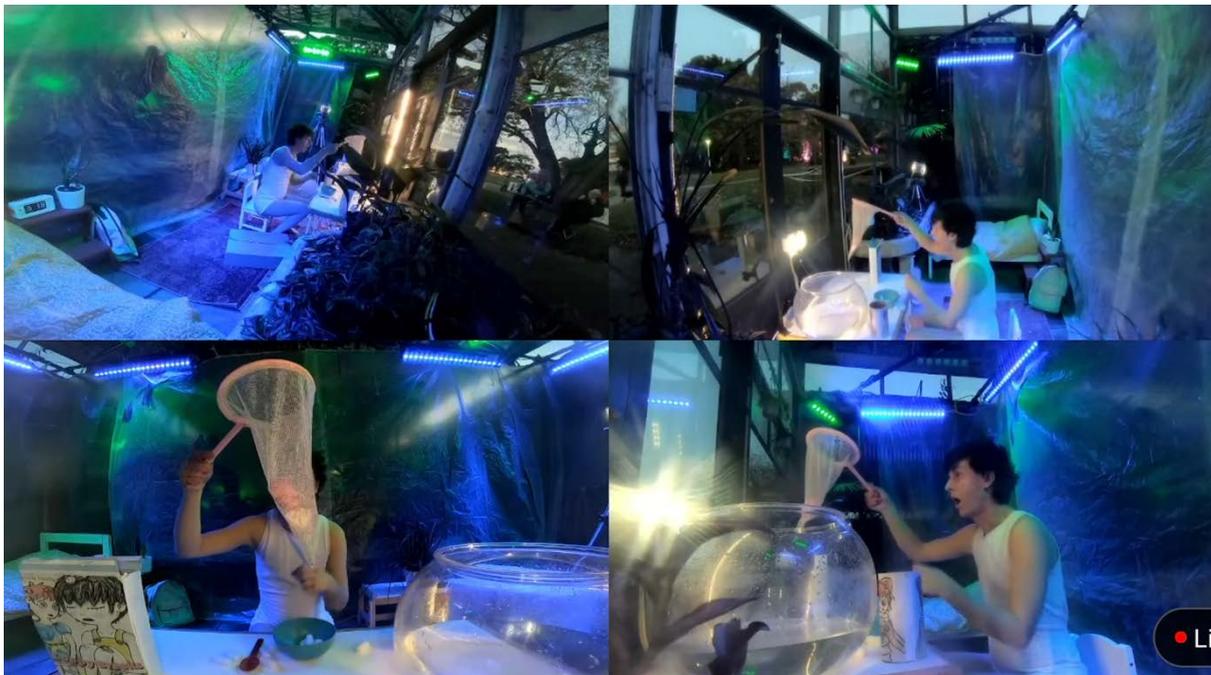
Time passes slowly, until the arrival of a surprise birthday present. The rain washes away the fairy floss, as they embark on a new adventure.

The plants appear closer than the previous night. There are vines growing over things. Next to the table is a large present box, wrapped in bubble wrap. The alarm clock on the floor. The character is hiding under the bed. They start to move the bed before we can see them. They will come out from under the bed before long.

The alarm clock rings again and keeps ringing until the character finds it and turns it off. It is not too loud. The character stands up suddenly and gets caught in the bed slats. They may seem disoriented, but they will be ok. They are wearing a white playsuit, but not the tulle 'cloud' costume.



The character gets hungry. The food has run out. They contemplate eating the fish, but decide not to.



The character makes a little person out of packing pellets. It falls into the fish bowl. Oh no! They scoop the pellet-person out but it is all soggy. The door bell rings. They tuck the pellet-person into a pot plant. We do not see the pellet-person again.



The character changes into pink party clothes and a party hat. They use matches to light birthday candles and sparklers.



They get cake all over their party clothes. They take off party clothes and hang them up. They dance with fairy floss, which appears to come magically out of the present box. They put the pink fairy floss on sticks in the garden bed. No one eats the fairy floss.



It starts to rain. The character gets cold and wet. Sad that their fairy floss has melted, they sink down into the water. The water level in the pool will slowly rise. The performer will dance and lie in the pool for quite some time, but they will be fine. After they sit up and 'wake up' the toy fish, there will be a bubbling sound, like a fish underwater.



This sound will change to a dull rumbling sound, which will slowly get louder. Smoke and lights will come from behind the plastic curtains. This helps us to know that the character has had a realisation. They will pull all the curtains down to reveal the plants in the greenhouse. The curtains are attached by velcro. You may be able to see the technicians behind the plants, they are operating the sound and the lights.



The character changes into a set of clothes made from the same plastic as the 'walls'. They make a 'raft' out of the furniture and some plants. They pretend 'set sail' and mime rowing into the forest for some time. The lights will slowly fade and the music will end. The performer will exit 'back stage' and the live stream will end.



Sunday

Chapter 4: Sticky Transformation

They let go of the past, perform a sticky balancing act, and gain a transformative new perspective.

The cameras and plants are much closer. The set has changed and the backdrop walls have all come down. There are forest night noises, it may feel a little bit scary. The pool is full of water, the space appears flooded. (nb. The pool and water are not yet installed in these photos.)

The character is under the plastic 'tent' on top of the table. We can only see parts of them through the plastic and the camera angles. They wear a head torch and we can see this light moving through the plastic. They have plastic plants that they move inside the tent to make shadows. This reminds us of trees when we are camping. Sometimes they peak their head out of the tent and look around, then go back inside the tent. It may feel like a long time before they come out of the tent and we can see them properly.



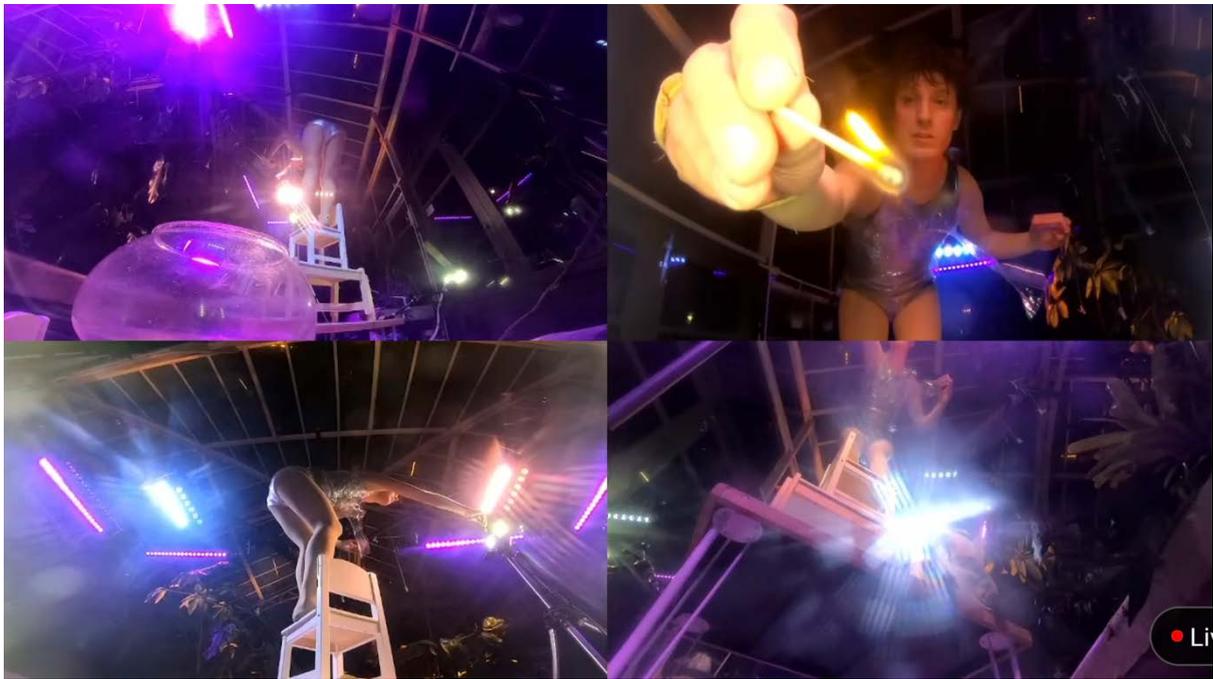
There is the sound of a wind storm. A fan blows the plastic. The character shakes the tent more and more. It will appear windy, like the tent may blow down. The windstorm soon passes.



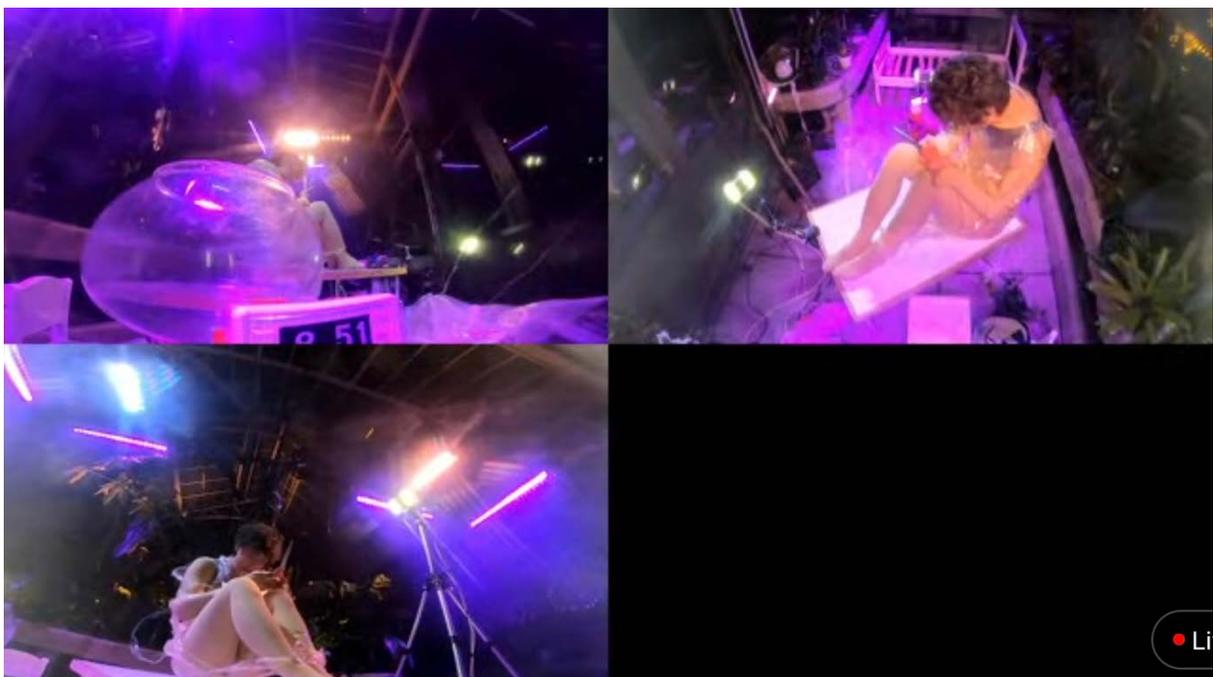
The character does a dance. They build furniture to make a tower and do a balance on top of the tower. It may look like they might fall, they will be ok.



The character lights a series of matches and lets them go out.



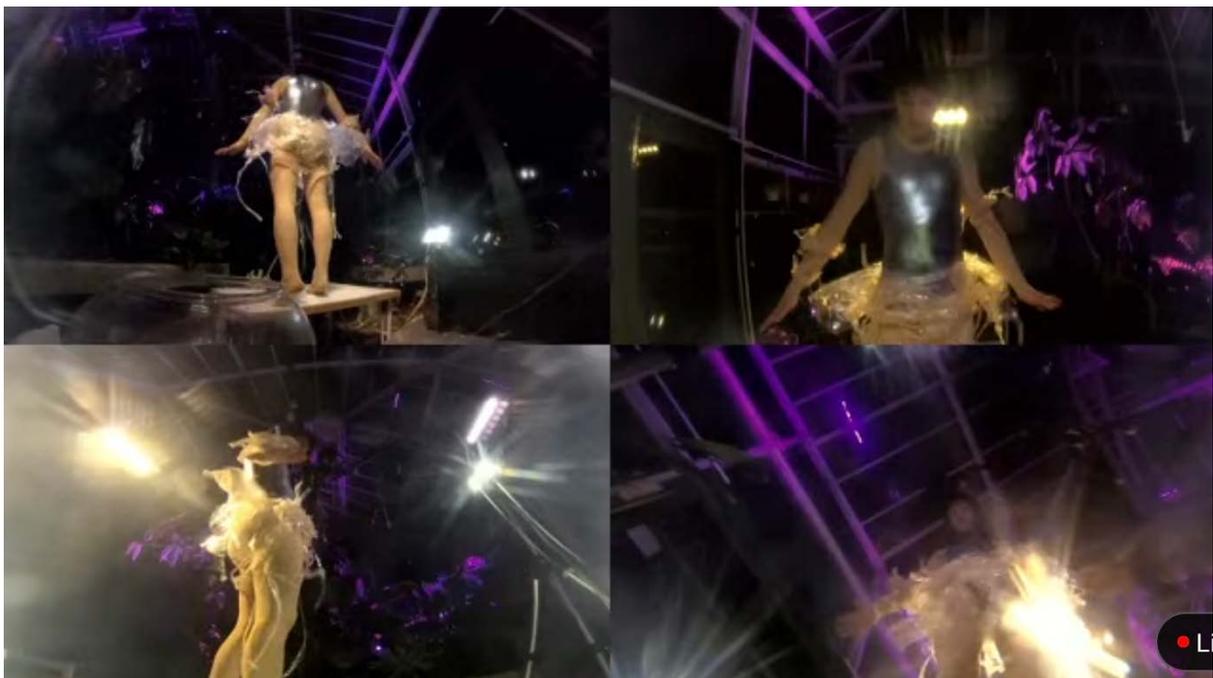
The character wraps themselves in layers of sticky tape, entrapping themselves. It may look like they are stuck, but they will be fine.



The alarm clock rings for the final time, but the sound soon stops, as if the batteries have run out. The character finds and uses the scissors to cut their way out of the layers of compostable sticky tape and cellophane. This will go in the compost bin after the show.



The character stands on the table in their new costume, a another kind of tutu made of cellophane and sticky tape. It is as if they have emerged transformed.



The character decides to 'free' the robot fish. They tip the fish into the pool.



The character then makes a new costume out of plastic leaves with velcro and prepares to leave the conservatory.

The character uses the last match to light some sparklers. They put the empty fishbowl on their head like a space helmet and exit the conservatory.



The character appears to walk off into the trees and the unknown. The audience watch as the character disappears into the darkness. They will be fine.



You can look through the door of the greenhouse, but not go inside. The front of house person will close the door to the greenhouse and the livestream will end.



THE END.

After the show:

- You may leave the performance or live stream at any time. If attending in person and all seats are full, the Front of House staff may ask you to give up your seat after fifteen minutes if there are many people waiting to see the performance requiring a seat. You are welcome to queue up again if you wish.
- On Sunday the 18th the performance officially finishes at 7:30pm but the park and festival will be open until 10pm. Following this the creative team will pack down all the equipment and pack up for the night.

Feedback:

We have striven to provide as much support as we can with the resources we have available, and we are always keen to hear back about your experience with this work.

- Was this guide made available early enough for your needs?
- What was good about this guide?
- What could have been better?
- What could we have done that might have made your experience of the work even better?

Please email your feedback to: theconservatory2020@gmail.com

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and True Custodians of the land where Conservatory has been created, the people of the Eastern Kulin Nation and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.