

## Harvest gardens benefit at Sunshine's H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens

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Helen Reid and Bill Bampton invite people to the H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens birthday celebrations. JULIE BEST

ONE hundred years on, and the H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens are again being cultivated as a sanctuary for the community.

Centennial celebrations for the gardens, originally established by Hugh Victor McKay for workers at his Sunshine Harvester Factory, will take place on Sunday.

Heritage gardening specialist and Friends of the H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens member Bill Bampton said the challenge of restoring the gardens was about reconnecting in their "contemporary context" to become the sanctuary they once were for local residents and workers.

Changing gardening techniques and weather add to that challenge.

Once a privately-run garden with four dedicated gardeners, in its heyday the grounds were green and shady with large shade trees, ornamental floral displays and well laid-out paths.

A bowling green, tennis courts, conservatory and gardener's cottage ensured the area was always in use. And workers making their way from home to the Sunshine Harvester complex added to a constant flow of pedestrians.

Mr Bampton said Mr McKay's vision to beautify the area extended to the streets beyond, with plantings of large shade trees.

He welcomed Brimbank Council's input into restoring the gardens, which has included succession tree plantings of oak, poplar and magnolia trees, restoration of the gates and entry pillars and the installation of a drip-irrigation system and refurbished lighting.

Mr Bampton said local flat-dwellers and residents should see the gardens as their own oasis and reclaim the

spot for relaxing and leisure.

Sunday's celebrations run from 12.30-4pm at the gardens in Anderson Rd, next to Chaplin Reserve, Sunshine. It will include performances from the Sunshine Community Brass Band, the Williamstown RSL Pipe band and community group The Legless Lizards.

There will also be a centenary tree-planting and historical film and image display throughout.

All are welcome.

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All times AEST