

Lily D'Ambrosio MP

STATE MEMBER FOR MILL PARK

- Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
- Minister for Suburban Development



Media Release

25th November 2019

A Melbourne icon is one step closer to returning to its original home in the Royal Botanic Gardens thanks to a \$600,000 grant from the Andrews Labor Government.

The Great Melbourne Telescope is being painstakingly restored by volunteers and staff at Museums Victoria after it was damaged by bushfires in Canberra in 2003.

An important piece of Victoria's history, the telescope was built in Dublin in 1869 and was installed in the Melbourne Observatory located in the Royal Botanic Gardens.

It had been a major attraction for the city as the second largest telescope in the world and the largest in the southern hemisphere.

After the observatory closed in 1944, the telescope was sold and relocated to Mount Stromlo Observatory in Canberra. In the early 1990s it was converted into Australia's first fully robotic and computerised telescope and was used in an international project that discovered the first observational evidence of dark matter.

In 2003, a bushfire at Mount Stromlo destroyed the telescope's modern features but left the original cast-iron shell of it relatively unscathed.

Museums Victoria recovered the telescope's remains and brought it back to Melbourne in 2008, partnering with the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Astronomical Society of Victoria to refurbish it and return it to its original home for community use.

Every week since its return, a team of more than a dozen volunteer engineering and astronomy buffs have met to catalogue and clean the telescope's surviving features and re-design and re-engineer its more than 400 missing components.

The small volunteer group nicknamed "The Barrys" have collectively contributed over 30,000 hours to the project using similar materials and manufacturing techniques that were employed when the telescope was first built.

The impressive 10 metre-high structure has been reassembled in time for its 150th anniversary and can be viewed at Scienceworks this summer.

The telescope will be an important part of the Royal Botanic Gardens' Nature and Science Precinct in which the Labor Government recently invested \$5 million towards planning and design.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Lily D'Ambrosio

Shop 2/30 Oleander Drive, Mill Park VIC 3082 P: 9422 5171

E: lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au www.lilydambrosio.com.au

f Lily D'Ambrosio MP  @LilyDAmbrosioMP



Lily D'Ambrosio MP

STATE MEMBER FOR MILL PARK

- Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
- Minister for Suburban Development



Media Release

“We’re proud to support the restoration of this Melbourne icon and look forward to returning to its original home in the Royal Botanic Gardens.”

“The Observatory in the Royal Botanic Gardens will be a fitting home for what is a wonderful part of our history.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Creative Industries, Martin Foley

“The Barrys are a shining example of the passionate volunteers in our creative industries - this grant recognises their dedication and efforts to help bring an important part of our history back to life.”

Shop 2/30 Oleander Drive, Mill Park VIC 3082 **P:** 9422 5171

E: lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au **www.lilydambrosio.com.au**

f Lily D'Ambrosio MP  @LilyDAmbrosioMP

