

THE GROWING UP COMPETITION

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For those of you who know us and our company Botanical Traditions, you will know that we are passionate about roof gardens and the benefits they offer in our Australian conditions.

In our current climate, green roofs are proven to provide significant reductions to the urban heat island effect, aid storm water management, provide important habitat links, reduce the energy demands of buildings as well as providing social and amenity value to buildings. However there are very few roof top gardens in Australia.

Recently, the 'Growing Up' competition was held by the 'Committee for Melbourne's Future' focus group, which was open to all registered Architects, members of AILA and members of AILDLM. The aim of the competition was to put together a cost effective yet innovative design for a retrofit roof garden on the top of one of 3 shortlisted buildings located in the CBD of Melbourne.

For the 'Growing Up' competition, Botanical Traditions sought to transform wasted roof top space into a unique garden space, designed along sustainable lines, to provide communal garden areas where friendships could be formed and neighbours met. The rooftop would become the social hub of the building.

The design, 'Beyond Expectations', of Manchester House on Flinders Lane, designed two distinctly separate spaces. The southern area utilised the warm sunny climatic conditions to create a large social gathering area complete with covered pergola, kitchen and raingarden. A raingarden is a specially designed area that filters stormwater to remove nitrogen, phosphorous and suspended solids. Large planter boxes defined this space, acting as seating areas and smaller more intimate seating areas were created for residents to enjoy the view of the bustling city below.

To the north, a productive communal vegetable garden and open pergola were designed to give residents the opportunity to grow

their own fresh produce. The area can support fruit trees, herbs, vegetables and vines. An iconic garden shed was also included.

Between the two areas, an elevated section was provided for researchers and Melbourne University to test different plant species for their suitability to roof top gardens.

Other key sustainable features that we included in the competition entry were an integrated water management strategy to capture stormwater off the roof surface, solar hot water, photovoltaic cells, large productive areas and composting systems.

We were very proud when Botanical Traditions were announced as the receivers of third place in the competition - at least one landscape professional made it to the top 3!

The winning design for 131 Queen Street, Melbourne, owned by an Owners' Corporation comprising of commercial occupancies was from Bent Architecture. That design will be built with the help of Growing Up's sponsors including Melbourne Water, Sustainability Victoria, VicUrban, City of Melbourne, and Australia Post. Construction of the winning design will take place this year with the assistance of Brookfield Multiplex.

The judging panel for the competition, chaired by Geoffrey London - the Victorian Government Architect, were delighted with the high standard of entries - although this made the judging a difficult process.

For more information got to www.growingup.org.au 

The plan view. (top)
The southern section. (left)
The northern section. (right)

