



GOLDEN VALLEY TREE PARK
— B A L I N G U P —

2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

It is with much pleasure and satisfaction that I present the 38th Annual Report to a dedicated, hardworking and committed Committee of the Golden Valley Tree Park.

This has been another busy year for us. I believe that we have achieved some excellent work over the past twelve months and you should all pat yourselves on the back for a job well done. I will reflect on these achievements later.

It was fortuitous that we obtained a Community Chest Grant from SW Development Commission to refurbish the gazebo in the World Collection and provide power to it. As well there is now power that can be used for functions near the old oaks. We decided not to proceed with upgrading the floor and there was local resistance to removing it and the old tree stump in the middle of the gazebo. Both were discussed at length and consumed many hours of debate by us and the local community. For the present, they will remain in-situ. Lighting of the oaks was also part of this project and is yet to be done.

We also received a \$25,000 grant from Hon. Mick Murray M.L.A. as part of a State government “*Local Projects for Local Jobs*” funding to employ professional landscape consultants for work on what we now call the Magic Oak Woods Project. Terry Farrell (Nature Based Play) and Craig Carpenter, landscape architect (Blackwell & Associates) were engaged to identify issues and provide a detailed landscape design in keeping with the natural landscape in the World Collection.

We also asked them to design a nature-based play area for children which included a “tumble-down platform type” tree house as well as an upgrade to the wishing well.

Their Report was completed within budget and timelines but gave our Committee an awareness of what this site can provide in future including the seasonal environmental challenges of the site.

As part of community consultation of the Magic Oak Woods, Cat Aniere, CEO of Millennium Kids (an environmental youth organisation), organised a day to understand what local kids wanted from the Magic Oak Woods. This was an excellent way to see how kids observe the Tree Park and to interact with a natural playground that the Tree Park offers. 17 children (aged from 4-12) and many parents attended and observed how Cat was able to get the kids to tell us what they wanted by involvement in a range of activities that pushed their imaginations, interests and knowledge. Cat produced an excellent report which was used in Terry and Craig’s Magic Oak Woods Final Report.

I would like to thank Cat and Wayne O’Sullivan for volunteering their time and showing us what local kids think and as Tree Park managers, look at issues from a child’s perspective. For me, attending this day with my grandson, was a highlight.

I wish to thank Wendy Kurz, Chrissy and Jan for overseeing the Magic Oak Woods Project and your input to the process by keeping Craig and Terry tuned with our thinking.

Future funding opportunities will need to be obtained to implement elements of the Magic Oaks Woods Report, especially the tree house and wishing well.

Although we approved the Report in principle we did not commit further action to it – a discussion and decision yet to be held.

One of the reasons that we were successful in our bid for funding was that we had done some forward planning via our 5 Year Plan. I would recommend that this Committee re-evaluate our priorities and document this in writing every few years so that forward planning is a key part of our operations. This is the way future governments will allocate funding grants and we must be proactive in this area. Crystal ball gazing and dreaming about the future will be vital for the Tree Park to maintain its success. This may have to include corporate sponsorship for larger projects.

Golden Valley Tree Park is a community-based organisation that is supported by Dept. of Parks and Wildlife (PaWS) and largely by community volunteers. For this I am most grateful.

If it were not for voluntary community support, this Tree Park would suffer immensely. As such, I record that a total of 2,385 voluntary hours has contributed to the successful running of this Park. Of this, just under half, or 1,160 hours was done by our Committee, 736 hours by the 5 Merry Men and 736 hours by a further 41 community members.

We are also supported by Pam Williamson who efficiently manages our website. Thanks Pam for another great year supporting us.

Lara Bos has kindly looked after the bookings at the Tree Park and this can be a time-consuming job of which we appreciate. Thank you, Lara.

Another of our helpers is Liz Gray who spends many hours replacing the brochures around the Park and Visitors Centre. We also acknowledge your support, Liz.

Visitation to the Tree Park. According to the PaWS road counter on Olwyn's Avenue from July 2017 to June 2018, there were 10,758 vehicles which translates to about 47,028 visitors. From these figures it is interesting to note that the months of February and April 2018 recorded 6,535 and 8,351 respectively. Our average monthly visitations for 2017/18 is about 4,275 per month. The 47,028 figure is for 11 months as no figure was recorded for December.

Note that we do not record vehicles or local walkers to the Australian Collection due to potential of double counting. We should aim to pick up walking visitors to the Australian Collection, especially as we now have toilets and a shelter there and I therefore encourage PaWS to follow this up. The addition of these facilities has added many more visitors to this section of the Park that are not recorded.

Tree sponsorships during the past year totalled \$2,845 or 2 bench and 8 tree sponsors. Many thanks to Chrissy for handling the many enquiries and organising plaques and posts etc. This can be a timeconsuming job as well as her other roles mentioned earlier (see attached Sponsors Report). I should also acknowledge Pete Hicks help as usually installs the posts as required.

The Friends of the Park has been managed by Wendy Ayes for many years now. Wendy has also kept the records of membership and sent out a copy of the Annual Newsletter. At present we have 50 Friends of the Park on our books. This is made up of 39 Single and 11 Family Sponsors. Thank you, Wendy for your contribution with the Friends (see attached Friends of Park Report).

It is also timely that we review the Friends system today as I believe they can offer us much more than just sponsorship and if they are willing to contribute further to our Park activities. More on this later.

Last year we carried out a tree audit in both sections of the Park. This was to identify trees that were in serious need of arboriculture work such as making them safe or removal of a few low branches on walk tracks etc. I am happy to report that the majority of this work was completed by Brian Martin and Peter Hicks. Thanks guys.

During the year we were also forced to carry out tree works on numerous *E. rudis* trees that had unhealthy or dead crowns in creek lines of the World Collection. The Dept. of Parks and Wildlife (PaWS) kindly organised and paid for removal of unsafe trees along the lower walk tracks. We were also obliged to remove many dead crowns around the Magic Oak Woods site for safety reasons and carried out by arborist Jolyon Elliot.

Last year I invited WA Plantation Resources (WAPRES) Harvesting Manager Mr Morten Nilsson to assist us by thinning the old eucalypts that had been closely planted along Dearle's Drive in the early 1980s. WAPRES have an export biomass market so we were able to dispose of the trees. As well we were very keen to clearfell the oil mallees in the Australian Collection and remove weedy species such as acacias and eucalypts there. This work was completed in May by Wilson's harvesting crew and we now have a mountain of (unsold) woodchips ready to spread around the Tree Park. 200 tonnes of saleable woodchips were recovered from this "cost-neutral" exercise and we thank WAPRES for their cooperation.

Woody weeds such as acacias, feral eucalypts or pines continue to be a headache for our management in the Australian Collection. Following the biomass harvesting we will be left with a weed management strategy from woody weeds as they coppice or regenerate and partly as a result of machinery disturbance. We will need to be ready to tackle this in the next few months.

We maintain our great relationship with PaWS through their rep, Andrew Sandri.

Thank you again for your generous time given to the Tree Park Andy, and your efficient and timely way of dealing with issues that we are confronted with. We are also indebted to Regional Manager Bob Hagan and your Manager Mr Peter Henderson, who also look after our interests at the Regional level of the Department and I also recognise the efforts of your colleagues, Gil Stokeman and Ken Ninnette for their work here as well.

This is a special but mutual and respected relationship that we have between PaWS and our Committee and one I trust we can maintain for many years. We will always be confronted with issues to address in future and encouraging to know we have PaWS to fall back on.

In regard to our land tenure changes, we have now met with some issues with Mines Department, but this will be resolved (hopefully) in our favour by the relevant Ministers in due course.

I take this opportunity to thank our Honorary Secretary Wendy Kurz for her efficient and well documented meeting Minutes. These Minutes are a concise record of our meetings which at times seem laboriously long (for me anyway) and I acknowledge your assistance during the year. Our gutsy Minutes also reflect how much activity has been going on during the year. I am also grateful that Wendy was able to bring Mr Wye Allen along to busy bees with his machinery being a great help.

My job as Chairman has been made incredibly easier by having Chrissy Sharp as Local Coordinator. Chrissy has picked up the jobs that require her attendance at the Tree Park which often go unnoticed by many in the community and sometimes by our own Committee members. Such jobs may include doing

guided walks, watering previous winter plantings, busy bees, treatment of woody weeds or liaison with local committees etc. One important job is carrying out job inductions to volunteers at busy bees, contractors such as the recent thinning job or to part-time employees. This is a requirement by PaWS and part of due diligence that we are obliged to carry out when we have people work voluntarily or employed at the Tree Park.

Such is Chrissy's voluntary commitment to the Tree Park is her record of hours worked over the past twelve months by amassing 310 hours which I am sure is a conservative figure.

Of course Chrissy has been also supported by Andrew Thamo who has also shown incredible stamina with his regular attendance and due diligence on Tree Park activities with his 234 hours of voluntary work. Andrew also oversaw the work done on the refurbishment of the World Collection gazebo that was finally completed by Terry Leseberg. He has been instrumental in getting the monthly busy bees in full swing.

Chrissy and Andrew's legacy is the Tree Park as they continue their long commitment and passion for its ongoing success.

Andrew has also organised monthly busy bees on a range of projects which has attracted many volunteers. A key job was to divert sheep poo away from the Yungerup Spring following localised sheep camps and over-grazing above the dam. As well, work on minimising erosion from the run-off creek of the dam was carried out with many helpers and has now stabilised this section of the Park.

The late break to the season also saw sheep camping in sections of the World Collection, such as above the Yungerup dam, which led to potential degradation of these sites. If we can achieve effective fencing to relieve this, plus monitor grazing levels better, we will achieve better land management as it was not a good "look". Andrew and Tom have this in hand by a better fencing plan that will be implemented over the coming months.

We were fortunate this year in having three new members join our Committee - Tom, Gary and Jan.

Tom Benson took on the role of Treasurer and we soon learnt how efficient the books were going to be done by bringing in some new ideas such as, workers comp. insurance for casual employees. Tom was also most helpful at busy bees with his practical knowledge and lending his tractor to work on various projects. Thanks Tom.

Gary Hodge also brought some useful experience to our Committee and has been working hard on trying to get the barbeque shelter and Lotteryswest funding application in. This is getting close to obtaining all the approvals to proceed and hopefully the shelter will be in place for the spring visitor rush.

Jan Helsham also brought her experience to the meetings and was able to assist the sub-committee overseeing the Magic Oaks Woods Project as well as provide us with updates from the Balingup Visitors Centre.

I believe you have all strengthened our knowledge base by your presence on Committee and trust you can contribute for many years to come.

I also record the resignations in November of two of our valued Committee members Peter Hicks and Brian Martin. Pete has had a long involvement with the Tree Park since 1982 and his assistance will be missed. However, he continues to organise the Merry Men on Wednesday evenings with clean ups, burning heaps or mowing etc.

Brian's knowledge of tree arboriculture will also be missed as will his tree pruning and general help around the Park. He had a knack of quiet achievement around the Park.

Constitution. This year a small sub-committee chipped away at re-writing our Constitution as part of our legal obligations and due diligence under the Associations Act 2017. I am happy to report that one more meeting of the sub-committee will complete this task, before we present it to the Committee for adoption and then is presented to PaWS for endorsement.

Our previous Constitution (September 2001) was out of date anyway so this exercise was timely, and we prioritised this over completion of the well overdue Management Plan. Thank you to Wendy Kurz for your work on the written drafts to date.

Management Plan. We started re-writing this some years ago and it has been a long, much overdue and arduous job among others that we chip away at whilst other Tree Park priorities seem to get in the way as we soldier on. Again, Wendy Kurz has also done a great job at getting this to a stage now where it needs some fine tuning. Hopefully we can get this ready to present to Committee in the next few months and to guide us into how we manage the Tree Park in future.

Tree species planted in 2017. A total of 138 trees were planted in the Australian Collection in 2017 of which 124 were *Allocasuarina* or *Casuarina* species. The tree guards were removed a bit too early and about 50% of them survived after rabbit damage to them. A further 9 species were planted in the World Collection (see attached species list).

Padbury Rd Dam. This has not yet been resolved by Water Corporation as they are now developing a Business Plan and looking at all options. So, this remains work in progress for the present as we wait for a positive outcome for the Tree Park. Hopefully Water Corp have us in their sights as key stakeholders and consider our future needs.

In closing, I take this opportunity in welcoming Yulia and Jeff to the Committee and wish you both a long and enjoyable association with us.

As I vacate the Chair today, Chrissy has kindly offered to step back into this role, one she held for at least 10 years. You have a big heart, Chrissy. I only kept your seat warm for three years.

In conclusion. Thank you again for your efforts to keep the Tree Park a beautiful and memorable experience for visitors from around the globe.

Golden Valley is this special place made possible by people like yourselves. Let's keep it this way.

Bob Hingston Chairman

12th July 2018.