

GOLDEN VALLEY TREE PARK

ANNUAL REPORT JULY 2022 TO JUNE 2023

Governance

The Management Committee of Golden Valley Tree Park Incorporated held monthly meetings for each month except April 2023. The Annual General Meeting was held on 17 August 2022. Minutes from all meetings are stored on Dropbox.

The following members resigned from the committee during the year: Gary Hodge, Jan-Michelle Helsham, Tom Benson, and Laurie Capill. The valuable contributions of the retiring committee members was formally acknowledged. Kevin Haigh joined the committee. The committee at year end were: Robin Wright (Chair), Yulia Novokova (Vice Chair), Garry Middle (Secretary), Kevin Haig (Treasurer), Andrew Thamo (Curator World Collection), Natasha Moore (Curator Australian Collection), Ania Boltuc, Stuart Walls, Rob Mann, Andrew Sandri (DBCA Representative).

Priorities for the Management Committee were revisited early in the financial year. It was confirmed that fundraising initiatives and maintenance should be the top priorities. A budget for 2023 / 24 was prepared and endorsed and the process for approving funds to be expended was confirmed. A Code of Conduct for the Management Committee was prepared and approved.

Partnerships

As joint manager of the Park, a good working relationship was maintained with the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). A meeting was held with DBCA in August 2022 to clarify the split of maintenance activities between DBCA and the Management Committee. DBCA has continued with their usual activities to maintain a high standard of upkeep at the Park. Fundamental tasks include spraying, grass management and general maintenance as well as 2 ranger visits per week to the toilet blocks. During the year it was agreed that waste bins would no longer be provided at the Park in line with normal practice for visitors to be expected to take their rubbish home with them. This has proved to be successful.

A number of meetings were held with the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup to investigate further opportunities for the Shire to support the Park beyond the provision of the All Access Path to the duckpond. A Service Level Agreement was mooted but agreement could not be reached on the activities to be funded. The Shire upgraded the foot access to the Park along Southampton Road and Old Padbury Road as part of their upgrade work to Southampton Road. This was much appreciated by the Management Committee.

Visitations

The Golden Valley Tree Park continues to be a very popular attraction for local residents and tourists, particularly in the April to June period when the leaves on many trees are turning to their autumn colours. The latest count indicates some 100,000 visitors to the World Collection in 2022 with about 45,000 occurring in the autumn months.

The Tree Park Brochure that is available at the Information Shelters has been revised and printed a number of times to keep up with demand.

Volunteering and Events

The volunteer hours expended in the Park are a testament to its popularity.

Three “Busy Bees” were held: the one in winter focused on tree planting; in spring it was weeding, mulching and reinforcing the guards of the new trees; and in the autumn it was fencing work around the chinampa.

The “Merry Men” continue to be active in undertaking a number of activities including mowing and clearing fallen twigs and branches.

DBCA organised a morning tea for Volunteers at the Gazebo on International Volunteering Day.

The “Spring Picnic” was held in October.



Trees

New plantings are an important part of maintaining an appropriate age structure for trees in the Tree Park into the future. In the last year 40 trees were planted, guarded, mulched and watered through the summer in the World Collection. Notable areas for plantings were extending the avenue of trees from the Desert Ash avenue towards Yungerup Spring as well as plantings near the car park.



The project to extend the labelling of trees in the World Collection has also continued. Besides adding new posts and labels to existing trees and new plantings, posts that have become rotten are being replaced and missing labels are also being replaced.

Maintenance

Routine maintenance of fences, firebreaks, gates and paths continued throughout the year with the assistance of the Park Steward. A fence was renewed on north boundary of the Chinampa, the gate re-established on its N.E. corner and the eastern boundary secured against sheep entry.



This year a major campaign was undertaken to clear the woody weeds in the Australian collection. This was very successful and involved the use of a contract mulcher over several weeks, followed up by spot application of herbicide.

The water reticulation system also received some attention following the detection of some significant leaks. A number of upgrades were made in the World Collection as well as the supply to the Australian Collection.

In addition a stock water trough was installed in the “Back Paddock”(near Duck Pond).

Fund raising

Donations are a major source of funding for the Tree Park. Collection boxes at the World Collection and Australian Collection have suffered from vandalism in the past and have repeatedly been repaired. Cashless donation through the use of a QR code has been investigated and QR code panels are now in place at the information shelters. The latest count shows that the donations through the QR code now equal the donations in cash in collection boxes.

The T shirts have been restocked and are now available for sale.



Sponsorships

Tree sponsorship at Golden Valley continues to be popular amongst the local and the broader community. The programme is far beyond raising much needed funds for Golden Valley, it creates personal, emotional ties to our park for people dedicating a tree to a family member, friend or a loved one.

We've been touched by the stories behind many of the last year sponsorships, some of them speak of loss, resilience, heritage, the importance of family bonds, the sadness of losing a loved one and the joy of the new beginnings. We even had a marriage proposal taking place near one of the newly sponsored trees and she said: yes.

What is a better way to celebrate life than by supporting a living tree?

We are also proud in creating more interest in trees and conservation as people often want to know more about the tree that they sponsor.

More than 20 trees were sponsored in 2022/23 and the funds that we have raised are put back into the running costs of the park and a care for our trees. It is also worth mentioning that a new bench was donated to the park and installed in the beautiful location near the Yunggerup Spring, just ready for a quiet contemplation in admiration for the surrounding landscape.

Homestead and Workers Cottage

Conservation Management Strategies for both the homestead and workers cottage have been completed along with an engineers report for both buildings. A list of tasks in order of priority are contained within these reports. Most urgent tasks include roof and gutter repairs to the homestead, removal of garden beds from immediately around the house, underfloor heritage excavation of the workers cottage and then floor and chimney restoration, improve soil drainage around the workers cottage.

A sub committee has been formed to progress these matters in conjunction with DBCA. but needs to meet more often and have the ability to apply for grants.

The homestead hedge has been replaced with a more manageable species less prone to disease - Photina Red Robin.

Social Media

The Golden Valley Tree Park continues to be popular on social media. Committee members and others regularly post on our pages on Instagram and Facebook. The Facebook site has 2,930 followers which is up 35% on last year. The demographics of our followers is as follows:

