

GOLDEN VALLEY TREE PARK

ANNUAL REPORT JULY 2025 TO JUNE 2026

Governance

The Management Committee of Golden Valley Tree Park (GVTP) Incorporated held monthly meetings for each month throughout the year except January. The Annual General Meeting was held in August 2025. Minutes from all meetings are stored on Dropbox.

The committee at year-end were: Robin Wright (Chair), Yulia Novikova (Vice Chair), Garry Middle (Secretary and Curator Australian Collection), Tom Benson (Treasurer), Andrew Thamo (Curator World Collection), Natasha Moore (adviser Australian Collection), Ania Boltuc, Rob Mann, Stelle Evangelista (DBCA Representative). Stuart Walls retired from the committee and his contribution was suitably acknowledged. George Bray joined the committee for a few months and his input over this period was welcomed. Brian de Garis is our patron.

A review of actuals vs budget for the 2025 / 2026 year revealed a healthy income in line with what was anticipated in the budget, with roughly equal contributions from sponsorship and donations. Expenditure was significantly less than budgeted, due mainly to a delay in undertaking some arborist work and not proceeding with installing security cameras. Thereby accumulated assets for GVTP Inc. increased in the financial year. A new budget will be prepared for the 2026 / 2027 year.

Partnerships

As joint manager of the Tree Park, a good working relationship has been maintained with the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).

DBCA has continued with annual visitor risk management inspections and taking necessary action for visitor safety. This has involved felling a number of dead trees in the Australian collection. A strategy is being worked on to handle the disposal of the felled trees.

Regular maintenance tasks have also continued throughout the Tree Park, including spraying, grass management, grading the access roads, firebreak and general maintenance as well as two visits per week to the toilet blocks.

DBCA has also been implementing the Conservation Management Strategy for the Homestead in a phased manner as budget allows. Work in the year included replacement of internal doors and window framing.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DBCA and GVTP Inc has been finalised to formalise the working relationship between the joint managers of the Tree Park. Following the signing of this document in August 2025, an Operations and Maintenance Plan has been

prepared in order to clarify respective roles and responsibilities. The Plan was issued in June 2026.

The threat to the unique ambience of the Tree Park posed by the proposed rezoning of surrounding land for housing by the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup has been resolved. The threat was apparent in the issuing of a draft planning strategy in April 2024. There were 141 public submissions opposing the rezoning and it has taken two years before the Shire has agreed not to pursue the proposed rezoning. This was confirmed at the Shire Council meeting in June 2026.

A new “Welcome to the Golden Valley Tree Park” sign was made by the Management Committee and kindly erected by the Shire on Old Padbury Road at the approach to the Tree Park. In addition, the Shire contributed \$2000 as a Community Grant towards the cost of installing fencing.

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.

Volunteering and Events

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

A “Spring Picnic in the Park” event was held in November and this was preceded by a busy bee to tidy up the location for the picnic.

A busy bee was also held later in November to tackle the grass near the car park and trails in the Australian Collection. Weeds in the pines area were dealt with by a busy bee in May and a further busy bee was organised in June to do some burning of piles of branches in the paddock alongside Old Padbury Road. The turnout at these events shows the dedication of many members of the community to success of the Tree Park.

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

Trees

There was limited new planting of trees in the year and the emphasis was on irrigation and nurturing of the trees planted in earlier years.

The project to extend the labelling of trees in the World Collection has also continued. This included labelling the extension of the avenue of trees at the Pear Tree Walk. 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.

A trial website was established in November 2025 with the aim of providing users of the Australian collection information on the tree species in the collection. Users either access the information directly from the website, or via a QR code located on the post at the foot of the tree. Visitors use the camera on their smart phones to view the QR code which then takes them directly to a webpage with information on that particular tree species.

Analytics from the website indicated that daily usage of the QR codes ranged from 1-10, with very few days where no one accessed the website. From January 1 to July 15, there were total of 268 views of the website from the QR codes. The committee has agreed to make the website more permanent and to seek a grant from LotteriesWest to fund the website and to purchase more permanent and weather proof QR code labels.

Maintenance

Routine maintenance of fences, firebreaks, gates and paths continued throughout the year with the assistance of the Park Steward.

A particular project in the year was the replacement of the perimeter fence alongside Old Padbury Road between the Homestead and Olwyns Avenue. This was a good example of the cooperation in that DBCA provided the fencing materials, the Shire provided a grant to hire a fencing contractor, and labour to assist the fencing contractor was provided by community volunteers. Further fencing work is planned for later in 2026 on a similar basis.

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. The latest act on 26 May 2025 of vandalism and theft left donation boxes at the car parks unusable and limited cash donations were collected for a number of months.

The donation boxes have since been redesigned with better security features and they were painted and re-installed earlier this year. Included was the fixture of a metal plate with the QR code under an anti-graffiti coating to further support the option of payment by QR code, which is growing in popularity.

Sponsorships

Tree sponsorship is a wonderful way to support Golden Valley while celebrating the people you love with a personalized name plaque on the post beside it. People choose to sponsor

trees for many heartfelt reasons. This past year, grandparents welcomed newborn babies into the world, and others honoured the memories of their parents or spouses.

Sponsors always take great care in picking the perfect tree, often choosing one that connects to a special memory. Most of last year's chosen trees were in our World Collection, while two were selected from the Australian Collection.

Thanks to this generosity, tree sponsorships raised a total of \$4,318 this year. In addition, one grateful family dedicated a picnic table in their favourite spot in the park and another one requested an additional plaque for their bench with a generous donation, bringing \$2245 in total to Golden Valley Tree Park.

Communications

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 official Facebook page for the Balingup Golden Valley Tree Park has in excess of 3,300 followers.

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068542410469>

An oral history of the park is being worked on, featuring Andrew Thamo, who is one of the co-founders of the Tree Park.

The information leaflets about the Tree Park continue to be popular. A print run of 1000 copies has meant that they can continue to be available from the information shelters.

The Golden Valley Tree Park web site is also kept up to date by Pam Williamson and provides a valuable source of information for visitors.