



16th Australasian **Botanic Guides Conference**

*Beauty rich and rare*  
Kings Park and Botanic Garden Western Australia

**16 - 20 September 2019**

### **WALK TITLE: CONNECTING PARK AND RIVER**

**This walk described how Kings Park and the Swan and Canning Rivers are closely connected, and the magnificent views along the scarp were a special feature for our visitors.**

#### **Catchment and geography**

The walk showcased the views from the Mt Eliza scarp and over the Swan and Canning Rivers and identified Kings Park is an important feature. The start of the walk described the landforms, the Swan River, and the origins of the Swan Coastal Plain.

#### **Aboriginal uses of the River and the Park**

The Swan Coastal Plain has been home to Aboriginal People for well over 45,000 years, and the Derbarl Yerrigan is sacred to them. Kings Park was a place of summer bounty with plenty of bush tucker after the spring flowering period, and there is a fresh water supply nearby. The Aboriginal spiritual, cultural and historical background is connected closely to both the Derbarl Yerrigan or Swan River and Kings Park.

#### **Early WA explorers**

Many Dutch, French and English explorers visited Western Australia during the 1600s and onwards to the time of settlement. Some ventured up the Swan River and looked at what is now Kings Park to view the surrounding area and the river. Painters, the photographers of yesteryear, recorded the views of pre-settlement days. Several crew members tasted some of the plants, sometimes to their regret!

#### **Early Swan River Colony Settlers**

The Swan River Colony was settled in 1829 and Lieutenant Governor Stirling envisioned it as a place for "free" settlers (no convicts), who would be entrepreneurial and enterprising colonists. We described the use of the river for transport, land allocation and some of the early industries around the shore and the impact on the new settlement and public health. The river was an important source of food so the effect of pollution was a significant issue, and some of the solutions are described.

#### **Current situation with the river and the Park**

Climate Change is having an effect on the river, which is really an estuary, and the levels of salinity are increasing upriver. Today, the river is generally considered healthy and sustainable with a large population of resident dolphins (the canaries in the mine). Over the years, the management of the Botanic Gardens has changed including watering programmes and the use of phosphate fertilisers. This has been done to protect our many plants and to prevent the run-off of chemicals and water and potential pollution of the river.

Today Kings Park and the Swan River are both important for commemoration, recreation, celebration, education, research, tourism and much more.

#### **Questions?**