



16th Australasian **Botanic Guides Conference**

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

**16 - 20 September 2019**

## **WALK SUMMARY: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF WOMEN**

**This walk around the water garden explores the connections to Kings Park of indigenous women, female settlers, campaigners for women's rights and suffrage and more modern female pioneers.**

### **Indigenous women's use of plants**

The Nyoongar Aboriginal women were responsible for the provision of around 90% of the food for their people, predominantly by gathering plant materials such as fruits, tubers and seeds. They were also responsible for collecting plants for medicinal uses.

- Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) – sap (kino) had medicinal uses, seeds and blossoms provided food
- Wonnil (*Agonis flexuosa*) – oil in leaves had medicinal uses
- Bibool (*Melaleuca raphiophylla*) - bark used as wrapping for food, bandages and bodies
- Kerbein (*Lepidosperma gladiatum*) leaves used for basket weaving, fishing nets, rope and string
- Jeeriji (*Macrozamia reidleyi*) – fruits treated and eaten, wool used as baby bedding, foliage for roofing
- Balga (*Xanthorhea preisii*)– nectar for sweet drink, bardi grubs for food, dried fronds to protect baby
- Poolgarla (*Banksia grandis*) – nectar for sweet drink

### **Pioneer women**

At the Pioneer Women's Memorial we heard the story of Georgiana Molloy who was one of the first settlers in what is now the town of Augusta. Like many pioneers, she had an extremely tough life but found solace in collecting botanical specimens of high quality, many of which are in herbariums in several European countries.

### **Women artists**

Female artists who have designed artworks in, or are connected with Kings Park include:

- Margaret Priest – Pioneer Woman statue
- May Gibbs – author and illustrator of *Snugglypot and Cuddlepie*, based on gumnuts from *Corymbia calophylla*
- Coral Lowry and Holly Story – sculptures and bridge in the water garden
- Philippa O'Brien – the Banksia Garden mosaics

### **Women activists**

The Bookleaf Memorial celebrates the centenary of women's suffrage in WA in 1899. Edith Cowan and Margaret Forrest were active campaigners for women to get the vote and for women's rights more generally. In 1921 Edith Cowan became the first woman in Australia elected to a parliament and is honoured on our \$50 note.

Fanny Balbuk was an Aboriginal activist who railed against the settlement of her land by the British. Bessie Rischbieth was a feminist and conservationist who campaigned against several proposed developments in Kings Park, including a swimming pool and later against the reclamation of parts of the Swan River foreshore for the freeway interchange.

### **Contemporary pioneer woman**

Dr Alison Ritchie is working in partnership with Kings Park on restoration ecology and conservation biology, in particular restoring native banksia woodlands north of Perth.