

Red Hill Road Landscaping Project through the Silvalite Reserve

In 2005 The President of The Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga, Philip Cross proposed for his year a tree planting project on Red Hill Road through the Silvalite Reserve between the main southern railway line and the Olympic Highway.

The vision was for a number of taller species of eucalypts to be planted within the Silvalite Reserve with a lower understory of trees and shrubs along both sides of Red Hill Road to create a wonderful vista in the years ahead for the community of Wagga Wagga. "A Centenary Drive" to mark 100 years of Rotary and something that should be there when Rotary celebrates 200 years of "Service Above Self".

Discussions were held with the Department of Lands, The Silvalite Trust, and Wagga Wagga City Council, to progress the project and when 2005 District Governor David Roberts approved an application for \$5,000 through Rotary's District Simplified Grant Program, plans were put in place.

The Concept Plan was prepared at no cost to Rotary by Alex Dalglish, a Landscape Architect from Eurongilly, who undertakes Landscape Planning & Designs for Rural and Urban areas.

Alex has used a number of species in her design with Eucalyptus species of White, Yellow and Grey Box as well as an Ironbark for the large trees in the Silvalite Reserve. These were chosen due to an identified Woodland and endangered ecological community listed in the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995.

Alex added an avenue of Kurrajongs along Red Hill Road with areas of Silver Banksia, Common Fringe Myrtle and Bush Peas and species of grasses for ground cover. These were chosen following a review of Council's Development Control Plan of Native Vegetation in the Kapooka area.

The Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga had not anticipated the extended drought or the delay in having the road extended to the Olympic Highway, which extended the length of time to complete the project. Nor did we expect to lose our dear friends Peter and Helen Walsh in an aeroplane crash in America. With Council's approval, a rock and plaque has now been installed and was unveiled by Mrs Grace Walsh in the company of her family and Helen Walsh's family, on Saturday 30 May with the words;

CENTENARY DRIVE

"This avenue of trees in Red Hill Road from the Olympic Highway to the Rail Underpass was planted on 3 May 2008 to celebrate 100 Years of Rotary (1905 – 2005) and in memory of our long standing Rotarian Peter Walsh, PDG, PHF +1, and his wife Helen, PHF, who were killed in an air crash at Long Island Sound off the coast of Connecticut, USA, on 27 June 2005 after they attended the Rotary International Centenary Conference in Chicago."

Over the past year, all the trees and shrubs were planted by Rotarians, their partners and some staff of Wagga Wagga City Council under the guidance of Mr Michael Cave. Additional shrubs were planted last Saturday in honour of Peter and Helen Walsh, Past District Governor David Roberts and his wife Joy as well as Mr Glenn Estess and his wife Mary who in Rotary's Centenary year visited Wagga as the 2005 Rotary World President.

Benefits to the community of Wagga Wagga and Rotary are long term as the Silvalite Reserve is natural bushland that has the Wiradjuri Walking Track through it and is used by Conservation groups. The walking track is part of a 30 km route around Wagga Wagga that has eleven established access points.

Surveys of the area identified 6 threatened species, on or near the site and these include the Squirrel Glider, Superb Parrot, Grey-crowned Babbler, Brown Treekeeper, Swift Parrot and the Common Bent-wing Bat. The landscape proposal will enhance wildlife in the area.

PP Philip Cross
30 May 2009