

A Brief History of Koala Green ® Plantings in Stirling Linear Park.



1990: Then State Environment Minister Anne Levy and Malcolm Campbell, then chief executive of Greening Australia, getting down and dirty to plant trees in Stirling Park.

The land in question was taken up in the 1850s by the Halliday family and developed as a market garden. This family ran the market garden until the 1950s when it was purchased by the Bonython family from Summertown who ran it until the mid-1970s when the State Government compulsorily acquired it for a primary school.

- In the late 1970s the Government abandoned the school idea and the land was passed to the Stirling District Council who at the time proposed to develop it as a sports park.
- During the 1980s Council used the area as a pound for wandering livestock and some local residents kept pet sheep, goats and horses in the area.
- In 1989 Council proposed to subdivide the area for sale into 28 residential building blocks.
- Considerable community opposition to the subdivision proposal, including a petition signed by over 1300 people, caused Council in 1990 to agree that the land should remain public open space.
- Initially there was a range of ideas about the future of the area. Ideas included: a woodlot, community gardens, an area for local residents pet livestock, an historical demonstration farm,

2000: *Then State Environment Minister David Wotton planting trees during one of the many working bees he took part in.*



a rural-style retirement village, a commercial herb and spice farm and a revegetated area for wildlife and passive recreation.

- In 1989 a group of ratepayers got together and formed the Stirling Park Landcare Action Group Inc (SPLAG).

Documented aims of the group were: “To replant and preserve Stirling Park, for passive recreation with improved public access:

to protect the character of the environment;
to preserve and extend protected habitat for native fauna;
to demonstrate by example the rehabilitation of degraded land in the water catchment.”

- In 1989 SPLAG prepared a revegetation concept plan for Stirling Park and submitted it to Council for consideration. It involved funding of up to \$18,100 a year over a two-year period from Greening Australia under the Koala Green program. This was funded by both the Australian Government (as part of the one Million Trees Program) and by Taubman’s Paints.

Mr Dobrinski, Council District Manager wrote to SPLAG saying that Council had approved the plan in principle and that the group should liaise with the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens regarding details of implementation.

- Following meetings with Council staff it was agreed that *Eucalyptus viminalis* (Manna Gum) together with some *Eucalyptus rubida* (now renamed *dalrympliana*) and some *Acacia melanoxylon* (Blackwood) should be planted. Tube stock grown from locally collected seed was sourced by Greening Australia. Preparation of the planting areas was done by SPLAG members.
- In 1990 two planting working bees were held. These were high profile and very well attended with over 80 people at each. Stirling Kiwanis provided a barbecue lunch, and volunteer workers included the State Minister for the Environment (Hon Anne Levy), the local State member of Parliament (Hon David Wotton), and the CEO and Chairman of Greening Australia.



1999: *Acting Mayor Ian Bailey, left, with students from Aldgate Primary School during a tree-planting session in Stirling Park.*

The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (Now Conservation Volunteers Australia) also attended and helped with organisation.

- For the next decade volunteers slashed and weeded around the plantings several times a year mostly using their own equipment and fuel.
- Since 1990 more than 40 more planting working bees have been held in Stirling Park with a range of canopy, understory and groundcover local indigenous plants, mostly from seed harvested elsewhere in the Linear Park. (This has been in addition to the regular monthly weeding working bees). Over 35,000 tube stock have been established together with a km of direct seeding in Stirling Park. Participants have included local primary schools, Stirling Lions, Stirling Kiwanis, Ernest and Young, National Australia Bank, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Planet Ark Inc, and hundreds of local residents.



1988: *What was to become a Koala Green site in Stirling Park, along the east of the main track, before the rehabilitation and planting of *Eucalyptus viminalis* (Manna Gum) *Eucalyptus rubida* (now renamed *dalrymliana*)*



1990: An army of volunteers gets to work in Stirling Park

2007: Volunteers planting native understorey among the mature trees.



This work and the associated massive weed-control works have been generously supported by both state and Australian Government grant funds including Landcare Australia. Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board, National Heritage Trust, Envirofund, Green Corps, Greening Australia, Wetland Care Australia, and Family and Community Services. The FSLP Deductible Gift Public Fund also contributed.

The Government funding was made available on the understanding that Council would continue to manage the area primarily for conservation - but encourage community access for appropriate passive recreation..

- In 1995 following the Stirling District Council's purchase of the Woorabinda property, Council requested SPLAG to form a group to help Council manage the combined Hender, Woorabinda, Madurta and Stirling Park reserves. At a public meeting addressed by the Mayor, District Manager and other Council staff, attended by over a 100 ratepayers, the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc was formed. They have continued to care for the Koala Green plantings until now.



2012: *Mission accomplished – a resident snoozes in one of the now mature trees.*



1990: *Greening Australia's Teddy Green with local children at the first tree planting session*