

## SWAN RESERVE WATER-WISE GARDEN

### A Brief History By Gordon Ryan (Society Life Member) Text Taken from SGAP Newsletter in 1980's

Once upon a time - on entering the city of Warrnambool along a single lane highway, you were greeted with a typical country view, a less-than-attractive tyre selling and repairing premises in front of the Warrnambool Livestock saleyards in a triangle edged by three made roads, but nevertheless a great meeting place on Wednesday sale days.

Great changes then occurred. The tyre retailer / repairer moved into new premises on the opposite side of the up-graded and now divided Highway, and the saleyards were moved out to Caramut Road. On the saleyards site, after the demolition of the buildings and cattleyards, a Tourist Information Centre was built, happily referred to by many S.G.A.P. members as "The TIC".

In May 1976, when the Warrnambool branch of the SGAP was in its infancy the then committee in its wisdom applied to the Warrnambool City Council to beautify the surrounds of the T.I.C., with the Council supplying funds for materials and the S.G.A.P. supplying labour and designing the layout. Council, in their estimates, made provision for the project to proceed, with funding on a yearly basis.

Soil, sleepers, stakes, pinebark and plants were acquired, and with S.G.A.P. member' efforts, raised beds were formed, covered with pinebark, and planted out with a selection of eucalypts, dryandras, banksias, correas, and other plants.



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Later, in 1979, S.G.A.P. raised the idea of a BBQ area, and to enhance the resultant building, more raised beds, pinebark, sleepers, plants and willing workers were necessary. By this time the previously planted trees and shrubs were established, growing and flowering well.

In more recent time, 1986 in fact, (perhaps something to do with the seven year itch?) on the Liebig Street end of the Reserve a banksia bed was formed, barked and planted out with banksias and other plants. Several of the banksias, although only 50cm high had already flowered, and when fully grown will make a nice impression for the reserve surrounding the Tourist Information Centre.

The S.G.A.P. members work only half a day per month - usually the Saturday morning after the monthly meeting - to provide this native garden for the enjoyment of the people of Warrnambool and visitors to the city. Members would find a lot to interest them in walking around the Reserve - and even more in joining the mainstay of members with the work at "The T.I.C." as this helps with the recognition of the different plants.

Visitors to the reserve are very impressed with the work of the group as specimens in flower can be found at most times of the year with the *Banksia praemorsa* growing near the south-west corner of the building being much admired.

**(POSTSCRIPT: In 2002 the Tourist Information Centre was moved to Flagstaff Hill with the council since then using the building for its children's services. The Society has continued its long association with the garden which is now known as the Swan Reserve Water-wise Garden).**

