# A HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF PARKS AND RECREATION
## Change and Continuity

Elizabeth A. Stewart

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Master of Arts
of the Australian National University.

December 1988

# Declaration

Except where otherwise indicated
this thesis is my own work.

Elizabeth A. Stewart
December 1988

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of preparing this thesis I have been given invaluable help by many people. My supervisors, Mr Ian Hancock and Dr John Merritt, gave me sound advice and their continued support, and I have been encouraged by the interest of my fellow post-graduates in the History Department.

I am grateful to all members of the RAIPR who supported my work and answered an endless supply of questions, and particular thanks must go to those past and present members who gave their time to be interviewed. Their hospitality and help was most appreciated. Special thanks are due to John Huston, Jack Owens, James Sullivan, Frank Keenan, Tom Kneen, John Gray, Ian Frencham, Warwick Watson, Trevor Arthur, Vernon Davies and Michael Hussey for their comments on this text. Thanks also to Diane Pike and Ian Taylor from the Federal Office for their support and suggestions.

Members of my family have given continued support, and I am especially grateful to my parents and to Jerry, whose support and encouragement was invaluable.

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACT | Australian Capital Territory |
| AFL | Australian Forest League |
| AILA | Australian Institute of Landscape Architects |
| AIPA | Australian Institute of Park Administration |
| AIPR | Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation |
| CCAE | Canberra College of Advanced Education |
| CRB | Country Roads Board |
| CSIRO | Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation |
| IFPRA | International Federation of Parks and Recreation ~~Association~~ Administration |
| IPASA | Institute of Park Administration of South Australia |
| IPAV | Institute of Park Administration of Victoria |
| MCC | Melbourne City Council |
| MMBW | Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works |
| MOA | Municipal Officers Association |
| NCDC | National Capital Development Commission |
| NRCL | National Resources Conservation League |
| NSW | New South Wales |
| RAAF | Royal Australian Air Force |
| RAIPR | Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation |
| SA | South Australia |
| SEC | State Electricity Commission |
| TPPA | Town Planning and Parks Association of Victoria |
| VTA | Victorian Tree Planters' Association |
| WA | Western Australia |
| YMCA | Young Men's Christian Association |

# Table of Contents

# INTRODUCTION

This history of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation (RAIPR) traces the growth of the Institute from its formation as the Victorian Tree Planters' Association (VTA) to its sixtieth anniversary in 1986. The VTA was formed in Melbourne in April 1926, during the city's annual Garden Week. Its initial membership consisted of approximately 50 nurserymen and park curators and its primary aim was to collect and disseminate information relating to public parks, gardens and tree planting. It undertook a number of tree planting projects before the Second World War, but after 1945 its members became increasingly concerned with improving the administration of parks and the education of people responsible for park development and maintenance. A change of name to the Institute of Park Administration of Victoria (IPAV) in 1955 reflected members' altered concerns.

As the Institute's membership continued to grow in the later 1950's, and as increasing numbers of interstate people attended its conferences, it came under pressure to become an Australia-wide organisation. This goal was achieved in 1962 when the Australian Institute of Park Administration (AIPA) was established. In the following years a number of State branches were formed in various capital cities. All states except the Northern Territory formed branches or divisions of the Institute and towns in northern Victoria and southern New South Wales joined together to form the Hume Division. In 1966, backed by a substantially larger membership and a growing public and governmental interest in recreation, the Institute again changed its name to become the Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation (AIPR). In 1976 the AIPR was granted permission to use the prefix 'Royal' in its title as a mark of its fiftieth anniversary.

The history I have presented here has been arranged chronologically. My major themes, which concern the growth, structure and policies of the Institute,[1] demand such an approach. They cannot be examined adequately unless closely tied to a socio-

[1]To avoid cluttering the text with acronyms, such as IPAV, AIPA, AIPR and RAIPR, I have used the word Institute throughout the thesis. I have assumed that ease of reading and the direct line of descent from the VTA to the RAIPR can justify this slight departure from accuracy.

political context which, over a 60 year period, changed significantly. The Institute did have lasting aims: to share knowledge and information and to raise the status of employees in the field of park administration. But the specific objectives within these broad aims changed as people's attitudes and leisure-time activities changed. For example, the development of the Institute parallels the growth of an awareness of the Australian environment amongst all Australians, and the consequent growth of different societies concerned with the protection of the country's open spaces. By the 1970's, therefore, in their aim of acquiring and sharing knowledge, Institute members had become closely associated with a number of these organisations, notably the Nurserymen and Seedsmen's Association, the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria, the Natural Resources Conservation League (NRCL), the Institute of Foresters, and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA). The consequent effects in Institute policy were marked.

There are some problems associated with writing a history of an organisation such as the RAIPR. The lack of written material on the subject of parks and recreation in Australia has made it difficult to place the development of the Institute in the perspective of changes within park and recreation administration since the 1920's. It is unusual for organisations such as the Institute to have a history written before their centenary and neither the AILA, the NRCL, nor the Institutes of Foresters and Architects, which were all formed this century, have yet undertaken this task. The lack of information about the concern with and care of the Australian environment indicates how recent the environment and recreation movements are, and there is great scope for historians to examine this important aspect of Australian society. The lack of material does not apply to the history of sport in Australia, a subject well documented by Geoffrey Blainey, John Lack, Dennis Shoesmith and Margaret Indian.[2] The growth of the recreation movement occurred quite apart from the growth of sport, but in most literature the two have not been distinguished. The growing popularity of travelling holidays, community health and leisure groups and other forms of passive recreation has been subsumed under arguments about how and why Australians developed a passion for playing and watching the universally popular sports of cricket, football and racing. A finer distinction between sport and recreation was made after 1972 and Elery

---

[2]In Geoffrey Blainey, "The History fo Leisure in Australia", in Victorian Historical Journal, Vol.49, No.1, February 1978, John Lack, "Working-class Leisure", in Victorian Historical Journal, Vol.49, No.1, February 1978, Dennis Shoesmith, "Boom Year: A Study of Popular Leisure in Melbourne in 1919", unpublished MA thesis, Australian National University, 1971, and Margaret Indian, "Leisure in City and Suburb: Melbourne 1880 - 1900", unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1980.

Hamilton-Smith and David Mercer have provided a more balanced view of the development of recreation in Australia.[3]

The lack of secondary material concerning the development of recreation has been partly countered by the fact that the activities of the VTA were reported in newspapers such as the Age, the Herald and the Argus, and in the gardening journals Your Garden and The Garden Lover (later The Australian Garden Lover). James Grant's and Geoffrey Serle's The Melbourne Scene, Humphrey McQueen's Social Sketches of Australia and Frank Crowley's A New History of Australia were also useful histories for placing the development of the Institute in the context of general changes in Australian society.

Another problem derives from the fact that this history has been written in co-operation with the Institute, whose members have particular ideas about the sort of issues with which it should deal. They were anxious to have individual and collective achievements highlighted, and the positive aspects of the Institute's development given greater emphasis than its negative points. The Institute's records, including Minute books, Constitutions, annual and conference reports, newsletters and journals, policy papers, government submissions and press releases, provide the best source of information about its development, but these sources give particular emphasis to member's achievements and aims, and lack details about controversial issues and events. One of my most difficult tasks, therefore, has been to avoid the biases inherent in the written sources. In some cases this has not been possible, and supposition or hypothesis has been used in an attempt to balance the argument.

There are two related difficulties. First, a history written from a perspective solely dictated by official sources would inevitably attribute the growth of the Institute entirely to members' strengths and achievements, while ignoring the fact that all organisations exist in a wider society and must be viewed in this context. My chronological framework has helped counter this problem by keeping the relationship between the Institute and its socio-political context in the forefront of the narrative.

Secondly, in addition to presenting only the achievements of the Institute, the official sources provide what is largely an Executive view of the Institute's growth. While it is

---

[3]In David Mercer (ed.), Leisure and Recreation in Australia, Melbourne, 1977, and David Mercer and Elery Hamilton-Smith (eds.), Recreation Planning and Social Change in Urban Australia, Melbourne, 1980.

proper that this view should be emphasised, I have sought to subject it to some critical analysis by using oral sources to present the ordinary members' interpretation of the Institute's development. Oral evidence presents its own problems because the spoken word contains as many, of not more, biases as the written word, and where appropriate I acknowledge and deal with these problems. Nevertheless the oral sources give more depth and colour to the narrative and reveal important dimensions to the Institute's history which might otherwise have been missed.

# Chapter 1

# THE PRE-HISTORY OF THE VICTORIAN TREE PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION

Although based in Canberra, the RAIPR has had its most significant growth and changes in Melbourne. That its forerunner, the VTA, should have been formed in that particular city was not merely coincidence. Melbourne's city and suburban growth, the development of its parks and gardens, and its changing recreation patterns reveal a tradition of tree planting and park care amongst its inhabitants and, more particularly, its park curators. By 1926 Melbourne had a collection of public parks and gardens that equalled any around the world. Its inhabitants were garden-conscious and collectively opposed attempts to wrest public land from public use.

This chapter will show how such a tradition developed, by tracing the development of the city from its earliest days and incorporating the provision and changing usage of its parks, gardens, and open spaces. Central to this theme, and to the development of the VTA, is the growth in active recreation and organised sport, as opposed to passive recreation, and their impact on the provision and use of Melbourne's parks and gardens. The development of Melbourne's public parks will be examined in the light of the poor planning and resultant overcrowding of Melbourne's suburbs, to show that the emergence of the VTA was also a response to what was perceived in 1926 to be a particular crisis. Although random city development was not unique to Melbourne, the fact that a consciousness of parks and gardens was established meant that the conflict between residents and developers was particularly fierce and the need for such mediating groups as the VTA more urgent than in any other city.

The settlement of Port Phillip was founded by John Batman and first settled in 1834. From its earliest days, provision of parks for recreation was considered to be an essential feature of development in the town. Physically, Melbourne was ideally suited to accomodate a large system of open parklands with its 'fine grassy slopes and the beautiful forests of trees (which) were very pleasing to the eye and greatly impressed

the first comers'.[1] It had, too, a supply of natural water features such as the Yarra River and a lagoon, later incorporated into Albert Park, which proved to be popular recreation grounds. Settlers were also encouraged by the climate, 'which was mild with good rainfall in the right seasons, and virtually frost free'.[2] These attributes might have been wasted in Melbourne's development had it been established, like Sydney or Hobart, as a penal settlement. An important factor in Melbourne's growth as a garden city was that it was established by free settlers who gave their full attention to the development of their new home as a place of beauty, grace and relaxation.

That the tradition of park provision and tree planting became so entrenched in Melbourne lies in the fact that the new population was largely British-born.[3]The effect of resettling in a new and strange land encouraged many settlers to create an environment as similar as possible to the one they had left behind. At the time of Melbourne's settlement gardening and horticulture were becoming increasingly popular in England. Not only did a number of settlers have an interest in these subjects, but some had specific horticultural training which they were keen to apply in their new surroundings. More importantly, the nature and style of Melbourne's parklands were distinctly and lastingly English, following a pattern that had been developed over centuries in that country.

Some of the earliest records of public parks in England date to the sixteenth century when they were included on all large scale maps. A series of maps published between 1574 and 1579 records 817 parks in England and Wales.[4] Although the large number of orchards, forests, commons, moors and heaths precluded the need for parks as recreation areas, formal gardens and parks around the large manor houses and estates became increasingly popular in the 1600's, particularly after the 1649 Civil War when large tree plantations were established to help replenish diminished timber supplies.[5] Between 1760 and 1820 a trend in Europe sparked a surge in landscape gardening in

---

[1]W.A.Sanderson, "The Alienation of the Melbourne Park Lands", in Victorian Historical Magazine, Vol.14, No.4, December 1932, p.141.

[2]Victorian Year Book, 1981, p.132.

[3]James Grant and Geoffrey Serle (eds.), The Melbourne Scene: 1803 - 1956, Melbourne, 1957, p.6. The editors argue that Melbourne's settlers came from Van Diemen's Land, Sydney, Scotland and England, and that the majority of settlers in the Western and Port Phillip Districts were Scots.

[4]Hugh Prince, Parks in England, Isle of Wight, 1967, quoted in Sandra Bardwell, "National Parks in Victoria 1866 to 1956", unpublished PhD thesis, Monash University, 1974, p.32.

[5]ibid.

England. The most popular garden theme adopted at this time was the improvement of the landscape with ornamental gardens containing exotic plant species, water features and small outhouses. The style remained popular for many years and was a particular feature of Australian homestead gardens in the nineteenth century.

Early English public parks first appeared in the latter half of the seventeenth century in the form of pleasure gardens, where displays of fireworks and evening concerts were held.[6] The Botanical Garden, a distinct style of public garden, was created between 1720 and 1730 and differed from previous public garden or park areas in that it was designed purely for scientific or acquisitive purposes. Until 1840, the need for open space in most towns was satisfied by commons and market places, but during the 1840's an upper middle-class urban reform movement gained momentum and brought attention to issues of sanitation, housing and public health. Many voluntary groups aiming at the reservation of open spaces and parkland within towns and cities were formed at this time, and the last three decades of the nineteenth century saw the greatest activity in park reservation.

By 1877 it was believed that local authorities should bear the responsibility of providing open space in highly populated areas, to enable all classes of people to obtain fresh air and access to recreation space.[7] Throughout the history of park provision and development in England it is apparent that such areas performed a continuing social function. For the wealthier classes private parks provided social status and the opportunity to display extravagance, while for the working and lower middle classes public parks provided an escape from the increasing congestion of England's large cities. Moreover, they provided a place for people to take Sunday strolls and hold family picnics, the normal forms of recreation at that time.

It is clear that these habits were translated to Melbourne in the late nineteenth century. The reform movement ideal of fresh air for all classes of people was mirrored by Charles La Trobe, Melbourne's first Lieutenant-Governor, in his early call for parks to be set aside as 'lungs for the city', and in the provision of public parklands on Batman's and the Western Hill in the town centre by 1840.[8] The uses to which Melbourne's open

---

[6]Warwick Wroth, The London Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century, London, 1896, quoted in ibid., p.37.

[7]William Ashworth, The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning, London, 1954, pp.11-12.

[8]R.T.M Pescott, The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Melbourne, 1982, p.3.

park lands were put also mirrored English habits. It was a common practice in England to graze horses and cattle on available open land and in Melbourne, too, many parks and recreation areas were initially used as police horse paddocks and grazing areas for the town's dairy herd. Melbourne's parklands were often planted with useful, as well as ornamental species of trees, as was the custom in England, in order to build up supplies of useful timbers such as ash and oak. Although the use of Melbourne's parks changed over time their social and practical roles diminished very little, and were an important factor in the development of a tradition of park reservation and tree planting.

Without doubt the credit for the early reservation of open space for public use belonged to Charles La Trobe, who arrived in the settlement in 1839. His involvement in the provision of Melbourne's parklands was substantial and it embodies a recurring theme of the history of the RAIPR: the role played by State and Federal governments in the provision and management of Australia's open spaces. In Melbourne's early years, the development of an association between individuals, public bodies and the government for the purposes of land reservation was necessary because all land in the district was owned by the central government in Sydney. La Trobe's first efforts to have land set aside for public use were aided in 1842 when the British Parliament passed an Act regulating the sale of crown land in the Australian colonies. The Crown retained the right to reserve from sale lands which might be of benefit to the public, including those for public recreation, thus saving valuable town property from total development.

Throughout the 1840's La Trobe's requests to the Sydney government for permission to reserve parklands were favourably received. Tenure on these lands, however, was insecure and not all sites were set aside for public recreation from the outset. Areas such as Yarra Park and the Domain became reserves for various government uses, and 'all passed through a period of neglect as waste lands until the funds were found to start developing them'.[9] In 1842 the Town of Melbourne was incorporated and a Town Council established. A significant step was taken in the provision of public parks in Melbourne when in 1844 the Council was 'empowered to accept and hold property for the benefit or recreation of the inhabitants of the town, and to appropriate such sums from its revenue as might from time to time be required to procure, construct and maintain the same'.[10]

---

[9]Rex Swanson, Melbourne's Historic Public Gardens, Melbourne, 1984, p.4.

[10]Sanderson, loc.cit., p.142.

From the time of its establishment the Melbourne Town Council adopted park reservation as one of its primary functions. In 1843 its Chairman, William Kerr, wrote to La Trobe urging that the Council be invested with the conservation of the land on Batman's Hill for the development of a Botanical Garden. La Trobe in turn applied to Sydney for approval, which was received on the condition that the Council maintain and develop that and other areas with its own funds. Such a request was impractical because the Council's funds were limited and it was even struggling to maintain Melbourne's roads, which at the best of times were dusty, rutted thoroughfares and after rain became an impassable quagmire. Both the Council and La Trobe struggled to have parklands reserved before 1851 but it was only after Victoria's separation from New South Wales in that year that the situation improved.

Between 1851 and 1854 large reservations of public land including Royal and Princes Parks, the Carlton Gardens, and several smaller reserves were made around the town centre.[11] Not one of these reserves was vested in the Council, however, and they remained fenced and under the control of the Government. Matters improved in 1854 when the new Superintendent of Victoria, Charles Hotham, appointed a parks ranger, F.A.Powlett, who was 'to supervise the laying out of the squares, and the planting of trees'.[12] In 1855 the Council's efforts to take charge of the town's parks were rewarded when it was given full responsibility for the Carlton Gardens and Fitzroy Square (now Gardens). In 1856 the Surveyor-General issued an assurance that Royal Park, Princes Park, South Park, Batman's Hill, Carlton Gardens, Fitzroy Square, Studley Park, the Richmond Police Paddock and other areas were intended for park or ornamental purposes. Tenancy of these areas was by no means secure, but by 1860 a substantial effort had been made in providing Melbourne with public parks. Provision of parkland after 1860 became an increasingly haphazard process as Melbourne experienced major suburban growth.

Melbourne's first extended period of growth occurred at the time of the Victorian gold rushes, in the early 1850's. With a greatly increased population, the town spread to the east along the waterways of the Yarra River, and to the south along the coast. Development of the western and northern areas was initially delayed because distance to the town centre was prohibitive to town workers and a large swamp in West

---

[11] ibid., p.148.

[12] ibid., p.149.

Melbourne made the area uninhabitable.[13] Lack of fresh water supplies in these areas also prevented development because rainfall was lower than in the south and the Yarra River, which provided much of Melbourne's fresh water, contained a high salt content in its lower reaches and was unusable.[14] By 1855 the Yarra River was being extensively used by industries as a dumping ground for factory wastes and a transport system for factory goods. Urban development of North and West Melbourne soon followed the establishment of industry, and because of the nature of the work available and the cheap, unattractive land, the earliest suburbs of Richmond, Carlton and North Melbourne were inhabited by working class people. Other suburbs that followed this pattern were Prahran, Brighton, Williamstown and Brunswick which were well established by the late 1850's.[15]

Melbourne's middle and upper class inhabitants have always occupied the higher land of the city and the first such areas to be settled were Richmond Hill, Jolimont, Fitzroy and South Yarra, where drainage was better and fresh water was readily available. People made wealthy with gold passed by the inner suburbs in their hunt for a new home and settled in Kew, Hawthorn, Camberwell and Toorak.[16] Proximity to the city was not as important for these residents as many had their own transport, and their new homes were large, ornate and endowed with carefully manicured gardens. As these areas were developed it became clear that Melbourne's suburban growth was divided by the Yarra River, where residents in the north were from the working class and those in the south and east were part of an exclusive middle class. It was a division that became more pronounced as the city became more industrialized and is one that exists to the present day.

In the 1850's and 1860's Melbourne was still a small town and the planning problems which were to become a recurring feature of its growth after 1890 had not yet been envisaged. By 1870 a ring of parklands including Royal and Princes Parks, the Fitzroy Gardens, Yarra Park, the King's Domain and Botanic Gardens, and the Flagstaff Gardens, had been created around the perimeter of the town. These areas provided adequate facilities for a population which spent its leisure time in passive pursuits such

---

[13]Ann McGregor and George Seddon, Somewhere To Go On A Sunday: a guide to Outdoor Melbourne, Melbourne, 1978, p.3.

[14]ibid.

[15]ibid.

[16]ibid.

as family picnics, walks and attendances at band performances. It was a number of years before the growing popularity of active sport created a demand for greater areas of parklands than those already existing.

Although government involvement and suburban growth were important factors in the provision of Melbourne's early parklands, the most important contributors to the development of a tradition of park care and tree planting were the men who were employed to design and develop the town's parks. The nature and backgrounds of these men largely determined their contribution to Melbourne's garden-consciousness and, in turn, to the development of a tradition which led to the formation of the VTA.

Melbourne's early park curators had in common the fact that they were mainly British or European-born and the gardens they planted were distinctly European in style. The Fitzroy Gardens were created by James Sinclair, who arrived in Melbourne in 1854 at a time 'when the clamour for the creation of a parkland worthy of the growing city was at its height'.[17] Sinclair was born in Morayshire, Scotland, the son of the head steward of a large estate. His training in gardening was typical of many of Melbourne's future gardeners, who were sent to Kew Gardens in London as apprentices, and then worked on one of the many large estates around the country. As a boy Sinclair showed great artistic talent and was sent to Kew Gardens to be tutored by Thomas Knight, 'one of the greatest English Gardeners and curator of the Exotic Nursery...'[18] After graduating from Kew he worked as a landscape gardener on the estate of Prince Woronzoff of Russia, before arriving in Melbourne where he became a seed-merchant and nursery adviser. In 1857 he was appointed curator of the land set aside for the Fitzroy Gardens and he began to plan the gardens using the natural curves and features of the land.[19] The result was an English-looking garden with avenues of oaks and poplars, sweeping lawns and ferneries and a stream running the length of the Gardens. Although world-renowned for their beauty, the style of the Fitzroy Gardens typifies early attitudes towards development of the environment in Australia, which dictated that natural areas be altered to a state as close as possible to that found in England or Europe.

The Melbourne Botanic Gardens were established in 1845 on a five acre plot south of the Yarra River, and were first administered by a Curator named John Arthur. Arthur

---

[17]Melbourne City Council, History-Features-Statistics of Melbourne's Gardens, Melbourne, 1979, p.4.

[18]W.H Newnham, Melbourne, The Biography of a City, Melbourne, 1956, p.131.

[19]ibid., p.132.

was succeeded in 1849 by John Dallachy who continued to develop the area and in 1851 a report to the legislature showed that 'in addition to an extension of cultivated ground, many kinds of exotic plants had been added to the collection'.[20]

The Gardens had their greatest period of development from 1857-1873 when Ferdinand Von Mueller was curator. One of Melbourne's leading botanists and a well-known public figure, Von Mueller was responsible for making the Gardens one of the finest in the world. He was born in Germany and gained high qualifications in botany and chemistry in that country. He came to Australia because of ill-health and in 1853 was made the Government Botanist of Victoria. In that position he made many exploratory trips around Victoria, discovering and naming new species of native plants. During his time as Director of the Botanic Gardens Von Mueller built up an exhaustive library and a large herbarium which in later years was used by botanists from around the world. As a curator he was more interested in science than visual beauty and his development of the gardens followed a pattern of rigid lines and symmetrical plantings.[21] His contribution, both to the Gardens and to Melbourne, derived from the wealth of his experience. It was largely due to his work and influence that Melbourne gained its reputation as one of the leading garden cities of the world.

A third prominent horticulturist in Melbourne was the man who replaced Von Mueller as Director of the Botanic Gardens. William Guilfoyle was born in Chelsea, England, in 1851, the son of an experienced landscape gardener. The Guilfoyle family migrated to Australia in the late 1840's and William gained his initial and most valuable horticulture training at his father's Exotic Nursery in Double Bay, Sydney, where he helped his father design and landscape many gardens in and around the city.[22] In 1873, after 25 years occupation of the site, the Botanic Gardens and Domain were permanently reserved as parkland and Guilfoyle moved to Melbourne to take up the position of Curator. During his time there (1873-1909), Guilfoyle transformed the Gardens into their present day form. Again prevailing English tastes resulted in manicured lawns, secluded walks, fern gullies, summer houses and a 'temple of the winds'. Guilfoyle's approach to the development of the Gardens was more ornamental than scientific and although he agreed with Von Mueller on the scientific purpose of a botanic garden, he

---

[20]Melbourne City Council, op.cit., p.8.

[21]R.T.M Pescott, "The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne', in Australian Parks, Vol.2, No.3, February 1966, p.18.

[22]Pescott, Royal Botanic Gardens, p.97.

felt that his efforts should result in '...a garden in which facility of research and scientific classification will combine with sterling qualities of landscape scenery'.[23]

Because of their size and proximity to the city, the development of Melbourne's inner city parks and gardens gained considerable public attention. By 1870, however, the provision of parks in Melbourne's newer outer areas was becoming increasingly important. As suburbs in the south and east were established many local councils attempted to provide recreation areas for the community, as illustrated by the development of Albert Park in 1862. The Park was originally reserved by the Town Council as a common for the city and a grazing area for the cows that supplied Melbourne with milk.[24] In 1860 the Emerald Hill Council took over the control of the area, then known as South Park, which stretched from South Melbourne to the beach at St. Kilda. Development of the land as a public park began in 1862 when the Emerald Hill Cricket Club obtained occupancy over a portion in the north-west of the park, ' the first authorized intrusion upon its area for actively utilizing its spaces for sports and pastimes'.[25] Over time the park obtained water service, tree planting and lawns, buildings and public conveniences, and was later renamed Albert Park.

Geoffrey Blainey reports that in Camberwell the City Council ' began to beautify the district long before it guarded the health of children'.[26] It planted its first trees in 1879 after 200 oaks, elms and other trees were bought from Macedon and 'as the rectangles of streets replaced the rectangles of paddocks, and the shire became borough and town and city, the council preserved open spaces'.[27] In his history of Prahran John Cooper noted that 'Prahran's policy has always been one of progress both from utilitarian and aesthetic points of view'.[28] In its annual budget the Prahran council set aside a substantial portion of money for the purchase of new parks, and Cooper noted that 'street ornamentation by the planting of trees...has been freely undertaken. Picturesque avenues of trees grow in different parts of the city'. Another example was in Caulfield where, after the turn of the century, the local Council spent much of its time providing

---

[23]W.Guilfoyle in R.T.M Pescott, ibid., p.101.

[24]John Cooper, The History of St.Kilda, Melbourne, 1931,p.21.

[25]Charles Daley, The History of South Melbourne, Melbourne, 1940. p.208.

[26]In A History of Camberwell, Melbourne, 1980, p.112.

[27]ibid.

[28]John Cooper, The History of Prahran, Melbourne, 1912. p.274.

areas for band recitals and bowling and croquet areas.[29] In the Dandenongs, the National Park at Upper Fern Tree Gully was reserved in 1882, and an area later to become the Churchill National Park was reserved in 1884.[30]

Of all inner and suburban parks developed in Melbourne before 1880, the Botanic Gardens were unique in having a selection of native flora in its collection. The rejection of native Australian plants by residents and horticulturists was widespread and unquestioned. It had its roots with the first settlers who were adversely affected by the nature of the environment in which they found themselves. Compared to the English idyll of green pastures, neat hedgerows and picture-book villages, the Australian bush was a harsh and dramatic landscape. It has been described as being made 'in one of nature's more relaxed, even casual moods. Everything is evergreen, yet this term is often ironic...Certainly the eucalypt is not deciduous, but it is sometimes blue, often olive-grey, and occasionally brown. Measured against a fresh green European ideal, the Australian bush presents a slovenly scene'.[31] Most of all, the first settlers missed the vivid colours of autumn and spring, it was many years before the subtle colours of the Australian bush were appreciated. In Melbourne, more than any other Australian city, the English style of tree planting and gardening was practised with enthusiasm and reinforced over the years by newly-arrived European horticulturists who taught their trade to young Australians. Appreciation of native flora began to surface late in the nineteenth century but developed only slowly, and when the VTA emerged in the 1920's Melbourne's streets remained a vista of oaks, elms, poplars, spruce and plane trees.

From 1880 the generous and largely consistent provision of parks in Melbourne was halted as the city's suburban development degenerated into chaos. The decade of the 1880's was a watershed in Victorian history when the colony experienced an economic boom unparalleled in its history, and Melbourne grew from a large town to a city. One of the most obvious signs of Melbourne's growth was its rise in population: from 207,000 in 1871 to 491,000 in 1891.[32] The majority of those arriving in Melbourne were from other colonies and overseas but there was also a drift from the country to the

---

[29]See P.R Murray and J.Wells, From Sand, Swamp and Heath...a history of Caulfield, Melbourne, 1980, pp.32-34.

[30]Helen Coulson, Story of the Dandenongs, Melbourne, 1959, p.121.

[31]Robin Boyd, The Australian Ugliness, Melbourne, 1960, p.76.

[32]Grant and Serle, op.cit., p.136.

city as worn-out mining towns and unworkable selections were deserted by people seeking an easier fortune. Statistics support this trend. In 1861 Melbourne held 26 percent of the colony's population, by 1891 it held 43 percent.[33]

The consequences of the large turn-around in population distribution were dramatic. Most noticeable was the development of distinct class divisions as Melbourne's inner city suburbs became marked as working class slum areas, while the middle and upper classes moved outwards to new eastern and southern suburbs. The establishment of class divisions was facilitated by the development of suburban railway and cable tram systems which enabled wealthier people to live further from the city. Railway construction began in 1878 and was continued throughout the 1880's. By 1890, the system had over 70 suburban stations, with Flinders Street station at its centre, and extensions that reached to present day limits.[34] Cable trams arrived in Melbourne in 1885 when a series of lines was run around the city's major streets. Within a few years nearly every suburb within five miles of the city was connected to the system. By 1891 47 miles of track had been laid and Melbourne had the world's biggest and most efficient integrated cable tram system.[35]

The development of Melbourne's working class and slum areas marked the end of the city's innocence as its government was brought face to face with the problems of a growing city. Inner city suburbs became smog-filled and congested and were only home to those who could afford the small cottages built for them by building or friendly societies. As the suburban spread continued the problems of water and sewerage provision became more apparent, but were ignored by local governments which were reluctant to undertake the necessary improvements. The responsibility for sewerage and community health had been placed with municipal councils in an 1874 Act which had also given them the authority to oversee and encourage good government, and to undertake a wide range of functions including maintenance of roads, lighting, recreation areas, libraries and gardens.[36] During the 1880's, councils neglected these duties, instead diverting their funds to the building of large council offices. The only real effort to rectify the city's community problems before 1900 was the establishment of the

---

[33]S.Bardwell, loc.cit., p.302.

[34]Michael Cannon, Life In The Cities, Melbourne, 1975, p.64.

[35]ibid., p.60.

[36]Victorian Year Book, 1984, p.107.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) which was directed to take charge of the city's water supply, sewerage and drainage.

A major consequence of Melbourne's growth in the 1880's was widespread alienation of both suburban and city parks. All land not properly secured was seized by developers who paid little attention to the fact that many reserves were to be converted to parks once sufficient funds were raised to develop them. Furthermore, the suburban sprawl demanded a supply of parks and reserves in new areas to cater for the population's growing needs, but local councils neglected to enforce a policy of reserving parklands in the same manner that other duties were neglected. The large inner city parks which had once been adequate for public needs became over-crowded and over-used. The development of the city's transport system also had a devastating effect on established city parks, and in his 1932 article on the 'Alienation of the Melbourne Parklands' W.A.Sanderson lamented the loss of Batman's Hill, which was levelled to allow construction of Spencer Street Station, Flinders Park, which became the train storage area at Jolimont, and parts of Royal Park and Princes Park which were dissected by train and tram lines.[37] One of Melbourne's original open spaces, the Western Hill, had first the Mint and then State and Titles offices developed on it. Controversy also arose over the fate of Yarra Park, between Wellington Parade and the Yarra River, as it was encroached upon for sporting facilities. Allotments along St. Kilda Road, which had been reserved for public use in the 1860's, were sold to private owners for development in the late 1870's and early 1880's. The alienation of Melbourne's parklands gave rise to a debate which continued well into the next century and was fuelled by the growth in popularity of organised sport in the 1890's. The problem was no nearer solution by the 1920's and was one of the major concerns of the VTA from its earliest days.

Until 1890, the social function of Melbourne's parks and gardens remained largely unchanged as places for individual or communal rest and relaxation. As parks within or close to suburban areas were alienated for development, those on the city's edges were increasingly called upon to serve recreation needs. One such area was Studley Park, and the following narration highlights the extent to which it was used by the public as an escape from an ever-growing, congested city centre. The observer notes that from the park one could see:

> ...houses, trees and hills, piled and terraced as it were, behind and upon one another with a city that seems in the clouds for a background; and the cattle and cornfields, and gardens, and orchards and glittering river, and cloud-shadows rolling and fading

---

[37]Sanderson, loc.cit., pp.151-152.

> over the sun-lighted landscape...and down below are the Kiss-In-The-Ring Valley and the Picnic Hollows, with the kettle boiling against old tree trunks, and tea-drinking, and silvery laughter, under old tents...[38]

In the 1890's further changes in Melbourne's social fabric again threatened the future of its parks. The decade was one of depressed economic conditions and was particularly marked by a growth in organised sport as a universal and popular pastime. Although the growth in the popularity of sport during the 1890's has been examined from a number of historical perspectives it is generally agreed that the professionalization of football, cricket and horse-racing at this time was the result of the sudden growth of the city and the need for a universal occupation involving the dominant values of the whole community, rather than a single class or elite.[39] Geoffrey Blainey noted that the 1888 Melbourne Cup drew a crowd of 100,000 people and in 1895 the same number saw the fifth cricket test between Australia and England.[40] He believes that sport in Australia was fostered by the favourable climate, cheap urban land, the high proportion of young men in the population, the growth of large cities and ample leisure time.[41] Certainly, Melbourne workers were liberated by the introduction of the compulsory work-free Saturday afternoon in 1909 and sport, spectator sport in particular, helped to fill the void created by an increasing amount of leisure time.

In a study of popular leisure in Melbourne, Dennis Shoesmith argues that the growth of sport between the 1880's and 1920's was the inevitable outcome of a period of staid provincialism.[42] The heady excitement of the gold rushes and the boom years had been replaced by the 1890's depression, and it was to be another 30 years before the jazz era of the 1920's again liberated Melbourne society. Sport was one of the few, universal amusements, and was seen by many as an extension of the pioneering spirit which had founded the country.[43] John Lack argues that sport became the consuming passion of the working class as living conditions deteriorated and were made unbearable in summer by heat and disease.[44] Sport gave workers one possible escape route from

---

[38]Anon. in Clive Turnbull (ed.), The Melbourne Album, Melbourne, 1961, p.87.

[39]See Blainey, "History of Leisure", Shoesmith, "Boom Year", and Lack, "Working-class Leisure".

[40]Blainey, loc.cit., p.15.

[41]ibid.

[42]Shoesmith, loc.cit., p.79.

[43]ibid.

[44]Lack, loc.cit., p.58.

these conditions and was both practised and watched with enthusiasm.[45] The growth of organised sport was encouraged, too, by an abundance of open spaces and watercourses in outer areas of Melbourne and as the decade progressed it was fully integrated into suburban leisure habits.

As people's leisure time increased they began to divide their waking hours into distinct behavioural patterns. For the first time work and leisure were regarded as two separate activities. In an increasingly urban environment, people began to regard the city centre as either a workplace or cultural centre to attend dances or the theatre, rather than the hub of all activity. Weekends were spent in the suburbs visiting friends, gardening or playing and watching sport at local parks and ovals.

As these patterns developed conflict arose between those who wished to practise or observe their favourite sport and others who accused them of alienating public land for their own purposes. The increased popularity of sport in the suburbs and the consequent alienation of open space for sports grounds aroused public resistance that even in the 1920's was a barrier to municipal councils trying to provide the facilities demanded of them. In 1926 the VTA saw the equitable provision of sports grounds and public parks as one of the greatest problems facing suburban councils. Margaret Indian notes that in 1900 there was controversy when public money was spent improving Hawthorn and Footscray sports grounds and when entry charges were demanded to what was previously an open reserve.[46] Council by-laws were as yet not sufficient to allow councils to appropriate land for public sports grounds where needed, and before the First World War most inner city parks came under increasing demand for use as sports grounds. Newer suburbs, too, were under-provided with a sufficient number of recreation areas to satisfy the population and the growth in active recreation.

From 1914 there was an improvement in the provision of suburban parks and sports grounds. Land prices rose from the slump of the 1890's and councils began to reclaim and improve recreation areas with ovals, tennis courts, swimming pools and bowling greens. The conflict continued between those who wanted parks and gardens to be kept exclusively for passive exercise, and others who wanted them converted to sports grounds. In Caulfield the local council was forced to compromise to satisfy both needs:

> Each time an area for gardens was acquired there was a clamour from various sporting bodies for permission to use it. The Council allowed a croquet club to use an

---

[45]ibid.

[46]Indian, "Leisure in City and Suburb", p.27.

> area in the Hopetoun Gardens but refused a tennis club permission to build courts in Greenmeadows Gardens. There was great pressure for sporting facilities, and the Council slowly arrived at a policy of separating gardens from sporting areas.[47]

As councils responded to the demand for more sporting areas, park curators and gardening enthusiasts began to fear the loss of established parks and gardens containing areas which, although aesthetically pleasing, were seen to be wasting valuable land. More than any other public issue, the developing conflict serves to highlight the change that had taken place in recreation needs over the past twenty years. The days of passive exercise had almost completely disappeared in the over-riding enthusiasm for organised sport, and a compromise between the two would not be reached for another 50 years.

By 1919 the importance of sport in suburban life and throughout Australia was well established. Football had been taken over by organised, sponsored clubs whose players were of the highest standard, and top level matches attracted crowds of 30 to 40 thousand people. Improvements in ovals and grandstands also encouraged big crowds and Fawkner, Albert and Yarra Parks were filled with numerous sporting groups on Saturday afternoons. Sport was particularly popular after the necessarily restricted years of the war and in 1919, too, 'organised sport served a constant pressure on the people of an industrially growing city to fill up the vacuum of idle time left after a 48 hour working week'.[48]

At the local level, sport was beginning to be included in public school curricula and, more than anything, it highlighted the need for closer consideration of the welfare of children and the provision of playgrounds in new suburban areas. At a 1919 Town Planning Conference in Ballarat a representative of the Victorian Education Department, W.M.Gates, gave a paper on parks and playgrounds in Victoria. He made the point that, although the playground movement was only new in Australia, it was time for the issue to be seriously dealt with:

> Provision of playgrounds is not a fad: it is a necessity. Many of us...are apt to think that "Australia is all right: We have so much room; so fine a climate, etc." So we have. But already we have slums; already thousands of young Australians have nowhere to play but in the gutter.[49]

He quoted examples of action already taken in the United States and England on playground provision and concluded that:

---

[47]Murray and Wells, op.cit., p.34.

[48]D. Shoesmith, loc.cit., p.175.

[49]In the First Victorian Town Planning Conference and Exhibition, Official Volume of Proceedings, Ballarat, 13-15 November, 1919, p.50.

> ...it is clear that healthy boys and girls must have play, and...if we do not provide for organised and supervised play we are neglecting one of the most valuable factors for training in social and community life and duty.[50]

The shortage of suitable recreation and playing areas in the suburbs became fully apparent after the First World War. In 1917, with the financial and manpower problems of the war occupying its full attention, the State Government had opted out of its involvement of dual management of the city's parks and gardens, placing that responsibility fully with the Melbourne City Council (MCC).[51] The Council then established its own Parks and Gardens Committee to manage the new areas under its control and to introduce a unified system of management by incorporating each new park area into a Committee of Management. The Council was largely defeated in its efforts because of its lack of control over other facilities in suburban areas. Specifically, the MMBW controlled water supplies and sewerage connection, the Country Roads Board (CRB), formed in 1912, assumed responsibility for all the States major and minor roads, and electricity was provided by the State Electricity Commission (SEC). By the early 1920's it was apparent to the State Government that, if not rectified, lack of proper sanitation and open spaces would begin to affect the health and well-being of the community. Action to correct the unplanned and chaotic growth of Melbourne's suburbs could be delayed no longer.

Efforts to reorganise municipal control began with the inclusion of zoning provisions in the 1921 Local Government Act. The most significant effort to end the suburban chaos, however, was made in 1922 when the State Government established a Metropolitan Town Planning Commission to 'inquire into and report on the present conditions and tendencies of urban development in the metropolitan area'.[52] The Commission submitted its report dealing with aspects of zoning, transportation, building regulations, road improvements, recreation and legislation for implementing planning schemes in 1929. On the subject of recreation the Commission stated that:

> the provision of sufficient open spaces for the enjoyment of the community in large cities is now generally accepted as a vital part of city development. Abundant evidence is available (to show) that proper outdoor recreation has a most beneficial effect on the health, morals, and business efficiency of communities...[53]

---

[50]ibid., p.52.

[51]R. Swanson, op.cit., p.15.

[52]Victorian Year Book, 1984, p.109.

[53]Plan of General Development, Melbourne. Report of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, Melbourne, 1929, p.187.

The central concern was not whether recreation facilities were necessary but how much space was needed, where it should be located and how it could be obtained for public use at a reasonable cost. The Commission addressed the problems faced by councils in obtaining suitable recreation space, as well as the need to provide playgrounds where children could play in safety, away from the increasing hazard of road traffic. It estimated a potential city population of 3,500,000 people and on that basis recommended that a ratio of five acres of parks and playgrounds for every 1,000 people be adopted as a government standard.[54] Although the report was later adopted as a guideline for the city's town planning needs it was not acted on at the time of its submission. The biggest factor against its acceptance was the advent of the Depression, which also halted many other efforts for city and suburban improvement. It was also concluded at a time when neither the State government nor the opposition could agree on the best way of establishing a greater Melbourne authority which could have carried out the Commission's recommendations.

A more successful attempt to resolve Melbourne's problems was launched by the Town Planning and Parks Association of Victoria (TPPA) in the promotion of Garden Cities. The movement came to Australia from England in 1913 and was led by the founder of the TPPA, James Barrett. The Garden City idea was first proposed in 1898 by an Englishman, Ebeneezer Howard, in his book Tomorrow: a peaceful path to real reform (later renamed Garden Cities of Tomorrow). The essence of his scheme was the development of a co-operative civilisation in small communities embedded in a decentralized society. He wanted to combine town and country life to obtain the advantages of both by building self-contained estates of approximately 30,000 inhabitants.[55] These small, modern cities would contain an abundance of parks, tree-lined streets, local shops and work centres close to every resident.[56] At a time when urban over-crowding was becoming a serious problem in England, Howard's idea attracted considerable support and in Australia the progress of the movement was reported in the Melbourne-based publication Real Property Annual (later Australian Home Builder/Beautiful). James Barrett could see the potential for the application of the Garden City idea in Australia and he was particularly encouraged by a chapter in Howard's book praising Colonel William Light's plan for Adelaide with its ring of

---

[54]ibid., p.193.

[55]Robert Freestone, "The Australian Garden City: a planning history 1910-1930", unpublished PhD thesis, Macquarie University, 1984, p.17.

[56]ibid.

parklands. The Garden City proposal was foremost in his mind when he formed the TPPA in 1914, although he modified the concept to suit Australian conditions. The creation of public parks and playgrounds, better housing, proper planning of unused land around towns and the establishment of national parks to protect the native flora and fauna were central concerns of the new Association.[57]

The Garden City proposal received its greatest support in the early 1920's when public concern over Melbourne's planning problems was mounting. The Merrilands Estate, built in 1918 at Reservoir, was developed as a garden city, as were the seaside garden cities of Ranelagh, built near Frankston in 1923, Mooroduc, built on the Mornington Peninsula in 1927, and City View at Keilor East, also built in 1927.[58] Other ideas forwarded by Barrett and the TPPA, such as the establishment of an outer ring of parks linking Caulfield, Malvern, Camberwell, Northcote, Coburg and Essendon, were keenly supported:

> ...Fortunately, there are public-spirited and far-sighted men in the community who are devoting time and thought to preparing plans for our future. It is impossible to study the proposals that have been drawn up by the Town Planning Association of Victoria without becoming infected with the inspiration of their authorship...It is...a practicable plan to prepare in a big way against the needs that are already making themselves evident in our civic life...[59]

The formation of the TPPA and the partial implementation of the Garden City proposal were two of only a few successful attempts to improve the quality of life for Melbourne citizens before 1930. Those seeking improvements in the direction of Melbourne's growth were defeated by a lack of commitment in both the State government and those bodies powerful enough to effect any long-lasting changes. There is no doubt that by the 1920's Melbourne's tradition and pride in the city's established parks and gardens was well developed. Furthermore, as the city's middle class expanded and more people had access to their own home, horticultural pursuits grew in popularity and a greater appreciation of the environment was developed. For the majority of people, however, the concerns of living were dominated by the needs of work and home life, in which appreciation of the benefits and needs of the environment was of little relevance. The challenge facing the city's planners, therefore, was to provide a suitable living environment for the population and to cater for growing sport and recreation needs while preserving established and valued traditions.

---

[57]S. Bardwell, loc.cit., p.359.

[58]R. Freestone, loc.cit., pp.325-326.

[59]Editorial in the Herald, 23 November 1923.

# Chapter 2

# 1926 - 1938: EMERGENCE AND CONSOLIDATION

The emergence of the VTA in 1926 was the result of growing concern among a particular section of the community over the alienation of Melbourne's parklands and the lack of municipal planning in its suburbs. Its founding members were park curators and nurserymen who shared a common desire to improve the appearance of Melbourne's suburbs through tree planting, and to encourage a unified approach to the management of the city's streets and parks. In the Association's earliest years members pursued these aims by making contacts with government officers in departments such as the MCC's Parks and Gardens Committee. Before the Second World War the VTA had a well-defined public role as an advice service on all matters relating to tree care within Melbourne and in surrounding rural centres.

The VTA was formed during Melbourne's annual Garden Week, an event organised and conducted by the Nurserymen and Seedsmen's Association of Victoria. Garden Week was first held in April 1924 as an Horticultural Trade Exhibition and, because of its success, was renamed in 1925 and made an annual fixture of Melbourne's horticultural calendar. Held at Wirth's Park, near the city, it attracted exhibits from Melbourne's leading nurseries, garden stores and tradesmen, the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee and the Burnley School of Horticulture. The event ran for five days and was fully supported by members of the public who used it as an opportunity to gain ideas for their own gardens, and to consult professionals about various gardening problems. It was regarded by Melburnians as an ideal forum to promote a love of plants and gardens in the suburbs, and Melbourne's position as the leading garden city of Australia:

> ...it is not surprising that Garden Week has become an annual institution in Melbourne. It is a fine institution for it encourages the love of beautiful things, expands the knowledge of both professional and amateur gardeners, and inspires a healthy rivalry between the growers of flowers and shrubs. A community which possesses the gardens seen around Melbourne must be the better for it.[1]

---

[1] Editorial in the Leader, 5 April 1930.

Many of those who attended Garden Week were park curators or nurserymen who used the event as an opportunity to discuss common concerns and problems. It was an ideal forum for the first meeting of the VTA which was called by John Thomas Smith, Curator of Melbourne's Parks and Gardens in the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee.[2] The events leading to this meeting are described by the Association's initial Secretary, and later President, John Stanley (Jack) Owens:[3]

> At this time the Metropolis of Melbourne (was), as it is today, managed by a number of Municipalities, the boundaries of which are defined by an imaginary line down the centre of the road. Consequently, tree planting on our streets and roadways, and tree care was most haphazard. To make matters worse, overhead wires, and gas and water mains sharing what was supposed to be a nature strip, were outside the Curators control, so large gaps taken out of trees, and the nature strip constantly disturbed for gas and water supplies was a real nightmare. Mr Smith invited his collegues from the adjoining Municipalities for a cup of tea at his home to discuss this problem, it was obvious that the problem went much further, and that all Metropolitan Curators were involved with the same problem. The "Garden Week" Committee was approached, and they agreed to invite all authorities involved in tree management to attend a meeting at a forthcoming "Garden Week" Exhibition.[4]

John Smith was not alone in his concerns and his arrangements for the meeting were supported by James Railton, President of the Nurserymen and Seedsmen's Association.[5] As a nurseryman, Railton was interested in forming an association which would further the work of the Seedsmen's Association by planting Melbourne's bare roads and promoting tree planting and tree care in the community.

The formation meeting was held on 14 April 1926. Messrs Railton, Owens and Smith were present along with a number of men who were actively working in parks and gardens but were unacquainted with each other. As discussion of problems and concerns proceeded it became apparent that there was considerable potential and value to be gained from the formation of an association.[6] Jack Owens remembers that:

> The establishment of a permanent organisation was a unanimous agreement amongst the Curators of that time, but a number of the employing authorities were not too happy with the proposal, and for this reason we could not use a name with any

---

[2]John Smith was an English horticulturist who trained at Kew Gardens before migrating to Australia to manage the glasshouses and gardens on the Chernside Estate, at Werribee. He became Curator of the City of Melbourne in 1921.

[3]Jack Owens completed his schooling in Melbourne before obtaining the position of Secretary to the Lord Mayor. He began work as a senior clerk in the Parks and Gardens Committee in 1922, working directly under John Smith. He took over the position of Director of Parks and Gardens in 1947.

[4]Letter from J.S.Owens to J.Huston (RAIPR Honorary Historian), 8 January 1986.

[5]James Railton was the owner of a successful nursery and seed business in Preston with retail outlets in Swanston Street, Elizabeth Street and other localities.

[6]J.S.Owens, AIPR News, Vol.5, No.1, January 1976, p.1.

municipal significance, so we called it the Victorian Tree Planters' Association.[7]

Once formed, the new organisation appointed an Executive, consisting of the Association's chief office-bearers. The man appointed President of the VTA was Councillor William Cockbill, a member of both the MCC and its Parks and Gardens Committee. John Smith declined a position on the Executive but instead nominated Jack Owens as Honorary Secretary. A committee[8] of eleven was then nominated, comprising of men who were either nurserymen or municipal and country curators, and included Councillor William Warner (Nurseryman and Mayor of Camberwell), Charles Plumridge (Curator, City of Kew), Frederick Ueckerman (Curator, City of Caulfield), L.G. Robertson (Curator, City of Brighton), F. Reeves (Curator, City of Malvern) and Eric Nidschelm (Curator, Newtown and Chilwell). Other founding members, such as Alec Jessep (Principal, Burnley School of Horticulture), and Frederick Rae (Director, Royal Botanic Gardens) worked in related fields of parks and gardens care. A number of others were from rural centres around Victoria, including D.S. Middlin (Forester with the MMBW, Ballarat), Tom Toop (Curator, Ballarat Botanic Gardens), W. Lewis (Curator, Bacchus Marsh), E.Gray (Curator, Kyneton) and W.C. Griffiths (Curator, Bendigo). At the close of the meeting membership stood between 50 and 60 men.

The initial aim of the Association was straightforward. As stated in the 1929 Annual Report, its primary object was 'the gathering and dissemination of facts and information with reference to Public Parks and Gardens and Treeplanting'.[9] Membership was open to anyone interested in public parks, gardens and tree planting, at a cost of 10/6 per annum, and to municipal councils, Commissions, Boards and nurseries whose business correlated with the work of the Association, at 1/1/- per annum.[10] It was proposed that the VTA operate as a non-profit organisation and that all running costs, such as stationary, travel and communication be met through membership fees. As will be seen later, its financial arrangement was one aspect of the VTA's organisation which created substantial problems for its members and was a recurring weakness in the Institute's operation.

---

[7]ibid., p.2.

[8]Up to 1944 both office-bearers and committee members were known as "the Committee". After that time they were referred to as "the Council" but for convenience I have adopted this title from the beginning. Office-bearers were always known as the Executive.

[9]VTA 1929 Annual Report, p.3.

[10]VTA Minutes, 14 April 1929.

It was agreed that the Council should hold quarterly meetings and that there should be an annual general meeting for all members, to be held during a proposed annual conference. The latter decision was a particularly important one because in later years the annual conference was the one event which could be relied upon to bring all members together at least once during the year. The inaugural conference was held in March 1927 and it set the standard for future conferences with a high level of organisation and outside support, high attendance rates, and speakers who were considered experts in their field. It was held in Ballarat, at the instigation of member Tom Toop, and was attended by over 80 delegates who travelled to the conference site by train and open charabanc. The Mayor of Ballarat, Councillor A.J. Pittard, opened the conference and expressed his approval of the visit because it would give residents an opportunity to focus attention on the town's best private and public gardens. A series of seminars was conducted on topics ranging from 'Trees that have been and are now growing round Adelaide', the State School Endowment Plantation Scheme, and 'Utility Trees for Victoria',[11] and delegates were given guided tours of local plantations and public parks and gardens. This format was one adhered to for a number of years and was an important factor in the VTA's bid for recognition and publicity, through the attraction of local interest in areas it visited.

Recognition was one of the VTA's earliest goals and was assisted by a number of factors. In forming their Council, members appointed men who were at the top of their profession and, as the caretakers of Melbourne's prized parks and gardens, they were highly regarded by both the public and the city's administrators. More importantly, members such as Councillors Warner and Cockbill were able to obtain the patronage of the State's leading public figures and for many years the Governor of Victoria, Lord Somers, acted in this capacity.

Another long standing and highly-regarded patron was Councillor William Brens, Chairman of the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee, whose relationship with the VTA, through the MCC, was one of its greatest strengths. Councillor Brens was a previously successful businessman who had built up his own enterprise, Austral Wheel Works, before being elected to the MCC in 1938. He served as a councillor and Chairman of the Parks, Gardens and Recreation Committee (as it became known) for 25 years, apart from 1952/53 when he was Lord Mayor of Melbourne. He is described as a far-sighted, quiet diplomat who loved gardens and colour and who was a strong

---

[11]See conference report in The Garden Lover, Vol.3, No.1, April 1927, p.43.

supporter of all forms of active recreation, particularly children's play, long before such interests were accepted by the community at large.[12] His power of persuasion over fellow Councillors ensured that the Parks and Gardens Committee always received an adequate portion of Council funds 'and this attitude flowed through in his association with those Councillors from other bodies and with VTA members who influenced the direction of the Association'.[13]

Through Councillor Brens, VTA members were able to convince the MCC and other metropolitan councils of the value of their organisation in enabling council employees to gain knowledge which they could then apply to their work. Because of this connection, the VTA was supported by being given immediate access to the head of a large department, John Smith, and its resources. As Honorary Secretary Jack Owens was able to carry out many of his duties in work time, and for a number of years VTA meetings were held in the staff training building of the MCC's nursery, in the Fitzroy Gardens. VTA contacts with the MCC were important, too, because its finances were insufficient to allow members to carry out many of their desired activities, such as tree planting and advice-giving. Many successful projects were only completed in co-operation with MCC staff and with MCC resources.

Significantly, too, the VTA was able to quickly earn public recognition. In 1926 Melbourne had a number of bare and windswept areas, particularly in the west, which were in need of proper planning and a program of treeplanting to increase their visual appeal. In other areas, continued alienation of public parks and destruction to street trees by municipal authorities had created a need for a group, such as the VTA, to provide an official voice of protest. The SEC was the chief offender in lopping street trees to install new power lines and to keep existing lines clear of foliage. At each new instance of work carried out in suburban areas there was a flood of complaints from outraged citizens:

> I notice that the yearly vandalism in the lopping of trees is now taking place, more especially that done by the State Electricity Commission. Surely if this is necessary it can be done by some person who has some knowledge of pruning...This same question...comes up every year, but there it seems to rest. Can no remedy by found to stop the spoliation of our streets and the destruction of our trees?[14]

Because of its council connections the VTA was regarded as a group likely to be able to influence these activities with protests at an official level.

---

[12]Interview with Frank Keenan (AIPR President 1971/72. Refer to page 37 for details of his background.), Melbourne, 6 June 1987.

[13]Letter from Frank Keenan to E. Stewart, 6 May 1988.

[14]Letter to the Editor, Argus, 7 January 1939.

The factor that contributed most to the VTA's establishment in the community was that it catered to an increasingly garden-conscious population. The level and frequency of complaints against damage to street trees and public parks indicated a well-developed public awareness of the city's garden image. Added to this was a widespread interest in gardening and horticulture amongst a large portion of the community. Garden Week was attended annually by increasing numbers of citizens anxious for new ideas and new gardening techniques. By 1930 Melbourne's garden consciousness was being frequently reported in terms similar to the following:

> Melbourne is known throughout the world as a city of gardens. Probably no other place can outrival it in regard to public parks and gardens... whilst certainly no other city of the same size has anything like as many beautiful private gardens. It is a poor-spirited citizen who has not his lawn or flower beds...[15]

As Curator of the city's largest and most used public parks John Smith was convinced of Melbourne's future as a great garden city:

> I am satisfied that the Melbourne public is the greatest flower-loving city in the world. I have never seen a place for its age so full of flowers and garden lovers. The gardening instinct seems born in the people.[16]

All VTA members were involved in the gardening and horticulture world in various ways. During the 1920's and 1930's the Herald held regular gardening competitions in the suburbs and for a number of years John Smith, Alec Jessep and Frederick Rae were the principal judges of these events. As a group, the VTA was seized upon by members of the public keen to obtain professional advice on a variety of problems and, as the group became more widely known, its advice-giving role threatened to become overwhelming. Despite the amount of work involved, members rarely refused to give advice. They had formed the VTA to perform that role and they realised that their chances of becoming established in the eyes of the community depended on how willingly it was performed.

Despite members' efforts, the VTA did not achieve immediate public and council recognition and support for its activities. The greatest hindrance to members' activities was their lack of funds, because money raised through membership fees was used in running costs and to pay the Secretary an honorary stipend. Until its association with the MCC was established through Councillor Brens, the VTA rarely had sufficient funds to undertake new projects, and members were prevented from travelling to rural centres to assist country curators as often as they would have liked. Scarcity of funds also

---

[15]Editorial in the Leader, 5 April 1930.

[16]Argus, 31 March 1929.

prevented the VTA from attracting much media attention although the journal, The Garden Lover, reported its formation and conference activities for some years. Another factor that hindered members' activities was the shortage of public transport around the State. Communication between members was restricted and required country committee members to have a considerable degree of commitment to maintain regular attendance at quarterly and annual meetings. The VTA,too, initially faced opposition from employing authorities in permitting council employees to attend meetings and conferences, on the grounds that it was a waste of time and public money. Argument arose in 1927 when the VTA requested permission for a member of the MCC, Councillor Delves, to attend the Ballarat conference:

> Councillor Chandler said that he was opposed to the proposal on the grounds that it would entail a waste of money. The council had the services of an expert gardener who was thoroughly conversant with all matters appertaining to tree-planting...He expressed the view that Cr.Delves would be able to learn as much in a Chinese garden as he would by going to Ballarat.[17]

The VTA faced such opposition because it was seen as an amateur organisation with aims that were not entirely relevant to the sphere of parks and gardens care. From the VTA's earliest days its members made a concerted effort to dispel this image by spreading information about the services they were offering. At the formation meeting it was agreed to write to as many urban and rural councils as possible to promote the benefits of an organisation devoted to acquiring and sharing knowledge, and to urge employers to send their park curators to VTA meetings and conferences.[18] Country members boosted these efforts because they were better placed to convince shire councillors of the benefits to be derived from the VTA.

Members also sought to influence the activities of urban and rural authorities in the hope of creating a better and more co-ordinated management of tree planting. In July 1926 a deputation of members met with the CRB, asking that the VTA be consulted before any future tree planting was carried out. They strengthened their case by travelling throughout the State and dividing it into zones, according to the type of trees suitable for planting in each area and, after a period of consideration, the CRB agreed to the request.

In Melbourne, members requested both the SEC and the Melbourne Electric Supply Company to consult them before installing new telegraph poles, to ensure that they

---

[17]Newspaper article, reference unknown, probably the Herald or the Argus, early 1927.

[18]VTA Minutes, 14 April 1926.

would not interfere with street trees. In 1932 members compiled and distributed a list of smaller trees suitable for street tree planting as a guide for municipal councils. Some of the VTA's requests were adopted but the spread of its influence was not as wide as members hoped. There is no doubt, though, that the efforts of the VTA provided the city's planners with a valuable guide to the establishment of more co-ordinated urban management.

As VTA members became increasingly involved in council issues their relationship with the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee strengthened to the point where many of their concerns could be dealt with in council work. In the late 1920's the MCC controlled parks, gardens and reserves covering over 630 acres, in an area which extended from High Street, Prahran to Park Street, Brunswick, and from Punt Road, Richmond, to beyond the Flemington racecourse. This area included 1500 acres of street plantations, 21 playgrounds, 24 tennis courts, a paddling pool, a putting golf course, 75 cricket pitches, 35 football grounds and several basketball fields.[19] All of these facilities were under John Smith's control. By 1929 he was assisted by 210 men, eight district foremen and the foreman propagator.[20] Maintaining these areas was a full-time occupation, particularly with the type of equipment available which, by modern standards, was primitive. Horse-drawn lawn mowers were used in conjunction with scythes and burning to keep grass down. Sometimes these methods produced unfortunate results:

> The broad areas of parkland were treated in a more simple manner, long spring grass on the cricket fields was burnt off, as the most expeditious method of reducing it to size where balls would not be lost. Complaints of cricketers falling into blackened areas of grass in their white clothes were not uncommon.[21]

Having a number of curators in its membership, the VTA discussed all matters relating to the care of such areas and through discussion members gained a greater understanding of the problems common to different municipalities.

The provision of adequate recreation space was extensively discussed by VTA members and the MCC in the 1920's. As the popularity of gardening and horticultural pursuits increased, so had the incidence of active recreation and organised sport. In working class suburbs, particularly, the available recreation space was valued more highly than ever. In 1929 John Smith remarked that before long the playing areas

---

[19] Argus, 30 March 1929.

[20] ibid.

[21] J.S.Owens, Australian Parks, Vol.1, No.2, November 1964, p.14.

around the city would only be sufficient for the children of those districts, and that it was necessary for someone to reserve large areas for sporting purposes outside the metropolitan area.[22] Both Jack Owens and Councillor Brens had a personal interest in active recreation and promoted their ideas for improving the supply of recreation areas at VTA meetings. It was during this period that the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee and the VTA began to promote rationalization of open space usage for the benefit of both passive and active recreation, rather than the usual dominance of one or the other.

In many of their early activities VTA members displayed a philosophy of looking to the future in anticipation of changes in tree planting and park care. It was an ideal espoused by two of the VTA's most influential members, John Smith and Councillor Brens, despite their different interests and backgrounds. As a horticulturist John Smith was interested primarily in the beauty of his surroundings. He regarded his work as:

> ...only one rung in the ladder to be climbed before Melbourne becomes what it should be, one of the loveliest cities in the world. I am only one in a hundred, and it is incumbent on each curator to do his best to leave the gardens of our city in the best possible condition for future generations.[23]

Councillor Brens was a more practical man, with a desire to see open space used for both active and passive pursuits. His approach to the future, however, paralleled that of Smith:

> One of the many philosophies enunciated by Councillor W. Brens, my Chairman during the whole of my administrative career with the Council was, "Never think in the past, yesterday will not return, so think in terms of today and tomorrow."[24]

The development of this philosophy was important for the survival of the VTA, not only as it was establishing itself but in later years when its ability to change enabled it to adapt to changes in society. In the 1930's it influenced members' decisions to establish and maintain contacts with municipal and urban authorities, including the CRB and SEC. It also encouraged them to establish links with organisations which had similar interests, and a number of members maintained dual membership with the Field Naturalists club, the Forest Commission of Victoria, the Town Planning Association of Victoria, the Municipal Association of Victoria, the League of Youth of Australia and the Victorian Council of Horticulture.

The philosophy was also evident in the VTA's promotion of native plants for tree planting, in place of the more popular European species. In the late 1920's most

---

[22]Argus, 30 March 1929.

[23]ibid.

[24]J.S.Owens, Australian Parks, Vol.1, No.2, November 1964, p.14.

residents and professional horticulturists still adhered to the English style of tree planting:

> The men who were the pioneers...came from the old world, and they worked on those things about which they knew something. They knew elm trees, for instance, and they did far better with them than if they had experimented with gum trees, about which they knew nothing at all...They made some mistakes...(but) much of the beauty about us at present we owe to them.[25]

By 1930, however, many local curators were experimenting with native plants in street tree planting to overcome problems created by European varieties. VTA members encouraged their actions by highlighting the benefits of faster growth and low maintenance of native trees, over the more commonly used elms, ash and oak trees. The first suburban planting of a native tree, Tristania Conferta, was made on Flemington road in 1926 and was significant enough to be publically reported.[26] By 1938, VTA conference delegates moved 'that the conference affirm the principle of planting no more plane trees in the metropolitan area and in provincial towns'.[27] In 1931 the VTA sent a deputation to the Post Master General to have a native floral emblem on the State's stamps, and a native flower to be named the emblem for Victoria. A plebiscite conducted by the Association found Pink Heath to be the most popular wildflower in the State and, although the VTA suggestion was not adopted at that time, Pink Heath was later named the official floral emblem of Victoria. Although it was many years before native plants were widely used in private and public tree planting, VTA efforts to create an awareness of the native environment was a considerable development on prevailing English-oriented perceptions of landscape.

During the late 1920's and 1930's the VTA extended its philosophies of native tree planting, advice-giving and sharing of knowledge and expertise in a number of public projects. The first was in 1927 when representatives from the Association were invited to join a Committee in planting an avenue of trees along the Melbourne-Geelong road. The chairman of the Geelong Road Committee was VTA President, Councillor Cockbill, who presided over an official planting ceremony on 26 August, when the Governor of Victoria planted the first tree near Kororoit Creek. Included on the Committee were representatives from the CRB, Shire Councils, Horticultural Societies, and the Nurserymen and Seedsmen's Association, all of whom agreed that Australian Eucalypts and other species would provide a substantial wind-break for the windswept road.

---

[25]John Smith in the Argus, 30 March 1929.

[26]In The Garden Lover, Vol.12, No.4, July 1926, p.43.

[27]Argus, 16 March 1939.

In 1928 the VTA was asked to assist the Mount Dandenong Reserves Committee in establishing a conifer arboretum at Kalorama. The VTA agreed to the proposal, realising its experimental and educational value, and a sub-committee was formed to plan the layout of the arboretum. Planting began in early 1929 with donations of specimen trees including species of oak, maple, elm, ash, cypress, redwood, and chestnut. The project suffered financial setbacks but intermittent donations of money and plants enabled it to continue, and in 1931 the VTA gained equal control of the area with six of its members on the management committee, together with six from the Mount Dandenong Reserves Committee. Another major project was carried out in 1933 when VTA members planted five English Ash trees in the grounds of Saint Pauls Cathedral, in the city. A casket was placed under one of the trees for posterity with the message that:

> ...by a feat of transplanting...this garden area could be quickly converted into a shady rendezvous and resting place for the citizens of this city...[28]

The planting of the Geelong road and the projects at the Mount Dandenong arboretum, and Saint Pauls Cathedral gave the VTA its greatest community contact. The progress of all projects was reported in The Garden Lover, the Argus and the Herald and, in the years before the Second World War, members went to great lengths to answer public inquiries. Most queries were discussed at quarterly meetings when a particular member was appointed to advise correspondents on the best solutions to their problems. When queries were received from outside the metropolitan area the Council usually appointed two members with experience relating to the problem to deal with it on site. In this way members were assured that their advice was being adhered to while further publicizing the efforts of the Association.

The majority of queries and problems dealt with in the above manner related to municipal concerns and there is no doubt that the VTA developed as an urban-based organisation. Nevertheless, its members were interested in a variety of rural matters, including conservation, erosion and bushfire control. They regularly attended seminars and meetings during Melbourne's annual Bushfire Prevention Week and in the late 1920's expressed public concern at erosion and the resultant flooding in the Mallee and Gippsland areas:

> They (the VTA) claim that one of the chief factors in this cause is the excessive denudation of the forests by the inroads of the settlers in the upper reaches of the rivers and their catchments. This question is of national importance, and to this end

---

[28]From a copy of the letter written by Cr.W.Cockbill and J.S.Owens, dated 14 July 1933, which was placed in the casket.

they have delegated an investigation into this matter...[29]

Similar views were held by members of the TPPA and the Australian Forest League (AFL), a body which was concerned primarily with reafforestation in rural areas but whose interests were largely the same as those of the VTA:

> We again invite all local governing and other bodies concerned to do all in their power to foster a love of forests, and where suitable, to ensure the planting of our Australian flowering shrubs and trees in the parks, streets and recreation reserves under their control.[30]

By 1930 many VTA activities had to be scaled down when Australia, like much of the Western world, fell into the grip of the Great Depression. Unemployment began rising in 1927, despite the introduction of a 44 hour week, and by 1930 it was as high as 30 percent. Many city dwellers were forced to leave their homes to find work in the country or to try farming on poor blocks of land. Lack of income forced many on to the streets:

> Idle men dotted suburban streets and parks, yarning away their time or hanging around the employment offices. Hawkers and desperate or unashamed beggars made the rounds of the middle class suburbs.[31]

The care of parks and gardens in cities was minimised as municipal councils were forced to reduce existing programmes of road, street and bridge construction and maintenance. These areas were not neglected as badly as they might have been, however, for they were one aspect of municipal duties which provided an outlet for unemployment relief work. Throughout the Depression the most significant municipal contribution lay in the use of sustenance labour:

> Through local work relief schemes, the assistance of grants made available by the Government from the Unemployment Relief Fund, and special loans provided under the Unemployment Relief Loans and Application Act councils were able to make work available to the unemployed on road, street and footpath construction and maintenance, and other public works.[32]

The MCC Parks and Gardens Committee played a large role in providing relief work in the city's parklands. In 1929 the State Government relinquished control of the Treasury Garden to the Council and a gang of 25 unemployed men was put to the task of bringing it into line with the neighbouring Fitzroy Gardens. In 1930 Jolimont Reserve was converted into a camping area with room for 60 unemployed and homeless men. In 1934 it was reported that:

---

[29]The Australian Garden Lover, Vol.12, No.10, January 1936, p.43.

[30]Charles Rosenthal, President of the AFL, in The Tree Lover, journal of the AFL, Vol. 1, No.1, July 1933.

[31]Grant and Serle, op.cit., p.253.

[32]Victorian Year Book, 1984, p.110.

> ...since July Melbourne City Council has provided continuous sustenance work for 3,300 men, or an average of 163 men a week and additional work is now contemplated at Royal Park, which will enable 200 more men to be employed.[33]

VTA members continued to meet throughout the Depression and in 1930 they held discussions with the Returned Services League on the landscaping requirements around the Shrine, work which was to be carried out by unemployed relief workers. Jack Owens remembered that when work had commenced on the Shrine grounds

> ...a four horse team ploughing the approach to the National War Memorial (Shrine) in the Domain gave a country aspect to part of Melbourne within a mile of Swanston Street.[34]

In 1933 members approached the Premier with a suggestion, subsequently agreed to, that sustenance funds be made available for the development of parks and gardens as a centenary measure.

Although it maintained an interest in its major projects, lack of funds prevented the VTA from undertaking any further large scale tree planting projects during the 1930's. During the worst years of the Depression efforts were concentrated on answering queries and locating areas where unemployed men could be put to work. Alec Jessep remembers that both the VTA and Melbourne's parks and gardens survived the Depression because of the dedication of those in the field, and that the lean conditions engendered a loyalty amongst park staff that saw everyone helping each other, in an effort to maintain the city's parks and gardens to the highest possible standard.[35]

Although the maintenance of Melbourne's parklands was one of the least affected aspects of municipal duties during the Depression, the reduced availability of trained park staff created considerable problems within the city's parks departments. It was at this time that VTA members developed their lasting concern over the need for higher education standards in horticulture, in order to attract more men to the profession. One of the main reasons for the reduced number of park staff during the Depression was that municipal councils, facing a shortage of funds, were forced to discharge staff in order to save money for essential services. Another was that English-trained horticulturists, who had formed the backbone of horticulture in Australia up to that time, were prevented from coming to Australia as the Depression worsened. The few who remained, such as

---

[33]J.S.Owens, from 1934 MCC Report, in Australian Parks, November 1964, p.15.

[34]ibid., p.14.

[35]Interview with Alec Jessep, Melbourne, 30 August 1987.

Percival Trevaskis,[36] were increasingly valued for their knowledge and expertise because horticulture training, such as that in England, had no equivalent in Australia. Percival Trevaskis, and others like him, were able to gain employment in the highest positions in horticulture because of their qualifications, but when the numbers of such experienced men began to subside, it became apparent that there was a desperate need for suitable training facilities to be developed within Australia.

In the 1930's most horticulture training in Australia was concentrated at the Burnley School of Horticulture, in Melbourne. In New South Wales the only training related to horticulture was a course in agriculture at Hawkesbury Agriculture College or Yanco and Hurlstone Agricultural High Schools. In South Australia the Roseworthy Agricultural College had been established since 1885 but courses at this and other Agriculture schools contained very little horticulture content because they focussed on preparing students for farming life. The Burnley School of Horticulture was formed in 1891 when the Department of Agriculture assumed control of the Burnley Gardens from the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria. The original horticulture course was two years full-time study and led to the Certificate of Competency in Horticulture. Until 1930, most of its successful graduates were female, including Edna Walling who became a well-known landscape gardener. A 1926 report of the course noted that it was

> ...largely followed by girls who intend to make horticulture their life work...the girls who graduate at Burnley readily find profitable employment...There are openings...in garden designing, and landscape work. In all these lines woman's artistic skill and instinctive appreciation of beauty makes her peculiarly fitted for this new application of the age old business of home-making.[37]

The domination of horticulture by women before 1930 is easily explained. Until that time gardening was not considered a profitable or legitimate career for men, and boys considering a future in parks and gardens care were dissuaded by parents who directed them towards a more lucrative career. Before boys began to obtain formal horticulture education the majority of council gardeners and curators learnt their trade from experience, and succeeded to higher positions without formal qualifications. The situation began to change in 1927 when the Cronin Memorial Scholarship was established to attract boys to a gardening career. Named after a former director of the Botanic Gardens, John Cronin, the Scholarship was a combined project by the Nurserymen and Seedsmen's Association, the VTA and the Rose Society. It was

---

[36]An English horticulturist who was brought to Australia in 1929 to landscape the gardens of the estate, Burnham Beeches, in the Dandenongs.

[37]The Garden Lover, Vol.2, No.7, October 1926, p.266.

designed to provide an opportunity for students to add to their education with a further year in a Parks and Gardens Department or Botanic Gardens. The first recipient of the Scholarship was Frank Keenan[38], who joined the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee in 1931 after two years of study at the Burnley School of Horticulture, where he had been the sole male graduate in his year. His progress set a precedent, for between 1931 and 1939 40 male students graduated from Burnley and were employed in various municipal parks departments.[39] Moreover, when Keenan first entered the MCC Burnley had barely been heard of in local government but by the end of the 1930's the MCC was trying to have the School's courses upgraded to a higher standard.

As its awareness of the education problem grew the VTA became concerned at the lack of administration taught in the Burnley horticulture course, for its content was largely practical. Members' interest in this issue was aroused because as the area of parklands under council care grew, curators were finding it increasingly difficult to deal with problems of park administration. As an organisation consisting largely of curators, the VTA strove to provide answers to the problem. In 1929 James Railton raised the subject of training for future curators and formed a sub-committee of members representing both commercial and municipal interests to investigate the problem. After a period of time the VTA Council compiled a report on a proposal to establish a separate School of Horticulture devoted entirely to public parks and gardens. The report could not be acted on because the Depression was at its worst, but the the idea of establishing their own horticulture school stayed with members for many years.

In 1932 the MCC took its own steps to educate staff in areas most applicable to their work with the introduction of monthly lectures in horticulture. The lectures, which were open to all council gardeners and labourers, were conducted by experts in the lecture hall of the Fitzroy Gardens and included such topics as 'The Use of Gardening Tools and Appliances' and 'Cause and Control of Common Garden Diseases'. Further efforts by the MCC and the VTA to improve horticulture education were hampered by a shortage of money and staff, and were not resumed until the late 1940's. The lack of staff and training facilities did not disadvantage the VTA, however, because it was one

---

[38]Educated at Eltham College, Melbourne, and at Burnley before starting work with the MCC. After four years in the airforce during the war he returned to the MCC and was appointed Officer-in-Charge of Royal Park South and Fitzroy Gardens Nursery. In 1954 he became Assistant Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, and in 1964 he replaced Jack Owens as Superintendent of the MCC Parks, Gardens and Recreation Department.

[39]Interview with Frank Keenan, Melbourne, 28 May 1987.

of only a few organisations offering a self-help and information service, and it was well supported by curators seeking answers to the current crisis.

By 1934 the worst of the Depression was over but, despite efforts to the contrary, the maintenance of suburban streets and parks was not improved, and the VTA's concern over the lack of proper park administration deepened. In 1933 the Victorian State Government had shed most of its responsibility for metropolitan parks with the proclamation of the Market and Parklands Act, which gave the MCC control of the only inner city parks still outside its domain; Royal Park, the King's Domain, the grounds of the College of Surgeons, and Parliament Gardens. The Council had to agree to spend a certain amount of money each year to maintain these areas, and to spend 28,000 pounds on Royal Park over the next five years.[40] The only reserves that remained in Government hands were the Botanic Gardens, the grounds of Government House, and the gardens behind Parliament House. An amended Local Government Act of 1934 gave municipal councils more responsibility for a wider range of facilities than before, including private street construction, provision of carparks, maintenance of schools and colleges, and assistance to asylums.[41]

Although these efforts were an apparent attempt to improve municipal management in the suburbs they failed because councils were denied the financial support to carry out their new duties. Instead, they were forced to concentrate their activities on the construction of roads, provision of lighting and gas, removal of waste, and partial maintenance of parks and recreational facilities. Park curators found their range of duties increased but they were ill-equipped to cope with the change, lacking the necessary knowledge and support to administer the greater areas of land under their care. Curators' problems were further complicated with the acquisition of land such as Royal Park, which required councils to become more involved in the issue of active and passive use of recreation space. There was still a public outcry when lands were taken over for sporting facilities and councils were often accused of 'alienating' public lands:

> The Minister for Lands indicated yesterday that he was definitely opposed to the practice of alienating any portion of parks and reserves within the metropolitan area, unless it could be shown that the public would benefit thereby...Applications for...land for bowling clubs or tennis clubs, which meant encroachment on parks or reserves, would not be entertained, as comparatively few people only would be benefitted.[42]

---

[40]Swanson, Melbourne's Historic Public Gardens, p.16.

[41]Victorian Year Book, 1984, p.107.

[42]Argus, 23 August 1927.

VTA members were aware of this conflict and discussed it at some length, but were unable to provide a satisfactory solution until after the Second World War when the concept of open space utility changed.

The latter part of the 1930's was a period of consolidation for the VTA as it continued to gain recognition within the community, and a greater reputation as an organisation aiming to help and support employees within the parks profession. Members maintained rural interests with conferences such as that held in 1938, a four day tour of the Victorian towns of Mansfield, Bright and Albury. Issues discussed during the tour were suitable accommodation for 'old citizens who frequent parks and gardens to play cards and discuss affairs', band performances in parks and gardens, vandalism in parks, and whether golden poplars were suitable for street beautification.[43] In 1935 James Railton succeeded Councillor Cockbill as VTA President, and Jack Owens remained Honorary Secretary. In 1937, as a measure of their status in their profession, James Railton and Councillor Warner were elected to the Victorian Council of Horticulture. Also in 1937, the VTA was asked by the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria to raise a number of Royal Oak seeds which it had received from England. When they were big enough, the trees were to be planted around Victoria to mark the coronation of King George VI.

The reasons for the emergence of a Tree Planters' Association in Melbourne rather than another capital city or Australian state have been discussed earlier. It is interesting to note, however, that although the VTA began to spread its interests interstate as early as 1927, the VTA remained the only Tree Planters' Association of its kind until the 1960's. VTA members encouraged links with other States from the Association's earliest days and in 1927 they invited the Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, J.F.Bailey, to address conference delegates on the street trees of Adelaide. This practice was followed at subsequent conferences and gave rise to interstate interest in VTA aims and activities. In both 1932 and 1937 the VTA received requests from a Tasmanian MLC, L.M.Shoobridge, to hold a conference in Launceston and, although the proposal was not carried out, it was due more to lack of funds than a desire to keep VTA activities within Victoria. In 1938, VTA members received a request from the Leeton Town Planning Committee for members to visit the town to inspect and advise on its tree planting projects. The plan was accepted and the subsequent visit established a pattern of regular interstate trips by members who were keen to put their combined expertise to good use.

---

[43]See reports of the tour in the Argus, 14 March 1938, and the Herald, 12 March 1938.

As the reputation of the VTA spread, attempts were made to start similar Associations in other States. In 1934 the VTA received requests from New South Wales and Tasmania for advice on how to set up similar organisations, and in 1935 the VTA sent copies of its constitution to Western and South Australia as a guide to forming Tree Planters' Associations in those states. In October 1936 members were informed that these organisations had been established. As a rule, Tree Planters' Associations formed outside Victoria during these years lacked public and government support and were not able to consolidate themselves as the VTA had. Most did not survive through the Second World War. Their effect on the VTA was to create a greater awareness of its existence and to provide an increasing number of interstate members whose diversity of interests and knowledge broadened the knowledge and aims of Victorian members. The VTA's early association with other States was crucial to its development for in 1962 it gave members the confidence to take the necessary step of becoming an Australia-wide organisation.

By 1939 the VTA was a well-established, amateur organisation. Its members had created a firm base and a network of contacts that would support its activities in the future. The majority of its concerns were devoted to tree planting and providing a public advice service, but signs of change were evident in the increasing number of park curators as members and in members' growing interest in park administration and horticulture education. The most important aspect of the VTA's development before the war was its establishment as an organisation concerned with a variety of issues affecting the environment in both urban and rural areas. Members sided with conservation groups in denouncing the misuse of rural properties by farmers and developers and urged greater forethought in future planning of wilderness areas. In urban centres they advocated proper care and management of parks and gardens and, although their interests in parks were primarily horticultural, members addressed the need for greater areas of recreation space in Melbourne. The VTA was limited in its efforts to promote the importance of active recreation and improvements in horticulture education in Melbourne from a lack of funds and facilities, but through its contact with the MCC it was aware of the need for more definite action in these areas in the future.

# Chapter 3

# 1939 - 1949: CRISIS, CHANGE, CONTINUITY

The declaration of war on 3 September 1939 and the following decade of conflict and recovery irretrievably changed the course of the VTA's growth. When viewed in the context of its place in a wider society, the development of the Institute has been greatly affected by changes within that society and this trend became increasingly apparent when the fortunes of the VTA fluctuated with the progress of the war. Not only was the Association's future placed in doubt during the crisis years of 1942 and 1943, but the VTA began to concern itself with issues relating almost entirely to park administration. In the immediate post-war years the transition of the VTA to a park administrators' organisation became more apparent. It was during this period that problems facing park curators, such as staff shortages and land alienation, became urgent. VTA members identified a new role for themselves in trying to solve these problems and in the process almost completely abandoned their tree planting and advice-giving role. But if the period is one of change there were, nevertheless, continuities in the way members retained their loyalty to the profession and to their organisation in the manner characteristic of the VTA's earliest years.

In the months following the outbreak of war the activities of the VTA continued as normal and, once the initial excitement had died down, Australian society, too, remained unaffected and even apathetic towards the activities taking place in Europe.[1] There were a number of reasons for this. First, although war between Britain and Germany was declared in September there was little fighting until the following April, and it was not until Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 that heavy fighting occurred. In these early months there was little news coming from the war front, and as Australian casualties were not yet involved the public soon lost interest. Second, many Australians felt that although the Federal Government was right to support Britain in a time of crisis, the war in Europe was far removed from Australian life and was not

---

[1]Michael McKernan, All In! Australia During The Second World War, Melbourne, 1983, p.12.

particularly an Australian concern. There was disappointment that the 'war to end all wars' from 1914 to 1918 had not achieved this and that Europe was once again war-torn.[2] Third, except for the departure of men for the armed forces, Australian life was barely disrupted. Unemployment was eliminated 'because of the needs of defence production and the vacancies created by enlistments'.[3]

The Menzies government encouraged Australians to pursue their normal lives because it was felt that the upkeep of the Australian economy and production levels was the best way to help Britain. The 'business as usual' attitude pervaded all aspects of life and, by late September, the war seemed forgotten. In Melbourne, large crowds flocked not only to the Show, but to the races, the football and the picture theatres:

> People seemed happy "to carry on in their usual way and leave worry about the war to the nation's executive or until it appear(ed) to be necessary for Australians at home to worry."[4]

The popularity of sport was in no way diminished, and in a reference to Albert Park one observer noted that it was still:

> ...the playground of the people, one of the few lungs of an ever-growing city, where youth has its fling at the weekend, and where one can see almost every sport under the sun without paying for it.[5]

In 1940 the Melbourne Cup was watched by 100,000 people and drew 127,676 pounds in on-course betting, an all-time Australian record for any one race.[6] Christmas 1940 was celebrated without the restraint one might expect of a nation at war.

Melbourne's gardening and horticultural activities, including those of the VTA, continued unchanged until mid-1941. Garden Week, by then considered Australia's version of England's famous Chelsea Flower Show, was held as usual and was promoted as 'a welcome break from daily conditions', a reference to the imposition of war-time restrictions in the early 1940's. The Herald gardening competition was conducted in 1939 and 1940 and in both years VTA members played their usual active role. The 1939 annual conference was held in Melbourne during Garden Week, and the VTA was offered facilities, including a marquee for conference lectures, for its participation in the week's events. As in previous years members gave advice to groups and individuals on tree planting problems, and received an increasing number of

---

[2]ibid., p.1.

[3]Grant and Serle, The Melbourne Scene, p.256.

[4]Quoted from the Age, 29 September 1939, in McKernan, op.cit., p.12.

[5]Age, 29 May 1939.

[6]McKernan, op.cit., p.61.

invitations to inspect both urban and rural gardens, nurseries and country estates. In late 1939 members attempted to create a record of the best specimen and avenue trees in Victoria by gathering a collection of slides of specimen trees from around the State. The Association's interest in the Mount Dandenong Arboretum was maintained through regular visits to the area. A further interest in the area was established when members agreed to a request by the TPPA for assistance in supporting a deputation to have the Dandenong Police Paddock retained as a National Park.

One of the most obvious signs of normality in Melbourne was the anticipated amount of money, 80,000 pounds, to be spent annually on the maintenance of city parks and gardens. In 1939 the total area of Melbourne city proper was approximately 7,740 acres, of which 1,777 acres were devoted to parklands, gardens, and reserves.[7] This area was a considerable increase on the 630 acres of parks controlled by the MCC in the 1920's (see Chapter Two, page 14) and, as the area of land reserved for public use increased, VTA members expressed concern at the continued lack of uniformity in the maintenance of park areas.

Their concerns also extended into country areas where in 1939 lack of proper fire control resulted in severe bushfires over much of north-east Victoria and the destruction of Victoria's most valuable timber stands along the Great Dividing Range. VTA members made a number of donations to the Bushfire Relief Fund and wrote letters to the press stressing that such a catastrophe should not be allowed to recur. They also offered donations of trees to shires which had suffered badly during the fires, an offer repeated by members of the West and South Australian Tree Planters' Associations on hearing about the losses sustained. As the war moved closer to Australia, the need for the maintenance of valuable timber resources became increasingly apparent, and moves were made to form a permanent organisation to tend exclusively to protecting the State's natural forest areas.

Early references to the war appeared in VTA Minutes in mid-1940 when members discussed possible venues for the 1940 conference. In an effort to spread VTA interests outside Victoria, Canberra was proposed as a possible conference site. After consideration, the idea was postponed 'until world affairs settled',[8] and a tour of Western Victoria was organised. In 1940 the Federal government began urging people

---

[7]The Australian Garden Lover, December 1939, p.15.

[8]VTA Minutes, 7 February 1940.

to support the war effort by investing in War bonds, and in July the VTA complied by spending 25 pounds on War Savings Certificates. By mid-1941 the effects of the war were being felt more widely throughout society and the VTA Council felt it was time that activities were scaled down to cope with war-time restrictions. The number of inspections made to rural estates and tree plantations was reduced to comply with petrol restrictions and most advice-giving was carried out by letter. In July, members of the Council decided that because of their restricted activities:

> ...there was not sufficient business to call the Committee together for monthly meetings...until further notice meetings should be held on alternate months.[9]

The Council did not meet between November 1941 and May 1942, a sign of the uncertainty which was reflected throughout society as the war moved closer to home.

The bombing of Pearl Harbour by the Japanese in December 1941 heralded the beginning of the Pacific War, an event which presented the first real threat to Australians and their way of life since European settlement. The fall of Singapore in February 1942 and the air-raids on Darwin a few days later gave rise to the belief that the Japanese were trying to invade the country. In Darwin the Japanese raids prompted a dramatic response:

> Servicemen and civilians panicked, fleeing the post by any means available, even on foot. Most feared that the raid was but a preparation for full-scale invasion.[10]

Sydney was also galvanised into action following the infiltration of its harbour by three Japanese submarines in May, when 'terrified harbour-side residents...had watched in fascinated horror as searchlights and gun-fire from shore batteries swept over the water'.[11] The period of uncertainty and fear was particularly strong from 1942 to mid-1943 and it brought Australians together in a spirit of nationhood for the first time since the Great War. As war-time restrictions of food, clothing and petrol rationing, the 'brownout', slit-trenches, air-raid precautions and requisitioning of schools and other buildings became more stringent, 'most people accepted government interference cheerfully enough, while reserving their right to grumble'.[12]

The spirit of these years is reflected in the activities of the VTA, which faced the first threat to its existence in 1942. In that year the Council considered the Association's future and the prospect of disbanding in the light of its reduced activity and

---

[9] ibid.

[10] McKernan, op.cit., p.112.

[11] ibid., p.134.

[12] ibid., p.136.

effectiveness. The question was closely discussed and, although it was decided to abandon the 1942 annual conference and annual general meeting, the general feeling was that although 'we were not so forcible as pre-war times, we were still anxious to serve their (members') requirements, and carry on, to the best of our ability in the circumstances'.[13] Following a discussion on the 'ways and means of preserving the Association until better times were at hand',[14] the Council decided that, subject to members' agreement, office-bearers and committee members would be re-elected for the following year, the annual subscription would be reduced from 10/6 to 2/6 for the duration of the war, 'and that Municipal Councils and other organisations be informed of the Association's intention to carry on in a modified form'.[15]

There is little doubt that the VTA was strengthened by these discussions about its future. Its members were forced to assess the Association's value to a community which was confronted by major economic and social disruption. By having to face this issue in such difficult conditions, they were obliged to determine whether the aims and ideals set down by the VTA's founders were still thought worthwhile. Their reaffirmation of these aims and ideals renewed their commitment to them. Furthermore, the decision enabled members to set a course of activity for the following decade, confident that they could contribute to the rebuilding of a peacetime community. In an effort to consolidate its decision the Council reverted to monthly meetings and encouraged members to grow onion seed for Britain, which faced severe food shortages after the German raids.

With the resumption of regular meetings VTA members continued discussions of the problems in Melbourne parks created by the impact of the war. In 1940 the MCC had been requested to give 25 acres to the Australian Military Forces for training purposes. The request was agreed to, but only after a heated debate its legitimacy:

> "We have heard much talk of loyalty" said Councillor Hayes, "but the only reason the troops are to be taken from Caulfield racecourse (to Royal Park) is to allow a race meeting to take place...There are plenty of other places available."[16]

Requests for parkland were repeated often and in 1940 most suburban councils were happy to help the war effort by contributing areas of municipal parkland. The crisis of 1942 intensified activity in city and suburban parks in which trench-digging squads

---

[13]VTA Minutes, 6 May 1942.

[14]ibid.

[15]ibid.

[16]Argus, 11 April 1940.

were employed 'to provide some rudimentary shelter in the event of air-raids'.[17] The Collingwood Council provided 9,000 pounds to dig trenches for half of its 28,000 inhabitants and in Essendon people formed 'working bees' to dig trenches, with the aim of providing one trench for every four households.[18] Melbourne's inner city parks were worst affected by the trench-diggers, and even land around the Shrine of Rememberance, Melbourne's tribute to the dead of the last war, was not left untouched. In January 1942 it was reported that:

> Britain's "Dig For Victory" slogan has gripped Melbourne...Already there are hundreds of digging squads in action and sleek lawns in parks and gardens are showing ugly scars as deep-gashed trench shelters take shape.[19]

By February regular trench drills were taking place:

> Walking in "dignified fashion", about 1500 public servants from the State offices carried out their trench drill yesterday. The Premier was one of those seeking shelter in the trenches which cut up the lawns of the Treasury Gardens.[20]

As well as being required to submit parklands for the use of bomb shelters, municipal councils were given full responsibility for the organisation of air-raid precautions, and many councils offered the use of parks and halls to military units within their districts for drilling and training.[21]

Melbourne's parks were also used as vast army camps for the thousands of American troops which arrived in Australia from early 1942. The influx of Americans came soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941, and by early 1943 there were approximately 250,000 American servicemen in camps and bases in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.[22] The Flagstaff Gardens, Royal Park, Albert Park and the Melbourne Cricket Ground were all used as army camps because accommodation in buildings was limited. Jack Owens remembers that:

> The U.S. troops required recreational facilities and these were provided in parks as near as possible to Victoria Barracks. Army barracks were constructed in some parks and there was a staging camp for Australian troops in Royal Park...One major Melbourne hospital became the 4th General Hospital of the U.S. Army.[23]

Park curators faced enormous difficulties in maintaining the city's parks in the face of

---

[17]McKernan, op.cit., p.114.

[18]ibid.

[19]Age, 3 January 1942.

[20]Age, 25 February 1942.

[21]Victorian Year Book, 1984, p.112.

[22]McKernan, op.cit., p.187.

[23]Transcript of an interview with J.S.Owens, 7 May 1986.

such concentrated use. Municipal councils had most of their finance, materials, labour and equipment diverted to the war effort and were only able to maintain essential services. In many suburbs park maintenance became a luxury that was almost completely abandoned until resources were again available. To compound the problem, most councils were faced with a lack of trained staff resulting from army enlistments, poor training facilities and a leftover shortage from the Depression. In desperation, park staff appealed to VTA members for solutions and, in late 1942, suggested that the Association hold quarterly meetings of metropolitan curators 'for the purpose of discussing existing manpower shortages and matters of post-war interest as it effects the management of Parks and Gardens'.[24] Increasing numbers of curators began to attend VTA meetings in the hope of finding solutions to problems from others facing similar restraints.

VTA members encouraged such discussion, accepting the fact that as it embraced more park administration problems the Association was heading in a new direction. Tree planting concerns were not completely abandoned, however, because they were central to the VTA's aims, and in 1942 the Committee wrote to the army offering the assistance of members in embarking on 'an extensive tree planting programme for camouflage purposes'.[25] Individual members played their part in pursuing the aims of the VTA and in 1942 it was reported that Mr R.M. Petrie, a VTA member, had been appointed Red Cross Gardening Rehabilitation Officer. His job was to interest servicemen in Convalescent Homes in the gardens and so 'provide them with an occupation and an interest during their convalescence, as well as fitting them for a job after they return to normal life'.[26]

In 1943, as the threat of invasion by the Japanese diminished and the Pacific War moved north, Australians began to consider other aspects of their lives besides the war effort. A sense of relief prevailed and '...the government faced the extremely difficult task of maintaining war fervour and a sense of national unity as pressures for relaxation mounted'.[27] VTA Minutes reflect the growing mood of optimism as activities began to include more general problems and concerns. Although there was no conference, the

---

[24]VTA Minutes, 26 August 1942.

[25]VTA Minutes, 29 July 1942.

[26]The Australian Garden Lover, 12 February 1942.

[27]McKernan, op.cit., p.141.

annual general meeting took place in April, and in August a debate was held on the most suitable trees for residential streets with nature strips. Again the problem of divided control of street tree plantations was raised and there was a suggestion that curators meet prior to the pruning season to decide on a uniform policy for the treatment of street trees. In this way it was hoped that they would be able to avoid much of the public criticism they received after street tree pruning.

From 1943 the VTA began to occupy itself more heavily in plans for post-war reconstruction and this, more than any other activity, highlights its development from a tree planters' to a park administration organisation. Members not only hoped to solve their own work problems through discussion with others, but were aiming to play a major part in the reconstruction of Melbourne society through the restoration of the city's park and recreation areas. In the 1943 Annual Report it was stated that:

> Planning the conduct of the war has rightly taken the forestage, during the past year, but the gradual clarification of the issue makes it imperative that we face up to the growing concern of the many problems to be met with after hostilities have ceased.[28]

The VTA's interest in post-war concerns was largely prompted by the actions of the Curtin government which in late 1942 established the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction, incorporating the Rural Reconstruction Commission, the Housing Commission and the Secondary Industries Commission. The immediate concerns of the Ministry were the demobilisation of servicemen and women, their settlement on the land and in business, and their retraining for civilian occupations. Its long-term objectives were achievement of full employment and planning an improved physical and social environment.[29]

The VTA focussed its post-war reconstruction plans on this latter aim, encouraged by an emerging community belief that a new and better way of life had to be created to make sense of the suffering that had been experienced. The Council encouraged members to 'convince public authority that something must be spared from the war effort now for the making of these plans, plans for the physical as well as the social reconstruction of the nation. Neither will be successful without the other'.[30] Their first priority was the immediate restoration of the city's parks using ex-servicemen as labour. While realising that 'public parks and gardens at the moment do not come under the

---

[28]VTA Annual Report 1943, p.4.

[29]Victorian Year Book, 1984, p.40.

[30]VTA Annual Report 1943, p.5.

heading of essential necessities', the Council nevertheless felt that 'these assets which have cost thousands of pounds to install would employ thousands of men in the temporary capacity of their restoration'.[31] The VTA identified a number of other key areas in which it would be involved after the war, including:

> ...the new development of areas for public recreation, the promotion of better housing schemes...the installation of amenities to assist in the decentralisation, municipal airports, and reafforestation...[32]

It hoped to spread its influence over as wide an area as possible and throughout 1943 members contacted municipal and shire councils to draw attention to the work of the Association. The Council was also relying on existing members to promote the VTA's new aims and it called on all members to make suggestions for the future:

> ...your suggestions, your recommended solutions and your willingness to help do the work...will (give)...the greatest opportunity to provide the means whereby peace, solitude, beauty and contentment can once more be restored to a war-weary world.[33]

In 1944 the Council initiated the first substantial constitutional changes since the founding of the Association. Committee membership had grown to 34, resulting in an imbalance in rural and municipal council representation. A special sub-committee worked on a new constitution for nearly a year before presenting its final version for adoption to the 1944 annual general meeting. Previous aims were retained, but more specific categories of membership were proposed: ordinary members, sustaining members (municipal councils, commissions, boards, etc.), and life members, of which the Association already had a number. The most important section of the new Constitution reorganised the committee, and formalised the distribution of rural and city members to ensure adequate representation of both. Of the vice-presidents, one was to be a country nominee with five from the city and, of the fifteen committee members, nine were to be from metropolitan districts, and six from the country. The greater number of metropolitan representatives was necessitated by the greater number of metropolitan councils in the membership and was considered a fair distribution. The new Constitution also required each committee member to have at least the status of Curator, 'someone who follows the occupation of superintending gardening activities of any public body'.[34] This particular specification clearly emphasised the Association's growing concern with the affairs of park administration, because it excluded members

---

[31] ibid.

[32] ibid.

[33] VTA Annual Report 1943, p.4.

[34] VTA Constitution, 1944, p.3.

whose work related exclusively to tree planting, such as a nurseryman, from holding a position of influence in the Association. Councillor Brens was one of the strongest advocates of an association devoted to the interests of park administration and as early as April 1943 suggested that the Tree Planters' Associations in Western Australia, South Australia, and Tasmania be amalgamated with the VTA to give them better co-ordination and to achieve uniform aims throughout the country.

In 1944 the VTA lost a further link with its pre-war tree planting days when much of its advice-giving role was taken over by another organisation, the newly-formed Save The Forests Campaign. As the war progressed there was growing community concern with environmental issues because war shortages had highlighted the importance of soil, forests and water in the national economy. The bushfires of 1939 had further revealed the vulnerability of Australia's basic resources and the Save The Forests Campaign was formed in January 1944 to deal directly with these issues. The Campaign was prompted by Cyril Isaacs, MLC, a nurseryman who was concerned to replace the losses sustained in 1939 and prevent a similar occurrence in the future. The aims of the Campaign were as follows:

1. arouse public interest in forestry and to enlist public assistance in preventing and fighting bush and forest fires,
2. build up an organisation that will ensure the continuance of active public interest in our forests,
3. take all possible action to ensure that the water, timber, and soil resources of the State are fully conserved.[35]

A Council was elected representing 30 member organisations with over 100,000 members, a number which had risen to 51 member organisations by 1946.[36] The VTA welcomed the formation of the Campaign because members felt that by working in partnership with Campaign members they could achieve better uniform management of open spaces in both urban and rural areas. To cement the relationship Jack Owens accepted the position of Secretary of the Campaign for a year in 1944. VTA Minutes noted the progress and activities of the Campaign as it became established, and the two organisations joined together on a number of occasions for field trips and seminars. As the Campaign extended its activities its members established a nursery in Springvale, on the outskirts of Melbourne, and undertook tree planting projects in the manner of early VTA efforts. Over time the Campaign established a reputation similar to that of the VTA in its earliest days and members received requests from the public for advice on

---

[35]These aims were reported in the VTA Annual Report 1944, p.2.

[36]Victorian Year Book, 1984, p.51.

tree planting. The VTA encouraged this role because its members recognised the gap that had been created by their growing concern with park administration. They maintained a representative in the Campaign's membership throughout the 1940's and 1950's and established a close association which exists to the present.

The end of the war in 1945 heralded another phase in the development of the VTA as its members embarked on an active campaign to promote and carry out their plans for post-war reconstruction. The years from 1946 to 1949 were particularly important because it was then that the VTA reinforced its changing role as a park administration organisation. Much of its activity in the immediate post-war years was directed by massive changes taking place in and around Melbourne as the city recovered from wartime restrictions.

The war had given a great boost to Australian manufacturing and between 1939 and 1946 the number of factories producing munitions and other war goods had increased by fifteen percent.[37] At the end of the war most Australian cities made great strides in industrialization. Although the conversion from war to peacetime production was often slow, it was offset by a strong consumer demand created by high employment levels and shortages of overseas goods. As wartime rationing lifted there was a great expansion of established lines of production including footwear, clothing, plastics and agricultural machinery. The greatest growth area, however, was in building, particularly in Melbourne which experienced a more severe housing shortage than the other capital cities both during and after the war. As restrictions on building materials lifted Melbourne experienced a period of suburban growth unparalleled since the boom of the 1880's. The demand was particularly severe because of the backlog created by both the Depression and the war when building of private homes was negligible. Melbourne also received the largest contingent of migrant refugees after the war and the need to house them and the thousands of homeless ex-servicemen and their families had the city's planners searching for new ideas in community housing.

Part of the answer was provided by the Housing Commission, established in 1939 to solve the problem of slum reclamation and housing shortages. The Commission had almost immediately begun construction of 412 houses in an estate at Fishermen's Bend, in the city's west.[38] Although its projects were restricted during the war the

---

[37]G.C.Bolton in F.K.Crowley (ed.), A New History of Australia, Melbourne, 1974, p.489.

[38]Victorian Year Book, 1984, p.229.

Commission remained active and, in the immediate post-war years, it developed estates in Spotswood, Maribyrnong, West Brunswick, Coburg, Preston and Newtown.[39] The majority of post-war building, however, was not as organised or well-planned as that of the Commission and a shortage of building supplies resulted in large numbers of people building their own homes on the cheapest available land. Moorabbin, Box Hill, Blackburn, Ringwood, North Balwyn, and Heidelburg were all new suburbs that spread rapidly over the orchards and farmland in the city's north, west and east.[40] Most of these areas had only the bare necessities and were without water and sewerage for a number of years. The new suburbs were also characteristically drab and bare, and few residents planted trees or grass to relieve the starkness. In the city itself, material shortages prevented renovation of existing buildings but the last of the large mansions in Toorak and Brighton were subdivided and built on.[41] Not only were many old and historic homes knocked down, 'but almost every tree was removed from the remnants of the estates which these houses had managed to hold around themselves'.[42]

Being closely involved in municipal development most VTA members regarded the latest phase of Melbourne's growth with dismay. They did their best to improve conditions where they felt it was most needed. In 1943 they expressed concern that the Housing Commission was planting unsuitable trees in its estates,[43] and in 1946 they gave advice on a proposed tree planting program at a Housing Commission estate in Sandringham.[44] In November 1945 a sub-committee visited Moorabbin to make recommendations about the type of trees most suitable for the area. In Camberwell, members conducted a tour to discuss a new development in the spacing of street trees and a scheme for proper planting, ideas which could be applied in other metropolitan areas. Between 1945 and 1946 members undertook visits to the Dandenongs, Heidelburg, Richmond and South Melbourne to give advice on tree planting.

The restoration of Melbourne's parks to their former condition was one area in which the VTA's post-war ambitions fell short. Although numbers of unskilled workers were

---

[39]ibid.

[40]Grant and Serle, op.cit., p.257.

[41]Boyd, Australian Ugliness, p.83.

[42]ibid.

[43]VTA Minutes, 26 May 1943.

[44]VTA Minutes, 20 February 1946.

allocated to work in the restoration of parks and gardens, it was a long time before the inner city parks were vacated by the army. Public debate on the issue was regularly reported in a number of newspapers as various organisations, including the VTA, pressed for the vacation of parklands:

> The Municipal Association of Victoria decided yesterday to ask the Federal Government to vacate parklands now occupied temporarily by departments; also to ask the State government not to use any more parklands or reserves for building sites.[45]

> There was no justification for attempting to retain permanently wartime buildings on parklands, Mr Cain, Premier, said last night...There is a growing need for the restoration of all parks and their extension if possible.[46]

VTA members made requests for the release of parklands through the MCC, but the government was occupied with more immediate concerns:

> Housing, hospitals, and schools must come before improvements to Victoria's national parks and parklands, Mr Holloway, Premier, said last night.[47]

In 1946 and 1947 the VTA conceded that post-war ambitions had fallen short of expectations, and that:

> Many important aspects of rehabilitation have rightfully taken precedence...we had no conception of the vast amount of rehabilitation work which was likely to follow world upheaval...we are now only just beginning to realise the seriousness of our obligations.[48]

As members pursued concerns relating to park care and management they again encountered the familiar problems of a lack of trained park staff and the poor status of curators. Although the VTA had been able to provide some solutions to these problems during the war they were inadequate for the amount of work needed to restore Melbourne's Garden City image. In 1943 Councillor Brens had expressed his support for the improvement of horticulture education and the promotion of a scheme 'for the introduction of Parks and Gardens executives as a career for boys leaving school'.[49] Horticulture education received a considerable boost when the Curtin Government established the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme in March 1944. The Scheme provided professional, trade and agricultural training under certain conditions to enable ex-servicemen and women to become re-established in civilian employment. Full-time trainees received allowances during their training and vocational trainees were placed in subsidised employment while acquiring trade skills. At the peak of the

---

[45]Argus, 9 May 1946.

[46]Argus, 18 May 1946.

[47]Argus, 16 June 1948.

[48]VTA Annual Report 1946, p.1.

[49]Minutes of the VTA Annual General Meeting, 19 April 1943.

program in 1947, over 4,500 students were enrolled at various tertiary institutions in Melbourne.[50] For park administrators the benefits of the Scheme were felt at the Burnley School of Horticulture which trained nearly 150 students under the scheme until the early 1950's. A number of ex-service graduates entered the field of park administration and Association member Tom Kneen[51] remembers that the scheme boosted the number of males studying in horticulture. Up to 1946 the proportion of female to male students at the School was at least three to one but the ratio altered steadily from then on.[52] Further benefits were the provision of a new building and increased staff and equipment at Burnley, and a boost to the School's status as it was brought more in line with Diploma-awarding agricultural colleges.[53]

The VTA commended the establishment of the Scheme but felt that the length of training, usually six months, was inadequate. Members were also concerned to see that curatorial positions left vacant by the war were filled only with trained men, ensuring that the existing measure of professionalism was maintained. It was thought that most training should be concentrated on the lower positions, such as gardeners, and that newly-established courses should be administration-based. Practical courses such as that established at the Sydney Technical College in 1938 catered for 'nurserymen gardeners, landscape gardeners, flower farmers, greenkeepers, company employees, and home gardeners...'[54] but were considered impractical for the changing needs of park administration. In 1946 Alec Jessep promoted a scheme he had observed in New Zealand which, if applied in Australia, would have required the government to establish an Examination Board and issue certificates and diplomas to Burnley graduates. In the following year members discussed the possibility of horticulture being studied at university, with in-service training and a final exam 'covering all branches of horticulture and recreation as applied to Municipal Parks and Gardens'.[55] Successful candidates would be issued with 'The Diploma of Park Administration' under university

---

[50]Victorian Year Book, 1984, p.214.

[51]Tom Kneen was an agricultural science graduate who was employed by the Department of Agriculture in Victoria for over 34 years. During that time he worked in its Horticultural Division for ten years, and as Director of the Burnley School of Horticulture for 21 years from 1946. He joined the VTA in 1955.

[52]Tom Kneen in correspondence to E.Stewart, 6 May 1988.

[53]ibid.

[54]The Garden Lover, March 1941, p.21.

[55]VTA Annual Conference Report 1947, p.2.

seal, or the seal of the VTA. Later in 1947 Alec Jessep proposed a Diploma of Horticulture at Burnley in place of the current Certificate of Competency, and the City of Prahran supported the issuing of certificates to competent curators. Although the VTA's proposals were presented to a number of education authorities few were even considered by a government which was preoccupied with other post-war reconstruction plans. The VTA ended the decade with a field trip to Burnley, conducted by Tom Kneen, one of a younger generation of members who were to pursue the education issue to a more successful end in the 1950's.

An integral part of the VTA's pursuit of better education standards was the desire to provide park staff with adequate knowledge to deal with the changes that had occurred in park administration during the war. Changing recreation habits had brought about many of these changes and it was during the late and post-war years that members became aware of the growing recreation movement in the United States. The concept of organised recreation had developed in the United States between the two World Wars when park administrators rejected European concepts of passive and ornamental park use in favour of a 'Parks for the People' philosophy.[56] The change was largely necessitated by growing overcrowding in American cities and the need to occupy youths and children in pursuits other than vandalism and delinquency. A number of departments of recreation were formed and coaching in all sports became standard in American schools.[57] The movement remained almost unheard of in Australia before the war but the arrival of American soldiers in 1942 brought an influx of new ideas, including that of organised recreation. The United States army delegated officers to cater specifically for the recreational needs of American soldiers during their stay and one of them was William Du Vernet, a Recreation Officer from Los Angeles. Brought to Melbourne in 1942, Du Vernet established the game of softball in Victoria as recreation for American nurses. The MCC assisted in his program by providing playing fields, and an association developed between Du Vernet and Jack Owens, by then head of the Parks and Gardens Department. In 1949 VTA members were introduced to the concept of organised recreation movement when Du Vernet addressed the annual conference on its development in the United States. He explained that in Los Angeles over twelve million dollars was spent annually on parks, gardens, arenas and organised sports. Recreation was organised for people from toddler age to old age with remarkable

---

[56]Notes written by Frank Keenan on Education, Recreation and the RAIPR, undated.

[57]ibid.

results; delinquency and vandalism was reduced and the whole behaviour tone of the city had been raised.[58]

Du Vernet's speech had a great impact, particularly on younger members who were keen to see park use broadened and redefined. Sport was as popular as ever after the war and, although the debate over the alienation of parklands was maintained, the MCC risked public anger by spending even more time and money on areas for sports use. Under the guidance of Councillor Brens and Jack Owens facilities became more complex and included indoor sports stadia and athletics fields. The MCC further extended its services to provide buildings, equipment and funds for supervised children's play centres which were staffed by the Playgrounds Association of Victoria.[59]

In conjunction with these actions the VTA discussed more complex procedures for the care of sports fields, and in 1947 called for the establishment of an Institute of Turf Research to look into the maintenance and development of grasses for airports, golf courses, bowling greens and tennis courts.[60] In 1948, Jack Owens noted that recreation habits had been affected by the introduction of the 40 hour working week in 1948 and the growing popularity of motor cars. In the late 1940's production was begun on 'Australia's own car', the American-owned Holden, and in 1949 162 came off the production line in Fishermen's Bend.[61] The cars were both popular and widely available, and introduced a new form of recreation with people taking Sunday drives to the hills or the coast. More importantly, the increased number of car parking areas reduced the amount of space available for other forms of recreation and park curators were increasingly required to assess the impact of cars on the environment in their daily work.

Curators also found their work practices changing with the introduction of more sophisticated machinery. While greater technological advances were to be made in the 1950's, by the late 1940's park maintenance was becoming easier with horse-drawn mowers and the autoscythe, 'a machine with a three foot blade between fingers with a

---

[58]VTA Annual Report 1949, p.1.

[59]Frank Keenan in correspondence to E.Stewart, 26 June 1988.

[60]ibid.

[61]Humphrey McQueen, Social Sketches of Australia, 1888-1975, Melbourne, 1978, p.182.

three inch moving action left to right'.[62]

In an effort to give park staff greater support, Jack Owens launched a campaign in 1948 to have the term 'Curator' changed to 'Superintendent'. This was, he felt, the only way in which park supervisors would acquire greater public status and the recognition they deserved:

> the word (curator) suggests the caretaker of a bowling green or a sports ground or a museum. We are qualified men and feel hot under the collar when interstate "superintendents" or "directors" call us "curators".[63]

He pursued the issue in his work throughout 1949 and, although a proportion of municipal councils agreed to the change, the issue was carried into the next decade. A factor against the change was that most councils placed their parks under the control of the engineer or town clerk, so that despite his title the park supervisor was generally answerable to another person.

The final years of the 1940's saw moves to consolidate changes brought about in the VTA during the war. In 1948 continued interstate pressure for more involvement in VTA activities resulted in the first interstate conference in Adelaide. The conference was well attended and created great interest amongst Adelaide park staff, a factor which indicated to all VTA members the important part other States would play in the Association's future. The move to a more administrative-based organisation was emphasised in 1948 with discussion of the possibility of renaming the Association to highlight its changed emphasis. Suggestions were the Institute of Park Administration, the Association of Superintendents of Parks and Gardens and the Australian Tree Planters' Association. All proposals were rejected on the basis that a name change would result in a loss of the identity of the past 22 years as a Tree Planters' Association. The issue was not one that would rest, however, and was pursued during the late 1940's and 1950's by a younger generation of members, including Frank Keenan and Tom Kneen, who were beginning to fill higher roles in the VTA Committee, and who, together with Jack Owens, were to lead the Association through the next twenty years. In 1947 the VTA celebrated its twenty-first birthday with a dinner at the Wentworth Cafe and a night at the Tivoli Theatre and, after 21 years as Secretary, Jack Owens was nominated VTA President. In 1949 the VTA prepared to consolidate another interstate link with advanced preparation for the 1950 conference in Canberra.

---

[62]R.J.Pittock, Superintendent of Parks, City of Newtown. Private correspondence.

[63]Argus, 27 June 1949.

There is no doubt that the advent of the Second World War had a significant effect on the development of the VTA. By 1950, it was a different organisation from the one it had been in 1939, largely because park administration now dominated members' concerns and activities, almost to the exclusion of their original tree planting concerns. The basic structure and values of the VTA had not altered, however, and the increased concern in park administration arose largely because of members' original interests in the maintenance of Melbourne's streets and parks, and in the profession of horticulture and park care. The perceived changes in VTA aims and activities mainly serve to place the development of the Association in the context of changes in society, and emphasise the factors of change and continuity which would sustain it in the future.

# Chapter 4

# 1950 - 1962: A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE

Before 1950 the VTA's development from a tree planters' to a park administration association was largely unplanned. Members' interests had changed as circumstances within the profession of park administration altered with changing social conditions. Many of the Association's older members were disinclined to address the complex problems of park management within the forum of a tree planters' organisation, preferring to maintain the role of an advisory tree planting body. Such a future would have been acceptable to members had the immediate post-war years not indicated a new role for the Association. After 1950 the VTA Executive began a conscious process of defining the Association as a park administration organisation. It was not an easy task because those advocating change were younger members who faced opposition from those who had directed the Association thus far. Many members, too, opposed changing the nature of the Association because it was one stable element in a society which was experiencing rapid changes in its structure and composition. The eventual acceptance of a new image, however, was facilitated by the Institute's constant concern to advance and protect members' interests.

As was the case during previous periods of growth, the VTA's aims and activities were affected by the changing nature of Australian society during the 1950's. Although the war years had brought high employment levels, a temporarily higher proportion of women in the workforce, and more sophisticated technology, it was during the 1950's that Australians adopted car and home ownership and the benefits of consumerism as desirable goals. The decade was one in which Australia emerged as a 'modern' society. The labour and goods shortages of the immediate post-war years were largely resolved by the 1950's, by which time the Liberal government's dream of a more equal society was beginning to be realised. The recipe for this dream was based on American life, as for the first time since colonisation Australia abandoned Britain as its cultural model. Britain had only just survived the war and even so was a bankrupt and broken nation. The United States, however, had emerged as the world's leading industrial nation and

the re-making of Australia was intended to follow the United States recipe for a modern industrial society. Much was made of the change in allegiance, and at least one social commentator stated that:

> ...Australia sees in the United States an example of what she herself can hope to achieve in the future. Australia cannot hope and does not want to be another England or another Europe. She can reasonably hope that one day she will be another North America.[1]

The adoption of American 'know-how' in terms of industrial development, scientific and sociological techniques, education and culture did not extend to a whole-hearted acceptance of all aspects of American life. Pringle insisted that Australians '...do not greatly care for the abstract idea of the United States. Anti-Americanism is quite strong...Australians...like individual Americans but disapprove of the United States'.[2] Although this view did not apply to all Australians the adoption of American culture in the 1950's was mainly restricted to the purchase of American products, and established English traditions and virtues remained intact.

The most immediate and visible effect of Australia's borrowing from the United States was in the appearance of goods unobtainable during the war. Irons, vacuum cleaners, washing machines and food mixers were purchased by housewives keen to modernise their homes and improve their lifestyles. Luxuries such as nylons, babyfood and, later, television and LP records became obtainable items for the first time. The greatest growth area, however, was in secondary industry, and once again 'through United States companies Australian industry tooled up to provide the machines, vehicles and petrol to transform the country'.[3] The expansion of the economy resulted from a nation-wide switch from agriculture to industry, a change made easier by the influx of European migrants who filled the majority of new industrial positions in most capital cities. Indications of the overall growth during the period were the rise in population by 40 percent between 1946 and 1961[4], a rise in home ownership by 28 percent between 1947 and 1954[5], and a 31 percent increase in the number of factories built between 1950 and 1960.[6] The effects of this growth on the country's social structure was the promotion of

---

[1]John Pringle, Australian Accent, London, 1958, p.17.

[2]ibid., p.19.

[3]Stella Lees and June Senyard, The 1950's, Melbourne, 1987, p.1.

[4]Commonwealth Year Book, 1962, p.286.

[5]Lees and Senyard, op.cit., p.22.

[6]Commonwealth Year Book, 1962, p.160.

the Great Australian Dream; home and car ownership for each and every Australian. It was a dream that came to epitomise 'modern' Australia, and it was so successful that by the middle of the decade the face of most Australian cities was quite different to that of ten years before. Physical changes were evident in newly-built city skyscrapers, material changes in the new products seen in most homes, and social changes in the behaviour of youth and a more diverse pattern of leisure habits. Some were accepted without reservation, others with reluctance. The prevailing mood of the decade was one of contrasts, of acceptance of new lifestyles and material possessions, and conservatism evident in '...long Sundays...the barbarism of the six o'clock swill...the arbitrary censorship of books and films, the Cold War...'[7]

The process of achieving the suburban ideal of 'a block of land, a brick-veneer, and the motor-mower...in the wilderness...'[8] was not without problems. Furthermore, because it involved change to the environment it was one that involved VTA members as they struggled for co-ordinated urban development. One of the most contentious urban issues of the early 1950's was that home ownership was promoted as an obtainable and desirable goal for all Australians, despite there being insufficient land and facilities to cater for the increased demand. In each State Housing Commissions, or their equivalent, continued construction of housing estates, but again there was insufficient land in established areas to expand as far as was needed. One solution was to build vertically, and it was during the 1950's that high-rise buildings became a feature of the urban skyline. Multi-storey flats were provided for hundreds of migrant families in inner city areas and, as city prices rose, many companies tore down their headquarters to build multi-storey office blocks in their place. In Melbourne, as in most capital cities, there was a further sprawling of new suburbs, particularly to the south and south east. Common to all new suburbs was their uniform appearance and the hasty, sub-standard construction of new homes.

In the late 1950's there was a backlash against the suburban sprawl of Australia's larger cities. One outspoken critic was Robin Boyd, a Melbourne architect who claimed that the millions of private homes were 'collectively...an achievement. Individually they are prey to thoughtless habits, snobberies and fickle sentiment. This is the story of a material triumph and an aesthetic calamity'.[9] Criticism was also aimed at the Housing

---

[7]Lees and Senyard, op.cit., p.1.

[8]Allan Ashbolt, "Myth and Reality", in Meanjin Quarterly, December 1966, p.373.

[9]Robin Boyd, Australia's Home, Melbourne, 1952, pp.7-8.

Commission for its high-rise units because although they could boast economy of space and fast slum reclamation, 'they constituted environmental disfigurement, used prime real estate when lower value areas might have served the same purpose, and demolished houses that would later have been regarded as worth preserving'.[10]

In the early 1950's VTA members devoted much of their time to educating the public on the necessity of planting trees in new suburban areas. Members were particularly frustrated at the lack of treed areas and playgrounds in high-rise housing estates and they fought the Housing Commission's desire to provide quick housing at the expense of such facilities. Initially they wrote to the Commission with suggestions for tree planting projects in its estates, but after a short time the Commission began to pass on requests for and actively seek advice on tree planting from the Association. The VTA responded to these requests by sending groups of members to different areas to recommend particular tree planting programs. In this way there was a substantial visual improvement in Mulgrave and Kangaroo Flat, and in country areas around Port Fairy, Rutherglen and Rochester.

In the latter half of the decade, VTA activities relating to tree planting all but ceased as members became preoccupied with the effects of changing leisure patterns on traditional park management practices. Divisions between home and work practices that had emerged in the 1930's became more marked as increasing urbanisation forced city dwellers to seek entertainment close to their homes. The promotion of home ownership and suburban living as an ideal lifestyle reinforced this pattern and in 1963 Chris Wallace-Crabbe wrote of Melbourne that:

> It is an extreme and unmollified example of the modern mass society. There is all too little cushioning between the individual and the vast anonymity of mass media, large organisations and democratic institutions...Sporting clubs and various church organisations provide the main sources of consolation...[11]

The incidence of participation in and observation of organised sport had continued to grow, and was providing an increasingly important social role. A 1948 Morgan Gallup Poll found that playing or watching sport was the favourite way for Australians to spend their leisure time and that four in ten played some kind of sport.[12] Spectator sport was

---

[10]James Sullivan in correspondence to E. Stewart, 11 March 1988. James Sullivan studied accountancy before working as a radar technician in the RAAF during the war. From 1954 to 1963 he was an administrative officer in the MCC Parks and Gardens Department. He joined the VTA in 1955 and held the position of Secretary from then until 1964.

[11]In an article titled "Melbourne", in Current Affairs Bulletin, Vol.32, No.11, 1963, p.168.

[12]Morgan Gallup Poll, May/June 1948.

becoming an increasingly big business, and in Melbourne attendances at football and cricket games, tennis matches and horse races increased every year. In both the 1950's and the 1960's a number of writers praised Australia's growing reputation as a nation of sport and leisure lovers,[13] the result of which was the promotion of the largely mythical 'bronzed Aussie' image:

> Here the summers are hot but not, as a rule, so hot as to deter those who wish to play games. The midday siesta has no part in Australian life; indeed the mere thought of it is a subject of scorn. If you wish to drowse at noon, then you do so on a beach to the rhythm of breaking waves, or on a grassy bank lulled by the distant click of bat on ball. And every now and then you stir, to plunge into the warm, green, velvet water, or to raise yourself on one elbow and shout, "Slog him for six, Bluey!"[14]

The element of truth on which such statements were made was that the beach and the cricket field, amongst others, were becoming increasingly important recreation areas. In the suburbs the chronic shortage of sports fields worsened and municipal councils were faced with the demands of trying to provide more of these areas, while safeguarding existing open spaces from the hands of developers. In Adelaide and Perth the problems were even more complex as suburbs began to spread into rural areas and shire councils found themselves supervising semi-suburban areas. Changing recreation habits were also felt in the increasing numbers of city people travelling further afield during annual holidays. This pattern was encouraged by the promotion of the Holden motor car which, during the 1950's, achieved phenomenal success. In Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney large factories were established to cater for the demand for the car, a demand made greater by the deterioration of public transport and the expectation that urban expansion was based on the availability of private transport. During the 1950's trams were taken out of commission in every Australian city except Melbourne, and bus services ran less frequently. With the availability of the motor car, travelling holidays became popular for the first time. Whereas in the past many people spent holidays at a guest house or hotel, in the 1950's and 1960's they set out to go sightseeing and visiting new places. In 1948 only half the adult population had a holiday away from home but in 1958 66 percent claimed to be taking a summer holiday either at the beach, in the country, fishing, touring by car or by caravan.[15] In 1960 Jack Owens outlined a number of other reasons for the change in leisure habits during the past decade:

> Since the beginning of the century the standard working week has been cut by one

---

[13]These include Ian Bevan, The Sunburnt Country (1953), W.V.Aughterson, Taking Stock (1953), J.D.Pringle, Australian Accent (1958), Jeanne Mackenzie, Australian Paradox (1961), A.L.McLeod (ed.), The Pattern of Australian Culture (1963), and Craig McGregor, Profile of Australia, (1966).

[14]Ian Bevan, ibid., London, 1953, p.161.

[15]Morgan Gallup Polls, March/April 1949 and February/April 1958.

> third and today a thirty-two hour week is being considered for some industries. Vacations have been lengthened, longer periods of sick leave with pay are becoming the rule and long-service-leave is an established practice...Today...a man spends about four percent of his lifetime at school, only about fifteen percent at work and he has about twenty- one percent left for leisure.[16]

Park curators and superintendents were ill-equipped to cope with the demands placed on their facilities at this time because they lacked government support and education about changing leisure pursuits. Jack Owens was one of a few senior council members who had become better informed of trends overseas through men like William Du Vernet from Los Angeles. Jack Owens urged the need for careful planning and better education of staff:

> ...the usefulness of (our profession) can be increased in value only as long as its members are constantly alive to the ever-changing tempo of a growing nation such as ours. This can only be achieved by knowledge and more knowledge...[17]

In 1956 he pointed out that the essential requirements of a good recreation department were adequate recreation areas with well-designed facilities and efficient, modern equipment. Parks should be taken to the people by providing neighbourhood parks for school-age children.[18] Problems brought about by the popularity of cars were also considered:

> The motor car and the increased population...has made it possible to establish large areas of urban development and with it more Park lands to develop, more streets and roads to plan and more playing fields to maintain.[19]

In 1957 Jack Owens furthered his knowledge of developments in overseas recreation by travelling to Europe and the United States. In London he attended the first World Congress in Park Administration, but it was in America that he gained most knowledge of the movement. After visiting and inspecting recreation facilities in a number of States he was made a fellow of the American Institute of Park Executives, an organisation with which he maintained regular contact on his return. In 1956 the Association was addressed by Joan Matheson, one of the first Recreation Officers in Melbourne, on her visit to America for the International Recreational Congress. She highlighted the essential factors of recreation in the United States: the finance available for projects, the amenities provided for all age groups, and the wide spectrum of activities covered by

---

[16]IPAV Conference Report 1960, p.7.

[17]Jack Owens in VTA Conference Report 1955, p.2.

[18]IPAV Conference Report 1956, p.1.

[19]IPAV Conference Report 1959, p.2.

the term 'recreation', including hobbies and libraries.[20] This sort of contact was essential for the development of the recreation movement in Australia, but because information about the movement was limited and the ideas presented so new, VTA members, who were one of the few groups of people learning about these developments, were unable to act on their growing knowledge. The significance of their adoption of the concept of 'recreation' as a specific movement in the 1950's was that it preceded any similar State or Federal government recognition by at least fifteen years, and it was crucial to the Association's development as a park and recreation organisation.

For the majority of VTA members knowledge of changing recreation needs and habits was gained through first-hand experience in the workplace. One of the greatest changes felt by park curators was in the availability of technologically-advanced park maintenance equipment. When lecturing better ways of coping with the demands of recreation and increased leisure time, Jack Owens frequently referred to the advent of better equipment as the most positive and helpful aspect of the technology boom. Certainly the recognition of the role technology had to play in the future of park management was crucial for the Association's future, when its relationship with equipment manufacturers and owners often provided the only reliable financial support for many Institute activities. The mechanization and availability of farm equipment was what initially helped park curators in the 1950's and whereas in 1939 there were less than 42,000 tractors in Australia, by 1951 there were 110,000.[21] In 1955 Jack Owens noted that:

> To overcome skilled labour shortages we are forced to delve further into the field of mechanization, and it is most encouraging to see the many varied uses to which agricultural tractors and their many attachments can be put.[22]

In the early 1950's VTA members attended increasing numbers of displays featuring new equipment, including post-hole diggers, hedge trimmers, mowers, chippers and leaf loaders, that would help them in their work. One Sydney-based member remembers the differences made with better equipment over the period:

| | |
|---|---|
| March 1950 | Elderslie Oval used to be cut with the horse mower taking two days. We now cut with tractor and side cut in half a day. |
| July 1956 | The ovals have been cut with the new Nayjon Rotary Tractor Mower. The new mower is a lot faster than the side-cut and cuts lower. All ovals...were cut in half the time... |

---

[20]IPAV Minutes, 12 December 1956.

[21]McQueen, Social Sketches of Australia, p.184.

[22]VTA Conference Report 1955, p.2.

February 1961 We have tried out the new chainsaw and found a great saving in time against the axe and cross-cut saw.[23]

Machinery displays became a regular feature of quarterly and annual meetings and eventually every annual conference included a trade display of the latest equipment available to parks staff.

Although more efficient park care equipment helped curators to cope with changes in recreation and park use, they still faced the problem of having insufficient staff to cope with increasing demands on their time. Staff shortages were felt not only in the lower levels of gardeners and maintenance staff but in supervisory positions, and curators found it increasingly difficult to find trained replacements to fill positions left vacant by retirements. The problem was not unique to the parks profession but was being felt throughout the community as the post-war boom created one of the greatest employment markets in Australian history. It was for this reason that education became one of the key political and social issues of the 1950's as employers sought not only to fill positions but to raise the standard of employees through better qualifications. Both Federal and State governments responded to the growing emphasis on education by backing it 'as the way to build up the intellectual resources of the whole of society and create a more economically useful workforce'.[24] Over the decade secondary schooling became the norm rather than the exception, and tertiary education became more common than in the past with the introduction of Commonwealth Scholarhips and State teaching studentships. As a result, the number of students attending universities throughout Australia rose from 32,453 in 1948,[25] to 47,500 in 1959.[26] Many new avenues of careers opened up to young workers and more importantly, 'there was a general change in the pre-requisites demanded for the upper levels of the workforce. Men with years of experience gave way to boys and even girls with degrees.'[27] In a profession such as horticulture, where practical experience had been the only form of qualification available in the past, this trend was to be particularly significant.

In hindsight, Frank Keenan remarked that in the late 1950's the Institute 'became the body responsible for bringing together Parks and Gardens administrators for mainly

---

[23]R.J.Pittock, private correspondence.

[24]Lees and Senyard, op.cit, p.120.

[25]Commonwealth Year Book, 1951, p.240.

[26]Commonwealth Year Book, 1962, p.607.

[27]Lees and Senyard, op.cit., p.120.

educational purposes'.[28] Having already committed itself to seeking a higher standard of horticulture education, the VTA made a concerted effort to achieve concrete results in the 1950's. Although the post-war Reconstruction Training Scheme had boosted the number of students undertaking horticulture at the Burnley School of Horticulture it was still the case that the graduates and diplomates of University and College faculties of agricultural science and agriculture occupied the leading roles in research and education at those places where horticulture was taught. After consultation with staff members at Burnley, in particular Tom Kneen, the VTA was convinced that the only way to achieve equal status for horticulture was to upgrade the existing course to a Diploma, as suggested by Alec Jessep in 1947. With the establishment of a firmer relationship between the VTA and Burnley the possibility of such a move seemed more likely. In 1951 Tom Kneen commenced a series of evening courses in Horticulture at the College for the benefit of employees, as a temporary measure until a higher status course could be established. In 1952, when Councillor Brens endorsed a Diploma of Horticulture as the only viable way to attract men to the field, Kneen joined a group of men determined to upgrade the existing course to a Diploma.[29] In the following years information was gathered from England and New Zealand on Diploma courses in those countries, giving strength to the case being built up by VTA members. During the 1957 conference Frank Keenan presented members with a proposal for a three-tiered structure of courses in horticulture which could be applied throughout the country. The first level would be an apprenticeship course for gardeners, the second a Diploma course to provide future supervisors, and the third, university courses in landscape design, horticulture or town planning. With regard to the Diploma course, he explained that the Education Division of the Department of Agriculture was aiming to bring the Certificate of Competency in Horticulture at Burnley in line with the Diploma courses in Agriculture already conducted at the State Agricultural Colleges (Dookie and Longeronong). What was needed to bring it about was a concrete proposal from an independent body such as the VTA, because it was not possible for the Department to bring about the move by itself.

---

[28]Letter from Frank Keenan to Trevor Arthur (Victorian member of the RAIPR), 30 July 1984.

[29]At the head of this group was Frank Keenan who had played an increasing part in the VTA's education interests since the end of the war. His interest in education stemmed from the fact that he was one of the earliest male graduates from Burnley and one of the first qualified employees in the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee. As the Principal of the Burnley School of Horticulture and through his close association with the VTA Tom Kneen had became more aware of the problems facing parks departments with the lack of trained staff. He was convinced that it was to the benefit of the School that the Horticulture course be upgraded. Jack Owens was also part of the group and although himself not a holder of formal qualifications he was aware of the need for a higher standard of education in the profession of park administration.

Tom Kneen and Frank Keenan wrote the proposal on behalf of the VTA, including assurances of support from employers and park administrators for students when they finished the course. They and Jack Owens then met with the Superintendent of Education in the Department, and in October 1957 Tom Kneen advised members that the Certificate Course had been upgraded to a Diploma. In 1958 the Institute gave a further boost to students by donating a bursary of 21 pounds a year for five years to the College, to be offered to the top student in the course.

The first aspect of Frank Keenan's three-tiered restructuring of horticulture education concerned the introduction of an apprenticeship in gardening, to provide parks departments with a badly-needed supply of gardeners and maintenance staff. The VTA pursued the gardening apprenticeship with as much vigour as the Diploma during the 1950's, but with less success. In 1952 the VTA was advised by the Municipal Officers Association (MOA) that the Apprenticeship Commission of Victoria had approached employers and employees to conduct talks on the possibility of proclaiming gardening an apprenticeship trade. Over the next four years members kept the issue alive in conferences and at meetings, and through correspondence with the MOA. At that time there were only a limited number of courses available to provide gardeners with the most basic training. The night courses at Burnley were extended to cover such areas as greenkeeping and landscape design. In 1952 the Save The Forests Campaign was incorporated and renamed the National Resources Conservation League (NRCL). In 1953 and 1954 the League held a series of courses for Shire employees on tree planting and maintenance but neither of these courses was adequate for council needs because they were held only part-time or annually and did not provide continuous training for employees. In 1957 Frank Keenan, in his education proposal, advised that the Department of Agriculture had promised to provide training for fifteen apprentices a year for four years if the apprenticeship was introduced. He encouraged members to forward to the Apprenticeship Commission figures on how many apprentices could be employed in council positions but, because the Institute did not have support in government circles, it was powerless to do anything except support moves to have the apprenticeship established. In later years the issue was kept alive but discussions were slow and members had to be content to let the matter proceed at its own pace.

In conjunction with its support for the upgrading of horticulture education in the 1950's, the VTA increased its efforts to increase the status of the profession. In 1952 it was noted of horticulture that 'Australia is one of the most backward countries in the world in this regard. The reason is probably that there is little "glamour" in doing this

type of work.'[30] In 1955, too, Jack Owens was still of the opinion that:

> ...the salary and status available at the conclusion of...training is not considered satisfactory by parents of prospective boys...[31]

By 1950 the MOA had given limited approval to Jack Owens' proposal to change the title 'Curator' to 'Superintendent' and a number of municipal councils had made the transition. In 1951 members raised the possibility of taking action to raise salaries for park personnel, a change they felt was vital to attracting more employees to the profession. Although the Executive felt that the VTA did not have the power to intervene in industrial matters, it did invite a representative of the MOA to a meeting to discuss the matter. In 1954 a Sub-Committee was formed to deal with a submission from the MOA on the pay conditions of Municipal Curators and during a follow-up meeting between the MOA and VTA a clear definition of the duties and role of a Superintendent was decided upon:

> The officer appointed in any municipality to control the maintenance and administration of gardens, parks, reserves, plantations, nurseries, sports ovals, children's playgrounds, tennis courts, bowling greens and all similar areas or places in the municipality.[32]

The position of Assistant Superintendent was adopted, and the title 'Curator' officially abolished. In 1955 the VTA was renamed the IPAV, and in a subsequent process of membership re-classification, members decided that the only way to succeed in having salaries raised to an acceptable level was to have the Institute's classifications accepted by the MOA as salary determinators. After meetings with the MOA and the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Institute won limited concessions to have its Fellows recognized in the Local Authorities Award.

One further activity undertaken by the Institute aimed to raise salaries in a different way. In the late 1950's when the first horticulture Diplomates were beginning to make their way into the workforce, many found that the support promised to them was lacking, and that salary levels in municipal councils were too low to attract them to council positions.[33] In 1960 IPAV members made a proposal to create the position of Technical Assistant in Parks and Gardens Departments of local councils. In this way salaries could be brought into line with professionals with similar training in, for example, the Department of Agriculture, the Public Service, and municipalities in

---

[30]Editorial in Your Garden, March 1952, p.5.

[31]in VTA Conference Report 1955, p.5.

[32]Minutes of IPAV Annual General Meeting, 15 June 1955.

[33]IPAV Minutes, 17 August 1960.

England and the United States. Duties would not be defined but the position would have a salary directly below an Assistant Superintendent, and would lead to promotion to Executive level. The proposal received a mixed reaction and was only accepted by a small number of councils. In a further bid to help diplomates a Municipal conference in 1961 decided that eight years of service would be equivalent to a Diploma in terms of employment. Jack Owens attended the conference and supported the move but was quick to point out that the IPAV had adopted this criterion in its classifications at least three years earlier.

Frank Keenan's comment that in the 1950's the Association brought parks and gardens administrators together for mainly educational purposes (see page 66) reveals two factors about the VTA's operation at that time. First, education was the major concern of members and was therefore something on which they spent most time and effort. Second, that the education issue was the main concern which held the Association together during the first half of the decade. Apart from activities relating to education the VTA lacked a real focus during the early 1950's. The post-war years had involved members in the important matters of restoring parks for public use and in helping the community re-adjust to peace-time living. In the 1950's the Association lacked such a clear-cut role and, because members were no longer concerned wholly with tree planting, it seemed misguided to many younger members to retain the old tree planting image. The main concerns the VTA held in this area were the necessity of planting in new suburbs and of assembling a list of suitable street trees for use in suburban areas. In 1957 the Institute relinquished all interest in the Mount Dandenong Arboretum, apart from a small donation to help maintenance, thus cutting one of the last ties with the old tree planting days. There was unrest within the Association, created by an increasing interest in its affairs from interstate members, and by younger members James Sullivan, Frank Keenan, Tom Kneen, Bill Halligan, Ken Hunter and Gordon Shearwood, and Noel Lothian who joined and became active in the VTA in the 1950's.[34] Jack Owens still led the Association as President but he was one of the few surviving founding

[34]Bill Halligan was a nurseryman until the war when he became Head Advisor in gardening to the RAAF. After the war he worked in the Richmond City Council before being appointed Curator (later Superintendent) of Parks in the City of Box Hill. He joined the VTA in 1946. Ken Hunter trained in horticulture at Burnley after the war and worked in a number of Melbourne municipal councils as Superintendent of Parks and Gardens before moving to Adelaide, and then Perth, in the 1960's. He joined the VTA in 1952. Gordon Shearwood joined the VTA in 1955 when working as Supervisor of Parks and Recreation in the Shire of Corio. Noel Lothian was educated at Burnley and held various positions in Christchurch, New Zealand, London, Munich and the MCC before his appointment as the Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, a position he held from 1948 until 1980. He joined the VTA soon after his appointment in 1948.

members, for John Smith died in 1950, James Railton in 1951, and Councillor Warner in 1961.

There was one other unifying feature of the Association's activities during the 1950's. The annual conference continued to be held successfully, and the importance placed on this event can be seen in the amount of time and effort spent on conference organisation. In 1959 Jack Owens noted of earlier years that:

> ...the men of that time felt that the Conference alone was sufficient to justify a profession or Association. The members in attendance at this conference have many years of combined experience in their field and this is our strength, the highest objectives of our Conferences being to resolve differences, develop a sound philosophy, and build a profession of attitudes.[35]

Another past member remembers that:

> In the early 1950's, the annual Conferences...were much smaller and less formal than in recent years...Delegates could be roughly divided into those who held senior positions in Local Government pre-war and those who had been appointed since the war...It was common at that time for Conferences to be held in Country areas...These became known as flag waving tours, where the Institute received local exposure. The President and other members were snapped up for radio and press articles and the local authority received some recognition and assistance for their membership fees.[36]

It was during the 1951 conference that the Association celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with a record number of interstate attendances. In 1959, on the death of the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in Perth, John Braithwaite, an 'H.N. Braithwaite Memorial Lecture' was instituted at each conference, and continued until 1969 when it was replaced by an Australian Award in Park Administration.

In an effort to establish a new identity for the Association, members spent time trying to gain more publicity for its activities. In 1951 Your Garden (the journal of the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria) was adopted as the official journal of the VTA. It did not prove successful in publicizing VTA activities and alternatives such as involving the press in VTA activities, were suggested. This,too, was unsuccessful because although invitations were sent to newspapers at different times, reporters rarely attended VTA activities and seldom wrote about its affairs.

One subject which continued to attract debate in the press was the treatment of street trees by municipal councils. Journalists often used emotive words such as 'council axemen' to excite debate whenever a street tree was removed, resulting in a flood of letters vilifying council activities in parks and on the streets. In 1955 James Sullivan wrote in defence of council actions, stating that 'old trees at times must make way for

---

[35]IPAV Conference Report 1959, p.2.

[36]Ken Hunter in private correspondence.

new and better ones. Just as home owners rearranged their gardens, so public gardens had to be reformed occasionally'.[37] On occasion these views were supported by members of the public:

> Why is it that Melbourne City Council can never lay an axe to a tree without occasioning a public outcry?...Trees, we all know, must be removed from time to time. In Gipps Street alone there are a dozen which have not put forth leaves this spring...I...assume they are dead and must therefore go.[38]

In 1952 Councillor Brens made a further attempt to focus VTA interests in a particular direction by suggesting that it become an Australian Tree Planters' Association. His idea was not supported because younger members wanted to disassociate themselves from the tree planting image and incorporate the word 'administration' in the title. By 1955 it had become apparent that the Association needed to formally recognise the changes that had taken place within the VTA over the last 30 years:

> ...in 1926...we were a general mixture of Curators, Nurserymen, Tree Lovers, and some people who wanted the support of the Association to condemn some tree removal proposal...We survived many storms...and proved ourselves a very useful organisation in the promotion of treeplanting...We found that we had performed many acts of public service without doing much for ourselves as a profession, and we came to the conclusion that whilst we could still perform a very useful public service, we could also consolidate our own profession by a closer study of our own numerous and complex problems...In recent years, other organisations have been established for the promotion of tree planting...and the conservation of tree resources.[39]

The renaming of the VTA in June 1955 was the formal recognition of these changes. In the following two years a new Constitution was drawn up in which all mention of tree planting was removed. There was, instead, a particular emphasis on education and status, and a resolution 'to assist the Government of Victoria...in the setting up of an apprenticeship system for the training of gardeners in Victoria...'[40] In a subsequent re-classification of members a number of new categories of membership were added to make allowances for the new levels of qualifications available.

The name change was described by James Sullivan, then VTA Secretary, as:

> A major turning point in the Institute's direction...The move was not unanimous as some believed that moving from an almost exclusively horticultural base into the wider field of park administration might be a retrograde step.[41]

Other members, however, believed that the Institute had not gone far enough and during

---

[37]Age, 15 December 1955.

[38]Age, 10 September 1953.

[39]J.S.Owens, VTA Conference Report 1955, p.5.

[40]IPAV Constitution, 1957, p.2.

[41]Private correspondence with James Sullivan, February 1988.

the 1955 conference in Mildura a special meeting of members from all States was held to form a provisional Australian Institute of Park Administration (AIPA). The purpose of this was to give members from States other than Victoria a chance to form their own divisions of the national body, by appointing two State representatives to co-ordinate the activities of the Institute in their area. There are a number of reasons why a provisional Australian Institute was formed at this time. Since the first interstate conference had been held in Adelaide in 1948 the numbers of interstate people attending VTA conferences and meetings had been steadily increasing. At the silver anniversary conference in Launceston approximately 56 delegates were present, with representatives from Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, as well as Victoria. In 1952 the Director of Parks and Gardens in the City of Adelaide, Ben Bone, advised the VTA of the formation of a South Australian Tree Planters' Association, whose members wished to correspond with the VTA. Superintendents of Parks and Gardens in nearly every state, including Harold Oakman[42] in 1963.) in Brisbane, Frederick Chilvers in Hobart, John Braithwaite in Perth and Ben Bone in Adelaide had been members of the VTA for a number of years and were increasingly anxious to have some representation in the affairs of the Association. More importantly, increased interstate involvement in the VTA indicated that its activities could no longer be restricted to Victoria, as its concerns were shared by park administrators all over Australia, and that it was the only body they could turn to for mutual support and sharing of ideas.

In the years immediately following its formation AIPA representatives corresponded frequently, as confirmation of State appointments to the Committee and arrangements for other delegates to be accepted as representatives were made. As provisional AIPA Secretary James Sullivan wrote to a number of newspapers asking for publicity for the new group but only one, the Age, ran a small column repeating the details of the group's formation and its aims and objectives.[43] Of all States, South Australia was the most organised in establishing its own State Institute of Park Administration. In December 1955 a South Australian sub-committee was elected to draw up a constitution, based on that of the Institute of Park Administration of New Zealand. The inaugural meeting of the Institute of Park Administration of South Australia (IPASA) was held in February 1956, with Ben Bone as President, Noel Lothian as Vice-

---

[42]Harold Oakman trained in agriculture and horticulture at the Sydney Technical College and worked for the Kuring-gai Municipal Council before being appointed Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in Brisbane in the early 1950's. He became Director of Landscape Architecture of the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC

[43]11 April 1955.

President, Secretary and Treasurer, and a committee of two. Noel Lothian, particularly, was keen for other Divisions to be established and at an AIPA meeting proposed that the Australian Institute be properly established by combining Western and South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, and Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and New South Wales into three separate divisions.

There is little record of this activity in the Minutes of the IPAV, or in private correspondence. The lack of written evidence indicates the indecision, disagreement and conflict which delayed the establishment of the proper Australian Institute until 1962. As was the case in the formation of the IPAV, members held many informal discussions on the benefits and disadvantages of such a move. The only visible sign of discontent amongst Victorian members was in 1960 with a complaint from the Warragul Shire Council over the necessity of holding conferences interstate. In reply it was stated that there were not enough Victorian members to justify holding conferences in that State every year, considering the numbers of interstate members now attending Institute conferences.[44] The main reason for the delay was that the Victorians felt that they would lose much of the power and identity they had held within the Institute for the past 30 years. Those who favoured the move were prepared to take the time to persuade them that it was the right move to make.[45]

A contributing factor to the delay was that with changes all about them in their daily lives, some members were disinclined to encourage further changes within the Institute if they were not absolutely necessary. Lees and Senyard write that many people found it 'tempting to hold to the security of old ways of life, especially when the new threatened to upset certainties such as the dignity of hard toil and the advantages of being British stock'.[46] Certainly the introduction of modern machinery, the emphasis on formal qualifications rather than experience, and the growth of recreation had brought significant changes to the profession of park administration. These changes had begun to be felt only during the 1950's and some of the Institute's older members considered that the establishment of a national body amounted to change for the sake of change. It was up to younger members to persuade them otherwise; that park administration had changed direction and that the Institute would be of more benefit to the country if it became a national body.

---

[44]IPAV Minutes, 17 February 1960.

[45]Private correspondence with James Sullivan, February 1988.

[46]op.cit., p.141.

Eventually, at the 1961 annual general meeting, Jack Owens moved that the IPAV proceed in becoming an Australian Institute. The reason given was that none of the States except South Australia had succeeded in forming their own Institute. By establishing the Victorian Institute as the Australian body, other States would have the opportunity to form Divisions if they desired, and members from outside Victoria would have the chance to participate in the functioning of the Institute. The motion was accepted and confirmed at the 1962 conference in Hobart and a proposed Constitution was drafted and accepted in principle by all States.

In a submission concerning aspects of the change the IPASA made a number of important points. First, a national body was a necessity for the nation-wide preservation of parklands and the co-ordinated education of future administrators. Second, because the national office was to be in Victoria the Executive Committee would be almost 100 percent Victorian. This would work in the Institute's favour because regular meetings would need to be held to handle such matters as classification, and it was necessary to have the Institute based where the Secretary resided. Third, that the Victorian Institute with its Australia-wide membership was virtually carrying out the duties of a Federal body without a Federal name. For this reason the transition would be relatively simple, with only minor alterations necessary to the Victorian Constitution.[47] These and other comments were taken into consideration when the new Constitution of the AIPA was formally accepted at its formation meeting on 20 June 1962.

[47] 1962 paper submitted to the IPAV by the IPASA titled "Establishment of Australian Institute", p.1.

# Chapter 5

# 1962 - 1969: AN AUSTRALIAN ORGANISATION

The significance of the Institute's change from a Victorian-based to an Australia-wide organisation became fully apparent during the 1960's. During these years the majority of State branches were formed, and there was an immediate rise in membership numbers and a further diversification of members' interests. Conscious of the Institute's higher profile, members consolidated their contacts with similar overseas organisations and made further progress in the pursuit of higher standards of horticulture education. More importantly, the Institute embarked on a new course of growth as members embraced the recreation movement in their aims and activities and, particularly, in the Institute's name. The direction of the Institute was affected, too, by changes in society as members became involved in the backlash against the materialism of the 1950's, characterised by the growth of the environment and conservation movements.

The appointment of a Council was one of the first tasks of members of the new Institute. As predicted, new and re-elected office-bearers were all Victorian, and included Jack Owens as President, James Sullivan as Secretary, Tom Kneen as one of three Vice-Presidents and a Committee of five including Frank Keenan, Percival Trevaskis, George Vafiopolous (Curator, City of Geelong), and Richard Pescott (Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne). A further task was the establishment of a Classification Board to deal with existing members, approximately 200, and an expected rise in membership as interstate people became aware of the existence of a federal body of park administrators.

With the basic structure of the AIPA in place the Council dealt with outstanding administrative matters, including the production of new letterheads and stationary, making minor adjustments to the constitution, and establishing a program of conference venues for the next five years. In 1963, a number of new applications for membership were received, a preliminary meeting was held to discuss the formation of a New South Wales (NSW) branch, and members pursued the proclamation of a gardening apprenticeship in Victoria.

The most important development was the formation of State branches of the Institute. Without State centres the aims and activities of the new Institute would founder and AIPA members were aware that the Institute's future depended on participation from all States. Victorian members were the first to begin the process of building a network of State branches, not surprisingly since the majority of those involved in the formation of a Victorian branch had been leading figures in the VTA and the IPAV. A preliminary meeting was held at the Burnley School of Horticulture in September 1964 to guage the level of support for a Victorian branch and in October Jack Owens received permission from the AIPA Executive to proceed with the branch formation. The inaugural branch meeting was held at Burnley on 28 November, attended by 28 members and chaired by Jack Owens. Elected office bearers were Gordon Shearwood as President, George Vafiopolous and Colin Simpson (MCC) as Vice-Presidents, Bill Halligan as Secretary and a Committee of five. A system of quarterly meetings was decided upon and the first function arranged was a Christmas Luncheon in Royal Park, an opportunity for new members to meet informally.

In the first year of its operation the Victorian branch set a standard of activities that established a pattern for the rest of the decade. Meetings were held regularly in the form of field trips, slide shows and lectures. The Committee felt that one of the most pressing needs of the branch was an increased membership, and it embarked on a series of promotional activities in and around Melbourne.[1] They were so successful that at the first field day in Geelong in October 1965 75 people attended the branch meeting, and over 200 were present for the following field demonstration. By the end of 1965 membership had grown from 28 to 84, the result not only of former IPAV members transferring their membership to the branch, but of the successful promotional events conducted by members. A variety of seminars were organised for members on subjects ranging from weedicides, tree propagation and turf cultivation to Victoria's National Parks. In 1967 the branch began holding bi-monthly meetings, in order 'to have interesting Meetings...with field days and Evening Meetings...to get the Members, and senior members of their staffs together exchanging ideas and getting to appreciate problems in our particular work'.[2] Exchanges of information and problem-solving remained important aims of the branch and the holding of seminars and lectures enabled members to carry out these goals.

---

[1]AIPA, Victorian Branch, Executive Review 1965, p.3.

[2]AIPR, Victorian Division, Committee Review 1967, p.2.

Membership continued to grow, boosted by promotional activities and successful seminars, and in 1968 had reached 130. One of the most successful events during the decade was held in June 1968. Over 300 people attended an all-day 'Symposium on Street Trees' at La Trobe University, among them representatives from many different fields. Members felt that the event lifted the status of the Institute, and they capitalised on its success by publishing and distributing the proceedings. In 1969 the branch organised and ran the Institute's national conference in Melbourne, the first to be held in the State since IPAV days. It was generally agreed that the conference was as good as any held previously, and with a membership of 139 by the end of the year the branch looked forward to a promising future.[3]

In its early years, characteristics emerged in the Victorian branch that were to distinguish it from other State branches. It was more established than the others because of its large membership, made up of former IPAV members and Superintendents of Parks from most major towns and cities around Victoria. Also, many of the issues previously dealt with by the IPAV, including the status of park administrators, the lack of control over park maintenance, and the pursuit of better standards of horticulture education, were adopted as central concerns of the branch. Many more local issues were dealt with than in the IPAV, however, and discussions were more intense than they had been. Branch member Gordon Shearwood believes that one positive aspect of the branch formation was the introduction of three-year Presidential terms, a move which outruled the long Presidential terms of previous years.[4] Another, he said, was that it gave the Institute in Victoria a change of direction as different people leading the branch introduced new ideas and brought a change of focus to Institute activities.[5] The branch formation also encouraged members to promote the Institute for the benefit of the State and, throughout its existence, Victoria had a very active and visual branch of the AIPA.

The second branch of the AIPA to form was one that combined members from NSW and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Preliminary meetings to discuss the formation of a branch were held in Sydney in late 1963 but there was insufficient support for the idea and it was postponed. In 1964 the AIPA held its annual conference for the first time in Canberra. The high standard of organisation and participation at that

---

[3]AIPR, Victorian Division, Executive Review 1969, p.3.

[4]Interview with Gordon Shearwood, Perth, 25 March 1988.

[5]ibid.

event sparked renewed enthusiasm for a branch involving members from the ACT and NSW.[6] A second meeting in Sydney attended by Federal Secretary John Dickson (Jack) Firth[7] and 27 others was held on 27 February 1965 at which the branch was formally accepted as part of the Australian Institute. Elected office-bearers were President Warwick Watson (Assistant Superintendent, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney), Vice-Presidents Knowles Mair (Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney) and Tom Wood (Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, Wagga Wagga), Secretary Maurice Watson (Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney), and a Committee of five. The branch headquarters were in Sydney and meetings were to be held three times a year, with country meetings and field days being arranged when possible.

The branch faced the initial task of preparing for the Institute's annual conference in Sydney in 1966 and a committee of five was formed to deal with the arrangements. Other committees were formed to examine the branch constitution and membership applications and, after receiving official recognition in July 1965, the branch Committee made an application to the Federal Executive to use a specific branch letterhead. Although branch meetings were held regularly throughout the year they were not well attended and most attention was focussed on the upcoming conference. The branch received substantial support from councils and government bodies in the months before the conference so that the actual event, in August, was attended by a record 170 delegates. Other activities in 1966 concerned the pursuit of better horticulture education in NSW, for which branch members made representation to the Ryde School of Horticulture for the establishment of an advanced course in park administration. In 1967 the NSW Technical Education Department approved the introduction of Post-Certificate Courses in Park Administration and Landscape Design at Ryde, a considerable advance on existing courses which were aimed more at amateur gardeners than professionals.

Although membership of the branch had risen to 33 following the conference, by the end of 1967 it had fallen to only twenty people. In March 1968, because of lack of support, it was resolved that the branch cease functioning as a separate entity, its affairs to be left in the hands of the current executive. It was not until May 1971 that a revived

---

[6]John Gray in correspondence with E. Stewart, 21 November 1988. John Gray was President of the RAIPR in 1976/77. For details of his background see page 93.

[7]A horticulturally-trained man who attended Burnley School of Horticulture before commencing work at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne in 1934. He served in the RAAF for four years then in 1947 took up the position of Curator (later Superintendent) of Parks and Gardens for the City of Northcote, where he remained for 23 years.

NSW Division formed, separate from the ACT, which had formed its own Division in mid-1970.

A number of factors conspired against the successful establishment of the NSW/ACT branch. From the beginning there was a lack of commitment among members which stemmed partly from the fact that branch meetings were held on weekdays and members were reluctant to travel long distances across Sydney to attend them.[8] Member apathy also developed because the branch failed to attract sufficient numbers of councils, government bodies and individuals to meetings. The branch was faced initially with a number of administrative problems as it sought to establish a relationship with the Federal Executive and members often felt that meeting time was wasted on such matters when issues of greater concern were being ignored.[9] Problems also existed in the membership itself which was dominated by formally-qualified Botanic Gardens staff, to the exclusion of less qualified people who felt that many important issues were ignored. The branch was hindered, too, by a poor relationship with the Federal Executive, which, members believed, should share more of the control of the Institute with interstate members.[10] In turn, the AIPA Executive accused the branch of trying to be too professional in its aims and activities, something branch members strove for as a desirable aim. The differing views held by Victorian and NSW members resulted in on-going hostility which, combined with factors already mentioned, jeopardized the success of the branch.

A State which faced problems similar to those in NSW, but with more success in combatting them, was Western Australia (WA), which formed a branch of the AIPA in March 1965. The main instigator behind the formation of this branch was Ken Hunter, who carried many ideas of the Institute in Victoria to his new post as Director of Parks and Gardens in Perth in 1963. Soon after his arrival, he contacted the Secretary of the Employers' Union who gave him a list of the employers of park personnel throughout the State. He then wrote to each one asking if they would attend, or send a representative to attend a meeting in Perth, with the intention of forming an AIPA branch.[11] After he had obtained permission from the Federal Executive to form a

---

[8]Interview with Warwick Watson, Sydney, 1 June 1988.

[9]ibid.

[10]ibid.

[11]Interview with Ken Hunter, Perth, 29 March 1988.

branch, the meeting was held in February 1965. It was attended by 31 people representing most metropolitan councils and a number of shire councils. The branch was formally recognized on 19 March when the Constitution was accepted. Ken Hunter became President, Peter Luff Snr.(Superintendent of Parks in Fremantle) Vice-President, and the Secretary was Leonard Easton (Assistant Town Clerk, City of Sterling). They were to be assisted by a Committee of five including the Director of King's Park, Arthur Fairall. After the meeting Ken Hunter wrote to every Council in the State asking them to join the Institute as a Sustaining member, a move which was so successful that by the end of 1965 the branch had 30 such members. Sustaining membership was to remain an important part of the branch and distinguished it from those in other States which did not receive such strong support from local councils.

By early 1966 the WA branch had 78 members, a number nearly equalling membership in Victoria. As in Victoria, members had embarked on a determined membership drive by holding a number of different activities to which they invited council representatives and as many park personnel as possible. One of the first of these events was a field day in May 1965, where parks and gardens equipment was displayed and demonstrated. It was attended by trade, Local and State government representatives, Mayors, Councillors and Members of Parliament. In October branch members held a reception for visitors and their wives who were in Perth to attend the opening of the King's Park Botanic Gardens. In March 1966 the branch organized a statewide playground equipment competition 'with the object of seeking designs of suitable new and original forms of Playground Equipment'.[12] A total of 38 entries were received and judged by a panel including a Professor of Architecture, a Consulting Engineer, and Ken Hunter. These activities were the most successful in attracting attention to the branch.

The fact that Perth was situated such a distance from the other State capitals meant that its residents had to rely on themselves for the development of the city. Groups such as the AIPA were well supported by both the public and the State government because they were seen to be a positive force in the city's growth.[13] Also, in the mid-1960's Perth was a rapidly growing city and many small communities were being overtaken by urban development. Few new areas had personnel solely in charge of park development and those who were responsible for providing open spaces for the community

---

[12]Local Government Journal of Western Australia, June 1966, p.42.

[13]Interview with Ken Hunter, op.cit.

welcomed the help they received from experienced parks people such as those in the Institute.[14] Member enthusiasm was maintained not only by frequent activities but also by the fact that the branch was to host the 1968 AIPA conference, and much energy was needed to persuade members in the eastern States to travel to Western Australia.

In the years leading to the 1968 conference the WA branch held monthly meetings consisting of lectures, slide shows and occasional field trips. It was during these years that the branch adopted an advice-giving role not dissimilar to that undertaken by the VTA years earlier. During the 1960's, not only were many new urban areas developing in WA but in the isolated northern parts of the State new mining towns including Wyndham, Dampier and Port Hedland were established. These new towns had relatively large populations with specific recreation needs but they had no parks personnel to help in the development of recreation facilities.[15] Many of the Institute's activities were advertised in the Local Government Journal of Western Australia and councils in country areas often wrote to Ken Hunter, as Director of Parks in Perth, for advice. He in turn passed such requests to the branch for action and members either sent information by letter or made personal visits to help rectify problems and give advice.[16] The branch made occasional visits to Bunbury, Albany, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie, but distance prevented field trips from becoming a regular activity.

Although the branch focussed mainly on local issues, occasionally influences from the Eastern States directed activity undertaken by members. When Ken Hunter arrived in Perth there was very little unity of titles amongst Park personnel, who ranged from Head Gardeners and Curators to Superintendents and Directors of Parks and Gardens.[17] Soon after its foundation the Institute wrote to all councils asking that they unify these titles by renaming all head personnel of parks Superintendents. The request caused some controversy among councils which feared a consequent rise in wages, but over a period of time the change was made. In most respects the branch developed in its own way, and the organization of the 1968 conference is a particular example of the style of operation adopted by the branch. During the preceding two conferences, branch members had attracted attention to the upcoming conference with displays featuring the

---

[14]ibid.

[15]Interview with Leonard Easton, Perth, 28 March 1988.

[16]Interview with Ken Hunter, op.cit.

[17]ibid.

attractions of WA. Their efforts proved such a success that a record 200 delegates representing all States, New Zealand and South-East Asia attended. WA members welcomed guests by having wildflowers and gifts placed in every delegate's hotel room, and by organizing post-conference tours to different parts of the State.[18] The conference gave a great boost to branch membership from people who had been sent by their employers to attend, and the enthusiasm and support generated by the event was retained for the rest of the decade. By 1970 the branch had a total of 120 members.

Only months after the WA branch was formed the IPASA announced that it intended to become the South Australian branch of the AIPA. The South Australian Institute had remained almost completely independent from the IPAV in the early 1960's, with only Noel Lothian, Ben Bone and a few others attending interstate conferences. Most members were only concerned with matters within South Australia and although the membership remained small, at about 30 people, it was an active group which held regular bi-monthly meetings incorporating lectures, slide shows, seminars and field days.[19] From 1959 to 1964 the Institute undertook a number of excursions outside Adelaide to attract members in country areas such as Mt.Gambier, Whyalla and Port Lincoln. The Institute's relationship with the Australian Institute changed in early 1965 when its President, Noel Lothian, replaced Jack Owens as Federal President. The first non-Victorian President of the Institute, Noel Lothian brought South Australian activities to the attention of other members, and he also helped to improve communication between South Australian members and the Federal body.[20] The decision to amalgamate with the AIPA was announced in May 1965.

All office-bearers of the IPASA were transferred to the new State branch and a large donation of money was made to the Federal office as a sign of branch commitment to the Institute. While the branch continued its activities much as before, the closer communication between South Australia and Victoria meant that issues such as improving the status of parks personnel were discussed more frequently by branch members. The problem of status arose in South Australia largely as a result of discussions at AIPA conferences during the 1960's in which it was resolved to unify titles around the country. In South Australia changes in titles of park staff came about

---

[18]Ken Hunter, "WA Region 1965-1969", July 1987.

[19]From notes on the History of the South Australian Region, prepared by Leslie Clayton, SA Regional Secretary.

[20]Interview with Noel Lothian, Adelaide, 21 March 1988.

slowly, despite Institute intervention, and depended largely on the size of the council concerned and the importance placed on its parks department. Small councils generally had a park supervisor who was responsible to the town clerk or engineer. Larger councils originally called their chief of parks the Head Gardener or Curator, as Ben Bone was known until his position was retitled Director of Parks and Gardens in the mid-1940's.

Another activity influenced by Victoria was the pursuit of more and better horticulture education in South Australia during the 1960's. At the time the branch formed the only course in horticulture available in Adelaide was at the Botanic Gardens, a four year full-time Trainee Course established by Noel Lothian in 1949 to prepare boys and girls for work in the Botanic Gardens and other fields of ornamental horticulture.[21] The majority of parks employees had no formal training but were self-taught, and in this the Institute played an important role through the exchange of information amongst members. To help improve the education situation branch members made repeated submissions and proposals for the establishment of a gardening apprenticeship throughout the decade. Their efforts were repeatedly thwarted, largely because gardening was not yet regarded as a career which required special training. They were opposed by the Nurserymen's Association whose members feared that they would have to pay high wages to apprentices rather than employ cheap manual labour, and the Education Department refused to listen to submissions from horticulturists because it believed that practically-trained people were not qualified to give advice on education matters.[22] In short, although Institute members maintained their efforts, little was achieved in the improvement of horticulture education in South Australia before the early 1980's.

During the latter half of the 1960's the South Australian branch retained a small but committed membership of approximately 40 people. In 1967 it held a successful national conference, attended by 182 delegates. Like the Perth conference held the following year the conference was beneficial to the local branch, but as the Institute was already well established in Adelaide, which had held two national conferences in 1948 and 1960, it was less of a landmark in its development. In 1969 members organised and ran a one-day 'Symposium on Trees' at Flinders University on the lines of that held in Melbourne. It, too, was a great success, with various speakers drawn from different

---

[21] ibid.

[22] ibid.

fields, and the papers were also printed and distributed. The Institute in South Australia was largely horticulture-based and by 1970 members were preparing to face the impact of the recreation movement, an issue that was to prove as divisive as any in the Institute's history.

It was another two years before a further State branch was formed and in that time the Institute changed its name and renamed existing State branches Institute Divisions. The Hume Division was formed in 1966 after members from towns in Southern NSW met at the Sydney conference to discuss the problem of attending Institute meetings in Sydney from such a distance. Those most concerned with the problem were Tom Wood, Laurie Withers (Superintendent of Parks in Leeton), and Len McInnes (Officer-in-charge of Parks and Gardens for the Snowy Mountains Authority).[23] The three men consulted NSW members living in Albury, Cooma, Griffith, Narrandera, Wodonga and Shepparton in Victoria and all agreed that it would be preferable to form a Division incorporating these and other towns and cities in Northern Victoria and Southern NSW.[24] During 1967 deputations including Messrs Withers, Wood and McInnes went to Sydney and Melbourne to convince members that there was a need for better organisation of Institute activities in the area, and that the support for a new Division existed. The men were met with scepticism from NSW members who doubted its success. They also became involved in a complicated debate over the boundaries of the Division for both Victorian and NSW Divisions feared a loss of members to the new Division. Eventually, it was decided that there would be no set boundaries and that people living on either side of the Hume Highway could join the Division.[25] The inaugural Division meeting was on 4 November 1967 at Wagga Wagga, attended by 21 people from an area bordered by Griffith, Tumut, Shepparton, and Deniliquin. Office-bearers elected for the first year were Tom Wood (President), Laurie Withers (Vice-President), Barry Dangerfield, City of Albury, (Secretary) and a Committee of five.

Unlike other Divisions, the Hume Division had no established central town or city as its headquarters and members faced greater problems in co-ordinating activities than in the capital cities. Its members were scattered over a large area and attendance at meetings required members to travel long distances and to have a greater level of commitment than that of most Institute members. The Division was unusual, too, in that

---

[23]Interview with Tom Wood, Wagga Wagga, 8 November 1987.

[24]ibid.

[25]Interview with Len McInnes, Canberra, 29 April 1988.

each meeting was held in a different town, giving a greater number of rural communities the opportunity to benefit from Institute activities and expertise. Hume was also the only fully country-based Division of the Institute and, because its members were not constricted by the problems of working in large urban councils, many of their concerns were different from those in the other Divisions.

In its first year of operation meetings were held in Albury, Narrandera-Leeton and Canberra. In later years it became customary to hold meetings four times a year. Members were keen to spread their combined expertise over as large an area as possible and they aimed to cater specifically for the parks and recreation needs of every town within their area.[26] If the Division wished to visit a town which did not have an Institute member it wrote to the town clerk or mayor to advise them of the visit, and to invite them or any other interested persons to attend. Meetings thus planned were generally given a formal welcome by a local dignitary and were often concluded with a meal provided by the host town. Because meetings were held on weekends there was always time for members to tour local park and recreation facilities, giving them the chance to discuss mutual problems, exchange information and advise the local town clerk or engineer on the development of parks in their area.[27] Most members were accompanied by their families on these occasions and as the pattern of weekend gatherings evolved, Division members developed a closeness that was lacking in other Divisions.

During the late 1960's, as the Division was becoming established, most activity centred on the quarterly meetings. Members had set ideas about what the Institute should try to achieve, which was to encourage small towns to make use of the Institute, and to convince local engineers and gardeners that parks and recreation were not limited to the capital cities.[28] Many small towns visited by the Division were without a gardener and if they had one he was usually unqualified, so that the expertise brought to such places as Bright, Myrtleford, Tumut, Jerilderie and Cootamundra was invaluable. Many towns were encouraged to provide more open spaces for community recreation, develop leisure programs and to improve maintenance of park and recreation facilities. Over time, the Division developed a network of contacts which enabled town clerks or

---

[26]ibid.

[27]Summary of the Minutes of the Hume Region, prepared by Regional members James Jenkins and Robert Van Der Weyde.

[28]Interview with Len McInnes, op.cit.

engineers to consult a professional for advice on all problems that they encountered.[29] The method of its operation enabled the Division to publicise the Institute's aims and activities over a wide area, a fact which increased its membership over the years, and helped it to become established relatively quickly. Issues such as the standardisation of titles of park personnel were not as important in the Hume Division because there were so few towns with a hierarchy of park staff and very often those in charge of parks also had responsibility for various other town facilities. Horticulture education was an important issue in the Division but not until the late 1970's. Before that time the Division's greatest contribution was in slowly educating the community with which it made contact, and in establishing a firm basis of operation for the future.

The final AIPA Division to form during the 1960's was in Tasmania. The main instigator behind the Division there was Bill Goodman[30] who, like Ken Hunter, wrote to as many local councils, government departments and civic authorities as possible to guage the level of support for a Division.[31] From a subsequent meeting of interested parties the Tasmanian Division was officially formed on 28 February 1969. Bill Goodman was elected President, Vice Presidents were Alan Ransley (Glenorchy City Council) and Steve Kent (Devonport Municipal Council), with Keith Kelly (Hobart Botanic Gardens) as Secretary. Initial membership was a small but dedicated group of twenty people who felt the need for a body of professionals who could co-ordinate Institute activities between conferences.[32] Like the Hume Division, the Institute in Tasmania was not centred in any one city but had members in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie, with some scattered along the West Coast in Queenstown, Zeehan and Strahan. Meetings were held quarterly on weekends and weekdays, often in the midland towns of Bronte Park or Campbelltown to enable most members to attend.

During 1969 the Division was principally occupied with the administrative details of becoming established. In May Bill Goodman reported that the Division had seven Federal, thirteen Division, and 30 trade members. The first field day had been attended

---

[29]ibid.

[30]A previous member of the Victorian branch of the AIPA who had qualified with a Diploma of Horticulture at Burnley before working in the Parks Departments of Oakleigh City Council in Melbourne and at Traralgon in Gippsland. He joined the Institute in 1964 and on moving to Gippsland began organising meetings for members there. He obtained the position of Director of Parks in the City of Launceston in the late 1960's.

[31]Interview with Bill Goodman, Canberra, 7 May 1988.

[32]ibid.

by 85 people and there were 120 people on the Division mailing list.[33] A meeting was held in Launceston in August, and the first annual general meeting was in December of that year. The only other activities of note were forward planning for the 1971 AIPA conference to be held in Hobart and Launceston, and Division proposals to have a Trade Certificate in Horticulture established at the Hobart Technical College. Previously, horticulture education in the State had been non-existent and Institute members were keen to have courses established as soon as possible. They met with considerable success and their efforts resulted in a Horticulture Certificate course in Hobart beginning in 1970. Further advances in education were made in the following decade.

Apart from the formation of State Branches and Divisions, the greatest development of the Institute in the 1960's was the members' adoption, both in the Institute's title and in its aims, of the recreation movement. Although members had been aware of developments in the United States since the Second World War it was during the 1960's that they received most information about the recreation movement and its possible application in Australia. Their adoption of the movement at this time was particularly significant because it was not until the early 1970's that recreation, as distinguished from sport, was recognised by any Federal or State government as a legitimate public requirement. In their willingness to embrace the movement in the 1960's, AIPA members displayed the foresight, espoused by VTA members in earlier years, which had enabled the Institute to survive by adapting to social change.

Much of the information concerning recreation in the 1960's came to Institute members through the continuation of overseas visits such as those undertaken by Jack Owens in the late 1950's. Two leading figures in this process were Frank Keenan and David Shoobridge[34] who made a number of trips to international parks conferences in England and the United States throughout the 1960's. Frank Keenan made a visit to seventeen major American cities in 1962, after which he wrote a report describing a situation evolving in the United States in which recreation was beginning to take precedence over horticulture in many parks departments.[35] He also reported that by

---

[33]AIPR Minutes, 30 May 1969.

[34]A forester who studied and worked in Tasmania and Canberra before being appointed Assistant Director of the Parks and Gardens Section of the Department of the Interior in Canberra in 1952. He became Director of the Section in 1958 and because of his senior position in the Commonwealth Public Service was an important link between the AIPA Federal Office in Melbourne and the Federal Government in Canberra in the 1960's.

[35]F.Keenan, Report of a Study Tour - City Park Systems in Great Britain, Western Europe and North America, 1962, p.4.

1960 separate departments had been established to develop independent recreational areas and educate public recreation officers. The leaders of the movement had developed into top administrators and had begun to be more prominent in public circles than the horticulturists controlling the public parks system. In some cities recreationists controlled parks departments, 'generally to the detriment of the general horticultural aesthetics of these cities'.[36] The result was the development of hostility between the two groups and Keenan concluded that '...there must always be an uneasy compromise between active recreation and horticulture'.[37]

During the 1960's recreation in the United States began to focus increasingly on urban parks. The trend was linked to rising fuel costs and a growing realization that 'the traditional emphasis on national park, forest and coastal planning...greatly favoured the affluent middle classes as against those who could not so readily afford to leave the city and travel to distant recreation sites'.[38] It was also a time when 'quality of life' became a catch-phrase for those concerned with conservation issues. 'Quality of life' issues such as the preservation of historic buildings and sites, the protection of forests, wilderness, beaches, rivers and lakes, and the provision of better and more easily available recreation facilities were not limited to the United States but spread throughout the Western world. In 1965 the Australian Conservation Foundation was established with a register of 320 groups and 65,000 members. The word 'conservation' took on a broader meaning and pollution became a perceived problem. The growth of the conservation movement was paralleled by a widespread desire to return to natural products in food and clothing, and pastimes involving the use of natural products, such as weaving, pottery and leatherwork.

Although these trends were readily adopted by Australians, the recreation movement progressed only slowly. After a time people began to perceive that the type of facilities available to most Americans were not available in Australia, and began to demand, and receive, a greater variety of recreation facilities. The Police Boys Clubs and Community Youth Clubs that had been built in post-war years became increasingly popular and were the basis on which large community Health and Recreation centres were built in the States, with the support of the Federal Labor government, in the 1970's. Australians also turned increasingly to wilderness areas for their recreation and the

---

[36]ibid.

[37]ibid., p.5.

[38]Mercer and Hamilton-Smith, Recreation Planning and Social Change, p.2.

foresters and rangers in charge of such areas were unable to cope with the demands placed on them. As the decade progressed untrained park staff were increasingly diverted to recreation matters and many foresters, in particular, were forced to divert machinery and manpower away from traditional forestry activities to provide public recreation facilities in forest areas.[39] In cities, too, Water Boards had to consider the recreational potential of catchments and waterways, Housing Commissions had to give more consideration to the leisure needs of their tenants, and Road Boards found the recreational use of roads an increasingly important consideration in planning.[40] There was very little government support for these growing recreation needs, except for continued support of State branches of the National Fitness Council, an organisation designed to cater for the sporting and physical recreation needs of the community.

Institute members perceived these changes with mixed feelings. They were reluctant, as they had always been, to become politically involved with conservation and environment issues for fear of jeopardizing the Institute's public standing and their own positions.[41] They were concerned, however, to see that the increased public use of urban and rural open spaces was properly managed and that the visual as well as the practical qualities of recreation areas were maintained. In 1966 Noel Lothian wrote of the need to provide more recreation facilities in both urban and rural areas, keeping in mind the needs of motorists, youths and the aged.[42] At the same time, he said, there must be a guarantee that '...our national heritage, our plants, birds, animals and landscape will be preserved and be available for future generations...'[43] As they learnt more about the recreation movement, many AIPA members became convinced that they had already been dealing with many of the issues being discussed in their work. On the other hand, Frank Keenan and Noel Lothian were urging members in lectures and at conferences to adopt a broader definition of recreation:

> ...recreation includes more than mere sport. To the aged it might be a quiet corner...the opportunity to ponder and appreciate...beauty...The purpose and functions of public parks, zoos, botanic gardens...and national parks must all be included in our

---

[39]Keith McKenry, Recreation, Wilderness and The Public, a survey report for the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, Melbourne, 1975, p.iii.

[40]ibid.

[41]Interview with Keith O'Kelly, Sydney, 31 May 1988.

[42]In an article titled "In What Direction Does Our Course Lie?", in Australian Parks, Vol.3, No.2, November 1966, pp.5-9.

[43]ibid., p.9.

meaning of recreation.[44]

In the United States recreation had been defined as any pursuit that provided relaxation and enjoyment to individuals, including hobbies, dancing, reading, community service, music, drama, and social activities.[45] To most Australians recreation meant sport, and Institute members realised that their greatest challenge would be to alter the community's perceptions.

In 1966 the Institute responded to the growing world-wide interest in recreation, and a world-wide trend among similar organisations, by adopting 'recreation' into its title to become the Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation. The Institute was to some extent following the lead of the American Institute of Park Executives, which in 1964 had become the National Recreation Association, and the English Institute of Park Administration, which also in 1964 became the Institute of Park and Recreation Administration. The change can be mainly attributed to members' realisation that organised recreation would be a major factor in most Australians' lives, and in the Institute's activities, in years to come:

> The change in name indicates a variation in the Institute's policy, in as much as a wider field of operation is now involved. The use of the word "recreation"...will mean that youth activities, and other fields of recreation...in all age groups, will now become a matter of greater concern to the Institute.[46]

Soon after the change, the AIPR aimed to increase its status outside the country by applying to become a member of the International Federation of Parks and Recreation Administration (IFPRA).[47] For the rest of the decade those most concerned with recreation exhorted members to focus increasingly on the development of urban parks and recreation, an area perceived to be of increasing value for the future. They were also urged to be aware of the problems existing between recreationists and horticulturists overseas, and to start planning to avoid the conflict that had characterised the meeting of the two professions elsewhere. Frank Keenan, particularly, was convinced that 'active and passive recreations can be incorporated in a parks system, with horticulture playing a predominant part...'[48] By 1970 these problems were yet to become evident in

---

[44]ibid., pp.5-7.

[45]Keenan, Report of a Study Tour, p.15.

[46]AIPA Conference Report 1966, p.1.

[47]IFPRA was established in London in 1957 at the time of the first World Congress in Parks and Recreation. It has since held international congresses in a number of different countries every two or three years. Up to 1986 approximately 35 nations were represented in IFPRA.

[48]AIPA Conference Report 1965, p.8.

Australia, although it had become clear to all in the profession that 'the philosophy of recreation will be the major motivating force that the Park Administrator will have to recognise and come to terms with in the next decade'.[49]

Although recreation was becoming an increasingly time consuming issue for Institute members, longstanding concerns were not forgotten. During the 1960's, largely as a result of Institute activity, further advances in the improvement of horticulture education were made. In a paper presented at the 1962 conference in Hobart, Tom Kneen noted that 'the provisions for horticultural training in Australia compare unfavourably with those in England and New Zealand'.[50] The only full-time training available was at the Burnley School of Horticulture, which had the Diploma of Horticulture. Part-time training was available at the Ryde School of Horticulture. The Botanic Gardens in Adelaide and Sydney, and the MCC Parks and Gardens Committee had training schemes for their gardeners, but as yet no State had been successful in having a gardening apprenticeship scheme introduced. In Melbourne, AIPA members continued to pursue the apprenticeship issue but in both 1962 and 1963 Tom Kneen noted that because there had been no provision for extra staff at Burnley the apprenticeship was unlikely to go ahead. Members continued to pursue the issue and their efforts were finally rewarded in May 1966 when gardening was proclaimed an Apprenticeship Trade, covering municipal councils, golf courses, racing clubs, foreshores and cemeteries within the metropolitan district of Melbourne. At the time of the proclamation two Institute members were appointed to the Apprenticeship Trade Board; Richard Pescott as the government representative, and Frank Keenan as the Municipal Association representative. Both men were keen to educate Institute members on the implications of the apprenticeship scheme and in December 1966 invited a representative from the Apprenticeship Board to lecture on the topic at an Institute meeting. In 1967 members of the Victorian branch called for support for the apprenticeship within the field of park administration, asking that all eligible boys be registered as applicants. In November 1967 Frank Keenan wrote an article in the Institute journal, Australian Parks, outlining the details of the apprenticeship and its relevance to members.

In 1966 the AIPA extended its influence beyond Victoria by preparing a submission

---

[49]R.D.Stringer, Deputy Director of Parks, City of Sydney, in the "Braithwaite Memorial Lecture" at the 40th Annual AIPR Conference, Adelaide, 1967, p.14.

[50]Conference paper by T.H.Kneen at the 35th Annual AIPA Conference, Hobart, 1962, p.14.

for the establishment of a School of Park Administration and Horticulture at the proposed Canberra College of Advanced Education (CCAE). The idea for the submission was first suggested by David Shoobridge in the early 1960's, but after meeting opposition from some members he was not able to pursue the matter until 1965. In that year the proposal was developed by a group of staff from the Department of the Interior Parks and Gardens Section. Those involved were David Shoobridge, John Gray,[51] Ray Margules (Assistant Director of the Section), and Robert Boden.[52] After meeting opposition from within the Department the submission was adopted by the Institute and further developed in 1966. The proposal was based on courses that had been running in the United States for a number of years, with an emphasis on both park administration and recreation. The proposed course was to provide a more highly educated group of park administrators for the future, and, more importantly, to raise the status of park administration as a profession in Australia. In May 1968 David Shoobridge reported that the CCAE had been established, to operate with the same status as a university. Park Administration was not accepted in the first four schools but in 1969 a course in Applied Science was established, headed by Dr Peter Rudman, who wrote to the Institute seeking information on its aims, activities and membership because his course was likely to include aspects of local park administration. In later years, the AIPA submission introduced a management aspect to the Applied Science course, which began taking students in 1970.

In other States there was varied activity on the education issue. The Victorian branch was the most active in this respect, an understandable consequence of having been the headquarters of the Institute for so long. The apprenticeship scheme received considerable attention from branch members as they became familiar with its operation, and as it spread into country areas around Melbourne. In 1966 the branch made a proposal for the establishment of a scholarship, the 'William J.Brens Scholarship in Gardening', which would give the most successful final year apprentice in Victoria the chance to work for twelve months in parks departments or similar organisations in New Zealand. The idea was approved and funded by the MCC Parks, Gardens and Recreations Committee (as it had become), and administered by a specially appointed

---

[51]Trained as a forester at the Australian Forestry School in Canberra in 1953 and worked as a forester for seven years. He joined the Parks and Gardens Section in 1960 and joined the AIPA in 1964. He was appointed Principal Landscape Architect of the NCDC in 1974, and Director of Landscape Architecture at the NCDC in 1980.

[52]An arboriculturist in the Section. He was not an Institute member but maintained an interest in and participated in some of its activities.

committee. The Institute was represented on this committee together with representatives from the MCC, the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Technical Education Department and the Apprenticeship Board.

The Victorian branch also participated in a number of short-term education activities. In 1966 it ran two courses, one in conjunction with the NRCL which was aimed at country Superintendents and had the theme of 'Tree Culture'. The second was in conjunction with the Geelong Council of Adult Education, on the subject of 'Horticulture and its Various Aspects'. Held over a period of two months, the course was aimed at the general public and all lectures were given by Institute members, including Richard Pescott, Bill Halligan and George Vafiopolous. The course was repeated in the following year, as was the course with the NRCL, and for a number of years after the Division participated in Adult Education courses in Melbourne.

The second branch particularly active in education was Western Australia, which began discussions on the possible establishment of horticulture courses in 1965. At that time the only such training available in Perth was an informal apprenticeship at King's Park, conducted by Arthur Fairall. Both King's Park and the Perth City Council were the largest employers of park staff and both were keen to establish a course in Park Administration.[53] After a number of meetings, at which Ken Hunter and Arthur Fairall represented both the Institute as well as their employers, a Certificate in Park Administration and Horticulture was established in 1966.[54] In 1967 the Division held a series of Turf Maintenance Courses at the Claremont Technical School, and during the latter years of the 1960's members focussed more attention on the possibility of establishing a formal gardening apprenticeship scheme in Perth.

The effects of the Institute's wider involvement in national and international concerns of park administration, recreation and education on its method of operation were considerable. The production of the Institute's own journal in 1964, for example, was a sign that members were aware of the importance of spreading their knowledge over a wide area, and that greater publicity of the Institute's activities was essential to its development. The journal was initially proposed by its first editor, Alex Wilkie, after the Institute tried unsuccessfully to use another publication, the journal of the Municipal Association of Victoria, to advertise its activities. In 1964 Wilkie produced his own

---

[53]Interview with Ken Hunter, op.cit.

[54]ibid.

draft copy of a journal he hoped would be published by the Institute. He emphasised that the Institute was in an unsatisfactory position with regard to publication of its activities, and that the production of an Institute journal was the only possible solution.[55] His idea was well received and the first issue of the journal, Australian Parks, was published in August 1964. In his first editorial Wilkie wrote that:

> The Journal has a two-fold purpose - firstly as a means of regular communication between those who are in any way connected with the Parks-Gardens Profession, and secondly as a means of disseminating information...about the many facets of Park Administration.[56]

Although Alex Wilkie passed away in 1969, in his five years as editor he succeeded in establishing the journal as a recognised and authoritative publication on many matters relating to park and recreation administration. He was succeeded by ACT Divisional member Paul Herbert who, with a group of editorial assistants, directed the production of the journal in Canberra for nine years.

Changes were also felt in the arrangement of the Federal Executive during this decade. In 1964 James Sullivan resigned as Secretary to take up a new position at the Melbourne Zoo, and he was replaced by Jack Firth. The most significant change was when Noel Lothian took over from Jack Owens as Institute President in 1965, ending a leadership that had lasted for eighteen years. At a dinner held in his honour Jack Owens was praised for his long service, his vigour and far-sighted planning and the distinction with which he held the positions of Secretary and President.[57] In 1968 the Institute Executive presented members with a new Constitution, incorporating many of the new interests with which it had become involved. The aims of the Institute were broadened to include persons associated with recreation areas and national parks, as well as those in public parks and gardens. There was an emphasis on informing the public on the necessity to safeguard open spaces, and on stimulating public demand for wider land use. Members wanted to 'increase the confidence of the Community in the employment of...parks and recreation officers, by admitting...only such persons...that have adequate knowledge of the theory and practice of parks and recreation management'.[58] There was an emphasis, too, on promoting higher education qualifications at trade and professional levels. Finally, the Institute resolved 'to promote, establish and assist in

---

[55]AIPA Minutes, 10 April 1964.

[56]Australian Parks, Vol.1, No.1, August 1964, p.3.

[57]Reported in Australian Parks, Vol.2, No.2, November 1965, p.27.

[58]Constitution and By-Laws of the AIPR, October 1968, p.3.

the formation of Regional Divisions'.[59] The pursuit of this aim was so successful that by 1970, after the formation of the Tasmanian Division, the Institute membership had increased to 408.

The Institute's increased involvement in overseas matters of park administration was rewarded when its proposed 1970 conference in Canberra was granted international status. The person mainly responsible for this achievement was David Shoobridge whose involvement outside Australia began in 1967 when he presented a paper at the Third World Congress in Park Administration in London. In that year he became the AIPR representative to IFPRA, and the Institute began exchanging journals with the American Wilderness Society. It was during his visit to London that David Shoobridge proposed the holding of an international conference in parks and recreation in Australia in 1970. He had some difficulty persuading other IFPRA members of its potential success but he was helped by having the full backing of all AIPR members.[60] In 1969 he and Richard Pescott attended another World Congress in Berne where the Canberra conference was widely publicized. They received assurances that representatives from a number of countries would be present in Australia in 1970. All Institute members felt that the holding of an international conference was essential to display the advances made in park administration in Australia.

To cope with the increase in work created by the conference, the Institute proposed in 1969 to make the Secretary position a full-time job. The proposal was accepted and Jack Firth was made permanent Institute Secretary in 1970. It was an important decision because it indicated that members were becoming more fully aware of the necessity to present an organised and united public face as they embarked on a more varied course of activity.

---

[59] ibid.

[60] Interview with David Shoobridge, Canberra, 14 April 1988.

# Chapter 6

# 1970 - 1978: THE INSTITUTE, RECREATION, AND GOVERNMENT

The fulfilment of Institute aims had by 1970 taken on a wider definition than twenty, or even ten years before. With increased involvement in overseas organisations, further commitment to the recreation movement, and a closer association with government representatives at State and Federal level Institute members had committed themselves to promoting the Institute at the highest possible level. It was during the decade of the 1970's that this commitment was carried out at all levels of Institute activity. Of greatest interest to members was the adoption of recreation as a specific movement by the Whitlam government, something they saw as a culmination of the acquired knowledge and activities undertaken during the 1960's.

It was also during the 1970's that the process of establishing State Divisions of the Institute was completed so that by 1972 the Institute was ready to present a nation-wide voice on park and recreation matters. Members' desire for the Institute to act and be seen as the key parks and recreation body in Australia meant that they were forced to raise the level of their association with related State and Federal government departments. At the same time, the increase in activity in State Divisions and the Federal office saw the pressures of operating as a voluntary organisation increase markedly. The Institute's relationship with the Federal government, therefore, was complicated by the need for government funds to cover operating costs, a factor which became increasingly important as the decade progressed.

The Institute's expanding interests continued to include association with similar organisations overseas and there is no doubt that the 1970 International Congress in Canberra was more successful than any other event in having parks and recreation management recognised in Australia. Officially titled the Sixth International and First Australasian Regional International Congress of Park Administration, it attracted 300 local delegates and 43 from thirteen overseas nations. It was the first occasion on which the Institute received any government recognition for its activities, with a grant of

$4000 from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to help cover administration costs. Of the grant, Noel Lothian wrote that:

> Because of the recognition by the Commonwealth Government we have been able to invite important overseas experts to address Congress sessions. This will undoubtedly be of great benefit to members and their public work.[1]

Current Institute and IFPRA President, David Shoobridge, remarked of the Congress that it was the greatest concentrated effort made by the Institute and that it had established park administration in Australia on a status of international recognition.[2] The seal of approval came in the form of opening addresses by two public figures: the Governor General, Sir Paul Hasluck, and the President of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Sir Garfield Barwick.

The contacts established between Institute members and their overseas counterparts during the Congress were maintained at least for the rest of the decade. That and the measure of government recognition achieved through holding the Congress were some of its most important benefits. Equally important, however, was the formation of the ACT Division to cope with arrangements for the Congress. The ACT already had a number of Federal members of the Institute, including David Shoobridge, John Gray, and Harold Oakman. The initial meeting of the Division was on 29 May 1970 and was attended by fourteen people. Office-bearers were Harold Oakman as President, Secretary Lynton Higgs (Parks and Gardens Section, Department of the Interior), Treasurer Pat Hanrahan (a forester in the Parks and Gardens Section), and a Committee of six. All were appointed at that meeting when the Division was officially named the 'ACT Regional Division', to indicate a geographical range not necessarily confined to the ACT. All Division activity focussed initially on Congress organisation with two sub-committees formed to deal with Congress tours and the trade display. One of the most central roles played by members was in the collection and production of Congress papers, distributed to all delegates on the final day of the Congress.

The ACT Division formed at an opportune time because organisation of the Congress forced members to work more closely together than they would have otherwise. The friendships made during that time helped to form a small but dedicated nucleus of members which enthusiastically promoted the Institute's aims and activities.[3] From the beginning the Division differed from others, largely because of the nature of parks and

---

[1] In Australian Parks, Special Congress Issue, 1970, p.75.

[2] In AIPR Annual Report 1970, p.1.

[3] Interview with Pat Hanrahan, Canberra, 20 June 1988.

gardens management in the ACT. Unlike other States, the ACT did not have a system of municipal government that was responsible for the Territory's open spaces. The administration of the ACT was a Commonwealth responsibility and a requirement of those controlling its parks and gardens was formal education in an appropriate discipline. Because of the lack of adequate horticulture training in the ACT the majority of those in charge of the city's parks and gardens were trained in either forestry or botany.[4] Both men in charge of the Parks and Gardens Section in the 1960's and early 1970's, Lindsay Pryor and David Shoobridge, were foresters. ACT Divisional members were mainly recruited from the Parks and Gardens Section, the NCDC, and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Unlike many members, they were professionally trained in fields that enabled them to adapt to the profession of park and recreation management. Many of their ideas, particularly the necessity for higher levels of education in park management, were not well received by some members of the horticulture profession which, by nature, allowed only a slow process of change.

The ACT Division also differed from those in other States in that young people were encouraged to join. The Division carried out a number of membership drives in its early years and many meetings were held at the CCAE to encourage students to participate in its activities. Following the Congress, Division activities resumed a pattern similar to other State Divisions, including field days, seminars, lectures and evening meetings. Membership grew steadily throughout the 1970's, and although it never reached the same levels as in larger States a solid nucleus of members was maintained.

In 1971 the formation of Divisions in New South Wales and Queensland completed the Australia-wide spread of the Institute. Since the collapse of the NSW/ACT Division in 1968 members in New South Wales had limited their involvement to national activities, mainly the annual conference. On 7 May the original committee called a meeting to discuss reforming a division. Chaired by the Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens, John Beard, the meeting was attended by over 40 people representing municipal councils, academic institutions, trade organisations and the Botanic Gardens. The Division's aims were identified as creating co-operation between various organisations and uplifting the profession.[5] Elected office-bearers were John Beard, President, Cedric Bayliss (National Fitness Council), Vice-President, and Barry

---

[4]Correspondence with John Gray, 21 November 1988.

[5]AIPR, Minutes of a Special Meeting to re-activate the NSW Division, 7 May 1971.

Dangerfield (Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney), Secretary. There was a Committee of eight. Meetings were to be held every two months and members agreed that field days would form an important part of the program, in both metropolitan areas and in the rural centres of Orange and Bathurst, the Blue Mountains, and the North Coast.[6]

Not only was the reformed NSW Division better supported than its predecessor, but its members had a vastly improved relationship with the Federal Executive. Former problems of lack of representation and independence had been resolved by the forming of other Divisions and the 1968 Constitution which ensured representation of all States on the Federal Council. Attendance at Division activities was also improved, although numbers at meetings never achieved the same levels as those in Victoria where 60-70 people often attended field days or seminars. As planned, members based much of their activity on field days in different shires and municipalities, inspecting recreation areas and facilities, and sharing knowledge and common problems. In 1973 the Division held the Institute's annual conference, attended by 257 delegates. By 1975 membership had risen to 150.

The formation of a Division in Queensland soon followed that in NSW. The meeting held on 28 May to formalize the Division was the result of years of effort to establish a branch in that State. As early as 1965 the Director of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Harold Caulfield, organised a steering committee to form a Queensland branch but his efforts were to little avail. He found that he was hindered by not having a large pool of personnel from which to draw members.[7] In Brisbane the City Council controlled every aspect of municipal life; parks and gardens, water, sewerage, electricity and transport. Because the Institute traditionally drew its membership from the leading personnel of bodies that looked after these facilities it was left with only one or two adequately qualified people to call on. For many years it was apparent to both Harold Caulfield and the head of the Brisbane Parks Department, Ray Steward, that there was little possibility of forming a Division while this situation existed.[8] Interest in a Division was renewed in 1971 with the Institute planning to hold its 1972 conference at Broadbeach, on the Gold Coast, for which a Division was needed to carry out much of the organisation. Although only eight people were present at the initial meeting, the Division was officially proclaimed and Ray Steward nominated President. The main concern of the

---

[6]ibid.

[7]Interview with Harold Caulfield, Brisbane, 6 June 1988.

[8]ibid.

Division was to attract members and those present were instructed to obtain new members within their sphere of work, as well as contacting parks people in Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton. Letters asking for support were also sent to a number of government departments , including Main roads, Forestry, National Parks, the National Fitness Council and the Department of Wildlife and Preservation.[9]

From its inception the Queensland Division was ruled by the nature of local government in the State. Public Service Departments were reluctant to support the Institute for fear of incurring the disapproval of government ministers, and Institute members were frequently frustrated in their efforts to make statements on issues or partake in particular activities for fear of contravening the policies of their employer, generally the State Government.[10] Members found it difficult to obtain permission to attend conferences or lectures in work time, even for events such as the Broadbeach conference at which Division members, who had organised the event, were allowed to attend for only one day. These difficulties affected the morale of the Division and although meetings and field days were regular, attendances were poor. Attendances, too, were affected by the size of the State which prohibited members from some of the more distant towns and cities attending Institute activities. Because of these problems, and in order to boost numbers, the Division organized activities in conjunction with the National Fitness Council and the AILA. It also readily accepted members from a number of professions other than horticulture, including forestry, national parks and recreation. This trait helped the acceptance of the recreation movement in Queensland far more easily than in States with Divisions made up largely of horticulturists.

The formation of Divisions in the ACT, New South Wales and Queensland helped to remove barriers to membership that were then present in most other Divisions. While the Queensland and ACT Divisions accepted membership from people in a variety of professions, membership from trade operators became commonplace in the NSW Division in the 1970's. Trade displays had long been a feature of Institute field days and conferences but in the 1970's some of the large companies managing such aspects of park maintenance as turf care, irrigation and seed production began to sponsor activities in return for publicity and advertising.[11] In a report on the 1970 Congress it was noted that:

---

[9]AIPR, Queensland Division Minutes, 28 May 1971.

[10]Interview with Harold Caulfield, op.cit.

[11]These included turf and park care equipment specialists Scott Bonnar, Deveson Jahn, Rover and Victa, seed merchants F.H. Brunning and Arthur Yates, Koppers Australia and Tru-Rain Irrigation.

> The problems of organising an international congress would have been so much more difficult without the generous financial assistance and service provided by such a wide section of the trade associated with the provision of parks and recreation facilities to the public.[12]

In order to encourage trade membership, the Institute began to produce a regular Buyer's Guide in 1972. Incorporated in the journal Australian Parks, the Guide was an alphabetical reference to park and recreation suppliers around Australia, and was designed to benefit members in their work.

With the formation of the last three Divisions the Institute experienced its second large membership increase since becoming a national organisation.[13] Membership growth created inevitable problems of administration and communication, and became a central concern to Federal Secretary, Jack Firth. Soon after his appointment in early 1970 he began a program of visits to each State Division to check on progress and activities, and to solve problems of a Federal nature. He was concerned about the lack of communication between members and in 1972 he began production of an Institute newsletter, AIPR News, to help the flow of information around the country. Although Institute members had produced newsletters before, AIPR News was the first comprehensive guide to Institute activities in all States and the only one that has been maintained. In the inaugural newsletter Frank Keenan, then Institute President, noted that it 'marks another mile-stone in the history of park and recreation management in this country', and that it had 'the primary objectives of learning to understand and appreciate the work of members associated with the various disciplines within our profession of park administration'.[14]

Another of Jack Firth's concerns was to promote the Institute internationally and in the eyes of the Federal government. He made a number of contacts with professionals overseas and interstate seeking membership, and was the first to make submissions for government funding of Institute activities. The most successful of these was in 1973 when the Institute made a written submission to the National Estate Committee of Enquiry. The concept of the National Estate was first adopted by the Whitlam government in 1972 and was defined as 'those places...of the natural environment of Australia...that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance...for the present

---

[12]David Shoobridge in AIPR Annual Report 1970, p.1.

[13]Membership had almost doubled since 1970 to a level of 740 by 1975.

[14]In AIPR News, Vol.1, No.1, January 1972, p.1.

community'.[15] The Enquiry was established to define the government's role in administering the Estate, and the Institute's submission to the Enquiry made a number of recommendations on the matter. Part of those recommendations included funding for Institute activities. In 1974 Jack Firth advised members that a grant from the National Estate was to provide $1000 towards producing the journal, $320 towards bringing an international speaker to the 1974 conference, and $5000 towards the cost of producing a series of park management manuals.[16]

In 1975 government recognition of the Institute came in another form. During the previous year the Department of Foreign Affairs sought a representative from the Institute to attend a meeting to discuss a cultural mission to China. The proposed mission was the result of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Australia and was originally intended to represent 'the arts, the academic and educational world, the media, the environment, parks and gardens, zoos, galleries and the sports'.[17] After attending the meeting Institute members submitted a proposal, subsequently agreed to, redefining the mission as a study of the Gardens, Parks and Open Spaces of China. Mission leader was Professor J.D.Ovington (First Assistant Secretary, Department of Environment and Conservation) with a party made up of Robert Boden, Jack Firth, Frank Keenan, Noel Lothian and Gordon Shearwood. The visit in mid-1975 was considered a success and was followed by a return delegation of Chinese to Australia later in the year, hosted by Institute members.

Apart from the physical growth of the Institute the early 1970's were busy years for Institute members in their pursuit of improved education in park administration. By 1972 the Applied Science course at CCAE was fully operative and, as a result of the Institute submission, was being taught with a particular emphasis on park administration. In February 1971 John Gray was appointed a senior lecturer of the course which was structured so that students could major in park planning and management, and land use planning areas. It was during his first year of teaching that John Gray began to realise the difficulties graduates would have in finding employment in municipal parks departments.[18] Students were learning ideas and concepts that were

---

[15]Australian Encyclopaedia, 4th Edition, Vol.7, 1983, p.91.

[16]Australian Parks, Vol.10, No.3, February 1974, p.59.

[17]Letter from Alan Renouf, Department of Foreign Affairs, to Val Ellis, AIPR President, dated 9 May 1974.

[18]Interview with John Gray, Canberra, 15 June 1988.

more advanced than, and very different to, those held by traditional horticulturists in local government. With this in mind he devised a Summer School of Park Management, to be held at the CCAE, to instruct course graduates in traditional municipal park management methods, as well as informing workers from the local parks system on the sort of ideas being taught in the course. Both the Institute and the College agreed that the School would be an ideal way to bridge the gap created by the course and it was organised for February 1973.[19] Although the CCAE supplied the facilities, administration and academic involvement for the School, the ACT Division played an active part by providing lecturers, guides and a general information service. Attended by about 35 participants, the School was a great success and has been a regular feature between the College and the Institute ever since.

In Tasmania further developments in the establishment of horticulture courses were made. The course being conducted by Keith Kelly at the Hobart Technical College was given Certificate status in 1970. By 1973 it had expanded with a staff consisting mainly of Institute members, and a register of 40 students. In the same year, a Horticultural Certificate Curriculum Committee was formed with representatives from the State Education Department, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Hydro-Electric Commission, the AIPR, and others, to ensure a high and consistent standard of horticulture education in the State. In 1975 negotiations were undertaken to commence a Certificate Course in Horticulture at the Launceston Technical College on the same lines as the Hobart course.

Two other developments in education are worthy of mention. In 1972 the Institute's Education Sub-Committee began discussions with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and the Victorian Education Department on the possibility of establishing a correspondence course in Park Administration. By 1974 these negotiations had been concluded and the course, which was designed to train skilled workers to progress to a supervisory level, commenced in that year. In 1974, too, the Institute established an Education Trust Fund with an initial target of $10,000. The Fund was first proposed by James Sullivan and Jack Firth during the 1971 annual conference in Tasmania, with the purpose of furthering education and research in the field of parks and recreation. Between 1971 and 1974 individual members and Divisions made donations to the Fund which was legally established on 5 March 1974. Institute members had initially hoped to be able to run their own school with the money from the Fund, but over time

---

[19] ibid.

modified their aims to provide recipients with money for research or overseas training. It took several years before the initial target was reached, however the Fund exists today at a level of approximately $20,000.

There is no doubt that the Institute's development during the 1970's can be largely attributed to members' involvement with recreation. Whereas in the 1960's discussion had centred on the need to educate the Federal government, the Australian public and park staff on developments in the movement overseas, in the early 1970's the terms 'leisure' and 'recreation' became household words. The increase in public awareness of recreation was mainly due to its adoption by the newly-elected Whitlam government in 1972 as a key policy area. In his policy speech on 13 November 1972 Mr Whitlam stated that:

> There is no greater social problem facing Australia than the good use of leisure. It is the problem of all modern and wealthy communities. It is, above all, the problem of urban societies and thus in Australia, the most urbanised nation on earth, a problem more pressing for us than for any other nation on earth. For such a nation as ours, this may very well be the problem of the 1980's...[20]

His government acted on his words by creating a Federal Ministry of Tourism and Recreation in 1972. The States were also active in this area because Queensland had formed a Division of Sport in early 1972 and in Victoria a Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation was formed in December 1972. In other States, a Sport and Recreation Service of NSW, a Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport in South Australia, and a Department of Recreation in Western Australia were all established in 1973. Tasmania was the only State without a Minister for Recreation or Sport but the National Fitness Council and the Physical Education Department began to work more closely together in that State to provide a better community service.

One of the earliest actions of the new Federal Minister of Tourism and Recreation was the commissioning of a report in early 1973, The Role, Scope and Development of Recreation in Australia,[21] by Professor John Bloomfield. The Bloomfield report highlighted the change in thinking on recreation that had occurred in professional circles. The myths of bronzed Australian athletes and a land of perpetual leisure were exploded in a barrage of facts on the high rate of heart disease and on participation in sport, the latter revealing that most sports had become the province of the privileged few who were talented enough to reach international standards. In conclusion, Bloomfield urged people to stop thinking of recreation as a few traditional sports:

---

[20]Department of Tourism and Recreation, Review of Activities for the Period December 1972 - June 1974, Canberra, 1975, p.2.

[21]Canberra, 1974.

> People everywhere in Australia must have the opportunity to experience the sheer joy of participating in an activity they have chosen and to achieve the hard-to-define sense of well-being that comes from possessing a fit and healthy body.[22]

Although the report produced some important conclusions it focussed mainly on indoor recreation. Later in the year the government established a Task Force to present it with a more balanced view of recreation needs. Three Institute members, John Gray, Frank Keenan and Ian Frencham,[23] were on this committee which met for six months before producing a draft report on recreation as it affected outdoor resources.

In 1974 the Federal government sought to reinforce its new policy with a national leisure seminar in Canberra. Titled 'Leisure - A New Perspective', the seminar was officially designed 'to explore the implications of Mr Whitlam's policy statement'. Four key speakers from Europe and the United States were brought to Australia to address delegates on issues in recreation in their own countries.[24] On the opening day of the seminar Mr Whitlam emphasised the responsibility he felt about the issue:

> No Government's responsibility terminates with bread and butter issues, with matters of finance, employment and defence...To an increasing degree Governments are expected to improve the intellectual, artistic, recreational and sporting opportunities of their people.[25]

In January 1975 the Federal Department of Tourism and Recreation extended its sphere of activity by launching a Recreation Advisory Service. The Service had three aims: to put the community in touch with new ideas on leisure planning and programs, to encourage discussion on the significance of leisure in society and exchange information about recreation programs, and to provide a feed-back for Governments on the recreational facilities and programs people needed.[26] At the same time, large sums of money were directed towards developing leisure and recreation programs and facilities in all capital cities. In 1975 $4.5 million was allotted for community leisure facilities, $1.15 million for national sporting associations, $231,000 to accelerate development of courses in recreation at Colleges of Advanced Education, and $250,000 for research

---

[22]ibid., p.4.

[23]A senior lecturer in the Applied Science course at the CCAE.

[24]They were Willi Daume, President of the National Olympic Committee for Germany, Dwight Rettie, Executive Director of the National Recreation Association in America, Michael Barron, previously Recreation Development Officer at Milton Keynes in the United Kingdom, and Dr T.L.Burton of the Canadian Department of the Environment and a world authority on the leisure environment.

[25]In Department of Tourism and Recreation, op.cit., p.1.

[26]Reported in Australian Parks and Recreation, February 1975, p.58.

into all facets of community recreation.[27] With the help of this money a number of States established programs, including the much publicized Life. Be In It. campaign, created by the Victorian Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation in 1975 to promote fitness and health and encourage participation in sporting activities.

The recognition of the recreation movement by the Federal government paralleled similar recognition of the conservation movement. In 1975 the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Conservation formed the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service 'to enable the Australian government to manage national parks and marine parks in areas under its direct control'.[28] The Service intended to manage parks for recreation and scientific investigation as well as nature conservation. Official recognition of the value of Australia's wilderness areas was the end result of many years of lobbying by organisations such as the AIPR and the Australian Conservation Foundation. This recognition also made it much easier for National Parks employees to become members of the Institute and their ideas and concerns began to shape Institute activities in most States.

In general, Institute members reacted with enthusiasm to government commitment to recreation. Frank Keenan, John Gray, Noel Lothian and David Shoobridge were all pleased that the Federal government had at last begun to adopt a more realistic approach towards recreation. To the majority of members the development of recreation became apparent through the newly-formed State Departments, and with the emergence of large numbers of trained recreation officers in the municipal parks system. Training of recreation personnel was slow to be established in Australia but once it had begun, spread rapidly to all States. National Fitness Councils in each State had been training people before the recreation movement grew in Australia, however they produced leaders proficient mainly in sports organisation, rather than in the wider field of recreation and leisure.[29] The first full-time courses in recreation were a Diploma in Recreation conducted by the Sport and Recreation Service of NSW, Diploma's of Youth Leadership with the Victorian YMCA and Institute of Social Welfare, and a Certificate of Recreation with the Community Recreation Council of WA. All of these courses were established by 1973. Other courses were established later in the 1970's,

---

[27]ibid.

[28]Reported in Australian Parks and Recreation, May 1975, p.60.

[29]Interview with Albert Simpson, Director of National Fitness Council of SA 1950-1976, Adelaide, 23 March 1988.

including a Graduate Diploma in Recreation at Nedlands, in Perth, and at the CCAE, in 1975. These courses were part of the Federal Government's commitment to provide already qualified people with specific recreation training.[30] AIPR members were particularly influential in having recreation adopted in the courses of Institute's of Technology around Australia, including Preston and Footscray in Melbourne, and the Queensland Institute of Technology. Graduates of most recreation courses were trained 'to teach people of all ages how to best use their leisure time and to co-ordinate the various agencies and services providing recreational and sporting facilities'.[31] In Sydney and Melbourne the City Council's had formed recreation sections within their parks departments in which recreation officers were employed 'to...see that the extensive and complex system of sports grounds and other sporting facilities provided by council are used in the best interests of the community rather than be left entirely to the volunteer clubs'.[32]

By the mid-1970's large numbers of recreation officers were being employed in municipal councils and government departments throughout Australia. Their integration into the entrenched municipal parks system was by no means smooth and a number encountered hostility and resentment from some of the horticulture and engineering-trained heads of parks departments. Horticulture was a profession steeped in tradition with skills and knowledge passed down through many generations. Recreation, however, was a relatively young profession and recreation graduates were articulate, highly educated and ambitious.[33] The meeting of the two groups was, at times, traumatic. Park Directors and Supervisors were preached to by a younger generation which often wanted to take over large areas of parkland to develop new recreation programs and facilities. Ornamental horticulture was often dismissed as an unnecessary waste of space. The reaction between the two groups followed, in fact, the same pattern as that in the United States and Europe in the 1960's which some Institute members had been warning might happen. Traditional horticulturists watched with alarm as large numbers of recreation trained people began to attend Institute seminars

---

[30]Correspondence with John Gray, 21 November 1988.

[31]Cedric Bayliss, Director National Fitness and Recreation Service of NSW in Australian Parks, Vol.7, No.4, May 1971, p.6.

[32]Frank Keenan, "The Urban Park and Recreation Service in Australia", a speech given at the 1973 IFPRA conference in London.

[33]Interview with Tom McLaughlan, SA Region member, Adelaide, 21 March 1988.

and conferences, and many feared a complete takeover.[34]

That the Institute attracted large numbers of recreationists in the mid-1970's was not a coincidence. No other body existed with interests similar to theirs and recreationists attached themselves to the Institute as the logical vehicle to express their views.[35] In traditional horticulture-based Division's, the clash was particularly hostile. Victoria was the only State with a group of young, enthusiastic horticulturists graduating from Burnley, and many deserted the Institute once recreationists joined. In South Australia, recreationists were regarded with suspicion for many years.[36] In country areas, such as those covered by the Hume Division, the effects of recreation were less marked. Few recreation officers entered country parks departments and the ideas emanating from the cities seemed to many country parks officers a waste of time and resources. They had been dealing with recreation problems in conjunction with other aspects of park management for as long as they could remember.[37]

Although it was an urban phenomenon many municipal parks personnel shared the views of country members and were angered that it was only in the 1970's that they were given credit for dealing with recreation problems that for many years had been an integral part of their work. To many it was a concept that had been blown out of proportion by government bureaucrats and the media. Nevertheless, it sparked a lively debate among members and in the early 1970's the Federal Council was forced to make a ruling on the eligibility of recreation officers to become members of the Institute. In 1974, it announced that all past doubts had been 'cleared up' and that recreation officers were eligible to join the Institute as corporate members.[38] Further debate ensued later in the decade over whether to allow recreationists on to the Federal Council, a point which was resolved in 1983 when a recreation-trained man, Edward Gleeson,[39] became Federal President of the Institute.

---

[34]ibid.

[35]Interview with Peter Nicholls, SA Region member, Adelaide, 22 March 1988.

[36]ibid.

[37]Interview with Laurie Withers, Leeton, 27 August 1987.

[38]Reported in Australian Parks, Vol.10, No.3, February 1974, p.60.

[39]Edward Gleeson was one of the first graduates of the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation Diploma Course in Recreation. He worked as a recreation officer at the National Fitness Council in Tasmania before being appointed Northern Regional Manager of the Tasmanian Division of Sport and Recreation, a position he held when elected Institute President.

Despite the fears of some older members, recreation was enthusiastically promoted by the Institute. The Queensland and ACT Divisions placed a particular emphasis on recreation and based many of their activities on that theme. Following the national Leisure seminar in 1974, the Queensland Division ran a seminar titled 'Space and Leisure' later in the year. Held in conjunction with the AILA and the Australian Planning Institute, the seminar pursued issues raised at the national seminar and explored them more closely. Speakers came from a variety of fields all over Australia and the proceedings were printed for sale to benefit members in other States. The ACT Division focussed most of its activities on recreation largely because its members were well versed in the latest developments of the movement overseas and were keen to promote the issue within the Institute. In 1972, John Gray was Division President and he organised a public lecture at the National Library of Australia by Sir Adrian Curlewis, an ACT judge who through his work had developed an interest in life-saving and physical activity for young people. Titled 'To Riot or Recreate', the event was attended by 175 people representing professionals in the field and a wide spectrum of Canberra organisations and citizens. The main points made by Sir Adrian were the need for education on how to use leisure, and that unless this was pursued there would be a continued increase in violence, crime and disorder.[40] The Division also held a number of one-day recreation workshops at the CCAE, designed to involve young people in Institute activities and to explore various aspects of recreation and leisure.

The Institute promoted recreation on a national level in the mid-1970's. As a sign of its commitment, the Federal Council changed the title of the journal in 1974 to Australian Parks and Recreation. In 1975 a survey of members titled 'Recreation-What Is It?' was undertaken. The results show some important developments in members' thinking on the subject. Most answers emphasised that recreation was the individual's choice to pursue relaxation and enjoyment in whatever way they chose - a far cry from the days when 'recreation' meant 'sport'. Some definitions, such as 'recreation being the things people want to do in their leisure time'[41] were straightforward but others emphasised the complexity of the issue:

> Recreation is not a set of specific activities, it is a concept dependent upon the attitudes and perceptions of a society, and as such it is not static, but dynamic and highly variable in its composition...Recreation is such an individual matter...that it

---

[40]John Huston, "A Short History of the ACT Regional Division of the RAIPR", p.3.

[41]Graham Dempster, Director of Sport and Fitness, Department of Tourism and Recreation, in AIPR News, Vol.4, No.6, September 1975, p.3.

probably escapes any single meaningful and useful definition.[42]

It was generally agreed that the emphasis in recreation needed to be changed from philosophy to people:

> In the recreation revolution now sweeping Australia, parks and playgrounds have to be planned for people - and for active and passive use by people of all ages. A park must no longer be a showpiece of untouchable horticulture, an expanse of colour and civic pride and dedication that wins municipal awards.[43]

Other activities were aimed at a wider audience. The 1975 annual conference in Perth was devoted to recreation and was titled 'The Recreation Explosion'. The main guest speaker was Dr Elsie McFarland, Chairman of the Department of Recreation Administration at the University of Alberta, Canada, who spoke on developments in recreation in Canada and the United States. Other conference topics included Forest and River Recreation, Highways as Recreational Outlets, the Recreational Needs of Tourists, and the Recreation Potential of National Parks. Institute members increasingly sought to have their views heard in government circles. In 1976 the Institute issued a statement on Recreation in Local Government with the aim of producing a set of guidelines to be followed by municipal authorities. It urged local Government to combine with other levels of government 'in a total systems approach'. It pointed out the levels of funding that were available from Federal and State governments towards developing public recreation. It also stated that local government must ensure that parks and gardens served two purposes - as a contribution to the environment of the community, and as resources for leisure time activity.[44] In 1977 the Institute enlarged on this paper in a Policy Committee 'White Paper', a 'basic manifesto setting out commonly accepted concepts which apply to the supply of parks and recreation services'.[45] The paper gave a basic definition of recreation and highlighted deficiencies in the delivery of recreation services and leisure facilities in Australia. As with the Local Government Statement the 'White Paper' was intended as a guide to aid in the better management of parks and recreation facilities throughout the country.

In conjunction with their promotion of recreation some Institute Divisions dealt with matters of conservation and environmental preservation during the 1970's. In Tasmania,

---

[42]Hadley Sides, Western Port Regional Planning Authority, Victoria, in AIPR News, Vol.4, No.6, September 1975, p.3.

[43]Cedric Bayliss, "Parks Are For People?", in AIPR News, Vol.2, No.2, March 1973, p.1.

[44]AIPR, "A Statement on Recreation In Local Government", Canberra, 1976.

[45]Trevor Vollbon, Queensland Division member and AIPR Policy Sub-Committee Convenor, in Policy Committee "White Paper", March 1977, p.1.

particularly, conservation of wilderness areas for the sake of the environment and recreation had always been of more concern than in other States. As on other occasions, members had to be careful to suppress their political views in order not to anger or embarrass their employers. They tried, however, to achieve a balanced view of controversial issues such as logging, woodchipping and the damming of rivers for Hydro Electricity. Field trips were held in Triabunna, where woodchipping and logging were the main industries, and in Queenstown, a mining town. On these occasions, members invited representatives from the paper mills, and woodchip and mining companies to accompany them on tours of mining, mill and logging sites, in order to gain a complete picture of the problems created by these industries.[46] In 1972, however, the Division took the unusual step of issuing a public policy statement condemning plans to dam the Gordon River without an accurate feasibility study. This action followed a meeting on the *MV Denison Star* during an inspection tour of Macquarie Harbour and the river. As a result of the meeting Division members launched a 'Conserve the Lower Gordon' campaign to have the lower reaches of the river reserved as a tourist attraction.

In Brisbane the Queensland Division was involved in the establishment of a large forest park in the Mount Nebo - Mount Cootha area on the outskirts of the city. The future of the area arose in 1975 and following extensive visits to the site Division members formulated a submission to the government on its future. They recommended that it be preserved as a natural park with the addition of professionally designed recreation and picnic facilities for the benefit of visitors. The submission, together with others from community groups, succeeded in having the park (now known as the Brisbane Forest Park) reserved in 1976.[47]

As the 1970's progressed, not only did Institute members aim to have their views heard by local governments and the Australian public, but all efforts were made to extend the Institute's voice overseas. They capitalised on the interest sparked by the 1970 Congress in a number of ways. Most notable was the increased attendance by Australians at overseas conferences held by IFPRA and other parks organisations. From 1973 to 1979 either Frank Keenan, the Australian representative to IFPRA, or Jack Firth, as Federal Secretary, attended every international congress that was held. Australians attended congresses in 1971, from 1973 to 1975, and in 1977. In 1974

---

[46]Interview with Bill Goodman, op.cit.

[47]Interview with Trevor Vollbon, Brisbane, 7 June 1988.

fourteen Australians were present at the IFPRA Congress in Vienna. The value of such conferences became apparent in the increasing sophistication of Australian conferences and in the ideas being presented at these events. Overseas speakers were a regular feature of Institute conferences throughout the 1970's as were Australian speakers at conferences in New Zealand and the United States. The contact between Australians and their overseas counterparts was boosted by the reciprocal exchange of journals between various organisations and by 1977 the number of interstate and overseas publications being received at the Institute's head office was overwhelming. To help distribution and to give members the chance to take advantage of the availability of such information an Institute library was established. In 1977, too, the Institute's increasing interest in the Asia-Pacific region was boosted when John Gray received a grant from the Australian Japan Foundation to undertake a study tour to Japan the following year. To maintain the increasing familiarity with overseas professionals and to 'keep in mind the needs of our Asian neighbours',[48] the Institute introduced an 'overseas member' classification in 1977.

The Institute embarked on a new phase of development after 1976. In that year members celebrated the Institute's fiftieth year with, appropriately, a Golden Jubilee conference in Melbourne. At a special conference banquet past and present members reminisced about past events and developments. Included in the August issue of the journal was a brief history of the Institute, written by Jack Firth, in which the major developments of the Institute were noted. Tributes were paid to the major contributors of the Institute's development, particularly Jack Owens. During the year, a series of articles detailing the progress of the Institute decade by decade appeared in AIPR News, a reminder to all members of the strengths that had sustained the organisation since 1926. These celebrations helped members to focus on the future direction of the Institute and in a concluding article in AIPR News Jack Firth urged members to strive for better education, increased contact with members and the public, a continuing high standard of conferences and an increased membership 'to provide the momentum which any progressive organisation requires to maintain its development...'[49] In a journal article, editor Paul Herbert wrote that:

> Now, more than ever in the 50 years since its birth, the Institute is needed. The more complicated, crowded and contaminated our environment, the greater becomes the requirement for a national, co-ordinated, nationwide approach to planning the outdoor environment...The Institute is one of the professional groups that must...fulfill

---

[48]John Gray in AIPR Annual Report 1977, p.4.

[49]AIPR News, Vol.5, No.8, December 1976, p.16.

this function.[50]

The greatest contributing factor to the Institute's new focus came with the employment of a new Executive Director (previously Secretary) in 1976. Early in the year Jack Firth resigned, ending a thirteen year period as Institute Secretary. His replacement was Vernon Davies, a recreation-based man with a background in physical education tuition and administration of the national YMCA office in Melbourne. His appointment was significant because it was the first time the Institute had appointed to a position of influence anyone with a background other than horticulture. Vernon Davies was keen to see the Institute expand and spread its influence over as wide a field as possible, and with his guidance members produced an increasing number of submissions to the Federal and State governments, improved their contact with overseas organisations, and held greater numbers of national seminars on topics relating to park and recreation administration. Trade sponsorship of Institute activities was actively sought, as was funding from government sources for on-going projects. The series of park management manuals which had started in 1975 was well advanced by 1978. Six manuals covering irrigation, the management of man-made and natural landscapes, the care and maintenance of trees, design of park furniture, playground design and park user fees were in various stages of production, with a further five planned.

It was under Vernon Davies, too, that the Institute achieved its final name change. Before he left, Jack Firth had begun proceedings to have the title 'Royal' adopted into the Institute name. Despite some controversy, because it was done without the knowledge of all members, the submission proceeded on the majority decision that it would give the Institute increased status. In February 1977, the Institute was advised by the Commonwealth Government that the Queen had approved the use of the 'Royal' prefix in the Institute's name. Announcing the news, President John Gray wrote that:

> ...this step is a substantial acknowledgement by the Federal Government of the status and national importance of the Institute. The Institute will be held in much higher esteem in Australia by a considerable number of government and private bodies. The prefix is not granted freely and an organisation must have reached a level of eminence, achievement and be of long standing.[51]

With the employment of Vernon Davies, the Institute's Federal Council had the chance to carry out a move that had been planned for some time. As the Institute had become more heavily involved with the Federal Government and overseas organisations

---

[50] Australian Parks and Recreation, August 1976, p.9.

[51] AIPR News, Vol.6, No.2, March 1977, pp.1-2.

it had become increasingly apparent to members that the Institute's headquarters should be moved to Canberra where it would be better able to lobby parliamentarians and Commonwealth departments on the issues of greatest concern to members. The move had not been possible before as Jack Firth was settled in Melbourne and was reluctant to undertake such a step. Vernon Davies, however, was employed on the understanding that a move was possible, something he found acceptable having lived and worked in Canberra before.[52] Much of the planning was undertaken by John Gray who was keen to see it take place as soon as possible:

> In considering this question, the Executive Committee has been particularly conscious of the continuing growth and increasing stature of the Institute as a national organisation. The Institute must be capable of effectively serving the needs of its members and at the same time providing national leadership in parks and recreation. The Executive Committee considered that a move to Canberra was inevitable and...we should take up the option without delay.[53]

Having a number of contacts within the Commonwealth Public Service, John Gray was aware that accommodation was available in the newly-built National Outdoor Stadium at Bruce and after negotiations the space was offered to the Institute at an acceptable rate. With no further obstacles in its way the Federal Executive announced at the 1977 conference that the move would take place in early 1978.

The idea of the Federal office moving from the relative safety of its home in Melbourne to an unknown future in the national capital was not popular with all members. Many Victorians, in particular, were opposed to the relocation. They feared both a loss of membership in their Division and a decreased Victorian representation on the Executive. Thus the Executive's decision created hostility and factionalised members, but there seemed little doubt that the future of the Institute lay in a closer association with the Federal Government.

---

[52]Interview with Vernon Davies, Canberra, 29 June 1988.

[53]John Gray in AIPR News, Vol.6, No.6, September 1977, p.2.

# Chapter 7

# 1978 - 1986: CRISIS AND RECOVERY

The history of the RAIPR after its move to Canberra forms two distinct phases. The first covers the years in which members developed high, even unrealistic expectations of the Institute's potential as they intensified their efforts to promote the organisation as Australia's key parks and recreation body. The main focus of members' activities was the achievement of Federal government recognition of their efforts through greater association with government representatives, something which forced on them a greater dependence on government support than ever before. As the level of Institute activity intensified, the problems of operating as a voluntary organisation became more apparent and, in the early 1980's, culminated in a financial crisis which threatened the Institute's future. The second phase covers the years after the crisis, in which members consolidated both the Institute's financial position and its internal structure, through a greater delegation of duties to the Institute's Divisions. Much of the struggle between recreation and horticulture-oriented members dissipated as government money for recreation was withheld and the need to present a unified argument for greater funds and support for park and recreation administration became apparent. The importance of this period lies in the forced re-assessment of Institute activities and concerns, the result of which was a process of management on which its present operation is based.

The months following the move to Canberra were particularly active ones. In a press release in March 1978 Vernon Davies stated that 'the move to Canberra was a response by the Institute to the growing recognition in Australia of the important contribution parks and recreation can make to the quality of living of the nation'.[1] John Gray added to this sentiment:

> By deciding to establish its National Headquarters in Australia's National Capital, your Institute has demonstrated its preparedness to accept its responsibilities to the nation as a leader in the increasingly important field of parks and recreation in Australia.[2]

John Gray also felt that the move was a sign of the maturity of the Institute, and that:

---

[1] RAIPR Press Release, March 1978.

[2] Australian Parks and Recreation, February 1978, p.5.

> The Institute was able to take the transfer decision because...we were strongly united federally. Our strength lay...in a well constructed federal council...the membership of which is genuinely committed to the progress of parks and recreation throughout this great country.[3]

The move was made in January 1978 with the help of Institute members, particularly those of the ACT Division. ACT members held work parties to organise both the new office and accommodation for Vernon Davies and his family. In February a loan appeal, with a target of $7000, was established to help finance the move. When the appeal closed in June 1980 over $8700 had been donated by members. The Canberra office was considerably larger than the Melbourne office, something considered necessary for the Institute's expanded services, its library and publication sales, and a larger staff. The office also contained a Board Room for Executive and Federal Council meetings, a considerable improvement on past facilities. The new premises were officially opened in April by Jack Owens, by then one of the longest-surviving founding members. It was an historic occasion which members felt justified the effort of persuasion needed to bring about the move. Younger members, too, were impressed with the history of the Institute's development as narrated by Jack Owens.

After only a brief period of settling-in, Vernon Davies and the Federal Council embarked on a program to increase and improve interaction with the Federal Government. Closer ties were considered essential if there were to be significant developments in parks and recreation, and if members were to achieve the desired recognition of the Institute as the leading parks and recreation organization in Australia. Government recognition of the Institute was particularly important to Vernon Davies who felt that it was the only way to ensure the Institute's future.[4] Accordingly he, John Gray and Bill Goodman met with the Minister of the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development, Mr R.Groom, in September 1978 to argue in favour of establishing a program of meetings between the Institute and the Department. Such meetings would enable members to monitor and give advice on Department activities, including its Research Programme in Parks and Recreation, its Programme for Guidelines in Parks and Recreation, and other projects under consideration. The Minister agreed with the proposal and meetings were held twice yearly thereafter.

From early 1979 members made an increasing numbers of submissions to the Federal

---

[3]RAIPR News, Vol.9, No.5, July 1980, p.3.

[4]Interview with Vernon Davies, op.cit.

Government. One was to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation Inquiry into Coastal Management, with information supplied by the Institute's Coastal Management Special Interest Group. Members also supplied information to the NSW Government Inquiry into 'Off-road use of Vehicles for Recreation Purposes', an issue of increasing concern to environmentalists with the growing number of four-wheel drive vehicles being used for recreation. The Institute received requests for advice from the CSIRO Division of Land Use Research which invited members to list ten major issues concerning National Land Use, and from the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, asking the Institute to comment on a proposed 'Voluntary Youth Community Service Scheme'. The Federal Office was not alone in answering and formulating requests to government departments as both Victorian and Tasmanian Divisional Councils made reports to Local Government Inquiries into 'Prospects For The Future'. Many other issues were dealt with by members and the fact that all requests for advice were acted on meant that there was an increasing volume of work being generated and carried out by the Federal Office.

One of the most significant projects carried out by the Institute during the 1980's was wholly supported and financed by the Federal Government. It began as a submission to the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon.R.J. Ellicott, titled 'The Collection of Native Plants in Australian Botanic Gardens and Arboreta'. Institute members had become increasingly concerned at the loss of endangered native plant species after attending conferences on the subject in 1976 and 1980, and they realised 'the need to improve and expand Australia's system of botanic gardens in the 1980's and beyond'.[5] Their submission was a plea for the funding of a nation-wide study of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta as the first step towards establishing a national system of Native Botanic Gardens throughout Australia. The submission was accepted by the Australian Heritage Commission which annually selected a project of national importance to be funded by the government.

The initial grant of $5000 helped finance the completion of the first stage of the study, to establish the extent of the existing collection of native plants in Botanic Gardens and Arboreta and identify deficiencies in the collection. A further grant of $20,000 was sought and received before the completion of the report in 1984. A consultative committee, including the Directors of the major Botanic Gardens and an horticultural consultant, John Wrigley AM, was selected from each State and chaired by John Gray.

---

[5]John Gray, "Botanic Gardens - A New Era", in RAIPR News, Vol.9, No.5, July 1980, p.1.

The report was launched by the Federal Minister for the Arts, Heritage and Environment, the Hon.Barry Cohen, at Parliament House, Canberra, on 18 April 1984. In the foreword to the report Institute President Edward Gleeson wrote that:

> Our unique Australian flora is an important part of our heritage and the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation believes that Australians must take all steps possible to ensure its preservation, interpretation and protection for posterity.[6]

His comment, and indeed the entire project, clearly indicated the change in attitude that had taken place towards the Australian environment since the days of the VTA. More importantly, its completion and eventual acceptance as the hallmark of thinking on the subject indicated to members that they had achieved a measure of the government and community recognition they had been seeking.

The increased level of Institute activity began to take its toll in the late 1970's and Institute members perceived that they would have to seek financial support from outside sources if they were to continue their present level of activity. Having received government grants for specific projects in previous years the Federal Executive made a concerted effort to attract government funding to cover administration costs. In April 1980 a submission for funding was prepared on the following lines: $20,000 for general administration, $10,000 to run special education programmes, $10,000 to allow the Institute to bring various recreation groups together, $20,000 to stimulate private sector involvement (i.e. advertising) and $10,000 for general education and public activities.[7] The application was rejected by the government which was reducing its spending in the face of a tighter economic climate. It does indicate, however, the level of activity at which the Institute was aiming. Members had greater success in their applications for funding for the journal and the Park Management Manual series, which were on-going projects supported annually with grants of $5000 each.

Through its efforts to attract funding for general running costs, the Council came to the conclusion that greater promotion of the Institute's aims and activities was necessary. Members were urged to embark on an extended campaign of lobbying:

> Lobbying: The choice is get involved or be forgotten. The Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation is embarking on a new endeavour, the more active pursuit of ensuring that its basic message is understood and implemented at the government level.[8]

Members attempted to comply with these urgings by approaching appropriate

---

[6]RAIPR, A Report on the Collection of Native Plants in Australian Botanic Gardens and Arboreta, Canberra, October 1984, p.v.

[7]Reported in RAIPR News, Vol.9, No.3, April 1980, p.2.

[8]Graham Howard, "The Importance of Lobbying", in RAIPR News, Vol.9, No.4, June 1980, p.1.

government departments on matters of concern to them but, despite their efforts, it was not until 1984 that the Institute received a grant to assist with general running costs.

Apart from facilitating members' ability to lobby for government support, the move to Canberra provided better opportunities for organising national events. In the years following the move national seminars and workshops became an important part of the campaign to promote Institute interests. At a Federal Council meeting in October 1979 members accepted the concept of National Seminars of two to three days length on specific areas of interest as another medium for members to share their knowledge and express views on particular topics. The first of these was a National Turf Management Seminar in Canberra in June 1980. Held over three days, the event attracted 320 delegates, half of whom were non-members, as well as government representatives, the Hon.R.J.Ellicott, and the Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Capital Territory, John Briggs. Three more successful seminars were held in 1981: one in Canberra in June on Playground Design and Safety, conducted in association with the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia, and two National Workshops on Coastal Management, one in Gosford, NSW, in August, the other at Queenscliff, Victoria, in September. These events were major attractions of the Institute in the early 1980's and were recognized by participants as being of world standard. The papers presented at all Seminars were published for sale and have since been used extensively as authoritative documents on their particular subjects.

The success of National Seminars depended largely on the combined knowledge of Institute members expert in one particular field. By the late 1970's the Institute had created a number of Committees, whose representatives had knowledge of a particular subject and who were concerned to develop aspects of certain issues within the broad field covered by parks and recreation. The Education Committee, which had existed for a number of years, looked at and recommended ways in which education in parks and recreation could be improved throughout Australia. The Classification Board and Awards Committee were two groups of members who were concerned with the proper administration of these aspects of the Institute. By 1978 there were fourteen Committees of Federal Council, some with short-term and others with long-term goals. All had projects under consideration on which they were required to report to the Federal Council, and Committees were not entitled to act on their own recommendations without Federal Council consent. Although the efforts of these Committees were useful on some issues they were not as effective as they could have been because many did not have a properly defined role and members often had difficulty in containing the varied

interests of the Institute within a few specific areas.[9]

Of greater effect were the Special Interest Groups which formed out of the Committees in April 1978. They were established to assist members with special interests to have a greater involvement in the Institute's decision-making processes.[10] These groups were to be complementary to, and more specific than the Committees, and were seen to have an important role in helping to educate other members in new philosophies and thinking. Members of these groups were restrained in their actions by having to report regularly to the Executive, and they could not speak on behalf of the Institute without Council approval. Some of the first to be formed were Cemeteries and Crematoria, Botanic Gardens, Coastal Management, National Parks, and Playground Design. The creation of Special Interest Groups was the result of both the increasing multi-disciplinary composition of the Institute membership, and members' growing desire to participate in the decisions and actions taken by the Institute. It was the Special Interest Groups that devised and ensured the success of the Institute's National Seminars, and that provided government departments with information and advice.

One of the more active Special Interest Groups formed in 1978 was concerned with recreation. The Institute's involvement in recreation after its move to Canberra was still actively maintained, particularly since Federal government commitment to recreation was substantially reduced from that maintained during the years of the Whitlam government. Although established recreation and leisure programs continued unchanged in each State, most of the initiative and funding for both old and new programs came from within the States. Few ideas and little co-ordinated planning was provided by the Federal government. Institute members became aware of this situation in 1978 when the Recreation Special Interest Group was formed to continue the development of recreation as an integral part of the Institute. Representatives from each State were appointed to the group which intended to discuss issues such as professional recreation training and courses available in Australia, classification of recreation personnel, conditions of service, local government recreation, and the relationship between programs such as the Life. Be In It campaign, and parks and open spaces recreation.[11] In an effort to focus members' attention on recreation the Institute published in the May

---

[9]Correspondence with Ian Frencham, 2 November 1988.

[10]Reported in RAIPR News, Vol.7, No.3, April/May 1978, pp.11-12.

[11]Reported in Australian Parks and Recreation, August 1978, p.2.

and November issues of the journal a series of Recreation Policy Statements by Ministers with leisure and recreation responsibilities from the Commonwealth, the States, and the ACT. From these articles it was clear that there was little planning or leadership in recreation coming from the Federal Government, and that the enthusiasm of the early 1970's had waned significantly. It was then that members of the Recreation Special Interest Group resolved to see the Federal government adopt a more co-ordinated approach to recreation by formulating a policy statement with guidelines to be followed by all States and Territories.

In 1979 two significant advances were made in the development of recreation. First, a Bachelor of Arts in Recreation was offered at the Preston Institute of Technology, the first undergraduate course in recreation in Australia. Second, the Institute's Recreation Special Interest Group recommended and carried out the formation of a Recreation Development Committee, with the aim of preparing a recreation policy document for submission to the Federal government. The rationale behind this move was that the Institute could not urge the development of a Federal Government Policy on Recreation without having one itself.

Meetings between Institute members and government departments in the early 1980's convinced members that their message was not being heard. They were initially encouraged after attending the Australian Labor Party's National Seminar on Sport and Recreation in Australia in early 1980 at which greater government support for recreation was pledged in the event of the Labor Party winning office. After meetings with the Commonwealth Sports Advisory Council, however, members concluded that recreation was still a low priority in government departments and that Federal and State governments were rarely differentiating between sport and recreation. In December 1981 Institute member Tom Crossen (Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Hobart) wrote an extensive article on the state of the recreation movement in Australia which, he said, had reached a turning point. Declining birth and marriage rates, an aging, more self-oriented population, a shrinking economy, rising travel costs and an energy shortage all meant that:

> The park and recreation field...will need to look beyond itself at the environment in which it operates in order to identify directions for the future.[12]

He concluded that it was inevitable that the level of government support for recreation would decline, and that more emphasis would have to be placed on local governments

---

[12]Tom Crossen, "State of the Movement", in RAIPR News, Vol.10, No.6, November/December 1981, p.1.

and user-pays systems. These ideas were being shared by an increasing number of recreation personnel, and they show that park administrators were beginning to realise that provision of recreation facilities was a public necessity for which they were largely responsible.

Both Institute and Federal government activity in the recreation field was reduced until 1983, the former because of the Institute's financial problems and the latter because of the worsening economic climate. In January 1983 the Institute's Recreation Development Committee resumed its activities and made a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure in Sport and Recreation. When the Hawke Labor government was elected in March 1983 there was renewed hope that recreation would be given more attention and that a national recreation policy would be established. Members were optimistic that they would have greater opportunities to influence Federal decisions on policy-making with the new government, which had committed itself to giving greater attention to recreation.[13]

Members continued to pursue the development of a national policy throughout 1984 and early 1985, when it was stated that 'the Commonwealth government is currently at the cross-roads as far as recreation policy is concerned and it behoves us to liase closely with Government to ensure that worthwhile initiatives are set in train'.[14] In October 1985 their efforts were rewarded when the government released its initial recreation policy document, Towards the Development of a Commonwealth Policy on Recreation. Significantly, the report was launched at the Institute's annual conference in Toowoomba, an indication of the level of government recognition then held by the Institute. The paper signaled renewed government commitment to the development of recreation in Australia, and promised a more co-ordinated approach to the introduction and maintenance of recreation programs throughout the country. In the foreword, Minister for the newly-established Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism, the Hon.John Brown, stated that:

> ...the Hawke Government committed itself to establishing a significant role for the Commonwealth in recreation development in Australia, with the goal of assisting all Australians to participate in enjoyable leisure time pursuits of their choice.
>
> ...the Government believes that the development of a comprehensive policy which will provide a structure for addressing the recreational needs of all Australians is an

[13]Editorial in RAIPR News, July 1984, p.1.

[14]Federal President Barry Nielsen in RAIPR News, Vol.10, No.3, September/October 1985.

important long term goal.[15]

The other major development to occur as a result of the push for greater government involvement in recreation took place within the Institute itself. By the late 1970's, as Federal government commitment to recreation and leisure diminished, it became clear to recreationists and horticulturists within the Institute that the only way to achieve any success in promoting better park and recreation management was to present a united face. As recreation became an integral part of most municipal parks departments Institute members realised that park and recreation administration was one, rather than two separate occupations. Unity between the two groups was also essential for the Institute to attract government funding by presenting itself as an umbrella group for parks and recreation in Australia. Moreover, by the 1980's the Institute membership had become further diversified with the addition of people who had only a marginal interest in either recreation or horticulture. In the early 1980's, too, Institute's of Recreation were formed in Western Australia, Victoria, and South Australia, so that there was a general leveling of numbers of horticulture and recreation-oriented members. By the mid-1980's, therefore, the conflict between the two groups had largely disappeared, as ideas and concepts were mutually exchanged in an effort to learn from, rather than oppose each other.

As in past years, Institute members maintained an interest in the education of parks and recreation personnel during the 1980's. By 1978 most of the existing courses in the profession had been established but members were concerned to see that course standards were maintained. In 1978 Bill Goodman expressed the hope that the Institute could have an effect in the employment field by establishing 'normal minimum qualifications' for particular positions.[16] In 1978, too, the Institute updated its 1973 Directory of Parks and Recreation Courses, a publication which had been compiled with the help of State Divisions and which was intended to provide information on courses applicable to student members and others interested in the education of parks and recreation personnel. The Directory was further updated in 1985 and remained an on-going commitment to the improvement of education services. Institute members also maintained their involvement in the successful running of the annual Summer Schools of Park Management, in the production of Park Management Manuals, and in the

---

[15]Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism, Towards the Development of a Commonwealth Policy on Recreation, Canberra, October 1985, p.2.

[16]Presidential Report 1978 in RAIPR News, Vol.7, No.7, November/December 1978, p.4.

holding of regular seminars and workshops by each State Division. By June 1981 the Institute's Education Trust Fund had reached the $10,000 target set in 1974 and became operable and, in 1985, Institute members encouraged and participated in the establishment of a National Core Curriculum for horticulture courses, a project designed to bring all horticulture courses in line with each other.[17]

The years immediately following the Canberra move saw an increase not only in the Institute's involvement with the Federal government, but a renewed emphasis on increasing the professional appearance of the Institute. A major part of this effort was the compilation of the Institute's Policy Position Statement. The formation of a firm Institute policy had become a necessity because, at a time when members were pursuing the development of national policies on recreation, they had become aware that 'for a number of years...our Institute has never clearly stated, over and above the objectives in the Constitution, what our policy is on Parks and Recreation'.[18] In 1976 the Federal Council requested the Queensland Divisional Council to form a group to develop a draft policy on Recreation. By 1978 this policy had been revised and lengthened to cover Institute policy on issues including education, government involvement, provision of open spaces, management, the contribution of the private sector, local government, and resource availability.[19] Rather than providing members with an established set of rules, the paper was intended to be viewed 'as a guide to the Institute's activities in the years ahead. It may be reviewed at subsequent meetings...and will assuredly be changed as our perceptions of the needs and responses of the Institute in relation to Australian Parks and Recreation are more clearly perceived.'[20]

Two activities in 1979 were specifically intended to help boost the Institute's professional appearance. For some time members had believed that they could not consider the Institute a professional body unless it was reflected in their standards and behaviour. The best way to ensure this was in a Code of Ethics which would set down guidelines on which members could base their work behaviour.[21] The Code was prepared by the Professional Committee and presented to members at the end of 1979. It

---

[17]Reported in RAIPR News, Vol.10, No.1, January/February 1985, p.2.

[18]Bill Goodman in RAIPR News, Vol.7, No.5, July 1978, p.2.

[19]RAIPR, Policy Position Statement, September 1979.

[20]ibid.

[21]Reported in RAIPR News, Vol.8, No.6, November/December 1979, p.4.

identified a professional as someone who had attained 'a minimum performance and qualification criteria for acceptance into the profession'.[22] He or she must maintain a certain standard of work, be open to scrutiny from peers, and must maintain membership of an organisation such as the Institute. Members were to practice their profession with fairness, competence and dignity, to continue to attain knowledge and skills, to place the objects of the Institute ahead of self-interest and to act with honesty in all dealings in business and with the Institute.[23] This document, in conjunction with the Policy Statement, established a set of guidelines that enabled members to deal with almost every problem or issue that presented itself in the course of Institute or park and recreation management.

The second development in 1979 was the incorporation of the Institute under the law of the Companies Act 1961. Incorporation was a subject that had been initially discussed in the late 1960's, but was deferred until 1976. The three main reasons for Incorporation were that the Institute would acquire legal status as a company limited by guarantee, that it would protect members' funds, and that it would limit member liability to $50 in the event of bankruptcy or defamation suits. In turn, the Institute could only produce a profit if the money was used to further Institute aims, and the Executive was required to submit the Institute's accounts annually for inspection by a qualified auditor.[24] It was decided to incorporate in Victoria to avoid certain complications and under the guidance of Noel Lothian a set of Memorandum and Articles was drawn up. It was a protracted process and partly contributed to the need for an Institute Policy Paper in order to clarify members' rights and Institute policies. The Institute was incorporated on 1 July 1979, at which time the old Institute was dissolved, and Institute Divisions became known as Regions.

By 1980 the amount of work being generated through the national office was substantial. The workload was added to by the fact that all work was done manually, so that membership processing and newsletter production were arduous and time-consuming activities. Besides preparing submissions for presentation to the government and for distribution to members, organising meetings, workshops, conferences and seminars, answering correspondence and attending to member inquiries, the office was

---

[22]ibid.

[23]ibid.

[24]Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation, October 1978.

offering an increasing number of member services. The Institute's library had expanded to include a large number of overseas park and recreation journals, from which relevant articles were extracted and reproduced for members' reference in a list, which was incorporated in the newsletter. The office had maintained its link with the CCAE and students regularly made requests for information or visited the office to ensure that they were acquainted with developments in their particular subjects. As Vernon Davies expanded his interests and activities the office played host to greater numbers of departmental representatives, overseas dignitaries, trade representatives and interstate professionals. In a further effort to improve the public face of the Institute both the journal and newsletter were upgraded, the former from 36 to 80 pages, the latter to a professionally printed and bound magazine. The number of office staff increased to cope with the growing workload and by 1981 included between three and four full-time staff, a similar number of part-time clerical staff, and in mid-1981 the services of a part-time accountant, Michael Hussey, were employed.

In early 1980 a number of articles proclaiming the success of the Institute since its move to Canberra appeared in RAIPR News.[25] In March 1980 the Institute stood in a strong position with a membership that had increased from 700 in 1977 to approximately 1000. The Federal office had entered a more modern era and staff were in the process of placing all of the Institute's records on a text editor. Members were laying elaborate plans for the future and had developed strategies to introduce new services; accreditation of professional qualifications, a facility management publication, parks and recreation Year Books, a national job bulletin service and an annual publication titled 'Parks and Recreation Programming Ideas'.[26] John Gray felt that the Institute should extend its influence throughout the country and overseas:

> We must build on our experience in Canberra and Federal Council should be aiming to set up regional service centres as sub-offices of national headquarters...I also see the Institute playing an important role in the Asia/Pacific region where we can help in the establishment of new Institutes.[27]

Although South Australia was the only State successful in establishing an office and a part-time Secretary, the volume of work in the Regions increased as membership grew and as a result Regional Secretaries began to demand more services from the National

---

[25]An article in March 1980 stated optimistically that the Institute membership had doubled to 1300 since the move, and that all records were to be placed on computer. An extensive article in July outlined the increased number of activities that had taken place since the move and the success of the National Office in its dealings with members.

[26]Reported in RAIPR News, Vol.9, No.2, March 1980, p.6.

[27]RAIPR News, Vol.9, No.5, July 1980, p.8.

Office. Members, too, began to be more vocal in their demands for particular services and there was a level of communication and discussion between members, the Executive and the National Office that far exceeded that of previous years.

By mid-1981 it became obvious to members that the Institute's level of operation could not continue. After an analysis of its financial position for the year 1980/1981 the Institute was found to be operating with a deficit of approximately $30,000, with some debts outstanding for over a year.[28] The news came as a surprise to most members and even as the signs of trouble became apparent the causes remained largely unknown. The Institute Executive was initially guarded about the nature and extent of the crisis. In August 1981 Treasurer John Mortimer remarked that '...clearly...our source of funds rests on too narrow a base to enable the present operation and provision of services to be maintained'.[29] He also noted that at first glance the Institute had run into trouble because of increased operating costs and an increase in charges associated with printing and postage. It was only after several months of further analysis that the real, and far more complicated causes of the crisis were revealed.

When accountant Michael Hussey was employed in mid-1981 one of his first tasks was to draw up a set of financial records of Institute activities for the past year.[30] This was not unusual and had previously been carried out by a professional accounting firm each year in the course of its audit. In most years the annual figures were received, printed and distributed without a detailed analysis of the Institute's actual operations. In 1981, however, the resulting figures were fully analysed for the first time. From these it was apparent that the Institute had been operating for some time on a narrow, almost non-existent cash base and an income that was far exceeded by its spending.[31] National Seminars and the annual conference were becoming increasingly costly to hold because they were still organised by the National office. As the amount of work in the office grew, so its running costs mounted and although seminars and conferences were successful in terms of attendance numbers and feedback, they barely broke even after the absorption of National office costs. The necessity of more office staff to cope with the workload meant a greatly increased wage load, the addition of costly office

---

[28]Reported in RAIPR News, Vol.10, No.4, July/August 1981, p.2.

[29]ibid.

[30]Interview with Michael Hussey, Canberra, 3 August 1988.

[31]ibid.

equipment, and services to members created greater costs in terms of printing of newsletters, servicing the library and attending to inquiries. There was also a lack of control over accounts received so that neither the Executive nor Federal office staff had an accurate idea of the financial viability of office costs.[32]

An important contributing factor to the Institute's financial problems was members' inability to attract government funds to cover administration costs. As previously stated, the Federal government was facing its own need for financial stringency in the early 1980's, something many Institute members were unwilling to realise after the free-spending days of the early 1970's. By 1980 there were a number of public organisations seeking public funding, something only those with particular public appeal were successful in obtaining. A number of Institute members, including Warwick Watson and Vernon Davies, were aware of the funding situation and began to advocate the need for sponsorship by large public companies.[33] Deals were sought with cigarette and timber companies which were willing to negotiate to support Institute activities, but they were not carried through because a majority of members thought the Institute would attract an undesirable image.

That the Institute's financial problems remained hidden for so long was largely due to a lack of communication between the Federal Council and Institute members. Wage levels were known only to the Council and activities were carried out that were not properly costed to assess their financial viability. Federal Treasurers attended all Council meetings but there was not sufficient material available to allow them to undertake a proper analysis of Institute costs. Furthermore, few Institute members had little, if any, accounting experience and although the Institute was spending beyond its means it did not have a system in place to be able to detect the mounting crisis.[34]

From mid-1981 to mid-1982 the financial situation worsened. In an effort to increase Institute income membership fees were raised, but it became clear that this was not sufficient. Debts continued to mount and the Institute's account was frozen by its bank. Its overdraft was then in excess of $18,000. In September President Warwick Watson noted that:

> ...at the present rate of progress it would appear that we are not going to eliminate

---

[32]ibid.

[33]Interviews with Vernon Davies, op.cit., and Warwick Watson, Sydney, 17 October 1988.

[34]Interview with Michael Hussey, op.cit.

this deficit...unless we curtail activities or take some hard decisions...[35]

Those decisions were made in early 1982 with a substantial reduction in National Office staff and operations. By agreement between himself and the Institute Executive, the services of the Executive Director, Vernon Davies, were dispensed with and Secretary Julie Klein resigned. The hours of the remaining part-time staff, Michael Hussey and Pat Watson, were also reduced. From April, the office was run only by these two, although to fulfil the Institute's obligations under the Companies Act, retired member Jack Huston served as Honorary Company Secretary. John Gray and Ian Frencham were among several members who assisted the office in the organisation of particular projects on a voluntary basis. Services such as the compilation of bibliographies and copying of articles were discontinued and the library was reduced. Although a number of members were ready to wind up the Institute's affairs President Paul Wycherly (Director of King's Park, Perth) was adamant that they should persevere. He made a number of trips from Perth to Canberra to persuade members to this effect and, together with other members, made donations of money to help the immediate financial problem. In May 1982 he informed members that:

> ...due to the deficit...and the discharge of commitments such as staff leave pay...there is still an acute cash-flow problem and a need for bridging finance until the Institute's revised administrative structure and budgeting takes effect.[36]

He proposed a formal system of donation through a loan fund, to which each member was asked to give a minimum of $50. The loans would be non interest-bearing and with no fixed repayment terms. Industry members were asked to advertise in and sponsor the journal and the newsletter with pre-payments. Such action was deemed necessary to bring the Institute out of its most immediate financial difficulties.[37]

The turning point of the crisis came during the 1982 Perth conference. For the first time in the Institute's history the responsibility for organising the annual conference was placed fully on the Region. The WA Region responded to the challenge by holding a fund-raising event which added several thousand dollars to the conference budget.[38] The conference proceeded well until the Federal Council meeting when it was stated that the loan account had not reached the required amount and a motion was moved and

---

[35]RAIPR Annual Report 1980/1981, p.1.

[36]President's Report, RAIPR News, Vol.11, No.1, April 1982, p.3.

[37]ibid.

[38]Interview with Gordon Shearwood, op.cit.

passed to place the Institute in voluntary liquidation.[39] At the Annual General Meeting which followed, Michael Hussey presented the financial report to members, stating that the Institute was still short of money and that urgent action was required. During an adjournment of twenty minutes an additional $13,000 was pledged which, combined with money already received in the loan account, was sufficient to enable the Institute to continue operations.[40] All outstanding debts were paid immediately and plans were made to begin re-paying members' loans. A profit of $14,000 from the conference further helped to boost Institute finances so that by December a semblance of normality had returned to its activities.

The years from 1983 to 1986 form the second phase of the Institute's most recent past. They were years in which the Institute slowly consolidated its financial position and gradually resumed the activities which had been of greatest importance in the early 1980's. It was a cautious period and the conduct of the National Office contrasted sharply with its earlier operation.

In February 1983 the office moved out of its location in the National Outdoor Stadium in Bruce. The Australian Institute of Sport had been formed and as the space was now needed, the Institute's lease was not renewed. Temporary accommodation was found in a Parks and Gardens Depot run by the Department of the Capital Territory, and a full-time secretary and two part-time clerical staff were maintained. The office provided only a skeleton service and its workers were stretched to the limit in maintaining membership records and answering member inquiries. The financial situation slowly improved; in March 1983 President Ken Trafford (Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, City of Sunshine) reported that 'the Institute continues to improve its financial position to the extent that we have no outstanding liabilities and no overdraft at the bank'.[41] The Institute's only remaining liability was in the loan money and in August Ken Trafford noted that 'the Federal Executive has been able to meet its promise in the repayment of 50% of the loan funds subscribed by both the members and industry last year'.[42] Institute finances were also boosted by members who refused repayment of their loans, preferring to donate them to various Institute funds. In 1983

---

[39]Interview with Michael Hussey, op.cit.

[40]ibid.

[41]RAIPR News, March 1983, p.1.

[42]RAIPR News, August 1983, p.1.

the annual conference in Melbourne returned a profit, prompting the establishment of a Special Purposes Fund for activities not normally covered by average Institute finances. The Fund proved useful for separating the decision-making process on activities outside normal administration and has since been used for such purposes as the production of further park management manuals, development of the journal, purchase of office equipment, and sending Institute members to interstate and overseas conferences.

One of the most immediate consequences of the financial crisis was the increased independence of the Regions. In his 1982 Presidential Report Paul Wycherly wrote that 'in my nomination for President...I was in favour of devolving more to the Regions. Force of circumstances has precipitated a rapid devolution to the Regions...It will be very much worthwhile of every member will play their part...'[43] He urged Regional members to help the Institute by paying their subscriptions, joining in and organising activities, recruiting more members, and lending money to the Institute loan account.[44] Regional Councils responded to this call and in the process organised themselves on more independent lines than they had previously been operating. They became more conscious that, having the majority of Institute members close to them, they had a substantial role to play in the conduct of the Institute's affairs. National Seminars and workshops that had previously been organised in Canberra were taken over and arranged by individual Regions. Conference organisation began to occupy a greater part of Regional members' time, and more thought was given to ways of promoting the Institute's aims and ideals through the Regions rather than the National Office.

Throughout the financial problems members sought to uphold the professionalism of their organisation, and this was reflected in the standard of activities which included workshops and seminars. In May 1983 the ACT Region held a second National Turf Management Seminar and a successful conference in Launceston in 1984 enabled more profits to be channelled into special projects. Also in 1983, Tom Wood and other members of the Hume Division were largely responsible for the establishment of a Horticulture Trade Course Certificate at the Wagga Wagga College of Technical and Further Education.

The work of the Committees and Special Interest Groups continued because they were largely Region-based, enabling the completion of the Arboreta study in 1984, and a

---

[43]RAIPR News, Vol.11, No.1, April 1982, p.3.

[44]ibid.

submission by the Recreation Committee on Expenditure in Sport. The greater independence of the Regions during the crisis forced many members to re-assess their commitment to an organisation that needed their support to survive. It caused some members to leave but in general it created a feeling of unity. Members' willingness to support the Institute financially is the most obvious example of their dedication and was what ultimately enabled it to survive.

The Institute's National office began to operate more actively during late 1984. At that time the Institute received its first government grant to help cover administration costs. The grant was the result of a submission made to the Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism in late 1983 by members Trevor Arthur, Pat Hanrahan and Paul Davies who were responding to advice that an earlier grant application had not been approved. The second submission was successful and $16,000 was allotted from the Commonwealth 1983/1984 Budget on the following lines: $10,000 for administrative support, $4,000 towards changing the journal format, and $2,000 for member attendance at international meetings.[45] In line with these specifications the journal Australian Parks and Recreation was upgraded to a larger size and colour photographs were included. A further grant for 1984/85 was promised to the Institute, on the strength of which the Executive decided to re-employ a full-time Executive Director. Ian Taylor began work with the Institute in December 1984. In May 1985 the Executive negotiated a lease for new premises in Royal National Capital Agricultural Society premises at the National Exhibition Centre, and soon after the Institute was located in its present home. In 1986, at the annual conference in Albury, the Institute celebrated its sixtieth year with a Diamond Jubilee conference, attended by most past presidents or representatives thereof. Conference attendance once again reached the level of the years preceding the financial problems, and a special commemorative dinner was a fitting indication of the Institute's revived strength and members' dedication to their organisation.

Financially, the Institute continued to gain strength, establishing a firmer monetary base than in pre-crisis years. The level of member services was slowly revived and although the Institute has not reached the same level of activity as in 1981 it continues to offer most of the same services to members. The main effect of the crisis was that it brought the momentum built up over a number of years, and which held unlimited potential for the Institute's future, to a complete halt. The period from 1978 to 1981 was one in which Institute members achieved a measure of success in their aim of

---

[45]Reported in RAIPR News, March 1984, p.4.

having the Institute recognised as the main professional parks and recreation body in Australia. By 1981 the Institute was poised to become an authoritative and influential force in park management in Australia. That momentum would undoubtedly have been maintained, had the Institute had the financial backing to capitalise on its achievements. The enforced period of inactivity during 1982 and 1983 saw earlier efforts wasted as members lost many of the government contacts and much of the reputation that they had established.

The effects of the crisis were not completely negative. The enforced independence of the Regions meant that they became stronger, more self-reliant, and in a better position to make suggestions and support National Office suggestions for the further advancement of the Institute. The crisis also forced members, particularly those on the Federal Council, to be better informed about the daily running of the Institute. They had learnt not to plan ahead without first assuring themselves that their projects could be financed. From 1981 onwards a budget was drawn up for the following year and if projects could not be funded within its strictures they were not pursued. In 1986 the Federal Council was reduced in size, lessening the need for expensive and time-consuming meetings and allowing for better organisation of Institute management.

More important than any of these reforms, however, the crisis forced all members to re-assess their loyalty to the Institute, and the overwhelming response to the urgent situation in Perth in 1982 is an example of their continued support. The crisis was not unlike that faced by VTA members 40 years earlier when the future of the organisation was threatened by war shortages. Then, as in 1982, loyalty to their organisation united members in a determination to triumph against their troubles. In 1986 the RAIPR was a stronger, if less active Institute than in 1978, but with a future equally as promising.

# CONCLUSION

The VTA's original aim of promoting a love of trees and tree planting has remained central to the Institute's activities throughout its history. Out of this aim has come the desire to raise public and government awareness of the need to protect and to manage the environment properly. As a more recent aim, concern over open space management has provided the main focus for Institute activities. Members have been successful in allying themselves with Australian and international organisations with similar concerns to promote their interests and the Institute is now recognised by such bodies as an authority on many topics relating to the care and management of parks and recreation areas.

Through its regional centres the Institute has been successful in promoting its aims and activities over a wide area of the country. In many country towns and cities the benefits of the Institute have become apparent through the acquired and applied knowledge of Institute members. The Institute's annual conference has played a substantial role in consolidating and extending the sharing of this knowledge among members, and it has also been a significant unifying force in the Institute's development.

One of the Institute's greatest achievements has been its promotion of education in horticulture and recreation. It was one of the earliest concerns of members and over many years they sustained a level of interest in horticulture education, particularly, that exists to the present. Their concern to raise the status of the profession of park administration has resulted in the establishment of a number of courses in horticulture and recreation, and the improvement of existing courses in those subjects. Consequently, their activities in this area have benefitted the profession in the provision of better qualified personnel in park and recreation management.

Another striking feature of the Institute's development has been its capacity to survive change. It was this ability which led members to aim at acquiring government recognition, at all levels, of the services and expertise being offered through the Institute. The Institute has had the support of local government from its earliest days, and without the consent of council employers many members would not have attended

seminars, meetings or conferences. Councils often provided valuable financial support for such activities. At State government level the Institute has achieved a measure of support for its activities and is regarded as a legitimate authority on matters relating to parks and recreation administration. The Federal government, too, recognises the expertise of Institute members in matters relating to open space management, and continues to seek their advice. It funds Institute projects and activities, but to a lesser extent than in previous years.

There is no doubt that although many of the Institute's central aims and objectives have been fulfilled, it has yet to reach the potential forecast during the active and promising years of the 1970's. The RAIPR is not recognised nationally as the key parks and recreation body in the country, and has not achieved a level of recognition where members can shape government policy or determine national wage levels for park staff. There are a number of reasons for these comparative failures.

Despite their interest in education, members have not promoted research into various aspects of parks and recreation management in Australia. It is an area with potential for national and international recognition, partly because it is a field that is changing rapidly. Individual members have recognised the value to be gained from academic research, but the Institute as a whole has denied itself the status which could accrue from being closely affiliated with the academic world.

The Institute has not aimed, except in its earliest years, to identify itself directly with the Australian public or to became a public voice on issues of common concern, including conservation, recreation and the raising of an awareness of the Australian environment. In the VTA's earliest years its role as a public advisory body gave it publicity and public support. Had that role been maintained with similar vigour the RAIPR may have gained even greater government recognition in recent years. In the latter half of the 1970's, for example, when the Institute was seeking greater financial support from the government, it was rejected in favour of organisations, such as the A²Bustralian Conservation Foundation, which had greater public appeal.

The Institute has suffered, too, from its policy of maintaining a non-political, ideological stance on the issue of conservation. When the Institute side-stepped involvement in the global issue of the protection of the environment in the 1960's, it missed the opportunity to attract substantial public and financial support in the following decade. It might be said, therefore, that the philosophies laid down by the founders of the VTA are out of date today. In order to attract government funding,

essential to continuing growth and diversification, organisations such as the Institute must have a public political opinion.

Another barrier facing Institute members, has been a hesitancy to recognise the problems inherent in operating as a voluntary organisation. In the days of the VTA voluntary operation was not a significant problem. Those who guided the Association wholly devoted their lives to its promotion and development. In recent years members of the Institute Executive have found it difficult to devote sufficient time to Institute interests. Members attempted to solve the problem by employing a full-time Secretary in 1970, but they failed to provide a sufficient staff level over the next decade, and the Institute began to suffer. Had alternative sources of funding been sought in the late 1970's the Institute may have maintained its momentum and averted its financial crisis.

In the last twenty years the Institute has suffered from its policy of encouraging diverse interests in its membership. Initially, the inclusion of recreationists, foresters, geologists, botanists, landscape architects, engineers, and others provided a unique opportunity for members to broaden their level of expertise. By the late 1970's, however, the Institute was suffering from its efforts to support multiple disciplines without sufficient human and financial resources to sustain these activities, and eventually it was not able to provide any one group with substantial support. What was needed was better identification of the main interests the Institute was trying to serve. Closer participation with groups sharing similar interests may then have followed, and perhaps some plans for co-operative endeavour would have developed.

The achievement of the Institute's most recent objectives, however, remain within its reach. The legacy of 60 years of existence is the capacity to survive in times of difficulty. This ability should sustain the Institute in the future and help it overcome the barriers to further development.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Commonwealth Year Books, 1951, 1962.

Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism, Towards the Development of a Commonwealth Policy on Recreation, Canberra, 1985.

Department of Tourism and Recreation, Review of Activities for the Period December 1972 - June 1974, Canberra 1975.

Education Department of South Australia, Current Trends in Recreation, papers from a seminar conducted by the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Adelaide, 1973.

First Victorian Town Planning Conference and Exhibition, Official Volume of Proceedings, Ballarat, 1919.

Melbourne City Council, Parks, Gardens and Recreation Report, 1980.

Minutes of the Melbourne City Council Parks and Gardens Committee, 1919 - 1952.

Plan of General Development, Melbourne, Report of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, Melbourne, 1929.

The Playground and Recreation Association of Victoria, Twenty-fifth Annual Report, 1938-1939.

Victorian Year Books, 1926, 1938/39, 1945/46, 1973, 1981, 1984.

## NEWSPAPERS

Age

Argus

Ballarat Courier

Box Hill Gazette

Herald

Leader

## PERIODICALS

The Australian Garden Lover, (formerly The Garden Lover)

The Australian Home Beautiful

The Garden Lover

The Local Government Journal of Western Australia

The Mentor, journal of the Municipal Officers Association of Australia, June 1955.

Morgan Gallup Polls, 1949, 1958.

The Tree Lover, journal of the Australian Forest League, July 1933.

Who's Who in Australia, 1959, 1968.

Your Garden

## MONOGRAPHS

Ashworth, William, The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning, London, 1954.

Aughterson, W.V, Taking Stock, Melbourne, 1953.

The Australian Encyclopaedia, fourth edition, 1983.

Bate, Weston, A History of Brighton, Melbourne, 1962.

Bevan, Ian, The Sunburnt Country, London, 1953.

Blainey, Geoffrey, A History of Camberwell, Melbourne, 1980.

Bloomfield, John, The Role, Scope and Development of Recreation in Australia, Canberra, 1974.

Bolton, Geoffrey, Spoils and Spoilers, Sydney, 1981.

Boyd, Robin, Australia's Home, Melbourne, 1952.

----------, The Australian Ugliness, Melbourne, 1960.

Cannon, Michael, Life In The Cities, Melbourne, 1975.

Centenary Celebrations Council, Victoria, The First Century: an historical survey, Melbourne, 1934.

Cooper, John, The History of Prahran, Melbourne, 1912.

----------, The History of St.Kilda, Melbourne, 1931.

Coulson, Helen, Story of the Dandenongs, Melbourne, 1959.

Crowley, F.K (ed.), A New History of Australia, Melbourne, 1974.

Daley, Charles, The History of South Melbourne, Melbourne, 1940.

Eden, Anthony, Places In The Sun, London, 1926.

Grant, James and Serle, Geoffrey (eds.), The Melbourne Scene: 1803 - 1956, Melbourne, 1957.

Greenham, Charles, Beauty Spots of Our City, Melbourne, 1924.

Horne, Donald, Time of Hope, Sydney, 1980.

Keenan, Frank, Report of a Study Tour - City Park Systems in Great Britain, Western Europe, and North America, Melbourne, 1962.

Lees, Stella and Senyard, June, The 1950's, Melbourne, 1987.

Mackenzie, Jeanne, Australian Paradox, Melbourne, 1961.

Marshall, Alan, The Great Extermination, London, 1966.

McGregor, Ann and Seddon, George, Somewhere To Go On A Sunday: a guide to Outdoor Melbourne, Melbourne, 1978.

McGregor, Craig, Profile of Australia, Chicago, 1966.

McKenry, Keith, Recreation, Wilderness and The Public, Melbourne, 1975.

McKernan, Michael, All In! Australia During The Second World War, Melbourne, 1983.

McQueen, Humphrey, Social Sketches of Australia, 1888 - 1975, Melbourne, 1978.

Melbourne City Council, History-Features-Statistics of Melbourne's Gardens, Melbourne, 1969.

Menadue, John, A Centenary History of the Australian Natives' Association 1871 - 1971, Melbourne, 1971.

Mercer, David (ed.), Leisure and Recreation in Australia, Melbourne, 1977.

---------- and Hamilton-Smith, Elery (eds.), Recreation Planning and Social Change in Urban Australia, Melbourne, 1980.

Morrison, Crosbie, Melbourne's Garden, Melbourne, 1946.

Murray, P.R and Wells, J, From Sand, Swamp and Heath...a history of Caulfield, Melbourne, 1980.

Newnham, W.H, Melbourne: The Biograpy of a City, Melbourne, 1956.

Nuttal, Charles, Melbourne Town, Melbourne, 1933.

Pescott, R.T.M, The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Melbourne, 1982.

Pringle, J.D, Australian Accent, London, 1958.

Ritchie, John, Australia As Once We Were, Melbourne, 1975.

Roe, Michael, Nine Australian Progressives, St.Lucia, 1984.

Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Australian Outrage, Sydney, 1966.

Spearritt, Peter, Sydney Since The Twenties, Sydney, 1978.

Stretton, Hugh, Ideas For Australian Cities, Melbourne, 1970.

Swanson, Rex, Melbourne's Historic Public Gardens, Melbourne, 1984.

Thompson, Paul, The Voice Of The Past, Oxford, 1978.

Turnbull, Clive (ed.), The Melbourne Album, Melbourne, 1946.

Whitelock, Derek, Conquest To Conservation, Adelaide, 1985.

Willis, Margaret, By Their Fruits, Sydney, 1949.

## ARTICLES

Ashbolt, Allan, "Myth and Reality", in Meanjin Quarterly, December 1966.

Blainey, Geoffrey, "The History of Leisure in Australia", in Victorian Historical Journal, Vol.49, No.1, February 1978.

Crees, Richard, "40 Years of Service and Achievement", in Trees and Victoria's Resources, Vol.26, Nos.1-3, 1984.

Lack, John, "Working-class Leisure", in Victorian Historical Journal, Vol.49, No.1, February 1978.

McKenry, Keith, "Parks For The People", in Victorian Historical Journal, Vol.49, No.1, February 1978.

Moorhouse, Frank, "The Bush Against The Laundromat", in Seddon, George and Davis, Mari (eds.), Man and Landscape in Australia, Canberra, 1976.

Mosley, J.G, "Towards a History of Conservation in Australia", in Rapoport, Amos (ed.), Australia As Human Setting, Sydney, 1972.

Perry, T.M, "The Shape of the Suburbs", in Victorian Historical Journal, Vol.46, No.3, 1975.

Pescott, E.E, "The Pioneers of Horticulture in Victoria", in Victorian Historical Magazine, Vol.16, No.1, February, 1940.

Sanderson, W.A, "The Alienation of the Melbourne Park Lands", in Victorian Historical Magazine, Vol.14, No.4, December 1932.

Wallace-Crabbe, Chris, "Melbourne", in Current Affairs Bulletin, Vol.32, No.11, 1963.

## THESES

Bardwell, Sandra, "National Parks in Victoria 1866 - 1956", unpublished PhD thesis, Monash University, 1974.

Freestone, Robert, "The Australian Garden City: a planning history 1910 - 1930", unpublished PhD thesis, Macquarie University, 1984.

Hoadley, Neralie, "Social Inequality In The City: The Impact of the Victorian Town Planning Movement During the Inter-war Years", unpublished fourth year thesis, Department of History, University of Melbourne, 1981.

Indian, Margaret, "Leisure in City and Suburb: Melbourne 1880 - 1900", unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1980.

Shoesmith, Dennis, "Boom Year: A Study of Popular Leisure in Melbourne in 1919", unpublished MA thesis, Australian National University, 1971.

Tanner, Lindsay, "Working Class Politics and Culture: A Case Study of Brunswick in the 1920's", unpublished MA thesis, Department of History, University of Melbourne, 1984.

## THE RECORDS OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

RECORDS OF THE VTA

VTA Annual Reports, 1929, 1943 - 1953.

VTA Conference Reports, 1948 - 1955.

VTA Constitution, 1944.

VTA Minutes, 1926 - 1955.

RECORDS OF THE IPAV

IPAV Annual Report, 1957.

IPAV Conference Reports, 1955 - 1962.

IPAV Constitution, 1957.

IPAV Minutes, 1955 - 1962.

IPAV News, newsletter of the IPAV, 1958 - 1962.

RECORDS OF THE AIPA

AIPA Annual Report, 1965.

AIPA Conference Reports, 1963 - 1966.

AIPA Minutes, 1962 - 1966.

Australian Parks, journal of the AIPA, 1964 - 1974.

RECORDS OF THE AIPR

AIPR Annual Reports, 1966 - 1977.

AIPR Conference Reports, 1968 - 1976.

AIPR Membership Lists, 1974, 1976.

AIPR Minutes, 1966 - 1976.

AIPR News, newsletter of the AIPR, 1972 - 1977.

Australian Parks and Recreation, journal of the AIPR, 1974 - 1986.

Constitution and By-Laws of the AIPR, October 1968.

RECORDS OF THE RAIPR

Memorandum and Articles of the RAIPR, October 1978.

RAIPR Annual Report, 1980/1981.

RAIPR Conference Reports, 1977 - 1986.

RAIPR Minutes, 1976 - 1986.

RAIPR News, newsletter of the RAIPR, 1977 - 1986.

REGIONAL RECORDS

Clayton, Leslie, "History of the South Australian Region 1956 - 1986", 1986.

Goodman, Bill, "Details of RAIPR Tasmanian Region from 1972", September 1987.

Hume Region Minutes, 1967 - 1986.

Hunter, Ken, "WA Region 1965 - 1969", July 1987.

Huston, John, "A Short History of the ACT Regional Division of the RAIPR 1970 - 1986", 1986.

NSW Region Minutes, 1965 - 1968, 1971 - 1986.

Queensland Region Minutes, 1971 - 1986.

Summary of the Minutes of the Hume Region, prepared by J.Jenkins and R. Van Der Weyde.

Tasmanian Region Minutes, 1972 - 1986.

Tasmanian Region Newsletter, 1978 - 1985.

Victorian Region Committee Reviews, 1967 - 1968.

Victorian Region Executive Reviews, 1965, 1969, 1971.

Victorian Region Minutes, 1964 - 1973.

WA Region Minutes, 1976 - 1980.

REPORTS

AIPA, Proposal To Establish a School of Park Administration and Ornamental Horticulture in the Australian Capital Territory, February, 1966.

AIPR, "A Statement on Recreation in Local Government", Canberra, 1976.

AIPR and Division of Natural Resources, School of Applied Science, CCAE, Occasional Papers in Recreation Planning - State and Federal Recreation Policy, May and November 1978, Canberra.

RAIPR, A Report on the Collection of Native Plants in Australian Botanic Gardens and Arboreta, Canberra, 1984.

RAIPR, Directory of Parks and Recreation Courses in Australia, Canberra, 1985.

RAIPR, Policy Position Statement, September 1979.

Vollbon, Trevor, Policy Committee "White Paper", March 1977.

ARTICLES

Anon., "History of the Institute Journal", 1984.

Anon., "The Institute - Its Growth and Future", in RAIPR News, Vol.9, No.2, March 1980.

Anon., "The Institute-The Profession-The Member-The Team", undated.

Bayliss, Cedric, "Parks Are For People?", in AIPR News, Vol.2, No.2, March 1973.

Crossen, Tom, "State of the Movement", in RAIPR News, Vol.10, No.2, November/December 1981.

Firth, J.D, "The AIPR and the future", in AIPR News, Vol.5, No.6, September 1976.

----------, "The Fifth Decade", in AIPR News, Vol.5, No.6, September 1976.

----------, "The Fourth Decade", in AIPR News, Vol.5, No.5, July 1976.

----------, "The Growth of The Institute", supplement to Australian Parks, August 1976.

----------, "The Second Decade", in AIPR News, Vol.5, No.3, April 1976.

----------, "The Third Decade", in AIPR News, Vol.5, No.4, June 1976.

Gray, John, "Botanic Gardens - A New Era", in RAIPR News, Vol.9, No.5, July 1980.

Howard, Graham, " The Importance of Lobbying", in RAIPR News, Vol.9, No.4, June 1980.

IPASA, "Establishment of Australian Institute", 1962.

Keenan, Frank, "The Urban Park and Recreation Service in Australia", a speech given at the 1973 IFPRA conference in London.

Lothian, Noel, "In What Course Does Our Direction Lie?", in Australian Parks, Vol.3, No.2, November 1966.

Owens, J.S, "AIPA: A Brief History", in Australian Parks, Vol.1, No.1, August 1964.

----------, "The Beginning", in AIPR News, Vol.5, No.1, January 1976.

Pescott, R.T.M, "The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne", in Australian Parks, Vol.2, No.3, February 1966.

Shearwood, Gordon, "The International Federation of Parks and Recreation (IFPRA)", April 1986.

PRESS RELEASES

RAIPR Press Release, March 1978.

PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE

RAIPR files contain a great deal of private correspondence, much of which was consulted, but it is too numerous to mention in detail. Letters and notes by the following people were particularly useful however:

J.D Firth, I. Frencham, J. Gray, K. Hunter, M. Hussey, F. Keenan, T. Kneen, J.S Owens, R.J Pittock, A. Renouf, J. Sullivan and P. Trevaskis.

**INTERVIEWS**

Trevor Arthur, Sydney, 18 October 1988.

Reg Beaton, Perth, 25 March 1988.

John Beaumont, Adelaide, 21 March 1988.

Harold Caulfield, Brisbane, 6 June 1988.

Leslie Clayton, Adelaide, 21 March 1988.

Tom Crossen, Hobart, 13 January 1988.

Barry Dangerfield, Adelaide, 21 March 1988.

Vernon Davies, Canberra, 29 June 1988.

Leonard Easton, Perth, 28 March 1988.

Fay Ellis, Adelaide, 22 March 1988.

Edward Gleeson, Launceston, 16 January 1988.

Bill Goodman, Canberra, 7 May 1988.

John E.Gray, Canberra, 15 June 1988.

John F.Gray, Launceston, 16 January 1988.

Bill Halligan, Sydney, 31 May 1988.

Pat Hanrahan, Canberra, 20 June 1988.

Ken Hunter, Perth, 29 March 1988.

Michael Hussey, Canberra, 3 August 1988.

John Huston, Canberra, 3 August 1988.

Alec Jessep, Melbourne, 30 July 1987.

Frank Keenan, Melbourne, 28 May 1987.

----------, Melbourne, 2 June 1987.

Tom Kneen, Melbourne, 4 June 1987.

Noel Lothian, Adelaide, 21 March 1988.

Peter Luff, Perth, 28 March 1988.

Len McInnes, Canberra, 29 April 1988.

Tom McLaughlan, Adelaide, 21 March 1988.

Peter Nicholls, Adelaide, 22 March 1988.

Barry Nielsen, Brisbane, 8 June 1988.

Harold Oakman, Brisbane, 7 June 1988.

Keith O'Kelly, Sydney, 31 May 1988.

John Stanley Owens, Melbourne, 4 May 1987.

Bill Potts, Adelaide, 21 March 1988.

Robin Richardson, Perth, 29 March 1988.

Gordon Shearwood, Perth, 25 March 1988.

David Shoobridge, Canberra, 14 April 1988.

Albert Simpson, Adelaide, 23 March 1988.

Ray Steward, Brisbane, 6 June 1988.

James Sullivan, Melbourne, 28 May 1988.

Ted Thompson, Adelaide, 22 March 1988.

Ken Trafford, Sydney, 18 October 1988.

Percival Trevaskis, Melbourne, 31 July 1987.

Trevor Vollbon, Brisbane, 7 June 1988.

Pat Watson, Canberra, 3 August 1988..

Warwick Watson, Sydney, 1 June 1988.

----------, Sydney, 17 October 1988.

Laurie Withers, Leeton, 27 August 1987.

Tom Wood, Wagga Wagga, 8 November 1987.

Paul Wycherly, Perth, 28 March 1988.