

TREENET 1997-2007

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INTRODUCTION

On February 17th 1997 the inaugural meeting of the “Urban Tree Cooperative Research Group” was held at the Waite Arboretum in Adelaide. Its stated aims were “to improve the streetscapes of South Australia through a coordinated assessment of existing and potential client needs, species selection, production methods, establishment practices and information sharing”. Two weeks later on 28th Feb the membership had grown from 4 to 7, the name had changed to TREENET (Tree and Roadway Experimental and Educational Network), and the reference to SA was dropped as it was realized that TREENET would have national relevance. Our vision was to positively influence the way Australians value and manage urban trees through research and education. We embraced inclusiveness through a broad involvement of the professions influencing the urban forest, confident that only by an integrated pursuit of common objectives could we succeed in our aims.

Now 10 years on, the purpose of this brief paper is to give a summary of the current activities of TREENET and to chart our progress toward the original vision.

THE NETWORK

It is impossible to characterize or quantify the depth and breadth of the TREENET network. We don't require membership of individuals, and most information is available freely online without the need for personal access codes. However the list of 1100 or so users that have registered to date to receive TREENET emails gives us a clue to the distribution of the TREENET audience.

ACT	NSW	TAS	NT	Qld	SA	Vic	WA	Other
15	300	11	7	120	350	205	50	70

This suggests that the regional interest in TREENET is roughly in line with the distribution of the Australian population, with the exception of South Australia for obvious reasons. This is reassuring and validates the original strategy to build TREENET around the emerging information super highway. The site www.treenet.org receives 30-40 unique visits (different individuals) per day and the average time spent is 5-6 mins, which ranks TREENET reasonably highly in any search engine where urban trees are the keywords.

MEMBERSHIP

TREENET encourages individuals and companies involved in urban forestry to support their various Industry Associations through financial membership. Individual financial membership of TREENET is limited to individuals who are invited by the Management Committee to be on the Advisory Board. Institutional Membership is open to Industry Associations (Appendix 1) and Government Organizations (Appendix 2). The purpose is to ensure that TREENET has a mutually beneficial relationship with many different professional associations servicing the urban forest as well as providing a means for Local Government to share the responsibility for urban tree research and education.

GOVERNANCE

The AGM is held immediately following the Symposium on the first Friday in September. It is the ideal opportunity for members of the Advisory Board to meet and implement the legal requirements of TREENET Inc. and to consider any changes to the Constitution or the Management Committee. As can be seen elsewhere in these proceedings we are very fortunate to have a well qualified Advisory Board representing a broad range of expertise and regions.

The Management Committee meets regularly by teleconference between Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. In line with the TREENET emphasis on education and research, the Management Committee of 6 currently comprises 3 members from the tertiary education sector, in addition to one from local government. The total number of members is limited to 7 and is elected from nominees from the Advisory Board at the AGM. The Chairperson is Dr Greg Moore.

RESEARCH

It was never intended that TREENET would conduct research of its own accord. Rather it would seek to promote and facilitate research by tertiary institutions, as well as species, establishment and engineering trials by local government bodies, land developers and industry. More importantly it would provide an online forum for demonstrating innovation in urban forestry accessible to all with a modem. It has nevertheless conducted research in 2005 on behalf of the Cancer Council of SA on the UV blocking properties of a range of common street trees. Funding of \$42,000 was provided by a group of SA councils and the paper has been published in the journal "Photochemistry and Photobiology". Recently TREENET has commenced discussions with SA Water on projects relating to storm water sequestration, and the beneficial reuse as a structural soil of water treatment residue currently dumped in landfill at great cost to the taxpayer. The limiting factor, as always, is not a lack worthy projects, but providing the funding. TREENET has a reasonable chance, with the growing support of Local Government through Institutional Membership, of successfully lobbying State and Federal Governments for a fair share of the funding rolled out for the environment, particularly in election years.

EDUCATION

TREENET does not conduct courses in arboriculture, landscape architecture, plant production, parks and gardens management, town planning, or urban ecology. People within the TREENET network do, however, have a great wealth of uncommon knowledge about trees, which is fundamental to the most effective practice of these essential professions. The delivery of this body of knowledge can be as simple as face to face contact and mentoring of students, participating in the print and broadcasting media, and delivering public lectures. There are many examples of our involvement in these activities, especially the annual TREENET Street Tree Symposium in the first week of September, but it is through the internet that TREENET expects to provide its greatest educational service. One of the most visited sites is www.treenet.com.au/proceedings.asp where all the papers from past symposia are freely available online. We hope to add actual recorded presentations online via www.youtube.com sometime in the future so that all who unfortunately cannot get to a Symposium can have access to the information both in print and video format.

AVENUES OF HONOUR 1915-2015 PROJECT

There are many reasons why Australians should value urban trees. Unfortunately most people have no appreciation of the myriad of benefits that urban trees provide and are also unaware of the many challenges facing trees planted in this environment. There is an expectation that urban trees should survive no longer than a few decades at most, so the idea that we could maintain trees in good health for a century or more is unthinkable. However the great value that Australians place on commemoration, especially of those killed in the theatres of war since 1915 provides a unique opportunity for a revision of these attitudes. There will be a resurgence of tree

planting as we approach the centenary of the Gallipoli landing as well as the realization that in most cases the original trees have disappeared or are in a sorry state due mostly to neglect and mismanagement. The TREENET Avenues of Honour Project is a unique opportunity to demonstrate our expertise in addressing these challenges and to improve the standard of tree literacy in the wider community.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Until 2003 we relied entirely on whatever spare time I, Jennifer Gardner, and a small group of volunteers could find to manage the administrative tasks and research and education roles of TREENET. This was especially demanding around the time of the Symposium. Following incorporation at the end of 2002, I became Director and work approximately 20 hours per week in the TREENET office located in the Coach House Science Centre at the Waite campus of the University of Adelaide. TREENET employs others as funding permits to provide support particularly in the areas of administration and website design and management. We continue to rely heavily on the commitment of a wonderful bunch of volunteers in all of our projects, particularly the production of Gallipoli Rosemary and the running of the Symposium. I thank them all for their ongoing support. In particular I want to express the deep appreciation of the Management Committee for the many hundreds of hours of voluntary work that Brian Measday puts in each year as Treasurer. His professional accounting background and knowledge of the legal framework in which TREENET operates are the mainstays of TREENET Inc. He is also the inventor of Greenwell, the only irrigation device, other than a bucket, which can be legally used by South Australia's gardeners and that is now very widely used in tree planting projects around the country.

FUNDING

TREENET is a not-for-profit incorporated body which, through the TREENET Fund, is registered as an environmental organization for the purposes of receiving tax deductible donations. Reference to the table below highlights our reliance in the earlier years on making a substantial profit from the Symposium to finance our activities.

Activities	2004	2005	2006	2007
Institutional Membership		\$11,500	\$14,750	\$26,500
Sponsorship	\$5,000	\$20,000	\$40,250	\$30,685
Symposium	\$41,896	\$26,682	\$18,605	\$16,530
Donations to TREENET		\$350	\$560	\$50
Shading SA research grant		\$35,065	\$2,890	
Avenues of Honour Donations		\$5,000		\$5,000
Gallipoli Rosemary Royalties				\$10,375
Totals	\$46,896	\$98,597	\$77,055	\$89,140

It can be seen that we are moving to replace that financial dependence on the Symposium through Sponsorship (Appendix 3), Institutional Membership, the Avenues of Honour project and research grants for specific trials as indicated previously. It is clear that profits from Symposia are being replaced as the major source of funding as we seek to deliver a premium event at an affordable price. This is fundamental to our aims of supporting education and research in urban forestry and being accessible to the widest possible audience. Our Sponsors deserve recognition for their participation in the TREENET vision and our desire to keep registration costs for the Symposium down will hopefully reward them through greater contact with potential customers. It is interesting to note that although the number registering for the Symposium is currently around the 200-230 mark, a total of over 750 different individuals have attended the 8 Symposia so far. In order that we avoid the trap of "preaching to the converted" it is important that we encourage elected members of local government bodies in particular to attend by providing free places through Institutional Membership.

The final thought on funding is that every 4 years there seems to be extra money around just prior to a federal election. TREENET will be lobbying hard on behalf of the urban trees that have so many benefits to offer at a time when "Climate Change" is inevitable in both the political and environmental context .

APPENDIX 1

INVITATION TO 2007 INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP (ASSOCIATIONS)

Institutional Membership is open to all not-for-profit organisations and agencies with an interest in urban trees who support the aims of **TREENET**.

Industry Associations are eligible for Institutional Membership (Associations) status, valid until **31 December 2007** for the annual investment of **\$500** (Ex GST).

TREENET:

- **Treenet** (Tree and Roadway Experimental and Educational Network) is the National Research and Education organisation for urban trees. It is a not for profit organisation based at the University of Adelaide's Waite Arboretum.
- **Treenet** is advised by a National Board of over 50 voting members who have been selected for their expertise in relevant fields.
- **Treenet** maintains a freely accessible website www.treenet.org with information on all aspects of urban trees and related technologies and products.
- **Treenet** is the home of the Avenues of Honour 1915-2015 project, which is recognised nationally as a most significant urban forest initiative www.avenuesofhonour.org

The Benefits:

- **Free of charge**, one Elected Member, or other Honorary Position within your organisation may attend the **8th National Street Tree Symposium at the National Wine Centre 6th –7th Sept**. Registration cost for the Symposium is usually \$500+GST.
- **A 10% discount on the registration cost** will apply to all financial members of your organisation attending the annual symposium.
- **A gratuity equal to 10% of the registration cost** will be paid to your organisation for each paying member of your organisation attending the annual symposium.
- **A free copy of the Symposium proceedings** will be mailed to your organisation in September 2007.
- **Your organisation has the right to promote your membership of Treenet** in all publications and media in the current financial year.
- **You will receive a certificate** suitable for framing for public display acknowledging your membership.
- Your organisation will be **listed as an Institutional Member at www.treenet.org with a direct link provided to your website.**
- By supporting **Treenet** you are contributing to the efficient and effective management of our urban forests and helping to ensure the continuation of research programs of direct benefit to your organisation and to the wider community.

APPENDIX 2

INVITATION TO INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP 2007 (GOVERNMENT)

Institutional Membership is open to Local, State and Federal government bodies who support the aims of **TREENET**. Individual membership is not offered.

TREENET:

- **TREENET** (Tree and Roadway Experimental and Educational Network) is the National Research and Education organisation for Urban trees.
- Based at The University of Adelaide's Waite Arboretum, **TREENET** is a not-for-profit organisation dependant on sponsorship, Institutional membership, income from the annual symposia, research funding, and donations (tax deductible).
- **TREENET** is advised by a National Board of over 50 voting members who have been selected for their expertise in relevant fields.
- **TREENET** maintains a freely accessible website www.treenet.org with information on all aspects of urban trees and related technologies and products.
- **TREENET** is responsible for **The Avenues of Honour 1915-2015 Project** www.avenuesofhonour.org

The Opportunity:

- The benefit of association with the **TREENET** vision is offered through **Institutional Membership**. The cost for local government bodies is **\$750 (Ex GST)** per calendar year, renewable each January.

The Benefits:

- **Free of charge**, one Elected Member, or other Honorary Position within your organisation may attend the **8th National Street Tree Symposium at the National Wine Centre 6th –7th Sept**. Registration cost for the Symposium is usually \$550 inc GST.
- **A 20% discount on the registration cost** will apply to all paid staff of your organisation attending the annual symposium.
- **A complimentary electronic copy of the 2007 Symposium proceedings** will be forwarded to your organisation after the event for distribution to all relevant staff.
- **Your organisation has the right to promote your membership of TREENET** in all publications and media in the current financial year.
- **You will receive a certificate** suitable for framing for public display acknowledging your membership.
- Your organisation will be listed as an **Institutional Member** at www.treenet.org with a **direct link provided to your website**.
- By supporting **TREENET** you are contributing to the efficient and effective management of our urban forests and helping to ensure the continuation of research programs of direct benefit to your organisation and to the wider community.

APPENDIX 3

TREENET SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES (FOR THE 2007 CALENDAR YEAR)

Bronze \$2000– 20 packages available 2007

- Right to promote Treenet sponsorship
- Framed Certificate presented at the 2007 Symposium
- Website Exposure (1 time unit per sponsor)
- Direct link from treenet.org to your business website.
- Acknowledged in Symposium proceedings and on conference banners (text only no logo).
- Promotional material can be included in Symposium satchels.
- Free poster display space available at Symposium (up to one side of standard display board)
- 1 Symposium seat and 20% discount on additional attendances.

Silver \$4000 – 4 packages available 2007

- Right to promote Treenet sponsorship
- Framed Certificate presented at the 2007 Symposium
- Website Exposure (2 time units per sponsor)
- Direct link from treenet.org to your business website
- 1 separate page on website made available for your own promotional messages. You have access to update info when you wish.
- Acknowledged in Symposium proceedings and on conference banners (logo)
- Promotional material can be included in Symposium satchels.
- 1 free trade display space at Symposium.
- 2 Symposium seats and 20% discount on additional attendances.

Gold \$8,000 – 2 packages available 2007

- Right to promote Treenet sponsorship
- Framed Certificate presented at the 2007 Symposium
- Website Exposure (4 time units per sponsor)
- Direct link from treenet.org to your business website
- 2 separate pages on website made available for your own promotional messages. You have access to update info when you wish.
- Acknowledged in Symposium proceedings and on conference banners (logo)
- Promotional material can be included in Symposium satchels.
- 2 free trade display spaces at Symposium
- 4 Symposium seats and 20% discount on additional attendances.

Platinum \$16,000- 1 package available 2007

- Right to promote Treenet sponsorship
- Framed Certificate presented at the 2007 Symposium
- Website Exposure (permanent presence at top of each page)
- Direct link from treenet.org to your business website.
- 4 separate pages on website made available for your own promotional messages. You have access to update info when you wish.
- Acknowledged in Symposium proceedings and on conference banners (logo)
- Promotional material can be included in Symposium satchels.
- 4 free trade display spaces at Symposium
- 8 Symposium seats and 20% discount on additional attendances.
- Invitation to address delegates at 2007 Symposium opening.