

## MARION BLACKWELL - BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### General Background:

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Marion Blackwell is an environmental scientist and landscape designer; the founding director of Blackwell & Associates Pty Ltd, which is an active landscape architectural practice in Peppermint Grove in Western Australia. She was born in 1928 and grew up on a station in the north of NSW. Her primary schooling was obtained as a pupil of the Blackfriar's Correspondence School ("School of the Air") and secondary education at Hornsby Girls High School. She graduated in Science from Sydney University in 1952, majoring in Plant Ecology and Physiology. Upon graduation she was appointed as the lecturer in Mycology (fungi) at the University of NSW, a position which she held until moving to WA with her husband and young family in 1958. Since then she has undertaken part-time lecturing at the University of Western Australia in both the Department of Botany and the School of Architecture, as well as being involved in a wide spectrum of landscape consultancy work in the fields of landscape planning and design, the sustainable use of natural resources, and environmental management, both for the conservation of bio-diversity and for passive recreational purposes.

Projects undertaken over this period have included ecological and heritage (including native vegetation) surveys, landscape assessments, feasibility studies and site rehabilitation work. They have ranged through the vernacular landscape planning and design of new "outback" towns for the arid north-west and inland of Western Australia, to a naval establishment, university campuses, botanic gardens, city squares, urban parks, roof gardens and indoor atriums.

In her landscape design work Marion has endeavoured to find solutions that are appropriate to both the ecology of the site and the individual client & user needs; on the basis that appropriate design can, in the fulfilment of its functional requirements, establish the framework for an aesthetically pleasing, self sustaining and comfortable (human) environment.

Her particular interests centre around the use of good design in improving the quality of life for people living in arid areas and include the conservation and rehabilitation of problem areas, particularly in desert regions and arid/wind swept coastal locations. This has involved the survey and photography of native species in their ecological habitats - aimed at the application of adapted and more appropriate species for use in plantings on problematic sites. In the work, emphasis has been placed upon plants with specific adaptations to adverse conditions including those adapted to physiological drought caused by salt air, high evaporation rates, low water availability, soils with both high and low pH's, and saline soils, as well as the problems of seaside and inland dune stabilisation.

Marion has undertaken a number of research projects in relation to water conservation, soil stabilisation, mycorrhizal significance and revegetation; the culturing and preservation of Basidiomycete Fungi, and the effects of high soil pH on plant root/fertiliser relationships. She has been responsible for the introduction into horticulture of a number of choice species of native plants for landscape work: including selections for indoor planting, soil stabilisation, and plants of phreatophitic habit - for use in the development of a new town in the western arm of the Great Victoria Desert.

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She has also undertaken the preparation of planting palettes for regional amenity projects in the Carnegie Salient, the South Western Interzone (Kalgoorlie-Coolgardie), the Murchison, the Pilbara and the Kimberley; and similarly of plants for coastal stabilisation and revegetation work including the establishment of a hierarchy of coastal plant species from high water mark, through to the various hind dune revegetation successions further inland - under various conditions of coastal climate, problematic soils, sand-blast and desiccation.

### Memberships and Public Appointments Held:

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- Honorary Fellowship of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, conferred 1981.
- Member of the judging panel for the 1983-86 Brick Clay Award.
- President of the West Australian Wildflower Society
- WA delegate to ASGAP (Associated Societies for Growing Australian Plants).
- Member of the Mycological Society of America.
- Inaugural Member of the Ecological Society of Australia.
- Inaugural Member of the Australian Systematic Botany Society.
- Horticultural Adviser to the Western Australian Horticultural Council.
- Western Australian Representative on the Australian Council of Women Graduates.
- Member of the Western Australian Wildlife Authority - Flora Committee (from formation to its cessation in 1985).
- Member of the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority (NPNCA) advisory to the Western Australian Minister for the Environment, from its formation (March 1985) to the present day. Marion has for the last 5 years been Deputy Chair person of the Authority.
- Member of the Recreation sub-committee of the Youth, Sport and Recreation Committee; advisory to the Minister during 1983 & 1984.
- Member of Technical Advisory Group on the Register of Significant Trees - National Trust of Australia.
- Member of the judging panel for the "Top Tourism Town Awards", WA. from its formation in 1991, for its duration.
- In early 1991 Marion Blackwell was appointed by the Federal Minister for the Environment as a member of the new advisory committee to the Australian National Botanical Gardens. At its first meeting Marion was unanimously elected as the chairperson.
- Member of Western Australian Flora Industry Advisory Committee – Appointed by the Minister for the Environment.

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- WSWA representative on WATS & C3 (Western Australian Threatened Species & Communities Consultative Committee) since 1998
- Member of the "Landscape Awards Excellence" Judging Panel 1994-2000
- Member of Endangered Flora Consultative Committee till it was superceded in 1996
- Member of the EPA - Appointed by the Governor in 1995 re-appointed for 1997/98
- Member of ACTEPA (Advisory Council To the Environmental Protection Authority) - appointed by the Minister for the Environment – June 1998 until present.
- Member of the EWSSC (Environmental Weed Strategy Steering Committee)

### Publications and Major Reports:

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- Vegetation & Floristics of the Burrup Peninsula and the Southern part of Dolphin Island, together with an assessment of the impact of the North West Shelf Gas Project upon the Landscape, Flora and Vegetation of this area, and its Regeneration Potential after disturbance. For Woodside Offshore Petroleum
- Rottnest Island - Landscaping Report. MI Blackwell & PJ Cala October 1973. Prepared for R.J. Ferguson & Associates.
- Pictorial Encyclopaedia of Species of plants suitable for Landscape Development at a proposed new Townsite near Agnew - for Agnew Mining Company Pty Ltd.
- "Gardening at Leinster". MI Blackwell & PJ Cala, drawings by Mark Jaarvinen. Printed by Advance Press Pty Ltd.
- Yeelirrie Mining Project - Vegetation Surveys including revegetation potential - for Maunsell & Partners.
- Vegetation and Floristics of the Lake Way Uranium Project area for - Wyoming-Delhi-Van Joint Venture.
- Forest Gold Environmental Report on 20 gold mining leases at Labouchere - for CRA
- WA Smelter Group - Feasibility Study - Collie Site - Environmental Assessment - December 1980.
- Bunbury extensions of the Dampier to Perth Natural Gas Pipeline, "Landscape, Vegetation Flora and Fauna Assessment" - August 1982.
- Biological Review of a Designated Area between Worsley Siding, Worsley Townsite and Old Fernbrook Farm May - 1983.
- Initial Assessment of the Vegetation on land held by Worsley Alumina Pty Ltd and its surrounding impact areas - December - 1983.
- Sand Stabilisation - Mullaloo Development - October 1983.
- Environmental Review and Impact Assessment together with Report on Landscape potential, Landscape Planning and Design for the Proposed New Wittenoom Tourist Complex - 1983.
- Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve - Recreation Management and Interpretive Strategy - June 1985.

#### Publications and Major Reports:

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- Vegetation Monitoring of the Rehabilitation areas - Burrup Peninsula - Report to Woodside Offshore Petroleum Pty Ltd.
- Landscape Planning Design Specifications for Argyle Townsite, Argyle Diamond Mine site Infrastructure Development - East Kimberley. - for Tomlinson, Architect and Van Eck & Lurie Pty Ltd - Joint Venture.
- Environmental Report on the proposed Hardrock Quarry - Lot 1 Swan Location - 1316.
- Guildford Townscape & Conservation Study - Ian Hocking & Associates and Blackwell & Associates - April 1987
- Regional Landscape Perspectives - Report for the Perth Planning Commission - 1987.
- Gimlet South Project - Landscape Rehabilitation Report prepared for BHP Gold Pty Ltd - January 1988.
- Supreme Court Precinct - In association with Ian Hocking & Associates - The Survey and Preparation of a Conservation Plan for the Government House Gardens, Stirling Gardens, Botanic Gardens and Supreme Court Gardens, Perth. - 1993.
- Wave Rock - In association with Tom Hibbs -Development of a Concept Plan, Design Guidelines and Management Plan For Wave Rock, Hyden, W.A. -for the Wheatbelt Commission & the Shire of Kondinin.- 1994.

#### Publications and Major Reports In Association With Blackwell & Associates:

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- Bishops See "Report & Garden Survey" - June 1999
- Sunset "Tree Survey" – April 2000

#### Other Items of Note:

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- Annual Series of Weekly Radio Interviews & "Wildflower Watch" Bulletins for the Tourism Commission & the Wildflower Society of W.A. on "What's out Where"
- Series of TV interviews/illustrated sessions on Issues of Landscape Design for Problem Areas, such as Indoor Gardens, Seaside Locations, Desert Areas etc – for the ABC
- International Botanical Congress tour guide/lecturer;
- Key note, & other addresses given for various organisations eg. - An Australian Town of the Desert," SGAP Conference Perth 1977 - Australian Garden History Society 1999
- Awarded the Western Australian Civic Design Award 1987 as a participant of the professional team which designed of the Campus of Murdoch University. "For excellence in civic design and in recognition of the contribution made in the design and implementation of the project";

## Other Items of Note:

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### Featured in:

- The Australian Plants; Collectors and Illustrators 1780 – 1980, W.A. Herbarium Research Notes N° 12 August 1986
- Endeavour New Series Vol 5 No.3 1981. Pergamon Press Oxford. Cover photograph Fig 1 of article by Professor D.H Richardson & E Nieboer. Lichens & Pollution Monitoring P.127-133.
- Conscious Living No.24 in "Dedicated Women" P 37/8 – July/Aug 1994
- Environmental Protection News write up – July 1995
- West Australian "Scientist Joins EPA Board" – July 1999
- Guest Editorial for the "Australian Garden History" Vol 10 No.6 – May 1999
- Australian Horticulture "Landscape of the Month" Vol 97 No.5 P10-12 – May 1999
- Australian Horticulture "Marion Blackwell – Australian Dynamo" Vol 97 No.5 P32-33
- Landscape Vol 14 No.4 In Doing what comes naturally "Celebrating Women in Conservation in WA" - P3 & P44-45 – 1999
- Awarded the Western Australian Civic Design Award 1988 as participant of the Professional Design Team for the City of Bayswater Administration Centre.
- Designed and set up an Installation related to an Aboriginal Sculpture, as part of "Art in Bloom" for the Art Gallery of W.A. 1992

### Select Projects List:

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**PROJECT: Murdoch University Landscape Master Plan**

**CLIENT: Murdoch University**

1973

The preparation of a master plan for the long term landscape development of the university campus including a design translation of the planning review study. Involvement has included reports, planning and detail design work through to contract administration for the various sections of the landscape development, including the design of landform, car park systems, paving, lighting, reticulation, planting and the internal road layout.

Advice was also given on the siting and appropriate floor levels of proposed buildings and the location and design of sporting and other recreational facilities including a 1,200 capacity amphitheatre.

Further work included a review of the campus planning in order to accommodate a proposed golfing academy on campus and a definitive proposal for the siting of student housing.

In 1987 Marion Blackwell received the Western Australian Civic Design Award as a participant in the professional design team responsible for the planning, design and development of the Murdoch University campus.

Select Projects List:

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**PROJECT: Leinster Township: Landscape Master Plan**

**CLIENT:** Agnew Mining Co Pty Ltd

1975

A Landscape Master Plan was prepared for the new nickel mining town of Leinster, situated in the western arm of the Great Victoria Desert. This work included advice on the location and orientation of the town-site, a landform analysis, site planning and detailed design, plus a detailed planting proposal for the town centre, and the entire residential component including streets, individual house lots and the single men's quarters.

Prior to the commencement of the Master Plan work, an ecological survey and assessment of the Perseverance Well area, (immediately surrounding the proposed township site), was undertaken. From this and other background information, an illustrated catalogue of plant species suitable for use in the landscape development of the town of Leinster was prepared.

A "Gardening at Leinster" information booklet was also prepared to accompany the Master Plan. This booklet was provided to the new residents as a "do-it-yourself" manual, which explained what landscape opportunities existed in this arid and possibly alien environment, with how to go about further developing their own private gardens under these rather difficult conditions.

**PROJECT: Herbarium Gardens**

**CLIENT:** Department of Agriculture

1979

As Senior Partner of Blackwell & Cala, Marion Blackwell produced a detailed landscape design for the development of the Herbarium grounds so as to become a representative "WA Botanical Gardens adjunct" to the West Australian Herbarium.

This was designed to not only display the attributes of specific plants but, so as to acknowledge their taxonomic linkages and also their habitat associations. These groupings included a Banksia display area, containing ground covers through to tree species, all of which belonged to this same genus. An Acacia area, a poisons garden - with native and introduced species being accommodated, an area representative of the northern sand plains, west of Wongan Hills and between the Moore River and Shark Bay, a southern sand plain area, also areas planted with representative species from the Murchison, the Gascoyne, the Ashburton, the Pilbarra and the Kimberley regions.

This planting design set out designated locations for 1,147 different taxa of Western Australian plants (more than an eighth of the then known flora of this state).

**PROJECT: Argyle Mine Accommodation Complex**

**CLIENT:** Van Eck & Lurie Pty Ltd, Minenco Pty Ltd

1984

The preparation of a landscape master plan and detailed design, including stabilisation and amenity planting, for the 364 single persons quarters in the central hill-top community complex at the Argyle Diamond Mine. Further work involved a recreation development and lay-down area, plus the design of an appropriate entrance statement for the overall complex.. This was followed by a detailed landscape design for the Mine Infrastructure Area.

Select Projects List:

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**PROJECT: Woodman Point Recreation Complex**

**CLIENT:** Department of Sport and Recreation

1986

The preparation of a Master Plan and detail design of this 290ha reserve for recreation, education and conservation purposes. The complex is based upon a proposed parkland system with the facilities integrated into the overall design. Some of the elements included in the Master Plan are as follows: dune stabilisation; freshwater, brackish and salt-water lake systems; observation hides, viewing towers and board-walks; road and car parking systems, interpretive centres and education resources for water-based recreation activities.

**PROJECT: Greening of Jigalong**

**CLIENT:** Aboriginal Housing Board

1991

Blackwell & Associates Pty Ltd were commissioned as the co-ordinating consultants for a multi-disciplinary team including anthropologists, hydrologists, ethno-botanists, ecologists and architects who were engaged to undertake a feasibility study aimed at providing solutions to community health problems in this isolated settlement of 600 to 800 aboriginal people, which is situated east of the Gascoyne at the junction of the Great Sandy Desert, the Little Sandy Desert and the Gibson Desert, approximately 160kms east of Newman. This encompassed:

- the identification of community needs, expectations, skills, resources and activities.
- gaining an understanding of the community functions and how they relate to vegetation as well as the causes of current soil degradation.
- a survey of the site's flora, vegetation, soils, geomorphology, hydrology (including water potential), climate (especially rainfall) and pollutants.
- the researching of appropriate species for ethnic usages, amenity purposes, food, shade, shelter, fuel wood, drought and salt tolerance.
- the addressing of appropriate achievable and practical strategies for arid area stabilisation and revegetation.
- the development of pertinent methodologies to carry out the aims of this project.
- the providing of Jigalong residents with appropriate resources and skills to enable them to participate in the rehabilitation and stabilisation programme.
- the exclusion/removal of feral (predatory) animals such as goats.
- the development of a landscape design masterplan and detail design for rehabilitation and amenity procedures
- the setting up of monitoring programmes.

**PROJECT: Voyager Estate Winery**

**CLIENT:** Voyage Estate

1995 - 2000

Marion Blackwell in consultancy with Blackwell & Associates was commissioned to prepare a landscape master plan for the winery estate. This involved land use planning, optimal siting of roads and footpaths; separation of visitor, winery work and private traffic routes and accomodation of parking for the various development nodes.

This was followed successively by design of landform through to detailed planting of the individual areas. Careful consideration was paid at all times to the development of themes in keeping with the "Cape Dutch" character favored by the client for his development.

Involvement in the following projects has been as an independent subconsultant for specific sections of the work:

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**To Taylor Cullity Pty Ltd:**

- Vegetation and planting for the award winning Australia Garden at Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. 1997

**To Blackwell & Associates:**

- Vines Masterplan, Clubhouse & Entry - for SANWA 1988-1989
- Kings Park Restaurant - for Kings Park Tea Rooms 1992
- Supreme Court Gardens - for BMA/Perth City Council 1993
- Claremont Station Precinct Study - for Town of Claremont & DPUD 1994
- Perth Capital City Landscape Strategy - for Perth City Council & State Govt 1995
- Joondalup City Centre Streetscape - for LandCorp 1988-2000
- Cypress Hill Redevelopment, North Fremantle - for LandCorp 1997-2000
- Northwater Marina, Carnarvon - for LandCorp 1997-2000
- Bishops See Masterplan - for Hawaiian Investments 1999-2000
- Heathcote Hospital Redevelopment - for Government Projects Office & CAMS 1997-2000
- Sunset Hospital Redevelopment - for Government Projects Office & CAMS 2000