

APACE NEWSLETTER - July 2020

Co-ordinator - Joann Heta

This Newsletter is special for two reasons, firstly the impact of Covid-19 on Apace's operations and secondly Tony Freeman's retirement after 35 years. The Newsletter concludes with a letter of thanks written by Ann Forma. Ann's letter opens with "The history of Apace from 1985 to the present is very much the trajectory of Tony's working life" and concludes with "the span of his career represents an enormous contribution to the People and Plants of Perth. Thank you Tony".



AGM

APACE 's AGM which was held on Wednesday 17 June 2020 heralded our best turnout for many a year. This support from our community is most appreciated and it was a pleasure to report our best financial result for at least the last 10 years. This will enable us to offset debts and invest in the infrastructure of the nursery.

The main item of business was the special resolution to change the financial reporting period from a calendar year to that of a financial year which was supported and carried.

The meeting was followed by drinks and snacks and with the easing of the Covid Restrictions there was definitely a feeling of celebration amongst our attendees.

Office Bearers:

Office bearers elected at the AGM were:

President: Bryn Jones

Secretary: Jennifer Kitchin

Treasurer: Patrick Gibbons

Committee Members: Joann Heta, Ann Forma & John Thornett.

COVID-19 - The Team



COVID-19 - the Response

As per the community at large, there was a sense of uncertainty and trepidation within APACE WA at the commencement of the COVID restrictions. However we responded quickly by creating a COVID safe workplace and ensuring frequent and targeted communication with staff. Strategies included the postponement of all volunteer activities and restrictions on public access to the site. Sales method moved immediately to online and order only options.



We did however have some lucky breaks, the first being that plant nurseries were declared an essential industry which meant we were able to retain all our workers. Government assistance from both Federal and State jurisdiction ensured important financial support and demand for plants increased with many people at home working on their gardens.



COVID coincided with one of our most crucial times of the year, namely the council sponsored subsidised plant scheme. Staff ingenuity saw an online ordering system implemented along with a well organised pick-up service at the gates. This delivered great results for APACE WA with our best sales ever.

Gratitude is extended to the Management Committee for their unwavering support and to Staff for their amazing fortitude and dedication during these difficult times. I must make special mention of Darnell Luke, Apace's Nursery Supervisor for the outstanding time and effort he spent organising the council sponsored subsidised plant scheme.



Nursery Notes

Winter brings dark starts and cold days but this is par for the course for our intrepid workers. This is the time for wetland maintenance with the digging up of established stock and dividing plants for replanting and extension of coverage with premium plants. In addition there is always the weed control to maximise plant growth. Winter is also the time for the "big clean" of the whole nursery to ensure it is ready for spring activities. Winter brings an end to the annual cycle of the nursery and with the coming of spring we move once again to propagation of plants and filling up the tables to ensure stock for the coming year.



Apace Community Garden - Covid-19

Precautions: to address the threats posed by Covid-19, Gardeners focussed on minimising contact with Apace's staff by visiting the Garden outside Apace's normal working hours and using the rear access gate wherever possible. Appropriate hand sanitisation and social distancing procedures were introduced and a temporary hold put on the processing of plot application, approval and allocation procedures.

Wellbeing: Well-documented research indicates community gardening making a significant contribution to well-being particularly in terms of mental health issues such as stress. A few weeks into the pandemic an informal survey focussing on the well-being of Gardeners was carried out. Although some Gardeners were disadvantaged by Covid-19, particularly in terms of employment, without exception all regarded their participation in the community garden as a significant benefit to their overall well-being.



Gnomes in the Garden: the survey also indicated that whilst a few gardeners did need help looking after their plots, almost all of the rest had time to help others with tasks including providing ongoing support to the gardeners disadvantaged by Covid-19; the maintenance of "Community Plots" - plots/areas which the Apace Community Gardeners group cultivate on behalf of Apace because of limitations which make them unsuitable for allocation as plots/areas on which fees can be charged; and other 'Community' tasks such improvements to reticulation and sheds, fencing repairs etc. So the 'Gnomes in the Garden' group was formed — gardeners who wanted to help with activities other than looking after their own plots with its activities seen as an opportunity to support the well-being of fellow gardeners and to encourage the development of a community culture in the Garden whilst having some fun and enjoyment in doing so. We succeeded on both counts

So a big thank you to all our customers and all our other friends for such great support during this challenging but ultimately successful time for Apace.

Kind regards, Joann - Apace Coordinator

Tony Freeman

Tony will retire from Apace on August 21st, 2020

The history of Apace from 1985 to the present is very much the trajectory of Tony's working life. For most of that time he has been the Coordinator of Apace. The original group at Apace was called the Appropriate Technology Development Group (ATDG) and Tony began in the early years when ATDG had a sub-lease on the site from Fremantle Council and had an alternative energy, sustainability focus. He spent time on projects retrofitting Homeswest housing to make it more energy efficient/sustainable. The site was essentially bare with only Winter House, restored by Fremantle Society in 1982 on it. Apace did not have an enterprise such as the Nursery or even the Community Garden then and it was difficult going from one grant to another sometimes being unable to keep paid staff on site. The Community Garden at Apace was initiated in 1987 and was one of the earliest developments on the site. Over the years Permaculture principles and Organic Gardening/Composting were subjects of Training Courses.



There was a Solar Housing group meeting at Apace and the Rammed Earth Building was built partially with volunteer labour as a demonstration of Rammed Earth Technology around 1987/88.

Also in 1987/88 a new focus began at Apace with one small greenhouse being built to grow local native plants for the revegetation of Buckland Hill and the North Fremantle Heritage Trail around the cliffs of Rocky Bay. A new arm of Apace called Apace Aid Inc. was set up to administer enterprises such as the Nursery and to give Apace a firmer financial footing.

Tony enthusiastically educated himself in many new areas including growing local plants and later with Greg Reid helped Apace become the first Nursery in Perth to grow Wetland plants for the restoration of Perth's much neglected wetlands. This involved a lot of plodding around swampy places learning about these species and how to bring them into cultivation.

Education was always a focus. Work skills courses for young people to help them into work. Apace started the first Bush Regeneration course in Perth in 1992. This course educated many volunteers in friends groups as well as Council employees and others.

It brought in expertise in Plant identification, Weed Identification and Control, Vegetation mapping and other practical techniques required to run a successful revegetation project. Later came a Seed Collection course. Apace built the first Community Seedbank in Perth to support the collection of seed so that local Provenance plants could be grown to put back into local bushland.

In 1987, Tony designed and Apace administered the grant for the North Fremantle Primary School playground. He had worked in landscaping before working at Apace and was skilled in design.

In the mid 1990's an ambitious project to build an Education centre and revamp the whole site was brought to fruition with detailed designs ready to go. Unfortunately uncertainty over the granting of a new lease brought this to a halt.

Tony then led Apace through a very difficult time when the organisation might have moved or closed down. Finally after a long battle the lease was renewed and Apace could move on. It was time to consolidate and improve the environmental performance on the site. Tony researched the building of nutrient stripping beds and worked on a system to retrieve water from the nursery and purify it by pumping it through a series of raised filtration beds. Benefits of this project included replacing the increasingly saline bore with year round good quality water for the Community Garden.



More recently Tony worked through the complexities of changing the Constitution to simplify the two arms of Apace (ATDG and Apace Aid) into one organisation Apace WA. He also oversaw the successful setting up of the Community Garden as a semi autonomous organisation.

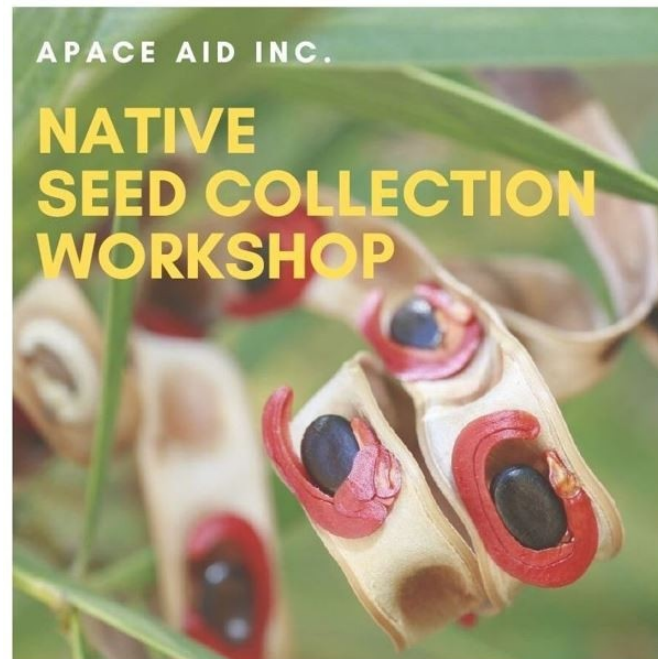
Throughout his career Tony has faced the many challenges of Apace with a spirit of independence, continuous self-education and energetic dedication to the ideals of the organisation. The projects mentioned above are a tiny snapshot of his 35 years at Apace. The span of his career represents an enormous contribution to the People and Plants of Perth.

Thank you Tony

Ann Forma



Native Seed Collection & Processing Workshop



Saturday, Sept' 19th 2020 / Wednesday, Sept' 23rd 2020
8.00am – 2.00pm

You can feel the change in the air as we transition from Makuru to Djilba and that means the Native Seed Season is just around the corner.

We're seeing quite a bit of interest in our Native Seed Collection & Processing Workshop this year and have set aside 2 dates that we are presently seeking expressions of interest for:

- Saturday, September 19th 2020
- Wednesday, September 23rd 2020

Our Native Seed Collection & Processing Workshop covers all of the essentials including licencing, OSH, essential basic botany, environmental care, industry best practice collection methods, processing & extraction essentials for the enthusiast and / or community group, storage guidelines ... and much more !

The workshop is open to anyone at a cost of \$90.00 / person, but we will gladly supply a quote if you want to book the Native Seed Collection & Processing Workshop exclusively for your group or staff.

Register now for the dates above and / or contact us at:

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