

A lifetime legacy

The history and heritage of our parks



Whadjuk Country

For over 60,000 years, Whadjuk people have lived on and cared for the lands that are now known as Kings Park and Bold Park. Kaarta Koomba/ Kings Park and Kaarta Gar-up/Mooro Katta/Mount Eliza hold deep cultural and spiritual significance for Noongar people, linked to Waugal dreaming and ancient songlines that extend across the country. The area has always been an important hub for trade, ceremony and daily life.

1697 - 1801

European exploration

In the late 1600s a Dutch expedition explored the Derbarl Yerrigan and named it 'the Swan River'. They were followed by a French expedition in 1801. Both parties climbed Kaarta Gar-up and observed evidence of people and dwellings in the landscape.

1827 - 1829

European colonisation

The British, led by Captain Stirling, explored the Derbarl Yerrigan/Swan River in 1827, climbing Mount Eliza and identifying the lands on the edge of Buneenboro (Perth water) as a site of British settlement. During this expedition, the party met and traded with Whadjuk people. In 1829 Stirling returned and established the Swan River Colony near the base of Mount Eliza.

This process of colonisation caused the displacement and disconnection of Aboriginal people from Country and culture. It resulted in the destruction of sacred sites and prohibited Whadjuk people's access to the Country making up Kings Park, Bold Park and the wider colony.

1832

Private lands, public purposes

One Tree Hill (Reabold Hill) was allocated as private land and used for quarrying and agriculture, eventually becoming part of the Limekilns Estate.

Mount Eliza was reserved for public purposes in 1832. The first export from the colony consisted of jarrah logged from the area. Limestone and jarrah harvested from both parks was used to construct public buildings like Perth Town Hall.

The freshwater spring at Goonininup was converted into Kennedy Fountain, becoming the first public water supply for the colony in Perth.



1895 – 1901: Perth Park was officially opened by John Forrest in 1895. It was renamed ‘The King’s Park’ during a royal visit in 1901.



1919 – 1929

The State War Memorial & Honour Avenues

In 1919, the first of Kings Park’s Honour Avenues was planted along May Drive. The State War Memorial was constructed in 1929, commemorating Western Australians who sacrificed their lives in war.

1925 – 1936

Bold Park

An area encompassing Reabold Hill was set aside as a public park in 1925. It had been named Bold Park by 1936. Over the 20th century, northern parts of the park were excised and land to the southwest was amalgamated, resulting in the current footprint.

1927 – 1954

Perth Prohibited Zone

The Perth City area, including Kings Park and Bold Park, was declared ‘an area where it was unlawful for Aboriginal people not in lawful employment, to be or remain.’ The prohibition was enforced until 1954.

Aboriginal people displaced by colonisation continued to camp on the lands that now make up Bold Park until the mid-to-late 20th century.

1939

Native Nursery

Kings Park’s first native plant nursery was established, shifting focus from exotic plants to Australian native cultivation.

1965

Western Australian Botanic Garden

The WA Botanic Garden, dedicated to researching and displaying Western Australian flora, was officially opened.

1987 – 1998

A-Class Reserve

The Friends of Bold Park successfully campaigned for Bold Park to be protected as an A-Class reserve in 1998.

1999

Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA)

BGPA was established to manage and care for Kings Park and Bold Park.

This resource forms part of our 20-year Master Plan.

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