# Ben Bennett &

# Ben Bennett Botanical Park

## Ben Bennett Park



In 1969 the Queensland Lands Department excised 30 acres (12.14 hectares) of Crown Land from the Caloundra Town Reserve for a botanical park of native flora.

Landsborough Shire Council was appointed trustee for the area and the park was named in honour of the person primarily responsible for its



preservation, former Shire Councillor, Ben Bennett.  It is a testament to the many valuable contributions that he made to the Caloundra community.

The park is next to Caloundra High School and is useful for the students biology studies.  It is close to the Girl Guide Hut and is used by Guides and Guide Brownies for natural history observation.  Of course there are others – walkers, joggers, birdwatchers, picnicers and parties.  It is a haven of peace, only seldom abused.

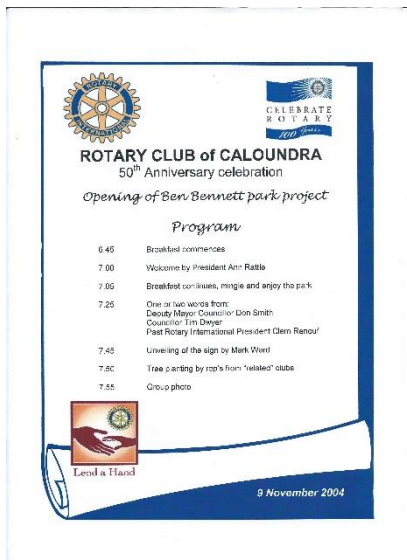Flowers of Ben Bennett Park: 1 *Hibbertia vestita*  2 *Arianema fimbriatum*  3 Pinkeye (*Tetratheca thymifolia*)

There is a good review in Weekend Notes.

The park was originally known as *Ben Bennett Botanical Park* but is now **Ben Bennett Bushland Park**

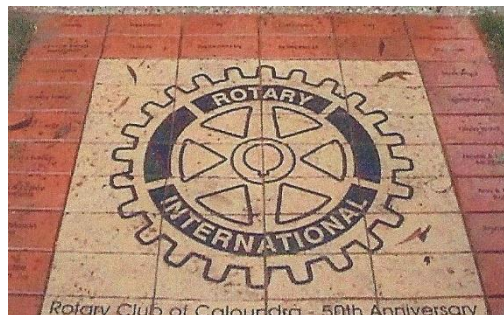## The Rotary Club of Caloundra & Ben Bennett Park

Rotary has a proud history of improving the facilities of public parks in Caloundra. Refer to the Footnotes.

On 12 October 2004, the club celebrated its 50th anniversary during which tribute was made to its Charter President, Ben Bennett.  His son, Ian was President of the Rotary Club of Woombye 2003-04 and made a moving speech.
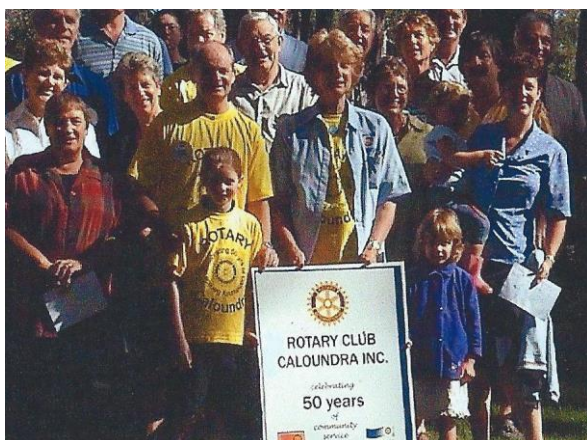
Rotary Club of Caloundra
50th Anniversary celebration
Opening of Ben Bennett park project
Program

The Club was moved overwhelmingly to honour Ben Bennett as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations and in conjunction with the celebrations to mark the 100th Anniversary of the commencement of Rotary International on 23 February 2005. Where better to do so than at the park named after him? Ben had a strong interest in flora & fauna and lobbied hard for the establishment of Ben Bennett Park.

The club's project – in conjunction with Caloundra City Council – provided a BBQ picnic shelter, paving, and a sign which pays tribute to Ben Bennett at the entrance to the park on Queen Street, Caloundra.



The project was opened on 9 November 2004 with a breakfast BBQ in the presence of the Deputy Mayor Don Smith, Cr Tim Dwyer, and Past Rotary International President, Clem Renouf. Mr Renouf was and is a member of the Rotary Club of Nambour which sponsored the Rotary Club of Caloundra in 1954. He was a close friend of Ben Bennett.





congratulations rc caloundra

Another friend of Ben Bennett was present – Rod Robinson who was then an Honorary Member & the longest serving member of the club at that time.

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Representatives of the clubs sponsored by the Rotary Club of Caloundra also attended - Mike Gregory (Rotary Club of Maleny) and Win Fowles (Rotary Club of Caloundra Pacific.

Each special guest planted a tree as a tribute to our Rotary family.

At various times in subsequent years, the Rotary Club of Caloundra has celebrated its Charter Anniversary at Ben Bennett Bushland Park – the 61st anniversary in 2015 is an example: see pictures at http://rotarycal.blogspot.com.au/2015/10/13th-october-rotary-caloundra-61st.html

## About Ben Bennett 1912-1987



# About Ben Bennett
### (1912 - 1987)

### His Family Life
Ben Bennett was born in Nambour in 1912. His father worked for the ESA bank (Now ANZ). The family moved to Brisbane in 1918, but returned to the Sunshine Coast in 1928 after his parents purchased the Hotel Francis in Caloundra. Ben remained in Brisbane where he attended Brisbane Boys College. On the completion of his secondary schooling, Ben moved to Sydney to work for the ESA Bank, but soon transferred back to Brisbane, then to Landsborough (1933) and then to Maleny (1934). It was here that he met his wife Millie, the daughter of a Maleny dairy farmer. The couple would eventually have three children: Ian, Janet and Peter.

At the beginning of WWII, the couple purchased the Strand Theatre in Caloundra. Soon after, Ben signed up as a reinforcement for the Second Tenth Artillery and was posted to Cape York to man anti-aircraft artillery after the fall of Malaya. On his return to Caloundra, he and Millie continued to run the theatre until 1970 when they retired. Ben continued to work in the community until his death in 1987, aged 75 years.

### His Public Life
Ben became actively involved in the Caloundra Community on his return from service in WWII. His major contributions were as follows:
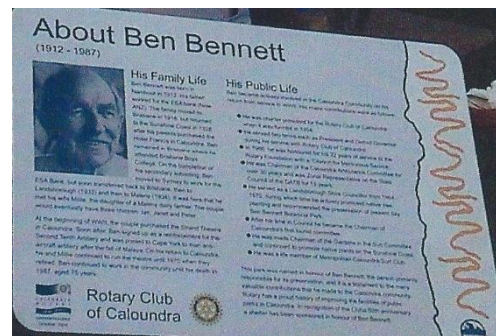
- He was charter president for the Rotary Club of Caloundra when it was formed in 1954.
- He served two terms each as President and District Governor during his service with Rotary Club of Caloundra.
- In 1986, he was honoured for his 32 years of service to the Rotary Foundation with a 'Citation for Meritorious Service'.
- He was Chairman of the Caloundra Ambulance Committee for over 30 years and was Zonal Representative on the State Council of the QATB for 13 years.
- He served as a Landsborough Shire Councillor from 1964 - 1970, during which time he actively promoted native tree planting and recommended the preservation of present day Ben Bennett Botanical Park.
- After his time in Council he became the Chairman of Caloundra's first tourist committee.
- He was made Chairman of the Gardens in the Sun Committee and continued to promote native plants on the Sunshine Coast.
- He was a life member of Metropolitan Caloundra Surf Club.

This park was named in honour of Ben Bennett, the person primarily responsible for its preservation, and it is a testament to the many valuable contributions that he made to the Caloundra community. Rotary has a proud history of improving the facilities of public parks in Caloundra. In recognition of the Clubs 50th anniversary a shelter has been sponsored in honour of Ben Bennett.

Rotary Club of Caloundra

commemorated October 2004

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## 1. His Family Life

Ben Bennett was born in Nambour in June 1912 and completed his primary education there.  His father worked for the ES&A Bank (now part of ANZ).  The family moved to Brisbane in 1918, but returned to the Sunshine Coast in 1928 after his parents purchased the Hotel Francis in Caloundra.  Ben remained in Brisbane where he attended Brisbane Boys College.  On the completion of his secondary schooling, Ben moved to Sydney to work for the ES&A Bank at Bondi Junction, but soon transferred back to Brisbane, then to Landsborough (1933), and then to Maleny (1934).  It was here that he met his wife Millie King, the daughter of a Maleny dairy farmer.  They married on 11 May (year unknown) and the couple would eventually have three children: Ian, Janet & Peter.

At the beginning of WW2, the couple purchased the Strand Theatre in Caloundra.  Soon after, Ben signed up as a reinforcement for the Second Tenth Artillery and was posted to Cape York to man anti-aircraft artillery after the fall of Malaya.  On his return to Caloundra, he and Millie continued to run the theatre until 1970 when they retired.

Ben continued to work in the community until his death in 1987, aged 75 years.

## 2. His Public Life

Ben became actively involved in the Caloundra community on his return from service in WW2.  His major contributions were:

- o He was Charter President for the *Rotary Club of Caloundra* when it was formed in 1954. He served again as President in 1962-63.
- o He served two terms as District Governor (1974-75 & 1979-80) during his service with the Rotary Club of Caloundra.  Ben's second governorship in 1979-80 followed the then nominee, Alan Morris of the Rotary Club of Boroko withdrew.
- o He organised the only Rotary District 9600 Conference to be held outside Queensland when it was held in Port Moresby in 1980
- o In 1986, he was honoured for his 32 years of service to The Rotary Foundation with a Citation for Meritorious Service.
- o Ben was Chairman of the *Caloundra Ambulance Committee* for over 30 years and was Zonal Representative on the State Council of the QATB for 13 years
- o He served as a Landsborough Shire Councillor from 1964-1970, during which time he actively poromoted native tree planting and recommended the preservation of what is now *Ben Bennett Botanical Park*.
- o After his time in Council, Ben became the Chairman of Caloundra's first Tourist Committee

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- He was Chairman of the *Gardens in the Sun Committee* and continued to promote native plants on the Sunshine Coast
- Ben was a life member of the *Metropolitan Caloundra Surf Club*.



Footnotes & Sources:
1. Background notes prepared for the opening of the Ben Bennett park project 9 November 2004 by Mark Ward, President 2003-04
2. The first meeting of Landsborough Shire Council was held on 22 February 1912 after splitting from the Caboolture Divisional Board.  Kilcoy Shire was also formed on that day.  1912 marked the beginning of Landsborough Shire Council and on 19 December 1987 the Landsborough Shire Local Government area became Caloundra City.  In March 2008, the three councils of the Sunshine Coast, Noosa Shire, Maroochy Shire and Caloundra City amalgamated.
(Source: https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Council/News-Centre/Backward-Glance-history-of-local-government-160316)

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3. The "Profile of a President" at the 25th Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Caloundra on 13 October 1979 when Ben Bennett attended as Charter President, a Charter Member, current Member and as District Governor.
4.  During WW2 Ben served in Artillery and claims that he was hotly pursued all over Queensland by a company known as the 'Old and the Bold' or the 'Ruthless Toothless'.  He served on Moreton Island in Local Defence.  He found himself in Townsville and in Iron Range during the Battle of the Coral Sea, working in Anti-Aircraft.  The close of the war found him in Jacky Jacky.
5. Sunshine Coast Places - http://www.sunshinecoastplaces.com.au/caloundra/caloundra/ben-bennett-park
6. Weekend Notes - http://www.weekendnotes.com/ben-bennett-bushland-park/



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