

STATE-WIDE TREE PLANTING PROJECT

AN IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL

As one of his aims for Rotary in his year of office, RI Governor-Elect Ian Riseley has flagged “the Environment” as an area that does not get enough attention from Rotary. In order to start correcting this situation, he plans to have every Rotarian throughout the world plant at least one tree - a relatively modest target. This theme has been picked up by Districts 9455 and 9465 in Western Australia. The Rotary Club of Cambridge has volunteered to co-ordinate and record the efforts of all clubs in both districts.

In areas and regions of high rainfall, it may not be difficult to put a tree in the ground and then see it flourish without any further attention. However, in most of Australia including the bulk of the areas covered by WA’s two districts, that is not the case. Drought is endemic and there are occasions when it is excessively hot. There are also many predators such as rabbits, kangaroos and insects that will eat the young seedlings. Therefore, the challenge is not just to put the trees in the ground but to maintain them such that they stay alive at least until they are well established.

It is proposed that every club and every individual member should be involved in this project in some way or another. The strategy set out below is proposed.

1. Every club must appoint a co-ordinator. The tasks of that co-ordinator will be to decide where the trees will be planted, who will plant them, who will maintain them and what sort of tree to plant. Once planted, the co-ordinator will report to the Rotary Club of Cambridge, the number and the location of the trees planted. The task of the Rotary Club of Cambridge is merely to keep score on behalf of both districts; not to dictate to any other club what they should be doing.
2. There are several options for sourcing the trees and planting them. These could include a commercial nursery, a local Council, a charity such as Carbon Neutral or some other source.
 - a. A commercial nursery. A nursery such as Hamel Nurseries in Pinjarra could be utilised to supply trees and indicate a location where they can be planted. Richard Hamel is the President-Elect for the Pinjarra Club. It could be arranged that club members plant trees under the direction of a professional such as Richard Hamel, making the process into a Rotary family and Vocational Outing. This could be ideal for rural or groups of rural clubs. The costs relating to this operation have not been investigated and could be quite variable.
 - b. Local Council. This would operate in the same way as for a above with the Council supplying the trees and indicating a location where they can be planted. There could be variations of this depending on the co-operation of the Council. Similarly, the costs of following this route have not been investigated.
 - c. Carbon Neutral. Carbon Neutral is a charity which will plant trees on behalf of the clubs for \$3.75 per tree. Carbon Neutral will arrange for the selection and supply of the trees, a location to plant them, the planting process followed by the protection and maintenance of the young trees. Carbon Neutral will also provide a monitoring service, not only of the trees themselves but also of the influx of fauna attracted into the habitat created by the planting. The planting could either be undertaken by the

clubs themselves or by casual labour providing work for indigenous people and/or backpackers. The experience of Carbon Neutral is that better success is achieved by using paid casual labour rather than volunteers. The planting could be done on a designated day or days and could be attended by club members and their families who could do some of the planting at least. The Rotary Club of Cambridge would be happy to co-ordinate the efforts of any club wishing to use this approach. Carbon Neutral will also arrange for an area designated for Rotary and will further arrange for a commemorative plaque where publicity photographs can be taken.

The following factors need to be borne in mind by the club co-ordinator when deciding which approach to use:

1. WHERE TO PLANT. If a professional is not used to facilitate the process, negotiations will have to take place with the land owner or local council as to where the trees can be planted.
2. HOW TO PLANT. Should it be a club outing involving the whole family?
3. WHEN TO PLANT. June, July and August are the months when planting can and should be done in the south west of Western Australia. This period is fast approaching.
4. PROTECTION. How will this be done?
5. MAINTENANCE. By whom, how and when will this be done?

Each club's co-ordinator will report to the Rotary Club of Cambridge the following:

- The number of trees planted
- The location
- When planted
- Commemorative arrangements.