



Araluen Botanic Park Self - Guided Tour

Theme	Botanical & Historical information
Accessibility	Medium
Time	About 1hour

General Introduction

The history of Araluen begins with Australian businessman, politician and founder of the Young Australia League, J.J. "Boss" Simons, establishing a holiday camp for this youth organisation in 1929.

He bought 59 hectares of a south facing valley in Roleystone as the site for his camp. Creeks run through the valley creating a cool moist climate, making it an ideal site for a garden. Simons called his valley Araluen, an Eastern States Aboriginal word meaning "singing waters," "running waters" or "place of lilies."

League members and volunteers created paths, roads, steps and terraces. The buildings and structures throughout Araluen were designed by leading Perth architect W.G. Bennett and built from local stone and timber in a Canadian Log Cabin style.

In 1985, the Young Australia League sold Araluen. In the late 1980s and 90s Noelene Drage and Mary Hargreaves were instrumental in saving the park which was on the verge of being sold to overseas investors. Thanks to their help and strong community support the State Government was persuaded to purchase the Park in 1990. The Araluen Botanic Park Foundation was then born and over the next 20 years it worked with the Government to restore and revive Araluen.

Number 1 | Mary Hargreaves Pergola

This Pergola was erected and dedicated to Mary Hargreaves to commemorate her strong commitment that saved Araluen Botanic Park.

Number 2 | The Shepherdson Bungalow & Totterdell Cottage

This ruin used to be The Shepherdson Bungalow which was named after Mr Shepherdson who donated money to the park. He was the owner of the Adelaide Timber Co. which operated a mill nearby. The bungalow served to accommodate members and officers of the Young Australia League. It was also designed to accommodate honeymoon couples. All that remains of Shepherdson Bungalow today is the stone ruin of its fireplace and chimney and the remnants of floors with some bathroom floor tiles.

Totterdell was built in 1931 and named after the Lord Mayor of Perth. It used to have a spacious living room, sleeping quarters, kitchen, store room, bathroom, lavatory and a fire place made of natural rocks. It was in a ruined state in 1990, half of the roof was missing, the floor was missing and the walls and windows badly vandalised. The building has been fully restored and now serves as the Park's administration office.

Number 3	The Log Cabin & McIntosh Pergola
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This is the remains of the Log Cabin that was built in 1932. As for the Shepherdson bungalow, this was used to welcome couples on their honeymoon. Today only the stone chimney is still standing and this has been incorporated into a tiled roofed covered area.

Back in 1937 Mrs Macintosh gave the League a donation of £24 to make possible a wisteria covered pergola. The pergola includes eight pillars built of reddish stone and supporting a Jarrah super- structure and is erected between the log cabin and the head of the Grove. Wisteria plants from the late Mr McIntosh's garden covers the Pergola.

Number 4	The Grove of the Unforgotten
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In 1933, work began on the Grove of the Unforgotten to commemorate Y.A.L boys killed in the Great War. It has 89 steps to the top and the same number of cypress pines down each side. This was to commemorate the 88 fallen Y.A.L. boys and one for the unknown soldier. The pines were planted in the shape of a lyre, the emblem of music. J.J. Simons considered musical training to be a very important aspect of the Y.A.L.'s work and there were several Y.A.L. bands which toured Australia. The theme of the Grove, with its cascading waterfall, was said to be 'the everlasting waters, singing an eternal requiem' to the fallen and the pool at the base reflects the loss. The grove is built around a huge blackbutt *Eucalyptus patens*.

Number 5	The Pool of Reflection
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As mentioned this is the Pool of Reflection, part of the Grove of the Unforgotten. For many years the YAL held Anzac day ceremonies at the Grove. Today, the Araluen Botanic Park Foundation commemorates, each year on November 11th, Armistice Day, which marks the end of the First World War in 1918. These moving ceremonies feature soloists and local school choirs and the placing of wreaths on the still waters of the Pool of Reflection.

Number 6	Margaret Simons Pergola
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In 1940 Simons created a tribute to his mother, the Margaret Simons Memorial Rose Pergola. This was built by a dedicated gardener, Jack Italiano, and the YAL boys. The magnificent stone pergola with its 38 pillars and climbing roses was officially named by the Governor, Sir James Mitchell, on Mother's Day 1940.

Number 7	The Amphitheatre & Swimming Pool
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The Amphitheatre was built to accommodate shows, plays and concerts. Here, Araluen Botanic Park holds numerous events throughout the year, such as the Christmas Carols by Torchlight in December and Blues in the Hills in March. The Amphitheatre can welcome up to 500 people and is also a popular venue in which to hold wedding ceremonies.

In 1941, the swimming pool was constructed at Araluen. It is believed that the rock wall which dams the pool was constructed over the earlier gauging weir that had been built in 1921. An earlier swimming pool project for the boys was a spectacular failure when marauding gilgies ate away the sandbag weir on Stinton Creek and rains burst through to flow into the Canning River. A second pool was also unsuccessful, but the third, with its sturdy rock walls, remains today. The swimming pool was extremely popular for many years. For health reasons the pool is no longer used for swimming.

Number 8 | The Old Dunnies & Araluen's fauna

The ruins that you can see on the hills are the remains of The 'Old Dunnies' which was used during the YAL years. We have proper toilets on the other side of the Concourse but kept the ruins of the 'Old Dunnies'.

Araluen's unique setting offers a variety of habitats suited to many different species of wildlife. It provides them with shelter, nest sites, a wide range of food sources and permanent water. Some will be residents, some visit seasonally while others will pass through occasionally.

Birds include red and white-tailed cockatoos, kookaburras, superb blue wrens, galahs, Australian ringnecks, Australian wood ducks and a few different types of owls. Reptiles include snakes, skinks, bobtails and other lizards. Frogs, of course, find the conditions at Araluen ideal

Mammals include possums, bandicoots and kangaroos, however you will be very lucky to see them as they shy away from humans.

Number 9 | The Roundhouse Giftshop

The first building to be erected was the Roundhouse made from the sides of barrels. This building apparently burnt down and was replaced by the present rectangular stone building in 1931 which was added to in 1941. The Roundhouse was used as accommodation for Y.A.L. boys and officers. The building has since been restored and is functioning as an information centre and souvenir shop during busy periods.

Number 10 | Chalet Healy Café

The Chalet Healey was officially opened by the Lieutenant Governor of WA, Sir James Mitchell on one of the wettest afternoons of the season. The Chalet was named in honour of Mr TV ("Tim") Healey of Vacluse, NSW whose generosity enabled the building to be completed. A tablet to this effect was placed on the building and also another tablet to the honorary architect, Mr William G Bennett, in appreciation of all his valuable services to the League. After being a restaurant for many years, the Chalet Healy is now a café where visitors can enjoy a lunch, tea and coffee all year.

Number 11 | Aspro Cottage

In 1933, the Nicholas family, major shareholders in the Aspro Co., financed the building of a third bungalow (after Shepperdson and Totterdell) that became known as Aspro Cottage. The Aspro Cottage was another building built by the YAL boys and used for their accommodation.

Today Aspro Cottage is mainly used for storage.

Number 12	Bennett's Lawn & Lawn No2
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Bennett's Lawn was named after the popular and prolific architect in the 1930s, William G. Bennett, who had been a member of the League from the age of sixteen. He designed many of the buildings that you have seen today including Margaret Simons' Pergola.

Bennett's Lawn and Lawn No2, adjacent to it, are popular venues to hold wedding ceremonies for their intimacy, the peaceful Stinton Creek running through between them and their lush Australian ferns. In spring, this area of the park is also surrounded by gorgeous camellias, magnolias and azaleas. Our Camellias are world acclaimed and now recognised as one of 28 Camellia Gardens of Excellence worldwide

Number 13	Forest View
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This is the latest addition to the park and was completed in November 2017. The Forest view is a 500sqm of wooden Jarrah deck with a 21mx9m white marquee surrounded by Eucalyptus trees and roses bushes. It is an ideal venue for functions, gala dinners and meetings. It can be rented out to the public at a small cost.

Number 14	The Rose Garden
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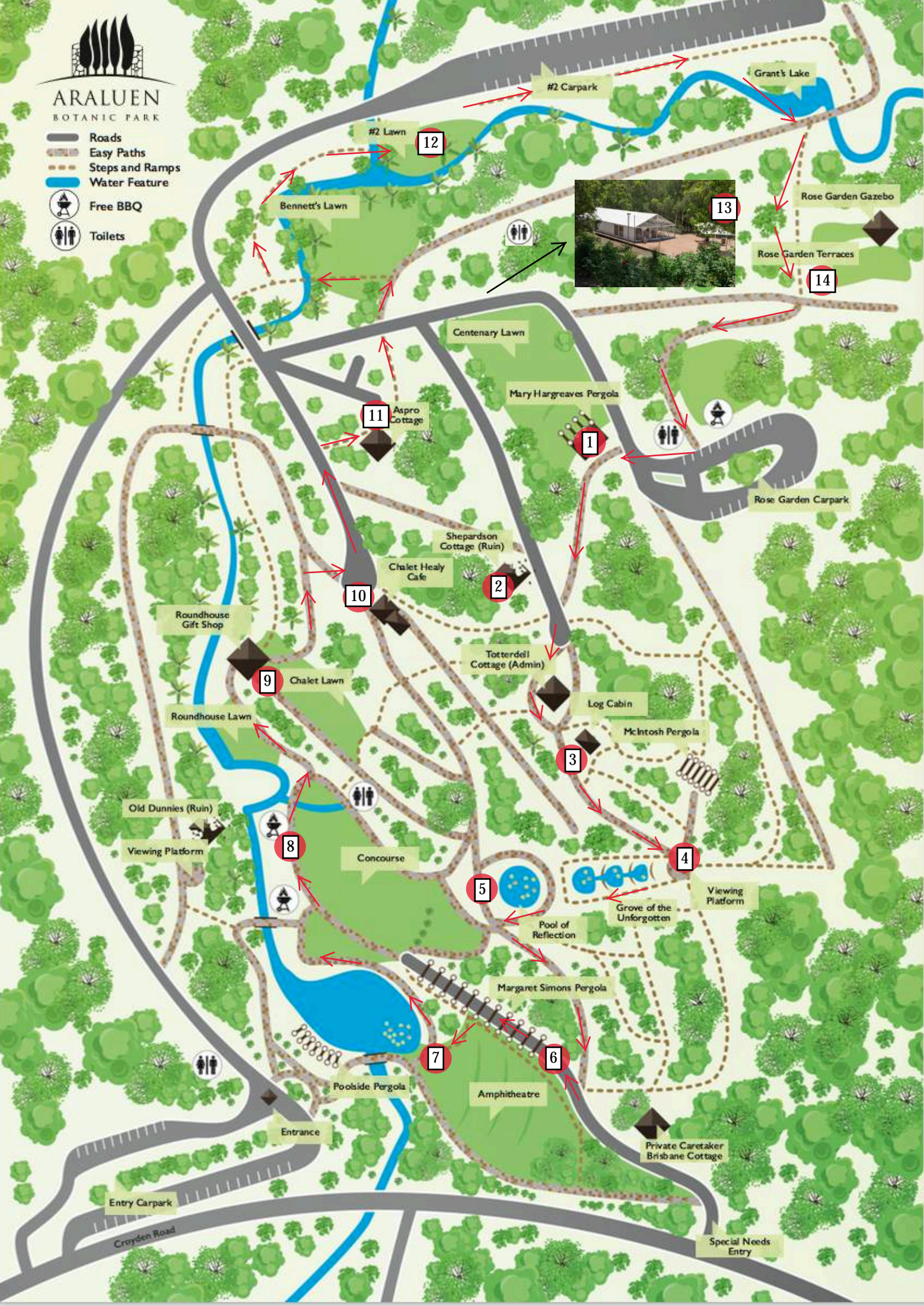
We are now standing in the Rose Garden. There is a huge variety of roses at Araluen. The roses are planted in an Australian bushland setting, amongst native vegetation of jarrah, yarri, marri and grass trees, rather than as a formal rose garden. This is one of the reasons why it is so unique.

Many roses were planted in 2000. These roses are now well established and provide a spectacular display, especially in late October and early November. The Araluen Rose garden is recognised for its world-class Tea Rose collection, including its large collection of Alister Clark roses and the many spring flowering varieties.

In the 1930's, climbing roses were planted on the Margaret Simons Memorial Pergola and beds of then popular modern roses were established nearby. In the 1990's these rose gardens were refurbished and new rose gardens were established.

The Rose Garden Gazebo was built by the Foundation in 2000 and is now another popular venue for wedding ceremonies.

- Roads
- Easy Paths
- Steps and Ramps
- Water Feature
- Free BBQ
- Toilets



#2 Carpark

#2 Lawn (12)

Bennett's Lawn

Grant's Lake

Rose Garden Gazebo

Rose Garden Terraces (14)

Centenary Lawn

Mary Hargreaves Pergola

Aspro Cottage (11)

Rose Garden Carpark

Shepardson Cottage (Ruin)

Chalet Healy Cafe (2)

Chalet Lawn

Roundhouse Gift Shop (9)

Totterdell Cottage (Admin)

Log Cabin

McIntosh Pergola

Roundhouse Lawn

Old Dunnies (Ruin)

Viewing Platform

Concourse

Pool of Reflection

Grove of the Unforgotten (4)

Viewing Platform

Poolside Pergola (7)

Amphitheatre (6)

Entrance

Entry Carpark

Croyden Road

Special Needs Entry

Private Caretaker Brisbane Cottage

Margaret Simons Pergola