

The Place of Reflection, Kings Park

The Place of Reflection in Kings Park acknowledges the pain of those experiencing significant grief and loss. Set high on the Mt Eliza escarpment amongst natural bushland, this unique facility offers the Western Australian community an alternative to traditional grieving and memorial sites.

The Place of Reflection has been specifically designed to offer healing, comfort and hope through nature: visitors are provided with a gentle and protected experience of the sights, sounds, smells and physical sensations of the natural environment, while spectacular views of the river below, the cityscape and the hills beyond remind them of the life and future to which they remain connected. Its design won the Excellence Award for Landscape Architecture at the 2012 Australian Institute for Landscape Architects (WA) awards.

Since it was first opened in 2011, it has brought comfort to people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds trying to come to terms with loss in many different forms: the death or disablement of loved ones; family members who have gone missing; homelands and cultures that have been lost or left behind; the loss of physical or mental health; and the breakdown of family relationships, among other scenarios.

A winding pathway leads individuals through the space and provides opportunities for meditative walking, while seating nooks and wooden decks overlooking the escarpment encourage quiet thought and contemplation. At the end of the walking path is a large, covered pavilion area – the Marlee Pavilion – that provides a sheltered, powered space suitable for holding organised functions for up to 80 people. The pavilion is booked by a range of organisations and support groups to hold commemorative and healing events.

The site also lends itself to counselling and mentoring sessions where individuals might benefit from being in an open-air environment.

The Place of Reflection is the vision of a consortium of five organisations committed to helping people deal with grief and loss: the Healing Hearts Foundation (founded by the Rotary Club of Heirisson); the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors; SIDS and Kids WA; The Compassionate Friends; and Soroptimist International of South Perth. Funding to investigate the community's need for such a facility, and to support its construction, was provided by Lotterywest. Donations were also received from individuals, community organisations and the corporate sector.

The Consortium continues to raise awareness about the Place of Reflection within the community, while the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority has responsibility for managing the site and taking bookings for the Marlee Pavilion.

Further information about the Place of Reflection, including videos showcasing the site and its different uses, is available at: www.placeofreflection.org. The website also contains downloadable posters and flyers that can be used by organisations to help promote the site to their clients and members.

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