

History of the Save-Our-Jewel website

The website was launched **1 July 2011** by the Save-Our-Jewel action group. After years of concern starting in 2001 when the eastern wall of the lake was removed, the group formed in 2008 as a response to the perceived destruction of a precious community asset. In 2010 it was named **Save Our Jewel** because the lake is Subiaco's "jewel in the crown". The community issues that led to its formation are detailed in *History* on this website (start at 2000).



Early days revisited

In September 1976, and in December 1988, the lake is full year-round and wildlife is plentiful. It is what rate-payers love and expect.

*In November 2001 Subiaco council removes the **eastern wall** and 8 mature trees, leaving only porous sand.*

*The following summer for the first time the lake **dries out** but the Subi administration seems deaf to complaints.*

Continuing deafness, plus continuing concerns, plus positive ideas for restoring

the lake, led to our **action group**. All of us have lived daily with the lake's deterioration.

Meet the Save-Our-Jewel group



On average we have known Lake Jualbup and its visitors for twenty-five years (and that was in 2010). Like many people, we remember Lake Jualbup when it was **Subiaco's jewel in the crown**. Two of us go back even further, to our school days spent at a lake without lawns or planted trees, just thick bulrushes and mountains of rubbish. From the left we are:

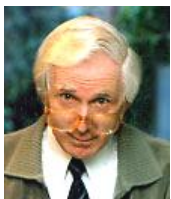
Stan Rudrum, retired public servant, born in James Street, resident in Morgan Street since 1981.

Mark Wilshusen, electrical engineer, resident in Evans Street since 1992.

Allan Stoney, architect and convenor of the group, resident in Evans Street since 1988.

Leigh Alver, former military officer, resident in Waylen Road since 1998.

Hugh Richardson, mechanical engineer, born in Subiaco, resident in Hilda Street since 1974.



We thank Dr Geoffrey Dean, a resident of Cullen Street since 1985, for organising the **technical information** on our website. He is a technical editor and formerly a research scientist with the Soil Bureau Wellington NZ, and CSIRO Soils Division Perth. Since 2008 he has been researching for free the history and hydrology of Lake Jualbup. His interest is purely scientific. He does not live near the lake, is not a member of Save Our Jewel, and does not urge any particular view of its future.

Four petitions had been circulated during 2001-2010. The next page shows the 2010 one.

PETITION

To the Mayor and Councillors of the City of Subiaco concerning the future of Lake Jualbup

We the undersigned recognise that numerous factors have impacted on the future of Lake Jualbup. In summer the lake used to be full. Wildlife was prolific. Not any more:



In summer
1988 the
lake looked
◀ like this

In summer
2008 the
lake looked
like this ▶



Experience at both Lake Jualbup and Mabel Talbot has shown that letting the lakes dry out as "natural wetlands" is not viable. Both lakes have become infested with the invasive weed *Echinochloa crus-pavonis* or South American Barnyard Grass. When the rains come, the weeds rot, the lake stinks of hydrogen sulphide, and the seeds survive for a bigger crop next year. Letting the lakes dry out has proved to be a disaster.



Also, if Lake Jualbup is to be taken seriously as a refuge for wildlife, then permanent water is essential. Most people can see the obvious — no water, no wildlife. When water returns, so does the wildlife. The lake is not just for people.

The factors that have impacted on Lake Jualbup have also impacted on Hyde Park Lakes in the Town of Vincent. There the option of letting the lakes dry out in summer to form a "natural wetland" was considered but was rejected after public opposition. In October 2009 the Town of Vincent officially adopted a plan to restore permanent water to Hyde Park Lakes. If the Town of Vincent can do it, so can Subiaco.



We recognise the recent move to facilitate public consultation about the future of Lake Jualbup. But the lake itself has spoken in ways that are amply clear. Like Hyde Park Lakes, Lake Jualbup is an icon. It is a drawcard for residents and tourists. It is part of our heritage. To allow the present disaster to continue would be inexcusable.

Accordingly, we the undersigned request the City of Subiaco to restore permanent water to Lake Jualbup

Community action begins and after 8 years and one more petition is successful

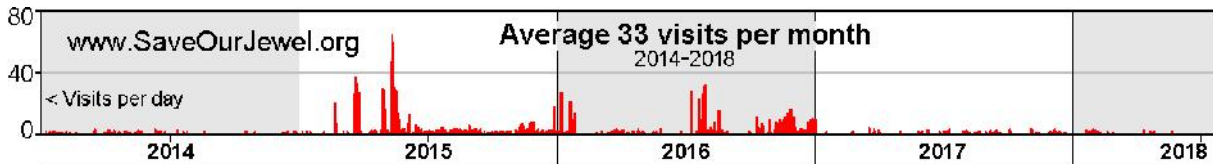


November 2010. SOJ convenor Allan Stoney runs through **ideas for restoration** with more than fifty concerned Shenton Park ratepayers, once for an overview then again for feedback. Most of the ideas are adopted unanimously.

In **July 2011** the ratepayers' proposals are put on our website. They cover not just water but also concerns like footpaths, wildlife areas, and access for persons with a disability. There is technical information, case studies, maps, and over 100 photos. In **February 2012**, after a 1700-signature petition and much bureaucratic delay, Subiaco council adopts a **restoration plan** largely based on the above proposals. Further bureaucracy and then planning meetings (attended by SOJ) delayed actual on-site work, which began in November 2017. It was completed in **June 2018**. Visit our *Summary of Events 2008-2014 & 2015-2022* for the full story.



Visitors to this website



Above: **Number of visits** per day to the SOJ home page as recorded by Google Analytics. The total for January 2014 through July 2018 is about 1500, but **only 8%** are from Australia (most from Perth), with the most frequent being from the USA 26%, Russia 16%, UK 15%, then the Netherlands, Germany, China with 2.5% each. The high proportion from overseas is probably due to rich people mistaking SOJ as an insurance scheme for diamonds and pearls.

Spikes in **local visits** tended to occur whenever the POST mentioned the website, but are hard to disentangle from overseas visits. Unfortunately our website does not lend itself to recording visits to individual pdf pages, so we don't know which pages were the most visited.

Views from emails to our website 2011-2015

Most are from people who live in the general area and have been familiar with the lake before it began drying up. All are outspoken in their **criticism** of its management. One offers useful comparisons with urban lakes overseas. For more views published in the POST see our *Letters* page. The pictures that follow were taken in 2017 and during the upgrade:

I really enjoyed your web site. It certainly clarified the specious arguments I've heard about keeping everything "natural" and the concerns for "Aboriginal Heritage". We have lived in Shenton Park for 5 years and have spoken to residents who've lived here for many years. We can't believe that a decision to keep the lake filled year round has not been agreed upon long ago. I do hope that very soon we have a beautiful lake in the park to enjoy 365 days of the year – *Lyn F, November 2011*.

We are long-standing residents of Subiaco and are concerned that a vocal minority can stop all sorts of decisions that should be made. The Save Our Jewel proposal for Lake Jualbup will create a beautiful public space. As we create more high density living, public spaces become vital to a happy healthy community. They need to be managed for the community, not for fringe groups who have extreme views on what a "natural" environment should be. We travel a lot and we see public spaces in cities like Berlin and Paris that are vital parts of the residents' everyday lives. I don't understand why we are unable to create these in Perth – *Adrienne M, Excelsior Street, November 2011.*



I have been reading the information on your website and fully support your proposals. There are a lot of myths about Lake Jualbup and your website is very informative and helps to dispel those myths. I also think that the signage that has been put up in front of some houses makes a good statement and will help to get the message across. I would like to offer my house as another place where you can erect a sign should you wish. I live opposite the lake and it could help to build further support. Perhaps a Facebook page could help to get some of our younger park users interested. Anyway keep up the good work! – *Amy M, Evans Street, November 2011.*



Thank you for the coherent and logical presentation on the Save Our Jewel website. I completely agree with the proposals put forward, and wholeheartedly endorse either returning the lake to its former glory of ten years ago or at least doing no more damage and destruction to its current flora and walling. When I was a young boy the Jualbup area was used as a rubbish tip. The lake that was developed in the area was man-made and should therefore be treated as such, not looked on as a natural lake that we have interfered with. All over the world there are beautiful lakes and ponds located centrally in urban areas that bring delight and pleasure to all who have the opportunity to visit them. The idea that, say, the lakes in central Hamburg should suddenly have their walls torn down and reeds and grasses planted because some environmentalist thinks they know what is best for any body of water would be treated by Hamburg residents as ludicrous. We should treat the idiotic proposals that have come from the environmentalists advising our council with the same disdain. Well done on the community action by your group! – *Leslie V, Heytesbury Road, November 2011.*

I have been a resident of Subiaco for 40 years and have always admired Lake Jualbup. It is criminal to allow the lake to dry out, it should look glorious all year round. Your web page is most enlightening. It is an absolute disgrace that this saga has dragged on for 10 years without any decisions being made. It

is wonderful that you have in your group people who feel so passionate about the environment and experts who can speak on the best ways to save the lake. I know nothing of the technical side, but see the absolute necessity of doing whatever it takes to save and preserve this wonderful lake for all to enjoy – *Terry B, Gloster Street, December 2011.*



For the record I would prefer the name be returned to "Shenton Park Lake", or at least a dual naming of "Lake Shenton/Jualbup", which would recognise the last 150 years of contributions to the area, rather than a politically-correct swansong exercise that had no support or consultation with either council or residents. I am 100% in favour of a return to year-round water, and also of dredging and deepening the lake so there can be a larger variety of fauna. I grew up with Shenton Park Lake when it had willow trees and was an English Garden lake. I loved it and don't care for the "sustainable" swamp we now have that allows children and dogs to violate the island sanctuary. I would be 100% in support of a fountain to be installed to help aerate the lake if that helped the health of the ecosystem. Keep up the good fight! – *Ben T, Onslow Road, March 2015.*

Later views from emails following the upgrade in 2018

The above emails were **enthusiastic** about upgrading the lake. After the upgrade they were less numerous but just as enthusiastic about the results. This one is typical:

I just wanted to say thank you for establishing this website and all of the information on it. It is wonderful! It is so great that your community came together to save this lake and all of its birdlife. Thank you! – *Anne C, April 2018.*

When we eventually took down the **website** in 2019, it was seen by some as the sad loss of a key archive. So in April 2022 we updated it to cover later events (total photos now exceed 500) and put it back up at a new address www.SaveOurJewel.au (not .org), all independently and at our own expense. Do tell us what you think of it and its future in the long term (we welcome all emails). Our **email address** has not changed: SaveOurJewel@gmail.com.

Many thanks for your support!

The upgrade received **acclaim** from the community, but the Save-Our-Jewel group remains vigilant. You can still email us or you can reach convenor Allan Stoney on 0419-905-214.

