

General History of the Rotary Lookout located in Jo Gapper Activity Park, Hillbank

My involvement with the Rotary Lookout began in May, 1999 when the then President of the Elizabeth Rotary Club, Theo Nitz, said he wanted a high profile project that would carry the Rotary name into the community. I pointed out that there was no recognised lookout in Elizabeth and a Lookout would be a suitable project.

Theo set up a committee consisting of Theo Nitz, Brett Dixon and Martin Rodgers to investigate the feasibility of the project.

Wes Robinson, a Past President of the Club, told the committee that in 1995 the Elizabeth Council had investigated the possibility of a Lookout and the information may still be available. Copies of Council minutes were provided dating back to 25 October, 1995 listing two possible sites, one on Blacktop Road and the other behind Jo Gapper Park (near the quarry).

The Jo Gapper Park site was selected as it provided the view we wanted. The view included Munno Para, Elizabeth, Outer Harbour, Port Adelaide, Parafield Airport and places further south. Although Adelaide was not visible from the Lookout, it could be seen from the top of the quarry. A short walking track could be a later development to the lookout project. The site had previously been a Lookout, but had fallen into disrepair and apparently was no longer used.

I contacted Bob Pitt of the Elizabeth Council and ascertained that the site would be available for development.

On 19 April, 2000, following negotiations with Council, the following was agreed:

- The Lookout to be named "Rotary Lookout".
- Rotary to pay \$1,930 for the following materials for Council to install (our cost in brackets):
 - 1 metal bench seat (\$670), permapipe fencing around the lookout (\$1,100), 4 finger street signs indicating the way to the Rotary Lookout (\$160).
- Council would arrange to have Jo Gapper Park and the Rotary Lookout included in street directories.
- Council to purchase and install a rubbish bin, concrete slab to accommodate the seat and a cairn, grade the access road to the Lookout area, spray the caltrop and consider additional planting around the site to improve the outlook.

Our club arranged for Alan Fant, a member of the Munno Para Rotary Club, to construct a pyramid-style cairn with a 700 x 700 mm base and a 450 x 450 mm top, and a bronze direction indicator was subsequently fitted on top of the cairn indicating that the Lookout was a joint project between the Playford Council and the Elizabeth Rotary Club.

The official opening of the Lookout took place on 25 September, 2000. This was the day the District 9500 Governor, Glen Eden, made his official visit to our club. The Mayor of Playford (previously Elizabeth) Marilyn Baker, District Governor Glen Eden and President of the Elizabeth Rotary Club, Sheila Hall, performed the official opening.

Following complaints from local residents and members of the pistol club about noise and hoon driving, Council installed barriers at the entrance to the Park to prevent vehicle access. However, vandalism continued and conditions in the Park deteriorated to a point where Council could not keep up with the maintenance.

Early in 2014 I became aware that Playford Council was spending \$300,000 upgrading Jo Gapper Park. The upgrade included new walking tracks, BBQ areas, a new dog park with separate areas for large and small dogs and the Lookout area.

The upgrade of the Lookout area included new Gabion stone fencing, 3 new seats and 2 bench seats for which the Elizabeth Rotary Club contributed \$2,500, and a new coloured photographic sign describing the

Lookout view, the sign incorporating the Rotary International and Playford Council Logos and the Lookout name, "Rotary Lookout".

The official opening of the upgrade was performed by the City of Playford Mayor, Glenn Docherty, on 20 July, 2014.

Past President Reg Driver

1 August, 2014