

Peta Goodwin and Maureen Munro

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Peta Goodwin and Maureen Munro are the eyes and ears of Barrett Street Reserve, working tirelessly to maintain this unique place for generations to come. But these women don’t consider themselves heroes. Instead, they see it as simply giving back to a space that has given them so much.

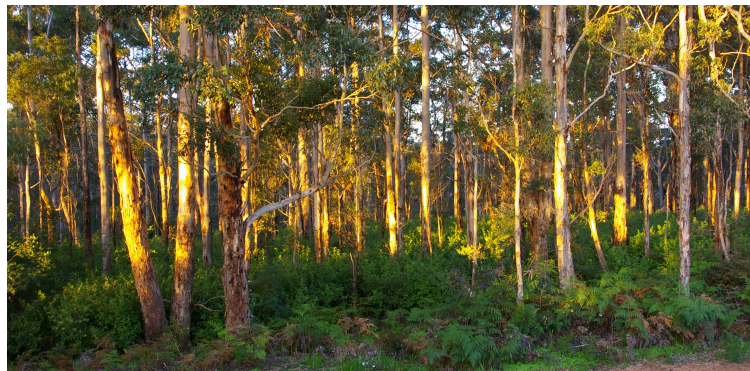


Barrett Street Reserve covers more than 17ha at the entrance to Margaret River and is brimming with Karri trees – a species unique to the South West and one of the tallest trees in the world. The reserve holds a special place in the hearts of many locals, but given its close proximity to town, weeds, vandalism, illegal mountain bike trails and illegal campers are a recurring issue.

That’s what makes people like Peta, Maureen and their group, Friends of Barrett Street Reserve, so important. Together, they rally volunteers, undertake conservation work and advocate for its protection when it comes under threat.

Maureen believes native bushland is too often treated as an endless resource, but said it was in everybody’s interest to protect it.

“Our population numbers are growing rapidly, and the remaining reserves and bushlands are being destroyed at alarming rates,” she said. “We need this, and other, reserves for the health and wellbeing of our environment and ultimately our own health.”



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Much of the Friends’ work centres on removing weeds like Asparagus Creeper (*Asparagus scadens*), Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera* species) and Bleeding Heart (*Homalanthus populifolius*). As well as weeding, they undertake replanting efforts to rehabilitate areas damaged by weeds, erosion or wilful vandalism, like illegal bike trails and cubby houses.

The group has also had several big wins on the advocacy front over the years, one of which involved speaking up about illegal mountain biking trails. Peta said this resulted in community input into the local trails strategy. “I feel that by speaking out when we did about the mountain-biking taking over there ... has led to good outcomes, not just for this particular reserve but for the river, the river reserves, the town trails and the community,” she said.

As part of the Friends group, Maureen and Peta share their passion and growing knowledge of the reserve through Shire committees and think tanks, Nature Conservation-run workshops and local, national and international student visits. Peta said it gave her a feeling of accomplishment to be acknowledged as trusted custodians of the forest, which is a place she’s held dearly for more than three decades ago.

“I love living near the forest and being able to walk to the end of the road and be among those beautiful, bright trees,” she said. “I love watching the wind bend them and the light change them through the day; they are a huge part of my sense of place and home.”

Maureen also has a deep love of the forest, describing it as her “Karri cathedral”. “We need to work together for a healthy long-term future,” she said. “We live in a beautiful place and I want to help keep it that way.”

