

Ralph Neale's Landscape Australia

Its role in charting a landscape profession

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Landscape architecture in Australia was advanced in 1979 when the first issue of a national professional journal, *Landscape Australia*, was published. Encouraged by the staff of the Centre of Environmental Studies at the University of Melbourne, Ralph Percival Neale (1922-2014) was the journal's instigator and inaugural editor and he continued to produce the journal for the next 21 years as the only public forum for the profession. Neale was a shoe manufacturer, historian, photographer, painter, and naturalist who managed to bring these multiple skills and interests to bear on the journal. His contribution helped to present a particular charter for the profession that was overwhelmingly pitched at stewardship of the land. He did so in a manner that relied as much on representations of iconic Australian landscapes as it did the intellectual content of the articles and letters within. This paper explains Neale's influence along with the broader motivations of a group of conservation-minded people that helped define a profession for Australia. It also examines the meanings and ideas communicated in the journal's cover graphics, logos, slogans and photography, in order to shed light on the symbols that underpinned the identity of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) in its early decades of existence.

Keywords: Ralph Neale; landscape architecture; conservation; professions.

Introduction

In early 1980, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) was just thirteen years old, having begun the process of institutionalisation in August 1966. The 1970s were the time for establishment, with landscape architects forging practices that encompassed the realms of landscape reclamation, landscape assessment and planning, and site planning and design (Saniga, 2012, 199-254). By 1987, urban design had emerged as a new and lucrative field of work that even further challenged landscape architects' ability to define their own professional orbit. There was rallying for territory between landscape architects and architects, planners and even engineers and

scientists in forestry, ecology, etc. One founding member wrote: “A lot of time and energy was spent (in education and practice) fighting often rear guard actions for recognition – it seemed that this upstart profession was being denigrated and shot-at wherever and however possible – we had to be kept in our place (ie gardeners).” (Williams, 2003). Organisations like the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC, formed in 1958) and various public works departments and boards had more or less ‘delivered’ landscape architects roles in public service. Still, the road ahead was uncertain.

Charting the new profession of landscape architecture was not made any easier with the extremely diverse disciplinary make-up of those individuals who had decided to align themselves with it. For example, one key contributor, Richard Clough (second AILA President, 1969-1971), was trained in architecture at the University of Sydney (1947) and then undertook landscape education at University College in London in 1949 followed by work experience with Sylvia Crowe between the years of 1954-56. Soon after he returned to Australia he was recruited to the NCDC (in 1959) by Peter Harrison (1918-90) and found a role in generating landscape plans for broad scale open spaces in the nation’s capital (Saniga 2012, 170 & 174). A very different kind of practitioner, but one also of influence, was Alistair Knox (1912-86) in Melbourne. He held no formal training in landscape, architecture, planning or architecture yet was ardent in partially defining himself as a ‘landscape architect’. For Knox, the professional title held the potential to aid his conservation battles: membership of the AILA “[did] open occasional doors that would otherwise remain closed” (Knox, 1975, 72). Institutionalisation thus held the potential to give shape to a newly defined group despite the fact that “with all those folk and all their divergent views, it was rather hard to see how a harmonious Institute would form” (Bunzli, 1991, 204).

Notwithstanding the broad make-up of those who had decided to call themselves Landscape Architects, the profession moved forward with a degree of purpose. This came in response to a shared concern for improving the visual quality of the Australian urban environment in the wake of the post-World War Two development boom. Complicit was a heralding of the importance of Australia’s indigenous landscape. These shared aims helped galvanise members into action under the maxim ‘Stewards of the Land’, although as will be discussed, the extent to which landscape architects became conservationists needs some qualification. In achieving unity the fledgling AILA was dramatically aided by the birth of the journal *Landscape Australia* in the late 1970s. Its founder and inaugural editor, Ralph Percival Neale (1922-2014) established a vibrant forum for sharing ideas whilst also formulating a public platform for promoting stewardship of the land. Neale (see Figure 1) used images and words in a combined way to form a well-crafted sales pitch that could underwrite the new profession. As sociologist Andrew Abbott argues, identity and an appreciation of the usefulness of a new profession in the public mind is an essential part of success (see Abbott, 1988, 60). The aim of this paper is to explain the significance of Neale’s publicising of an emerging landscape architectural profession in Australia. It presents an overview of Neale’s contribution and establishes a framework for understanding the techniques with which he helped solidify what the AILA’s inaugural president retrospectively described as a “unity of purpose” (Spooner, 1991, 206), in a situation when unity seemed difficult to conceive.



Figure 1: Ralph P Neale (1922-2014), portrait at home circa 1985. Photographer unknown. Source: A Neale 2014.

A new profession: Ralph Percival Neale (1922-2014)

Ralph Neale's life was summed up well by his son as: 'Shoe Manufacturer, Yachtsman, Journalist, Historian, Artist, Publisher. A FULL LIFE' (A Neale, 2014, 4). Born in 1922, Neale grew up in Melbourne in the suburb of Camberwell. He had attended Camberwell Grammar School between 1929 and 1932 and Wesley College in Prahran from 1933 to 1937 and by the age of 15 Ralph had finished school. Neale had very much enjoyed drawing and had an appreciation and fascination for aesthetic objects, "...particularly ships, old and new, Malcolm Campbell's speed record motor cars, and aeroplanes piloted by Charles Kingsford Smith". (Neale, undated, 4-5). Neale's mother organised for him to attend water-colour classes with local artist Mary Andrew. In these classes he claimed to have developed tonal appreciation, as Mary Andrew reputedly had a distinctive water colour technique that she applied to painting gardens (Neale, undated, 9-10).

Neale spent almost all of 1938 travelling the world with his family, exploring cities and landscapes of England, Wales, Scotland, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, France, Luxemburg and Germany. The family returned to Australia via New York shortly before the outbreak of World War II. It was an experience that he claimed was highly significant in broadening his outlook (Neale, 2014, 2). Upon returning to Australia, Neale entered the family shoe making factory, Cherub Shoes, continuing a family lineage

that extended back to his great grandfather, James Neale (1815-1876), who had begun in the shoe business in Twerton, Somerset and London. In 1941 Ralph Neale was assigned to the 6th Battalion of the AIF and in 1942 was stationed south of Geraldton, predominantly surveying parts of Western Australia. The process of map making Neale found useful later in life (Neale, 2014, 1) when his association with both landscape architecture and publishing took hold. After the war Neale returned to the shoe-making business where he eventually became Managing Director and over the next two decades he sharpened his business skills. It was through an army friend, George Silcock, that Neale met his wife to be, and in 1946 he married Vivienne Silcock (1917-2014). They had two sons, George (b. 1948) and Andrew (b. 1951) and by 1952 had moved into a new home in Mont Albert designed by Roy Burman Grounds (1905-1981). Neale had sought out Grounds because he considered him a “newly rising architect” (Neale, 2014, 10) and Neale was very interested in, and appreciative of, good design. He remained in the shoe making industry until 1974 when he sold his share, forgoing the long-term family association with a company that by the 1970s had become Niblick Cherub Footwear. The lead-up to Neale embarking on a new career in association with a new profession in Australia – landscape architecture – is significant; it came as a result of involvement in a local conservation battle over a piece of public open space in Melbourne.

In 1961 Neale had started sailing and racing dinghies on Albert Park Lake in South Melbourne. He described Albert Park as a ‘little kingdom’ (Neale, 2014, 2), inferring the web of politics, nepotism, and bureaucracy at local, state and even Federal Government levels. In 1961 public protests broke out over a proposed bowling alley to be built in Albert Park to be operated by a private company and in 1970 the Chairman of the Albert Park Committee of Management, Patrick Kennelly, reputedly proposed to build an 8 storey tower on an island within the lake as a ‘revenue-raiser’ (Neale, 2014, 3). These threats to Albert Park Lake as a public resource, and a good venue for sailing, were a catalyst for Neale and others in the sailing community to establish the Albert Park Protection League (APPL). Neale was pivotal and also took on public relations, liaising with the community and the media. In the process of organising a public meeting in October 1970 he sought speakers of note and consequently developed associations with two of the most influential academics and conservationists in Melbourne at that time, architect Robin Boyd (1919-1971) and Emeritus Professor of Botany at the University of Melbourne, John Turner (1908-1991). In discussions with Turner, Neale learnt of George Seddon’s writings, namely, *Swan River Landscapes* (1970) and became interested in different ways of conceiving urban parklands and new philosophies for considering the Australian landscape (Neale, 2014, 3-4).

The APPL were successful in their campaigns and Neale reflected on the early 1970s as a time when as well as managing the shoe business he spread his energies widely: native plant regeneration on a 20 acre property he had purchased in St Andrews north east of Melbourne; increased activities with the Albert Park Yacht Club in restoration work (a 1910 yacht the *Acrospire*); and, research and writing the Club’s centennial history. With these broad interests and activities as a backdrop Neale discovered landscape architecture through a newspaper article written by Anne Latreille in Melbourne’s *The Age* newspaper titled “Landscape Art earns a place” on 28 June 1974 (Neale, 2014, 7) and subsequently enrolled in the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) Course in landscape design led by Ronald Rayment. Between 1974 and 1978 Neale continued studies and interest in landscape design while also pursuing writing and research in yachting history. At an informal gathering in 1977 that was associated with the Centre for Environmental Studies at the University of Melbourne it was suggested to Neale by Jeremy Pike, a landscape architect and

academic working under Professor George Seddon, that the AILA required a professional journal (Neale, 2014, 11). On 1 February 1978, Ralph Neale registered 'Landscape Publications' as the business name under which the AILA's official journal, *Landscape Australia*, was to be published. This was a commitment which, as Turner argued, put landscape architects, and the Australian public at large, "greatly in his debt" (Turner, 1987). The first subscription received was from Mr Donald Sigsby, 16 October 1978 and the first edition released in January 1979. Within its first year of publication, the journal received the Pink Heath Innovative Award from the Victorian Garden State Committee and in 1980 the Robin Boyd Award for Environmental Design from the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects. Praise from other sources beyond Victoria would follow. In 1982 Shirley Stackhouse labelled it "the stylish and impressive quarterly publication" in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (see Stackhouse, 1982).

Ralph Neale's business acumen no doubt formed a part of his driving force, as did his involvement in public activism and conservation. In 1979 he reflected on his own personal trajectory, stating: "it seemed to me that there were important things in life I hadn't done. I regretted that I wasn't doing something of more benefit to others" (in Powell, 1979, 17). In terms of his motivations, Neale explained that personal interests and skills fortuitously combined with a fledgling profession, enabling him to fulfil his main aim which he put simply as: "the growth of the profession" (Neale, 2014, 186). He wrote:

'I formed the view that I was now carrying out a national work of benefit to the public in general...They [public sponsorship bodies] did not know how small was the amount of money spent on urban improvement at that time in Australia. Throughout the nation we depended on recreation areas that had been improved by our grandparents' and great grandparents' generations. There were only a handful of people qualified or experienced in landscape design, and they were hungry for work. The people who would change the face of our cities and towns were only now beginning their education in landscape architecture. A journal in landscape architecture then, and for many years to come was to defy the economics and could only come about through short cuts, dogged determination and belt tightening on the part of many madly enthusiastic people, apart from myself.' (Neale, 2014, 17)

Many were employed at *Landscape Publications*, the longest serving being Ruth Sanderson as Assistant Editor (1982-91), Ruth Boniface in Subscriptions (1986-2001), John Temple, Don Anderson, Elizabeth Jacka as Consultant Editors, with many other less long-serving participants along the way. Neale's wife, Vivienne, was essential in proof reading throughout his writing career. These people helped bring *Landscape Australia* to press, but it was Neale who unswervingly piloted the ship. The following analysis establishes essential dimensions of his aims, demonstrating how the championing of a conservation ethic came from a potent mix of imagery and words in a journal marketed to the landscape profession and beyond.

Conservation and the iconic potential of Australian landscapes

The burgeoning conservation movement of the 1960s and 1970s in Australia saw new strategies for opposing inappropriate development. Libby Robin has detailed the way in which environmentalists at the time formed alliances across professional and disciplinary boundaries: scientists, amateur

naturalists, economists and bureaucrats (Robin, 1998). Hutton and Connors explored the diverging political strategies associated with the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) having initially been founded in 1965 by cautious or conservative-minded people who were “mostly Canberra-based scientists” (Hutton and Connors, 1999, 107). The joining of forces and combined efforts toward conservation battles and environmental consciousness involved a diverse array of societies, from local tree preservation groups such as the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (FNCV) through to national organisations like the ACF. Talented amateurs often played commanding roles, with committed people like Herbert B Williamson featuring prominently in the twentieth century in Victoria (see Latreille, 1999, 21). Dyson found that egalitarianism helped make for a concerted effort in organisations such as the Society for Growing Australian Plants (Dyson, 2015, 368). Ralph Neale was one such talented amateur, and the journal he created and promoted with vigour was a significant attempt to galvanise a community at least partially for the purposes of conservation.

Neale developed a visual language that promoted a revering of trees and landscapes, particularly Australian ones. In addition to advocating the conservation of plants and their natural or semi-natural settings, he also championed cultural landscapes that had been consciously designed. In December 1977 when Neale began devising his publication, his first task was the preparation of a business emblem. He designed and made a scratch-board logo or colophon depicting an Australian flower (Neale, 2014, 11). Although Neale clearly had talents in watercolour and painting in general, his choice of scratch-board probably stemmed from his personal introduction to Professor John Turner over the Albert Park resistance. Turner was talented in the art of scratch-board and his art work featured throughout the centenary history of The Wallaby Club, a walking club linked with conservation and landscape appreciation of which both Turner and Neale were members from 1941 and 1985 respectively (see Landscape Publications, 1993), with Neale serving as President from 1998-99. Neale selected *Banksia integrifolia* because he felt it appropriate due to the species’ widespread providence across Australia and it remained the logo of the journal for as long as he was publisher (see Figure 2). He also noted that “younger people” would have dismissed it as “old-hat” but that in his belief it suggested permanence and tradition stating that: “To me, it said ‘We have been in business for some years....’” (Neale, 2014, 12). Neale’s representation of Australian flora as a logo communicated a sense of age and timelessness linked to the Australian environment. The correlated sense of authority that came from a publication that was well-established also furthered Neale’s aim of achieving a voice in politically hostile and professionally competitive contexts.



Figure 2: [left] The original 1978 scratch-board logo or colophon by Ralph Neale, depicting a study of *Banksia integrifolia* (author's collection); [right] the colophon as typically used within the journal opening pages of each edition of the journal (*Landscape Australia*. 1982, 167.)

The visual appropriateness and symbolic impact of book covers, journal covers and the like is undoubtedly an art in its own right and an important consideration in marketing any publication. It could be argued that an additional layer of significance applies to cover designs for professional journals, because as well as appealing to the general public or interested amateur, the cover must speak to the identity of the profession concerned. Fookes (1994) in a research report titled, 'Where on earth are we going? What will it be like when we get there? Architecture Australia 1960-1980' undertook a survey and analysis of the front cover designs for the journal *Architecture Australia* between 1960 and 1980 in order to explore how the visual content of the covers represented alternative directions for the architecture profession. Likewise, the front cover graphic of *Landscape Australia* during Neale's editorship, which ceased at the end of 1999, was arguably linked to his own aspirations in terms of an identity for the profession in Australia in its first two decades of existence. In 1978 whilst planning for the first edition, Neale identified the fact that journals of this nature typically were confined to black and white printing, largely due to the expense of colour productions. He concluded it was "...very important to have an attractive cover photograph...The black surround of the cover was at the time unusual, but [he] thought it enhanced the colour of the photograph..." (Neale, 2014, 22). The first edition in January 1979 through to *Landscape Australia*'s last issue in 2002 (when Neale sold the journal to Universal Magazines) consisted of a colour image set in a black-border (see Figure 3).

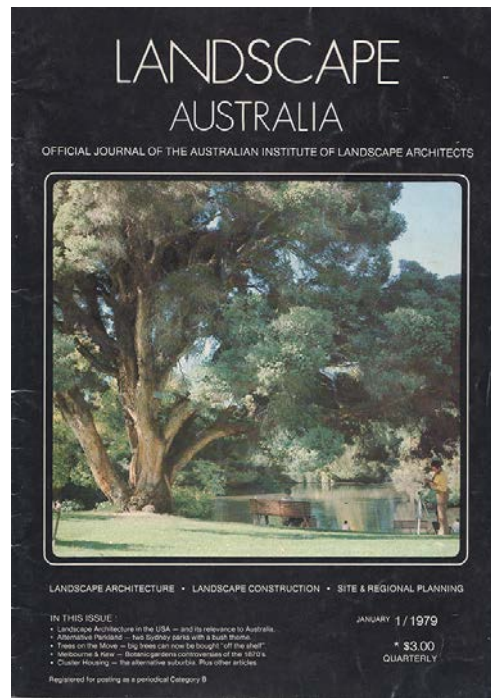


Figure 3: The cover of the first edition of Landscape Australia, January 1979. Photograph by R Neale.

In the first decade, approximately 70% of the cover images were attributed to Neale. Approximately 30% of the covers include commanding views of landscape scenery, 40% are of newly designed landscapes (often featured within that edition) and 30% featured tree specimens. It is interesting to note the choice of descriptive words and phrases found on the inside cover when captioning the cover image depicting trees: “magnificent” (Landscape Australia, 1979, 3; Landscape Australia, 1980, 3), “luxuriant” (Landscape Australia, 1979, 55; Landscape Australia, 1983, 3), “gloriously vibrant” (Landscape Australia, 1981, 279), and “memorable Australian experiences” (Landscape Australia, 1983, 251). Mature trees were icons linking past and present and were representative of Australia’s heritage. Referring to the cover image of the first edition (see Figure 3) Neale wrote: “Not surprisingly I chose the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne where I found the perfect tree, an old paperbark, *Melaleuca linariifolia*.” (Neale, 2014, 22). Issue One of 1982 depicted *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* or River Red Gum and the associated caption by Neale communicates the iconic significance of trees in representing the profession:

‘1982 is the YEAR OF THE TREE in Australia. For ‘Landscape Australia’ and probably all its readers, every year is the year of the tree. Our cover shows that not all farms in Australia are without trees, and in fact we know that many farmers are conservationists in the real sense.’ (see Landscape Australia, 1982, 3)

Cultural landscapes figure strongly in Neale’s choice of cover images. In 1988, Australia’s bicentenary, each of the four edition’s covers contained a painting that Neale had completed specifically to commemorate “contributors to Australian life and landscape ‘improvement’” (Neale,

2014, 85). He also noted the irony in such intent given that some might argue that colonisation had undoubtedly caused unfathomable degradation to the Australian landscape.



Figure 4: [top left] 'COVER: "Thomas Shepherd's Dream". See page 46.' (Landscape Australia, 1988, 3); [top right] 'COVER: "The End of a Long Day". See page 134.' (Landscape Australia, 1988, 115); [bottom left] 'COVER: "Walter Griffin Calls to See Charles Weston – Canberra 1916". See page 240.' (Landscape Australia, 1988, 215); [bottom right] 'COVER: "Albert Morris in the revegetation area of the Zinc Corporation Mine at Broken Hill - 1938" See page 368' (Landscape Australia, 1988, 343).

Regardless, Neale persisted with his endeavour and noted the "best intentions" and "influence" of these contributors (Neale, 2014, 85-86). He carefully researched the history of his subjects and on the basis of historic narratives he managed to glean, he imagined and created the depictions. Through the year of 1988 he published his paintings in the following order (see Figure 4); Thomas Shepherd (1779-1835), colonial nurseryman in NSW from 1826 and early advocate for the value of Australian indigenous flora; the German-born Dr Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-96), Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne between 1857 and 1873; Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937) alongside Charles Weston (1866-1935) with Walter's wife, Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961) in the background set within the Yarralumla Nursery in Canberra in 1916; and finally, Albert Morris (1886-1939), one of the key instigators behind the landscape revegetation of the mining township of Broken Hill, New South Wales. All these narratives he depicted consist of actors and scenes that underpin hallmark achievements in the designed landscape in Australia.

A conservation agenda for the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects?

Ralph Neale's agenda to engage the profession of landscape architecture in the process of improving the quality of Australia's landscapes was fittingly reflected in the cover motto of the journal: 'Helping you to make Australia a better place to live'. This motto first emerged in the last edition for 1986 and continued through to the second edition of 2001, with only minor changes to its wording along the way. In 1978 when travelling abroad as preparation for the inauguration of the journal, Neale met many notable landscape architects (Garrett Eckbo and Julius Fabos for example) and publishers including Grady Clay, Managing Editor of *Landscape Architecture* journal in the USA (Neale, 2014, 14). Clay later praised Neale's journal in providing "clear insight into both the problems and unique aspects of the emerging Australian landscape" (Clay, 1982). In reading Neale's account of the people he met and places he visited in America (Louisville, Boston, Seattle, Oakland and San Francisco to name a few), it is clear that as well as formulating ideas for publishing on landscape architecture, his travel experiences led to a 'reformulating' of his ties to the Australian (urban) landscape. Having been involved in the protection of Albert Park he had no doubt become more acutely aware of the state of open space and public parks in Australian cities by comparison. Whilst travelling in the USA, Neale wrote to his wife: "It is so different to Europe. When I think about our cities, they don't seem to (sic) bad after all...Generally the feeling I have so far [of USA cities], is one of dismay." (Neale, 1978). He commented on vandalism in public space and reflected that the only landscapes of any quality were to be found at forecourts or spaces around flats where a guard was paid to patrol the space.

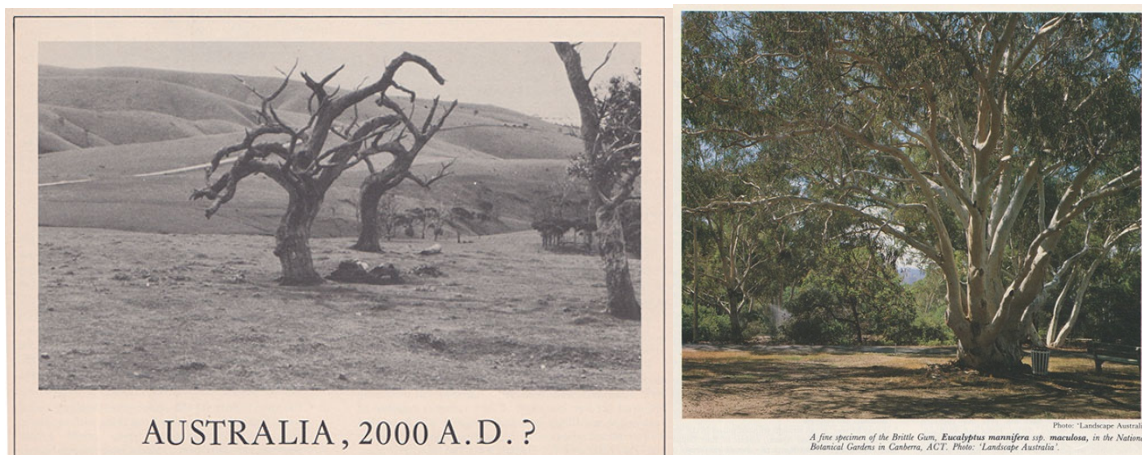


Figure 5: [left] A farming area in South Australia c1979 by R Neale (Neale, 1979, 131); [right] Photograph by R Neale featuring a 'fine specimen' of Brittle Gum in the National Botanic Gardens, Canberra (see Wrigley, 1982, 201).

These experiences were a reaffirmation of the need to herald valuable landscape design principles from the past whilst also identifying environmental degradation and the need for conservation into the future. He employed impassioned and emotive references to trees and landscapes, and the threats they faced. In 1979 his short article "Australia, 2000 A.D.?" (Neale, 1979, 131, see Figure 5) called for action to protect the remaining stands of Australian trees if society was to avert the "turning [of] the landscape into a gum tree graveyard". (131). Emotive and metaphoric language in reference to nature can be explored via literature concerning wilderness experience. Knopf (1987)

proposed four broad themes that he identified within literature concerning the values of natural environments and these included: nature as restorer, nature as competence builder, nature as diversion and nature as symbol (see Knopf, 1987, 783-825). Knopf discussed how various writers have found nature to symbolically represent life, continuity, enduringness, forces greater than or resistant to human action and even mystery and spirituality (Knopf, 1987). Such dimensions resonate with the manner in which Neale incorporated symbolism within *Landscape Australia* and the genre of nature pilgrimage.

For example, Neale was an admirer of the work and advocacy of the forester Richard St Barbe Baker (1890-1982), otherwise known as The Man of the Trees, who was prominent in advocating the protection of forests and starting up branches of The Men Of The Trees groups around the world (see Figure 6). St Barbe Baker had appeared on an Australian Broadcasting Commission 'Science Show' in early 1979 and a transcript of an interview between the Show's presenter, Robyn Williams and St. Barbe Baker was published in *Landscape Australia* (Williams and St. Barbe Baker, 1980, 47, 49, 51, 53 & 55). In another film found elsewhere, footage of St. Barbe Baker shows him addressing a tree specimen. Looking up into the tree's canopy, he states: "Stand firm. Grip hard. Thrust upwards to the skies. Bend to the winds of heaven." (St. Barbe Baker, date unknown, film transcript). Trees were icons of life, longevity, and romanticism for the past and lost landscapes. In a related example, E F Schumacher, an economist and also a member of The Men Of The Trees, narrated a 1977 film on forest destruction in Western Australia due to timber harvesting and said:

'Well, what do we see here? The scene, of devastation. This is no longer a forest, this used to be a forest. It used to be like a temple. And now it, looks like a battlefield. Abandoned machinery. Everything abandoned. How can this happen?' (Schumacher, c.1977, f ilm transcript).

Such references to religious edifices, heaven (and earth), temples, graveyards, etc, by activists and writers alike can be found in *Landscape Australia*. Supporters within the profession of landscape architecture included practitioners such as Alistair Knox and Bruce Mackenzie (see examples in Saniga, 2012, 188-197) but the extent to which the broader professional community in the AILA were prepared to join the ranks is less clear. Certainly, many of the articles in *Landscape Australia* that were pro-conservation were written by people who were not landscape architects and Neale was acutely aware of antagonism and scepticism regarding conservation. After St Barbe Baker had spoken in 1981 to a packed crowd in Wilson Hall (University of Melbourne), reputedly of over 1500 people, Neale reflected that "many scientists, politicians and industrialists regard him as an old man with extreme ideas" (Neale, 1981, 284). Neale felt that the profession of landscape architecture in Australia was not conservation-minded and said:

'The other thing of course is that the Institute has never been prominent in things like, "Save Albert Park", for example, or, you know, nor did the architects of course. No one came out and said, you know, "this Institute, frowns very much on this proposal, to put a car track in the middle of Melbourne". Ahhh. [Saniga: Why do you think that is?] Well, they're afraid they'll upset someone! That's been a disappointment I think.' (Neale, 2000)



Figure 6: [left] Richard St. Barbe Baker in Melbourne at the Royal Botanic Gardens, 1981 (Photograph: R Neale. Source: A Neale); [right] St Barbe Baker speaking to primary school children in Thomastown, Victoria, with A Rein, President of Men of the Trees [Victoria] in background, 1981 (Photograph: R Neale. Source: A Neale).

Regardless, Neale continued to ensure issues regarding conservation of both urban and non-urban environments were published. For example, in 1979 he published a photograph taken by wilderness enthusiast, Antonius Moscal, of the 'Thunderush' at the Franklin River in Tasmania's wilderness (see Volume 1, Number 4, 1979). In quoting Moscal's appreciation for the value of wilderness as an escape from "the sterile jungle of our concrete edifices" (Moscal quoted in cover caption by Landscape Australia [R Neale], 1979, 179), Neale wrote: "He [Moscal] as well as many other Australians, is appalled at the proposal to dam the river for hydro-electric power." (Moscal quoted in cover caption by Landscape Australia [R Neale], 1979, 179). He also strove for a balanced perspective, giving those who were on the development side of the ledger the opportunity to write articles or respond to criticism regarding controversial landscape projects. For example, landscape architect Mike Tooby in Western Australia had completed landscape consultancies for Alcoa involving impacts to existing Jarrah forests and having received criticism from other members of the local profession who were against industrial use of natural resources, he responded that such critics "engender a sense of hopelessness among those who might otherwise strive for a solution" (Tooby, 1980, 262). The key issue was that many landscape architects of the time were completing consultancies that were contentious developments like mining or freeways, as opposed to taking an activist position. They claimed that there was a need to ensure a satisfactory outcome to works that were deemed to be inevitable in a progressive Australia.

Conclusion

This paper has provided a brief introduction to the life and work of Ralph Neale with particular emphasis placed on the quality of his visual and literary work via the journal *Landscape Australia*. In terms of the richness of Neale's contribution to Australian society and landscape, the content of this paper only scratches the surface. His life was marked by extraordinary achievements and the way in which his contribution could be discussed in terms of the emergence of the profession of landscape architecture in Australia is extremely varied and far beyond the scope of this paper. He advanced landscape architecture in complex ways, on the one hand firmly advocating the AILA and delivering the Institute its professional journal, but on the other, maintaining a degree of autonomy that would enable him to be outspoken about conservation and environmental issues, as well as maintaining a degree of tactfulness in promoting the profession. By his own admission his business success and survival required him to 'stand alone', acknowledging of course the important contribution of his staff and, importantly, his wife, Vivienne. A significant part of his independence was the ability for him to find an outlet for his creative expression, through photography, painting and words. With great effort but with corresponding personal fulfilment, Neale did advance landscape architecture in Australia and the many benefits of his journal persist to the current day.

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