

Lady Brodie-Hall (Jean Verschuer)AM, FAILA

by Marion Pennicuik, Editor, Landscape Australia

In January 2001, Jean Brodie-Hall (Verschuer) was awarded the AM—Member of the Order of Australia—in the Australia Day Honours for services to "conservation and the environment, particularly through the development of techniques for landscape planning in arid areas, and to professional development through the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects" (*The Australian*, 26.1.2001).

After a seven-year period nursing children, Lady Jean Brodie-Hall changed career in the early nineteen-fifties and followed her love of design, becoming a prominent and respected landscape architect in Western Australia.

Her enthusiasm for the landscape began with a Technical Extension Service course in Municipal and Landscape Gardening, then courses in horticulture, architectural drawing and techniques. Enthused by the opportunities available, Jean delivered lectures on landscape gardening in the Adult Education program.

As a landscape architect, Jean's commitment to the development of landscape architecture began in 1963 with the inaugural meeting in Canberra, which resulted in the setting up of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA). By the time of the first AILA Conference in Melbourne in 1969, Jean was one of only four landscape architects working in Perth.

Her achievements in private practice mark a significant period in the development of the profession. Working as a consultant with a number of distinguished architectural firms, including Forbes and Fitzhardinge, and Summerhayes and Associates, Jean contributed to significant public, community and private projects of merit. In addition, she acted as a consultant to the WA Railways, the State Energy Commission, the Commonwealth Department of Works, ALCOA, the Western Mining Corporation, the Northern Territory Conservation Commission, and various councils. Her many projects included Shenton Park Day Hospital, the Australian Paper Manufacturers Building, the Salvation Army Village, the Wembley Downs Shopping Centre and the Standard Gauge Railway Line. Jean was involved in the establishment of the School of Landscape Architecture, University of Western Australia, and from 1974 to 1981, worked as the staff Landscape

Architect to the University of Western Australia. She was also an Honorary Landscape Architect to the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie (1980-1989), and she has been a Council member of many important Western Australian institutions and other committees.

One of her most significant projects was Kambalda, a mining town 720 km east of Perth, with an annual rainfall of 20 mm. She aimed to blend the town into the natural landscape to achieve minimum maintenance given the low rainfall. Jean identified local flora, then encouraged local nurseries to propagate them for the job.

Always giving generously of her time to help develop the profession, Jean has undertaken a marathon workload. She made a major contribution as the Australian delegate to the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), as Secretary of the WA Group, a member of AILA's National Council for ten years and as AILA President from 1977 to 1979. During her term in office, Jean organised the National Conference in Perth. Jean became a Fellow of the AILA in 1979 and was awarded the AILA Award in Landscape Architecture in 1990 for her contribution to the profession.

In early 1978, as President of the AILA, Jean gave much-needed encouragement to Ralph Neale, who had approached AILA in regard to starting up the journal *Landscape Australia*. Jean has remained a loyal supporter of AILA and of *Landscape Australia*.

In numerous other ways, Jean has made a contribution to the quality of the landscape and touched the lives of many people. Her many community and professional activities have helped increase the profile of the profession. These have included:

- Member of the Advisory Committee of the Australian Broadcasting Commission in WA.
- Member of the Landscape Committee for Conservation through Reserves.
- Member of a Committee to report on *Dust Abatement in the Eastern Goldfields* for the then Minister for Conservation, and Member of the Technical Advisory Committee.
- Member, juror, Committee Chairperson, Jury Chairperson of the Civic Design Award Committee.
- Member, Aesthetics Committee for the Royal Agricultural Society.

- Chairperson Advisory Committee of the Government House Grounds Management.
- Member Redevelopment Committee for Hackett Hall.
- Member of the WA Museum Board and Chairperson of the Grounds Advisory Board.
- Fellow of Guildford Grammar School Council.

Always supportive of the profession, she has worked diligently within the WA Group and sought to influence the quality of landscape development in an objective and gracious manner.

Acknowledgements

This citation was prepared from material kindly supplied by Margaret Hendry (1930-2001) and John Phillips (1943-2001), formerly of AILA, with the assistance of Jean Brodie-Hall and Ralph and Viv Neale. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Citation for The Australian Award in Landscape Architecture

Jean Verschuer, Fellow of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, has rendered distinguished service to the profession of landscape architecture and its advancement over a period of many years. She was involved in the formation of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and helped guide the fledgling organisation in its early years as a Federal Councillor, serving as President from 1977 to 1979.

In her creative work as a landscape architect, Jean Verschuer has had notable success in the design and planning fields. Her site planning and design at the University of WA and her planning and design work for mining areas are fine examples of Jean's achievement.

Her work has been a seminal influence and an exemplar for others to follow and she has therefore been instrumental in advancing the profession. Jean Verschuer's boundless and infectious enthusiasm for the values of Landscape Architecture have been and continue to be a source of encouragement to other members of the profession and her commitment to the values and stewardship role of landscape architecture is of the highest order.

Citation for the Curtin University Fellowship Certificate

To commemorate her outstanding contribution to the field of landscape architecture, in particular the landscaping of the Western Australian School of Mines, the Council of Curtin University of Technology appoints Jean Brodie-Hall as a member of Curtin University Fellowship.

Awarded in recognition of the contribution to the character of the University and its students by virtue of having achieved distinction and professional standing in the community through initiative and leadership in her chosen field of endeavour.

Awards

1990 AILA—Award in Landscape Architecture

1989 Member of the Curtin University Fellowship

1987 Bicentennial Medal awarded by Western Australian School of Mines

1979 Fellow of the AILA



Lady Brodie-Hall AM at her investiture, with Lieutenant General John Sanderson AC, Governor of Western Australia, Government House Ballroom, 30 March 2001 (Photo: Des Birt).

Entrance to Department of Exploration and Mining Geology, School of Mines, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, before and after redevelopment by Jean Verschuer in the mid-1980s (Photos: by author).

Entrance to University of Western Australia, Perth, before and after redevelopment by Jean Verschuer in the early 1970s (Photos: by author).

