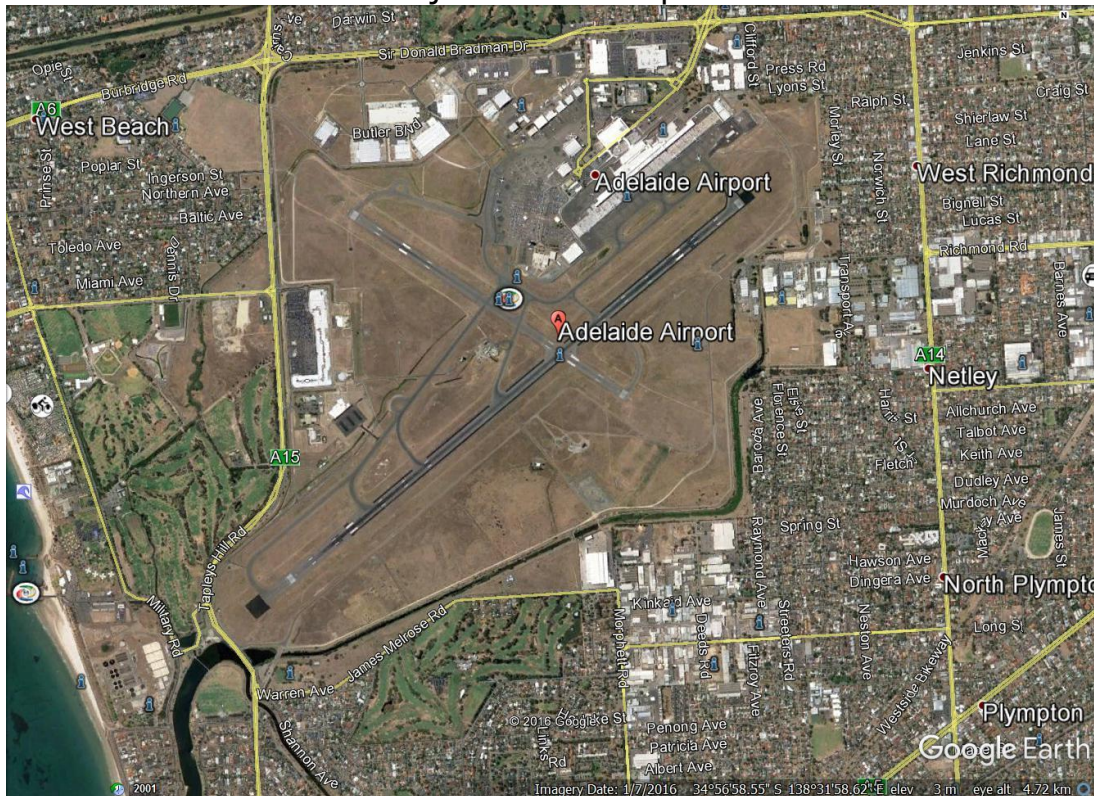


Project Adelaide Airport



It is quite amazing how time flies past, and events then fade away into the distance. Such is much of my recollections about one of our very best projects at the Adelaide Airport. Unfortunately world events made that project very difficult to continue, as security was a major change to the grounds being accessed, although we were on the very extreme southern boundary of the Airport, and actually outside the main perimeter fence.

This was a COOTS project that was much closer to home. It is within the Airport outer boundary, and we were given the task of revegetating a large land-fill bank that stretches for 1.5 kilometres along the southern fence of the Airport. This bank is made up of soil that was dredged from the Patawalonga, and was part of the State Governments pledge to clean up the waterway.



The view of the 1.5 km Airport bank, looking toward Tapleys Hill Road



The other view of the Airport bank looking toward the city

Our aim was to replant the bank, and other areas within the Airport, with mainly indigenous species, and we were sourcing our seed from any remnant vegetation within a few kilometres of the site.

It is extremely fortunate that we had golf courses nearby which contain good stands of remnant vegetation. This will ensure that there will always be seedlings, grown from a constant supply of good, fresh, endemic seed.

Over a period of time in 2001, we were fortunate enough to get some funding to carry out the revegetation of that bank, and I approached our Australian Plants Society growers to see if they could supply a number of plants for the project, and to be paid for their plants from the funding money.

Interesting to see the names of the growers who were able to supply plants as some are still around, and some sadly are no longer with us.

The list was as follows:

Brenton Tucker.
Wendy Fopp.
Anne Houghton.
Keith Pitman.
Lester Ball.
Steve Fielke.

Lloyd Carmen.
John Earle.
Ian Trigg.
Brett Fitzpatrick.
Jamie Mugridge.
Steve Johnston.

Anne Dealtry.
Corrine Hampel.
Karen Lane.
John Barrie.
Peter Hall.
Margie Barnett.

Eighteen SGAP (now APS) growers were able to benefit from this project, and I was hoping that we could have continued over the coming years, but because the Airport had been privatised, and Serco ended up being the new owners, there is some doubt, as to the ability for APS to get more funds, so it basically came to an end at that time.

Over 7,000 plants were planted into that landfill bank at the Airport, and it still is a fairly good showpiece for APS over coming years.

Other than a few that had been chewed off by the many hares at the site, our success rate was only moderate, but this was attributed to many factors. Mainly the soil is made up of many probably unsavoury elements, but it would definitely be quite saline. This is why the saltbush species did so well I suspect. Also the conditions of the area are quite severe, and many plants could not stand up to the cold and windy environment.



Tree guards being assembled, and plants ready to be planted along the 1.5 kilometre bank.



Volunteers working in very extreme conditions , putting seedlings into the very steep bank.

However those that have survived are now doing very well and quite established, but it would have been good if more funding had been available and a continuous project could have been the outcome.

It was extremely hard work, especially as the sides of the bank were very steep and many volunteers simply were unable to keep their footing and plant at the same time, but gradually and with plenty of tenacity, we did manage to get plants in. I was extremely pleased at the hard work done by the COOTS volunteers at the time, and also to Geoff and Margie Barnett, who spent many hours working with Growers to get particular

species that could be grown at the site, bearing in mind that one of the main criteria at any airport is to have species that do not attract large flocks of birds, and I think we achieved that well.



It was a great experience in any case, and if others in the Society are like me, and are sitting in a plane at takeoff or landing, it is always good to look at that southern boundary, and think that we did that. I know that the Adelaide Airport was a small and very brief project for us to do, but it certainly was in a very prominent position, and is the type of project that gives focus to the Society and the aims and objectives that we strive to achieve. If something similar comes up in the future, it certainly is something that is worth following up.

Jeff Reid – COOTS Coordinator