

# Verge trees trapped in 'spiral of decline'

By JEN REWELL

**It has been a long, deadly summer for verge trees in Cambridge, and the fatality list makes for grim reading.**

A council officer responsible for keeping track of the health of verge trees has created a sombre report detailing the death of 23 trees and guessing why they died.

Some are described as being "short-lived" and "having come to the end of its useful life expectancy".

One WA peppermint tree died after being infested by "beetle borer", but most showed no signs of pests or disease.

Some are suspected to have died from lack of water or nutrients, or "growing very close to

infrastructure", usually paving or walls.

Some have had the reticulation turned off, and others have not been able to compete with neighbouring trees.

The phrase "spiral of decline" is used often.

Many *callistemon* (bottlebrush) and *lophostemon* (queensland box) trees were lost during summer.

"These species are not adapting well to the continued warming and drying climate," the report said.

The Town waters new verge trees once a week during hot weather, but has asked residents to help by giving them a bucket of water to help them through summer.



## Cott's Dorothy is a real gem

Dorothy Erickson adds another feather to her cap as she's inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame. INSET: Her book *Inspired by Light and Land*.

By SARAH McNEILL

**Dorothy Erickson, jeweller, historian, lecturer, curator, art critic and author, has been inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame.**

It is just one more acknowledgement of the Cottesloe jeweller's extraordinary contribution to WA's art, design and culture.

Now 86, she was made a state cultural treasure last year for her lifelong advocacy of WA's special landscapes, geology and flora through her jewellery designs and international curations.

And she was just the fourth West Australian inducted into the Design Institute of Australia's hall of fame in 2020, joining national figures Florence Broadhurst (wallpaper), Ken Done (graphics), Grant Featherstone (furniture), and Collette Dinnigan and Akiro Isogawa (fashion).

"No one in WA takes much notice of crafts, so it was a great surprise and pleasure to be recognised by the Design Institute," Dorothy said at the time.

The Royal WA Historical Society conferred a fellowship

on her in 2019 while, in 2017, she was recognised at the WA Heritage Awards for voluntary individual contribution.

Her late mother, Rica, a renowned wildflower painter and author, received the same honour when she was 99.

Dorothy grew up on a farm with her mother but as a young aspiring student was shocked to find out being a woman meant she was considered a second-class citizen.

"I found out I couldn't study engineering at UWA because there were no ladies' toilets," she said.

She went on to study botany as part of a teaching degree.

She enrolled at the Chelsea Institute in London in the 1960s to research Australian plants at Kew Gardens and the Natural History Museum.

Much of her jewellery design reflects her passion for WA's flora, and many of her early pieces were based on her mother's paintings.

As a historical society fellow, Dorothy is currently a researcher, sorting out "what's in the cupboards" as she puts it, and writes papers on historical artefacts.

## Feds promise Sculpture cash

**Sculpture by the Sea exhibition is likely to go ahead next year and 2027 after organisers said this week \$750,000 in federal money had been promised.**

Exhibition director David Handley said it was great to see bipartisan support for the Cottesloe beach event.

"Without this level of federal government support it is simply impossible to stage such a large free to the public

event," he said on Thursday.

The event, which usually runs in March, was cancelled for 2025 due to lack of funding.

The Austrade funding will mean each Australian artist in the 2026/27 events will receive at least \$4500 towards their costs of exhibiting.

Each artist spends \$15,000 on average to make and freight their sculptures.

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