

# Fact sheet 2 PEACEHAVEN: The Peace Pole

The Peace Pole at Peacehaven Botanic Park is one of over 200,000 throughout the world. They symbolise a shared desire for the countries of the world to be at peace. The pole at Peacehaven was installed when the park was first established.

## OVERVIEW

- The purpose of Peace Poles is to convey the message ‘May peace prevail on Earth’.
- The concept originated in Japan after World War II and has spread worldwide.
- There are now more than 200,000 Peace Poles throughout the world.
- Peacehaven’s Peace Pole was installed in 2006, in time for the park’s official opening.
- Its presence is a reminder of Stan Kuhl’s vision for the park as ‘a place of peace and tranquillity for generations to come’.
- The Peace Pole is the central feature of a circular garden on which the four points of the compass are marked out, signifying hope for peace in every part of the world.
- The Peace Garden was once on a mound, but over the years has been lowered and is now almost flat.
- Peacehaven’s Peace Pole bears the words MAY PEACE PREVAIL and the park’s original logo of a white dove symbolising peace.

## WHAT IS A PEACE POLE?

The Peace Pole concept originated in Japan in 1955 and spread internationally from the 1980s onwards. More than 200,000 Peace Poles have now been ‘planted’ and are in almost every country of the world.

The initiator of this idea was writer and visionary Masahisa Goi, born in Tokyo in 1916. He was horrified at the devastation caused by two world wars, and founded an organisation that is now called May Peace Prevail On Earth International.

Masahisa Goi ‘believed that the message, May Peace Prevail On Earth, has the capacity to bring people of various cultures, faiths and traditions together in the spirit of universal love and oneness by unifying the global heart and mind’.<sup>1</sup> Peace Poles display his message in the language of the country where they are placed, sometimes with additional translations.

## PEACEHAVEN’S PEACE POLE

The pole at Peacehaven was installed before the park’s official opening in 2006. It is the central feature of a circular garden marked out with the four points of the compass, signifying the hope for peace in all corners of the world.



The Peace Pole is near the main entrance, with a backdrop of majestic gum trees.



## BACKGROUND: 'PEACE HAVEN'

Stan Kuhl, the park's benefactor, was a strong advocate for world peace. That was why, when he had a new house built for himself on the family farm in the 1970s, he named it 'Peace Haven'.

When Stan signed the agreement to donate land for a park, he resisted suggestions that it should be named after him. He wanted it to have the name he had chosen for his house, though with the minor change of making it one word: 'Peacehaven'. Stan's vision for the park was that it would be 'a place of peace and tranquillity for generations to come'.<sup>2</sup>

## PLANNING FOR PEACE

Stan Kuhl's vision was incorporated into the design of the park in plans drawn up by landscape architect Richard Jones in 2005. These gave pride of place to a Peace Garden near the main entrance, in an area where majestic gum trees generations old still thrived. The garden was to be on a circular mound topped by a sculpture and fountain, with water circulating to and from the lake. In the words of the designer, it would be 'a living, breathing monument to the beauty and bliss of peace'.<sup>3</sup>

However, the region was in the grip of drought when the park was being developed and water restrictions were in force. The suggestion was made that a Peace Pole be substituted for the fountain. Richard Jones drew up a design incorporating the words MAY PEACE PREVAIL with the park's original logo of a white dove symbolising peace, and the pole was constructed.

It was installed in time for the park's official opening in September 2006, though it wasn't intended to be permanent: the program for the day stated that '... the Peace Pole is temporary until the fountain is in place'.<sup>4</sup> But by the time the drought broke, the pole had become a fixture.

## CHANGES OVER TIME

Over the years the Peace Garden has undergone a succession of changes. Plants never thrived on the mound, and it was eventually grassed over, with the compass points paved in sandstone. The mound was gradually reduced in height and is now almost flat.

The Peace Pole has stood firm throughout, encouraging all who see it to transcend their differences, celebrate a common humanity and strive for peace.



The Peace Pole today: spreading a message of peace since 2006



The mound and Peace Pole when the park was opened in September 2006

## REFERENCES

1. May Peace Prevail On Earth International, 'founder, Goi Sensei', [worldpeace.org/founder/](http://worldpeace.org/founder/)
2. Barbara McKenzie, *Peacehaven Botanic Park: Legacy of a Pioneering Family*, Barleyfield Publishing, Highfields, 2023
3. Richard Jones, Cloudlake Design Services, Peacehaven Botanic Park Master Plan, February 2005
4. Official program for opening day, Sunday 24 September 2006