

Address to Council 28 July 2015 - Rebecca John

My name is Rebecca. I am the granddaughter of John William Allen who was the first born of John Allen. I live a few streets away from Allen Park with my kids. I stand here today representing the descendants of John Allen – a man who served the City of Nedlands and the Road Board for more than 30 years. He was my great grandfather. I represent my Aunty (his granddaughter) Margaret and I'd particularly like to mention family members who send their apologies tonight but want to be a voice for my great granddads legacy. Philip, John, Michael, Naomi, Nicole, Justin, Sarah, Jessica, Joanna, Caleb, Sebastian, Zemirah, Josiah and Daniel.

I stand to represent all my family – there are a lot of us!!

We join with other voices - friends of the John Allen legacy here tonight.

John Allen was dedicated to putting Swanbourne Beach and the coastal ward of Nedlands quite literally on the map. He was the chairman of the Road Board.

He helped plan and laid out roads for the benefit of all West Australian's including those in Hollywood, Melvista, Dalkieth and Swanbourne too.

In fact my great grandfathers vision was "a natural garden and a look out for the people for all time"

My great grandfather John Allen, a Gallipoli veteran, spent 14 years of his life travelling the state, painstakingly persuading people to sell their blocks and turning them all into one cohesive A class reserve. He was determined to give Nedlands, all ratepayers of the future, all of us in this room and beyond - the gift of a park and remnant bushland that could be enjoyed by future generations.

Significantly, as a member of the Road Board he categorically insisted on closing off several of the roads that impaired the reserve including Sayer street.

In 1936 with a war on the horizon the commonwealth seized much of the land he had sacrificed so many years parcelling together.

The community backed John Allen's vision and objected so strongly that the then Defence Minister did two things:

1. The Defence Minister gave back a large piece of the reserve Defence did not need free of charge to the state.
2. The Defence Minister stipulated that the public were to be allowed free access to all but the very top of Melon Hill

For 90 years John Allen's legacy has been enjoyed by the people of Western Australia. Over his lifetime he continued to plant, protect and improve this land. His children and grand children watered the trees, pulled weeds after school. My generation grew with a love of nature as a result.

We, the Allen family ask that you join us in following in his footsteps and help preserve, protect and improve the A class Reserve for everyone to enjoy as a park, for recreation and to protect the ecosystem that is so precious to many species.

Our first act must be to remove the illegal road on the A class reserve that John Allen closed for our benefit 90 years ago. It's too easy to tear down in an instant with a different motive what has taken a lifetime to preserve.

We should then enforce his vision and return it to "a natural garden for the people for all time".