



2023 WA Landcarer's Hall of Fame

Don Stanley (Posthumous)

The late Don Stanley was a second-generation farmer, whose family still owns and operates a 25,000ha wheat farm in Kalannie in the Central Wheatbelt of Western Australia. Don is regarded as the founder of the oil mallee industry in Australia, which included introducing *Eucalyptus kochii* into farming enterprises.

Don was educated at Perth Modern School where he met his lifelong partner, Allison. They both enrolled at the University of WA in 1946. After two years at UWA Don transferred to the Australian Forestry School in Canberra for 1948 and 1949. Following that period of study,

Don returned to Kalannie to manage the farm and with his father Ed expanded their property during the 1950's. In the 1990s, Don commenced a program of oil mallee plantings in conjunction with founding the WA Oil Mallee Association, which encouraged farmers to plant an estimated 15,000 hectares of Mallee *Eucalyptus* trees across the State. The Stanley family has planted over a million trees on their property. The farm continues to be run by Don's Grandson Travis Stanley.

Don was enthused by the prospect of tree planting as a potential moderator for salinity. He could see that if we aimed to build a serious industry around mallee, that we should make it a whole wheatbelt project. Hence, together with enthusiastic support from CALM (Department of Conservation and Land Management), interested parties were identified in six centres: Kalannie, Canna, Bruce Rock, Narrogin, Woodanilling and Esperance. Key land-care positive people were identified in each of the districts invited to a meeting with Don and John Bartle of CALM.

During this period there was state and commonwealth programs and funds available for salinity and landcare programs. The mallee initiative was seen to be a very sound and attractive and it was anticipated that it might be possible to secure substantial funds to support a major project. The Oil Mallee Association of WA (OMA) was formed with a representatives selected from each location. Regular meetings were

arranged with Don as President. About \$2million was raised for mallee research and development over the 1990s. CALM, with Dr Syd Shae at the helm, made a strong contribution to this development of a Wheatbelt program and the six centres of activity contributed significantly. Don Stanley was a very sound leader and reportedly any issues in the organisation were readily resolved.

Some aspects of Don's background were a significant factor in his motivation to make change and to advocate so vociferously for tree growing action on farms. Don remained a member of the Australian Forestry Institute and in the obituary created by the AFI, his profession is listed as a forester. The knowledge acquired at a world class program at ANU served him well in his future leadership of agroforestry activity throughout the WA Wheatbelt.

Don was also Chair and driver on Kalannie LCDC and was solidly committed to the organisation and the greater community. organisations. He continued to Chair the OMA for the decade after its creation and secured funding and government backing for the objectives of this organisation which had a membership of 1000 farmers, around 25% of the total number of farmers in the WA Wheatbelt at the time.

It is worth noting also that Ian, Don's son, was awarded the 2005 Australian Government Landcare Program National Individual Landcarer Award and has continued a strong interest in mallee eucalypts including helping create the Kalannie Eucalyptus Oil Distillery (now Kochii Oil) and Rainbow BeaEater, a biogas producing company with successful projects in South Australia using feedstocks such as waste timber and straw to heat large glasshouses. Ian is currently the Chair of the Oil Mallee Association.

In recognition of Don's significant contribution to landcare within the Kalannie region an Acacia has been named after him: *Acacia stanleyi* commonly known as Stanley's Rock Wattle.

Don died in 1999 at the age of 71, after a successful farming career and engagement in a wide range of agricultural and community organisations.