



UWA Friends of the Grounds and the Institute of Advanced Studies present the  
**2009 George Seddon Lecture:**  
**Revisiting 'Sense of Place' in a rapidly changing world**

by Stephen D. Hopper, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, and  
School of Plant Biology, The University of Western Australia

Professor George Seddon's *Sense of Place*, first published in 1972, was a landmark for many Western Australians. The book challenged readers to look at Perth and the Swan Coastal Plain with fresh eyes from geological, botanical and human perspectives. Seddon proposed that 'A sense of place shows most clearly in the way the community feels about and uses the landscape'. He concluded: 'My hope is that Perth will become more parochial and that planning for it will be minutely topical'. Among other influences, the book inspired me to undertake a personal and ongoing exploration of Australian landscapes, their evolution and biodiversity conservation, and their global context. Now that rapid climate change is upon us, accompanied by global loss of carbon sinks and biodiversity, there is merit in exploring the continued relevance of Seddon's main themes in *Sense of Place*. Through understanding the geological history and evolutionary biology of landscapes, and by observing past and present human use of land, the power of place becomes evident. Moreover, some places, south western Australia among them, are so different from most that novel ways of living sustainably are needed to ride the winds of global change.

This lecture explores these ideas, and calls for a significant, place-driven, rethink of human use of land and water as an integral part of appropriate responses to a rapidly changing world.

### About Professor Stephen D. Hopper

Professor Hopper is the 14th Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. He holds Visiting Professorships at the University of Reading, The University of Western Australia and at Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Perth.

Steve Hopper is a plant conservation biologist, best known for pioneering research leading to positive conservation outcomes in south-west Australia and for the collaborative description of 300 new plant taxa. Professor Hopper joined Kings Park and Botanic Garden as the Director in 1992, and from 1999-2004 served as Chief Executive Officer of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, leading the delivery of improvements to programmes and infrastructure to world-class standards.

He joined Kew, a World Heritage site and global plant science powerhouse, in October 2006, where he steered the preparation of celebrations for the organisation's 250th anniversary in 2009. He has also led the development of a forward 10 year Breathing Planet Programme for Kew and its global partners. This collaborative programme aims to make an urgent and necessary step change in the application of science-based plant diversity solutions towards sustainable living and a reasonable quality of life in the face of accelerating climate change and the loss of biodiversity.



Professor Stephen Hopper, Kew

### Emeritus Professor George Seddon AM

Born in 1927, George Seddon studied English at the University of Melbourne, and later gained both an MSc and PhD in Geology at the University of Minnesota. He was an Emeritus Professor of Environmental Science at University of Melbourne and a Senior Honorary Research Fellow in English at UWA. He was a Fellow of the Royal Australian Planning Institute, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences, and the Australian Academy of Humanities. His books include *Swan River Landscapes*, *Landprints*, *From the Country*, *A Landscape for Learning* and *Sense of Place*. He was awarded the Eureka Prize from the Australian Museum in 1995, the Mawson Medal from the Academy of Science in 1996 and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Planning Institute of Australia.

### Lecture Details

**Date:** Tuesday, 11 August 2009 | **Time:** 6pm

**Venue:** Octagon Theatre, UWA

**Cost:** Free, all welcome, but tickets are essential.

Tickets are available from the Octagon Theatre Box Office.

Tel (08) 6488 2440, Monday – Friday, 12.00-4.15pm.

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