



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025 FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

Introduction

UBC is the Peak Body for bushland conservation groups: We are a community association of 90 member groups (each with their own local membership) and 100+ individual members – all of whom have a common interest in the conservation of our natural biodiversity, with a particular focus on urban bushlands, wetlands, coastal and riverine natural areas. UBC is wholly volunteer led and relies on membership fees, donations, grants, and volunteer hours to deliver on our advocacy role of being a public voice for what remains of our urban native vegetation.

2024 was another busy year. We started the year mobilising against threats to the independence of the EPA and loss of appeal rights for citizens, and that continued throughout the year. We ran workshops, talks and walks for members; made submissions to environmental consultation processes; joined the EPA Stakeholder Reference Group; focused our advocacy and engaged with decision makers and senior public servants.

As we enter 2025 with both Federal and WA Governments going to the polls, it is clear we need to mobilise our local communities and let our elected officials know how important our biodiversity is and how at risk it is from the actions (or lack of action) of government.

2024 Highlights

Defend WA's Nature and Nature Alliance with CCWA

Throughout 2024 UBC has engaged deeply in the Conservation Council of WA (CCWA) led campaigning and advocacy for the safeguarding of our environmental laws and the independence of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). This has involved weekly, then fortnightly alliance meetings; attendance at rallies and actions; consultation with senior public servants; and the development of a protection agenda for nature with specific election asks for the 2025 electoral cycle. Through this we have forged a stronger alliance with CCWA and other environmental NGOs; helped CCWA establish its new Nature program and created a strong collaboration with them.

Despite all this effort and advocacy, some of Vogel – McFerran recommendations have now made their way into the EP Act and been proclaimed. It is very clear that future change will be through community mobilisation. UBC commends the [Protection Agenda for Nature](#) for your attention and advocacy.

Workshops

UBC delivered 2 workshops to its members during 2024 – in March and June.

Perth's Coastal Karst Limestone Ecosystems and Honeymyrtle Shrublands Symposium

On 17 March more than 80 scientists, practitioners, land managers and bushcarers came together to share knowledge and learn about one of Perth natural coastal wonders, *Karst limestone ecosystems and Honey Myrtle Shrublands of the Swan Coastal Plain*. This ecosystem was Federally listed in November 2023 as critically endangered. All left with a greater understanding of how precious this TEC is and how little is left. See *article in Autumn 2024 UBT*

Advocacy Skills Workshop

On 23 June more than 30 members of 20 Friends groups came along to learn from Lynn MacLaren how they might campaign for change for their patch and the importance of developing an advocacy plan to achieve those end goals. A big thank you to all the dedicated participants, to trainer Lynn MacLaren and guest presenters Leonie Stubbs and Heidi Hardisty, and to The Wettenhall Environment Trust for sponsorship. See *article in Winter 2024 UBT*

Major Submissions

During 2024 the UBC Submissions Working Group led by Marg Owen and James Mumme made 36 submissions. Read more on our [“Your Voice Needed Now”](#) page. Thank you to Colma Keating and our intern Jasmin for all the work in advocating for a native vegetation lens for the **Perth & Peel Urban Greening Strategy**. Thank you to Colma Keating, Sue Conlan and member groups for the input into the draft **Swan and Canning Rivers Protection Strategy**. The UBC welcomed the emphasis on interconnectedness across the catchments and called for greater protection of the river system.

The 2024 list of submissions is appended to this report.

Advocacy & Campaigning

Engaging with decision makers

During 2024, UBC was granted regular meetings with Minister for Environment. We also met with staff for the Minister for Local Government about the future review of the Cat Act.

UBC also established regular meetings with the Deputy Chair and then Chair of the EPA. UBC became a member of the EPA’s Stakeholder Reference Group and participated in consultations about future guidelines for EIA.

UBC met with the Chair of the WAPC for a briefing on the status of the Surf Park.

Support for local campaigns

During 2024 committee members supported advocacy campaigns for member groups based in Churchlands, Nedlands and Trigg and continued its advocacy for the protection of banksia woodlands at the site of the Surf Park in Jandakot and the Swan Valley Urban Growth Corridor.

Save the black cockatoos

UBC also maintained its focus on advocating for black cockatoos, recognising that the survival of this species is highly connected to the protection of habitat from clearing and revegetation efforts at scale.

Memberships

As at 31 December 2024, *UBC Membership* was 92 Member Groups and 108 supporters. Thank you to everyone who supports UBC, your presence makes our organisation and our advocacy stronger.

Honorary Life Memberships were awarded at the 2024 AGM to Renata Zelinova and Marg Owen, OAM.

Grants

In 2024, UBC held 5 grants including acting as sponsor on 2 grants for unincorporated Member Groups, with grant income of \$51,536. 2 grants were finalised during the year. New grants received were from State NRM, City of Cockburn and Department of Social Services.

Committee operations

We continued with our Committee / Subcommittee **operating structure** with the following **subcommittees** operating during 2024 (i) Submissions, (ii) Advocacy; (iii) Communications and (iv) Events & Member Engagement.

We co-opted Philip Thomas to the position of **Treasurer** during the year.

Mitch Polain resigned from the committee during the year to focus on the demands of his Friends group.

Cyber security: During 2024 we implemented changes to our online membership module so that we hold only the information required for a Member Register (Name, email, phone). This means we will no longer hold addresses. In all systems we use, we have implemented two factor authentication.

Our People

Mary Gray OAM, past Chairperson of UBC was inducted into the WA Landcare Hall of Fame. Mike Ewing of Cottesloe Coastcare was awarded an OAM.

Conservation Matters

Bush Forever Update

Continuing request for the completion of Bush Forever: UBC continues to advocate for the completion of Bush Forever and for the purchase of sites still outstanding and for the transfer of Bush Forever areas from the care of the WA Planning Commission (WAPC) to either the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) or the appropriate Local Government Authority (LGA). We do this at meetings with the Minister for the Environment, through Questions on Notice to State parliament and through meetings with staff from government agencies. This included a Bush Forever round table in March with staff from DPLH and DBCA.

Campaigning for the protection of black cockatoos

- *'Keep Carnaby's Flying - Ngoolarks Forever'* project. UBC is a partner organisation in this project being led by Murdoch University (MU). The project has come to an official close, but a "living project" has been left in place to help conserve the birds. Professor Kris Warren of the School of Veterinary Medicine for Murdoch University and key coordinator hopes "...that this project's collaborations among local governments, NGOs and Friends of Bushland groups will continue beyond the project's lifetime, with ongoing revegetation and rewilding activities to provide new Carnaby's cockatoo food and habitat every year."
- *Save the Black Cockatoos:* This campaign has involved a number of organisations including UBC and continued throughout 2024 with volunteer support only, advocating for limited further clearing of the Gngangara Pines to maximise foraging habitat for black cockatoo species.

Advocacy

Meetings with Decision Makers

Minister for Environment

Several meetings were held with Minister Whitby or his staff during 2024. UBC advocated for the protection of the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands; the management of the Gngangara, Pinjar and Yanchep pine plantations for cockatoo foraging habitat; the Vogel-McFerran Report recommendations; banksia woodlands threatened at Perth Surf Park and Jandakot; Perth & Peel Urban Forest Strategy; and progress on State Planning Policy 2.9 (Water Resources).

Chair/ Acting Chair of EPA

UBC welcomed the opportunity to meet with Lee McIntosh (Acting Chair EPA) and Darren Walsh (incoming Chair) and to voice concerns that urban bushlands required more protection than currently afforded. They both indicated the importance of community input into consultation processes and encouraged UBC and its members to continue their advocacy. They noted the importance of community advocacy with other State government departments for environmental protection.

EPA Stakeholder Reference Group

UBC was granted membership of the EPA's Stakeholder Reference Group during 2024; have attended scheduled meetings and have contributed to EPA internal consultation processes that will result in changes to EIA guidelines.

Chair of WAPC

UBC requested a meeting with the Chair of WAPC in February 2024 to discuss options for moving the Surf Park from Jandakot to a more suitable location. Staff in attendance provided a briefing of process to date indicating that timelines were now with the proponent to meet.

Other

Planning Minister – UBC request to meet with Minister Carey about the creation of the Yule Brook Regional Park was not granted.

DWER – UBC request for a round table discussion on the implementation of the Native Vegetation Policy is in progress and planned for March 2025.

Campaigning

Save the black cockatoos

Much of this is referred to under Defend WA's Nature, and elsewhere in meetings with Ministers.

Supporting local campaigns including Save Churchlands Bush, Brabham, Nedlands

Sharing reasons and strategies with local issue campaigners have been fruitful.

Priority Focus for UBC Advocacy

There are many strands to advocacy; so many issues and so many members requesting assistance. During 2024 the UBC committee resolved that it would operate under three 'umbrella' themes

- Policy based: The implementation of the Native Vegetation Policy and its commitment of net gain
- Project based: The creation of the Yule Brook Regional Park
- Campaign based: Defend WA's Nature (in collaboration with CCWA and others)

Member Engagement

New Members

UBC welcomed 11 new *member groups* during 2024. These groups were invited to introduce their group / their patch at meetings throughout the year. We welcomed:

1. Western Australian Tree Canopy Advocates Inc
2. Karak Cooby Bushcarers
3. Friends of Galup / Lake Monger
4. Bushmead Conservation Cobbers
5. Friends of Gabbiljee
6. Friends of Kings Park
7. Friends of Maritana Bushland
8. Friends of Mt Mackie
9. Friends of Smith's Lake & Park / Danjanberup
10. Manning Park Conservation Society
11. Save Churchlands Bushland

Meetings, Talks, Walks and Workshops 2024

2024 was a busy year of talks, walks and workshops. Our talks were an opportunity to bring together the membership of UBC, to welcome new groups and to meet our governance obligations regarding AGM/ General Meetings. The sessions hosted by UBC are shown in the table below.

DATE	TYPE	SPEAKER / HOST	TOPIC
5 March	AGM	Richard Yin, CCWA	Safeguarding WA's EPA and environment
17 March	Workshop	Various scientists and bushcarers	Limestone Karst Ecosystems and Honeymyrtle Shrubland Symposium
1 June	Walk	Friends of Lightning Swamp	Lightning Swamp walk
5 June	Talk	Friends of Erindale Road Bushland	Campaigning to save Erindale Road Bushland
23 June	Workshop	Lynn MacLaren	Advocacy Skills Workshop – finding ways to protect urban bushland
31 July	Talk	Lydia Fenu Patrick Wake	Learn more about iNaturalist and how it can make an impact on your patch
11 September	Talk	Dr Julian Bolleter	Natural Density: Medium density, liveable neighbourhoods, protection for urban bushland and species within. How can we have it all?
12 September	Walk	City of Joondalup	Walk in Craigie Bushland

DATE	TYPE	SPEAKER / HOST	TOPIC
7 October	Walk	Hosted by Bronwen and Greg Keighery	Northern Perth Honey Myrtle Shrubland excursion to Shire View Hill
23 October	Mini-workshop	Christine Richardson, Colma Keating & Rhiannon Hardwick	Protecting places we love – creating a groundswell of change in our communities

Urban Bush Telegraph

4 editions of the Urban Bush Telegraph were printed during 2024. Thank you to all contributors. Special thanks to our editor, Danielle Brady who encouraged us to bring a more strategic lens to this publication. You can find the current and past issues on our [website here](#).

However, we are concerned that the UBT is not being read by many and that this is not the way that our membership wants to receive information. This will be further considered in 2025.

Grants and Projects

Wettenhall Environment Trust

In 2023 UBC was awarded \$10,500 to deliver 2 training workshops for Friends groups that will help them recruit and retain volunteers, building their capacity to improve conservation outcomes and growing connection and community. The second workshop was on Advocacy Skills with Lynn MacLaren and was held in June. Thank you to Vicki Caulfield for project management and Lynn for workshop delivery.

Sponsor for Friends groups

UBC sponsored the following projects for unincorporated member groups in 2024:

- Friends of Coolbinia Bushland: State NRM grant
- Friends of Karak Cooby: City of Cockburn cultural grant

Keep Carnaby's Flying - Ngoolarks Forever

UBC is a partner organisation in this project being led by Murdoch University (MU). We received funding in 2023 and 2024 to support UBC's engagement in the project. We thank Heidi Hardisty for being our project representative.

Strategic and Operational matters

Strategic and Operational Plan

Succession planning and governance continued to be a focus for 2024 with considerable effort put into implementing the subcommittee structure.

With regards **Succession**, we remain committed to a continuous process that plans for people to move on from committee roles. This also means close attention to knowledge retention for the organisation and ensuring there is knowledge transfer from one person to the next. As people leave the committee, we encourage them to keep up roles within a working group or other volunteer support. Never lost!

We have continued our targeted conservation efforts whilst supporting committee, working groups and members as well as we can.

Deductible Gift Reciprocity (DGR)

DGR status was granted in late 2023. UBC was advised in early 2024 that we were "in transition" given that the ATO had taken over responsibility for managing deductible gift reciprocity from the Register of Environmental Organisations. The implementation steps required with our systems were completed in the first quarter of 2024.

Financial Summary

The 2024 finances will be lodged separately with the ACNC as required.

Subcommittees

During 2023 the UBC Committee continued to do more of its operational work via working groups.

Submissions Working Group (SWG)

Submissions and / or appeals are a key avenue for UBC to influence proposed developments as well as government policies/plans that will impact on bushland/wetlands. The Submissions team was led by Marg Owen and James Mumme with assistance from others. The table of submissions is at the end of the report. The table includes 4 Metropolitan Region Scheme comments and 4 Local Structure Plan comments.

Advocacy Subcommittee (ASC)

The Advocacy Working Group continued in 2024 with Heidi Hardisty as convenor and with Christine Richardson, Elizabeth Eaton and Lucy Pezzali as members. Our meetings with Minister Whitby have been productive. Increasingly it is clear that planning processes are the dominant force in decisions about bush protection.

Communications Working Group (Comms)

The Communications Working Group met periodically during 2024 and led the production of 4 editions of Urban Bush Telegraph under the guidance of editor Danielle Brady. We thank Alison Abel and Heidi Hardisty for being our Facebook Admin. Newsletters were circulated monthly by Christine Richardson.

Events & Member Engagement (Events WG)

Events & Member Engagement met periodically during 2024 under the leadership of Sue Conlan, Mitch Polain and Colma Keating, with assistance from Robyn College and others. Themes included:

- bringing awareness to our community about the newly listed critically endangered Honey myrtle shrubland on limestone;
- showcasing group campaigns; and promoting advocacy
- demonstrating ways groups can add further protection for their patch by using iNaturalist;
- building resilience into local bushland by cat and fox proofing, keeping an intact tree canopy and using the local wildlife (Quenda) to incorporate leaf litter into the soil and
- exploring what we need to do to make our city more liveable without urban sprawl

Acknowledging contributions to UBC operations

Life Memberships

At the 2023 AGM, UBC awarded Honorary Life Membership to Marg Owen OAM and Renata Zelinova.

Marg Owen OAM

It is with great pleasure that we declared Marg Owen a Life Member of the Urban Bushland Council.

Marg has been Secretary of UBC since 2004, her contribution to the UBC and conservation management goes way beyond the critical role of secretary. She has drafted many of UBC submissions on development proposals affecting bushland in the environmental impact assessment processes, based on her often-exhaustive research into sources of relevant information. Her efforts, energy and dedication to the environment have also been publicly acknowledged by the Conservation Council of WA in 2011 with the Bessie Rischbieth Award for Conservation and in 2020 by the Governor General of Australia with an Order of Australia (OAM) for Service to Conservation and the Environment.

Renata Zelinova

It is with great pleasure that we declared Renata Zelinova a Life Member of the Urban Bushland Council.

For more than 20 years, Renata has actively contributed to the operations of the Urban Bushland Council and even longer to her local Quinns Rocks Environmental Group. Her contribution includes grant writing and grant delivery for major projects such as the Perth Urban Bushland Fungi project (from 2004); as well as delivering the *Burning Issues* workshop in 2002. She was also editor of the Urban Bush Telegraph for 20 years.

Committee Thank You

A very special thank you to our dedicated and energetic UBC Committee members Marg Owen, Sue Conlan, Philip Thomas, Elizabeth Eaton, Mitch Polain, Heidi Hardisty, Lydia Fenu, James Mumme, Colma Keating and Sue Waddell. We've had robust discussions, but all the while centred around a passion for the protection of urban bushland and wetlands.

UBT editor

Thank you also to UBT Editor Danielle Brady. We are deeply indebted to her for her guidance during the past 2 years. Danielle is standing down from the role and we are seeking another person to take over as volunteer newsletter editor. Is that you?

Other volunteers and supporters

There are many others who assist and whose contributions help make UBC strong. Thank you to Chris Allbeury, Robyn Colledge, Vicki Caulfield, Colma Keating, for all your help in many ways. Thank you all.

Special Acknowledgements

We have many great people contributing to the conservation cause and it is great when our champions are recognised by others.

Mary Gray, WA Landcarers Hall of Fame

Mary was included in the WA Landcarers Hall of Fame in 2024. She is a founding member (since 1992) and long term leader of UBC. A major achievement was her preparation of the successful nomination on behalf of the UBC to list in August 2016 the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain as an endangered ecological community under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999.

Her significant contributions have been recognised with Honorary Life Membership of the UBC and also of the Wildflower Society of WA. She received the CCWA's Bessie Rischbieth Conservation Award in 2014. This award is presented to an individual who shows outstanding commitment to the WA environment, and who has had the courage to challenge government and non-government decision makers. In 2022, Mary was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) Queen's Birthday Honours, in recognition of her contribution to conservation and the environment.

Submissions Lodged 2024

In addition to the listed submissions, UBC engaged in 31 separate consultation processes in 2024. We supported member group campaigns by giving deputations at local council meetings or attending appeals with member groups.

LODGED	FOCUS	AGENCY
10 Jan	Perth Surf Park – Appeal against Clearing Permit CPS 10068	Appeals Convenor
31 Jan	Garden Street Extension, Southern River - Additional Information (impacts BF125 & CCWA & Banksia)	EPA
25 Jan	Appeal CPS 9182 City of Albany bike trails	Appeals Committee
7 Feb	North Ellenbrook District Structure Plan	City of Swan – deputation
19 Feb	Tredrea Workers Accommodation Village, Myalup	Appeals Convenor
7 March	Coppin Road Structure Plan area, Mundaring. Request for a controlled action.	DCCEEW
7 March	Subdivision of Lot 902 Flynn Drive Neerabup. Calling for a PER	EPA
20 March	Anketell Road Upgrade: Leath Road to Kwinana Freeway -Level of assessment – calling for a PER	EPA
24 March	Outer Harbour Port Development– level of Assessment – calling for a PER	EPA
8 April	Aigle Royal Devts, Beenyup Road Banjup - housing	EPA

LODGED	FOCUS	AGENCY
13 April	Chalice Mining Gonneville Project 940ha Nthn Jarrah Forest Request a PER. Proponent anticipates a PER	EPA
15 April 7 May	Albany Heritage Park mountain bike trails	Meeting Appeals Convenor
24 April	Appeal City of Gosnells TPS No 6 Amdmts 166 and 169 EPA Report 1757 Mch 2024.	Appeals Convenor
9 May	Advice to submitters on proposed MRS Amdmt 1400/41 - Nth Fremantle Urban Precinct (RLS/101).	Response from WAPC
10 May	Feedback invited on MRS 1422 Cockburn Road Coogee to amend MRS to transfer 4.1ha of land Cockburn Road from the Railways and Primary Regional Roads reservation to P and R, due to a TEC and potential black Cockatoo habitat	Response to DPLH
7 June	Perth and Peel Urban Greening Strategy	DPLH
16 May	Tredrea Workers Accommodation Village, Lot 28 Tredrea Place, Myalup. Lot 28.	Appeal hearing
4 May	Invitation to comment on proposed Brabham Stage 3 Local Structure Plan	City of Swan
6 June	Duncraig Library Bushland.	City of Joondalup
16 Sep	Appeal against granted clearing permit CPS 10340/1: widening Henley Brook Avenue south of Gnangara Road and extending the road through to just south of Henley Street	Appeals Convenor
23 Aug	Appeal: Tonkin Highway Grade Separated Interchanges (Hale Road and Welshpool Road) . EPA Report on Assessment (1769)	Appeals Convenor
16 Aug	MRS Amendment 1421 Brabham and Dayton Urban Precincts; City of Swan.	WAPC
7 Aug	Maddington Kenwick Strategic Employment Area Precinct 2 and 3B	City of Gosnells
28 July	UBC comment on Christine Tonkin's Churchland's proposed road from Empire Ave to Pearson Street	Christie Tonkin MLA
18 Jul	Anketell Road Upgrade (Leith Road to Kwinana Freeway:) Referral Decision for Public Comment. EPBC number: 2024/09841.	EPBC Act DCCEEW
4 July	47065 - East Wanneroo Precinct 8 - Roach Road Local Structure Plan – proposed loss of 10 ha BW: 4 ha FCT 20a – critically endangered in Excellent to Good condition.	City of Wanneroo
16 Oct	Westco Road Project-Appeal granting of Clearing Permit 9804/1 to clear 6.495ha of native vegetation by Meteor Stone Pty Ltd for limestone extraction – Nowergup	Appeals Convenor
9 Dec	MRS Amendment 1388/57 Wattle Grove (South) Precinct – Env Review.	DPLH
9 Oct	Comments on Draft Derbal Yiragan (Swan) Djarlgarro (Canning) River Protection Strategy	DBCA
24 Sep	CIA / HIA Draft Guidelines Submission (Cumulative Impact Assessment, Holistic Impact Assessment)	Chair of EPA
	Limestone Quarry Lot 1794 Finn Rd, Myalup	EPA
Nov 24	Appeal to Clear limestone shrubland for Limestone Quarrying in Wanneroo	
Dec 24	Wattlegrove rezoning from Rural residential to Urban	WAPC

Christine Richardson 1 March 2025.