



Newsletter of the Urban Bushland Council WA Inc
PO Box 326, West Perth WA 6872
Email: ubc@bushlandperth.org.au

The Urban Bush Telegraph

MAKE A SUBMISSION On the Draft Native Vegetation Policy for WA

Consultation is open for the State’s Native Vegetation Policy. This is now a critical time for conservation action in Western Australia. We have recently seen the announcement of the closure of native forest logging in WA within 2 years. And just now we have an opportunity to influence the Native Vegetation Policy for WA.

How UBC is responding

We believe it is important that all members make a submission to this process. We need a Native Vegetation Policy and especially one that properly protects native vegetation and aims for net gain in native vegetation extent. However, the draft document is long and somewhat confusing. So UBC has **created advice** to help with your submission. Go to the UBC’s [dedicated web page](#) for

Native Vegetation Policy which tells you about the consultation process and contains our submission guides.

You can find a concise downloadable submission guide on this page. You can also find a full version submission guide plus the supporting documents we have prepared. They are designed to assist with the completion of the Department of Water and Environment Regulation online survey.

UBC also held a **submission writing workshop** on 7 October at the State Library with 25 people attending. Brett Loney from the Wildflower Society WA told us why we needed a policy for native vegetation and Mary Gray summarised the key issues in the early parts of the policy document. Workshop attendees then broke into groups to form a view on the suitability of the key strategies and the roadmap for delivery. All this discussion has been synthesised into a consolidated document that you can find on our [website](#).

Key points for submissions

The Minister’s Foreword (page iii) and the Purpose section (page 4) of the consultation draft make some encouraging statements for the protection and management of native vegetation. However, it is hard to see how the remainder of the document delivers on the intent found at Minister’s Foreword and the Purpose.

Therefore we need you to respond – we all need to help to make this policy work.

In summary, UBC commends the Purpose of the Native Vegetation Policy (Page 4); and points out the importance of retaining native vegetation as a climate action. UBC urges the State Government to identify strategies with more ambition and urgency to protect and manage existing native vegetation and further deliver a net gain in native vegetation. The southwest WA biodiversity hotspot has been globally

(Continued on page 2)

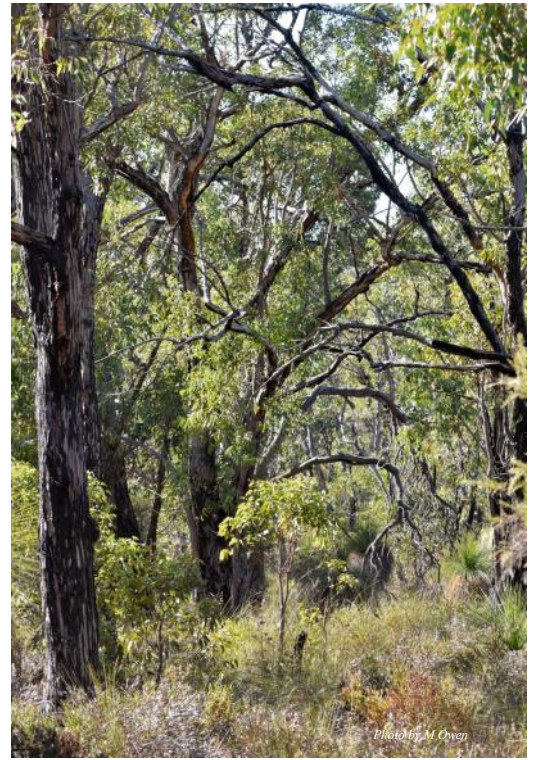


Photo by M Owen

Inside this issue:

Beeliar Wetlands Safe	3
Fight for urban bushland	4,5&10
Group’s News	6
Nature stories	11
2021 UBC Events	12

EDITORIAL

There are many ongoing nature conservation issues that are yet to be adequately addressed by our State Government. On the positive side, the Government's recent commitment to end forest logging in the south west is most welcome, and especially with the immediate end to Karri logging. Timber production should all be provided from plantations on suitable land already cleared.

In our south west biodiversity hotspot - which is globally recognised as such '*for conservation priority because it is under threat*' – there is ongoing and unregulated clearing to the degree that the extent of native vegetation loss is not known and not adequately monitored. The clearing regulations under the *Environmental Protection Act* (EP Act) are not controlling clearing as they should. Most applications for Clearing Permits are being approved despite being at variance to one or more of the clearing principles. This is contrary to the spirit and intent of the clearing regulations that state that native vegetation should not be cleared if it is in one of the 10 categories specified as clearing principles. The UBC calls for a significant change towards strict enforcement of the clearing principles, so that clearing at variance to one or more principles is not permitted. Offsets do not justify granting of permits to clear native vegetation that is supposed to be protected, as the result is always a net loss of high conservation value native vegetation.

Also there are categories of 'exemptions' for the need to apply for a Clearing Permit. Thus clearing of unknown extent and location is taking place under exemptions. A solution to address this in our over-cleared south west biodiversity hotspot is for this region to be declared an '*Environmentally Sensitive Area*' (ESA) under the EP Act which would mean that exemptions do not apply in this region. Notably Bush Forever Areas were declared as ESAs some years ago.

Now there is a [draft Native Vegetation Policy for WA](#) open for public comment until 25th October 2021. While the **Minister's foreword** (on page iii) together with the **Purpose** (on page 4 of the draft) are to be commended, the Strategies and outcomes together with the Roadmap are excessively wordy and confusing, and do not adequately deliver the Minister's commitment and the purposes – especially for our south west biodiversity hotspot. UBC members and supporters are encouraged to have your say via the on line survey questions or by sending a free form submissions to nvs@dwer.wa.gov.au

It is now 21 years since the Bush Forever plan and program was introduced by the Government of WA. It was planned to be fully implemented in 10 years by 2010, so now its completion is 11 years overdue. We are advised that a Bush Forever Audit (by DPLH) will be released by the end of this year. While most Bush Forever sites have been acquired or secured by government, the major gap is in the allocation of recurrent funding to DBCA for the management of the set of sites proposed to be transferred for management by them as 'A' class nature reserves. Whilst the McGowan Government has maintained its commitment to Bush Forever, we are yet to see the appropriate allocation of State funding for the on-ground survey, monitoring and management of all Bush Forever sites.

There remain a number of significant bushland sites that are under threat of development. Two such cases are being assessed by the EPA: Firstly Lot 123 Mortimer Road, Casuarina in the City of Kwinana is a Controlled Action under the EPBC Act (referral 2018/8379) and its assessment is devolved to the WA EPA. It is intact bushland of the Bassendean Central and South vegetation complex, and includes three State listed TECs, the Banksia Woodlands of the SCP TEC, as well as quality habitat for endangered black cockatoos and more. The UBC was advised by a DBCA officer in April 2020 that the site should be added to the conservation estate. So the site is really a test case for the EPA's rigorous assessment and advice.

Secondly, Lots 802 and 803 Erindale Road Hamersley in the City of Stirling. The Friends of Erindale Road are actively campaigning to have this quality site saved from development and instead conserved. See page 5 for details.



UBC held a submission writing workshop on 7 October.

(Continued from page 1)

identified for conservation priority because it is under threat. Clearing and cumulative impacts of clearing are major threats. Consequently, to achieve a net gain in the SW regions, there must be no more clearing.

We believe there is an urgency for action and that the timelines proposed in the policy document should be substantially reduced. We also note that the actions required for native vegetation and protection will require substantial additional funding support from the State Government and this should be provided through the budget process.

Find our submission guide on our [website](#), go to the [online survey](#), fill it in, then email UBC at ubc@bushlandperth.org.au and let us know it's done.

Find the online survey here: <https://consult.dwer.wa.gov.au/native-vegetation/draft-policy/> **Closing date is 25 October.**

Safe At Last – Government Acts to Save the Beeliar Wetlands

A forty-year campaign to save the Beeliar Wetlands from a misconceived road plan has succeeded with the passage of the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021 through the Legislative Council on 5 August 2021. This legislation rezones approximately 34 hectares of the Beeliar Wetlands from Primary Regional Roads reserve (Roe Highway stage 8) to the Parks and Recreation Reserve. Following this, the Minister is expected to incorporate this land into the Beeliar Regional Park and convert it to class A reserve.

The Urban Bushland Council has applauded this move by the McGowan Government, which has delivered on a major election commitment. The Government tried to pass this Bill in the previous Parliamentary term but it was blocked in the Legislative Council by the Liberal Party and their allies. As a result of the Government's resounding victory in the March 2021 election, it now has a majority in both Houses of State Parliament.

The decision to remove the Roe 8 reserve follows the Government's decision in 2020 to convert all the land it holds for conservation in the Beeliar Regional Park to class A status under the Land Act.

The campaign to save the Beeliar Wetlands from fragmentation by the Roe Highway began in 1975 with the publication of the Cockburn Wetlands Study, authored by Professor Peter Newman, which drew attention to the out-

standing conservation values of the Beeliar Wetlands. The Cockburn Wetlands Study recommended that Main Roads seek a better alignment for the Roe Highway, which would not degrade the wetlands. Although this recommendation was endorsed by the EPA in its System Six Report (1984) and reaffirmed in its strategic review in 2004, Main Roads made no attempt to find a less damaging alignment for Roe 8. They relied instead on a commitment from the Liberal Party to fund the flawed plan when it was next elected to Government. As a result, the Barnett Government attempted to construct Roe 8 through the Beeliar Wetlands in 2016/17, but it was met with fierce opposition by conservationists and local residents.

Labor came to power in March 2017, promising to scrap the flawed Perth Freight Link plan, which included Roe 8 and Roe 9, and redirect the funds to much needed improvements to the existing road and rail network. Some funds were also allocated to revegetating the bulldozed corridor that the Barnett Government had created through the Beeliar Wetlands. This work is proceeding.

For more details about the Roe 8 campaign and its wider implications see the book "Never Again: Reflections on Environmental Responsibility After Roe 8", edited by Andrea Gaynor, Peter Newman and Philip Jennings (UWA Press 2017, ISBN 978-1-74258-972-5).

UBC WORKSHOPS



Photo by D Keating

Sponsored by a generous supporter donation and pro-bono contributions, this year UBC embarked on the 'Capacity Building Workshop Series' in response to both members' requests and the demands of advocacy and bushland care across our urban areas.

With the theme for the year "Is your patch under threat", first off the rank in July was **"Why your Patch Matters"** where Diana Corbyn, Mary Gray (photo above) and Colma Keating took participants step by step through the keys to understanding a local patch:

- ◇ biological and physical attributes
- ◇ tenure
- ◇ land management
- ◇ policies
- ◇ program
- ◇ threats, support and resources.

(Continued from page 3)

Second in August was “**Working with local government decision-makers and land managers**” where Sandy Boulter (lawyer, ex Cottesloe Councillor and Local Government Elected Members Association) together with Renata Zelinova (WA Local Government Association) helped us to understand many aspects of local government including opportunities and challenges of existing laws, benefits of local biodiversity planning, the importance of third party appeals, compulsory voting and a public register of donations to councils and councillors – particularly from developers.

We have also aligned our ‘walks and talks’ with these workshop themes and thank all the individuals and groups who have contributed to making this a very rich year of learning and camaraderie.

As always, one of the highlights of all the sessions (walks, talks and workshops) has been the meeting and mingling of individuals who care for our bushland patches – and the cross fertilisation of challenges, approaches, stories and achievements.

Special thanks to our prob-bono presenters and UBC’s Capacity Building Project Steering Group (Mary Gray, Sue Conlan and Colma Keating) and project officer Colma Keating.



A joint event of the Friends of Warwick Bushland and the UBC held on 22 August at the Warwick Bushland was attended by 65 people.

Photo by M. Owen

f “SAVE KIARA BUSHLAND “

By Pat Mckeown

The fight to save the Kiara bushland is about to start ramping up again as Development WA (formerly Landcorp) has been given the plot of land formally known as Lot 9000 Kiara. After more than 20 years, the Department of Communities was unable to proceed with developing the land as the clearing permit had expired, and the vegetation is now recognized as part of the Swan Coastal Plain Banksia Woodland Threatened Ecological Community.

Currently we have an independent environmental consultant preparing a detailed report on our bushland.

The Carnaby’s and Red-tailed black cockatoos have been feeding and potentially roosting in the area in greater numbers due to the recent bush fires destroying large areas of their habitat. This piece of land has become vital to their survival as an area where they can rest, feed and roost.

Please join our Facebook page and support our cause.

We will soon be putting more pressure on the WA Government to protect this vital habitat. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to keep nature at our doorstep to ensure we have a healthy environment to which we can escape and enjoy.



NEW REGIONAL PARK PROPOSAL

Friends of Moore River Estuary (FOMRE) are proposing that a new conservation park be formed between the northern limits of Perth’s urban development at Two Rocks and the south bank of the Moore River Estuary, and encompassing lands the west of Indian Ocean Drive. The proposed park includes part of the traditional lands of the Yued People.

The land in question is unique, containing threatened ecological communities and including portions of the Gngangara, Gingin and Yanchep Groundwater Management Areas.

The benefits of creating a regional park here would be multiple, including biodiversity protection and enhancement of opportunities for nature-based cultural and recreational tourism. This could also create expanded employment opportunities through the [Indigenous Range Program](#) supported via Commonwealth Government funding.

The copy of the FOMRE proposal presented to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions in May 2021 can be found [here](#). Or go to the FOMRE website: <https://guildertonwa.com.au/fomre/about/>

Erindale Road Bushland a Threatened Ecological Community under threat

By Robyn Murphy, Friends of Erindale Rd Bushland

A large area of Banksia woodland 11km from the Perth CBD bounded by Erindale Road, Reid Hwy, Wanneroo Road and Lennox Drive in Hamersley is under threat.

This land, previously owned by the Commonwealth Government's National Transmission Network, was privatised by the Howard Government in 1999 and acquired by the Macquarie Bank Ltd, who sold it two years later to BAI Communications, a global company headquartered in Toronto Canada. The Canadian Pension Fund is the major shareholder.

After just over 20 years of private ownership, BAI Communications has decided to try to sell 13.55ha of this bushland for housing development, including the clearing of 11.58ha of native vegetation. Changes in technology make the decommissioning of the communication tower imminent and this largely intact Banksia woodland (Lot 802 and Lot 803 Erindale Rd) will become surplus to the requirements of this global communications company, who stand to make a huge profit by its sale for housing.

BAI referred its proposal to the EPA under s.38 on 17 April 2020. 170 submissions were received from the public seeking a Public Environmental Review. A Notice Requiring Information for Assessment was issued by the EPA on 2 July 2020. Since then, the proponent has made changes to its proposal seeking to increase the "disturbance footprint" from 11.58ha to 12.39ha with an "offset" on the adjoining Lot 803. This change to the proposal has been accepted by the EPA and a Notice of Decision to Change to proposal during Assessment was issued on 31 August 2021. The EPA is awaiting "additional information" from the proponent and once received, a two week public review period enabling public comment will be carried out before a decision is made by the EPA. The Minister for the Environment is the ultimate decision maker.

In the meantime, the Friends of Erindale Road Bushland has been actively campaigning to save this regionally important bushland. Significant facts are:

Banksia woodland on the Swan Coastal Plain is a Threatened Ecological Community under the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*.

Banksia attenuata woodland is listed as a Threatened Ecological Community under the *WA Biodiversity Conservation Act (2016)*. *Banksia attenuata*, *Banksia menziesii* and *Banksia prionotes* are present throughout the bushland.

The Flora List submitted by the proponents does not include Tuart or Rottnest Island Pine both of which are visible from outside the fence of the property.

Trees on the site provide foraging habitat and potential breeding habitat for the endangered Carnaby's Cockatoo.



Excessive clearing of vegetation has occurred on the Swan Coastal Plain with inadequate reservation of flora, vegetation and fauna.

The proponent's Flora and Fauna Report is dated September 2019. However it has not assessed the bushland against the EPBC Act list of threatened ecological communities under s.184 which includes "Tuart woodlands and forests of the Swan Coastal Plain as an ecological community in the critical endangered category".

Inadequate assessment in the proponent's report of the significance of the bushland to Noongar-Mooro people who walked this way from Perth to Yanchep.

City of Stirling's Urban Forest Plan's target to increase tree canopy to 18% by 2030 would be significantly undermined should this clearing be approved.

Offsets have been proposed in the Shire of Gingin and/or Dandaragan. It is not possible to offset a Threatened Ecological Community and the result is a net loss.

Please join the campaign to protect this important Banksia woodland by joining the Friends of Erindale Rd Bushland www.friendsoferindaleroadbushland.com; friendsoferindaleroadbushland@gmail.com like our Facebook page and **sign our petition available via the email.**

The Fire and Biodiversity Forum presentations and associated videos are now available on Vimeo: [Fire and Biodiversity Forum Margaret River 2021 on Vimeo](#)

Thanks to our generous and talented presenters, committee, sponsors, supporters, volunteers, audience and networkers, the Forum, Workshop and Field Trip attracted approx 450 delegates and highly positive and enthusiastic reviews, including appreciation of the expert range of speakers, location and venue.



Photo by J Bowler

Ellis Brook Valley Reserve

By John Bowler

Thirty years ago Ellis Brook Valley was not a place where many people chose or would want to visit. There was a lot of rusting debris from the quarrying activity which had ended in 1962 and there were wrecked cars and other piles of dumped rubbish. A few local residents however recognized that the valley had great scenic potential. There was a sixty foot waterfall and the Valley was flanked by steep rocky ridges. Also there was varied bushland, forest and wild flowers. Early action was to successfully campaign for a land swap with the then Readymix quarry. This ensured that the land containing the waterfall was no longer at risk of being quarried.

Soon after that the Friends of Ellis Brook Valley Group was formed. In a combined effort between the Friends, the Gosnells Council and the SES the rubbish heaps and wrecked cars were removed. The City of Gosnells were the official custodians of the Valley but in those early years they chose not to be particularly active in planning or work at the Valley. They were however prepared to assist the Friends Group with environmental initiatives and other actions to benefit visitors.

Over the following twenty-five years or so the Friends Group initiated and managed many projects. These included weed and erosion control, walk trail construction, design and construction of picnic and parking areas and more. We also ran our own nursery to raise seedlings for the re-vegetation of degraded areas. The Friends successfully applied for grant money and the Council was also forthcoming with funds for projects.

An important project was to establish a Regional Herbarium collection in conjunction with the State Herbarium. This required the collecting of plant species in the form of pressed specimens and identification and documentation. This work continued over a ten year period with hundreds of trips to all parts of the reserve and over five hundred species identified. My wife Heather was responsible for the bulk of the work and became highly regarded by the State Herbarium. Visitor numbers to the reserve gradually increased and the Council started to adopt a more hands on approach.

By 2020 the years of work had led to the Valley being a great natural venue. Visitor amenities were in place, there was an excellent network of walk trails and all degraded areas had been re-vegetated. Visitors were now flocking to the Valley. The Council was fully committed to the management of the Valley and their team of well qualified staff was doing most of the project and maintenance work. For the Friends Group this was very welcome as many of our members were no longer able to carry out the physically demanding work. It did however leave us wondering what we could now do and our participation level dropped as a result. Consequently an agreement between the Friends and Council has been drawn up. This document nominates who will be responsible for the various work requirements with the Friends being responsible for a number of the lighter duties such as pruning and management of motion sensor wildlife cameras.

For more information about Ellis Brook Valley there is a City of Gosnells web site and a host of other information on the internet. If you are planning a visit a week day may be best option as weekends are very busy.

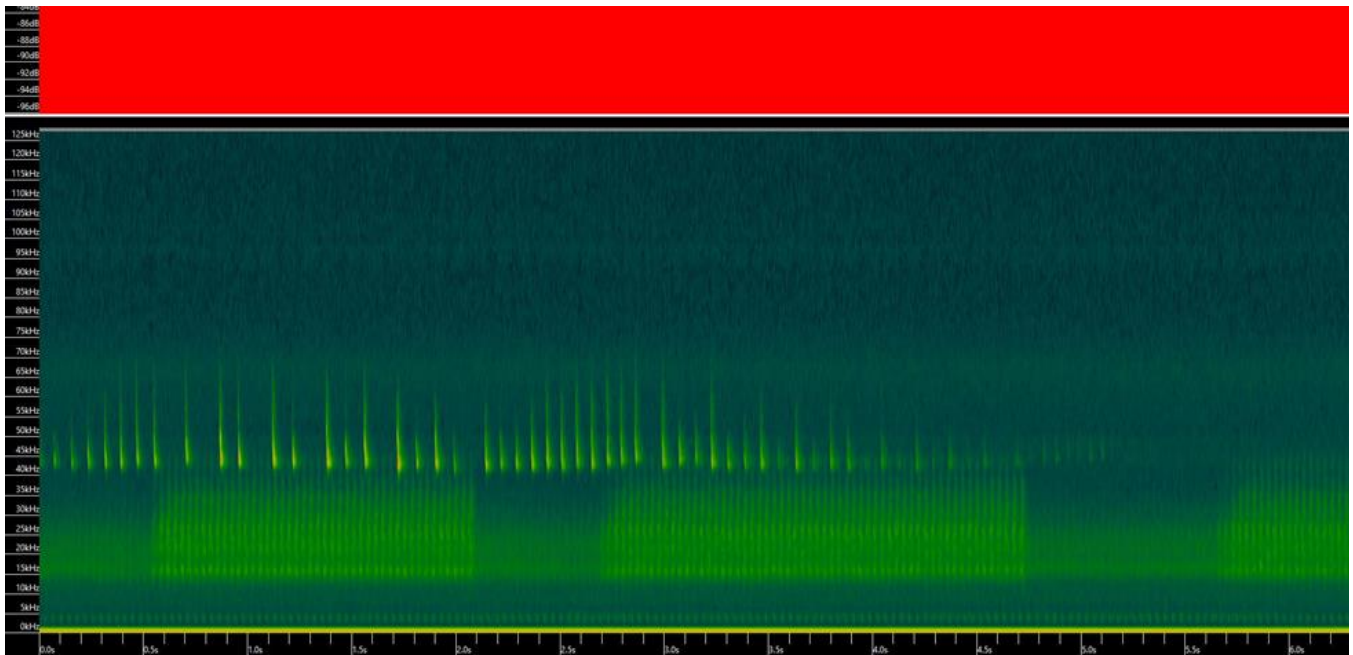
Group News Group News Group News

Friends of Paganoni Swamp

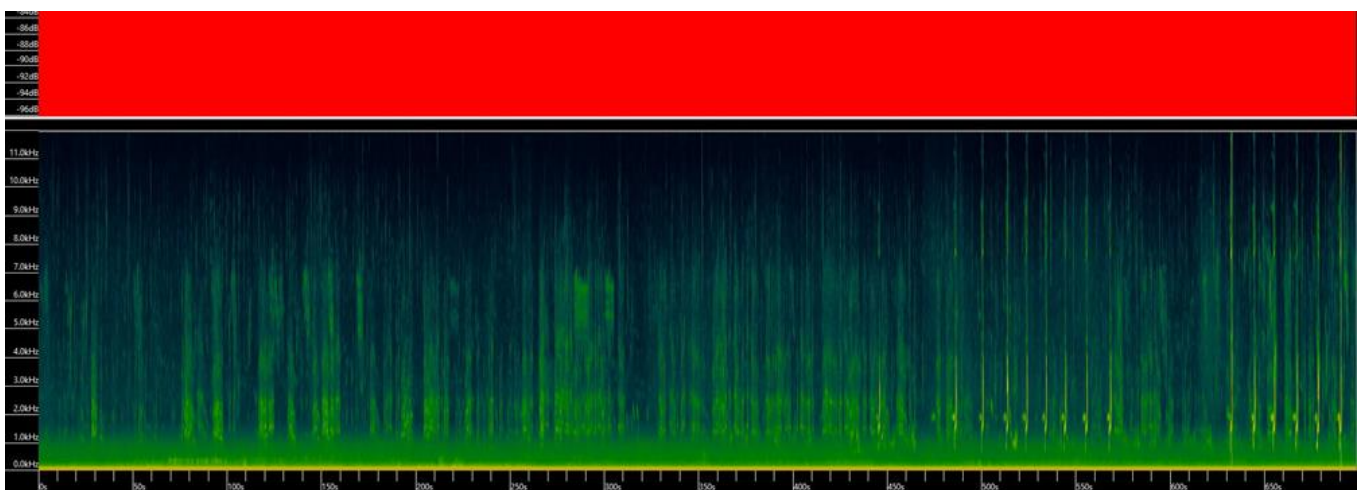
By Leonie Stubbs

Our Friends group is concentrating on weeding at the present time. With leadership from Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' staff, we have just completed weed mapping the area that underwent a burn in 2019. We noticed many young Tuart, Marri and Jarrah seedlings which was wonderful to see as well as the Hibbertia flowering. It was also interesting to note that the kangaroos have been busy keeping the weedy grasses under control. In areas they could not access, such as dead prickly wattles, there was usually a weed grass hiding amongst the dead branches. Our native animals provide so many benefits to the Reserve; the more they are protected and flourish, the healthier our bushland will be.

To ascertain what is in the Reserve we have a couple of outdoor cameras as well as a sound recorder. We situated one of the cameras near a phascogale nest box and were pleased to see a fair bit of activity occur around their mating time. That only occurs for around two months a year between mid-May and mid-July with most mature males dying off after that event. What a precarious existence this species has!



The top line represents a bat call. The bottom line represents insect calls. The sonogram below represents the calls of Ravens, Magpies and the Grey Shrike-Thrush.



Whilst it's absolutely fantastic to collect the information from the cameras and sound recorder, the data files are extremely large which requires storage space on a computer as well as the time and effort to classify the information. So it can be a challenge. However it certainly does add to the enjoyment of spending time at Paganoni Swamp Reserve.

If you are interested in joining our group we welcome new members and meet most Monday mornings for activities at Paganoni Swamp Reserve, Paganoni Road, Karnup. For further information please email Leonie at fop@westnet.com.au.

Group News Group News Group News

Friends of Allen Park Bushland Group is facing challenges on a couple of fronts, but centre stage, one that other groups are also confronted with, and that is the abundance of weeds following an excellent rainfall season. The weeds abound, but when fossicking through the undergrowth, we are rewarded with a myriad of tiny native seedlings. It's hoped the spring delivers just enough rain to see their roots deepen to resist desiccation through summer months. Most exciting was the discovery of half a dozen *Banksia grandis* seedlings that emerged from a good patch of leaf litter and not far from the parent plant. Although the area is on the road verge of the Heritage Precinct, and not in the depths of the reserve, it tells us that the soil health is spot on.

On the other front, the old Swanbourne Bowling Club greens have been the centre of controversy relating to 5000m square being excised from the A Class reserve to build a 7-bed children's hospice. The site abuts the bushland and community concern is that the proposal has been fast tracked under the cloak of Covid-19. The community was not fully engaged and consulted in the process despite it being allegedly so by the spruikers, resulting in the issue being emotive, divisive, and played out in the media. Had the legislative process been handled with transparency and due diligence, from the outset, the outcome would not have caused such angst in the community and perhaps brought about a better outcome.



Photo by L. Shaw

One larger *Banksia grandis* specimen (possibly last year's but not seen until now) emerging from the undergrowth, pictured here with Common mignonette orchids.

In November 2020, the City of Nedlands established a Site Assessment Work Group, a body of 12 residents with the aim to identify the issues this proposal would likely have on the community. The group was not a decision making body, but would bring issues from the community to the attention of the proponents, the Perth Children's Hospital Foundation and hope that the best outcome would arise from this process. The paucity of information flow from the proponents, even after a "community information" session, brought about a Friends of Allen Park community led question workshop in August. A comprehensive list resulted from this and circulated to Parliamentarians. It is now at this point that some of those questions will be answered.

Text and photo by Lesley Shaw

CRREPA Site Tours with South Metro TAFE, Urban Bushland Council and Perth NRM

By Colma Keating

Canning River Residents Environmental Protection Association (CRREPA) was busy this year with many site tours including three education/awareness focused tours exploring the variety of rehabilitation approaches that we have been using since our inception in 1994:

South Metro TAFE Conservation and Land Management Students joined us for the fourth year (May 17); Members of the Urban Bushland Council WA Inc (September 12) (photo below); and Members of Perth NRM (September 23).



Photo by C. Keating

Group News Group News Group News

In addition, it was great to have CRREPA Members also join these tours – a fabulous way to step back and see what, why and how the rehabilitation works have been undertaken in collaboration with others, in particular the City of Canning (CoC) and the South East Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL).

This year we included the fabulous Nurdi Living Stream that has created a much more interesting habitat for birds and insects as well as for the local community. Once the waters settle and move thru the two basins to remove nutrients and chemicals it travels north in pipes under Leach Highway near the Corinthian Tennis Club and eventually feeds directly into our patch at Grecian's Spit (Beatrice Avenue).

We are grateful to Cat Williams (SERCUL) for guiding us at Nurdi Living Stream, to Max Box, City of Canning Natural Areas Team Leader for guiding in May and to Grecian, Stephen, Sue and Colma for representing CRREPA and guiding along our foreshore.

We have also pulled together some very informative photo-books that demonstrate the amazing achievements of all our collective hard yakka! Click [here](#) to check some of the sites out – many that you would have contributed to.

If you would like us to run some more site tours for you, family, neighbours, friends – let us know. A great way to introduce new and old residents who may hopefully join us to continue our important and impressive work.

No Quarantine Necessary!

By Don Poynton, Friends of North Ocean Reef-Iluka Foreshore

One of the best spots in Bush Forever 325 to take in panoramic views of the bush and ocean is a small, difficult to access, hill capped by rough limestone, between Burns Beach and Iluka. Small pods of soil in depressions support a myriad of lime loving plants such as the mauve, Coastal Thomasia (*Thomasia triphylla*), the white flowers of the Coastal Trymalium (*Trymalium ledifolium* var. *ledifolium*) and Coastal Beard Heath (*Leucopogon parviflorus*), priority three, yellow *Hibbertia leptotheca* and Pink Fairy Orchids (*Caladenia latifolia*).

However, it was something completely different that caught the attention of a few volunteers from the Friends of North Ocean Reef-Iluka Foreshore during a recent visit. Scattered amongst the rocky outcrops were small cylindrical tubes up to 25m in diameter and 5-30mm high, made of woven plant fibre. The immediate assumption was they belonged to some form of trapdoor spider that didn't build a trapdoor!

On closer inspection, a beastly with a very large set of pincers was found to be protecting the entrance. After enticing it out of its burrow we found it to be a large ant about 25mm in length. It was soon followed by a smaller and thinner ant.

Both the WA Museum and the Pest and Disease Information Services (PDIS) identified them as major and minor workers of the native sugar ant, *Camponotus molussus*. PDIS added that as they were a native species, there was no biosecurity risk and the area did not need to be quarantined.

What made our discovery so unusual is that the ants are nocturnal and tend to nest in old termite mounds, a very unlikely occurrence at our location given it is hard limestone.

The ants are endemic to Southwestern WA and were first described in 1907 by Prof. Auguste Forel who described specimens from Buckland Hill and Serpentine which were collected during the 1905 Hamburg expedition to southwest Australia. Forel developed a lifelong passion for myrmecology (study of ants) in his childhood, but chose medicine and neuropsychiatry to earn his living. He is credited with formulating the neuron theory and published a remarkable book on the social world of the ants in which he made insightful observations on the neural control of sensory and instinctive behaviour common to both humans and insects.



View from Limestone Hill with bushes of *Hibbertia leptotheca* (P3) in foreground.



Major and minor *Camponotus molussus* worker ants and burrow.

Group News Group News Group News

Underwood Avenue Bushland

By Margaret Owen

The Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland is asking the WA Premier to buy Underwood Avenue Bushland, Shenton Park, to become an A-class reserve.

The petition, which at the time of writing having just over 12,000 signatures, will close on 11 October and we hope to present it to the Premier or to an officer on 27 October 2021.

The bushland's protection is now critical.

We became aware that something was going on that implied a decision had been made. The whole of the bushland and the wider area of Lot 4 was surveyed and pegged, a flora survey was carried out, and two non-government organisations that had been housed in UWA buildings moved out.

On enquiry to the University, the Friends were told that the surveying was for the Bushfire Management Plan. The Vice-Chancellor Professor Amit Chakma agreed to meet the Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland in March 2021. The Vice-Chancellor explained that non-core University land holdings and other assets were to be considered for divestment. The V-C explained that he was sympathetic to preserving the environmental values of the site but he has a responsibility because the land was endowed to the University. He also stated that nothing would happen to the bushland without consultation and communication with the Friends Group.

In our subsequent concern about what was going on, we rang the Market-led Proposal office in the Department of Finance.

Market-led Proposals were introduced by the Labor government in 2019. The website states 'The MLP policy is designed to enable you to submit your business's unique proposal to government, providing a single channel and a clear, consistent and transparent process.' The process may be transparent to applicants but as the process is confidential, there is nothing transparent to those outside the process.



If an organisation has 'an innovative proposal, unsolicited by government, that would provide an opportunity for the state government and the private sector to work together, and that would create jobs and stimulate the economy, and that would have a substantial element of public value', the proposal would be considered.

There are three stages to this process and at the conclusion of each stage, the proposal is put to state cabinet for approval or rejection.

Stage 1 is concept evaluation and if the proposal fulfills the criteria, the proponent is invited to proceed to Stage 2, where the business case is developed. As stated, the process is confidential, so that by the time the proposal becomes public, after passing stage 3, the proponent and the State government know all the details but the public has been left completely in the dark. The Market-led Proposal information under the Department of Finance website tells us that 58 Market-led Proposals have been received from 11 April 2019 to 24 June 2021. Of these 28 were declined and 23 are current.

The Friends found out that one or more Market-led Proposals were being developed in the 'Shenton precinct' although what area this precinct covered was unknown and unrevealed when requests were made.

The part that became public knowledge was that the odour buffer around the WWTP was to be reduced from its current extent of 500m. As sensitive land uses such as housing cannot be built within the buffer, a reduction of the buffer meant a lot of land could be made available for public housing or for other uses.

Disclosed information on the Market-led Proposal website is that the proposal for the Graylands Hospital site and the Shenton precinct has been invited to Stage 2 with governance by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. 'The proposal 'incorporates the implementation of an odour management and solar power solution at the Subiaco Waste Water Treatment Plant'. The proposal is investigating the potential to repurpose the current Graylands Hospital site for future urban development.'

Underwood Avenue Bushland is part of this Shenton precinct and also probably or possibly other University-owned lands such as CSIRO, Biological and Agriculture Science Research facilities at the Shenton Park Field Station and UWA Sports Park.

The Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland believe that some part of Underwood Bushland is threatened with clearing, and the obvious area is at the top of the dune where views are. We have reiterated our position to the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage that we request the State Government to buy the bushland and that UWA is willing to sell.

Group News Group News Group News

We also reiterated that we support the retention of the whole of Underwood Bushland (~34 hectares), as well as a strip of bushland through which the Carnaby's Cockatoos fly from their roost site into the bushland. Over years compromises have been made and for the sake of birds, animals, plants and fungi, no more bush can be excised.

The community opposes bulldozing or clearing of any part of this significant and wonderful bushland.

The Market-led Proposal in the Shenton precinct is moving very fast.

Blast from the Past - 1993.

The Urban Bushland Council has had to shift its office. Fortunately, after searching for some time, a room in City West Lotteries House at West Perth became available, so we are just shifting down the corridor.

In tidying up we came across a copy of a letter dated October 1993 from the then UBC President Jane Blake to the then Minister for Environment, Hon Kevin Minson.

In the letter Jane invited Minister Minson to give a presentation on the draft State Government's Urban Bushland Policy to members of the UBC. In her letter Jane wrote:

'As a peak body concerned with urban bushland issues in this State, I believe this Council is in a strong position to offer you comprehensive advice about community views and possibilities for protection of bushland for the enjoyment and enrichment of the community.'

'I would add that urban bushland in Perth is like no other. We still have the exciting possibility of protecting and living in harmony with our natural heritage. This will require a new commitment from the Government – a commitment which has been sadly lacking in the past, but which now requires Statutory strength.'

We'd have to peruse our records to see if the Minister did give a presentation. It would be difficult to resist such an invitation.

Tranes Weevils



Photo by M Owen

For a long time, it had been assumed that Macrozamia, that have separate male and female plants, were pollinated by wind transfer of the pollen.

However, when insects were excluded from macrozamia, the female plants did not set seed.

It was found that Tranes weevils are one of the pollinators. Tranes larvae develop in the male cones and as adults feed on the tissue.

The male Macrozamia plants can heat up and pollen-bearing Tranes may leave that plant and serendipitously find themselves on a non-heating up female plant. Thus, pollination can take place. When the Tranes return to a male plant they can mate and lay eggs there.

In other years I have seen them fighting on the male cones, using their rostrum (nose) to try to lever competitors off the cones. So far this year, they are not in great numbers.

It was very exciting to see this weevil, covered in pollen. Reproduction of both plants and animals is so important, as is protecting the whole of Underwood Avenue Bushland.

Stinking fungus

I don't have much of a sense of smell but I could smell these exotic structures in Underwood Bushland. The smell is described as of 'rotting meat or sewage.'

The fruiting body is short-lived so it was lucky that the remnants of the lacy skirt were still visible.

Spores are held at the top of the stalk in 'a foul-smelling brown slime that is eagerly consumed by blowflies and other insects.' And how are the spores spread? They are distributed after passing through the insects.

Amazing nature.

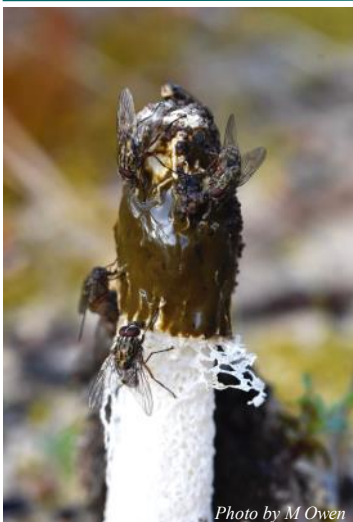


Photo by M Owen



Photo by M Owen

Nature stories and photos by Marg Owen



2021 EVENTS

Visit <https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/events/> to RSVP

Guided Walk in Hepburn Heights Conservation Area

With Friends of Hepburn & Pinnaroo
Bushland

Sunday 17 October 9.30 -11.00 am
Meet at O'Leary Road, Padbury

Walk followed by morning tea.



Photo by M Owen

How an emu crosses the road in Ellenbrook?

Use this [link](#) to watch a short video of an emu using the natural bridge over Tonkin Highway in Ellenbrook (Courtesy to ABC Perth).

This 12 m wide overpass was built by Main Roads and is the first fully vegetated fauna overpass in Western Australia.



SUPPORT THE URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL - JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Groups:

Membership with voting rights is available to groups committed to the protection of urban bushland for \$60 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

Individuals:

Supporter membership is only \$50 per year (GST included). Supporters can attend meetings and receive copies of the "Urban Bush Telegraph"

The annual membership fees include an electronic copy of the *Urban Bush Telegraph* (currently published quarterly). Printed copies can be ordered at a cost of \$15.00 per annum for four editions.

Join or renew on-line (<https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/membership/>) or send your name, address and cheque to:
Treasurer, Urban Bushland Council WA Inc, PO Box 326, West Perth WA 6872

Office:

URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL WA Inc
Lotteries House 2 Delhi Street West Perth WA 6008
Postal address: PO Box 326 West Perth WA 6872
Ph 9420 7207 E-mail: ubc@bushlandperth.org.au
Web site: www.bushlandperth.org.au



Urban Bushland Council WA Inc



<http://twitter.com/#!/UrbanBushlandWA>

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:
ubc@bushlandperth.org.au
Copy deadline - TBD

THE URBAN BUSH TELEGRAPH

ISSN 2208-4770