

The Zen of Bush Weeding

By Brentyn J. Ramm



A group of dedicated volunteers after one of their regular weeding sessions in bushland saved from Roe 8 extension.

Once a fortnight a small group of us gather to hand weed a strip of bushland for two hours. Hand weeding bushland hardly seems like a romantic endeavour. It is hard work and the weeds can seem to be endless. Why do we do it? In 2017, a long strip of Noongar country bushland was bulldozed by the WA Liberal government to make way for the planned Roe 8 highway. The Roe 8 project has been put on hold by the Labor government (hopefully for good), and since then the bushland has slowly come back with the help of the regeneration efforts of volunteers. Hand weeding of invasive plant species is an effective method for helping the bush to regenerate itself with minimal interference. As well as love of the bush, another reason we take up bags and breadknives for digging weeds is the general need to just do something in the face of multiple ecological crises. Taking action is in fact one of the most effective defences against hopelessness. Here I would like to talk about some of the other possible psychological benefits of bush weeding and in particular its relation to Zen.

Whether or not one has a formal meditation practice, there is something quite meditative about hand weeding. In one common meditation practice, you just follow your breath. Breath in. Breath out. Breath in. Breath out. Weeding is also a form of meditation. Dig, pull, place in bag. Dig, pull, place in bag. It is said that the essence of Zen is when eating, just eat. When working, just work. According to a Zen saying, before enlightenment you chop wood and car-

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Dare we hope for better times ahead now that Australians installed so many people in Federal Parliament who are ready, willing, and able to take action to avert the looming extinction crisis? Just as a frog in the pot is numb to its impending doom, could we be numb to our good fortune, too familiar with the disappointment that follows government-changing elections because too often we have borne witness to continuing native vegetation losses due to the march of industry or the shock of extreme weather events causing fire and flood, more clearing for unhealthy neighbourhoods.

One thing is clear: Things need to change.

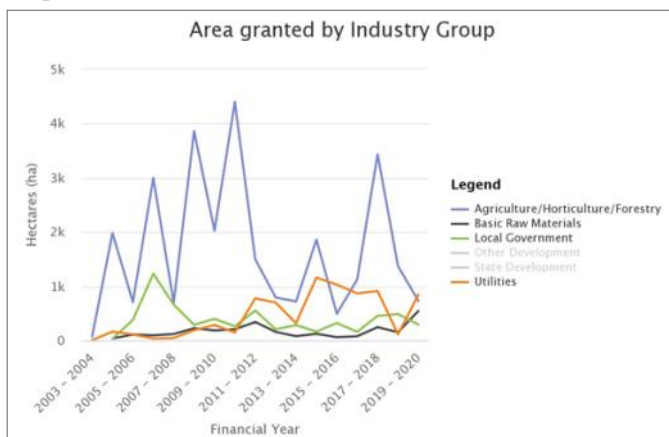
We elected a federal parliament that promised that change. Historic numbers of independents and Greens elected (the crossbench has 16 Members in the House of Representatives and 18 Senators) will influence an ALP Government to chart a way forward. In rusted-on seats treasured by the traditional parties, they booted out the dead wood that was rooted in the past.

Not that there is much left, of the roots. Clearing has continued to devastate our landscape catapulting us into an extinction crisis. Our iconic and much loved Carnaby's Cockatoos are declining in numbers due to continuing loss of habitat. Without a WA State of the Environment (SOE) report to reference, at least some of the evidence is published on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation website which shows the hectares approved for clearing. But this is not the total picture of land cleared as not all clearing requires permits.

"Over the past 10 years, 66,000 hectares of habitat containing threatened fauna and flora was cleared with federal approvals, according to the Australian Conservation Foundation. How much has actually been offset is also hard to follow. In the same period a separate 150,000 hectares was approved for clearing across WA by DWER and DMIRS." – [Peter de Kruijff wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald, 27 May 2022.](#)

The WA Government's new native vegetation policy has been labelled a "massive disappointment" in the same article. Fears of ongoing clearing remain unabated. In addition to the extinction threat, impacts like salinity, erosion, and the heat island effect in cities make it so much harder to reach climate action targets.

Clearing as usual has no place in this new political landscape of climate action.



Clearing of native vegetation under the authority of clearing permits in Western Australia. Source: [Clearing Statistics | Department of Water and Environmental Regulation \(dwer.wa.gov.au\)](#)

Next comes the truth-telling. Elected on a platform of integrity (plus climate change action and gender equity), the Teal and other progressive Independents will ensure the truth comes out. In fact, the Federal Environment Minister is using her first National Press Club speech on 19 July to release the latest State of the Environment Report the previous Government buried in a bottom drawer.

Alone among states and territories, Western Australia fails to submit a regular SOE Report, the last one is dated 2007. So just how much our environment has suffered while our economy has blossomed during a mining boom and biodiversity-slashing urban expansion has not been made public. Exposing the truth might force Ministers and other decision-makers to assert the laws intended to protect our rich biodiversity and keep our air and waterways clean.

Let's face it, if the report card was good, they'd be shouting the news from the rooftops and on election-period billboards. Because if there is one thing this election has demonstrated, it is that Australians care about the environment and want to take action to protect it. They are prepared to switch their vote, doorknock their neighbours and raise campaign funds to support leaders who share their concerns.



Mary Gray leading a walk at Hepburn Heights bushland. Campaign to protect this bushland led to the establishment of UBC in 1993.

Congratulations to our Urban Bushland Council past chair and current committee member, Mary Gray, 2022 recipient of Order of Australia Medal for her services to the environment.

Over many, many years, Mary has worked with perseverance and commitment for the protection of Western Australia's environment. Through Mary's active involvement in the UBC and the Wildflower Society, she has been able to gather support for some major projects, with examples including:

- Nomination of Banksia Woodlands as a Threatened Ecological Community. In May 2012 federal and state scientists came to a workshop and visited Banksia Woodland sites. The 'Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain' listing was accepted with the banksia community listed as 'endangered' under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* in 2016.
- Bush Forever Report Card Conference held in December 2012 and attended by 120 people. The conference was opened by the Minister for Planning, the Hon John Day.
- Campaigns to protect Anstey-Keane Dampland and against a proposal for a road through the damplands. The EPA assessed the road as 'environmentally unacceptable.'
- City Bush Guides program where participants were trained to lead bush walks in their local bushland.

Read more about Mary's activities in the 2022 Autumn issue of this Newsletter.

Thank you so much Mary.

Fire Regimes that Cause a Decline in Biodiversity - a listed threatening process

In April this year, Fire regimes that cause a decline in Biodiversity have been listed as a Key Threatening Process under the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*.

The Australia wide research review was out for public consultation in January 2022. The Urban Bushland Council and many conservation groups strongly supported the listing.

This Key Threatening Process listing is in response to findings that particular fire regimes, their landscape pattern and interactions with other threatening processes are a threat to more than 800 native species and 65 ecological communities listed as threatened under the EPBC Act. Fire regimes that cause declines in biodiversity are one of the most pervasive threats to Australia's biodiversity.

Here are just some of the review findings:

- The broad trend in charcoal and fire scar evidence suggests increased fire activity over much of the continent, from the mid-19th until the mid-20th century (Mooney et al., 2011).
- More temperate forest was burnt in the 2019-20 fire season than previously recorded.
- The four core components of the fire regime are frequency, intensity, season and type.
- Since European settlement, human influence on fire regimes again changed markedly across almost all

parts of Australia. As we have embedded large human populations and associated infrastructure within flammable forests, increasingly widespread prescribed burning is conducted across production forests and conservation areas.

- Biodiversity loss occurs during fires from direct impact such as heat and smoke.
- Reasons for biodiversity loss occurs after fire may include polluted water, enhanced competitive abilities of weeds relative to native plant species, increased hunting efficiency of introduced predators, reduced evasion or defence by native prey species, increased impact of diseases or reduced disease resistance, as well as changes to the physical environment brought about by climate change, resource exploitation, species introductions, or land use change. For example, fire may promote the spread and increase the impact of significant pathogens such as *Phytophthora dieback*.
- Increases in fire frequency promote further fire in some forest and woodland ecosystems ('landscape traps'), with elevated risks lasting for decades.

Listing a key threatening process does not regulate or prevent actions undertaken by the states or land managers but it provides a formal recognition that the process is a key threat to biodiversity at the national level. Use the following [link to download the Listing Advice](#).

CARNABY'S COCKATOOS AND GNANGARA PINES

By Margaret Owen



Photo by M Owen

Some birds like the Purple Swamp Hen are highly strung and easily alarmed, some like the Djiti Djiti (Willy Wagtail), are outrageously courageous, and some like Carnaby's Cockatoo are serene family and community loving citizens.

Particularly when feeding, Carnaby's Cockatoos will tolerate close human encounters. Here, in Bold Park, I accidentally came close to this lovely female bird, who just continued feeding on the *Banksia sessilis*.

Large flocks of Carnaby's north of Perth, have learnt to adapt to eating pine seeds as so much of their native food has been cleared. The planted pines at Gnangara support flocks of over 4,000 individuals. However, of the original 23,000 hectares planted, only between 3,000 to 4,000 hectares remain.

To avoid a big Carnaby's starvation collapse, this last area of pines must be protected. It's not rocket science.

Read more on page 11

MARRI AUDIT AT BAIGUP WETLANDS

By Penny Lee

Can Marri be grown in wetlands? At first thought the answer might seem to be 'No'! *Corymbia calophylla* does not naturally grow in swamps, or even right on the edge of rivers. But in wetland complexes such as the one at Baigup Wetlands, the local friends group, Baigup Wetland Interest Group (BWIG), has found this species can have a legitimate place when its growth requirements are understood. Given the urgent imperative to increase food and habitat plantings for threatened Carnaby's Cockatoos in the metropolitan area, BWIG carried out a survey and audit of Marri plantings at Baigup in March this year. At the end of a long, unusually hot summer, we found that approximately 180 Marri trees and seedlings had survived across several locations, although some were struggling. Others planted at the same time were already flowering well, setting seed, and promising a potential food source in coming years for our increasingly desperate black cockatoos. A few mature trees planted nearly 20 years ago had been flowering for at least a decade, while the exciting discovery of four small self-sown seedlings suggested that more natural regeneration might be expected over time.

Eight relatively small locations where Marri had been planted were identified. All trees were counted to the best of our ability (some mixed plantings were too dense to be sure of exact numbers). Representative photos were taken and assessments of the health of trees and seedlings in each area were made. Conditions of growth were also studied with a view to deciding whether further plantings might be feasible (or sensible) in future years.



Photo by P Lee

Naturally regenerating marri seedlings at Baigup.

Baigup Wetlands is a roughly crescent-shaped section of Swan River floodplain on the Bayswater/Maylands border. It extends roughly one kilometre downstream from Garratt Road Bridge and is about 15 hectares in extent. The streets to the north and east of the reserve are on higher land that seem likely to have featured Marri dominant woodlands prior to European incursion. Two constructed lakes provide perennial habitat for water birds, while an extensive and largely pristine sedge-plain along the river is nationally registered as an example of Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh Threatened Ecological Community (TEC). BirdLife WA has officially identified and listed nearly 100 bird species (including Carnaby's and Red-Tailed Black Cockatoos) at Baigup and on the adjacent sections of the river since regular surveys began in mid 2012.

We found that the best locations for Marri were across the relatively high north-east corner of Baigup bordering Garratt Road and Stone Street properties in Bayswater. Four mature trees probably planted by former group Friends of Baigup Wetland Reserve around 2004 had been supplemented in 2017 and 2019 with additional Marri and a range of other native seedlings. Sadly, a storm in 2017 uprooted another two of these older trees which probably became unstable when exotic trees surrounding and supporting them were cleared earlier that year. This area, where the self-sown seedlings were discovered in March, could probably also carry a few more planted Marri in future. Another 40 seedlings planted in 2019 further down the slope between the road and the swamp were found to vary very considerably in health,

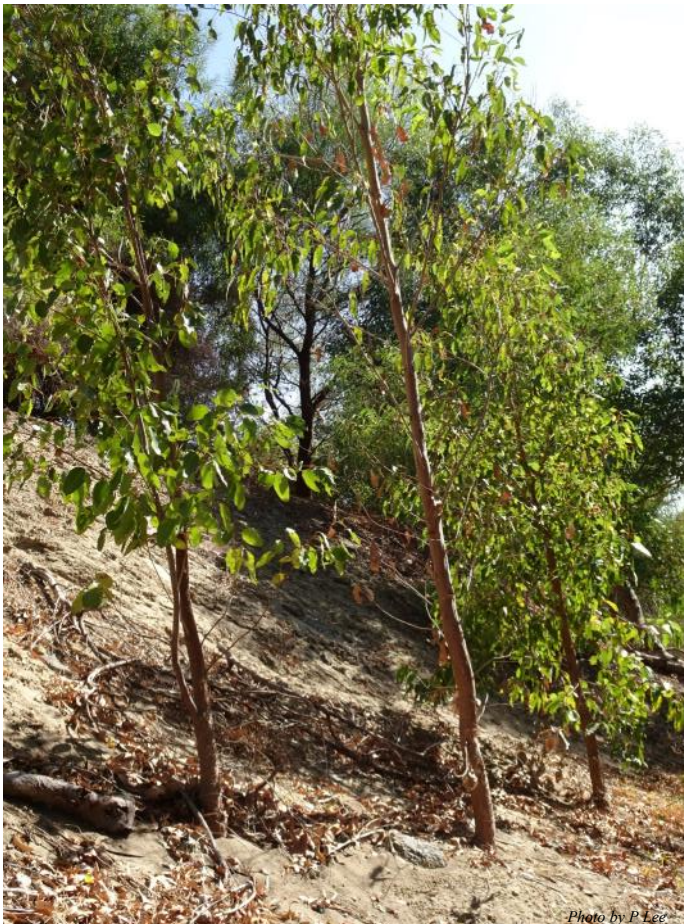


Photo by P Lee

Marri on steep rubble-filled slope at Baigup (2018).



Photo by P Lee

Successful mixed planting into geotextile (2019).

ranging from barely alive to a few beginning to flower. Shade may have been a factor in poor growth or deficiencies in the increasingly peaty soil approaching the lowest sections of the flood-plain.

By contrast, the most successful recent plantings are further uphill in the N-E corner. This dense planting undertaken by Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) contractors in 2019 includes mixed understory species. It was somewhat surprising, and interesting to notice that some of the tallest, healthiest trees had been planted on a wet (but well-drained) slope, while others in a more exposed location had been planted into soil protected by geotextile. The seedlings closest to a lawned area adjacent to the surrounding houses, especially spots where no geotextile had been used, had suffered most from the heat of the 2021/22 summer. Quite a few had died or were struggling to survive. But across this area as a whole, we estimated about 105 trees or seedlings still alive at the time of the survey. Our judgement was that additional plantings would be unnecessary for a few years until the overall ecological structure of these sections could be assessed as the taller trees gained additional height.

A small, raised area with about 12 trees in a densely planted mixed grove on lower ground close to the flood plain level was especially interesting in that a first attempt to revegetate this area after several large *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* had been cleared by DPLH and first planted in 2017 had largely failed. The second attempt in 2019 was much more successful, possibly because the seedlings had been watered by a local resident, possibly because Typhoon native nutrient tablets had been used, and possibly because mulch on the site had started to break down. A few additional trees might be added in future once the structure of the planting as it grows taller can be assessed.

Directly opposite this location is an area where 35 poplar trees were removed, mostly using BWIG grants and initiative, in 2016. Keen to replace the 'Poplar Grove' with a 'Marri Grove' for the sake of Carnaby's, we organised volunteer planting of mixed species, including Marri, in 2016 and 2017. What we did not appreciate at the time was the amount of water the poplars had been taking up, the difficulty of maintaining adequate weed control, and damage to the natural drainage through the area. Heavy machinery used to remove the poplars, and later to build a



Photo by P Lee

Healthy marri planted into geotextile on west facing slope.

new emergency access track through the area and remove additional exotic vegetation in 2017, left a devastated area that is only slowly evolving a naturally adapted drainage system. Only 5 Marri look likely to survive in this area. We learnt that poorly drained wet soils do not allow good root establishment. More swamp-friendly species are clearly required in this area. Two of these trees have flowered well for about 3 years although one has shown signs of stress in the form of psyllid infestation.

The remaining two small areas where BWIG planted a total of 35 Marri are in the south-west corner of Baigup in Maylands. Both are on steep, unstable, rubble-filled slopes, one facing east and one facing south. Again, we did not appreciate in mid 2018 how wet these slopes can be, nor how shaded by tall *Eucalyptus rudis* (Flooded Gums) and plantings of the fast-growing pioneer species *Acacia saligna* they would become. Pleasingly, however, 10 young trees seem to have become established along these slopes, several beginning to flower in the summer of 2021/22. Even so, we would not recommend more Marri in these locations.

Planting, and later conducting a detailed audit of Marri plantings at Baigup Wetlands, has taught us a great deal. Monitoring revegetation efforts is always advocated as a learning experience and to ensure more efficient and cost-effective future revegetation initiatives, but BWIG, probably like most volunteer groups, had not been able to prioritise such monitoring until this survey was conducted. Our survey has taught us more about the conditions Marri require while, at the same time, after less than three short years in the case of the most successful DPLH Marri plantings, allowing us to experience the joy of seeing a very good number of seedlings growing to maturity and promising to provide at least some food for hungry black cockatoos.

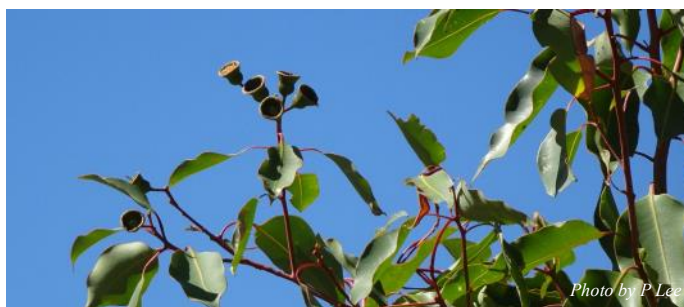


Photo by P Lee

Young 'honkey' nuts forming on a tree planted in 2019.

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Friends of Paganoni Swamp – Corporate volunteering groups take the stress out of planting

By Leonie Stubbs

Our Friends group had close to 2,000 seedlings to be planted around the boundaries of Paganoni Swamp Reserve to limit the spread of weeds into the reserve (made possible by the Federal Government's Living Landscapes Program protecting Threatened Ecological Communities). We aimed to plant in late May/early June in order to give the seedlings time to get their roots deep enough to survive our dry summers as our seedlings are not hand watered. Under the guidance of Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) staff seeds and cuttings had been collected from the reserve and delivered in late 2021 to Nuts about Natives Nuts, an exceptional plant propagation business situated in Karnup.

As our member numbers are low at present, we were fortunate to be in the loop with DBCA's Community Involvement Unit who made us aware of a number of corporate volunteering groups looking for projects in which to participate. So on our first day of planting eight delightful volunteers from the Department of Finance Graduate Program for 2022 willingly spent the day with members of our Friends group planting around 1,000 seedlings into an enclosure on the southern boundary of the reserve. Experienced staff from DBCA and SERCUL (South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare) directed the planting ensuring the best opportunities for survival of the seedlings.

In early June seven industrious volunteers from FMGL joined our members, DBCA and SERCUL staff to plant the balance of seedlings along the western boundary.



Photo by L Stubbs

Volunteers from the Department of Finance enjoying morning tea after planting at Paganoni Swamp.

Unfortunately, this area was not fenced so much of the time was spent in bagging the seedlings to limit losses due to the voracious appetite of our resident kangaroos. We do find that the survival rate of seedlings planted into the enclosure is more successful than those individually planted and bagged.

This is the first year we have sought the assistance of corporate volunteering groups to contribute to our planting program and it was such a relief to have extra people so willing to give us a hand (leaving aside the fantastic ongoing contribution of our members, DBCA and SERCUL staff). The only stress was whether or not we'd provided enough morning tea for everyone present!

Round One to Erindale Road Bushland

By Sonya Elek

The Friends of Erindale Road Bushland is unlike many UBC Friends groups. We don't do any weeding or planting on our site – we can't even access it to take photos, except from behind a wire fence. This is because our 'patch' has been privately owned since 1998. The owners of the bushland want to clear it for housing, and the Friends of Erindale Road Bushland recently had a small win in their efforts to stop this from happening.

Canadian owned global company, BAI Communications purchased the 42-hectare site, previously owned by the Commonwealth Government, in 2009. The site, bounded by Erindale Road, Reid Highway and Wanneroo Road in Hamersley, is recognisable by the 180-metre-tall radio tower in the eastern section. In 2019, the company launched a proposal to clear 13.55 hectares of the bushland for development. The Friends of Erindale Road Bushland was formed in response to the EPA's call for public comment on whether it should assess the proposal and has been working to protect it ever since.

The first step in our fight to protect this remnant Banksia Woodland was to make submissions to the EPA regarding the proposal to clear and develop the land. At very short notice, one of the group's founders, Marie Giorgi created a Facebook page and informed local residents of the pro-



Photo courtesy Friends of Erindale Bushland

Petition at Parliament House, 24 November 2021.

posal, urging them to make a submission to the EPA. During the seven-day public comment period, an impressive 176 submissions were made. As a result, the EPA decided to conduct an environmental assessment.

Our next challenge was to increase public awareness of the threat to this bushland. We achieved this by creating a website and starting a petition to protect the bushland. We collected 1381 signatures and the petition was presented to Parliament by local MP Jessica Stojkovski in November 2021. In addition to building public awareness, we

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have spent many hours writing to and meeting with our political representatives at every level. The petition demonstrated to these representatives that the public values this bushland as a habitat, bio-link, and ecological community.

The first significant decision regarding the Erindale Road Bushland came in May 2022, when City of Stirling Councilors voted AGAINST rezoning the land from 'Public Use – Commonwealth' to 'Development'. On the evening of May 3, Marie Giorgi presented a deputation in support of the Recommendation **NOT** to proceed with the rezoning of the Erindale Road bushland for housing development. This Recommendation was automatically and unanimously carried at a Council Meeting the following week – an encouraging small win for the Friends of Erindale Road Bushland.

The fight to protect this valuable bushland is ongoing and the process is long and complicated. State and Federal environment agencies will have the final say on whether to give approval to clear the land, and we will continue to



Petition supporters outside Parliament House, 24 November 2021.

lobby our political representatives to support the protection of this important urban bushland. To find out more, please visit our website: <https://www.friendsoferindaleroadbushland.com/> or Facebook Group, Friends of Erindale Road Bushland.

Attadale Alfred Cove Foreshore Master Plan

By M Matassa

After 18 months of exhaustive community consultation, including commissioning a Charrette Process run by a consultation company which drew together consultants and the major stakeholders with interested parties and community members, the Attadale Alfred Cove Foreshore Master Plan – Final Draft was presented for approval at the City of Melville Council Meeting on 15 March 2022.

The thrust of this plan is to create a cogent strategy for the management of the Alfred Cove Marine Park foreshore stretching from the Page Street dog beach at the edge of Point Walter to just past the Cunningham Street carpark in Applecross. Many people were previously unaware that these four and a half kilometres of foreshore were bordering such a vital section of our Swan River – the Swan Estuary Marine Park, set aside by an Act of Parliament in the 80's for the protection of the fauna and flora that fundamentally rely on it for their existence.

The responsibility for the management of this stretch of foreshore is held partially by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and partially by the City of Melville, with oversight by the Swan River Trust. These days the foreshore is recognized to be part of the wetland itself forming the essential buffer zone around the wetland. The appreciation of the importance of this area has unfortunately come after much of it was treated as a rubbish dump followed by infill to create sporting fields and construction of facilities and housing. People's understanding has been changing and, overwhelmingly, the community expressed their wish to see the environmental values of this important area prioritised, and supported the strengthening and the extension of the foreshore vegetation. This was well reflected in the Master Plan.



Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group (SERAG) appreciated the opportunity to be part of the Charrette process and has expressed its willingness to support the revegetation plans in whatever way it can. SERAG was very glad to see the high level of discussions between DBCA and the City of Melville that allowed the process to maximise the environmental outcomes that are so important to the future health of the Estuary, not only for the creatures whose very survival depend on it, but also for the health and well-being of the wider community.

Of course, the funding to extend the foreshore buffer will need to come from all levels of government. The State Government and the City of Melville demonstrated their good will by commissioning the first of the bird viewing platforms, this one on Point Waylen. The local member for the State Government, Lisa O'Malley MLA, is facilitating the funding of the platform, whilst the City of Melville is funding the revegetation, signage, paths and groundworks. This has given a strong impetus to the concept of designating the foreshore area as the Melville Bird Sanctuary (first stage) and SERAG is fully supportive of this campaign by the Friends of Melville Bird Sanctuary.

SERAG hoped that all this goodwill and strong community support would encourage the Council to move forward with the Master Plan. In "acknowledging" the Master

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Plan rather than “endorsing” it as the resolution originally proposed, some Councillors expressed concerns that the implementation of the Master Plan would have long term financial consequences for the City. This completely overlooks the purpose of a Master Plan. As stated at the beginning of the document:

“The Attadale Alfred Cove Foreshore Master Plan ... has been prepared to establish a vision for the area and assist in guiding future investments and support decision making processes over the next 20 years.”

Clearly, funding details have yet to be worked out.

Comment by Sue Conlan, UBC Committee Member:

What next? As an around the river cyclist, it saddens me to see how little area is left for waterbirds and keeping the river healthy at Melville. A petition is being circulated not for a bigger buffer for wildlife but to leave the grass! How much consultation do we need?

Many thanks to the gentle but determined SERAG Team for being a voice for nature! The UBC will stand by you if you need further support.

Friends of John Forest National Park

Reprinted with permission from the Friends Group newsletter



Volunteers enjoying morning tea after couple of hours weeding. Photo courtesy of Friends of John Forest National Park.

On April 23 an enthusiastic team of 12 met on Throssell Road to scout for weeds in this area. As a group we headed upstream along the dry Throssell creek bed where we cleared large areas of fleabane and some isolated watsonia. The following week on April 30 we headed downstream from the same area where we needed all hands-on deck to tackle the fleabane (*Conyza* sp.), fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), mentha, veldt daisy (*Dimorphotheca ecklonis*) and stinkwort. Jan donned the backpack sprayer while others hand weeded, bagging the seed heads along the way.

A special thank you to Cathy and Bruce who have hosted the group for morning tea several weeks in a row.

Wildflower Discovery Walk – 27th August

By Ashe Murray

The Friends of Coolbinia Bushland will host a free Wildflower Discovery Walk on **Saturday the 27th of August from 1pm-4pm**. The Coolbinia bushland is a stunning 1.4-hectare natural asset for the surrounding community, boasting over 80 species of native plants and is a beautiful example of Jarrah-Banksia woodland. It hosts a range of native birds, reptiles, and insect life. It provides habitat for the endangered red-tailed black cockatoo and was registered as a ‘Land for Wildlife’ site in 2002. During Djilba, the bushland will be a magnificent carpet of bright colours, and you will see orchids too.

Bring your camera!



Fringed lily

Photo by A Murray

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Photo by M Owen

Juvenile Brown Goshawk in Coolbinia Bushland looking at birds perched above.



Photo by A Murray

Participants at one of many guided walks held at Coolbinia Bushland in 2021.



Photo by A Murray

Cowslip orchid

In previous years the Friends Group have hosted hundreds of people who are all keen to discover, learn and connect with the Coolbinia Bushland. Thanks to funding from a Federal Volunteer Grant, through the office of the Hon Patrick Gorman MP, we can once again host a special community event. Held on Coolbinia Primary School grounds, activities will commence at 1pm with a Welcome to Country and a Smoking ceremony. Guests can then choose to participate in two of the following three guided activities being run concurrently in the bushland:

- ◆ A Noongar Bush Walk and Talk
- ◆ Wildflower Discovery Walk and Talk (Group 1)
- ◆ Wildflower Discovery Walk and Talk (Group 2)

A free afternoon tea will be provided in between the rotation of activities.

For future updates and to register for this event please follow us on Facebook and Instagram; Friends of Coolbinia Bushland.

Inappropriate Plantings near Nature Reserves

Reprinted with permission from The Bushland Whistler, Friends of Forrestdale Newsletter, Ed 22.

In the photograph below you will see a bare road verge devoid of native vegetation and a row of eastern states eucalypts (60+ trees) that have been planted in recent days along Ayres Road (formerly Anstey Road), adjacent to Lot 68 Anstey-Keane Reserve.

Prior to the current road upgrade, the section of verge in the picture contained original native vegetation. Species such as *Melaleuca raphiophylla*, *Jacksonia sternbergiana*, *Xanthorrhoea preissii*, *Kunzea glabrescens* and many understorey plants graced this strip of land before being removed entirely and replaced with what you now see (photo below).



Photo by B Fremlin

The former vegetation was more interesting, more bio-diverse and more appropriate than the monoculture it has been replaced with and unfortunately similar instances are happening all too often. To avoid this occurring time and time again, rigorous roadside conservation laws are needed to protect existing native vegetation and to ensure that the imprint of any development is kept to a minimum.

Another concern regarding the planting of non-local species adjacent to nature reserves is the threat of their seeds entering the reserve and creating serious weed issues. This has happened in the Lake Forrestdale Nature Reserve where various foreign eucalypts were planted long ago in nearby Skeet Park. Over time their progeny have invaded the lake edge to the extent that they are now a significant problem that will be difficult if not impossible to rectify. The photo below (taken 16 June 2022) shows just some of the young foreign eucalypts growing on the lake edge. There are now many hundreds, ranging from seedlings to large trees.



Photo by B Fremlin

(Continued from page 1)

ry water. After enlightenment you chop wood and carry water. There is something about embodied actions such as hand weeding that brings one out of their head. For a blessed period of time, thoughts and worries can recede to the background, or perhaps even slip away entirely. Being out there in the bush surrounded by life, one's worries seem less important, even trivial. Why is this?

Just being in the bush itself in fact has many benefits. In Japan it is popular to practice 'forest bathing' or *shinrin-yoku*. This isn't hiking or exercising in the forest. It is the practice of just being aware of the sights, smells and sounds of nature. The psychological benefits of immersing in nature such as reduction in stress, depression and anxiety are well supported. It is like coming home. Perhaps a lot of this is to do with the sheer beauty of nature. As an example, from bush weeding, in between digging up *Gladioli*, one looks up at a Kangaroo Paw and it sometimes seems unreal. It shines with its own inner light.

Being immersed in the bush is a form of mindfulness, though it is also much more than this. It's also a letting go of the usual barriers between oneself and nature. In the Zen tradition, when asked 'what is your True Nature?' it is common for Zen masters to point to clouds, mountains, rivers and bamboo. They are referring to your non-separation from nature. Nature immersion is a radical openness to the world. In first-person experience, no eyes, nose or ears get in the way of the trees, smell of the soil, and sound of bird calls. They are you in that very moment. At least that would be the Zen explanation for why immersion in nature is so beneficial. It is a return to your original condition of wholeness. It is to see through the illusion of separation of self and world.

One doesn't need spiritual language to describe why it can be so healing to just be in the bush. It can be useful though to give it a meaning that goes beyond the common-sense perspective. It also highlights that bush immersion shouldn't just be something we use as a de-stress pill to allow us to go back and be more effective workers and consumers, as was the case when forest bathing was developed in 1980's Japan. Rather ideally it can actually

transform one's purpose, values and very sense of self.

Of course, bush weeding isn't a walk in the park. It's hard getting up early on the weekend. One gets tired, sweaty and dirty. There are flies and prickles. It can get quite hot. Forest bathing doesn't tend to have these drawbacks. But what forest bathing doesn't give you is a meaningful action which also gives back to nature. One is immersed in nature when forest bathing, but one does not participate in it.

Intellectually, we know how dependent we are on the environment (at least many of us do). Given the all-encompassing nature of the environmental crises we face, perhaps we also need to experience our non-separation from nature more directly. A common form of environmental activism involves yelling and holding placards in the streets. This is, of course, very important. But when engaging in such activities, 'nature' is an abstract concept. It can seem very far away. Burnout amongst activists is also a risk. By contrast, bush weeding involves actual physical connection with the land, at the same time as recharging oneself. By caring for the same area of bush over a long period of time an emotional connection also grows. Yes, there are benefits to bush weeding in terms of stress reduction, but in my view, this is just one of the possible benefits of engaging in this form of activism. This isn't how the word 'activism' is usually used, but surely this is what it is.

Sometimes when you see the weeds stretching off into the distance, it can seem futile. But one just keeps going. Chop wood, carry water. When the two hours is over and we stop for a cup of tea, you see the bags full of weeds that we've collected together. Not just that, if only for a short time, you are doing something which is symbiotic with the plants, insects and animals of the bush. The weeds may seem endless, but then you look up and see a bee going from flower to flower. With no thought of the future, it just goes about its task. Likewise, often you are just pulling weeds. Of course, in the order of nature, we will never be anywhere near as important as bees. But we can play a small part out there in the bush for a couple of hours a fortnight.

Coastal Research Priorities for WA - White Paper released

Pressure of growing population, more developments and climate change on our coast has led to a collaborative study to identify the critical research needed to improve the management, protection and sustainable use of our coastline.

The study, led by The University of Western Australia identified the following tier 1 priorities:

- Investigate ways to more effectively communicate science and expert opinion to the general community to build trust in scientific research.
- Improve integration of social, environmental, and economic values into coastal decision-making frameworks.
- Enhance coastal legislation to support coastal management and planning.

- Develop standardised and coordinated approaches to long-term coastal monitoring.
- Better incorporate environmental values (e.g. ecosystem services) into coastal decision making.

Use this as a reference when asking decision makers to listen to the science, consider the social, economic and environmental impacts before developing. These values are missing from business plans.

This could easily be applied to our rivers. Before allowing new developments and activities that impact ecological health of our neighbourhood, let's start the healing. Developments that are long term socially, environmentally and economically costly need to stop.

Use the following [link to download the White Paper](#).

In the company of Cockies - Black Cockatoos in Urban Landscapes

Recount by Margaret Owen of a talk by Merryn Prior, Birdlife



Last May, Birdlife's Merryn Prior gave an excellent talk to UBC members and guests entitled 'In the Company of Cockies – Black Cockatoos in Urban Landscapes'.

Some of the points from her talk follow.

Carnaby's black-Cockatoos could be known as FIFO birds – fly in, fly out - as mature birds fly off to breed between July and January before returning to the Swan Coastal Plain. They fly to breed between 50 - 150 metres from their natal areas.

In line with the talk's title, Merryn stated that we cannot afford to lose green corridors. Birdlife has data showing that black cockatoos deliberately avoid built up areas and use the corridors to get to a destination, even though it involves flying further. Birdlife is seeing Carnaby's finding new species of food all the time – we can't keep pushing them. Both roosting sites and foraging sites are important – both are needed.

Birdlife does not encourage breeding on the Swan Coastal Plain, as artificial hollows there get taken over by pest species and species out of their previous range (Galahs, Lorikeets, feral bees), and it is dangerous for young cockatoos.

Early indications from the 2022 Great Cocky Count of Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo is that there was a much lower count than in previous years.

Baudin's Black Cockatoo, currently listed as 'endangered

under the EPBC Act' is going to be moved to 'critically endangered.' It is believed that only 2300 to 4000 mature individuals remain. Baudin's do not occur in the Perth region.

There are many reasons driving decline and a chief reason is insufficient habitat. There should be no net loss and habitat needs to be created.

Following Merryn's talk, film maker Jane Hammond told the audience that her film 'Black Cockatoo Crisis' will be finished in September and will be going right around the world. Expert cinematographers have been called in to assist. Jane said that we have twenty years and we need to act now before black cockatoos disappear from our skies.

Following Jane, Paddy Cullen, convenor of the Save the Black Cockatoo Campaign, spoke of the many campaign actions occurring to save black cockatoos. One of the actions is a meeting with Wesbeam, Time is running out.

In looking at Wesbeam's blog dated 10 Oct 2018, it says 'Consecutive Western Australian State Governments have had a long-standing commitment to revert 20,000 hectares of the Gnamptera Pine Plantation back to Banksia woodland. The Wesbeam agreement with the Western Australian Government to harvest the pine plantation provides an economic incentive for the Government to realise that commitment.' ... 'Wesbeam will implement a comprehensive tree planting (\$1,000,000 per year) from 2009.'

This expansive revegetation did not happen and most of the cleared areas lie fallow.



Graphics courtesy to pixabay.com

Why would younger people want to join your activities &/or group?

We are inviting a panel of younger people (14-35yo) who can share their actual experiences of volunteering in bushcare and other activities of Friends Groups.

- ◇ What drives them?
- ◇ How could we invite them to join our activities/group?
- ◇ What are some of their favourite activities?
- ◇ What skills & experience do they bring? (eg planting, social media, finances)
- ◇ What has worked to maintain connection with a local group?
- ◇ How can groups meet them half-way?

Terrific opportunity to hear their guidance, ask your burning questions as well as highlight your experiences.

WHEN: Tuesday 4th October

6:00pm – refreshments and opportunity to network

6:30pm – general meeting with panel

WHERE: City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth.

The UBC is finalising the panel – your recommendations and experiences are most welcome via email: UBC@bushlandperth.org.au or call Colma 0407 180 660.



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

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Web site: www.bushlandperth.org.au



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NEWSLETTER ITEMS

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

ubc@bushlandperth.org.au

Copy deadline - 15 September 2022