

This report is for the calendar year January to December 2014 inclusive.

Bush Forever

There were no positive advances in the administration of Bush Forever in 2014. The MRS text amendment for Bush Forever Areas finally passed through Parliament, but it does not give statutory protection to sites. It does not even define their purpose, it only says that Bush Forever Areas are on the MRS Map.

The promised audit of sites was started by the Planning Department, but not completed.

The WAPC has continued to acquire sites slowly, however, the 15,000 ha of sites acquired over 15 years have still not been ceded to the Crown and transferred into the conservation estate. Some 70 sites planned to be transferred to DPaW for management have not been funded and transferred. This is a massive failure in governance.

TEC nomination

Our nomination for listing the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain as a Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) is now being assessed. A 3-day workshop conducted by the federal Dept Environment with DPaW and other scientists was held in Perth 23–25 June. The period of assessment has been formally extended by Minister Hunt until mid-2015.

Local Biodiversity Program, Perth Biodiversity Project, South West Biodiversity Project by WALGA
13 years of 'Action for Biodiversity' was celebrated with a publication and event on 22 August at South Perth Yacht Club. We are very pleased to have been able to contribute a short article reflecting the outstanding contribution made by the Perth Biodiversity Project over the years. It is an outstanding positive initiative which is part of the Bush Forever process. It is disturbing to note that the funding for this initiative – whose work is not yet completed – has been cut. WALGA and all local governments involved owe the success of the program to the dedicated professionalism by Renata Zelinova, its Project Manager and her team.

Environmental Weeds

There were two landmark conferences in succession late in 2014. Firstly Environmental Weeds Action Network (EWAN) held a 20 year celebratory Forum: '*Environmental weeds: past, present and future*' at Murdoch University. The UBC gave a presentation on '*The Urban Bushland Council approach*'. This was a collective view of our friends groups on the way ahead, with a focus on local governments. There was no answer to our question at the end: '*Which state agency is the lead agency for environmental weeds?*'

The second conference was the 2014 State Biosecurity Forum presented by the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA). The UBC again asked of the speaker Paul Brennan whether DPaW is the lead agency for environmental weeds, and why was DPaW refusing to control pest bird species harming endangered black cockatoos? No answers.

The WA State Biosecurity Strategy was released for public comment in November 2014. This is an important document which sits under the new Biosecurity and Agricultural Management (BAM) Act. It recognises the importance of 'environmental assets', their value to citizens generally, and the significant economic value of tourism to the state. The legal powers are now available to control plant and animal pests in natural areas. But the abject lack of interest and commitment and funding of state agencies to control environmental pests is remarkable.

Engaging with Ministers

Ministers have refused to meet with us. This is a situation we have never experienced before. It seems to be a reflection of today's political style of ignoring community knowledge and views at the expense of our precious natural areas.

Engaging with EPA

The UBC was invited to an informal social event to meet and talk with EPA members on 19th November. This was an event for peak community conservation groups and EPA Chairman Paul Vogel said it would

become a regular event which we believe is an excellent initiative. The Chairman acknowledged he was using our Bush Forever Report Card proceedings.

We note that in the EPA's Annual report, Bush Forever is featured as a success story. It did, however, acknowledge the *'remaining major threats to Bush Forever: e.g. development proposals for infrastructure projects; pressure for more active recreational areas; weeds; illegal dumping; and improper use of sites (e.g. dirt bike riding).'* The report also noted the *'ongoing challenge'* for management of sites to protect their values for future generations.

We expect the EPA will act on these issues and involve itself proactively in *stopping all* incursions into Bush Forever Areas, and generally into our precious but threatened Banksia woodlands.

It is time the EPA initiated statutory protection for all Bush Forever Areas. And it is time to end the urban sprawl.

UBC Council meetings and events 2014

- 5 March: Greg Keighery and Val English (DPaW) guest speakers *'Banksia woodlands – will we lose them?'*
- 15 March: UBC display at *'Urban Forests'* seminar by WESROC councils.
- 6 May: Associate Professor Steve Appleyard guest speaker *'Acid Sulfate Soils'*
- 21 July: *Bushfire Risk Management Q & A*. On the panel: Loretta Van Gasselt DOP, Ralph Smith DFES, John Lane WALGA, Robert Atkins private landholder, David Knowles Spineless Wonders and artistic photographer, David Pike Friends of Star Swamp bush land. Well attended despite very wet evening.
- 7 September: Guided walk by John Bowler and Sue Radford in Ellis Brook Valley with Armadale branch Wildflower Society.
- 29 September: Guided walk by Greg Keighery in Hartfield Park with Perth branch Wildflower Society.
- 3 December: UBC 21st Birthday celebration and Christmas windup at Old Observatory, National Trust.

Celebration event 17 May: Presented by City of Nedlands for 20 years of wonderful community work in bushcare by Friends of Shenton Bush land and Friends of Allen Park. Talks were followed by guided bird walks. We commend these groups and the City of Nedlands, as well as Urban Nature, for their work and what they have achieved on the ground.

Executive Committee members: A very sincere thank you to our dedicated and hard-working Executive Committee members: Secretary Margaret Owen, Treasurer Chris Allbeury, Web Manager and e-news producer Chris Richardson, and committee member Nina McLaren. Special thanks to our extended team: Editor and compiler of the *Urban Bush Telegraph*, Renata Zelinova; technician Kim Sarti, Facebook editor Cath Cooper, and Kevin McLean and others who contribute submissions and attend agency meetings with us. I sincerely appreciate the spirit of co-operation and mutual support you have all given to each other, to the UBC, and to me personally.

Submissions, issues and campaigns

The table below is a summary of the issues and key events that involved our attention during 2014.

No	Site or issue	Submission or action on	Outcome
1	Kiara TAFE site Bottlebrush Drive - ongoing	UBC and Save Kiara submission on Dept Housing proposal for housing, primary school, oval. Controlled action under EPBC Act for Carnaby's Cockatoo. DEC supported site addition to Bush Forever.	?
2	Anstey-Keane Damplands BF342 Keane Rd extension - ongoing	*PER by City of Armadale for local road extension. *UBC presentation to EPA *12 Jan: UBC attended site meeting by Friends of Forrestdale with local Councillors. UBC recommended to councillors that they withdraw the proposal. * Attended City of Armadale's public meeting in Harrisdale and asked questions: eg Why have speakers not mentioned that the proposed road traverses Conservation Category Wetlands? * UBC lobbied WAPC to acquire Lots 67 & 69 Skeet Rd as a priority as unfenced and vandalism, rubbish dumping causing degradation.	*EPA advised environmentally unacceptable. *No appeals against EPA advice and recommendations *Environment Minister agreed and rejected the proposal

<p>3</p>	<p>Perth Airport Gateway project</p> <p>Perth Airport Master Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *\$1billion project by Main Roads and Commonwealth *UBC meetings with Main Roads at site office, very extensive clearing and ‘gardening’ approach to landscaping with plants from all over WA including north-west. UBC objected as supposed to be doing rehabilitation with local species. * Clearing permit application for Roe Highway/Berkshire Rd intersection. *Draft released for public comment under the Airports Act. *Inconsistent with all former Master Plans; biodiversity information highly deficient, requires complete revision *Both existing Conservation Precincts 5&7 removed and changed to development. *UBC attended community forum in Midland Town Hall 11 September. *UBC rep met officer in Minister Warren Truss’ Office at Parliament House Canberra, asked for 2 Conservation precincts to be reinstated. *Letter to Minister Greg Hunt. * UBC letter to Minister Jacob to ask for his input to retain Conservation Precincts. Is Bush Forever, significant fauna habitat etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Community input ignored *Extensive area cleared for complex roads *UBC and other submissions ignored * Both Conservation Precincts removed. *New Master Plan ignores the outstanding conservation significance of the Airport vegetation, flora and fauna. Likely huge loss of biodiversity with clearing. *Minister Jacob refused any input to Commonwealth.
<p>4</p>	<p>Bush Forever - ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * MRS Text Amendment for Bush Forever open for public comment *UBC submission and request to meet Planning/WAPC staff *Legal protection for all Bush Forever sites still needed. *Acquisition of Lowlands BF is the exception as transfer to conservation estate was a condition of sale. See item 6 below. *Met Swan Region Manager DPaW: UBC calling for transfer of lead agency status to be transferred from Planning to DPaW now that management phase. Reminder also promised audit not yet commenced. *UBC and Wildflower Society met DOP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *UBC submission ignored, meeting request ignored *WAPC approved text amendment which still does not give statutory protection to BF sites. *15,000 ha of BF sites acquired by WAPC still not transferred to the conservation estate under the Land Administration Act. *DPaW failure to take over the lead agency status. *Audit by Planning started, not finished, no cross agency input.
<p>5</p>	<p>Underwood Ave bushland, BF 119</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *UBC facilitated meeting of scientists with Friends of Underwood Ave Bushland. *Support for campaign to lobby Julie Bishop MP to facilitate a land swap with Dept Defence land. *UWA PhD student research project on mygalomorph spiders. *Fire 11 January burnt extensive area of BF 119. Started by electrical fault on Western Power pole adjacent to edge of bush land. *Critical habitat for Carnaby’s Cockatoo and also for Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. *UBC/FOUAB met Director of Assessments in federal Dept Environment. *UWA honors project on germination in burnt and unburnt areas. Questionable science and impacts. * FOUA attended UWA Open Day 10 August. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Petition to Julie Bishop signed by 740 people. *Julie Bishop investigated land swap with Dept Defence land. *PhD research found site is highly significant for these short range endemic spiders. * Dept Defence refused land swap concept.
<p>6</p>	<p>Lowlands bush land and Hymus Swamp Bush Forever sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Future ownership negotiated with DPAW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *<i>Acquired by State government via DPaW - Alex Errington’s work</i> * <i>Ceded to Crown as ‘A’ class reserve</i>

7	Dogs in Koondoola and other Bushland	Uncontrolled dogs killing nesting Rainbow Bee-eaters. Dogs should be on leashes at all times in bushland reserves.	Star Swamp has dogs on lead only in new Management Plan adopted by City of Stirling.
8	Balannup Sewerage Pressure Main proposal through Anstey-Keane BF342	Water Corporation approached UBC with their proposal. *UBC with expert assistance had 2 meetings with them. Advised that it has fatal flaws and would have unacceptable environmental impacts and should look at proposals on west side without any intrusion to the Bush Forever Area. *UBC advice to OEPA on meetings with Water Corp and their unacceptable conduct.	*Referred to EPA * Submission on level of assessment AFI(b) – ie a quick No *No level of assessment set by EPA as yet.
9	Strategic Assessment Perth – Peel (SAPPR) - ongoing	*Ongoing process. *UBC goal to get statutory protection for all BF sites, and for all sites to be formally transferred to conservation estate. *OEPA preparing s16 advice for EPA. * UBC met OEPA staff and prepared submission on need for formal statutory protection for all sites, linkages and local bushland strategies by LGAs. *UBC met DPaW staff – emphasised need for statutory protection all BF sites, and off reserve protection for biodiversity – eg weeds, feral animals, ecological linkages, private lands.	*No draft released for public comment by end 2014 *Banksia woodlands are on the FPAL (federal priority assessment list) and they are to be regarded as already listed as a TEC in considerations under SAPPR
10	Point Peron, Mangles Bay, Lake Richmond thrombolites - ongoing	*Ongoing formal EIA process by EPA – PER. (EPA recommended approval and UBC appealed 2013) * Also assessed under EPBC Act. *Family picnic and rally held 14 Sept. UBC attended with stall. Good public attendance. *UBC attended rally at entrance to Cedar Woods AGM, and quietly handed out flyers to attendees explaining threats to critically endangered thrombolites in Lake Richmond. *UBC applied for ‘Statement of Reasons’ under federal law	*Appeals Convenor approval recommended *Minister Jacob approved development *Appeal by Cons’n Commission inexplicably withdrawn * Federal Minister Hunt gave conditional EPBC approval. *Long winded Statement of reasons received.
11	Offsets	*UBC submission to Senate Standing Committee on Environment References Committee. *Offset areas acquired by WA State Government are not being transferred to conservation estate.	
12	Ellenbrook Bush Forever site	Water Corporation proposal to build water tank in BF. UBC submission opposing this, alternatives available	?
13	Roe 8 Highway extension in Beelihar Wetlands	-ongoing. *166 appeals against EPA advice and recommendations. *Inaccurate information in EPA report. *Met with Appeals Convenor 8 April. *Possible presence of critically endangered Mound Springs at Roe Swamp. *May 2014: new federal government lure to provide half cost of Perth Freight Link which includes Roe 8.	*Appeals Convenor said it would be a long time before appeal process complete *Federal lure of \$ for Road Freight Link precludes formal EIA outcome and decision
14	Acid Sulfate Soils (ASS)	*3 day National conference held in Perth. UBC representative attended. *Swan Coastal Plain has some serious ASS sites and issues, especially in/near wetlands and on Bassendean landform.	Excellent conference. Seriously acidified site visit to: Lake Gnanagara; Spoonbill Lake (pH <2); ≈\$430 million spent just on earthworks for Elizabeth Quay.
15	Bedbrook Place linkage, Shenton Park	Development proposal in 3 Lots in bush land linkage between Underwood Ave and Shenton Bush Forever sites. UBC attended consultation meetings.	More clearing of the linkage

16	MRIT extension statewide as Regional Improvement Tax (RIT)	*Proposed by WAPC. *Strongly supported by UBC.	*RIT income included in forward State budget estimate *New legislation for RIT needed early 2015
17	Banksia Farm	Proposal for clearing and housing on Stevenson Ave and Rochdale Rd in best Banksia woodland. Is link to Bold Park. Proposal to clear good bush land and revegetate the worst part. Reversal recommended in UBC submission.	?
18	Lot 682 Rowley Rd Mandogalup	Clearing proposal for Residential Estate Development: EPBC Act referral 2014/7126 UBC submission opposed clearing 38ha.	? UBC submission ignored
19	Warbrook Rd Bullsbrook	EPBC Act referral 2014/7120 for clearing 70.64 ha black cockatoo habitat for agricultural purposes. Is Banksia woodland Bassendean complex north.	State Bush Forever policy against further clearing of eastern side of SCP ignored ? outcome
20	RPH Shenton Park annex - redevelopment	*Proposal for housing/commercial development on 16 ha site. Area includes significant bushland linkage on 1 side. *Development handed to Landcorp. *UBC attended Landcorp meetings and consultation sessions. *Landcorp being challenged on their concept plans to retain whole of linkage. *UBC met with OEPA.	*bush land linkage at first meeting was to be retained *Community input ignored in 4-5 meetings * Master Plan proposed 2 options both with unacceptable clearing in linkage
21	Pest bird species: Corella, Rainbow Lorikeet	*Funding ceased for culling program by DPaW. *Bird numbers dramatically increased as a result eg at Underwood major Roost site harassment of Carnaby's increased markedly *UBC request to continue funding at meeting DG of DPaW, letters. Only \$150,000 needed for DPaW to control. If outsourced cost \$300,000.	*DPAW refused to fund culling program *Minister Jacob refused to fund control stating not DPaW responsibility on lands not theirs to manage. *Unsatisfactory response.
22	Review of Emergency Services Act	UBC submission UBC does not support prescribed burning on the Swan Coastal Plain. More attention needed on arson and education of children about fire, DFES JAFFA program supported.	
23	Phytophthora Dieback	*Is a major threatening process. * UBC reps attended the annual Dieback Information Group Dieback Conference at Murdoch Uni.	*Excellent conference aids understanding across all sectors, great networking opportunity
24	All bush land areas – Recreational Hunting	Submission to Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Public Administration: <i>Inquiry into the Potential Environmental Contribution of Recreational Hunting Systems</i> . Also appeared before the Committee together with Eddy Wajon of Wildflower Society and as private landholder.	*Committee Report due March 2015
25	Talbot Rd Stratton - ongoing	*Proposal by Department of Housing for clearing for housing, school and oval. *Is Bassendean Central & South vegetation complex which was recommended for addition to Bush Forever as so much lost from both airports. Well under 10% secured for conservation in Bush Forever. *EPBC Act referral to Commonwealth Dept Environment *requires formal EIA by EPA as has old growth Jarrah, 2 and perhaps 3 TECs, and is black cockatoo habitat.	? UBC referral to EPA but they advised no 'project proposal' as yet so nothing to refer.

26	Lot 59 Wilkins Rd Kalamunda in Darling Range Regional Park	Major MRS Amendment 1271/41 to rezone 10.73ha from Parks & Recreation to Urban in MRS – for an aged care facility. Lot 59 is a Crown Reserve 30314. MRS proposal states that it is not part of the Darling Range Regional Park, but this is not correct. *Is a ‘controlled action’ under EPBC Act *UBC submission against the proposal to rezone and clear, high fire risk zone, good condition *SPP 3.7 requires a 100m separation zone from buildings so likely all would get cleared.	
27	Neerabup National Park - ongoing	*Freeway extension through the National Park.	EPA recommended approval
28	Hopkins Rd Nowergup	*Proposal to clear 10.99 ha excellent vegetation in Bush Forever 290 for mining limestone. *UBC submission for formal EIA at level API (b) – quick ‘No’ as environmentally unacceptable.	*Is a test case for mining proposals in Bush Forever Areas *? outcome
29	Ocean Reef Bush Forever		
30	EWAN Weeds Forum	Held at Murdoch Uni 28 November. UBC invited to give a talk: Mary Gray gave a collective view of UBC groups; Action needed by local government on weeds, and their local landscaping practices to set a community example.	*No answer to question posed: Which is the lead agency for environmental weeds in WA? No answer was given even though DAFWA and DPaW staff present and gave talks.
31	Dianella bushland, former Media Zone + Bush Forever site 043 - ongoing	*City of Stirling voted to remove kangaroos contrary to advice from Friends of Dianella Bushland. *UBC and Friends met and briefed Ian Britza, local MLA. *Local Structure Plan by City of Stirling proposes clearing of additional BF site no. 4 in Lot 1 Gay St contrary to DOP/WAPC plan. This Lot supposed to be added to Bush Forever 043 together with remainder of Channel 9 bushland already owned by WAPC	*Ian Britza agreed to follow up concerns of Friends
32	Lot 56 Cottonwood Cres Dianella - ongoing	*Owned by Department of Housing, adjacent to Channel 10 site, proposal for housing with clearing of Banksia wood land section which could easily be avoided	
33	Neerabup, Wanneroo	*Application for clearing 159 ha for mining and industrial purposes. Adjacent to Bush Forever and TEC *UBC submission /Wildflower Society submission. City of Wanneroo applied for a clearing permit for this area in 2007 but it was rejected by DEC. In 2007, the WAPC had also not approved the proposed subdivision due to the vegetation within the area being <10% threshold	?