

## The Wrap-up after Tree Deaths Debacle

After the death of an estimated 6,000 trees and shrubs in and around storm water drainage sumps in the Cities of Joondalup and Stirling from the alleged off-label application of a herbicide formulation containing hexazinone, what is the outcome?

At the City of Joondalup, the Turfmaster contract was terminated and herbicide spraying has been moved in-house. The City "resolved" the legal dispute with a confidential settlement so the amount of that settlement, or any of the associated documents, are not available for public scrutiny. The cost of remediation of the sumps was reported as being \$899,000 but it is not clear whether that includes the full cost of removing 4863 trees and shrubs (hundreds of which were very large mature trees) given the millions of dollars for tree removal (which we understand includes stump grinding and the pruning of branches from many sick trees) appearing in the City's "list of municipal payments" from 2007 onwards. On top of that, there was \$580,000 in legal expenses reported. The cost of in-house effort by City officers was "absorbed within general administrative costs". The community is suspicious that Turfmaster would have only agreed to pay a small fraction of all the costs incurred indirectly by ratepayers. As for replacement of the dead trees and shrubs, we are aware that not all sumps have been re-landscaped, but where they have, readily available native species typically used for landscaping have been used. As far as we can see, local provenance Tuart, Marri and Jarrah trees (being important



An example of a typical sump where herbicides are used to control weeds.

*Photo by JCCCF*

trees for native fauna such as the black cockatoos), and other local native tree species, are not being replaced.

An "expert" commissioned by the City of Joondalup concluded that the drought of 2006 was a contributing cause to the tree deaths, but because of the confidential settlement, the report cannot be scrutinised. Most in the community with any knowledge of native flora believe this conclusion is "absurd" and "inherently unbelievable", especially given there were no other widespread tree deaths starting in the spring of 2006, the deaths were confined to where trees had been sprayed, and trees in reticulated parks and private gardens died. This aligns with what both Cities were telling residents who asked why their trees were dying, even before the expert report was prepared. Not for one minute does the community accept that drought was even a minor contributing cause, but just another red herring argument to divert liability from the guilty parties. Our community group commissioned one of Perth's top arboriculturalists to do an independent

*(Continued on page 11)*



An example of a likely not sprayed sump, August 2007

*Photo by JCCCF*

## INSIDE

- Black Cockatoo Symposium wrap up
- Potential impacts of full Gngangara allocations
- Nowergup quarry rally

and more...

# Editorial

The State Government is not telling us what is happening to our bushland and wetland ecosystems and the groundwater systems that nourish them. Extensive groundwater drawdown and continuing clearing present a double whammy for our biodiversity hotspot.

The Water Corporation is telling us that there was precious little inflow this year into dams from Perth's surface drinking water catchments in the hills. Dams are about one third full and only supply a quarter of our domestic supply, with another 16% supplied from desalination.

Our major source of supply however is the Gngangara Mound, but we are not being told the full story about it. We are not told that horticultural production competes very strongly for groundwater on the priority areas of the Mound. Gigalitres are abstracted for irrigation of fruit and vegetables and turf farms without payment per unit volume, and indeed most commercial bores do not even have meters. So figures for volumes abstracted are only estimates at best and are thought to be greater than for public supply.

Superimposed on this scenario is the Government's recent decision to again allow twice weekly reticulation of home gardens from public supply despite the lack of recharge from rainfall in this record dry year. (See article by Alison Xamon on p 5). To achieve this the Water Corporation is being permitted to take extra water and draw down the water table well below EPA limits set just a few years ago, in order to prevent a perceived politically unpalatable total sprinkler ban. How many wetlands will dry out and never recover as a consequence? With low surface soil moisture, how many hectares of Banksia woodlands will suffer with a falling water table?

We are not being told how much land is being cleared and which plant communities we are losing and where. Under the clearing regulations there is neither a requirement to report total loss of vegetation cover each year, nor loss by

each municipality. Also we are not told the state's annual contribution to greenhouse gas emissions as a result of clearing, fire and disease such as dieback.

At the individual site level, we have not been told about the findings from botanical, hydrogeological and fauna studies conducted for the Public Transport Authority for the proposed Roe 8 extension through the Bibra Lake Bush Forever site. These scientific findings should have been publicly available before the expensive public consultation process - which was a sham because it was premature and based on a presumption of approval in the existing road reserve. The UBC believes this proposal is totally environmentally and socially unacceptable (because it will have significant and irreversible impacts) and should be withdrawn before any more scarce public resources are wasted on it. The *Save Beelihar Wetlands* group has been very active in voicing opposition to this crazy proposal.

The UBC's Black Cockatoo Symposium held on November 26th was very successful, attracting people from all sectors. A strong message from participants was that we need to stop clearing cockatoo habitat, and start protecting and seriously managing it. The call for effective regulation for protection was prominent. Proceedings of the Symposium will be available soon in hard copy and electronically on thumb drive.

UBC members and supporters are encouraged to take action and visit [www.cockatoosneedyou.org.au](http://www.cockatoosneedyou.org.au), a website established by a coalition of peak community groups including the UBC.

***The UBC wishes all groups and supporters a happy, safe, refreshing and fire free Christmas break.***

## Mother Nature Stories - Learn & Share



### Poor snake

One of the three articles including snakes in the Post of 13 November 2010 was entitled "Animals bear the brunt of urbanisation."

A horrible example of this occurred after that edition of the Post came out. Just outside the southern side of Underwood Avenue Bushland a huge old grass tree, one of three, was being mechanically prepared for removal so that a shed could be built. Somehow by accident, a dugite ended up impaled on the broken trunk of a still upright sapling. The snake's body was pierced through from one side to the other.

After discussion as to what was the best course of action, and as the stake was not through the snake's spine, the rescuer swept the snake off the spike with an upward sweep and the snake dropped free and rushed into cover.

I do not know what its chance of survival would be, but of course my wish would be that it could recover.

Unlike many other species, this species may not be at risk of extinction, but continuing destruction of bushland and the linkages between them, coupled with climate change, will put further pressure on our amazing flora, fauna and fungi. The bushland linkage between Underwood Avenue Bushland and Shenton Bushland, on both sides of Bedbrook Place is now at risk.



**BLACK COCKATOO SYMPOSIUM**  
**26 November 2010**  
**Murdoch University**

**Paraphrasing John Bailey's closing comments**



Photo by M Owen

The presentations showed we have gathered a fairly good understanding about the needs of black cockatoos but we have a long way to go. We need to understand their detailed habitat requirements for roosting, feeding and nesting. We have also heard that their movements over the course of the year are changing, and in some areas it looks like the red-tailed black cockatoo is moving in to replace the Carnaby's cockatoo.

We have some understanding of their large-scale movement patterns. And it is important to avoid further clearing. It is important to restore already cleared land, use other cleared or degraded land for development rather than clearing more new bush.

Beware offsets. It appeared that what offsets could deliver was a way to have more national parks and nature reserves, more areas protected in perpetuity. That is not what I have seen. It is possible to get agreement to conserve land for nature conservation but it is rarely implemented.

The importance of community science is evident from several of the talks. Some people have surveyed birds along a single track for many years. Some people in the community have long datasets. The professional science community needs to recognize the value of citizen science. The community can do real science.

The filming of the Carnaby's cockatoo was an entertaining presentation. We need to be prepared for the screening of the film. Collectively we need to be ready for the surge of interest which will come on the night and the next day after the public see the film. Professional organisations and NGOs concerned with black cockatoo conservation should prepare to harness the surge of interest and awareness.

We have seen how community education has led to use of artificial nesting hollows. We need to start early enough in educating our primary and secondary students about cockatoos and habitat. One concern about the national curriculum returning to the back to basics rhetoric is that it will cause parents and educators to forget about teaching children to care for and create a better world. We do not want to lose the good ideas from the 80's and 90's.

David from DEC gave a brief review of the problems with policy and legislation. We do have serious problems. Environmental Impact Assessment is never enough. EIA can only deal with large-scale development and has no effect on small scale projects nor with past poorly designed de-

velopments. Land use planning is not sufficient for protection either. EPA recommended against Underwood Avenue development at one time. Now that has changed.

We need serious legislation to replace the moribund Act we suffer under. The Wildlife Conservation Act was last amended many years before some of you were born. It needs to be replaced with legislation that supports what needs to be done. It needs to not just recognize flora and fauna but also the habitat requirements of the flora and fauna. We learned that lesson two decades ago but no government in Western Australia has heard that message over those decades.

We need a regional view. The loss of biodiversity is a cumulative thing, and so is the conservation of biodiversity. We need to think on a regional scale. Recovery plans need to be given the force of law. Large numbers of people devote hours into the recovery of cockatoos. Is it not a shame when others can ignore them? We need recovery plans to be binding. We need them to be funded. We also need legislation to deal with the various threats faced by black cockatoos.

It still surprises me that environmental protection and biodiversity conservation legislation is at a major disadvantage. Environmental legislation has to take into account economic considerations but you do not see economic legislation that has to take into consideration biodiversity conservation. It is time we had legislation in the state that not only mirrors the EPBC Act but goes way beyond the EPBC Act and requires all decision makers public and private to act in a precautionary way when it comes to biodiversity conservation and environmental protection.

Underpinning all of this is research and knowledge dissemination. We have information on requirements for nesting trees, feeding sites and population genetics. All of that is important when we draw up recovery plans which will deliver what we expect of them.

The conservation biologist Steve Hopper who left Western Australia to become Director of Kew Gardens once said, "we need to learn how to live in a biodiversity hotspot." We have not yet learnt to do that. I assert we need to learn how to live in the biodiversity hotspot so well that it ceases to be a biodiversity hotspot. It's called a hotspot because the biodiversity is at risk. Wouldn't it be nice to control the threats, conserve the biodiversity and enhance it?

*(Continued on page 4)*

We understand that habitat is as important as species. For many of us, though, it is the iconic species we dream about at night. It is the iconic species we look at in the foyer of the lecture theatre and our heart is moved. We can use cockatoos to pull together multiple people interested in biodiversity conservation on the Swan Coastal Plain, in the forests and in the Wheatbelt. In the Eastern States that approach has worked well to bring together different communities because they feel that they own the species and the individuals of that species that move between the farms and the various habitats. They move from the Wheatbelt to the forest to the Swan Coastal Plain and for a time into my front yard.

I suggest we follow the title of this symposium and think of all three forms of black cockatoo as one. The message we put out with black cockatoos and their conservation is to unite various people in a vision for the future. We share a sense of ownership for all black cockatoos. They are not yours to put at risk by removing those trees from your property. They are yours to care for so they will fly to someone else's property.

What about tracking the care of those cockatoos so you almost pass them on? We can all take a share in conserving all the habitats they need over the course of the year. We can think of some way of capturing the idea of black cockatoos as a force for change to protect them and all other species.

That is not enough. We need some sacrificial lambs among us. Those are the people we ask to join government. Those are the people we ask to be members of the EPA, to sit on advisory committees, to steer that delicate course between staying true to their principles and achieving change more efficiently than we can do from outside of government. We need both. We need the noise from outside, the research from outside. We need the independence from outside and inside. That is how you achieve change.

Birds Australia has a very high reputation both outside of government and inside government. The thing to do is make sure they have a seat around all of the tables that matter. A face to face conversation is worth a thousand letters or ten thousand postings on a website. Get to know the people who make decisions that affect black cockatoos.

We also need to ask questions of ourselves and get others to ask questions of themselves with respect to all that we do and all that we might do in the future.

It is time we stop native forest logging. We have a drying climate. We are observing changes in how cockatoos spend their day, their week, their year and this could be a response to stress or just something that happens from time to time. I don't believe that we can take the risk to continue logging in the face of this uncertainty.

The EPA in a report a couple of months ago almost said we should stop logging in the eastern jarrah forest. I think we should stop logging in all the jarrah forest. At the very least we should at least identify the critical habitat of the cockatoos and the other species that have critical habitat requirements as well and protect this habitat in reserves or in some other way. Thus so much of the forest would be protected that it would be pointless to continue logging. I genuinely believe this is now achievable. The forest management plan will need to be renewed in 2013. Preparatory work for that will start next year. The year after next is an election: three years and an election in the middle. The opportunity is there for the taking.

I am not as optimistic with development on the Swan Coastal Plain. It is a much greater challenge as there are many other players involved.

We have seen changes in Tasmanian forest policy. The steps were taken in part by convincing shareholders of Gunns to change their thinking, which led to a new managing director. That led to a change in policy. The soft underbelly of managing directors has often been their daughters and sons, and their granddaughters and grandsons. When they have to admit to what they've been doing at the breakfast table it can be an awkward conversation.

Reference was made to whether Murdoch can lead other universities by example. Maybe we can find some urban development companies that can lead by example other companies. We could track down where all the environmental science graduates have gone. We could suggest to those who now work for Satterleys that they achieve an agreement to no longer put at risk black cockatoo habitat in their urban developments.

In some cases the face to face conversations and the arguments would be all that they need. We've seen a lot of data here. We saw the distribution map of the three black cockatoos occupying this corner of Australia and how they move around perhaps avoiding each other, perhaps not. Those arguments can convince some. If they don't we change them—change the politicians not the arguments.

In Federal politics we've just seen something strange. Green politicians elected, alliances broken and new alliances made. Coming up to the next federal election it will be awful. I am not being party political but the Greens may need our support to maintain their role and at the very least to be the conscience of the government in power.

It can never be enough to rely on government. We have to rely on each other as well. Seeing this lecture theatre mostly full for a whole day shows that there are a lot of people who are prepared to work together. We need to work together to make sure that some people do sit around the right tables, other people do meet politicians face to face, researchers do not need to scabble for funding all the time to do their research, that long term monitoring will actually happen. That's why days like today are so important.

We need further symposia like these.

## FULL GNANGARA ALLOCATION GRIM FOR WETLAND HEALTH

Alison Xamon MLC-Greens Member for the East Metropolitan Region

Recently the State Government announced its decision to approve the Water Corporation's full allocation of 165GL from the Gngangara Mound this year, which is 37 per cent more than the 120 GL recommended in the draft Gngangara Mound Strategy. An increase of this magnitude in the draw from the mound is a serious sign of water policy failure but more importantly, of great concern for those working so hard to protect our urban bushland and wetland areas.

It runs the serious risk of leading to the acidification of wetlands at a time when climate modelling by the CSIRO and the Indian Ocean Climate Initiative predicts a further 11 metre decline in groundwater levels for the next 30 year average beyond 2006 (DRAFT Gngangara Sustainability Strategy 2009).

The decision also comes after last year's recommendation by the Environmental Protection Authority to remove seven criteria sites from the Implementation Statement 687 because they have already lost their original environmental values or are affected by climate variation and land use. These are Lake Gngangara, Edgecombe Seepage, WM6, MM49B, PM25, Lexia 94 and NR11C. Wetland experts estimate we now only have an estimated 20% of wetlands that were present on the Swan Coastal Plain at the time of European Settlement.

A continual over-draw of the superficial aquifers will mean that water birds, frogs, reptiles and mammals will struggle to survive over the summer months. The roots of Banksia bushlands will find it harder to reach the water table. Drier wetlands are more susceptible to bushfires and weed invasions. Acidification of wetlands can also compromise drinking water.

To increase the Water Corporation's take from the Mound before the Gngangara Sustainability Strategy is even released (the final draft was published 17 months ago), begs serious questions about the priorities of the State Government. The final Strategy was originally promised to be released late last year so the question also needs to be asked as to why the final Strategy has been withheld.

Measuring, monitoring and adapting to climate change are now a necessary part of public policy. But in Western Australia 90% of licensed bores on the Gngangara Mound are not metered, 100% of unlicensed bores are not metered and the Department of Water has no record or estimation of where the unlicensed bores are.

Endemic heathland, bushland and wetlands do not need 37% less water. It is predicted that we are in for a long, hot summer. The full effect of the decision on our urban bushlands and wetlands of a maximum draw are yet to be seen.

## Wanted 1000 Visionary Australians

The Wetlands Research Association, together with the Port Kennedy LCDC, and supporters, is calling for assistance to secure the construction Becher Point Education and Environment Centre under the terms of development of the *Port Kennedy Agreement Development Act 1992*. The objective is to provide the Minister for the Environment with 1000 pledges, i.e., two reams of (recycled) paper with pledges, as the basis for the Minister to ask the DEC to "require" the "Education and Interpretation Centre," ***This is because the Education and Interpretation Centre will not be built by the developer unless the Centre is requested by the DEC, and currently the DEC is not requesting it.***

As you can see from the inserted flyer, there is a stark contrast in the management of the Becher wetlands area now and when there was community management of fences, fire, weeds, vegetation restoration, and community education initiatives.

The educational programmes in the proposed Education and Environment Centre will be multidisciplinary, but founded on the Earth Sciences. They will provide the framework for inter-generational management of not only this site, but as a case study for other wetlands of international significance. Educational programmes will be based on geoheritage; coastal development; wetland development and the processes that maintain them; and the link between geodiversity and biodiversity. There will be educational programmes from pre-primary school to postgraduate level, community workshops, and school holiday programmes, that will benefit up-and-coming scientists, and to ensure that the local and regional communities and local residents understand and appreciate the values of the site.

The *Port Kennedy Development Agreement Act* was established to ensure that the environmental values of the site were maintained for their intrinsic environmental values, the rare and endangered fauna, and for science and education. This Centre and its Murdoch University and non-government research organisa-

tion research will not only benefit the management of Becher Point, a site of international importance, but all Wetland Groups.

If you can help, starting in 2012, your \$100 p/a, or less than \$2 per week (a monthly \$8.30 credit card authorisation will be available, if required) contribution is important, and may be the one that tips the balance in favour of establishing this exciting project!

A more complete overview of the Management issues of the Becher Wetlands Ramsar Site can be read at <http://www.mediafire.com/file/pg6nebrfrm14evq>. Importantly, this project is supported by WA Chief Scientist, Professor Lyn Beazley (AO) and the proposed Becher Foundation Patrons, UWA Emeritus Professor Don Bradshaw Neville Marchant (past Curator, Western Australian Herbarium), and A/Professor John Bailey Murdoch University Dean Of Environmental Science, (and past Conservation Commission Chair)

Please help if you can, and spread the word by circulating this call for help to 10 or more email recipients. Pledges can also be copied and pasted into the link on the pledge or emailed to [wra@inet.net.au](mailto:wra@inet.net.au) as follows:

Subject Becher Point Ramsar Site Pledge

Dear Minister,

This email is evidence of my support for the community management and construction of an onsite multipurpose Environmental Education and Interpretation Centre at Becher Point Ramsar Site for the sum of \$xxx p/a.

Name

Address

## NOWERGUP QUARRY RALLY

By Sabine Winton

What a fantastic day for 'community'. November 14, 2010 marks the beginning of a new chapter in our campaign to save the Lake Nowergup Valley.

If you haven't seen it, we got tremendously positive coverage in The Sunday Times, Chanel 10, Chanel 9 and Chanel 7. Community Newspapers and the West were there too.

Awesome work and support by everyone. I can't thank everyone individually, but you all did your bit and it has made a difference.

Photo below demonstrates the bipartisan support of all politicians. We now need them to continue to work together to deliver what we all have declared to be right.



A special thanks to our State Politicians, Eric Ripper, John Quigley, Michael Mischin, Albert Jacobs and Lyn MacLaren, and to our Councillors Tracey Roberts, Dot Newton and Brett Treby for sparing their Sunday to come and support us in this campaign to get the right and proper outcome for the Lake Nowergup Valley.

Don't switch off your emails or take your eyes off the ball even though we have taken an enormous step in the right direction. AND remember, it is simple in the wrong spot. The environment is the priority resource! We the voters are the priority resource!

I will be organising a mail-out to all the suburbs in the coming days to capture the interest and media attention that our campaign has received and to remind the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Environment of the regional interest and significance of this issue. We demand that they use their powers to do what everyone says is right.

*Editor's note:* The Nowergup quarry rally was organized by the Lake Nowergup Valley Community Group that had spent several months campaigning against a proposal for an open cut limestone quarry and concrete batching plant less than 500 m from Nowergup Lake Fauna Reserve, adjoining the Neerabup National Park, within an area covered by conservation value bushland including Tuarts and caves. The City of Wanneroo has unanimously rejected the proposal and the matter is currently being defended at the State Administrative Tribunal. The Minister for Planning, John Day has been asked to use his powers to intervene.

## Paganoni Damplands

By Rob Greenwood

Away from the rail and the road a silence descends over me, bush damp after rain, lichen and moss paperbark and sedge 'Karrakatta' sands tuarts banksias melaleucas twists and folds of paperbark - twice the area of Kings' Park - train noise intrudes then gone, steel wheel squeal in the distance mosquitoes have a feed greys and blacks of fallen tree tiny lizard in blackened stump crevice lichen hanging-on through summer now pale green balga fronds wind-draped over ancient sculptured stump like arms of a friend faint tweet of birds rain of seed casings disclose Carnabys feeding overhead sun faint fuzz through light cloud banksia cones silently mature only a few flowers in June sand of past beaches pale brown ant mounds so carefully constructed the log now hard under me time to move on and yet I linger a biodiverse matrix in a timeless land connection of species right here.... Trill of bird so crystal clear insistent save me from the folly of man, I want a future for my children's children too, do you value me??? or will the pressures of your own see Paganoni reduced in time to unsustainable triangle in scant 20, 30, 50 years??

Have we humans learned nothing since 1900 with 'TOD' DOT Transit Oriented Development mooted for 48 hectare NW corner of Paganoni the tentacles of urbanity spread out strangling, *degradation*, with every morning now until the world begins to act in unison another 500,000 mouths to feed, every morning, every morning, .... - escalator to the stars?? - competition drives consumption as each wants more and more - sounds of sirens far off from the centre of (700 ha) Paganoni Wetlands a sinister warning of the pressure of things to come? Focus our weeding efforts on the decision-makers who fail to understand biodiversity the maintaining of ecological balance how do we weed out these from pollies, execs, boards of corps?? who lack this basic knowledge connection to country, to land, to species - who can remain unmoved by fire sculptures of ancient trees the flights and songs of birds the patterns and the lives of nocturnal insects animals above and below the sand???

Chatter of cockatoos far off trills as the ants work over the log soft suede of moss lichen ancient *Zamia* cycad link with our dinosaur past as we witness present-day extinctions - a powerline down the middle cattle forage decimating priceless understorey for lack of a fence, feral humans drive, ride, shoot, strange night calls far off what is the bush thinking?? What will those of the future think of us??? Mosquitos now biting furiously like fish on burley - the bush listening for a sign as ants inspect my feet hard to imagine an ancient sea lapping this shore advancing receding down the millennia as ancient eyes learned the rhythms the rhymes the chants the songs who was Paganoni did he/she/they walk these lands these trails think these thoughts as they too saw dramatic change? Who in the future will follow in the tracks of these two feet of mine read these words, celebrate either our common sense, or again mourn our collective loss, will you? What will you do to protect Paganoni to protect our collective future... somehow inextricably entwined.....



# Group News Group News Group News

## Friends of Paganoni Swamp

It's been a pretty interesting year at Paganoni Swamp Reserve. We were successful in gaining two Environmental Community Grants: one for Geraldton carnation weed control and the other, in combination with the University of Western Australia, for research into brush-tailed phascogales present in the reserve. In areas where we have been working to control Geraldton carnation weed since 2005 we have seen concentrations drop from 30% to around 1%. The group's aim is to reduce concentrations of the weed to a level that does not require ongoing funding but can be managed by the Friends group in combination with Regional Parks' staff.

The phascogale research grant attracted publicity and in the process led to a relationship developing with students from a Year 2 class at St Bernadettes Catholic Primary School in Port Kennedy. The class was studying endangered species and saw an article in the local paper concerning the grant. Not only did the students write us letters of support for the work we were doing but also raised \$125 towards the research. Brian Chambers from UWA and I attended a school assembly to receive the funds and spent some time with the Year 2 class, answering their questions. Trapping for phascogales took place in late November when a number of traps were set throughout the reserve. A total of seven phascogales were caught, microchipped and released. Three of these endangered marsupials were caught in an area that was under threat from a proposal to rezone contained in the draft South Metropolitan and Peel Sub-Regional Structure Plan. It has now been confirmed safe from development with the entire Bush Forever site 395 now reserved in the Metropolitan Region Scheme for Parks and Recreation.

For further information in relation to the above or information about the Friends group, please call Leonie Stubbs on 0439 921 298.

*Leonie Stubbs*

## Friends of Queens Park Bushland

Twenty people met for a night stalk with the Friends of Queens Park Bushland on Saturday 20 November 2010. The walk was held in an area known to the Friends as Black Creek Reserve. This is 10 hectares of remnant Banksia / Marri woodland in East Cannington – part of Bush Forever site 283.

An ultraviolet light was set up in front of a white sheet and left to do its work while the group walked around the bushland with torches. Many spiders were found and Sand Scorpions (photo below) were glimpsed as they retreated down their burrows.



*Chlorocoma dichloraria*

Two Sand Scorpions, *Urodacus novaehollandiae*, fighting with each other was a sight to enthral the younger, and not so young, members of the group. In a writhing mass of legs, tails and pincers it could be seen that each Scorpion was trying to sting the



other while not being stung themselves. The Scorpions, up to 10cm long, broke up the fight when a large group of spectators gathered around them.

Back at the light trap more than 20 species of moth had been drawn to the light. Joining them were several species of beetles and some Longicorns, *Sceleocantha pilosicollis*. One type of beetle, *Colpochila* sp., was about 4cm long and built like a tank. They fly like tanks too. It can be quite disconcerting, as you are lining up a photo of a moth, to have a deep droning sound approaching you and then be smacked in the side of the head by a beetle. The beetle then makes it worse by flailing around in your hair!

Each species seen on the night stalk had its photo taken and, where possible, identified. The records made on the night stalks of today will be invaluable in determining future increases or declines. How can we help protect that which we don't know exists? Interestingly, of the moth species seen in November, only two were the same as on the previous night stalk held in March 2010. And none of the beetles were seen in March. This highlights the importance of conducting surveys throughout the year. Species seen at one time of the year are not necessarily seen at other times. Regular surveys are needed to see the complete suite of faunal species inhabiting an area.

More night stalks will be planned for different times of the year, when it is hoped that even more species will be recorded. The Friends of Queens Park Bushland can be contacted on [fqpbushland@gmail.com](mailto:fqpbushland@gmail.com).

*Friends of Queens Park Bushland*

**Bungendore Park Management Committee** held its 8<sup>th</sup> *Bungendore Bush Breakfast* in the park bushland on 7<sup>th</sup> November with just over 70 people enjoying the breakfast cooked by Armadale Lions Club members. Elder Albert MacNamara gave the Welcome to Country and his family contributed to the occasion by sharing some freshly-cooked damper.

Committee has been successful in obtaining a grant from Swan River Trust and Alcoa Landcare Program so that next year it can continue the revegetation and weed and Dieback control work in the park and some adjacent bushland. The new funding will enable the continuation of the rehabilitation programme within the park that commenced in 1982 – this year another 1,000 seedlings were planted during July in a recently disturbed area and a dieback-affected area by community members and students of nearby Armadale Christian College. The Dieback treatment programme has been continuing along the mapped dieback fronts with foliar spraying and stem injection by our contractor. Funding by Swan Alcoa Landcare Program and Community Conser-



# Group News Group News Group News

vation grants have assisted in both rehabilitation activities.

Planning is underway for our *Park in the Dark* astronomy evening at 7:45 pm on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> February. Cost will be \$2 per person (adults & children). RSVPs essential by 4<sup>th</sup> February to Miriam on 9498 1570. Refreshments will be available for sale.

*Kim Sarti*

## Wildflower Society of WA Wants You!

The Wildflower Society of WA is on the look-out for people who are interested in West Australian native flora - and who isn't! If you would like to know more about WA native plants and about how to grow them in your garden, you can join the Society. There are 6 branches in the Perth metro region and 3 country branches. Each has a monthly meeting with a guest speaker, as well as excursions to look at and learn about native plants. Members also receive an informative quarterly newsletter. If this sounds interesting, contact the Office on ph: 9383 7979 or [wildflowers@ozemail.com.au](mailto:wildflowers@ozemail.com.au) for further information. Visit the website at <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~wildflowers/> or just google 'wildflower society of wa'



Photo by G Zemunik

The **Friends of Mirrabooka Bushland**, a group formed this year, has monthly walks through the bushland. Owned by the WAPC, it is Bush Forever site 385, covering 96 ha of Banksia woodland. The bulk of the reserve sits between Mirrabooka and Alexander Drives - north of Reid Highway - with a small fragment east of Alexander Drive.

Much of the bushland is in excellent condition, with a diverse understorey of rushes, shrubs and sedges, and overstorey trees, predominantly the candle and firewood Banksias (*B. attenuata* and *B. menziesii*), with sheoaks (*Allocasuarina fraseriana*), jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) and holly-leaved Banksias (*B. ilicifolia*). The reserve is host to many bird species, including Red-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*) and Rainbow



Photo by G Zemunik

Jewel Beetle on Conospermum

Bee-eaters (*Merops ornatus*). It also sustains a population of Black-gloved wallabies (*Macropus irma*).

Walks on the first Sunday of the month (excepting January and February) start at 8:30 am followed by the monthly meeting. The group has input to the local council and the WAPC (who are currently fencing part of the reserve) and has recently assisted with flora surveys at the site with DEC. All are welcome to contribute to the management of the reserve and to take part in monthly walks. For further information contact 9344 2872 or email [friends.of.mirrabooka.bushland@gmail.com](mailto:friends.of.mirrabooka.bushland@gmail.com).

## Calendar Events

Monthly walk, Sunday 6 March, 8:30 am. Meet at Thyme Ct, Mirrabooka. Contact 9344 2872 or

[friends.of.mirrabooka.bushland@gmail.com](mailto:friends.of.mirrabooka.bushland@gmail.com)

Monthly walk, Sunday 3 April, 8:30 am. Meet at Thyme Ct, Mirrabooka. Contact 9344 2872 or

[friends.of.mirrabooka.bushland@gmail.com](mailto:friends.of.mirrabooka.bushland@gmail.com)

*Graham Zemunik*

## Friends of Hepburn & Pinnaroo Bushland

After a weed survey earlier in the year at which we identified several areas of concern, we had a weeding session in September, which mainly targeted Fumeria and Euphorbia. Included are before and after photos of the effect of removing the Fumeria. We also located and bagged a clump of Black Flag including all the corms that we could dig up; fortunately this had not spread too far and we are optimistic that we have removed most of it but will keep an eye on it over the seasons. We have been negotiating with the local council Natural Areas Group to carry out additional hand weeding and targeted spraying to help us keep the weed invasion under control.



Photo by R Henderson

Weed infested section of the bushland before (photo above) and after hand weeding efforts (photo below).



Photo by R Henderson



# Group News Group News Group News

Observing the good display of Donkey Orchids this year makes all the effort worthy.

*Ralph Henderson*

The **Friends of Lake Claremont**, the Cockatoo Coalition, and Harmony and a new young male cockatoo called Chasey and their helpers, Zara and Maureen from Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Rehabilitation Centre with volunteer Caron, attended an Earth Carers event recently. The idea was that people could bring house paint, no longer needed and people who wanted paint could take what they wanted. Last year the paint went in 40 minutes. This year there was a lot more paint and clothing was available for swapping or for just taking.



Harmony had a harrowing time. A dog not on a lead came in and scared Harmony who jumped off her perch and being unable to fly, she fell to the ground. The dog rushed at Harmony and really frightened her. Zara thought she may have to take Harmony to the vet's. After the fright, Harmony sat on Zara's shoulder leaning onto Zara and nibbled the bridge of Zara's nose. By the end of the fair Harmony was eating again.

## Botanical Surprise at Porteous Park

Porteous Park is a small remnant of Banksia woodland in Sorrento of vegetation type "Cottesloe Complex - Central and South with over 100 species of flowering plants. A Friends Group was formed in 2002 to restore this degraded bushland remnant back into very good condition, doing most of the hand weeding work (recently trialing various special tools), while the City of Joondalup staff do any herbicide spraying required, particularly selective herbicide to knock out perennial and annual veldt grass. The Friends Group have been weeding out 22 weed species across the entire park, and in 2010, we received another DEC "Environmental Community Grant" to employ a skilled bushland regenerator (under Friends Group supervision) to assist in particular with the removal of One-leaf Cape Tulip (*Moraea flaccida*) and Pink Gladiolus (*Gladiolus caryophyllaceus*). It requires a multi-year effort to achieve a big reduction in any well established population of any weed species, so getting this grant for a second year was very much appreciated.

Sometimes I find it pleasant to just to go into the bush and doing a few hours weeding myself, often to finish off a section of the bushland to achieve "zero tolerance" of an aggressive weed species. In late October, I was doing some weeding there and about twenty Carnaby's Cockatoos flew in a settled in Parrot Bush all around me, only a few metres away, and did not seem to be at all concerned about my presence. A nice experience! But how long will it last? I applaud the efforts of all those trying to restore the populations of the Black Cockatoos.

*Mike Norman*

## Friends of Dianella Bushland

This is an update on the proposed redevelopment of the Channel 7 media land, and its impact on the Cottonwood Crescent bushland, cared for by the Friends of Dianella Bushland.

Two representatives from the Friends group met with representatives of a developer to view the draft re-development plans for the area which were to be presented to the City of Stirling in November. There are some major changes to the original plans.

Part of Lot 7, which was designated by the original development proposal as suitable for inclusion in the current reserve (in lieu of POS), has been withdrawn to extend the housing area. A rectangular portion abutting the Channel 7 car park will now be requested to be rezoned R60 to allow a group of residences to overlook the bushland. There is a fall in the land, so a 1.5m limestone retaining wall will be built, with a fence on top (Possibly limestone pillars with infill of open wrought iron panels.) This means the area of donated bushland is reduced to 6800sq m, which will have to include a 3m wide firebreak at the foot of the retaining wall, a further reduction in bushland area.

The proponents have investigated the reticulated lawn area the kangaroos currently use and have included a similar amount within the new reserve fence. As we pointed out to them, the kangaroos now roam far and wide (onto the high school oval, and up Bauhinia Ridge road to Channel 10 verge) so their calculations are based on a false figure, and the new area may not be enough to sustain them. Satterley's have undertaken to consult with Mike Bamford on this matter, to ensure the kangaroos will have sufficient food resources. They plan to grass the reserve car park, and the sump area to meet the shortfall. The Friends reps pointed out that reticulated turf next to a bush forever site is not an ideal solution, and suggested they investigate native grasses which may be more suitable.

Because the development would remove the reserve car park, we asked about parking for visitors to the reserve, and proponents suggested on road parking would be an alternative. We do not think this is an appropriate solution.

The number of homes proposed for the area has been raised from 81 to over 100, including 3 pockets of R60. The proponents indicated the homes built on these blocks would probably not be R60, but the provision is there.

A perimeter pathway agreed to in early plans has been deleted as the developers have indicated it is a City responsibility.

No decision has been made regarding kangaroo protection during the earthworks.

As you can see, there are some problems about the reserve sustainability and biodiversity, which the Friends group is intensively monitoring.

*Jan Bant*

## Friends of Star Swamp Bushland Reserve

Our annual Spring Wildflower Walk saw quite a sizeable group along to see what the bushland had to offer. There were some orchids and the usual flowers but orchid numbers were down this year and flowering also seemed to be a bit later than usual. We attribute the low orchid numbers in part to the destructive fire through about 60% of the Reserve in 2007, with leaf litter and fungi still recovering. The big difference we have noted this year is the number of jewel beetles. Star Swamp Bushland

# Group News Group News Group News

historically has had a large range of these and every year our President, David Pike, takes a lot of wonderful jewel beetle photos. But this year David has been hard pressed to find many beetles at all, even on the flora usually crawling with them. David has also visited a number of other reserves in the northern suburbs which usually have an abundance of jewel beetles, but again has reported very few sightings. Birds, however, are another story. There seems to be a lot of nesting happening in Star Swamp Bushland and surrounding properties. Rainbow bee eaters have arrived and all of the common birds are busy nesting. We discovered on a recent nocturnal walk that the tawny frogmouths have two chicks, so hopefully the birds will have a good season and we will be spared the destruction of a fire in the Reserve.

*Christine Curry*

## Friends of Hollywood Bushland

Completed this years activities with a working bee on Sunday 14th November, weeding. Volunteers focused on the Carnation weed which seems to thrive. Our usual format is to work to morning tea and then wrap it all up - nothing too arduous as it gets quite hot this time of the year.

The Grass trees *Xanthorrhoea* produced a spectacular display of spikes. Some of the spikes are at least 3 metres long and full of flower and bees. The grass trees along the railway line near Shenton Park Station are the same - spectacular. Plenty of other flowers to see - so enjoy the walks before it gets too hot.

The orchids did well this year with the usual Pink Fairies, Donkeys, Snail, Cowslip and Greenhoods. The only new one was a species of blue Sun orchid. We will keep an eye out for it next year. The next orchid to come out will be the Slipper Orchids in the northern section and they are usually out sometime around Christmas.

Unless we get some unusual rain, we are going to have to water regularly - so please get in touch with days that suit you. Last year worked well when we watered at 7 am and were finished by 8am.

## Mt Henry Peninsula Conservation Group

Completed a busy year with a guided walk around the peninsula on Saturday 27 November. Participants talked about past, present and future while enjoying some activities and afternoon tea.

Julia Cullity, from Urban Nature, a section of the Department of Environment and Conservation, has helped, on three occasions recently, to review the progress of weed control on Mt Henry Peninsula.

In 2006, several weed populations were GPS mapped by Urban Nature. Of those, two woody weed species have been removed vis. Flinders Range Wattle (*Acacia iteaphylla*) and Myrtle-leaved Milkwort (*Polygala myrtifolia*). Removal of Geraldton Wax (*Chamelaucium uncinatum*), seeded from Kwinana Freeway planting, is in progress. Two bulbous weeds have been brought under con-

trol, Yellow Soldier (*Lachenalia reflexa*) and Bugle Lily (*Watsonia meriana* var *bulbillifera*), and two more are being reviewed, vis. One-leaf Cape Tulip (*Moraea flaccida*) and Long-tube Painted Lady (*Gladiolus angustus*) with GPS mapping. The annual and/or perennial Geraldton Carnation Weed (*Euphorbia terracina*), another Kwinana Freeway escapee, seems to be increasing the sites of its occurrence, despite annual hand weeding control. It invariably arises under trees, especially WA Christmas Tree, where the seed benefits from the fertile soil beneath, after being dispersed by grazing and roosting doves.

This year Wild Pink Gladioli seem to be prolific, despite years of removal when flowering and seeding. Searching for answers on this one!! For information on these species go to [www.florabase.calm.wa.gov.au](http://www.florabase.calm.wa.gov.au)

The two grant applications that were submitted this year to the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program have been successful for funding in 2011.

One was to continue Veldt grass weed control for Mt Henry Peninsula. The areas close to Gibney House have been treated for the first time this year and the grant next year ensures follow-up control.



The other was to restore native vegetation on an area of the slope between the river and the grassed area for the Edmund Rice Community at Westcourt.



Assistance from Urban Nature and the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program Grant is much appreciated as we progress with regeneration of native flora on Mt Henry Peninsula, and around Aquinas Bay.

*Reprinted with permission from the Mt Henry Peninsula Conservation Group Newsletter November 2010.*



(Continued from page 1)

assessment, and he concluded that hexazinone was the likely cause, and commented to us that the "hexazinone did what it was supposed to do - kill trees"! In fact, we know hexazinone is designed to kill woody plants other than conifers, so it has been used to spray pine plantations to kill competition from eucalypts and wattles.

At the City of Stirling, all we have heard is that in the following year Turfmaster was again awarded another 3 year contract with a potential 2 year extension, at a considerable total value. Notably Turfmaster is no longer contracted to apply herbicide in natural areas in Stirling. The City of Stirling took no legal action and it is not clear whether Turfmaster recompensed the City for any of the costs incurred. Stirling did state straight after tree deaths occurred however, that hexazinone was used to spray the sumps.

Turfmaster continues to benefit from many contracts with most other metropolitan local government authorities and state agencies, probably because the ongoing level of local government support for this company over the last 15 years has probably, in our opinion, put most other large turf/ herbicide players out of business!

DEC has also taken no legal action under the Environmental Protection Act because the investigation failed to establish a *prima facie* case and there was no reasonable prospect of conviction. So we are not sure what any company or individual can do before they can be prosecuted. The Health Department, who is responsible for licensing companies to spray in public areas, has taken no action either, other than issuing a warning.

Attached are two photos, one of a typical sprayed sump, the other a sump nearby that we believe was spared, one year after hexazinone was applied in the City of Joondalup. Note that the sides of the sprayed sump are almost totally bare and eroding. This suggests the hexazinone has not been completely washed out of the sides, so residual weed kill is still occurring. The bottom of the sump however is covered in weeds and it is suggested the hexazinone has been washed out of the bottom as hexazinone is soluble. Note some dead Eucalypt trees outside of the fence. Compare this with the picture of the sump that appears not to have been sprayed. There is thick weed

growth up the sides and bottom of the sump, and a variety of healthy native trees surrounding it despite the dry winter the year before this photo was taken.

The Hon Giz Watson MLC has provided information stating that not all the sprayed trees died (though the majority did); not all the trees that died were found to have hexazinone in them; records are inadequate to identify exactly what was sprayed (it was an off label use), where exactly it was sprayed; and the trees had been similarly sprayed without incident in 2003 and 2004 so that it is arguable that the tree deaths were not reasonably foreseeable. We have seen no evidence at all to support any of these claims, also noting that the records have been stated to be inadequate. Everyone seems to be ignoring that Turfmaster sprayed water drainage areas in Kununurra in 2003 and many trees died as reported by the "Kimberley Echo" so how can it be argued that it was not foreseeable?

Has anything changed since this debacle? The City of Joondalup no longer has a herbicide spraying contract with Turfmaster, but many other metropolitan Councils still do. It is perhaps unlikely that hexazinone will be used again in the affected Local Governments, but will it be used elsewhere in WA and will it damage desirable native vegetation again? There is no evidence to suggest the supervision of on-ground spraying work by Turfmaster has improved. Although we understand hexazinone is no longer used, there is no evidence that other "residual" herbicides in the "Triazine" group such as Simazine have stopped being used in Perth. Only a few Councils in the Perth metro area are considering how to reduce their widespread use of herbicides in public places by using methods such as steam. Notably the City of Nedlands uses steam.

None of us has ever seen or heard a single word of apology from Turfmaster or the Cities of Stirling and Joondalup for what has happened. But public apathy about this debacle, except for those residents whose gardens were directly affected, and the ongoing Local Government support for the way herbicides are generously sprayed around our parks and road verges on a continual basis, is an even bigger worry.

*Joondalup Community Coast Care Forum*

◇ What's new? ◇ What's new? ◇ What's new? ◇ What's new? ◇

## 2011 WA WETLAND MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

World Wetlands Day  
Wednesday 2 February 2011  
9am-4pm  
Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre

CALL FOR REGISTRATIONS

For more information contact Denise Crosbie on 9417 8460 or email: [denise@cockburnwetlands.org.au](mailto:denise@cockburnwetlands.org.au)

## State NRM Program

### 2010-2011 COMMUNITY GRANTS

Eligible community groups can apply for grants of between \$10,000 and \$50,000 for activities towards protection and conservation of natural resources in WA.

**Applications must be received by 5pm  
Friday 7 January 2011.**

Guidelines and the Application Form are available through  
<http://www.nrm.wa.gov.au/stateNRMprogram.htm>

# 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 \$35 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

### Individuals:

Supporter membership is only \$25 per year (GST included). Supporters can attend meetings and receive copies of the "Urban Bush Telegraph"

Groups and supporters are reminded that annual membership fees include one printed copy of the *Urban Bush Telegraph* (currently published quarterly). Additional printed copies can be ordered at a cost of \$5.00 per copy per annum.

Send your name, address and cheque or postal order to:

Treasurer, Urban Bushland Council WA Inc, PO Box 326, West Perth WA 6872

## Urban Bushland Council Activities

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Tuesday 1st MARCH 2011**

**Guest speaker: Greg Keighery**

**At Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth**

### BIODIVERSITY SEMINAR

**Friday 25th March 2011**

**Venue and program are being organised.**

**For more information contact the UBC office on 9420 7207**

**All welcome**

#### UBC PUBLICATIONS

***Wetlands to Wastelands?* - proceedings of a seminar about the future of bushland at Perth Airport (2004)**

Available at UBC's website

<http://www.bushlandperth.org.au/html/infosheets.htm>

***Burning Issues*—proceedings of a workshop about fire management in urban bushland. (2002)**

Available from the UBC for \$11, postage included.

***Building Partnerships between Community Groups and Local Government for Our Bushland*—proceedings of a seminar (2000). Available from the UBC for \$5.50, postage included**

***Managing our Bushland* - proceedings of a conference about the protection and management of urban bushland (1998). Available from the UBC for \$11, postage included.**

***Burning our Bushland* - proceedings of a conference about fire and urban bushland (1995). Out of print; available in libraries.**

#### NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Compiled by: Renata Zelinova

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:email

ubc@iinet.net.au

**Copy deadline - 15 February 2010**

#### PERTH'S BUSHLAND BIRTHDAY & PERPETUAL CALENDAR

**\$15 plus \$2 postage**

**Available by mail order from the UBC office.**

#### Office:

**URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL WA Inc**

**Lotteries House**

**2 Delhi Street West Perth WA 6872**

**Ph 9420 7207 Fax 9420 7208**

**E-mail: [ubc@iinet.net.au](mailto:ubc@iinet.net.au)**

**Web site:**

**[www.bushlandperth.org.au](http://www.bushlandperth.org.au)**