



The Urban Bush Telegraph

Newsletter of the Urban Bushland Council WA Inc

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Summer 2007-2008

What do ordinary citizens do when Government agencies refuse to fulfil their obligations?

This is the quandary people in Perth's western suburbs face now that the WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has given its approval to a proposal by the University of Western Australia to subdivide the Underwood Avenue Bushland for housing. The Underwood Avenue Bushland is a bushland treasure in Perth's western suburbs; third in size (after Kings Park and Bold Park, and equal to either of them in terms of the condition of its vegetation. Most importantly, Underwood is a key component of the bushland corridor linking Kings Park and Bold Park, and plays an important role in the long-term health and survival of both these bushland areas.

Reading the EPA report we search for some justification for approving the destruction of this bushland treasure. We encounter fine sounding phrases such as *protection of biological biodiversity* and *intergenerational equity* scattered through the report like hundreds-and-thousands on a birthday cake. As with hundreds-and-thousands on a birthday cake, they reside only on the surface. Cutting through the flowery rhetoric we find no substance at all, no attempt to quantify the environmental impacts of the proposal, no discussion of possible alternatives, no criticism of the inaccurate and inadequate contents of the proposal put forward by the University. We find nothing but bland statements of assurance that "*The EPA considers that the issues of biodiversity have been adequately addressed ...*" (Summary and Recommendations, page ii).

So, we search harder through the document to find how the issues of biodiversity have been addressed. We find a statement that "*The consolidated area will continue to provide habitat for a variety of fauna species including Carnaby's Cockatoo and the Graceful Sun Moth*" (Page 9). That statement strikes us more as an expression of hope than a statement of scientific assessment. When we consult with the EPA's own scientific experts, we discover that the proposed 10 hectare remnant is too small to provide food and habitat for many vulnerable species (especially birds) that currently inhabit the bushland. So, it seems that the EPA is ignoring the advice of its own experts! Where is the systematic assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposal? Where are the scientific facts? We find only flowery rhetoric and reassuring phrases.

We are at a loss to explain why the EPA is ignoring the advice of its own experts. Conspiracy theories begin to surface in our minds. The previous chairman of the EPA appears to have left suddenly after a close encounter with Brian Burke. Is something similar going on here? Once people lose confidence in the machinery of government then they feel angry, frustrated, and powerless. It dawns on us that this is why such reports are written; to make us feel powerless in the face adversity, and to eventually give up.

But, we know that bad things happen when citizens give up. We will not give up! We have fought this battle for eight years, and will fight it for another eighty years if necessary! All around the world people are fighting to save what is left of the natural world. We will continue to battle to make sure that our children, and their children will inherit at least some of the natural beauty we have enjoyed, and be able to experience the wilderness inside a city that only places like the Underwood Avenue bushland can provide.

What are we to do? For eight years we have been depending on your letters, submissions, signatures on petitions and attendance at public meetings to protect the bushland from the bulldozers. And it has worked. Ministers may care little about the environment, but they know that there are a lot of angry voters out there when their office is flooded with letters.

Dear readers, we need your help. We have been in this position before. The EPA approved a similar proposal in 2003 (Bulletin 1099). Following your support in the form of letters, petitions, and delegations, the proposal was rejected by the Minister.

So, we need lots of letters. We need so many letters that the Minister has to relocate to larger premises to employ enough staff to respond to them! You can send a letter to David Templeman, Minister for the Environment, 77 St Georges Tce, Perth 6000. Ring Kim (9381 6002) or Dani (9381 3470) for more information on how you can help.

Read more about Underwood Avenue Bushland on pages 4&7

INSIDE

- Greens win for Whiteman Park
- Moore protection: a 2007 good news story
- Perth Hills Planning Bill

and more...

Editorial

A year has passed since the issue of climate change leapt to media prominence and public concern. Remarkably absent however is any focus on bushland clearing and loss of biodiversity. The recent Clearing Forum (26 November) drew attention to the Government's failure to monitor the big picture for WA through satellite imagery. It was alarming to learn that we simply do not know how much land is cleared each year, nor do we know the net loss - or gain - of vegetation cover. Thus we do not know the contribution of clearing to the State's total Greenhouse gas emissions.

At the Forum the Department of Planning and Infrastructure did not present any data or estimates of clearing in the Perth Metropolitan Region. Much is exempt from clearing permits and no data is collected on exemptions. In contrast, staff from the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) presented data on the clearing approvals process under regulations. In 2006/07 DEC received over 500 applications to clear statewide. Of 110 decisions made by DOIR and 422 made by DEC, a massive total area of 9943 ha gained permits to clear and 5110 ha were refused permits.

Permits for roadside clearing by Main Roads and Local Authorities came under strong community criticism. Why are these permits being granted when they are in breach of so many of the clearing principles? In essence the new clearing regulations have failed to protect our precious biodiversity by controlling clearing to the point of 'no net loss of vegetation quality and quantity' - a national target.

Three and a half years after public release of the MRS Major Amendment for Bush Forever, it still has not been passed by Parliament. The process has stalled. During the year the UBC has lobbied DPI to impress the need to pass the Amendment, and to give statutory effect to Bush Forever areas in the MRS text and map. It beggars belief that the Government has so little commitment to Bush Forever when Perth is one of the few bio-diverse cities of the world. Why are we not proud and boastful of Perth's Banksia Woodlands?

The UBC has felt it important to help raise the capacity of community groups to draw the community into their local bushland and engage with nature. Our City Bush Guides project has trained 37 City Bush Guides to start taking guided bush walks. New Guides deserve your support and encouragement in learning about their local bushland and we ask Friends Groups to make them welcome if they contact you. Our common objective is to raise public appreciation and support of bushland. The UBC acknowledges the generous funding of the City Bush Guides project by the Western Australian Planning Commission.

Friends groups have again been active on the ground during 2007. The UBC commends the initiative and energy of so many people and we wish everyone a safe and restful Christmas season.



Moore protection: a 2007 good news story

By Cameron Poustie, Principal Solicitor, Environmental Defender's Office and Melissa Yuen, EDO volunteer

Moore River Company Pty Ltd v Western Australian Planning Commission [2007] WASAT 98 (delivered 1 May 2007) signified a rare outcome where the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) ruled in favour of the environment. The case involved an appeal against the WA Planning Commission's (WAPC's) decision to refuse approval for subdivision of a block of land owned by the Moore River Company. The matter ended up before the SAT, who ultimately upheld the WAPC's decision.

History

The decision brought to an end the long running campaign against the Moore River Company by local community and environmental groups wanting to preserve the area. The company itself is one with enormous resources and extensive experience in building and developing in Western Australia. The proposal would have seen the area turn into more urban sprawl with low and medium density residential developments to cater for around 10,000 people.

The main objection against the large subdivision was the potentially adverse environmental impact it would have on the sand dunes and the river running through the area. The Moore River Company might have seen the subdivision as progress and a general development of the area, but environmentalists saw it as destruction of unique tract of West Australian coast.

A few years earlier, the land had been rezoned from 'rural' to 'urban development'. Having successfully secured this rezoning, it was assumed an approval for the subdivision would subsequently follow.

Refusal to approve the plan of subdivision

However, the WAPC recommended against the subdivision and this decision was upheld on appeal by the SAT. Essentially, the SAT's reasons for refusing to approve the proposal revolved around the inconsistency with current planning schemes for the area including local and state planning policies.

One of the particularly important considerations for the SAT was the fact that the proposal did not adhere to State planning policies in relation to sustainability and minimizing the 'ecological footprint' of human settlement. The introduction of considerations of 'sustainability' in the decision making process will hopefully have a significant effect on the assessment of development proposals in the future.

The state planning schemes directed at promoting sustainability aim to achieve their objectives through managing large scale urban and regional developments. The WA Government's *State Sustainability Strategy*, adopted and published in September 2003, aims to facilitate sustainability by promoting well planned patterns of settlement across the state. The proposal was evaluated in the context of this strategy. Any proposed expansions or new settlements, should be accompanied with a planned 'economic and employment base', and in this case, those elements were not present.

There were also other significant issues raised by the local planning schemes. These included conflict with the provisions discouraging 'continuous linear urban development along the coast', as well as the fact that settlements with 'a high level of car dependency' were to be discouraged.

Conclusion

The case marks a significant milestone for environmental groups and demonstrates how environmental protection can sometimes be achieved through the application of planning policies and initiatives.

Greens win for Whiteman Park By Giz Watson MLC (Member for North Metropolitan Region)

In the last Parliament sitting week before the winter recess the Legislative Council debated the Greens disallowance of the Metropolitan Regional Scheme amendment that would have seen the transfer of 249 hectares of Park and Recreation reservation from the southern portion of Whiteman Park - referred to as the Marshall Road precinct - into urban development.

For only the second time in the ten years I have been in the Parliament, the Liberal party supported a Greens' disallowance on bushland issues!

Whiteman Park is on the edge of the Swan Valley in the north-east of the metropolitan area. The park's 2600 hectares comprises several large expanses of remnant bushland and significant wetlands. It also has a number of recreational facilities and grassed areas within it.

The Greens opposed the rezoning of the southern portion of the park for housing for several reasons; for the environmental issues, to protect the integrity of the park, and to honour the intention of the original landowners. It was very important to send a clear message to the Government that it is not acceptable to sell-off any part of a parks and recreation reserve. The disallowance also recognised that the land was originally sold to the State Government (back in the early 1970's) expressly for public purposes, and was promptly rezoned from 'rural' to 'parks and recreation'.

The Government argued that the Marshall Road precinct was degraded grazing land and of no significant environmental value to the park. However, the Urban Bushland Council disagreed, and in their submission to the scheme amendment said:

"We do not support the rezoning of this land to 'Urban' because

a) parts retain significant areas of bushland and damplands; b) the balance is open space, which, while degraded, provides many environmental, social and economic benefits; and c) selling natural assets to provide funds for development and management elsewhere in the park is totally unacceptable."

In their argument, the Government tried to present a package that another part of the MRS Amendment was adding 1081 hectares

of bush to the park, and so there was to be a net gain to the park. It is unfortunate that in disallowing the whole MRS Amendment (it is not possible to disallow part of it) that addition has not occurred. However, significantly, that same area is under the Priority One ground pollution control area. The Western Australian Planning Commission's own document states:

"The 1081 ha area contains native vegetation of varying quality and is a 'Priority One' Underground Water Pollution Control Area . . . 'Priority One' indicates that the highest level of protection is necessary for the area. The only land uses compatible with 'Priority One' areas are national parks and nature reserves. All other land uses are deemed restricted or incompatible."

In other words, there is no other purpose that the land could legitimately be designated for, other than to be co-joined with Whiteman Park. It is logical. It is the only land-use designation that it should ultimately have, and should not have been presented as compensation for the loss of the southern portion.

The decision is a victory for the local community and a much needed win for the environment. It is also an important 'shot across the bows' for a State government with a poor record of protecting urban bushland.

Members of the local community were vital in their lobbying efforts (particularly of the Liberal members) and were instrumental in sourcing material that showed the originals owners' intention when they sold the land to the government. The Urban Bushland Council should also be congratulated for their efforts in protecting the park and the Bennet Brook catchment. My thanks to all who contributed to a significant win for Whiteman Park and the community.

The full debate on the disallowance can be read at <http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/web/newwebparl.nsf/iframewebpages/Hansard+-+Advanced+Search>

THE PERTH HILLS PLANNING BILL

Have your say on the future for this beautiful, semi-rural environment

Community input is being sought into a draft Perth Hills Planning Bill that was developed by Greens MLC Giz Watson.

The aim of the Bill is to better protect and plan for future of the Perth Hills. Poorly planned urban development, quarrying, logging and bauxite mining are all contributing to a degradation of the natural values and beauty of the Perth Hills.

The Hills not only provide an attractive place to live, but are also an ecotourism and recreation destination, a habitat for threatened species, a source of clean water and an attractive backdrop to the city.

The Bill would recognise the Hills area, from Chittering in the north to Serpentine in the south, as an area of special significance. Following the model of the existing *Swan*

Valley Planning Act 1995, the Bill would:

- Establish planning objectives and give them legal effect
- Create a planning committee
- Give the planning committee powers to review development applications

A copy of the draft Bill and an Explanatory Memorandum are available from Giz Watson's parliamentary website: <http://www.mp.gov.au/giz-watson>

Send you comments on all aspects of the Bill including the proposed boundaries, the planning objectives and the mechanisms giving effect to those objectives.

Please email your comments to giz.watson@mp.wa.gov.au or send them in writing to Giz Watson MLC, 339 Oxford Street, Leederville WA 6007 by **1 March 2008**.

STORIES FROM UNDERWOOD AVENUE BUSHLAND



Photo by M Owen

It is Harvest Festival time in **Underwood Avenue Bushland**. A small number of balgas have put up tall flowering spikes, some over two metres high. This sudden wealth of food and drink attracts many species of insect and they all vie for position.

The greatest number of butterflies about the spikes are the Australian painted ladies, but the common browns and the yellow admirals are also present. Then we have weevils, lady-birds, beetles, jewel-like beetles, bugs and thousands of hover flies. Thynnid wasps are on the spikes and they often have a wingless female attached at the end of the abdomen which they drag along as they move over the flowers. While mating the male is able to harvest food and bend around to the attached female and to feed her. A big predatory orange and black wasp flew around the top one spike. Grasshoppers chomp away at the stamens of the flowers.

I can hardly drag myself away.
You wouldn't be dead for quids.

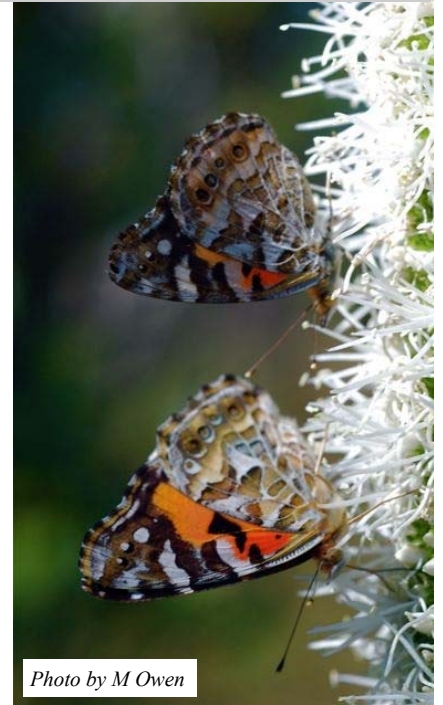


Photo by M Owen



In the weevil family Photo by M Owen



Macrozamia leaves Photo by M Owen

In its proposal for the bushland at Underwood Avenue, the University has described three areas. One area is for housing, one is for a conservation and public open space area and at the top of the hill are two areas known descriptively but not lyrically as 'University purposes - future use and development.'

This area is not to be bulldozed immediately and in fact, the EPA recommends 'that the University should rehabilitate the southern-most portion of the area identified as "University purpose - future use and development" which is odour affected, until approval to develop this portion of the land is given through a Land Use Plan', 'without further assessment by the EPA'.

Revegetate prior to bulldozing?

The old jarrah tree in the photograph (right) is in the area for future use. The smaller trees to the right of the jarrah are regrowth tuart trees.

Old tuart trees in this area would be lost. As Todd Andrew Edwards wrote in his paper "Tuart Decline - It's not just Bugs to Blame!"

It is unfortunate for Tuart trees that their distribution somewhat shadows the coastal strip where most Western Australians choose to live, as a result the affect of human activities on the species has been severe..... The continued clearing and destruction is however not an acceptable situation, especially since 66% of tuart communities have already been destroyed.

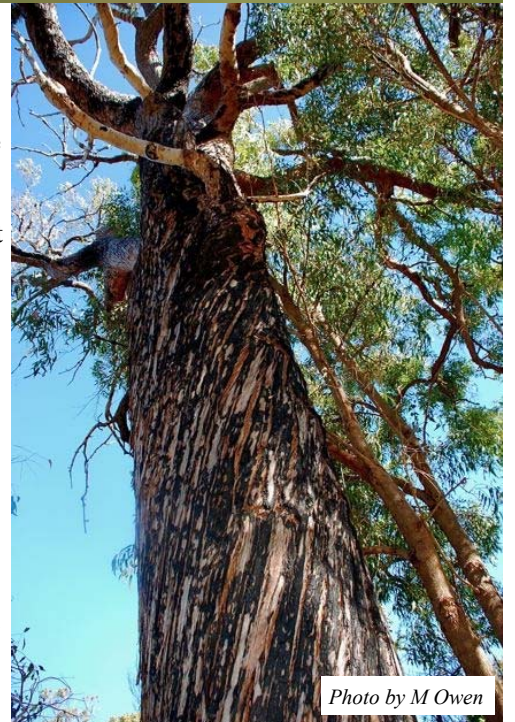


Photo by M Owen

Group News Group News Group News

About fifty different species of *Stylidium* occur in the Perth region ("Perth Plants", by Russell Barrett and Eng Pin Tay). Pollination occurs in a miraculous and intriguing way. The flower has four petals and the male and female parts of the flower are fused at the end of a long column, the trigger. On the end of the trigger is the pollen. The trigger is set, curved back waiting for the right insect to land on the petals.



Photo by M Owen

I was watching the small black beetles on the petals of *Stylidium striatum* (Pink Fountain Trigger plant) and wondering if the trigger would be activated by these insects if they moved to the centre of the flower.

This was not the case, and indeed, had the trigger been activated the pollen would not have landed on the beetles as they are too small.

As I watched, a bee-fly flew onto first one, then the next and the next flower in rapid succession. The triggers went bang, bang, bang, but noiselessly, well, noiselessly to my ears. Not surprisingly the bee-fly flew off.

When the flower has deposited its pollen on the back of an insect, the trigger gradually resets itself, and should another insect with pollen on its back land on the flower, the trigger is released again, bang, and collects this pollen being transported from a separate flower. In this manner cross-fertilization occurs.

Now tell me if that is not wonderful.

Margaret Owen

The **Star Swamp Bushland Reserve** has bounced back following the massive bushfire that swept through 60% of the Reserve in March this year. The grass trees have responded in their hundreds to the fire, sending up magnificent flower stalks which are covered in bees, beetles and honeyeaters. Most of the mid-range shrubs are shooting at the base, sending up vigorous new growth to replace the burnt, and new seedlings have emerged from the ashes.

As expected, weed numbers have exploded, with the bulb weeds particularly thick this year. The City of Stirling has been spraying for veldt grass and has trialled weeding programs on several other species, including Geraldton Carnation Weed, but it is a daunting task. The Friends Group continues its monthly weeding morning, having some success in a very small area of the Reserve, but it will be almost impossible to win the battle against introduced weeds.

One bright point to note is the germination of hundreds of tuart tree seedlings, mostly in the ash beds of tuart trees which were destroyed. If the bushland can survive without a further fire for the next few years, these will go a long way to restoring the higher canopy in the Reserve.

The recent fires in Yellagonga Regional Park and Warwick Regional Open Space indicate that there is probably a 'firebug' operating in the northern suburbs and this is worrying for all areas of urban bushland. Everyone will need to be vigilant and

report any suspicious activity in their local bushland to police or FESA, so that the risk of deliberately lit fires can be kept to a minimum.

Christine Curry

Friends of Trigg Bushland opened a Tuart Information Display signboard in Trigg Bushland on Wednesday 28th November by Drew Haswell, Department of Environment and Conservation. The signboard provides general information to the local community on tuart trees, as well as providing an update on the tuart mapping being conducted by the Friends of Trigg Bushland.

Using global positioning systems (GPS) and digital cameras combined with detailed aerial photographs, community volunteers are canvassing Trigg Bushland at 10 metre intervals and taking detailed data of each tuart tree. The data, including the precise coordinates of each tree's location, is combined into an electronic database which is intended to supplement the data collected by the State government and Murdoch University's Tuart Health Research Group.

It is hoped that it will provide baseline data for any future work undertaken to save the tuart, which is considered to be under serious threat. A website is also under construction so that tuart information produced by Friends of Trigg Bushland will be available to the wider community, and will be launched in the coming year.

The Tuart Information Display and website have been made possible by a grant from the DEC, with major support from the City of Stirling for the signboard. The Friends of Trigg Bushland have made a contribution in kind with hundreds of hours of volunteer labour in collecting and collating the data.

The data collection phase of the project is nearing 50% completion. Although the data has not yet been scientifically examined, volunteers report a perceived gap in the age of tuart trees – with most trees fully mature or alternatively young juveniles, possibly only as old as the most recent fire.

The data collection phase of the project is expected to run another 6 months and volunteers are welcome, with training and equipment provided. Families are particularly encouraged to take part as an interesting and educational pastime for all ages. For further information, ring Nina on 0427936566 or Barbara on 9447-5406.



Opening of the new Tuart Information Display at Trigg Bushland.

Photo by Ian Johnson

Group News Group

The Albany Community Environment Centre was started in 1992. It waxes and wanes in popularity, often revived by new environmental issues. The group reignited in May this year, on the issue of climate change. (It has no shopfront so many locals are unaware of the group's existence)

Our actions so far have been;

1. To raise awareness of climate change
2. To raise the public profile of ACEC and
3. To apply for grants to allow us to carry out public talks and home energy audits.

I'm not sure how many of you are familiar with Albany. I'm a blow in, or sea changer myself, having only been here seven years. The Albany population has been swelling rapidly with an influx of retirement villages, sea changers and one of the highest birth rates of any town in Australia? Along with it, a tide of housing developments is going up. In my short time here, several areas of native bush have already been bulldozed for housing, including Bayonet Head, and Yakamia. There are many established areas with pockets of remnant vegetation. In the last 2 months, a stand of sheoaks disappeared from a shopping complex. Our biggest challenge is a parcel of sand dunes at Emu Point, currently intact native vegetation with few weeds...on the cards to be developed by Land Corp.

In the face of the rampant urban sprawl, we decided to ask the Local Government to impose a moratorium on Land Clearing. We are currently in the process of checking the Local Planning Strategy to see what areas are earmarked for future development. We hope to find some Australian precedents (having heard that Noosa Council exercises such a policy) We also go clutching copies of the recent agreements signed between the Local Government Associations and State Government ([Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership Agreement](#))

If any body has suggestions to help us in our mission, we'd love to hear from you...

Helen Knewstubb,
Convenor

Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise were rewarded for their efforts when they were privileged to participate in a special event recently. Twenty five juvenile animals were released into the wild at Mogumber Nature Reserve.

The Western Swamp Tortoise is the most endangered tortoise in the world, with less than 59 adult tortoises in the wild.

The newly released juveniles were captive bred and raised at the Perth Zoo. The release was coordinated by the Chief Scientific Coordinator, Dr Gerard Kuchling, and Perth Zoo staff. Once all the animals were safely in the water, all participants enjoyed a barbecue lunch.

The AGM will be held at Perth Zoo on 8 December at 10.30 am. The meeting will be followed by a guided tour of the breeding facilities and a picnic lunch.

RVSP to westernswamptortoise@yahoo.com

Darling Range Branch of the Wildflower Society of WA presents an illustrated talk by

Maggie Lilith

THE IMPACT OF GM CROPS IN WA ON ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

The presentation will be held on Tuesday **22 January 2008 at 7.30 pm** in the Exhibition Room of the Kalamunda Library, corner of William Road and Spring Road.

Cost: \$2 (Members) & \$3 (non-members).

For more information phone 9291 9392 or 9293 3727 (aw)

◇ What's new? ◇ What's new? ◇

The latest installment of the Weeds CRC's newsletter, **Weed Watch** can be viewed at:

http://www.weeds.crc.org.au/publications/weed_watch.html

In this issue...

- New Weeds CRC publication lists over 28,000 introduced plant species and their weed status
- Australia's weedy future
- Conquer annual ryegrass with a non-crop phase
- Taking StubbleStarR to market
- WRA with Australia the global leader
- Weed Spotters: early detection of invasive plants
- What does your garden grow?
- Misbehaving plants
- EMAPi9

AND MORE...

Town of Kwinana

Invites public comment on its

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY DISCUSSION PAPER

The Discussion Paper represents Phase Two of preparing a Local Biodiversity Strategy for the Town of Kwinana, and aims to establish local biodiversity targets based on community aspirations and prevailing opportunities and constraints.

All comments should be received by **31 December 2007**. All responses should quote the subject 'Local Biodiversity Strategy Discussion Paper Comments', and be sent to Town of Kwinana, PO Box 21, Kwinana WA 6966.

RESOURCES FOR UBC MEMBERS

To assist Friends Groups with their activities, the Urban Bushland Council WA is offering a range of tools for free loan:

Flora survey kit (2 available)

Includes: backpack, rope measured out to set up 10x10 m quadrat, 4 steel stakes, hammer, clipboard.

Three shovels, two pitch-forks, two trowels, one spade, one saw, one mattock

Display material

A range of quality photographs with descriptions addressing the following issues:

- Values of urban bushland
- Threats to urban bushland

They can be used to raise awareness and promote activities in your local area by displaying them at your local library, local school or community fair.

GPS/Digital camera kit (will be available soon)

A geo-referencing kit that can be used for mapping weeds, fire history of a bushland reserve or recording the position of your monitoring quadrats.

To book the items please contact the UBC office at **least two weeks prior the day you intend to use the above listed tools** to allow sufficient time for pick up. Booking well in advance will enable better coordination of loans. Please contact the UBC office on 9420 7207 and leave a message with your contact details or email your request to ubc@iinet.net.au

From the letter to Mr Templeman, Minister for the Environment and Heritage sent recently by the Friends of Underwood Avenue (Inc):

The Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland (Inc) wish to convey our deep concerns about the EPA process and recommendations in Bulletin 1272 Lot 4 Underwood Avenue, Shenton Park 2007 Development and Conservation Proposal by UWA

Very clear refutation of the recent University of Western Australia (UWA) proposal was submitted by the Friends of Underwood Ave bushland Inc, Friends of Shenton Bushland Inc, Urban Bushland Council (UBC) and expert bodies such as Birds Australia and the Wildflower Society as well as independent experts in Biodiversity and native Flora and Fauna.

These same organisations and experts argued convincingly that the bushland is *regionally significant* and that for the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity and applying the precautionary principle, the whole of the bushland should be preserved. Indeed, the status of Underwood Avenue being regionally significant is accepted by the UWA consultants that state this in ATA 2000 report, p16, para 1, and the Government accepts this by the inclusion of the bushland in Bush Forever.

There is no argument therefore as to the importance of the Underwood Avenue bushland. What we are therefore questioning is how so much clearing is to be allowed on this site?

It is our understanding that during negotiations to get Bush Forever (Bush Plan) accepted by the Cabinet of the day, one of the areas of regionally significant bushland that was to be sacrificed was Underwood Avenue. This is totally unacceptable, because what has *not been done* is a thorough evaluation by the EPA of proposed clearing of so much of this regionally significant bushland.

The recent UWA proposal was found to have many significant errors of fact, but notwithstanding this, the EPA report agrees so closely with the intent and wording of the UWA proposal, that has been clearly refuted by the public submissions, that it raises serious doubts about the EPA and due process.

As an example of significant errors by UWA:

Proposing that the Carnaby's black cockatoo be taken off the endangered species list because they argue that there are now large numbers of birds that have plenty of opportunities to feed (in urban gardens). UWA states that "The Jarrah/Banksia Woodland vegetation type of the conservation and POS areas (and balance of the subject land) are well represented at other local reserves and open spaces."

This is immediately contradicted by the statement "Bold Park is composed of up to 70% approx 145ha of *Banksia* Low Woodland and Kings Park is composed predominantly of a mixed *Eucalyptus/Allocasuarina/Banksia Open Woodland*."

And "*Jarrah Woodlands are not as well represented locally*, comprising only 2% (10ha) of the vegetation in Bold Park" [my italics]

The EPA has delivered a weak and poorly argued report that is an insult to the many organisations and people that contributed scientifically sound and well argued submissions. The EPA has violated its statutory requirements to carefully and with the best science available to examine the impact of UWA proposal and the importance of Underwood Avenue bushland for its local and regional biodiversity and importance as a linkage between King and Bold Parks.

We are disturbed by the contrast between the EPA report and a meeting on 23/8/07 between the EPA, the Urban Bushland Council (UBC), Friends of Underwood and Friends of Shenton Bushland, in which the Acting Chairman of the EPA, Mr Barry Carbon, stated his resolve to: Not be constrained by Bush Forever and to consider the regional significance of the Underwood Bushland on its merits; and contact the Australian Department of Environment and Water Resources to work jointly with them over the endangered Carnaby's black cockatoo.

He was also:

- Disturbed by UWA arguing in their proposal that the Carnaby's black cockatoo be removed from the endangered species list.
- Disturbed by the way UWA had treated the bushland by allowing

commercial bee keepers to use the land and thus to introduce feral bees.

- Very interested in where the main stand of *Banksia prionotes*, that is an important food source of the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo, is located (It is to be destroyed). He was clearly aware of its significance.
- Moved to congratulate the representatives of the community groups present that there was an unusually high number of public submissions (108) and many were of a high technical standard.

The Australian Department of Environment and Water Resources has decided that the UWA proposal is a controlled action under the EPBC Act because it is likely to have a significant impact on the threatened Carnaby's Black Cockatoo, which contradicts the UWA submission and EPA report. Given the Acting Chairman of the EPA resolved to work jointly with them on this there is a clear failure within the EPA report to acknowledge the controlled action.

It is clear that the concerns, resolutions and observations of the Acting Chairperson of the EPA as stated to the people present at the meeting have not been carried through into the EPA report. There is also serious concern about a potential conflict of interest by EPA member Dr Andrea Hinwood, who took part in the deliberations on Underwood Avenue and is an Adjunct research fellow at UWA. Indeed, she was acting Chairperson for the period prior to Barry Carbon.

We urge that in your deliberations on the Appeal you take into account the strong public interest in saving this bushland:

There is widespread community support for retaining the entire bushland. 8000 (eight thousand) signatures have been collected on a petition to parliament to save the bushland. A copy of this petition has been delivered to your office. In a randomised, statistically significant Water Corporation survey of 400 residents, 82% opposed the UWA proposal, 72% expressed a preference for the UWA land to be retained as bushland, 14% supported some kind of environmentally sustainable use of the land, while only 7% preferred housing and 4% wanted commercial use for the area.

The understanding that Underwood Avenue has been sacrificed to enable Bush Plan to be accepted by Cabinet appears to have been confirmed by:

- The 3 proposals that have been put forward by UWA in which only very minor changes to the size (from 8 initially to 10 Ha) of the conservation area has been argued for by the EPA, but the placement and configuration of the area (L shape, square, rectangle) has changed considerably, attempting it would seem to cover some of the good to very good quality of bushland while sacrificing the majority which exists over much of the 38 Ha site.
- The emphatic refutation on three occasions of the seriously flawed UWA proposals by public submissions that moreover, prove the regional significance of the bushland and that it should all be preserved. These public submissions have in the main been ignored as the EPA reports, which have consistently followed the original negotiated Bush Forever deal.

No attempt has been made by the EPA to study the effect of a significant loss of bushland at Underwood Avenue and the pending loss of AK Reserve and the loss of linkage between Underwood Avenue bushland and Shenton Bushland by the Alzheimer's Association on the local biodiversity and effect on King and Bold Parks.

We would respectfully ask the Minister to:

1. Inform us as to how and why there is such a difference between the resolutions and concerns expressed by the Acting Chairman of the EPA and the EPA report and any conflict of interest.
2. Reject the EPA report as unsatisfactory and the EPA be directed to undertake a proper study of the effect of loss of so much of the high quality bushland on flora and fauna, within the context of its regional significance
3. The Government resume the bushland from UWA and dedicate it to a regional park with Bold and Kings Park, managed by the BGPA.

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 5 March
7.30 pm

At the Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth

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://members.iinet.net.au/~ubc/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

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Copy deadline - 15 February 2008

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