

VISIT TO LOWLANDS

On Sunday 27 November, a number of Urban Bushland Council members enjoyed the hospitality of Midge Richardson, the owner of the largest privately owned Bush Forever Site, BFS 368. Not discouraged by warmer weather than most would prefer for bushwalking, the visitors explored parts of the large property, mostly representative of vegetation communities typical of Bassendean Dunes and their transition to the Pinjarra Plain. Rare examples of intact riverine communities can be found along the Serpentine River, which runs through the property.

One of the attractions of this site is that it has not been burned for more than 80 years and never logged. Ancient trees are large and mature unlike most sites we are familiar with. Huge Banksias, Marris, Tuarts, Flooded Gums, Jarrahs and Paperbarks form the tree canopy. Some of the visitors commented that the understorey appears less diverse than in other parts of the Swan Coastal Plain. However, over 335 native taxa of flora were recorded on the site.

Driving into the property through the rural parts of the Peel Region, seems like entering a different world. Mature trees, like the one on the right, can be seen very close to the access track.

Multiple surveys for birds recorded 88 species, including several significant birds like Carnaby's Cockatoos, Golden Whistler, Yellow Robin, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater

and Great Egret which is protected under international treaties (JAMBA/CAMBA).

Other significant fauna found on the property include Quenda, Western Brush Wallaby, Brush-tailed Wamberger and Water Rat.

The farm buildings within the property include the original home of Thomas Peel, the original owner of Lowlands,



Photo by Kevin McLean



Photo by Kevin McLean

built in 1860 (pictured above). The historical significance of these buildings was recognised by their listing on the Register of the National Estate.

Lowlands is the largest privately owned property in the Perth Metropolitan Region managed for conservation. However, much greater support from the State government is needed as small grants currently available are quite inadequate for such a significant 1200 ha Bushland area.



Photo by R Zelinova

The UBC members explored the dense vegetation along a narrow path through the Eucalyptus and Banksia woodland.

INSIDE

- Perth Urban Bushland Fungi Project
- Update on Bush Forever acquisitions
- Threats to biodiversity at Perth Airport
- Biological Survey Kit available to Friends Groups

and more...

Editorial

Here is again the time of the year when we prefer to put all the problems behind and celebrate the positives of the past year. And sure enough there is plenty of reasons for that. Many groups had a busy year working in their piece of our natural heritage, planting, weeding, formalising access tracks and educating the community about the values of local bushland. Several groups celebrated 20 years of action for bushland conservation.

The Urban Bushland Council, together with its partners the WA Naturalists Club and the WA Herbarium have a good reason to celebrate as the Perth Urban Bushland Project's achievements over the past 18 months were recognised at a recent WA Environment Awards 2005. You can read more about this on page 4.

However, there is a list of issues the UBC was tackling over the past year that will need more time next year. One of them was the need for proper recording of the extent of clearing in the State. At present, data from 1997 on remaining vegetation extent is used to assess impact of development proposals on the vegetation in the region. We long argued that this is inadequate, especially considering that large areas of bushland are being cleared under exemptions, therefore it is hard to estimate the loss of vegetation on the Swan Coastal Plain since 1997.

Derek Carew-Hopkins, Director General, Department of Environment, has advised that the Department *'is now investigating the use of satellite imagery to monitor vegetation extent throughout the State. A pilot project is being conducted to trial information provided by CSIRO and the Department of Land Management.'* Some data and a low resolution version of the images are available at <http://landmonitor.dli.wa.gov.au>.

Another pressing issue is the lack of active management for conservation of a number of Bush Forever Sites, in addition to several proposals for development within Bush Forever Sites released for public comment over the past year. The UBC proposes to hold regional workshops to discuss unresolved issues and assign management responsibilities to state government agencies and funding the management of these sites by local governments.

In 2006, the UBC is planning to introduce changes to the tradition of monthly General Council meetings, that are held on the first Tuesday of each month. February and March will be an exception. At the Annual General Meeting in March the final decision will be made based on the response from members.

The UBC is proposing that instead of the monthly meetings, 3 or 4 events are held during a weekend. Using a hired bus, members will have an opportunity to visit selected Bush Forever Reference Sites and sites where UBC member groups were conducting their bush regeneration activities, focusing on different parts of the Swan Coastal Plain each time. A speaker will be invited to talk to the participants during a picnic lunch break. This will provide an opportunity to learn about the Reference Sites, selected as part of the Perth Biodiversity Project, to exchange experiences with bush regeneration practices and to network.

UPDATE ON ACQUISITIONS OF BUSH FOREVER SITES

In September 2004, the last update of information about which Bush Forever Sites had been purchased by the WA Planning Commission was published in this newsletter.

Since then the WA Planning Commission's Asset Management Branch acquired ten properties at a cost of \$7.1 million. The properties purchased are:

Paganoni Swamp and adjacent bushland, Karnup BFS 395 45.68ha

Lyon Road bushland, Banjup BFS 492 26.66ha

Conti Road bushland, Wanneroo BFS 164 4.04ha

Forrestdale Lake and adjacent bushland, Forrestdale BFS 345 (Additional Nominated Site) 2.02ha

White Road bushland, Orange Grove BFS 51 3.9669ha

Stakehill Swamp, Baldivis BFS 275 44ha

Seasons Greetings

to all from

the Urban Bushland Council WA

BUSHLAND AREAS UNDER THREAT

- WEBSTER ROAD BUSHLAND, FORRESTDAL
- BUSHLAND AT KEWDALE FREIGHT TERMINAL
- PERTH AIRPORT (BFS 386)
- CONSERVATION CATEGORY WETLAND AT BERINGARRA AVE, MALAGA
- PART OF BFS 293 (NOWERGUP)
- TRIGG BEACH BUSHLAND (BFS 308)
- ASHTON RD BUSHLAND, BULLSBROOK (BFS 88)
- BFS 344 (BANJUP)
- BANJUP BUSHLAND (BFS 263)
- BUSHLAND ADJACENT TO THOMSONS LAKE (BFS 391 & BUSHLAND ALONG HENDERSON RD, MUNSTER)
- COASTAL STRIP FROM WILBINGA TO MINDARIE (BFS 397)
- ALL BUSH FOREVER SITES IN THE NEGOTIATED PLANNING SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION CATEGORY
- KIARA TAFE SITE
- KEN HURST PARK (BFS 245)
- NORTH LAKE (BFS 244)
- UNDERWOOD AVE (BFS 119)
- POINT PERON (BFS 355)
- FARRINGTON ROAD BUSHLAND
- JANDAKOT AIRPORT (BFS 388)
- OCEAN REEF COASTAL RESERVE (BFS 325)

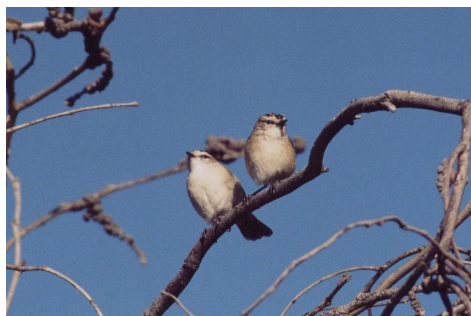
THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY AT PERTH AIRPORT

We are left to wonder how many more submissions we will have to write before the Authorities responsible for management of bushland at Perth Airport start giving considerations to the concerns raised by public.

Recent correspondence from the office of Hon Ian Campbell, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage that was written in response to the UBC concerns raised at a meeting in September and in a follow up letter, clearly indicates that the Federal Government is satisfied with the current arrangements. They believe that adequate protection of bushland is provided within the two Conservation Precincts as identified in the Master Plan for Perth Airport. This response ignores the fact that only about half of highly diverse and significant bushland is included in those two Precincts. The remaining over 200 hectares are within Precincts designated for future development. Furthermore, the Minister believes that no better environmental outcome would be achieved if the regionally significant bushland is excised from the Airport lease and was managed by a state authority with adequate experience in management of conservation reserves.

With public comment period just closed for one proposal and another closing soon the above response is extremely disappointing.

The UBC in its comprehensive submission expressed a strong opposition to the construction of a clay brick manufacturing plant at Perth Airport.



Pair of Yellow-rumped Thornbills, a significant bird species on the Swan Coastl Plain portion of the Perth Metropolitan Region.

Coles Dreaming?

Ancient melaleucas ripped and chipped ...mournful grey mounds bear silent testimony.. Bassendean dunes trio.. artefact scatters...quartz and chert.. flakes.. ancient fire charcoal?

Drain carved without mercy...or... consultation.. hydrology changed unfeelingly.. unknowingly? whose hands chipped those shards.. eons ago.....for us to find... today...show some respect?

World War 2 barbwire...rusting in silent protest.. mangled shopping trolley...two too-recent relics.. trill trills of rainbow bee-eaters ... that arrive like clockwork ... October's migratory reminder

Ancient cycles of nature long since forgotten?...as we rush headlong into an unsustainable future... Brooding ancient bush scowling across man's drain at his destruction; our molecular re-arrangement?

Lovelock states; Gaia will survive.... even as we cause many species' extinction...and likely our own? Perth Airport bushland; a corporation's folly ..when greed drives decisions there can be but one outcome.

Rob Greenwood

370,000 square metres of bushland and



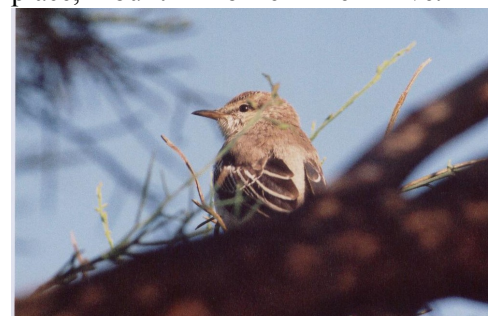
Nankeen Kestrel leaving a nesting hollow in an ancient Jarrah at the proposed brickworks site.

The main concerns from the perspective of protecting natural heritage at Perth Airport is the potential impact the proposed plant could have on the adjoining Conservation Precinct 7 and adjacent bushland, including the highly significant Munday Swamp.

Another matter of great concern is the perspective loss of invaluable remnant trees and habitat on the proposed brickworks site itself. This issue was not even identified in the Preliminary Draft Major Development Plan for the project. This is a serious deficiency as this site contains a large number of mature jarrah trees. Photos below document only a fraction of birds that use this area.

Before the end of this year, there is another proposal open for public comment at Perth Airport, Draft Major Development Plan—Coles Myer Ltd Distribution Centre. 37 hectares of bushland and wetland including registered aboriginal sites were cleared and chipped recently at Perth Airport by Westralia Airports Corporation BEFORE the release for 'public consultation' of the Major Development Plan for a Coles Myer Distribution Centre.

Cane toads have already turned up at the Woolworths Distribution Centre, next door, a hop skip and a jump from the Airport Southern Main Drain and our Swan River. Now another army of trucks a day from all over Australia are planned to access Coles Myer; a Distribution Centre in the wrong place, if built in Horrie Miller Drive.



White-winger Triller photographed at the proposed brickworks site.

All photos on this page by Kevin McLean.

Please consider writing a submission opposing the proposal for another distribution centre, a non-aviation development at Perth Airport.

The closing date for Public submissions on the Draft Major Development Plan—Coles Myer Ltd Distribution Centre is on 21.12.2005 before 4.00pm.

For more information please contact the UBC office.



Perth Urban Bushland Fungi

PERTH URBAN BUSHLAND FUNGI PROJECT—PHASE 1 was one of the five finalist in the **Western Australian Environment Awards 2005** in the Whiteman Park Community Achievement Category.

The formal presentation dinner was held on Friday 18 November at Hyatt Hotel and 10 representatives involved in Phase 1 of the project attended the Awards evening.

While Naragerup Rockingham Regional Environment Council was announced as winner of the Community Achievement Award, **the Perth Urban Bushland Fungi Project—Phase 1 received *Special Commendations***. The Project's achievements over the expectations were highly commended and a contribution by a high number of volunteers towards increased knowledge of the State's biodiversity acknowledged.

Congratulations to all involved in the PUBF Phase 1

PERTH URBAN BUSHLAND FUNGI—PHASE 2

The PUBF project is continuing in 2006 with funding support from Lotterywest.

A Community Education Officer and a Data Co-ordinator will be employed in 2006. The project particularly will focus on community participation during a number of fungi forays and workshops in Perth bushlands during the fungus season (June - July). Selection and organisation of these events will commence from early in 2006. Further information for community groups and individuals about registering interest will be posted early in 2006.

Visit the project website www.fungiperth.org.au for the latest updates such as additions to the *Field Book* and publishing of reports from fungi forays conducted in the 2005 fungi season.



Dr Judy Edwards, the Minister for the Environment; Science presents the Lotterywest cheque for PUBF Phase 2 funding to Mary Gray, the UBC President during a gathering in November.

Photo by Kirsten Tullis

“Biological Survey” Kits Available to Community Groups

What are ‘Biological Survey’ Kits?

‘Biological Survey’ Kits are geo-referencing kits that can record what work has been done, where and give an electronic record or ‘hard copy’ output of surveying efforts. They were created by linking the GPS, digital camera and computer based mapping systems to produce an electronic record of where a photograph was taken thus ‘geo-referencing’ the place where a biological specimen was found.

The system can also produce an electronic record of a track along which the data was collected. With linked photos for individual locations, this data can be used to add permanent records of specimens located in a type reference herbarium, to produce interactive displays for use in talks, to produce hard copy records and to transfer information directly on a website.

What do you need to do to use them?

The Kits are available for free to any community group registered with the WA Herbarium.

To use the system you will need to have an access to:

- a PC running Windows ©95/98/ME/NT4/2000/XP
- Map of your particular area of interest, which can be purchased in digital form or scanned
- A registered copy of OziExplorer (<http://ozieplorer.com>)
- A registered copy of OziPhoto Tool (<http://oziphototool.alistairdickie.com>)

It is recommended that before use, everyone will undertake some simple training to learn how to use equipment.

To borrow the equipment see Karina Knight at the WA Herbarium.

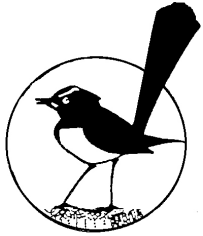
What do you get and where to get it?

Each Kit contains the following items:

- A Garmin eTrex©GPS
- An Olympus©4mp digital camera with optical zoom and macro features plus a 512kB storage card
- A mounting pole for the GPS
- Batteries, charger and data transfer cords
- Training and support

For more information or book your equipment by contacting Karina Knight or John Weaver or enquire at the WA Herbarium's reception desk.

Ph (Karina) 9334 0500
Ph (John) 0427 200841
Or email to weaverj@it.net.au



**CONGRATULATIONS TO
BASSENDEAN PRESERVATION
GROUP INC**
For 20 years of action for conservation
of urban bushland

In 2005, the Bassendean Preservation Group Inc. (BPG) celebrated its 20th year of protecting and enhancing the natural environment of the Bassendean district. It was formed from a successful community campaign to oppose a proposal to turn the river flats at Ashfield into a canal and housing development.

Since that time the BPG has been very successful in revegetating the Ashfield Flats, other areas such as at Bindaring Park, close to the Swan River. More generally, the BPG has worked with and lead the Town Council in its efforts to rehabilitate natural areas throughout Bassendean.

Photo by Greg Peterson



Some of the efforts of the BPG can take several years to reach full success. The example in the accompanying photograph shows Black Swans that successfully bred in 2005 in the lake at Bindaring Park, more than 10 years after the Town Council carried out a rehabilitation plan put forward by the Bassendean Preservation Group.

The BPG is also active in pressing the state government to adopt and carry out policies which are better for local natural environments and wildlife. This particularly applies to those aspects which affect the north-east region of the Perth metropolitan area. The health of the Swan River and its environs is a major focus.

For more information about the Bassendean Preservation Group Inc. and to join, contact the Secretary, Steve McFarland on 9377 0162 or email at skippy_farland@smartchat.net.au

Greg Peterson

Friends of Hepburn & Pinnaroo Bushland
WAPC Approves Alternative Western Power Site
You may recall that I wrote last year about a site that Western Power owned within the Hepburn Conservation Reserve which was earmarked for a sub-station and that we were trying to persuade them to consider an alternative, less environmentally damaging site.

I am pleased to confirm that the WA Planning Commission (WAPC) has formally approved the alternative site, which is in the Pinnaroo Cemeteries Reserve in a degraded area that would most likely have been cleared eventually. This outcome, which now removes the last known threat to the integrity of the Hepburn Conservation Reserve, has resulted from cooperation between the Friends Group, the local MLCs, Western Power and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. In particular, the open minded and cooperative attitude of the Western Power staff involved has been very encouraging and indicates that SOME utilities now have a much greater environmental awareness than in the past.

Ralph Henderson

Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland

Regular walks in the bushland offer many stories, some frightening, some exciting, but most prompt you to find out more. Like the one on the photo below, where I discovered

a large grey huntsman spider holding a pinkish looking large spider upside down beneath her, imprisoned by fangs. Quite a while passed with the pinkish



Photo by Margaret Owen

spider trying to struggle, but being barely able to move. When the grey huntsman decided to the underside of the bark, the pinkish spider managed to keep holding onto the top of the bark with one hairy leg. From underneath the bark, the aggressor pulled and pulled but 'pinkie' did not let go. Then a big hairy grey leg came from beneath the bark, grasped the pink leg, yanked it off the bark and both were gone.

My initial thoughts that I just witnessed a female killing her mate after mating were confused when reading that huntsman spiders are unusual among spiders in that they are not aggressive to males and mating pairs remain together for some time, caressing each other. They are also unusual in the length of their courtship ritual, which may last 7 hours or more.

So I sought advice from the WA Museum. Dr Mark Harvey explained that the photograph probably shows one species of huntsman eating another species of huntsman, which can occasionally occur even though it is unusual. The larger huntsman is an aggressive species that particularly enjoys eating moths but will take other prey if avail-



Photo by M Owen

Readers might find it hard to see an insect pictured left, but there is a Phasmodes, a member of the long-horned grasshopper family. Assistance from the WA Museum was used again. Dr Terry Houston helped with identification and this is probably *Phasmodes ranatiformis*, the only phasmodes in the Perth Region.

Group News Group News Group News

It is really hard to spot them unless they move. Some intensive scrutiny was needed to find her eye and an ovipositor became evident at her rear end.

The Praying Mantis (right) was enjoying a meal of a bee which had a small fly on it.

The Rainbow Bee-eaters have returned to Underwood Avenue bushland from northern Australia and Papua New Guinea. They tunnel into the ground up to 1.6 metres



and make a chamber at the end for the eggs. Last year foxes dug through the ground into the chambers and took all the babies from every nest.

Foxes do terrible damage to our wild life, as does bulldozing bushland out of existence. The University of WA is proceeding with its plans for such destruction, greatly reducing the possibilities for future studies of nature's little secrets.



Will there be an opportunity to observe this Katydid again (left)?

Margaret Owen

Friends of Forrestdale are concerned as Anstey-Keane Bush Forever Site is unfenced and rubbish dumping is rife. Lots 66, 68 and 70 Anstey Road in Forrestdale are part of Bush Forever Site 342. The Anstey-Keane damplands, of which these two lots are part, are floristically mega-diverse. They contain more species of plants than Kings Park yet their conservation values are not being protected properly at present.

Lot 66 is vested in the Conservation Commission and is managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management as part of Jandakot Regional Park. This Lot has a proper fence to prevent illegal rubbish dumping. It also has gates and rails to allow local residents, including horse riders, access to the area to appreciate its flora.

Lots 68 and 70 are a different kettle of fish however. They are vested in Landcorp and are not part of Jandakot Regional Park. Currently they are not fenced and illegal rubbish dumping is taking place in them. This is not an acceptable way to treat a 'Bush Forever' site. It is a failure of duty of care on to uphold the provisions of 'Bush Forever.'

In the short term, all urban bushland carers and users call on Landcorp to clean up both lots and fence them to prevent illegal rubbish dumping.

In the long term, it is unlikely that Lots 68 and 70 will be developed for industrial uses given the development of Forrestdale Business Park and given the Bush Forever status of Lot 68. This Lot should be acquired, vested in the Conservation Commission, included in Jandakot Regional Park and managed by CALM.

Rod Giblett 6

Australian Association of Bush Regenerators

Invites anyone interested to their

2006 Annual General Meeting

With a guest speaker

Shane Turner

"New approaches to germinating Australian seeds"

Wednesday 8 March 2006

at

Kings Park Administration Centre

Fraser Ave, Kings Park

Further details will be announced closer to date.

Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (WA) have compiled a "**Bush Regenerators Log Book**". The purpose of the log book is to help bush regenerators, including Friends Groups, to keep track of their activities, but also record the number of hours spent on a certain activity. All that information can be then used to plan future work and also could be useful to demonstrate someone's experience.

AABR (WA) would appreciate if as many groups or individuals tested the log book as possible. There is an evaluation sheet included with the log book to assist with recommendations for future log books.

Several copies of the log book are available through the Urban Bushland Council's office by calling 9420 7207 or emailing to ubc@iinet.net.au. Alternatively, you can request a copy through Anna-Marie Penna on 9420 7266 or by emailing to Anna-Marie.Penna@conservationwa.asn.au

The Friends of Shenton Bushland have been successful in applying for a Swan Alcoa Landcare Project (SALP) grant to work in collaboration with the Education Department and the Health Department to look after the entire bushland area for the next 12 months. Funds will be used to remove some woody weeds and replace them with local species grown from locally collected seeds by students at Shenton College. They will also continue removing the Geraldton Carnation Weed.

Good work is being rewarded with some interesting discoveries. For the past 12 years The Friends have not seen a Kangaroo Paw (*Anizoganthos manglesii*) in Shenton Bushland. This year they came across one right in the middle of the bushland and they are still puzzled by the question how it got there?

However, they are still waiting for response from the WA Planning Commission to their proposal for a new 'Bush to Beach' Regional Park. The proposal was prepared in cooperation with the Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland and presented more than a year ago to the Minister for the Environment and few weeks ago to WAPC. They have not even received an acknowledgement letter. Should they understand it as a rejection?

HerbiGuide

HerbiGuide provides information on weeds, pests and diseases in crops, pastures and horticulture to help with crop protection decisions. It is a computer program on CD that includes data on over 180 crops, 500 weeds, 40 insects and 250 diseases with solutions drawn from over a 1000 herbicide, insecticide, fungicide and pesticide products covering some 300 active ingredients.

For more information visit
www.herbiguide.com.au

Or phone 08 9844064 Mobile 0429669950

Birds in Backyards

is a research, education and conservation program focusing on birds and the urban environment. Get involved by becoming a member and taking part in our online surveys. Learn about how you can create bird-friendly spaces in your garden and local community. Find out more about Australian birds and their habitats.

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

FUNDING OPPRTUNITIES

GROUNDWATER LEVELS ON MOUND GO PUBLIC

Colin Murray of the Department of Environment has advised that data on groundwater levels on the Gnangara Mound will be placed on the Department's web site.

The Department of Environment has two figures that they provided to the EPA earlier this year. One showing where changes (declines) in groundwater levels have occurred on the Gnangara Mound since 1979, and another showing the gross depletion of groundwater in the superficial aquifer of the Gnangara Mound since 1979. Colin said that that these figures (updated annually) will provide a more complete picture of what is happening to the water resources and Gnangara Mound specifically.

The web address for the Department of the Environment is: **www.environment.wa.gov.au**

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 \$30 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

Individuals:

Supporter membership is only \$20 per year (GST included). Supporters can attend meetings and receive copies of the "Urban Bush Telegraph"

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

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

UBC meetings

Tuesday 7 February 2006 at 7.30 pm

Speaker: David Pike, Friends of Star Swamp: URBAN BIODIVERSITY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 7 March 2006 at 7:30 pm

Speaker: Dr Neale Bougher: PERTH URBAN BUSHLAND FUNGI PROJECT

Held at the National Trust building, 4 Havelock St, West Perth

All interested are 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

Editor: Renata Zelinova

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

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or fax (08) 9420 7208, email ubc@iinet.net.au

If possible, send contribution on floppy disk in IBM format. Disks will be returned.

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