

## **LAWS FAIL THE ENVIRONMENT IN LAKE NOWERGUP VALLEY - FOR A QUARRY AND BATCHING PLANT**

In late February 2011, Day 638 was recorded in the community campaign to save the Lake Nowergup Valley against a proposal by WA Limestone for open cut mining over 7 hectares of virgin bushland less than 500 metres from Lake Nowergup and adjacent to the Neerabup National Park and Bush Forever Site 383.

You may have heard that in the last three months both the WAPC and now the City of Wanneroo have granted approval for this proposal to go ahead. This is despite hundreds of submissions opposing it, despite bipartisan support from all our local State politicians, despite over 1000 submissions made directly to the Premier, the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Planning.

So how is it then that the planning and environmental processes are unable to deliver what the community so clearly wants?

State Planning Policy 2.4 Basic Raw Materials has been a key consideration by local and State Governments as a reason that this proposal has to be approved. Certainly even the Minister for Planning used it as a reason why he should not intervene in the matter himself.

If I were a bureaucrat and were given the brief to find a way that a refusal could be given to this quarry by having regard to SPP 2.4, it would really be quite simple. Amongst other things, SPP 2.4 requires that the significance of the resource be determined and consideration be



Rally participants enjoying the views over Lake Nowergup, November 2010

given to the effect on native flora and fauna, and the natural landscape. The significance of the resource is an area that has never been addressed. We do not know how much or what quality of limestone this quarry will produce. Agencies blindly accept outdated mapping that has somehow identified this site as a priority listing and on that basis accept the environmental cost of such a quarry. How can we even determine the opportunity cost to the environment of this proposal without a clear understanding of the quantity of priority resource that will be obtained?

SPP2.4 quite clearly states that environmentally significant areas may require referral to the EPA. As part of this, the policy has Environmental and Conservation Reference charts *that need to be taken into consideration*. Unfortunately these have not been updated since 2002, and do not map Neerabup National Park, Lake Nowergup or Bush Forever site 383. Nor has the WAPC included the East Wanneroo Landscape Character Assessment Study that it commissioned which clearly identifies this area as needing protection.

So there were opportunities to defend the environment under SPP2.4. But this did not happen. Both levels of Government did not take responsibility for updating the relevant environmental charts and neither thought it appropriate to refer the proposal to the Environmental Protection Authority. It took the Urban Bushland Council to do so.

Here is the next process that let the environment down. The EPA decided not to formally assess the proposal under part IV of the Environmental Protection Act (ie it was 'not assessed') because it believed there are adequate legislative controls to assess and manage the potential

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# Editorial

The more complex and numerous are government control processes, the more likely they are to fail protection of the natural environment.

While the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process under WA's Environmental Protection Act is a rigorous process with appropriate rights for public participation at a number of stages, it is only used for a small percentage of large proposals which do have impacts on the natural environment.

Most decisions affecting bushland are made at local government level, where 'due regard' is required to be given to various planning and environmental policies. This is where community concerns too often are disregarded and government policies ignored or sidestepped and excused with verbalism which may be no less than superficial spin. Land use planning decision makers are prone to interpret an EPA decision that is 'not assessed' to mean environmentally unimportant and thus environmentally 'approved'. Furthermore the EPA relies in such cases on planning processes at state and local government level and clearing and licensing regulations to protect or 'mitigate' environmentally sensitive values. These processes are prone to failure due to lack of due diligence or perhaps to undue influence and political interference on behalf of proponents.

A classic example is shown in our front page story about the proposal for a limestone quarry and batching plant in intact Tuart woodland of the Lake Nowergup Valley.

The failure of government laws and processes to protect Black Cockatoo habitat is a major issue which arose from the UBC's Black Cockatoo symposium held last November. To examine the legal issues more thoroughly, the UBC is holding a Council meeting on May 4th where a panel of high profile lawyers will examine case studies of community concern and address the question *'Does the law protect Black Cockatoos?'*

With generous funding support from Lotterywest, the UBC's second public symposium celebrating our bushland biodiversity will focus on Perth's Banksia Woodlands on 25th March 2011. Groups are encouraged to invite their local MPs and Councillors to attend. Registration is now open. Details of both events on back cover.

## New Website for UBC

Things have been very busy since I was appointed project manager for the development of a new UBC website a month ago.

Many of you will have been asked to complete a short survey outlining what Groups' preferences are for the site. Thank you very much for your responses. For those of you who wish to have your own web page on the site, I will be back in touch in a month or so looking for the images and text that will need to be uploaded.

I have finalised the website specification and have sent out an 'invitation to provide a quotation' to a small number of local web design firms, all of which have been 'pre-refereed'.

Funds for the project were made available via a Lotterywest grant. These funds will enable the Council to develop a very modern website that will cover off on a range of needs – from finding key documents, to web pages for supporter groups to features for supporting campaigns, and linking with Facebook and other social media.

I expect that the UBC Executive will 'sign off' on a preferred designer during April. I will then work closely with that designer in order to ensure that the final product fully meets our, and your, requirements.

We should be able to undertake user testing of functionality, design and navigation of the draft site during May with a view to live presence June or July. A fully featured site will then go on line in August for a spring season formal launch.

Please contact me on 9271 6595 for any questions etc you may have regarding this great initiative.

*John Baas*  
UBC Project Manager (Web)

### Two Citizenship Awards recognize a decade of commitment to local environmental issues

The UBC congratulates Cam Clay, who's tireless efforts for the community and environment were recently recognized as Cam became a recipient of two Citizenship Awards.

Read more on page 6

### ***When focusing on the words in bold, will this lead to even more diminution of environmental protection?***

On the first Parliamentary sitting day for 2011, the Premier Colin Barnett outlined the Government's agenda for the year ahead. Included in the almost 6,500 word statement was the following:

*"As Members are aware, the Liberal-National Government has a Minister for both Environment and Water. This is a deliberate reflection of the fact that issues around environment and water are inextricably linked. These are critical areas for the Government. In recognising this, the Liberal-National Government will look at the potential to strengthen the policy, standards, **approvals**, licensing and regulatory functions of government agencies that deal with environmental and water issues, possibly through a **structural re-alignment** that reduces duplication".*

Source: Ministerial Media Statements, Premier's Statement, Tuesday 15 February 2011: <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/>

# Whatever happened to the International Year of Biodiversity?

Alison Xamon MLC

The United Nations' International Year of Biodiversity started with an invitation from the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for all countries to join together to halt the "unsustainable rate" of loss of our species and ecosystems. "Biodiversity is life, biodiversity is our life", he said.

As we say goodbye to 2010 we should reflect on what was actually achieved last year for Australia's most biologically diverse region and the country's only entry in the top 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world.

In 2010 the State Government finalised the Bush Forever Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment, a process that was started ten years ago. It also released a Biodiversity and Conservation Strategy for the Great Western Woodlands and created the Kimberley Wilderness Parks. These are all things to be commended.

What I most regret however about Western Australia's participation in the International Year of Biodiversity was the lack of recognition by the State Government that many bush sites, wetlands and forests - some of them listed under Bush Forever and some not - continue to be under threat.

From 2007 until 2010 an additional 37 Bush Forever sites were created, but it appears with few additional funds in the budget to support the Department of Environment and Conservation in maintaining or managing them. In addition to this, several pieces of bush worthy of inclusion in Bush Forever, such as the Kiara TAFE bushland, have not yet been added.

This piece of bush at Kiara includes a good quality wetland and is representative of Bassendean Central and South Vegetation Complex which is thought to be seriously under-represented (much less than 10% of this complex) in the Bush Forever conservation estate. It has some good quality Marri woodland and provides feeding habitat for the endangered Carnaby's Cockatoo.

South of the city at Bush Forever site 342, the Anstey Keane dampland in Forrestdale is under threat from vandalism and unnecessary roads through the area. Despite a new species of bee being found in the area and there being more varieties of plant life in it than in King's Park, a road is proposed to cut through its heart, just to spare drivers going around the perimeter. One of the Government's own agencies has determined that it

would be "extremely difficult to (make) environmentally acceptable" the proposed Roe Highway Stage 8 through the Beeliar wetlands. And yet Government continues to insist that a "sustainable" solution can be found. This series of wetlands is ecologically precious and home to Carnaby's Black Cockatoo and the Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Overall the management of Bush Forever sites is simply not a priority for Government. Some sites have a plan and others do not, many have no protection. Unfenced sites have been damaged by off-road vehicles and illegal rubbish dumping. Site 385 at Mirrabooka, which concerned local residents are keen to protect, has seen extensive illegal dumping of household goods. It has also seen the recent deaths of black-gloved wallabies on Northwood Drive. Other areas such as Jindee, Paganoni Swamp and Errina Road are being reduced in size by various Government land holders - 2% here and 5% there further diminishing the integrity of these areas.

The concern is that the overall integrity of Bush Forever as it was originally intended by policy planners more than a decade ago, is being reduced and its unique value lost.

Unless I missed something, it appeared there was also no concerted effort by executive of Government to even celebrate the Year of Biodiversity. Biodiversity is a catchphrase that is often thrown in to media releases to sound scientific but I am confident that most West Australians want to see more commitment to this amazingly varied and fragile part of South Western Australia. It deserves recognition and it deserves better policy.

At the end of 2010 we still had no mandatory water saving targets and the Government was yet to decide on the next stage of the water optimisation trials in the Perth metro area. In 2010 we also saw the State Government giving the Water Corporation approval to draw its full allocation from the Gngangara Mound - 45 billion litres more than last year, before the Gngangara Sustainability Report is even released. If I had to name one single testimony of our ability to live sustainably and protect our biodiversity it would be our water resources. Sadly I fear that this lack of action by our decision makers last year would have left the United Nations Secretary General scratching his head. Biodiversity needs more than a year-it needs firm action and genuine political commitment.

## BUSH FOREVER SITES UNDER THREAT

**Anstey-Keane Damplands, Bush Forever 342:** *Road proposal by City of Armadale*

**Beeliar Regional Park: Bibra Lake- North Lake, Bush Forever 244:** *Roe 8 highway extension*

**Lake Nowergup Valley:** *Limestone quarry and batching plant*

**Ocean Reef, Bush Forever 325:** *marina and coastal facilities*

**Pt Peron - Lake Richmond area 355:** *Marina & canal development*

**Underwood Ave Bushland, Bush Forever 119:** *UWA housing proposal*

**Gngangara Mound catchment areas East Wanneroo:** *rezoning for industrial development*

**Wetlands on Gngangara Mound:** *increased groundwater drawdown by Water Corporation for public supply rather than total sprinkler ban*





## UBC SYMPOSIA CELEBRATE BIODIVERSITY

The Urban Bushland Council employed Project Officer Amrit Kendrick in October 2010 to run two symposia as part of the International Year of Biodiversity. Funds were provided by Lotterywest to hold 2 one-day events, bringing together a broad range of experts and inviting a varied audience. The November Symposium focused on the three species of black cockatoo native to south western Western Australia. More than 150 people came to the event at Murdoch University.

Presentations included a detailed natural history of the three species by Ron Johnstone of the WA Museum and talks by Department of Environment and Conservation's Geoff Barrett and David Mitchell about the threatened status and current recovery actions underway. Birds Australia's Cheryl Gole talked about the ten-year project for recovery of one of the species. Speakers Vicky Stokes from ALCOA and Caroline Minton from Murdoch University outlined their efforts in planning for rehabilitation and protection of black cockatoo habitat. "Cockatubes" which are artificial nesting hollows were described by Francis Smit of Serpentine Jarrahdale Landcare.

The Kaarakin Recovery Centre brought two live birds to the event and the audience enjoyed meeting these magnificent and exceptionally tame black cockatoos, Chasey and

Harmony. Another popular feature of the day was film footage shown by presenter Leighton De Barros, who is planning to release a film about black cockatoos, called *A Wing and a Prayer*. Other speakers included Margaret Owen, Nicole White and Kristina Huelin. The day's content was summarised by Murdoch's Dean of Environmental Science, John Bailey, who also called the audience to action, asking them to work together to lobby for protection of cockatoo habitat. Proceedings from the day are available from UBC in printed or electronic form for \$25 per copy.

The next symposium, *'Perth's Banksia Woodlands'*, will be held at Wollaston Conference Centre on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> of March. The program includes presentations on flora, fauna and fungi and their interconnectedness. From the leaf litter to the treetops there is a fascinating array of life forms in Banksia woodland. Speakers on the day will discuss why this ecosystem is unique, the challenges of retaining its biodiversity and how some of the components are adapted to survive climate factors, disease and fire. The Symposium runs all day from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Full details of the speakers can be found at [www.bushlandperth.org.au](http://www.bushlandperth.org.au). To register [e-mail](mailto:ubc@iinet.net.au) the UBC at [ubc@iinet.net.au](mailto:ubc@iinet.net.au) or call the UBC office (9420 7207) and leave a message.

### Cam Clay Wins two Active Citizenship Awards

A decade of service to the community and environment earned Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group's (AGLG) Chair Cam Clay two Premier's Australia Day Active Citizenship Awards.

Mr Clay was honoured with the Active Citizenship Award for a person 25 years and over and Environmental Contribution of the Year Award at a ceremony held as part of the City of Armadale's Australia Day celebrations yesterday.

Armadale Mayor Linton Reynolds said while it was unusual to confer two awards on one individual in the same year, Mr Clay's efforts over a long period had been "absolutely outstanding".

"Since his retirement 10 years ago, Cam has tirelessly worked on a range of community activities, with strong support from his wife Faye – a long-term volunteer at our Birtwistle Local Studies Library," Cr Reynolds said.

"As Chairperson of the Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group (AGLG) for the past decade, Cam has taken part in countless planting and weeding days, workshops, events and meetings and lobbied government at all levels for investment in local environmental projects.

"He is also the inaugural Treasurer of the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL), member of the Wildflower Society of WA, volunteer with the Bedfor-

dale Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, member of the Roleybushcare environmental group, Honorary River Guardian through the Swan River Trust and Deputy Chair of the City of Armadale Bushcare Environmental Working Group.

The City of Armadale and AGLG thanks Cam and Faye for their magnificent contributions.



# Group News Group News Group News

**Bungendore Park Management Committee** held its *Dark in the Park* astronomy evening on 12 February. Some 165 people attended, mostly family groups, to listen to Richard Tonello of Astronomy Education Services enthusiastically talk about the night sky. Richard set the scene by showing a video of the planned Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescopes. Western Australia is one of two finalists in the world, the other being South Africa, to host this massive undertaking. As Richard pointed out, some of the children in the audience may very well be employed on this project in future years. A tour of the night sky followed using software and a digital projector and then by looking at the night sky from the school oval next to Bungendore Park. Five telescopes were set up for people to look at the first quarter Moon, setting planet Jupiter, "Jewel Box" and many other constellations and nebulae. Committee considers there is enough appeal to conduct another evening and enough interest to run a workshop for those people who own a telescope but unsure how to set it up correctly.

*Kim Sarti*

**BPG (Bassendean Preservation Group, Inc)** has decades of experience propagating native species grown from local provenance seed for Bassendean's unique environment. In addition to the direct benefits to the environment there are intangible benefits that flow from a community effort to propagate and nurture native seedlings, and the pride and satisfaction from results of the labour. People like to grow seedlings, plant them out and watch as they grow into beautiful mature specimens.

BPG's planting activities have increased tenfold in recent years. We committed to and exceeded a "2008 Trees in 2008" program and in cooperation with the Town of Bassendean surpassed 2,500 natives planted in the Town's parks and reserves in each of 2009 and 2010. However the scale of BPG's current program and the requirements for upgrading to industry standard nursery hygiene practices to avoid the risk of spreading dieback mean BPG has outgrown the informal "backyard" methods that used to serve our purposes.

The answer is a central purpose built facility with space for the propagation frames, storage for tools and supplies, and an area for potting and thinning. BPG originally approached the Town of Bassendean in 2009 for the use of a plot of land. The request was declined, and the matter simmered until the Lions Club approached BPG with an invitation to join in establishing a co-located community facility that would include a Men's Shed and BPG's Grow Centre. Several meetings and just over a year later, Town of Bassendean Council unanimously approved a motion that advised the Lions Club and the Bassendean Preservation Group that the Town will facilitate the organization of a co-located centre to include a Men's Sheds project, BPG and other interested organisations, and will consider providing use of the necessary land subject to the usual conditions. The BPG Grow Centre is well on the way to reality.



*BPG at work*

BPG has been instrumental in assisting Eden Hill Primary's School's efforts to reduce their carbon footprint through their native tree planting projects over the last three years. This assistance has consisted of writing submissions for grants, advice, provision of seeds, materials and tools and guardianship of the seedlings until ready to plant out. In early 2010, students from 6 classes, ranging from Pre-Primary to Year 7, and their teachers propagated 350 local species in readiness for planting halfway through the year in a specially prepared area at Ashfield Flats, which is located along the Swan River between Bassendean and Bayswater.



*An Eden Hill Primary School student selecting a plant.*

Prior to the planting day the area was the subject of a "post-hole trial", a joint effort between BPG volunteers, the Swan River Trust, and the local land owner, to see whether the solid clay soil would respond to various interventions to increase the survival rate of seedlings. A "Dingo" digger was used to break the soil to depths of 60cm. Over 100 holes were bored and refilled while BPG members added slow-release native fertiliser or water retaining crystals, a combination of both, or none. The holes were tagged accordingly so that we can follow up the results over time. So far, results seem promising, with good survival rates in this patch, despite the area receiving about half the normal winter rainfall.



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We did learn some lessons from the experience, particularly that trying to map a planting area after the event (we had deliberately avoided planting in regular straight lines) is extraordinarily difficult.

The Broadway Arboretum is an area of bushland between an industrial area and a residential area in Bassendean. The original plan for the Arboretum was to display the diversity of Western Australian indigenous tree species, arranged by region. The plan was never fully realized, and over the years has fallen into neglect. BPG has attempted plantings there, mostly Jarrahs and Banksias, but the site contains uncontrolled fill that lacks organic material and we have found that the plants needed regular hand watering to survive the first summer. This is impractical because there is no water tap in the reserve. More background is available on the <http://www.broadwayarboretum.info/> website, created by a BPG member as part of his efforts to encourage community support for restoration of this overlooked reserve. As a consequence, the Town of Bassendean is currently looking to revitalise the Broadway Arboretum, and has engaged RPS Environmental to consult with the community and create a new Concept Plan. BPG was selected to participate in a workshop to provide our input, and this was followed by a general community meeting. It is encouraging that the Town of Bassendean is currently looking to revitalise the park, and BPG looks forward to participating in the revegetation plan.

Apart from this, the main project on the table presently for the BPG is to update the group's website (<http://www.bpginc.info/>), as our Webmaster of many years has passed on the reins for this task. Stay tuned...

**The Friends of Star Swamp Bushland** continue our monthly guided bushwalks in 2011, as we head into our 26<sup>th</sup> year. These walks have consistently proved popular over the years. Led by Phylis Robertson and David Pike, the walks leave from the Henderson Centre, in Groat St North Beach, at 8.00am on the fourth Saturday of each month. The variety of insects, spiders, flowers and birds to be found in the bush at any time of the year always amazes people. It only takes a practised eye and a bit of patience to see what is there. Why not come along to one of the walks?

## **Friends of Lake Gwelup**

People will have seen in *The West Australian* recently that there are plants growing at Lake Gwelup that shouldn't be there! But there is much flora and fauna that does belong, and much to be seen in the reserve, including the water-birds and waders that arrive at varying times of the year. Red kneed plovers and banded stilts were there last month and the larger birds will arrive as the lake fills in autumn and winter. A nocturnal walk will be held at Lake Gwelup Reserve on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm. The walk leaves from the carpark adjacent to the scout hall, in Huntriss Rd Gwelup. Nocturnal birds, spiders and insects should all be

out and about, so bring a torch and come along for a great experience.

The **Wildflower Society of WA** has branches all over Perth, with monthly guest speaker meetings which are always very interesting. Anyone can come along and, if you're interested, can join the Society for a modest fee. Branch details and speaker programs are placed on the website, so take a look at: <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~wildflowers/> or just google 'wildflower society of wa.'. We hope to see you at a meeting in the near future.

*Christine Curry*

## **GUIDED WALKS IN BOLD PARK**

The Friends of Bold Park Bushland offer free regular guided walks that lead visitors along some of Bold Park's many walk trails. The volunteer guides were trained last year in a Lotterywest-funded program, supported by the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority.

Walks are held on the first Saturday, second Thursday and third Sunday of the month. They begin at 9am at the Tuart Car Park on Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat. For further information and to confirm walks closer to the dates, please phone 9480 3996, visit [www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/bold-park/walks](http://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/bold-park/walks) or email [friendsbp@bgpa.wa.gov.au](mailto:friendsbp@bgpa.wa.gov.au).



*Guide leading a walk on Reabold Hill, Bold Park.*

**Environmental Research Group Augusta (ERGA)** aims to help conservation of plant and animal wildlife through targeted research, focusing on the natural environment of Augusta and its environs. In the Summer 2011 issue of their Newsletter, ERGA reported on the progress of ERGA's request for vesting the Donovan Street Bushland with the Conservation Commission as a Conservation Park.

ERGA's petition, with over 650 signatures, had received support from the Legislative Council and the Minister for Planning, John Day. A letter to ERGA from the Hon Brian Ellis, September 15<sup>th</sup>, then confirmed that the bushland would be reserved.

# Group News Group News Group News

On October 13th the Shire Council voted 6-nil in favour of vesting the bushland with the Conservation Commission as a 'Conservation Park'. This category differs from a National Park in that it has local rather than national significance and allows people to exercise dogs in the bushland provided they are appropriately controlled.

The proposal now must be approved by the Department of Mines and Petroleum and the Traditional Owners. The area immediately surrounding the bushland is currently covered by one registered native title claim: the South west Boorah#2 claim WAD253/2006; WC06/4) and ERGA anticipates strong support from the Indigenous Owners for the future protection of the bushland.

*Reprinted with permission from the ERGA News No 4 Summer 2011.*

## Friends of Lake Claremont Win Community Action Grant

For the second year in a row, the Friends of Lake Claremont have been awarded a \$20,000 Community Action Grant (CAG) through Australian Government's Caring for Our Country programme.

Partially surrounding Lake Claremont, the closure of a 21 ha golf course in June 2009 has provided an opportunity to restore the highly degraded wetland buffer. With this year's funds, we will be able to continue our work restoring a portion (2500m<sup>2</sup>) of the fringing vegetation of this Conservation Category Wetland and Bush Forever Site. Volunteers will plant 10,000 native seedlings on the north-west shore of the lake following the removal of invasive grass and weeds and installation of a temporary fence to protect the seedlings against walkers and dogs. Weeding and fence maintenance will be continued by our group members and the Town of Claremont. Restoration of the wetland buffer will provide additional native habitat and protection for local fauna and encourage future wetland buffer and bushland rehabilitation works.

We will be inviting volunteers from local schools and the wider community to help plant in late June – early July. If you are interested please contact us by e-mail

[FOLC.WA@gmail.com](mailto:FOLC.WA@gmail.com)

*Heidi Hardisty*



*Photo by H Hardisty*

*FOLC weed CAG site 2010. Revegetation work will continue on the wetland buffer this winter.*

The **Friends of Inglewood Triangle** invite anyone interested to help at Cleanup Australia Day 2011, Sunday 6th March 8am - 10am, in the bushland at Inglewood Triangle.

Meet at the Eighth Ave entrance near corner of Hamer Parade Inglewood. Bring own hat, sunscreen, drinking water and wear clean, sturdy, covered shoes or boots.

Register at the Eighth Avenue entrance. Hygiene treatment to prevent dieback spread will be available at the entrance. Gloves will be provided or bring your own. No dogs thank you.

We will be picking up rubbish, removing a patch of Caltrop and some dry grassy weeds.

Morning tea provided afterwards! Enquiries to Cath 9272 3390

## Friends of Hollywood Reserve

We had a fire in the Reserve on 9th January (Sunday) which was very quickly dealt with by the Fire Brigade. This is the area we will be replanting this year, and hopefully we will again have the Hollywood Primary School children to help us.



*Photo by D Hewson*

We are going to take part in **Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday 6th March** - just what we would call a Friendly Clean up. After those very high winds there will be masses of plastic blown in from the Cemetery. So if we could meet at 9 am. at the Front Entrance at Karella/ Boronia Ave. we can sweep through the Reserve in about an hour.

Bush to Beach walk is taking place on Sunday, March 20th and will commence at the small piece of bushland under threat of a car park near the bottom of Monash Avenue and will go through Hollywood Reserve to Shenton bushland and then to Claremont. More details later.

Our first proper 2011 Working Bee will be the 2nd Sunday in April, 10th April.

*David & Trish Hewson*



# Group News Group News Group News

## Clean Up Australia Day 2011 along roadsides

Several committed volunteers, along with a few supportive Local Governments, are this year combining their efforts to clean up some of Western Australia's most littered sites, our roadsides!

Currently there are four Clean Up sites registered:

1. Edinburgh Rd Reserve – Forrestfield
2. Hartman Dr (Kingsway Sp) – Madeley
3. Southern Brook Rd – Southern Brook
4. Coates Rd – Bakers Hill

All four road reserves are heavily littered so these sites could use all the volunteers they can borrow, as they say many hands – light work. If you haven't chosen a Clean Up site, yet perhaps consider one of these road reserves?

To register to volunteer at a Clean Up site above, join another location or create your own site go to <http://www.cleanup.org.au/au/Volunteering/volunteer-for-a-project.html>.

*Caron Macneall*

*Roadside Conservation Committee*

## Wetlands Conservation Society

### World Wetlands Day 2011

In January while the rest of Perth is still thinking "What am I going to do with the gold lamé tea cosy Aunt Dot gave me for Christmas?", the staff and volunteers of the Cockburn Wetlands Centre (aka members of the Wetlands Conservation Society) are putting the final touches to the annual World Wetlands Day Conference. Held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, it is in its' seventh year and again the Conference had a full house of 180. (that's people, not degrees Fahrenheit although it does get a little warm in early Feb.)

The conference is focused on wetland management and aims to attract community members as well as practitioners. The theme for World Wetlands Day this year is "wetlands and forests - forests for water and wetlands" in celebration of the [United Nations International Year of Forests](#). It is also the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention which is an international treaty on identification and protection strategies for wetlands of International significance.

With the spectre of climate change floating through many presentations, the audience was treated to a diverse selection of keynote sessions, poster presentations and workshops. Even wetland poetry got a look in.

Importantly the conference is a great opportunity for everyone to leave their wellies at work and get together to catch up on a years worth of tales from the swamps. A massive Thanks goes to Denise Crosbie who pulls the show together every year with an enormous amount of hard work and good humour. And now we start on next year.

## Friends of Trigg Bushland

As we get into the summer months, and having had a particularly dry spring, I am reminded again of the fire risk to the bushland. Arson is the main cause of fire in urban bushland and is difficult to combat, however vigilance by the local community may be the best weapon. City of Stirling is promoting *Adopt-a-Park* to encourage local groups and individuals to be —eyes and ears|| around their local parks and reserves and to report suspicious or antisocial behavior, vandalism and graffiti.

Our bushland represents valuable remnants of natural habitat but is also available for passive recreation. Unfortunately, added pressure from weed invasion, animal and human activity creates increasing levels of disturbance to this habitat. One aspect of this is the proliferation of small tracks and short cuts that continue to appear in areas popular for dog walking and exercising. Consequently the City is planning to fence some of the designated paths to discourage the creation of a network of —goat tracks|| through the bush which further degrades the area. We are supportive of this approach however I welcome any feedback.

The boardwalk proposed for Trigg to Scarborough and which had been deferred is being presented again for discussion in 2011. The earlier proposal was opposed by our committee and that view has not changed.

The sighting of an echidna in Trigg Bushland by a regular walker and long term resident is a rare and exciting event. It is most unusual to see these creatures in an urban setting. Their slow movement and propensity to venture onto roads makes them particularly vulnerable—so watch out for them!



*Photo by B Gibbons*

Friends of Trigg meet every first Sunday of a month to do weeding, every fifth Sunday of a month for guided nature walks and Monday afternoons to conduct Tuart monitoring. To confirm times and meeting places contact the Friends of Trigg Bushland on 9447 5406.

*Reprinted with permission from the Friends of Trigg Bushland Newsletter December 2010.*



## Rockingham Environment Centre Naragebup

offers a series of workshops for all ages. For a small fee, ranging from \$10 to \$20 per person, anyone interested can learn about snakes and turtles, nature drawing, paper making, solar cooking, gardening or learn other practical skills towards sustainable living with Sunny.

Workshops are run on Tuesdays and Saturdays in March and April, and sessions are held in the mornings or afternoons.

Many sessions are suitable for children as young as 6 years old.

For more information or make a booking contact Ann on 9591 3077 or email to [ann@naragebup.org.au](mailto:ann@naragebup.org.au).

## 'A WEDGED TALE'

a film by Adam Hermans and Simon Cherriman.  
[www.awedgedtale.com](http://www.awedgedtale.com)  
[www.simoncherriman.com](http://www.simoncherriman.com)

**Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th March 2011**

The Kookaburra Theatre,  
Mundaring Weir Rd, Mundaring, Western Australia.  
Cost \$10 per head.

In order for a screening to be viable, we need at least 70 people per night, preferably more. The cinema capacity is 300 so please tell your friends!

Please RSVP possible numbers of people attending and which date you would prefer, via email. [aquila84@inet.net.au](mailto:aquila84@inet.net.au)  
I'll send out a confirmation email for these dates after I know more about numbers. Hope you can make it!

## EXPERTS QUESTION ASPECTS OF PRESCRIBED BURNING

*University of Western Australia Media Statement 18 February 2011*

Prescribed burning to reduce the hazards of bushfires may do more harm than good in some circumstances, according to a group of leading environmental scientists.

From The University of Western Australia, Kings Park and Botanic Garden, and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England, the scientists argue that deliberately increasing the frequency of fires may lead to ecosystem degradation and loss of biodiversity.

In a paper published this month in *Trends in Plant Science* they acknowledge that as climate change increases the combustibility of vegetation, human lives and property are more at risk.

However, they suggest that prescribed burning – a key practice by most environmental managers – may cause more problems because, they say, there is actually little evidence that Mediterranean-climate plants such as those found in Australia are fire-adapted.

Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and UWA graduate Professor Stephen Hopper said: "Dealing with fire management is a complex business, especially when the dual aims of protection of life and property and of biodiversity conservation coincide.

"Our analysis reveals that it is naive on present evidence to assume that Australian plants are adapted to fire, and that prescribed burning regimes are not only good for the bush but can be applied in any fashion and frequency with impunity. Rather, we should be cautious in prescribed burning practices if biodiversity conservation is an aim, ensuring that good scientific design and adaptive management are applied to local situations, so that we learn as we go.

"Our paper is a plea for better science and closer working relationships between fire managers and scientists to

achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity conservation where that is a priority."

The paper's authors argue that the role of fire in engendering adaptive traits in Mediterranean plants has never been tested.

Traits traditionally regarded as evidence of adaption to fire, including smoke-induced germination, co-occur in ecosystems which are not fire-prone and also stimulate germination in plants such as lettuce and tomatoes, they write.

"Mediterranean climates and their unique ecosystems are only found on five per cent of the land surface of the Earth, yet they contain 20 per cent of the plant species of the world. The effective management and long-term protection of their biodiversity is a priority that is being made increasingly difficult by human population pressures and the as-yet not fully understood impacts of climate change," the authors write.

"Preventing an increase in fire frequency – instead of prescribed burning – can be crucial for maintaining soil integrity, water supplies, water quality and biodiversity. Suitable management practices are therefore difficult to predict."

The paper's lead author Emeritus Professor Don Bradshaw is a Senior Research Fellow at UWA's School of Animal Biology. His co-authors are Professor Kingsley Dixon, Director of Plant Science, Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Professor Stephen Hopper, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Winthrop Professor Hans Lambers, Head of UWA's School of Plant Biology and one of the world's most highly cited plant scientists and Assistant Professor Shane Turner also from UWA's School of Plant Biology.

## Planthopper

These white waxy patches are common on plant leaves in bushland.

Recently I was lucky enough to see a beautiful adult plant hopper laying her eggs. As she laid them she was manipulating the white waxy material to cover the eggs. She worked her way up to near the top of the leaf and her job was done. I thought she might rest but no, in the twinkling



Photo by M Owen

## Beautiful spider and wrens

What a fantastically beautiful spider, but what sort was it? At first it was barely visible among the stems of the white Tangle Daisy but it came to the tops of the flowers when I touched the stem.

Its eyes were in two rows of four, it was quite hairy and it had a white badge or shield on its underside.

Helped by the WA Museum, I was told that it was a less common variety of huntsman spider, *Neosparassus* sp. or badge spider and that this spider was probably a juvenile as adults are darker and better camouflaged.

A little later and to my great delight, a family of Variegated Fairy-wrens, with two of the males in breeding plumage, were hopping and flitting around. The foxes hadn't got them after all. These gorgeous little birds weigh only about 8 gm, and I read in Wikipedia that males have



Photo by M Owen



Photo by J Taylor

## Wandering gliders

I wonder if you have noticed a number of dragonflies flying around at the moment? We have had a big influx of Wandering Gliders, *Pantala flavescens* which probably came south with cyclone Bianca. They are the most widespread dragonfly species, found over most parts of the world - they have even been recorded in England. They are particularly found in the tropics and disperse widely. I have seen them on Cocos Island and Lord Howe both far from land and with few breeding sites. They seem to like flying in wide open spaces - such as playing fields and tennis courts, often gathering in the leaves of a tree. I have rarely seen them settle. They have been laying eggs in my swimming pool.

Jan Taylor



Photo by M Owen

been observed presenting yellow petals to females as part of the courtship ritual. Petals presented are not the same colour as the male bird.

Of course habitat destruction and fragmentation are threats to birds and Underwood Avenue Bushland continues to be threatened.

The bushland has approval for a housing development from both state and local government but the University of WA has to refer the proposal to the federal government (for the third time). The UWA vice-chancellor, Alan Robson and the chancellor, Michael Chaney have met the federal minister for the environment, Tony Burke, to discuss this development.

The Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland also requested a meeting with the federal minister, but were advised to talk to his advisor, Sean Halse, which we have done.

Margaret Owen



(Continued from page 1)

impacts, through the clearing permit process and quarry licensing under part V of the Act. The totally outrageous and flawed part of the EPA process is that the agency relies on the documentation provided by the proponent. WA Limestone's Rehabilitation and Management Plan does not even mention Lake Nowergup even though it is less than 500 metres from the site. How the EPA can accurately say that the proposal will not have wider impacts is extraordinary. There are many more flaws in the proponent's Management Plan and in the final report the EPA acknowledged that "the vegetation assessment undertaken was rudimentary."

Another concerning aspect of the EPA's decision not to assess the proposal is that it suggests that it will be up to the WAPC and the City of Wanneroo to decide whether or not to develop or preserve the area. Here's buck passing at its best. The EPA says the WAPC and the City of Wanneroo can decide. The City of Wanneroo and WAPC clearly have felt that the State Planning Policy 2.4 is the key document for its decision making. Yet the 2.4 Policy clearly states that some proposals should be referred to the EPA, and so the matter in theory goes around in a circle.

Where is the campaign now? The next stage for WA Limestone is that they must apply for a clearing permit from the DEC. Given what has gone before, the community holds no great confidence for this stage of the process. If a permit is either granted or not granted, it is subject to appeal to the Minister for the Environment who makes the final political decision. After all the Minister in his report

rejecting the appeals in relation to the EPA not formally assessing the proposal stated:

*"It should be noted that the City of Wanneroo's decision to refuse to grant planning approval will be a key consideration by the DEC in assessing any future clearing application lodged by the proponent."*

It is that domino effect again. The lack of will and inaction (the lack of due diligence??) by one agency ends up affecting the next stage of the process, so that the environment does not have a chance. We are hopeful though that the concerns raised by the EPA in relation to the basic level of information provided by the proponent will have its own domino effect too. WA Limestone must be forced to provide better information and the DEC ought to force them to commission truly independent flora studies to determine the environmental impacts accurately.

WA Limestone has also been advised that the proposal should be referred to the SEWPAC under the provisions of the EPBC Act. It is the proponent's responsibility to make this referral. But that is for another chapter. As is the City of Wanneroo's approval of this proposal and the State Administrative Tribunal's role in the ability of local government to make decisions.

A final warning for others in the community who may be affected by State Planning Policy 2.4 Basic Raw Materials: *beware!* The Government is currently revising SPP2.4 because it apparently is making it too difficult for mining companies to get approval. How much easier do they want it?

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

### Environmental Community Grants

The State Government has allocated \$1.53 million this year to help with projects involving: biodiversity conservation, sustainable catchment management, rescue and rehabilitation of injured or incapacitated fauna, interpretation and sustainable recreation in natural areas, regional parks and Bush Forever sites, support for major conservation/environmental organisations, protection of high value areas by landholders on private land.

Individuals, local community groups or organisations and Local Governments can apply.

For applications forms phone (08) 9442 0300 or email [grants@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:grants@dec.wa.gov.au) or visit: <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/view/5135/1/>

**Applications close Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2011**

### Riverbank Grants Scheme

This scheme aims to protect and enhance the Swan and Canning river foreshores. Riverbank funding is available to Local Government and state government agencies with management responsibilities within the Swan Canning Riverpark. Community and conservation groups may also be eligible.

For more information on how to apply, contact the Swan River Trust on (08)9278 0900 or visit the website at: <http://www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au/science/program/4th%20level%20content/riverbankgrants.aspx>

**Applications close Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2011**

### NEW BOOK

## Coastal Plants A Guide to the Identification and Restoration of Plants of the Perth Region

By Kingsley Dixon

The definite guide to the common 100 plants of the Perth coastal region, focusing on key species used in coastal restoration.

Published by CSIRO, February 2011

### Coastwest Grants

The annual Coastwest Grants support projects designed as a response to these challenges, which improve the condition and amenity of these coastal environments. Grants are provided to community groups to work in partnership with coastal managers in on-ground coastal and marine rehabilitation, restoration and preventative conservation projects.

Guidelines and application forms are available from Planning WA at [coastwest@planning.wa.gov.au](mailto:coastwest@planning.wa.gov.au) or visit: <http://www.planning.wa.gov.au/Plans+and+policies/Statewide+planning/Coastwest/115.aspx>

**Applications close Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2011**

# 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

### Perth's Banksia woodlands: precious and under threat

Friday 25th March 2011 8.30am - 4.30 pm

Wollaston College, MtClaremont

Registration essential, contact [ubc@iinet.net.au](mailto:ubc@iinet.net.au) or tel 9420 7207

### Bushland weed display at Garden Week, Perry Lakes

7th-11th April

At SERCUL/Wildflower Society site, adjacent to Water Corporation site

### UBC Council meeting: 'Does the law protect Black Cockatoos?'

Wednesday 4th May 5.30pm drinks & nibbles for 6pm start

A panel of lawyers including Assoc Professor John Bailey & Greg McIntyre will examine laws and policies relevant to case studies where habitat is lost or threatened and find out what needs to change.

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

#### 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](mailto:ubc@iinet.net.au)

**Copy deadline - 15 May 2010**

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

\$15 plus \$2 postage

Available by mail order from the UBC office.

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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)