

## Whatever Happened to the Wetland Buffer Guidelines?

Wetlands are more than just a body of water and a few trees. A healthy wetland is the habitat for many different species of plants and animals. Some of them don't have any open water, but they are still sources of great biodiversity. Prior to 1829, the Swan Coastal Plain was covered by extensive areas of wetlands. These supported the indigenous Noongar people as well as vast numbers of waterbirds, reptiles and native mammals. The Noongar people respected and managed the wetlands because they supplied them with abundant food and water and they gave the coastal plain a sense of place, a connection to their culture and religion.

When the European settlers arrived in 1829 they failed to appreciate the value of the wetlands and the wildlife. They set about taming and developing the land in the European fashion. They drained and filled most of the wetlands so that now we have less than 20% of our original wetland heritage left. Some wetlands were preserved and beautified in the European style, for example Lake Monger, Hyde Park Lake and Queens Gardens Lake, but most were seen as obstacles to development and so they were drained and filled.

While the Noongar people lamented the loss of their heritage, few of our leaders cared to listen. Most people thought of wetlands as disease infested swamps that needed to be sanitised or beautified. The idea of conserving wetlands in their nat-

ural state did not become accepted in WA until the late sixties, in the wake of the worldwide growth of environmental awareness.

In the seventies, the newly-formed EPA conducted a survey of wetlands in WA and found that there was a desperate need to conserve the last remaining fragments of our wetland heritage for many reasons, including biodiversity and maintenance of international waterbird migration routes. Following the publication of the System Six Red Book in 1983 some wetlands were placed in nature reserves and Regional Parks, but the vast majority were left unprotected. This led to the Swan Coastal Plain Lakes Environmental Protection Policy of 1992, which sought to prevent the destruction of the remaining lakes on the Coastal Plain. However, this policy does not protect damp-lands or the buffer zones of wetlands.

It is important to realize that a wetland does not begin at the water's edge. The water-dependent vegetation often extends for tens of meters above the high water mark and this vegetation is an important part of the wetland ecosystem. The Government recognised this in the late nineties and set about trying to define ecological boundaries for wetlands so that the whole ecosystem could be protected. A draft Wetland

Buffers Policy was produced in 2002 and released for public comment, but it has never been completed. In the meantime many new housing developments have been approved too close to wetlands. The residents of these developments now suffer the consequences of poor planning – midge and mosquito problems, bushfire risk, waterlogging and offensive odours from algal blooms. The planning authorities usually apply an arbitrary 50 metres buffer policy to developments near wetlands, but this can include roads and firebreaks and in some cases it has been reduced on appeal by developers.

We have lost so much of the wetland heritage that gave Perth its sense of place and we will lose more if these wetland buffer guidelines are not finalised soon.

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# Editorial

The Perth region lies in a biodiversity hotspot of international and national significance - with species rich Banksia woodlands like no other city in the world. No other city is set in a natural landscape dominated by Banksia woodlands. This incredible diversity of flora and floristic community types amongst our suburbs deserves the most sophisticated conservation system, public respect and bushland care.

The Bush Forever plan set in place in 2000 by a Liberal government was a fitting public response to this amazing natural heritage. But now more than 12 years later, Bush Forever is only partially implemented and the Barnett government has been remiss in its failure to properly fund acquisitions, management and legal transfers to the conservation estate.

In a rapidly growing city this is inexcusable. Where is the government's leadership and pride in our beautiful bushland? Why has the government failed to conduct the planned community education and involvement programs to raise community awareness and improve public health from people being in natural areas? Instead of the government, it was the Urban Bushland Council that initiated a Report Card on Bush Forever implementation in 2012. The Hon John Day officially opened our conference on 7th December 2012 with a statement of commitment to

Bush Forever. But where is the whole of government action and the funding?

The proceedings of our Report Card conference may be available by the time this newsletter is printed, or soon after. In it and also in this newsletter is the UBC's 'Call for Action on Bush Forever'.

The UBC will be seeking the active support and funding commitment from the new Minister for the Environment and Heritage Hon Albert Jacob MLA, as well as Planning Minister John Day. We will also be advocating action on the promised new Biodiversity Conservation Act for WA to underpin action on Bush Forever and biodiversity conservation generally.

The new WA Biodiversity and Agricultural Management (BAM) Act has at last come into effect as of 1 May 2013. As advised at our UBC Weed meeting last year, the listing and control of environmental weeds could be formally set in place under this Act. Given the threat of climate change and its impact of increased disturbance and weed invasion threatening our biodiversity, this should be a priority for immediate regulation and funding. For example proper strategic control to prevent further invasion of the highly invasive Geraldton Carnation weed *Euphorbia terracina* would be cost effective and protective of biodiversity.

## STOP THE BOARDWALK

The Friends of Trigg Bushland have recently submitted their submission seeking to protect the South Trigg Beach Class A Reserve Bush Forever area 308 from an unnecessary, unsightly, expensive and environmentally damaging aluminium boardwalk.

This narrow strip of vegetated foredune nestled between Scarborough and Trigg Beaches, has attracted the attention of the City of Stirling previously. In 2005 it proposed a boardwalk but abandoned the proposal after the public soundly rejected it and its own Natural Areas staff reported that: "Construction of the boardwalk is likely to result in significant impacts to the natural dune systems from which recovery and restoration would be difficult under the constraints of the coastal environment."

The Council has ignored the advice of its own staff, and has once again advertised for public comment a "concept" of a boardwalk. This time it has proposed three options for a boardwalk, each taking a different route and each equally damaging to the fragile dune environment. The Council's preferred option is an 800m aluminium structure with a ground level concrete path within a 4m wide corridor. The structure is based on the controversial Yanchep skywalk. This option (and the other two) would cause irreversible damage to this natural dune system during construction and would fragment the narrow coastal reserve introducing an edge effect in a south-north corridor. Building a static structure in an unstable mobile



dune system would cause erosion, sand build up and the risk of unnatural dune blow outs. Human activity in pristine areas will introduce weeds, rubbish and substantially increase the risk of fire.

The City of Stirling has a responsibility as land manager to protect this regionally and locally significant Bush Forever site, not to destroy it by this unnecessary and environmentally destructive boardwalk. Once the environmental values of the reserve have been degraded it opens the door for future development on this site. Is this the "hidden agenda"? Have a look at the reserve and make up your own mind.

Like our Facebook.com/SaveTriggBeach. For more information on the campaign, including the full cost estimates of the proposal go to [www.TriggBushland.org.au/StopTheBoardwalk.htm](http://www.TriggBushland.org.au/StopTheBoardwalk.htm) or email to: [stoptheboardwalk@gmail.com](mailto:stoptheboardwalk@gmail.com).



## 50th Anniversary of a Duke's Visit to Pelican Point

The Pelican Point area was important for Noongar people for more than 40,000 years before European settlement in 1829. It was an important cultural place – a camping place where springs provided a source of water and fish a source of food. It was a place to be protected!

The early European settlers saw things a bit differently. They saw the wetland areas around the Swan as ugly and unhealthy. The *West Australian* commented in 1893 *Western Australia does not have too many beauties of nature of which to boast. Perth could have been beautiful BUT it should not be a difficult matter to improve on nature where possible.* After some disastrous “improvements” - including the release 1000s of gambusia fish to eat mosquito larvae and the filling in about 16 hectares of low lying samphire marshes - fortunately this attitude has changed!

On March 27<sup>th</sup> 1963, while on a Royal Tour of Australia, HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh played a small part in this story.

As a newspaper article related the following day, Prince Philip rose in the very early hours from his bed on the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, moored at Fremantle, to make an unscheduled visit to Pelican Point, which had been recommended to him late the night before as the best place to observe local and migratory birds.

For two hours he observed and photographed the abundant birdlife, expressing the hope “that this and other suitable sites in and around the City of Perth would be preserved as permanent bird sanctuaries”.



Historian Dr Sue Graham-Taylor and Prof Robert Harvey presenting at the anniversary celebrations.

The Duke's visit focused attention to the area. Even popular cartoonist of the time, Kirwan Ward commented that to him it meant that he learnt something – and what he learnt was that a dotterel was not in fact a machine for making dots found in polka dot factories!

On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his visit, the *Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group* (SERAG) Inc. and *BirdLife WA* collaborated to organize a celebration on the Crawley foreshore to mark the occasion.



Photo by SERAG

Guests viewing Prince Philip's photographs.

Daniel Garlett provided a “Welcome to Country”, speeches were made, a tour taken and refreshments served; displays of historic material were prepared by SERAG members Dr Sue Graham Taylor, Fiona Crossan and Jane Leahy-Kane; photographs of the birdlife frequenting the Reserve were provided by Sandra Wallace from BirdLife WA, while Sue Mather took the opportunity to launch a new BirdLife WA community information pamphlet, *Birds of the Swan Estuary*.

Guests were reminded about the ecological importance of the site.

The passing of fifty years has provided us with an opportunity to look back and learn from our mistakes, and to better plan for the future.

Although Pelican Point Nature Reserve remains under significant pressure from urban development and recreational activities, we can celebrate that our community has given it A-Class status; and that community enthusiasm for its continued protection and rehabilitation is undiminished.



Photo by SERAG

Hon Bill Marmion MLA, Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Housing and Member for Nedlands among the guests.

# UBC CALL FOR ACTION ON BUSH FOREVER

February 2013

**The Urban Bushland Council WA calls for public recognition of Perth's rich Banksia woodlands and wetlands of the Swan Coastal Plain as a biodiversity hotspot of the world by:**

- Complete implementation of the now partly implemented Bush Forever Plan 2000
- A comprehensive audit in 2013 of all Bush Forever Areas
- Extending Bush Forever to include the Peel region, Swan Bioplan, Whicher Scarp, Darling Range, Bunbury Region Scheme, with new funding source similar to the Metropolitan Region Improvement Fund

WITH

## **Statutory protection**

**Statutory protection including a management obligation** under the environment portfolio to apply to all Bush Forever Areas and to all land holders of Bush Forever Areas

**Prohibition of clearing** in Bush Forever Areas and regional ecological linkages

Revision of the proposed **MRS Text Amendment** to include statutory definition, protection and management of all Bush Forever Areas, with clearing not permitted.

**A legally defined responsibility for DEC** to assume leadership of Bush Forever:

- Co-ordination and support of Bush Forever across agencies and landholders to shift to a new unit in the Nature Conservation Division of DEC with appropriate new funding.

'**Special Control Areas**' under the Planning And Development Act 2005 declared for all Bush Forever Areas that are not zoned Parks and Recreation under the MRS.

**Mandatory Local Biodiversity Strategies** developed and implemented by 2015 according to the LBS Planning Guidelines by WALGA for all local government authorities in the Perth and Peel regions.

**Linkages:** Statutory definition, protection and management of regional and local ecological linkages in the Perth and Peel regions.

Update and extend Bush Forever with new data and protection in new **WA Biodiversity Conservation legislation**.

## **Budget**

State Government increased funding for management and education, including massively increased funding and staff for the Nature Conservation Division of DEC.

Operational budget allocation by non conservation agencies to manage their Bush Forever sites to maintain values and prevent degradation.

An increase in the Metropolitan Region Improvement Tax (MRIT) rate to 0.2c/\$ to properly fund acquisition of Bush Forever Areas and initial capital works.

## **Education and awareness**

A new focus on bushland education of the Perth community, children and adults, to develop community pride in a sense of place.

## **Audit**

A comprehensive audit in 2013 of each Bush Forever Area and of the progress toward a CAR reserve system for the Perth Metropolitan Region to be completed and made public as a priority in early 2013.

## **Management**

Management of overarching, threatening processes: clearing, fragmentation, hydrological change, weeds, feral animals, disease.

For the 13,000ha of Bush Forever Areas outside DEC managed lands, all government landholders (Commonwealth, Landcorp, Water Corporation, Department of Housing etc.) be subject to the management obligation as above and thus be required to actively manage their sites to prevent degradation and retain conservation values.

Integration of locally significant natural areas with ecological linkages, rivers and wetlands.

## **Local Government**

Mandatory Local Biodiversity Strategies, developed and implemented by 2015 according to the LBS Planning Guidelines by WALGA for all local government authorities in the Perth and Peel regions.

State Government funding for 3 full time permanent staff to support development and implementation of Local Biodiversity Strategies.

## **Commonwealth**

All Bush Forever Areas declared 'Matters of National Environmental Significance' under the Commonwealth EPBC Act.

The Strategic Assessment for Perth and Peel changing its focus to managing the unique diversity on the Swan Coastal Plain of an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot, not just what is rare.

Recognition and protection of the network of regional and local ecological linkages in the Perth and Peel regions under the National Wildlife Corridors Plan and the proposed National Wildlife Corridors Act.

An end to clearing Banksia woodlands and black cockatoo habitat on the Swan Coastal Plain.



## Invitation to see the Carnaby's cockatoos fly in to roost

Anyone who was interested was invited through a letter to the Post newspaper to join me on the following Tuesday night at 5.40pm at the 'Carnaby's cocky counting corner.'

A banner is marking the counting spot on the corner of Underwood Avenue and Brockway Road. Cartoonist Simon Hudson created the image of the cockatoo, and banner printer and maker, 'graphicsource' generously donated much of the banner.

The idea is to promote interest in Carnaby's cockatoos and to save Underwood Avenue Bushland from becoming a housing development.

Three people arrived rather early: in fact two days early, as they thought there might be too many people coming on Tuesday night. When Tuesday night arrived, there were many people, over 30, all of whom were very interested. The ages ranged from 2 years old to old and it was so pleasing to see the children.

John told me that the Carnaby's come to his place to drink. On one occasion he had had 77 cockatoos in his yard drinking in turn from the bird-bath. All but three got a drink, he said. The last three on the ground were about to drink, when the flock took off, so they rose with the flock and flew off.



*Over 30 people responded to a letter in a community newspaper inviting anyone interested to join in regular observations of Carnaby's cockatoos in an inner city suburb.*

The cockatoos did not disappoint on Tuesday night. Over 250 flew in to roost. Then scientist and PhD student Christine Groom came in with her antennae-bearing colleague. They were following the green-tailed and letter 'T' bearing male Carnaby's who had been released with a small transmitter attached to his tail feathers. When his feathers drop off the transmitter will go with the feathers. He roosted with the large flock.

The following morning the flock flew east into Underwood Avenue Bushland. Records are kept of times the cockatoos are in the bushland so we have solid evidence of how important the bushland is for their survival.

## Our fourteen month fight with the City of Wanneroo to save Lot 5483 from being cleared



*Dr Paul Barber inspecting the trees on Lot 5483 and declaring them to be in very good condition*

Lot 5483 (pictured) is located in the middle of the conjoined Alexander Heights Park and the Ian Robbins Park. It is an undeveloped community purpose site, zoned "Civic and Cultural" and occupies 2,840m<sup>2</sup>.

In January 2012, the City invited expressions of interest from resourced community groups to develop this land. It counted 120 trees that would be at risk of being cleared, including 62 mature Banksias that are frequented in season by Carnaby's black cockatoos.

Local residents promptly formed the "Save the Trees in Our Park" action group in Alexander Heights to oppose the City's plan.

In three weeks of oppressive February heat, we gained 1,512 signatures to a petition for trees on this site to be retained in perpetuity. At this stage, we did not know who would apply to develop this land. The Vietnamese Community in Australia/WA Chapter Inc. was the only applicant. It subsequently lodged a formal application on 16 May 2012 to build its community and cultural centre on this land.

Our action group lodged a submission in opposing development. We maintained (inter-alia) that the applicant should more appropriately build its community centre in a light-industrial or commercial area. We pointed out that to clear this site would breach the City's Local Environmental Plan for 2009 -2014 and also not observe the spirit of section 1.3.3 of the Local Government Act 1995.

We contacted our four South Ward councillors to assist us in our fight, but they all refused. We applied to the Minister for the Environment, the Shadow Minister for the Environment, the Environmental Defenders' Office and the media to assist us, but they all refused.

Space does not permit us to cover other actions we took in our long fight. We finally came across the City's Policy Manual on "Acquisition and Development of Community Purpose Sites." This effectively provides that only

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the City can build a "Community Centre" (defined to be "a public building") and to be "for the maximum benefit of the local community." The City conceded that our interpretation was correct. The Vietnamese Community eventually withdrew its application to build on Lot 5483.

*Kevin Lehane*

## Friends of Forrestdale

Attached here are series of photographs taken along the full length of the Keane Road alignment (some taken in Spring 2012, others recently) showing the many types of vegetation and wildlife habitat that would be lost should the Keane Road extension be built.

Proponents of this proposed road are stating that the Keane Road reserve is very degraded and that minimal harm would be done if the road was built. As you can see from the photographs, this bushland is anything but degraded - in fact compared to many reserves on the Swan Coastal Plain, which have suffered degradation including extensive weed invasion, the native vegetation in Anstey-Keane (the 20 metre-wide x 1.5km Keane Road reserve included) is in excellent - pristine condition, and relatively weed-free. The only degraded part of the Keane Road reserve is a comparatively small area approximately 150 metres in length at the Anstey Road end. Incidentally, this damaged area exemplifies how degradation inevitably encroaches into bushland when roads are built.

It is important that people make an informed decision when writing their submissions on the "Keane Road Strategic Link". Important too is that people know what is at stake: a very rare and precious nature reserve, the value of which will be severely undermined should this non-sensational road be built.



## Blitz at Anstey-Keane Dampland

On Saturday April 6, DEC authorised officers, City of Armadale rangers and Armadale police conducted a blitz on unauthorised vehicles at Anstey-Keane Dampland. A total of 7 infringements were issued to various offenders under the Off Road Vehicle Act; 4 persons were spoken to prior to entering the site, and at least 10 offenders were unable to be stopped.

The efforts of the enforcement agencies involved in the operation are greatly appreciated, however these dismaying statistics highlight the urgency for blitzes to occur more often (the previous one was some years ago). There is also a pressing need for regular weekend patrols by DEC officers. For the recalcitrant offender who repeatedly rams gates, cuts fences and ignores signage, this would be the most effective deterrent.



**The Perth branch of the Wildflower Society** - in conjunction with UBC and Friends of Forrestdale - and with Bronwen and Greg Keighery will conduct a guided walk through **Anstey-Keane Dampland** on **Monday 30th September at 10am**. (This is the long weekend).

Anstey-Keane - Bush Forever site 342 and part of the Jandakot Regional Park - is a 308 ha reserve in north Forrestdale. It supports more than 380 flora species and varied habitat, including dampland, banksia woodland and low heathland.

Meet at the junction of Anstey and Keane Roads, where there is plenty of parking. We will be following soft sand tracks, which may be wet in areas. Bring hat, water and sturdy shoes or boots.

*David & Bryony Fremlin*

**Quinns Rocks Environmental Group** is organising a workshop to examine ways to maintain fauna movement between significant conservation areas on the coast and east of the newly proposed Mitchell freeway extension north of Burns Beach Road and Neerabup Road extension to Wanneroo Road that will run through the widest section of the Neerabup National Park. With the help of experts, issues such as effective wildlife corridors, local fauna movement needs and potential impacts of proposed road extensions will be discussed.

The workshop will be held on Saturday 15 June from 1.45-4.15pm at the Gumblossom Community Centre in Quinns Rocks. For more information contact Renata or David on [quinnsenvirons@yahoo.com.au](mailto:quinnsenvirons@yahoo.com.au)

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## Friends of Harman Park

Harman Park is a dry park in Sorrento containing three bushland islands. Each bushland island is surprisingly different, with a somewhat different assemblage of native plants in each. The bush islands also vary in condition, with parts of the southern island in almost pristine condition, the middle island in good condition and at least half of the northern island in poor (degraded) condition. Also on the positive side, the bushland in Harman Park has a smaller number of weed species, say, compared to Porteous Park in Sorrento.

There has been a Friends Group in operation there since 2002, the coordinator being Rhona Johnson who lives in the adjacent Seacrest Retirement village. The first thing Rhona requested was a sign at the front of the park, which was quickly erected by the City of Joondalup. As an artist, she has also painted many of the wildflowers occurring in the park. But due to her ill health, I took over as Coordinator in September 2011 and together with a few other Friends Group members, resolved to ramp up the on-ground work to improve the condition of the bushland in the park. There was some doubt whether the northern island could be saved, as it was over-run with veldt grass, carnation weed and fumatory, but after finding a variety of orchids still growing there, Friends Group member Karyn Gower decided it was worth a go and commenced hand weeding there.

In 2011, the Friends Group received a "Special Purpose Grant" of \$2000 from the City of Joondalup and then employed contractors under my supervision to work on the southern and central islands. During the winter, the City also sprayed all three islands for veldt grass and the Friends Group manually removed late germination and any plants missed prior to seed shed.

In 2012, the Friends Group again received a "Special Purpose Grant" and the City again sprayed the veldt grass, but also sprayed a "buffer strip" between the turf and the three bushland islands in September to stop weeds in the turf from seeding into the bushland. It is hoped that within a year or two, the veldt grass density within the bushland will be low enough so that spraying is no longer required, with a switch to manual weeding only. The Friends Group also alerted the City to the construction of a large cubby being built in the southern bushland island (complete with divans collected from the bulk rubbish collection), and all this was removed by City before too much damage was done to the bushland.

So in 2012, a total of 144.5 hours were completed by volunteers, another 56 hours by contractors (under Friends Group supervision) and about 50 seedlings planted. Most of these are growing well without any summer watering so far. A big effort was made to remove fumatory and



*Advanced plants grown from seedlings planted in July 2012 in Harman Park, Sorrento.*

carnation weed from all the bushland islands – in fact fumatory was weeded out four times over the winter and spring. As a result, there has been great natural regeneration occurring in the northern island, and all the islands to some extent. However, we expect there is still a large weed seed bank in the soil, so weeding effort will be required for some years to come to get the bushland back into excellent condition. Ultimately, the Friends Group may be able to rejoin all three bushland islands, just leaving an informal path between each.

(Sad news: the first Coordinator of "Friends of Harman Park", Rhona Johnson, died in hospital on the 19/2/2013. The Friends Group have asked the City of Joondalup for a bench seat and plaque to be located in Harman Park in her memory, and a local provenance Tuart will also be planted in the lawn area in autumn).

*Mike Norman*

## Sorrento Beach – Spinifex fertiliser experiment

Friends of Sorrento Beach was formed in 2000 and has been rehabilitating the entire 2 km of the Sorrento foreshore, extending this year south into a section in Marmion. This is a highly visible section of the coast, overlooked by West Coast Drive and the upgraded shared path which is used by thousands of pedestrians and cyclists each week. In 2012, the Friends Group did 1,046 hours of volunteer work, supervised 352 hours of contractor work (paid for by a Coastwest grant and a City of Joondalup "Special Purpose Grant"), planted 1,700 local provenance seedlings, supplied by the City of Joondalup, with a survival rate (so far) of over 90%. The City spot sprayed some weed species mapped by the Friends Group, including sour sob, which is better sprayed than weeded manually.

Each year, the Friends Group manually weeds the entire area to run down the weed seed bank in the soil, removing 22 weed species, and planting over 1000 seedlings



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per year (on average) with an average survival rate in excess of 85%. The plantings have been complimented by a lot of natural regeneration, which tends to occur more after a few years of "zero tolerance" weeding. As an example, the steep bank (what was, totally degraded) north of the Ross Ave look-out planted less than 2 years ago, and this bank is now close to being completely re-vegetated with coastal native plants (see before and after photos below).



Photo by M Norman

Degraded section of Sorrento foreshore north of Ross Avenue before works in June 2011.



Photo by M Norman

The same section of the Sorrento foreshore north of Ross Avenue as pictured above in January 2013.

In 2012, effort was directed to large areas of degraded foredunes with the dominant weeds being dune onion weed and sea spinach. The tops of the foredunes, and just behind, were mainly covered in weeds. The front of the dunes were mainly held together with *Spinifex hirsutus*, but in parts, even that was missing because it is very susceptible to trampling by beach goers walking up into the dunes. The City has since fenced most of the dunes at Sorrento Beach to prevent this. The City sprayed large (isolated) sea spinach plants in 2011 and the Friends Group manually weeded, using levering tools, all the onion weed and sea spinach located near existing native plants, ready for planting of both *Spinifex hirsutus* and *Spinifex longifolius* in 2012. The planting of the Spinifex was completed in June and July of 2012.

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The City's Conservation Officer Keith Armstrong suggested that to get quicker coverage of the bare sand in the foredunes with Spinifex, we should try the application of slow release fertiliser to the Spinifex seedlings that were planted. The City supplied the slow release fertiliser in September 2012 and it was applied (at the rate of about half a hand full) around each Spinifex plant in some areas north of Ross Ave by the Friends Group. The slow release fertiliser was also lightly broadcast over some existing areas of *Spinifex hirsutus* to thicken it up. The results to date show that the *Spinifex longifolius* (in particular) has responded well (see the photo of seedlings planted in July 2012) but too much fertiliser can temporarily set back the plant.



Photo by M Norman

Fertilised Spinifex six months since planting, January 2013.

The weeds have also responded to the fertiliser. Putting a fertiliser on what is usually low nutrient soil will always favour weed growth, so it is clear that encouraging the growth of Spinifex in this way can only be done where there is a well planned and implemented weeding program in place (the Friends Group planned for that). Most of the weeding must be done manually using levering tools as the weeds will grow closely around the planted Spinifex and therefore cannot be sprayed. This fertiliser trial is ongoing at this point of time – the area with Spinifex that has been fertilised will be monitored over the next few years.

Mike Norman  
"Friends of Sorrento Beach" and  
"Joondalup Community Coast Care Forum"

## Was it party time in Hollywood Reserve ?

Over 70 wine bottles were collected from one small area near a bench on Bill Day Walk.

13 people gathered to collect rubbish, and apart from the wine and about a dozen beer bottles found in one other spot, the usual rubbish was blown in plastic from the cemetery. It is a pity we do not have cash for bottles, we might have made a little money for the kitty.



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Our thanks to all those who helped us clean up.

*David & Trish Hewson*



*Photo by M Owen*

*Over 70 wine bottles and some beer bottles were collected during a clean up day in the Hollywood Reserve in March 2013.*

## How Mosman Park got a Friends of the Bushland group going!

Fire, weeds, threat of housing development and a Living Smart course!

A fire in Minim Cove Park in January 2008 was the second in this park within 5 years. One edge of the park had been highly disturbed due to adjoining houses. This edge looked like it had been used as the local residents' tip for building rubble and garden waste.

Native plants were few and far between but what was there was joyous. This edge had a great deal of rampant rostellifera wattle (*Acacia rostellifera*). It was marching for the central diverse area but still doing a wonderful job suppressing the wild oats as we came to find out when we cut the wattle back. The rostellifera wattle also provides a windbreak and keeps the soil alive. When we want some mulch we have no trouble finding rogue rostellifera to take some pruning from.

Some adjoining residents thought they heard the Mayor mention developing the area to pay for the rapidly degrading natural areas in Mosman Park. Imagine if your view of bushland and Swan River was soon to become bricks, how you might band together to find value in the bushland under threat.

Mosman Park hosted a Living Smart course not long after. Besides encouraging participants to be water wise, travel smart, waste wise, energy wise, garden for produce and biodiversity, connect to your community but also to pledge to put it into practice. With support from Councillor Libby Eustance and other participants, I put my name up as number one holder together. I couldn't think of anything better I would rather do except I worked, had two daughters still studying, a husband that worked long hours and I didn't know anything about Mosman Park bushland other than I loved it. But I am a NSW's farmer's daughter so I knew some weeds.

The council has since commissioned a management plan for that area and all other natural areas of Mosman Park. The council sent me to the APACE nursery's Bush Regeneration course. I have reduced my work hours to half time. My days off work I spend working in the bushland or on the computer identifying plants or attending talks, workshops with like minded people.

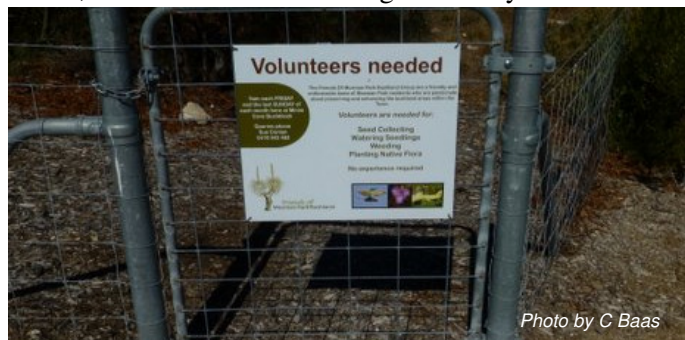
Getting to know councillors and council staff has made the job of bush regeneration much easier.

Our group only has a few regulars, others help when they can, this keeps our spirits going. It is amazing what you can achieve with a few extra pairs of hands. Our wider group love to join in planting days.

We always fly the flag at local community events and we like to work in bushland that is close to the public. Many passers by congratulate us on our work, which I respond with "I hope it's contagious!" Some just want to know when the dead trees are going to be removed. They just happen to be the trees obstructing their river views.

The joy of working in the bushland with like-minded people is heart-warming. We work side by side as if the planet depended on us. Never under estimate the strength of a small 85-year-old woman versus the root of *Pelargonium capitatum*! Pulling out lupins is on par with an Easter egg hunt!

The City of Mosman Park has several bushland areas to care for. The Swan River riparian vegetation is much of what remains. We also have a small, thin strip of coastal dunes, which we started to revegetate last year.



*Photo by C Baas*

*A sign inviting volunteers to help with rehabilitation of natural areas along the Swan River Foreshore in the Town of Mosman Park.*

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Forming the Friends of Mosman Park Bushland has been life changing! A new awareness of the threat to our beautiful bushland, of the value of bushland to keep us healthy, of meeting like minded people and the opportunity to do something about it. It has also given us the opportunity to know and work with our local council.

We have some beautiful plants in Mosman Park and it bothers me that we may only have one or two of them left here and there are no more of them till perhaps Bold Park. The more rare ones are those that nurseries can't germinate the seed.

Success does come with years of follow up! It's difficult to recreate the bushland, much better to stop it being whittled away.

We meet every Friday and the last Sunday of the month. Ring Sue Conlan on 0419942483 or 9384 3486 or email for location: [mail@mosmanparkbushland.org](mailto:mail@mosmanparkbushland.org).

*Sue Conlan*

## Friends of Paganoni Swamp – it's more than just our patch of bush

The effectiveness of the work of Friends of Paganoni Swamp is influenced as much by what occurs outside of the Reserve as within. For that reason we endeavour to meet with stakeholders annually to discuss matters of concern. These parties include representatives from the Department of Environment and Conservation, the Public Transport Authority, Main Roads and the local council.

One of the major concerns is weed control on the road and rail reserves as weed invasion from these reserves is a significant problem. Whilst the representatives of the abovementioned organisations are very sympathetic to our concerns they are also constrained due the size of area under their control. This is particularly the case with the road reserve on the northern boundary (Paganoni Road reserve) which was widened in 2008 in conjunction with the Kwinana Freeway extension. The local council's priorities are centred on managing its nature reserves with only limited resources to manage weed control on road reserves. We believe the road and rail reserves surrounding Paganoni Swamp should take priority, but that is not necessarily an opinion shared by others.

Our group was fortunate to receive a significant grant from State NRM to control weeds on the Paganoni Road reserve, which we believe highlights how important the issue is to the integrity of the reserve. However we also feel there should be a range of options available to manage road reserves that is not confined to revegetation if the road reserve has been cleared of all vegetation. In the case of the northern boundary road reserve there are now serious drainage issues along sections of the road as well as a high density of weeds present and this is having a deleterious impact on Paganoni Swamp. These degrading processes will be compounded by a prescribed burn planned for autumn 2014 as seed recruitment into the

burnt patch from the Paganoni Road reserve will include a high percentage of weedy species.

The other issue over which we have minimal control is the protection and management of adjoining bushland. Drier conditions in the south west and the consequences of wildfire or prescribed burns make it imperative that fauna are not restricted to the Reserve's boundaries in accessing alternative sources of water, food and



*Uncontrolled erosion on road reserve adjoining a conservation reserve Paganoni Swamp.*

finding mates. Bushland surrounding the Reserve requires protection against future development as well as appropriate funding to ensure they are well managed. For Paganoni Swamp the Serpentine River and its floodplain to the east, lakes and swamps to the south and bushland to the west are essential for the survival of fauna species that live and forage in the Reserve. For example, we are concerned that if the Keralup development around the Serpentine River proceeds it will limit the movement of fauna along the Serpentine River as we are unaware if the planners understand how fauna, for example the Chuditch, use the river to move from the Scarp to the Coastal Plain.

The first hurdle for fauna moving from Paganoni to adjacent bushland is negotiating underpasses under the freeway and railway. It is fortunate that Brian Chambers from the University of Western Australia is undertaking research into the way underpasses at Paganoni Swamp Reserve (as well as a number of other reserves) are utilised by both native and feral animals and designing strategies that will provide greater protection for our na-



# Group News Group News Group News

tive species so that they can move freely without fear of predation by cats and foxes.

As is well understood, habitat loss and fragmentation are major drivers of species decline. The work of friends groups will be futile if processes outside of their control reduce the resilience of the patch in which they invest so much of their effort.

*Leonie Stubbs*

## Friends of Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012 a new boardwalk and bird hide were opened at the northeast corner of Bibra Lake.

Narma Kullarck is Noongar for Family Place and reflects the hopes of Aboriginal Elder and Chairperson of the City of Cockburn's Aboriginal Reference Group, Revd. Sealin Garlett. As the area was a traditional place for Aboriginal families to gather in the past, it is hoped the lake will continue to educate and nourish families through appreciation of and improved access to its riches.

Together with the City of Cockburn Mayor, Mr Logan Howlett, Revd. Sealin Garlett cut the red, yellow and black braided barrier across the boardwalk access at a mid morning ceremony.

Built at a cost of \$650,000, Narma Kullarck is part of the City of Cockburn's adopted Bibra Lake Landscape, Recreational and Environmental Management Plan. Its design follows consultation with staff at the Cockburn Education Wetlands Centre and local experienced birdwatchers.



Photo by M Shaw

From the air the curved, 70 metre long jarrah boardwalk, following access and exit routes, outlines the body shape of the Longneck Turtle with the new hide resembling the turtle's head.

Extensive consultation with the Department of Indigenous Affairs revealed that local Aboriginal people are offended by piling into the lake bed. The City of Cockburn therefore chose to float the boardwalk and hide on a series of pontoons anchored into the top layer of the lake bed's mud. It has been built as close to the ground as possible to provide a more intimate experience of surrounding vegetation and wildlife and to avoid the need of visually intrusive handrails. The two metre width allows wheelchair and pram access.

At the hide metal steps on two sides of its supporting platform provide easy access to the water's edge for school children collecting water samples in their study of aquatic life.

Viewing slots have been built at two heights in each of the three walls and there is bench seating both inside & on the platform outside. The Friends of the Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre hope to install display and identification charts inside later this year.

The boardwalk initially passes through a dampland which had been seasonally flooded some years ago. Already plantings such as paperbarks, sedges, the wetland form of the purple flag lily and grey honey myrtle are flourishing there. However, it was necessary to clear land alongside the boardwalk during construction and this area will be revegetated.

Narma Kullarck Boardwalk and Hide are proving popular with the public. Some sit there to contemplate. The easier access through the melaleuca lakeside border has enabled some special birds sightings e.g. a group of over twenty sharp-tailed sandpipers and a baillons crake.

Information supplied for this article by staff of the City of Cockburn and the Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre is gratefully acknowledged.

*Marion Shaw*

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

### 2014 Swan River Trust Alcoa Landcare Program

Grants are available for community groups and local governments to rehabilitation and revegetation activities in the Swan Region. The focus of the 2014 round is on ecological corridors.

**Applications close at 4.30pm Tuesday 18 June 2013.**

For more information go to [www.perthregionnrm.com](http://www.perthregionnrm.com)

### Coastwest Grants

Grants are provided to partnerships of community groups and coastal managers to undertake on-ground coastal and marine rehabilitation, restoration and preventative conservation projects.

A total of \$500,000 is available.

**Applications close at 5pm Thursday 24 June 2013.**

### 2013 Community Grants

The Western Australian Government is making available \$3 million to fund community projects as part of the 2013 State NRM Program. Grants of between \$10,000 and \$50,000 are available to eligible groups for any on-ground activity that will assist in the conservation, restoration, rehabilitation or enhancement of a local natural area, including land, water or marine areas, or the conservation of biodiversity.

**Applications must be received by 5 pm Friday 5 July 2013**

# 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 \$45 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

### Individuals:

Supporter membership is only \$35 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

### UBC General Meeting Tuesday 2 July 2013

Guest speaker: Stephen Hopper BSc PhD Winthrop Professor

**'The loss, conservation and restoration of banksia woodlands and thicket  
in the Southwest Australian Floristic Region - a review.'**

Meet at the Lotteries House 2 Delhi Street, West Perth, at 6.00pm for drinks and nibbles and for 6.30 pm start

### Sunday 11 August 2013 at 10 am

UBC in conjunction with Northern Suburbs branch of Wildflower Society and the Friends of Koondoola bushland.

### 'Koondoola Regional Bushland'

Venue: Meet at (northern) corner Koondoola Ave/ Burbridge Ave, just off Marangaroo Drive, opposite the oval.  
Bring picnic lunch and folding chair

For information on speakers and topics visit [www.bushlandperth.org.au](http://www.bushlandperth.org.au)

### UBC PUBLICATIONS

***Perth's Banksia Woodlands - Precious and Under Threat***  
Proceedings of a symposium (2011)  
Available from the UBC for \$20 plus \$3 postage.

***Endangered Black Cockatoos in Western Australia***  
proceedings of a symposium about their biology, status, threats and efforts to restore their habitat and populations.  
Available from the UBC for \$20 plus \$3 postage.

***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 free.

***Building Partnerships between Community Groups and Local Government for Our Bushland***—proceedings of a seminar (2000)  
Available from the UBC free.

***Managing our Bushland*** - proceedings of a conference about the protection and management of urban bushland (1998)  
Out of print; available in libraries.

***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: [ubc@bushlandperth.org.au](mailto:ubc@bushlandperth.org.au)

Copy deadline - 15 July 2013

### 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



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