



Photo by Margaret Owen

Beckley Bushland?

In the hollow below the road
against the roar of traffic
a discarded car battery
foam doss bed
gold paint bong
relics of a recent past

white tipped wooden pegs
tied with pink flagging tape
a line of luminous orange flags
marks man's arbitrary line
under spreading Marri canopy
divide the living from the dead

banksia sheoak hundreds of tiny
flowers mauve shading to white
form doomed domed pompoms
as the latent malevolent heat
of summer prickles the skin

brilliant splashes of orange
against grey green cascade
of christmas trees in January
as ants scurry across leaves
dormant fungi lie in wait for the
promise of rain as endless traffic
of no purpose thunders past

an apple seed falls soon to be
buried under tons of sand
is this just another piece of bush
living at man's whim? Rare spider orchids'
prior right of occupancy of a mere
million years counts for nought?

By Rob Greenwood

INSIDE

- Kiara TAFE Bushland
- Perth Urban Bushland Fungi Project update
- Status of clearing in Western Australia
- Rainbow Bee-eaters

and more...

Editorial

Now that the election is over, it is time to draw up an agenda of what urban bushland groups might reasonably expect from the Government over the next four years.

Top of the agenda is to the need to stop the loss of biodiversity as Perth's suburbs continue to spread. It might seem obvious that this expansion is being fuelled by Perth's population growth. Unfortunately, few politicians seem prepared to embrace the idea of limiting this growth as a means of protecting our environment.

We therefore need stronger environmental policies designed to protect remnant bushland in the path of the suburban sprawl. The problem is that much of this bushland is in private hands, and people who own it have expectations of selling it for profit. Thus, it is very expensive for Governments to protect such bushland areas. At the same time, both Liberal and Labor parties are continually outbidding each other with cost-cutting measures, so rarely have the funds and priorities to purchase such bushland areas.

Therefore, second on our agenda is a dedicated fund for purchasing bushland areas. Such a fund should be subject to widespread community consultation to ensure that it is widely supported in the community.

Even when bushland areas are set aside for protection, local governments and community groups find themselves constantly having to search for money to fund the on-going protection of their biodiversity values. The Community Conservation Grant scheme has provided much of this funding, but this scheme is specifically NOT for ongoing management, and is intended only for special projects. The State Government therefore needs to set up a mechanism for funding the ongoing management of bushland areas.

Finally, even though there is widespread support within the community for protection of our bushland areas, few people are aware of the constant day-to-day battles being faced by conservation groups. We will therefore continue to need a strong and active Urban Bushland Council to give voice to the struggles of all the groups and individuals battling to save what we have left. One lesson we might all learn is that as individual groups we are very weak and unable to stop the damage. Our challenge is to learn to collaborate more in our campaigns and work together more effectively.

For more information see page 6

WILL THERE BE BECKLEY BUSHLAND?

We can calmly and logically present our appeals, or we can scream and shout to so many deaf ears. The result is the same. Dr Edwards has said on Channel 10 news "a carpark will be built on this site".

Beckley bushland is a special 4 hectare piece of bushland/dampland at the corner of the Kwinana Freeway and South Street, Leeming. It will have 0.8 hectare of bushland preserved for the 'short-term survival' of the declared rare flora, *Caladenia huegelii*. The remaining 80% will be bulldozed for an on-ramp and 400 space car park for the station for the line to Mandurah.

The 0.8 hectare area will be an isolated island of bush. A majestic 300 year old Marri tree (see photo on front page) is designed to be bulldozed, even though its trunk touches the conservation area.

A condition of the granting of a permit to clear is that the final plan is revisited with a view to include some mature Marri trees. Presumably the plan was revisited, because the 300 year old Marri was included in the conservation area. The rope was placed on the other side of the Marri's trunk to include it. But then it was decided that it would be too dangerous as its roots and limbs would have to be pruned. So the rope was replaced so that once again the tree is outside the conservation area.

To all the concerned people who came to the protest on Saturday, 12 February, thank you for your suggestions and support. We are still working to get the best outcome we can, which would be the building of a car park elsewhere. It is not beyond the realms of possibility for instance, for engineers and planners to design a multi storied car park on the existing car park site across the road, or on the northern side of South Street.

We have the best bushland in the world. As James Duggie said;

'We need a greater level of appreciation and acknowledgement from all sectors of society that urban bushland is priceless and irreplaceable. It is an important part of our natural heritage, and it deserves a higher priority in all our decision making and planning.'

Readers of this article do not need reminding of this. Those with deaf ears also shut their eyes and minds to it.

Towards a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Western Australia Discussion Paper

The Western Australian Government released this paper in December 2004 and invites the community to contribute to the development of a visionary long-term biodiversity conservation strategy. The Paper presents information on composition, status and major trends in biodiversity and suggests a pathway forward for conservation action over the next 100 years, adopting a 25 year initial planning horizon. The strategy aims to highlight major issues and gaps for research and management, promotion of biodiversity and the ability to engage people in its conservation.

The Discussion Paper is available at www.naturebase.net/haveyoursay and on request from the Department of Conservation and Land Management by phoning (08) 9334 0333.

Submissions close on 15 April 2005

UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR KIARA BUSHLAND

The future of Kiara bushland (also known as the Kiara TAFE Site) still hangs in the balance some eight and a half years since the local community became aware of rezoning proposals. The site, presently zoned Public Purposes, is around 14 hectares of seasonally inundated wetlands and Banksia woodland on Morley Drive in Kiara.

The first community-based surveys by Bayswater Greenwork and Kiara Progress Association showed the local residents' wish was split between keeping the bush and using it for educational purposes. Very few opted for housing. Since TAFE decided it no longer needed the site, over 80% of respondents have consistently called for its conservation, in the form of a 'managed bushland park'.

More recently a new group, 'Save Kiara TAFE Bushland', formed from the other community groups. Over the past 15 months it has circulated three leaflets to local letterboxes and of the 90 returns nearly 90% want a bushland park. The group also organised a public meeting and held a springtime walk.

Contact with key candidates during the election campaign has shown support of community wishes to keep the bushland from the Liberals, Labor and Greens. An on-site meeting between 16 residents and Labor's Martin Whitely (candidate in place of Clive Brown who is the retiring Member for Bassendean) on the day before the election was appreciated. Although unable to guarantee a 100% retention, he agreed the bush was worth saving and that it should be passed to an agency better equipped to manage it for the community and would be pushing for this. We are disappointed that previous support from Clive Brown has not resulted in the bush being set aside. It looked promising in 1997 when, while in Opposition, Clive Brown and the Upper House worked together resulting on a lively Parliamentary debate on the future of the Kiara TAFE Site. Following the debate the

MRS amendment containing the rezoning proposal for the site was disallowed.

The push to rezone for housing has continued with Landstart, an arm of the Department of Housing and Works, and the City of Swan both conveniently ignoring community wishes.

In the meantime the bush continues to degrade. It is a bit like leaving a valuable painting out in the weather until someone decides what to do with it. Regulations should be introduced for landholders to do more than the annual firebreaks on land that is not as yet zoned and approved for development. By carrying out basic weed control and maintenance there is interim protection for biodiversity and, if the scales dip in favour of conservation, a lot less bush regeneration work will be required.

There are great initiatives like Bush Forever and the Perth Biodiversity Project, and more recently the State government is calling for public help to develop a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for WA. Sadly these ideas are floating around in the ether because there is no integrated approach – you have CALM promoting the 100-year conservation strategy while Landstart and other departments are merrily destroying bushland.

However, we are ever hopeful that the growing awareness of the importance of biodiversity does filter through to all government departments and local government so that precious areas like Kiara Bushland can, before it is too late, be set aside and appropriately cared for.

Save Kiara TAFE Bushland will be approaching the new Minister for Housing immediately after the election. We will press for LandStart to give up the land to fulfil the community vision - for conservation of the whole site as a community managed bushland in conjunction with the City of Swan.

Suggested vision for Kiara TAFE bushland— a managed bushland park for the community



□ Information board and map

▭ Seating

△ Security lighting

White lines = nature trails and/or
bicycle paths

- Rehabilitation of bushland to include weed control and plantings using local species
- Opportunities for community to become involved in these activities



Perth Urban Bushland Fungi

Our fantastic PUBF volunteers continue to work tirelessly with us in the Herbarium on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, performing many and varied tasks. So far our volunteers have packed and organized the 2004 season vouchered specimens into an accessible and easy to use format. This has saved Neale Bougher, our mycologist, a lot of time searching for individual vouchered fungi as he works on the microscopy of these specimens.

PUBF volunteers are tackling the HUGE job of auditing all the hundreds of thousands of specimens and worksheets that comprise part of the existing Herbarium collections, as well as scanning the thousands of slide images so they are available in digital form.

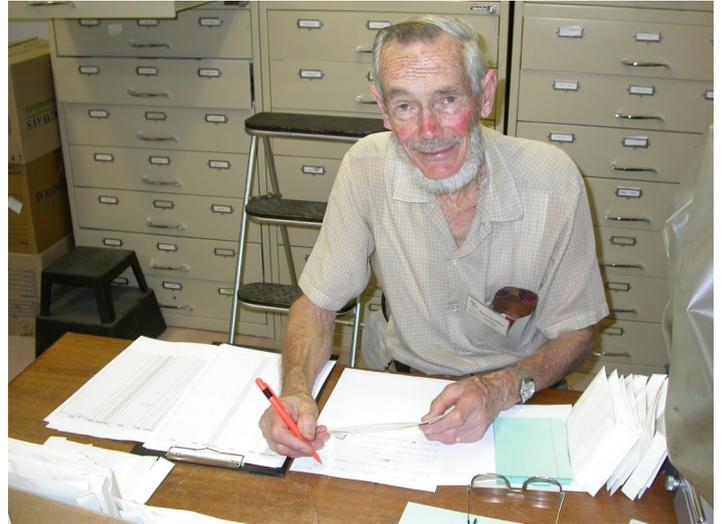
Other tasks include sorting scientific literature and sorting the extensive slide collection. A discrete and useful task we are currently tackling is extracting Fungimap target information from the 2004 records and sending them off to Fungimap. Eventually we would like to work on extracting Fungimap Target species records from all the herbarium collection but this will come a bit later.

Requests are coming in for us to consider many different urban bush areas for this season's Perth Urban Bushland Fungi (PUBF) project's workshops and fungi forays. We are heartened by the interest from Friends Groups as well as from local council Environment and Bushcare Officers.

Planning is underway and the next issue of this newsletter will have the dates and venues for the events that the PUBF project will be conducting this season. Remember, the main fungus season is in June and July and actually starts soon after the first rains.

We are currently busy producing Feedback Packages for those groups who had an PUBF event in their bush in 2004. The plan is to release these at the April meeting of the WA Naturalists' Club meeting in time for the 2005 fungi season. Groups will be notified before this event and we will work out with you how you will receive your report.

Production of the PUBF website is underway. Watch out for news of our website launch, which will be before the start of the 2005 Fungi season. We hope to have this up and running about the same time as the events dates are released, however PUBF information will also continue to be available on the UBC and the WA Naturalists' Club websites at <http://members.iinet.net.au/~ubc/html/calendar.htm> and <http://www.wanats.iinet.net.au/fungigroup.html>.



Kevn Griggiths, one of PUBF volunteers, at work in the collection
Photo by Neale Bougher

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Interested in fungi? Got an hour or ten? As we approach the fungi fruiting season we will need help with fieldwork, GPS recording, specimen recording, photography, data entry, to name a few. The Perth Urban Bushland Fungi Project is calling for volunteers to assist the Community Education Officer both in the field and at the WA Herbarium. For more information and to register your interest, please phone Jacqueline at the Urban Bushland Council Office on 9420 7207 (Tuesdays and Wednesdays).

Skills for Nature Conservation

Free training courses for anyone interested in making a difference to the environment

THE UNSEEN WORLD OF MINIBEASTS AND
NOCTURNAL ANIMALS

11 March, 5 pm—9 pm

At Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, Wembley

FERAL ANIMALS IN YOUR PATCH—DOS AND
DON'TS

21 May, 9 am—1 pm

At Whiteman Park, Lord St, Whiteman

SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL FUNDING APPLICATIONS

19 March, 10 am—1 pm

At Swan Catchment Centre, Middle Swan

MANAGING YOUR BUSHLAND FOR UNPLANNED
FIRE

11 June, 9 am—1 pm

At Warwick Leisure Centre, Warwick

TJUNTALUP KADUJIN (POINT WALTER LEARNING) -
SHARING THE WAY OF THE LAND

2 April, 10 am—4 pm

At Point Walter

CREATING WETLAND HABITATS

18 June, 10 am—4 pm

At Piney Lakes Environmental education Centre,
Winthrop

LEADING THE WAY—THE ART OF LEADING NATURE
WALKS

16 April, 9.30 am—1.30 pm

At Henderson Environment Centre, North Beach

RVSP are ESSENTIAL (08) 9374 3333

Past course notes can be found at
www.wrc.wa.gov.au/swanavon/pages/info_sheets.html

STATUS OF VEGETATION CLEARING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW CLEARING REGULATION ON 8 JULY 2004

Amendments to the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* prohibit clearing of native vegetation unless a clearing permit is granted by the Department of the Environment, or the clearing is for an exempt purpose. Exemptions are clearing activities that can be carried out without applying for a permit and are set out in the *Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004*. People that wish to clear are required to submit an application if an exemption does not apply.

The Department of the Environment's website, at www.environment.wa.gov.au, publishes public reports of applications for clearing permits. The summary of the data available on the website is in the table below:

PERMIT STATUS	PURPOSE OF PERMIT	EXTENT OF CLEARING BY LOCATION (in hectares)		
		Perth Metropolitan Region	Outside Perth Metropolitan Region	Total for Western Australia
ACTIVE PERMITS (permits that have been granted) 87 sites were recorded between July 2004 and January 2005	Mining	0	3251.09	3251.09
	Roads, rails construction & maintenance	27.2	144.07 + 6 trees	171.27
	Building	0	171.5	171.5
	Fence line maintenance	0	7	7
	Mining & aquaculture	0	163	163
	Timber harvesting	0	30 trees	30 trees
	Grazing & pasture	0	144	144
	Stockpile	0	2	2
	Cropping	0	31	31
	Horticulture	0	70.5	70.5
	Recreation	0	3	3
	Landscaping	0	1.2	1.2
	Dam construction	0	8	8
TOTAL	27.2	3996.4 + 36 trees	4023.6+36 trees	
EXEMPT APPLICATIONS 66 sites were covered between July 2004 and January 2005 For 10 sites data showing the extent and location was not available	Mining	187.1	61.55	248.65
	Roads, rails construction & maintenance	3 + 23 trees	21.23	24.23+23 trees
	Building	9.55	18.76 + 3 trees	28.31+3 trees
	Fence line maintenance	0	25	25
	Aquaculture	0	0.9	0.9
	Grazing & pasture	0	182.25 + 150 trees	182.25+150 trees
	Timber harvesting	0	150	150
	Industrial	0.98	0	0.98
	Horticulture	0	18.4 + 80 trees	18.4+80 trees
	Recreation	2	0	2
	Fire control & hazard reduction	0	0.5	0.5
	Dam construction	0	0.62	0.62
	Miscellaneous	0	1.85	1.85
TOTAL	202.63+23 trees	481.06+233 trees	683.69+256 trees	
TOTAL area permitted to be cleared since July 2004		229.83 + 23 trees	4477.46 + 269 trees	4707.29 + 292 trees
REFUSED PERMITS 11 sites Applications lodged between April 2004 and October 2004	Horticulture	4	0	4
	Building	0	12	12
	Grazing and cropping	0	985.7	985.7
	TOTAL	4	997.7	1001.7

The data presented above, covering application permits determined before February 2005, clearly do not reflect the real extent of clearing in Western Australia as a number of exempt purposes would not be reported. However, it shows that most rural clearing permits were sought for mining, followed by grazing and pasture and building. Twenty four out of 87 applications within the "Active Permits" category were for clearing of less than 5 hectares. Six applications were for clearing more than 100 hectares and the largest area covered in one application was 1000 hectares for mining.

Unfortunately, out of 189 applications determined before February 2005, only 11 applications for clearing were refused. Eight of the refused applications were for clearing for grazing and/or cropping. Two of them would have resulted in clearing of more than 200 hectares and in three cases more than 100 hectares. It appears that small scale clearing is more likely to be approved than large scale clearing perhaps?

Until there is a mechanism for public reporting of all clearing, regardless whether exempt or not, we will not be able to assess the effectiveness of the new regulation against national biodiversity conservation targets and the real extent of the clearing in Western Australia. Certainly with figures presented by the Greens (see press release 11 June 2004) it was clear that since 1999 significantly more land was allowed to be cleared for urban development, industry and roads than for farming. That is still very obvious when driving through suburbs on the urban fringe of our major cities in the south west. We have a hotspot of clearing, not conservation.

CALL FOR CONSERVATION 2005

After the election the Urban Bushland Council will be calling upon the Government to get serious about conserving our unique bushland before it's too late. Specifically we will continue to advocate for

Recognition of the south-west's biodiversity as the only region in Australia identified as a global hotspot for conservation priority because it is so seriously under threat. Recognition also that the metropolitan region with ~28% bushland remaining (Swan region) is a hotspot in its own right within the south west.

This implies a significant education process to shift the focus from clearing and development approval to biodiversity conservation.

We call for a massive state government investment to

- end land clearing and urban sprawl into pristine natural areas
- introduce an *Urban Growth Boundary* for Perth
- introduce a new Biodiversity Conservation Act which protects all flora and fauna, (not just rare and endangered species) and provides for its management
- properly fund bushland management of government controlled bushland
- properly fund expertise and capacity of scientific units in CALM, WA Herbarium, WA Museum, and Department of the Environment, which have been drastically run down by successive governments
- build a new '*state of the art*' Herbarium and WA Museum to become icons of WA's biodiversity

Bush Forever

- Increase funding to acquire all Bush Forever sites under '*Negotiated Planning Solutions*'
- introduce statutory protection for all sites as *Bush Forever Protection Areas* which prohibit clearing and provide for obligatory management to retain values
- Define management responsibility for all sites and

support Local Government in managing sites

- Introduce immediate interim protection for bushland subject to study in the new *Bush Forever 2* program
- Lobby for State protection of at least 30% each ecological community in Bush Forever 2

Perth Biodiversity Project

- Introduce biodiversity planning guidelines for *all* local government authorities
- Provide funding to initiate the process
- Fund the PBP Unit to support Local Government's building of capacity and expertise to manage local bushland before it degrades

Fire awareness and preparedness

- Lobby for greatly increased fire preparedness programs near bushland and especially on urban fringe and in Hills
- Focus on control of annual weeds and other measures to reduce fire hazard but with no prescribed burning on the Swan Coastal Plain
- Lobby planners to ensure no further subdivision and sprawl away from existing urban centres in Hills

Perth Airport area and foothills

- Lobby for excision of the Bush Forever site from the Airport lease
- Lobby for a Foothills Regional Conservation Park to protect significant reserves and linkages on the eastern side of the Swan Coastal Plain (Brixton St wetlands, Hartfield Park, Airport, Kewdale Freight Terminal bushland, Tomah Swamp, Maida Vale reserve, Hawk Valley bushland, Bushmead, Gt Eastern Highway bypass, Jane Brook, Susannah Brook, and ~10 Creek and Brook regional linkages)
- Lobby for extensive revision of the Kewdale Hazelmere Integrated Master Plan to include protection of all wetlands and bushland

SOUTH WEST OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA GLOBAL HOT SPOT OF BIODIVERSITY

Since 2000, when Norman Myers with several colleagues identified the south west of Western Australia as one of the 25 global biodiversity hotspots (Myers *et al*, 2000, Nature Vol 403: 853-858), more work has been done on this area.

S. Hopper and P. Gioia looked at the South West Australian Floristic Region more closely and recently have published results of their study (Hopper & Gioia, Annu. Rev. Ecol. Evol. Syst. 2004. 35:623-650). The paper looks in detail on the evolution of such a rich flora in this region and identifies major conservation issues. Massive habitat loss and fragmentation, root-rot disease (*Phytophthora*) impacting 2500 species, displacement by 900 invasive weeds, and rising saline groundwater tables threatening 400 taxa were listed as some of the major issues. They also pointed out that until the remaining 14% of species/subspecies without names are identified,

their specific conservation needs cannot be addressed. They also cautioned against the application of broadscale conservation management approaches. However, one message is clear: "*The minimisation of bulldozing is therefore a vital conservation strategy.*"

In February 2005, Myers and researchers from Conservation International published a new book, *Hotspots Revisited*, in which they updated their original list based on recent information on the distribution of plant species and levels of habitat loss. The revision brings the number of global hotspots to 34, but the south west of Western Australia remains the only region listed from Australia.

The author's response to the critics disputing the value of hotspots was that all they are saying that those 34 regions are the top, **urgent priorities** (New Scientist, 5 Feb, 2004).

Group News Group News Group News

The **Bungendore Park Management Committee** has been fortunate to receive Community Conservation and Swan Alcoa Landcare Program grants to continue the habitat enhancement programmes and dieback treatment for this year. Work has been underway by a contractor over the past month in controlling Brazilian Pepper Tree and other woody weeds in CALM-managed land adjacent to Bungendore Park; this work is being funded by a CALM Regional Parks Community grant. There has been other maintenance activity including the repair of the Albany Highway entrance statement by committee member Bill Ladyman.

The **Armadale Wildflower Society** is a recent member to the Urban Bushland Council, but not to the problems that confront our remnant bushland. Formed in 1961, the society has a history of concerns and activity relating to our bushland and flora. Copies of minutes and early correspondence refer to the disquiet of clearing, fires, rubbish dumping, shooting, removal of gravel and inappropriate management – issues that still are familiar to us all. Words such as water draw-down and *Phytophthora* don't feature in these early notes, but no doubt their effects were being noticed.

Seed collection took place in December and January for the Bungendore Park planting, a programme in which the Armadale Wildflower Society has been involved since 1982. Sitting in the shade enjoying a cuppa after one collecting session, a member posed the question "Why is it that we get up so early on a Sunday morning, stand out in the sun for hours and prick our fingers on the leaves and spikes of *Dryandra praemorsa* and *Mirbelia spinosa* to collect seed?" A good question, a very good question! Past-president Rob Harington has been working on a book & CD of the 40-year history of the society. The task is nearing completion and will be officially launched on 28th April.

Kim Sarti

The **Friends of Star Swamp Bushland Reserve** turns twenty this year. The group's establishment on 28 July 1985 marked the end of nearly a decade of action by the Trigg-North Beach-Waterman Community Association and a determined group of local residents to save the 96 hectares from becoming a housing estate.

Management responsibility is vested with the City of Stirling, with the Friends group working as the community voice in the management of the Reserve. The Star Swamp Bushland Reserve Management Plan provides a blue-print for the management and rehabilitation of the Reserve.

The Friends of Star Swamp Bushland has grown from a small group of local residents with little experience in bushland management, to a well respected community organisation led by knowledgeable environmentalists. The group has gone from meeting in member's lounge-rooms to its own base in the magnificent Henderson Environmental Centre, built by the City of Stirling within the Reserve's boundary.

A range of activities is offered to members and community volunteers, including an annual clean-up day, weeding, seed collecting and tree planting. The annual lupin pulls have become something of a legend in Perth, with around 90% of lupin numbers reduced over the twenty years.

The Friends group conducts guided early morning walks every month, twice-yearly nocturnal walks and a Spring wildflower walk. The Spring event this year will include 20th birthday celebrations at the Henderson Environmental Centre.

Christine Curry

The **Friends of Dianella Bushland** invite anyone interested to their regular guided walks through the Cottonwood Crescent bushland reserve in Dianella. Meet them at the Reserve car park on Sunday 13 March at 8.30 am.

On Friday 6 May, a specialist in the field will guide interested adventurers through the darkness and help to discover the nocturnal creatures of the bush. Meet them at 7.30 pm at the car park, entrance from Dianella Drive, Gay Street and the Channel 7 Private Road.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at Sudbury House on the corner of Chesterfield Road and Sunbury Place, Mirrabooka and start at 8.00 pm.

Friends of Koondoola Regional Bushland

After some good rains in September sixty four Year 9 students from Mercy College converged on the southern area of Koondoola Regional Bushland (KRB) ready to plant the *Eucalytus rudis* seedlings they had been growing from seed in their school nursery.

The school has a strong environmental focus and in the past

(Continued on page 8)

Australian Association of Bush Regenerators

Invites anyone interested to their

Annual General Meeting & Forum

The AGM begins at 7:30pm, followed by guest speakers:

David Bright

AABR WA committee member
*Strategy for maximizing survival of
tube stock in revegetation sites*

David has 15 years of experience in revegetation planting and will explain how research & trial & error has improved seedling survival rates from ~ 10% to 75%

Bob Dixon

Kings Park and Botanic Gardens
*Trying to improve the translocation of
Declared Rare Flora*

Bob is presently trialing various air-pruned pots and will also be speaking about improved seedling survival rates after site ripping

Wednesday 9 March 2005

at
Kings Park Administration Centre
Fraser Ave, Kings Park

Group News Group News Group News

has actively worked with other community projects such as Ribbons of Blue. The theme running through Year 9 is Leadership in Science, where students gain awareness and skills in managing their local environment.

Friends of KRB were approached by Mercy College via Urban Nature to see if there was any suitable projects, as KRB was an ideal location for the school to have a science project right on their doorstep.

The southern area of KRB has a number of serious environmental issues which are a result of storm water outfalls into the area. With background information provided by Friends of Koondoola Regional Bushland and their own research, students were able to identify the problems in the area and look at ways these problems can be addressed.

One of the problems identified by the students was the loss of native vegetation from aggressive weed growth and too frequent fires. To try and slow this decline the school grew seedlings to rehabilitate an area adjacent to an existing grove of trees.

The planting day was a great success with over 150 seedlings being planted in a short space of time. Students were shown the fundamental of planting which included removal of all weeds around the area and watering in the



Students from Mercy College planting at Koondoola Regional Bushland.

Photo by Alice Stubber

seedling after they were planted.

Although most of the stakes and guards were stolen soon after planting and the area suffered a small fire in late December many of the seedlings are still going strong.

Mercy College hopes that by linking the community with the school students appreciate that science is happening in their local suburbs and not just at an academic level at university and that they, by their actions, can all be part of making a difference to their environment.

Alice Stubber

The Friends of Trigg Bushland (Inc) welcome helpers on the first Saturday of each month to weed the south west corner of the Duart-Arnott part of the reserve.

You can also join them on the next walk guided by David Pike on 27 March. Assemble outside St Mary's School at 8.00 am.

Sure many can relate to the following reflections of one of the group's members, *Barbara Alcock*

Reflections of a Weeding Woman

What inspires a middle age woman to spend her spare time pulling weeds? And not even in my own backyard. I do come from a long line of weeders, but that is not it.

It certainly relates to all those hours I spent as a child riding my two-wheeled "horse" along bush tracks and throwing "boondies" at the boys next door when we played amongst the limestone outcrops down by the river. What glorious times they were! But there's something more to it then that.

Do I share an obsession with Lady MacBeth—"Out damned weed!" I certainly feel a terrific sense of achievement removing all those blemishes from a path of bush. Is it an opportunity for my spiritual needs to be met? Am I benefiting as much from weeding as the environment itself?

I am sure it is a little of all those things but there is also a need to fight for the underdog. Our unique native plants, the poor maligned Western blue tongue lizard. How I have come to love those little creatures and how it saddens me to see so many of them not able to safely negotiate our roads in an effort to locate their partner-for-life.

There is also the less obvious life in the bush—the insects and spiders and fungi that Phylis draws our attention to. It is like an optical illusion. There is so much there but we do not know what we cannot see!

I think we need a new term for the bush. The "bush" seems to equate to the "tip" in some people's minds judging by the way they mistreat it. "Natural heritage area" is much too wordy and there is no emotional attachment associated with it. If you have any suggestions for a better word for the "bush" we would like to hear from you.

Friends of Ken Hurst Park

Approval to construct Roe Highway Stage 7 from all environmental authorities has been received and Main Roads WA through the Roe 7 Alliance is busy planning for and undertaking clearing. At the request of the project's Environmental Reference Group, Roe 7 Alliance agreed to allow a small number of representatives from the Friends of Ken Hurst Park (FoKHP) (Diana Corbyn, Lesleigh Curnow and Eddy and Donna Wajon), Wilson Wetlands Action Group (Russel Gorton), Canning River Regional Park Volunteers (Jo Stone) and WA Native Orchid Study and

Group News Group News

Conservation Group to undertake a plant salvage operation on Saturday 5 February 2005. Only a small dieback free area was available but six hours was spent rescuing (digging up) and collecting seed from as many whole plants as possible.

The FoKHP rescued about 50 sedges, grasses, and shrubs including *Thysanotus* sp (possibly *thrysoides*), *Hibbertia huegelii*, *Calectasia narragara*, *Petrophile linearis* (small plants only as older plants had 2 cm diameter tap roots that went down at least 500 mm), *Xanthorrhoea gracilis*, *Calytrix flavescens*, *Nuytsia floribunda* (suckers), *Conostylis setigera*, *juncea* and *aculeata*, the grass *Amphibolus turbinatus*, *Desmocladius fascicularis*, *Lyginia barbata*, *Phlebocarya ciliata* and *Dasyopogon bromeliifolius*. Some plants have been divided and re-potted by students at Murdoch TAFE under the direction of Diana Corbyn and Lesleigh Curnow. Hopefully the plants will all survive with a little TLC and we will then be looking for assistance to replant them in degraded areas and along superfluous tracks in Ken Hurst Park later in the year (May-June).

Prior to this exercise, Andrew Batty and Nigel Swartz of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority translocated 20 *Caladenia huegelii* from several areas of bushland along the alignment as part of the approval process for Roe Highway Stage 7. A number of people including members of the WA Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group, Roe 7 Alliance and CALM were present to witness the exercise (see photo below).



Photo by Eddy Wajon

Among the orchids translocated was a 28-cm long, 12-year old orchid with about 7 old tubers (see photo). The oldest plant translocated was a 45-cm long 17-year old specimen.

Following this exercise, Bob and Tania Tatum, Matz Dahlkamp and Eddy and Donna Wajon, members of the WA Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group, recovered and translocated several orchids. This included one *Caladenia* sp (probably Carousel Spider Orchid), 2 lots (4 potato-like tubers, see photo above right) of *Pterostylis recurva*, 3 *Prasophyllum* (though not sure whether it was

viable, or whether the plant is an annual since the tuber was very brown and shrivelled) and possibly *Thelymitra*.



Eddy Wajon



Translocation of *Caladenia* sp by members of the WA Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group at Ken Hurst Park

Photos by Eddy Wajon

Men of the Trees are holding another Festival of Trees and are inviting all to

“discover *The Benevolence of Trees*”

On Saturday 2 April, from 10 am till 4 pm you can join in a day of fascinating talks and dynamic demonstrations, see how deftly a tree surgeon works as he recovers fine timber from a well loved tree, discover the way we make quality compost without turning! See inside our fully accredited nursery, discover what our sister organisations have to offer. Enjoy the entertainment, children’s activities, freshly prepared organic food and much more.

Best of all, at the **FESTIVAL OF TREES** you can get to know more about our woodlands and trees and the ephemeral qualities that bring peace into our lives.

Guest speaker Dr Richard Bell, Associate Professor Land Management, School of Environmental Science, Murdoch University

The **FESTIVAL OF TREES** takes place at St Barbe Grove, the Men of the Trees Nursery, corner of Amherst Road and Stirling Crescent, Hazelmere. Gates open at 10 am, official opening at 11 am. On site parking—gold coin admission.

Group News Group News Group News

Wildflower Society WA runs free monthly guided nature walks in different reserves. See seasonal changes in plant and animal life in a bushland near you.

The walks start at 8 am and run approximately for 1 hour.

Each month on

1st Saturday
(odd month)

Meet Landsdale Rd approximately 250 metres west of Alexander Drive (contact Phylis phone 9349 9105)

1st Saturday
(even months)

Landsdale Conservation Park behind Landsdale Rd approx 100 metres east of Evandale Rd Darch (contact Phylis phone 9349 9105)

2nd Saturday
(odd month)

Errina Rd bushland beside Highview Park. Meet in Highview Park car park at eastern end Errina Rd Alexander Heights (contact Phylis phone 9349 9105)

Each month

2nd Saturday
(even month)

Koondoola Regional Bushland - meet at Koondoola Avenue opposite Burbridger Ave (contact Elizabeth phone 9342 0616)

3d Saturday

Lake Gwelup Reserve. Meet Scout Hall carpark near tennis courts Huntriss Rd Gwelup (contact Betty phone 9444 5640)

4th Saturday

Star Swamp bushland. Meet at Henderson Environ. Centre, Groat St, North Beach

5th Saturday

Trigg bushland—meet in carpark between St Mary's School and Millington Reserve (off Elliot Rd) Karrinyup (contact phone 9448 9192)

Rainbow Bee-eaters *Merops ornatus*

Black and white photography cannot show off the true beauty of these jewels of the sky. Orange flashes of its under-wings high above are giving them away but they are usually heard before they are seen. The Rainbow Bee-eaters are very vocal even though the insect-like call is quite soft. They can be spotted resting on high bare branches of trees and shrubs, power lines or fences, flying out to capture prey on the wing or seize it on the ground. Bees are the main part of their diet. They eat them by breaking off or squeezing out the sting.

They like to dig their nesting burrows in sandy soils, often choosing degraded sites such as road cuttings. They were observed protecting their tunnels by swooping on a bobtail who was wandering too close.

Rainbow Bee-eaters are migratory birds traveling from North each year to breed in the South West, including Perth. As such they are protected under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and also under the Wildlife Conservation Act 1956. However, this does not seem to protect their nests from vandalism or feral predators.



Foxes are being blamed for damage to Rainbow Bee-eaters nests at Underwood Avenue bushland. Ten tunnels were recorded in the bushland this year.

The University of Western Australia had put stakes with red tape next to the tunnels to stop cars from driving over them. But in January, a member of Friends of Underwood Avenue discovered a tunnel had been dug out by a fox or foxes. Further search revealed that all six tunnels found on the day of the walk had been dug out (see photo left).

The foxes had not dug from the entrance of the tunnels but straight down into the chamber. Perhaps they could

hear or smell the baby birds. The Rainbow Bee-eaters, who had perhaps flown from New Guinea or from the Kimberley, had flown to Underwood Avenue bushland to breed and the babies have all been eaten.

Only an adequate feral animal control can prevent this next nesting season.



Dead Rainbow Bee-eater found at Signal Hill bushland partly buried by sand within a damaged nesting tunnel.

Photo by Kevin McLean

Over the years Friends of Signal Hill had also made sad discoveries. Dead Rainbow Bee-eaters and destroyed nests were found at the 4 hectare bushland.

This year again it is believed that children poked sticks down the tunnels and blocked the nests. Many nests can be found with sticks in them and the entrances filled with sand. Around school holiday time seem to be the worst period.

To stop this problem, people need to be educated about the birds and their habitat requirements. The educational program needs to target children as they have been known to be responsible.

Photo by Margaret Owen

**The Swan Alcoa
Landcare Program**

Is inviting applications from community groups
and local government authorities for

2006 Funding

Funding is available for a wide range of revegetation and
rehabilitation activities within the Swan Region that ad-
dress the following regional priorities:

- Retention, restoration and management of bush-
land, coastal, wetland and riverine vegetation; and
- Protection and enhancement of the quality of sur-
face water (streams, rivers, wetlands) and ground-
water.

To obtain a copy of the selection criteria and the applica-
tion form contact the Swan Catchment Council on
(08) 9374 3333

**Applications close
4:30 pm Friday 1 April 2005**

**The STATE OF AUSTRALIA'S BIRDS
Report 2004
Water, Wetlands and Birds**

Available for \$3 from Birds Australia, copies are limited.
Phone (03) 9882 2622 or mail to 415 Riversdale Rd, Haw-
thorn East VIC 3123

You are invited to:

**Getting the Drift – managing spray drift
for people, profit and the environment**

a one day seminar about agricultural chemical spray drift to be
held in South Perth

on the 22nd March, 2005.

This seminar brings together a group of expert speakers to examine
practical measures that can be taken by agri-chemical users to reduce
spray drift, and to review the current status of research, legislation
and regulation, and incident management issues concerning off-target
spray drift.

Seminar Outcomes:

- To improve stakeholder understanding and commitment to the
issue
- To increase public awareness on this issue
- To increase priority for new legislation to protect responsible
agri-chemical users.

Follow Up – The *Getting the Drift* seminar is part of a two day pro-
cess. It will be followed by a one day, invitation-only workshop involv-
ing key agri-business industry leaders, researchers and government
regulators to develop the following: An action plan that will ensure
WA adopts world's best practice in the regulation and management of
spray drift, a research program to fill the gaps for a science-based
compliance program and an incident management and reporting pro-
cess for off-target spray drift events.

For more information contact Kate Crass, Assistant Executive
Officer, Aquaculture Council of WA, Ph. 08 9492 8830 email:
kate@wafic.org.au or
visit <http://www.aquaculturecouncilwa.com/>

CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF WA STATE CONFERENCE 2005

"Empowering the Conservation Community"

Sat & Sun 12th - 13th March

Alexander State Library, Perth Cultural Centre, Francis St, Northbridge

The AIM of this conference is to bring together those involved or interested in conservation and explore the
issues surrounding environmental protection in Western Australia.

Come and share ideas on how to run your conservation group more effectively, form partnerships with other
groups, become involved in government consultation processes and learn about some of the environmental
issues Western Australia is facing today and how we as a community can start tackling these problems.
The Conference will include presentations on the proposed State Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

This conference is useful for people belonging to community conservation organisations, environment offi-
cers, environment studies students, community consultants and industry bodies and government officers that
are involved in community consultation.

**TIME AND PLACES ARE RUNNING OUT ...In order to secure your spot please contact Lisa Brideson at the
CCWA office on Ph: 9420 7266 or FAX 9420 72**

Closing date for registrations is Friday 4 March

**VERY SPECIAL DEAL for CCWA affiliated group delegates only Regional affiliated groups of CWA will be eligi-
ble to send their two appointed CCWA delegates to the Conference and have their accommodation COMPLI-
MENTARY (2 nights) and travel costs subsidized!**

Support the Urban Bushland Council

Join or renew your membership

Groups:

Membership with voting rights is available to groups committed to the protection of urban bushland for \$30 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

Individuals:

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

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

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

UBC meetings

Tuesday 5 April 2005 at 7:30 pm

Speaker: Frank Batini: Maintaining healthy water catchments

Tuesday 3 May 2005 at 7.30 pm

Speaker: Kate Brown: Environmental Weed Management on the Swan Coastal Plain

Tuesday 7 June 2005 at 7:30 pm

Speaker: Shae Callan: Impacts of invasive ants upon native bushland

**Meetings are held at the National Trust building, 4 Havelock St, West Perth
All interested are welcome.**

UBC PUBLICATIONS

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

Available at UBC's website

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~ubc/html/infosheets.htm>

***Burning Issues*—proceedings of a workshop about fire management in urban bushland. (2002)**
Available from the UBC for \$11, postage included.

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

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

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

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Editor: Renata Zelinova

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

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PO Box 326 West Perth WA 6872

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

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

Copy deadline - 15 May 2005

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