

## **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **Tuesday 6th March 2012 at Lotteries House 2 Delhi Street West Perth, 7.00pm**

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This report is for the calendar year January to December 2011 inclusive.

2011 has been an exceptionally busy year for the Urban Bushland Council. Our major focus has been the *Celebration of Biodiversity* project (one component of which commenced in 2010) generously funded by Lotterywest. The project had three components: the presentation of two symposia, production of new promotional materials, and the website project. Funding enabled employment of Amrit Kendrick as project officer for the first two, and John Baas as Web Manager. We wish to acknowledge the incredible amount of work done by the volunteer steering groups and managers of each component, as well as the project officers.

The web project was the major component and we now have a modern interactive website which was launched on 3rd August at the WA Herbarium. The Banksia Woodland symposium was an outstanding success, attracting a full house including many local government and state agency people alongside private consultants and community folk. We published printed proceedings of both symposia.

The project has certainly boosted the public profile and credibility of the UBC and our precious urban bushland. And the new website is attracting more people to our cause and is generating more work for us.

#### **Website project**

The finished product can be found at [www.bushlandperth.org.au](http://www.bushlandperth.org.au). At launch on 3 August 2011, it comprised 110 pages grouped into major themes that included Urban Bushland; Groups; Activities; Events; Resources; Membership and Gallery. From the Home Page visitors can subscribe to the e-Newsletter, apply to join UBC as a Group or as a Supporter or donate to UBC.

Groups are at the heart of the Urban Bushland Council. At launch, 56 Group pages had been created. This included twenty 'full' individual Group pages; with the remaining Groups having either simple pages with contact details or hyperlinks to their own or to third party linked sites. Very few Groups indicated that they did not wish to be represented.

Google Analytics shows a consistent increase in visitor numbers to the website and we are seeing people apply to join as Groups, Supporters and volunteers through the website. The use of the e-Newsletter function has increased our subscriber list to more than 185 email addresses by the end of 2011.

As part of the project, UBC reviewed and refreshed its branding to ensure that its print material complemented the design of the website.

#### **Support to community groups**

Providing information and supporting bushland groups underpins all our work. Three editions of the Urban Bush Telegraph were produced, and we sincerely thank all those people who contributed articles and news of their group activities. Special acknowledgement is due to our newsletter editor Renata Zelinova.

Raising community awareness of bushland issues and management, and networking amongst groups is always a challenge. Each group is busy concentrating on its local activities. We assisted some high profile campaigns: Roe 8 extension, Monash Avenue bushland adjacent to QEII Medical Centre, Perry Lakes tree removal by Landcorp in the Canaby's roost site, Underwood Ave bushland and adjacent Bedbrook Place bushland, and Nowergup quarry. A summary of the issues and activities we engaged in is shown in the table below.

#### **Engaging with Government**

During the year we continued to lobby and engage decision makers by meeting with Ministers and their staff, other politicians from all parties, agency officers especially in DEC and DOP, as well as presenting many written submissions and appeals for planning amendments, clearing permits and environmental assessments. We had just one meeting with the Environment Minister. 'We' includes our Executive Committee members who specialise in these roles: Marg Owen, Cath Cooper, Kevin McLean, M Gray together with many others from Member groups such as Phylis Robertson, Felicity McGeorge, Heidi Hardisty, David Wake. Many

thanks are due to all the members of groups who do this work for the UBC on top of their own submissions and work for their local groups.

### Black Cockatoos

Media interest in our endangered black cockatoos developed during the year. Coverage of local issues such as Monash Avenue was extensive in the local press and this helped focus on cockatoos. Local radio has also engaged in cockatoo matters.

The UBC is affiliated with the Cockatoo Coalition which presented a petition to Parliament via the Minister for the Environment; Water Hon W Marmion MLA at a rally on the steps of Parliament House. The *Cockatoos Need You* campaign ran an on-line petition.

### Bush Forever

Implementation of Bush Forever was again on our agenda for action during the year as the process has been curbed by the Barnett government. A meeting with the Treasurer Christian Porter MLA seeking support for more MRIT funds did not bear fruit.

A debate (10 August) on Bush Forever was held in the upper house concerning the Motion moved by Hon. A Xamon MLC to legally protect all BF sites and to provide management plans and resources to manage them. The UBC sent a letter to all MPs in both houses seeking their support for the motion. Many community folk were present in the Gallery during debate. Both Labor and the Greens supported the motion but Liberal & Nationals did not, so it was defeated.

### UBC events/Council meetings

- Manned UBC weed display at Garden Week (April 7-11)
- Legal panel addressed the question *Are Black Cockatoos protected?* (4 May) in 3 case studies.
- *'Preventing fire in bushland: focus on arson'* (6th July) Guest speaker Craig Waters from FESA Arson Investigation Unit.
- Tour of Herbarium and launch of new logo and new website by John Dell at Biodiversity Conservation Science Centre (3 August)
- Visit to Lowlands property (BF site 368) (23 October) with tour guides Midge Richardson (Lowlands proprietor) and Mark Angeloni.

### Submissions and campaigns

The table below is a summary of the issues that involved our attention during 2011.

No	Site or issue	Submission or action on	Outcome
1	Kiara TAFE site (ongoing issue)	WAPC, Ministry of Housing, City of Swan and Planning Minister support land swap with WAPC land used by Lockridge SHS (enables more housing, wetland rehabilitation and bushland retained)	-WAPC advises that 'negotiations continuing' with Education Dept.
2	1500 ha bushland burnt in Lake Clifton, Henderson area, including bush block subdivision	-Subdivision into large bush blocks is inherent problem for fire frequency -Sensationalised reporting by media incites further arson	-UBC phone call to each TV producer in Perth about depiction of flames and how this encourages arsonists. TV more interested in dramatic reporting of 'what happened'. FESA media committed to contact TV stations also.
3	DEC stepping up prescribed burning on Swan Coastal Plain after foothills fire	-DEC term is 'Biodiversity Management Burns' DEC prescribed burn in Paganoni proposed and carried out -Kelty inquiry	Took no notice of Friends concerns, nor presence of Chuditch nor ecologists advice from Urban Nature

4	Monash Ave bushland Nedlands -is part of Greenways 19 Kings Park- Bold Park	-Proposal for temporary car park for QEII construction period after Rosalie Park rejected after residents complaints. -QEII Master Plan had area retained for benefit of patients with seating, paths etc. area used by cancer patients  -Alternative and bigger temporary car park supported by City of Nedlands -	- Community rally and submissions to Minister Marmion's office and QEII Trust ignored -Appeal against EPA 'not (formally) assessed' was dismissed. -Reasonable EPA informal advice given. But not legally binding and was ignored. - Appealed against clearing permit, was dismissed - Ignored by Health Dept. -Community opposition, publicity in local press and demonstrations on site ignored by Health Dept. <b>-EPA informal advice &amp; EPB No 8 ignored, site cleared</b>
5.	George O'Neill's Lot, Bedbrook Place -in Greenway 19 also	-Clearing for Clinipath laboratory proposed. -Proponent divided 1.2ha block into 2 sections so that 0.8ha proposed for clearing would not trigger EPBC Act	-Appealed against clearing permit - <b>EPA's EPB No 8 ignored</b> -City of Nedlands approved development and ecological linkage significance ignored.--- <b>-No legal protection for linkages or endangered Cockatoo habitat</b>
6.	Autism Assoc'n Selby St, in Greenway 19 also	Clearing and new building proposed	<b>-EPA's EPB No 8 ignored</b> -Site cleared
7.	Northam Immigration Detention Centre	Proposed clearing 1ha Banksia Woodlands, feeding habitat for black cockatoos	-Federal Govt left decision to State Govt. -Premier Barnett against proposal for other reasons
8.	Forrestdale bushland	New species of bee found and described by Terry Houston (WA Museum)	Lots of publicity in West Aust, TV, and radio <i>'underlines Perth's reputation as one of the world's most biodiverse cities.'</i>
9.	Channel 7 land Dianella, incl part Bush Forever site	-Sale of land and high rise development proposal by Satterleys to encroach on part of BF site. Kangaroo population present. - City of Stirling include loss of part BF site in proposal submitted to WAPC for rezoning in MRS -F of Dianella and UBC prefer no clearing, keep connection Ch7 - Ch 9 bushland	-Not yet processed by WAPC. -F of Dianella to lobby WAPC and DOP staff to review proposals, propose no clearing
10.	Perth Airport-connectivity with Munday Swamp	-Large area bushland proposed for clearing with Gateway project - UBC rep on consultative group, seeking retention of more bushland on Airport and retention of connectivity along east side with Munday Swamp	-Offset negotiation difficult - not yet resolved
11.	Garvey Park floodplain, Belmont	Garvey Park Residents/ratepayers Action Gp opposed development on flood plain DA's 7 and 9, in Hay Road and Coolgardie	-Belmont Council approved sub-division Dec despite DOW info that area (and Airport)

		Avenue, Ascot	would flood with 100mm RF in 48hr in Avon catchment.
12.	Pt Peron marina proposal	-Proponents Cedar Woods, Landcorp -30ha of BF site 355 to be dug out and canals constructed inland. -Dredging of Mangles Bay	-Formal EIA by EPA -Scoping document out -Hands of Pt Peron (HOPP) active community group
13.	Nowergup quarry and batching plant, Wanneroo	- Not assessed by EPA, effectively means approved and C of Wanneroo backflipped its refusal - Clearing permit process applied - UBC Submission against clearing permit -Referred by WA Limestone to Cth under EPBC Act	-Action in SAT failed -C of Wanneroo approved quarry for 10 years - Clearing permit application not yet assessed -Cth referral not yet assessed?
14.	Jorgensen Park, Kalamunda	-Trees cut off before replanting - Lobbied Kalamunda Shire to retain stumps to allow regrowth until new trees establish	?
15.	Cockatoo Coalition: 'The Cockatoos Need You' petition to Parliament	- UBC is affiliated with the Cockatoo Coalition -Presentation of petition to Premier and rally on steps Parliament House 12 April -Organised by Cockatoo Coalition, CCWA etc	Environment Minister Marmion accepted petition. with 4300 messages. Good attendance at rally by 150 community and politicians
16.	Roe 8 Highway extension through Beeliar Wetlands - North Lake- Bibra Lake	-Tour of area by Federal Minister with Felicity McGeorge, Phil Jennings. -South Metro Connect has multi million budget for consultation process, biased position taken -PER with 28 Appendices out for comment - preferred option recommended by consultants in Appendix D ignored, not assessed -Community rally with ~1000 people against Roe 8 extension.	-UBC made substantive submission showing fatal flaws in proposal -UBC, SBW, met OEPA staff about problems with PER process  -Rally showed very high level of community concern
17.	Signal Hill bushland, Belmont	Review of Management Plan	UBC attended consultation workshop for plan review
18.	Southern River precinct 3F, City of Gosnells, includes wetlands, abuts BF 413	-MRS minor Amendment to rezone 34.4ha from rural to urban to facilitate light industry, commercial development -Regionally significant vegetation -EPA advice under planning referral	EPA 'not assessed' formally, informal advice including conservation through planning process ignored. -Wetland area not suitable for development <b>-Shows EPA informal advice is useless as not legally binding</b>
19.	UN Regional Centre for Expertise: A Network for Education for Sustainability	Many UBC members have strong links with local schools and provide avenue for practical education in environmental sustainability	UBC has registered its interest as a 'partner' in project with Bush Cadets at Inglewood Triangle.
20.	Redevelopment of Perry Lakes, NW corner Underwood Ave & Brookdale Rd	-Up to 500 Carnaby's Cockatoo roost at this site on 3 corners of the intersection. Nos of birds roosting is regularly monitored by M Owen.	- UBC phoned & wrote urgent letters by email to Carl Curtis (Project Manager, Landcorp )Project Manager. He did not respond and would

	Floreat by Landcorp	<p>-Trees within 1km radius of roost are considered roost trees and thus critical habitat by DEC. All trees within 6km radius are feed trees.</p> <p>-large trees including Tuarts cut down 18 June, more including large Marri later</p> <p>- Minister Marmion in answer to a question in Parliament denied that the above corner within Perry lakes redevelopment was a roost site - ie he lied to Parliament</p>	<p>not speak to us nor local activists.</p> <p>-On 1 July M Owen and A Jones arrested for failing to move on. They stood in front of large Euc trees to be cut down.</p> <p>-Photo of M Owen in paddy wagon in West Aust. Effective publicity</p> <p>-Both received spent convictions.</p> <p>- Minister eventually corrected his answer after UBC correctly recorded GPS of roost site, but this was months after so many trees needlessly cut down.</p> <p>-Another case showing no legally binding protection for significant Carnaby's habitat.</p>
21.	P1 areas of Gnangara Mound Wanneroo proposed for rezoning to Industry	Rally on site organised by CREW, Leader of Opposition Eric Ripper spoke, also Ken Travers MLC	UBC firmly opposed to rezoning
22.	Great Cocky Count 2011	<p>-Many community people participated</p> <p>-Count organised by BAWA with funding from and in conjunction with DEC</p> <p>-30-50% reduction in counts at roost sites</p>	- Report for 2011 Cocky Count still not released by 31 Dec 2011. No feedback to participants
23.	Clearing on Swan Coastal Plain portion of PMR	<p>-Nearly all clearing 'not assessed' either by EPA or under clearing regulations as exempt under Schedule 6.</p> <p>-UBC submission on Federal Govt Draft Offsets Policy. Intact bushland cannot be 'offset' by replanting or revegetation</p>	<p><b>-No overall assessment nor control of clearing Banksia Woodlands and black cockatoo habitat</b></p> <p><b>- 'Not assessed' effectively means approved</b></p> <p><b>- We do not know what we are losing</b></p>
24.	Strategic Assessment for Perth & Peel: by State & Cth under EPBC Act for <i>'better environmental outcomes for matters of National Environmental Significance</i> (MNES)	<p>-Information seminar organised by WWF.</p> <p>- ~8000ha Banksia Woodlands already 'upzoned' and under threat of clearing being exempt from need for clearing permits.</p> <p>- 24 TECs on SCP listed by DEC and gazetted but only 10 listed under EPBC Act.</p> <p>-Cth has huge backlog to assess by independent Scientific committee</p> <p>- UBC submission on Terms of Reference for Strategic Assessment</p>	<p>-Draft Regional Assessment to be out for comment ~July 2012</p> <p>-UBC fears lack of protection for threatened fauna habitat, TECs and Banksia Woodlands <i>per se</i></p> <p><b>UBC Outcome desired:</b></p> <p>-Call for moratorium on further clearing Banksia Woodlands heeded</p> <p>-All Banksia Woodlands are Black Cockatoo habitat and are listed as MNES and are protected by State law</p>
25.	Boardwalk proposal through fragile Trigg Dunes BF site	<p>-Initiated by City of Stirling</p> <p>-Friends groups and community opposition</p> <p>-expensive and potentially destructive</p> <p>- similar proposal rejected by Council 2005</p>	Not yet decided

26.	Tamala Conservation Park	-UBC and QREG submissions to WAPC on Park establishment and Management Plan	-WAPC advised our suggestions for infrastructure provision esp for wildlife crossing to be included in the Plan
27.	Underwood Ave Bushland BF site 119	-Community presence with banners outside bushland during City to Surf marathon. Many runners acknowledged us and especially M Owen and her work -Approval of housing development 2010 by State but still not approved by Federal Govt	-Strong community support to retain Underwood bush - Is an ongoing sensitive issue  UWA has not submitted another proposal to SEWPAC under the 'Controlled Action'.
28.	NRM South Reference Group meeting	-UBC invited to talk to 25 people, on Bush Forever. 5 Councils present. -Aim was to agree on actions to assist the protection and management of BF sites (many under LGAs) in their region - LGA officers decided to produce a simple template for BF sites with cost of fencing, (eg \$20/ m), signage, operational costs	-Template has been developed. Is tool for seeking LGA funds and budget for BF site management.
29.	European House Borer and pine trees	DAFWA program to remove pines, but are significant Carnaby's food source -2400 pines proposed for eradication	--60 pines removed -Pine Tree removal has ceased
30.	Appointment of new EPA member	New member replacing Joan Payne does not appear to meet requirements of appointment by Minister under EP Act: <i>'...on account of their interest in and experience of matters affecting the environment generally'</i>	-None of the 5 EPA members has knowledge or experience in biodiversity matters
31.	Marri Canker	-Extensive areas with Marris affected. -Community concern about how to influence government to study and act to help Marri	-Loss of more Black Cockatoo habitat from death of mature Marri
32.	Water Supply & Demand panel (Water Corporation)	-M Gray on panel -Groundwater replenishment trial operating, treated wastewater being pumped into Leederville aquifer on trial basis. -Water Corp seeking public support for groundwater recharge and potential future re-use via groundwater. - Water Corp allowed to draw more water - 165GL from Gnangara Mound - Gnangara Sustainability Strategy recommends 120GL limit	-Wetlands on Mound drying, biodiversity decline or collapse possible -Government did not implement total sprinkler ban in 2011 -excessive abstraction by both Water Corp and private agricultural producers lowering water table

In conclusion I wish to sincerely acknowledge and thank the Executive Committee members, Chris Allbeury, Christine Richardson, Cath Cooper, Rob Greenwood, Kevin McLean (for part of year) and Kim Sarti for their incredible commitment and professionalism on our Executive Committee and for all their work for the UBC in providing a voice for the bush. Personally I value highly your spirit of co-operation and friendliness at all times.

Our Secretary Margaret Owen was awarded the Bessie Rischbieth Conservation Award for 2011 - *'..in recognition of outstanding courage, integrity, perseverance and commitment over many years in working for the protection of Western Australia's environment.'* Our hearty congratulations to Margaret.

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