

The Urban Bush Telegraph

Planning Fiasco: Bush Forever Forgotten?

The WAPC released for public comment the suite of five strategic land use planning documents in May 2015. The comment period closed on 31 July 2015.

The suite includes the over-arching *'Perth and Peel@3.5 million'* and four draft planning frameworks for the Central, North-West, North-East and South Metropolitan Peel sub-regions. The WAPC says it will consider submissions before finalising these frameworks as sub-regional structure plans. But at the same time the state government is undergoing a Strategic Assessment process for the Perth - Peel regions under provisions of the federal EPBC Act. Their report for public comment will not be released until the end of 2015 or early 2016. So how can the WAPC's process be ahead of the Strategic Assessment process rather than coupled to it?

The UBC believes that the WAPC's set of documents is fundamentally flawed in many aspects. It does not show where development is proposed on native vegetation maps for each sub-region, it does not show the natural assets and constraints of the landscapes of each sub-region. It does not distinguish Bush Forever Areas from 'Open Space'.

Indeed in the over-arching *Perth and Peel@3.5 million* document, Bush Forever is not even mentioned. There are no photos of our unique Banksia woodlands, nor reference to Perth's natural landscape set-

ting reflecting the WAPC's vision of the year 2000 in Bush Forever: *'keeping the bush in the city', 'a little bit of bushland in everyone's back yard'*.

Chapter 8 - 'Environment and Landscapes' - does not mention Bush Forever or Statement of Planning Policy 2.8 (SPP 2.8: Bush Forever and associated lands), even though it is a world class *whole of government* conservation plan adopted in 2000 to protect our rich and unique biodiversity, and the lead agency is the Department of Planning. Indeed the WAPC has been acquiring Bush Forever sites for 15 years with public funds (the MRIF) so that they can be protected and managed for the purpose of nature conservation. Notably these sites still owned by the WAPC have not yet been ceded to the Crown and vested for the purpose of nature conservation. So are any of these sites at risk of *not* being conserved? Why has this important conservation acquisition process not been acknowledged and included in the 3.5 million document? The UBC believes that a firm commitment for the WAPC to finish acquisition of *all Bush Forever sites* and to formally *transfer them to the conservation estate* should be a requirement *ahead* of all new development proposed. Leaving Bush Forever sites under Parks and Recreation zoning without transferring them to the Crown and the conservation estate as 'A' class nature reserves does not formally protect them. The WAPC is denying its own conservation planning initiative

and responsibilities in Bush Forever by these omissions. The UBC believes that, as a matter of public interest, these glaring omissions must be corrected in a totally revised over-arching document and in the sub-regional plans.

Chapter 8 states: *'Planning and development decisions are required to account for the economic, social and environmental value of natural resources and assets in the public interest.'*

To this end, the four sub-regional planning frameworks have been informed significantly by the Strategic Assessment of the Perth and Peel Regions in an effort to achieve a more cost efficient and cost effective urban structure which also protects environmental values.'

We have no evidence whatsoever in the four regional planning frameworks that these environmental values will be protected. By omitting the stated inclusion of the network of Bush Forever Areas as well as their associated ecological linkages and network of local reserves, the public interest is denied, and our rich biodiversity is at risk. This is a massive flaw in the documents.

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Editorial

Strategic Assessment Fiasco

The WA Planning Commission is carrying out strategic land use planning for the Perth and Peel Regions to accommodate projected population growth to 3.5 million by 2050. The State Government wants to secure approval from the Commonwealth for this plan in order to avoid piecemeal assessment of its development plans under the EPBC Act and by the EPA. They hope that this will provide certainty for industry so that they can plan ahead for growth.

The project team has completed the first part of this task and their plans for basic industries, infrastructure and housing are available on the WAPC web site. Public comments closed on 31 July 2015. There are four sub-regional 'frameworks' which will become regional structure plans. They are broadscale and it is impossible to determine how they will impact on Bush Forever sites, Regional Parks and other regionally and locally significant bushland, as well as threatened species and communities listed at State and Commonwealth levels. No vegetation mapping is shown for each region. They contain very little if any information about the potential environmental impacts of the development proposals. Astoundingly, the 'Draft Perth and Peel @3.5million' document does not even mention let alone embrace the government's Bush Forever plan which was adopted in the year 2000.

The Commonwealth Government has requested that the State Government prepare a conservation plan which is supposed to address biodiversity and endangered species issues. It will include an offsets plan and an implementation plan. It will be released for public comment later this year or early next year.

It is unfortunate that the plans for development have been released first so that we are not aware of the proposed changes to the conservation estate and the amount of land clearing until after the comment period on the development proposals has closed. This is a glaring example of a dysfunctional Government process in which the different agencies involved are acting in an uncoordinated manner on an issue of great public importance. The UBC has lodged a strong protest about this improper process with the relevant authorities.

See page 3 for the key recommendations made in the UBC submission on the Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million document.

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Compiled by: Renata Zelinova

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO: ubc@bushlandperth.org.au

Copy deadline - 10th October 2015

Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million – Environmental impacts, risks and remedies:

- the EPA's interim strategic advice to the Minister for Environment under section 16(e) of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 is now available.

You can ring the Office of EPA reception on 6145 0800 to request a printed copy. It has lots of colour photos. The document can be downloaded (7.5Mb report) via www.epa.wa.gov.au (<http://www.epa.wa.gov.au/EPADocLib/Perth-Peel-s16e-interim-advice-2015-web.pdf>)



Photo by K Sarti

A Decision on Listing Banksia Woodlands under the EPBC Act Postponed

The UBC was notified that the Threatened Species Scientific Committee has been granted an extension for its assessment of the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain ecological community, under the EPBC Act. The new deadline is 31 July 2016.

UBC PUBLICATIONS

Perth's Bush Forever Report Card

Proceedings of a conference (December 2012)

Available through the UBC website:

<http://www.bushlandperth.org.au/resources/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.

Available through the UBC website:

<http://www.bushlandperth.org.au/resources/publications>

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.

PERTH'S BUSHLAND BIRTHDAY & PERPETUAL

CALENDAR

\$10 plus \$2 postage

Available by mail order from the UBC office.

FUNGI WALK AT LIGHTNING SWAMP

The fungi walk held at Lightning Swamp, Noranda, on 14th of June was fun, informative and quite a revelation.

Even though there had not been much rain, Kirsten Tullis who led the walk, told us there were still around 17 species of fungi.

We entered the bushland near the walkway near the top of Della Road. This area is a wetland when there has been rain but it was dry on the day. There were many examples of clumped stalks of *Pisolithus* or Dog Poo Fungus. These are one of the earliest fungi to come up and are mycorrhizal (where 'the fungi act like an extra root system by extracting nutrients from soil and supplying nutrients to the plants'. Fungi of the Perth Region and Beyond by Neale Bougher). The spore mass develops with the spores at the top and then the fungus becomes dry and papery and the spores are released. Spores would be produced in the millions and the spores are bigger than in other gilled and pored fungi as they do not need to fit through the pores.

Numbers of *Cortinarius* were found which when cut had a mauve shading around the edges. The gills are covered by a veil when young.

Fungi enthusiasts always have grand assortments of containers and tools. There was a brief distraction when a fantastic tool was produced. It was a fountain pen whose body was a ruler. At one end was the nib and at the other end was a small Phillips-head screwdriver. Tool envy was palpable.

Back on track, we were astounded when Kirsten showed a small (about 1 cm diameter) screamingly yellow truffle which had been found earlier. An animal had possibly unearthed it. With a readily-to-hand fork, the ground was scratched by mycologist Neale Bougher. We saw all the



Kirsten Tullis, Laurton McGurk and Neale Bougher at Lightning Swamp, holding a new fungi record: *Phlebia subochracea* tree and plant roots which the truffle supported and then about 6 other truffles were uncovered. Some fungi can form as either mushroom shapes or as truffles, depending on conditions.

Tiny little black fungi with pale decurrent gills were found almost beneath the soil surface. Neale has ruled out this genus – he says it might be an *Omphalina*.

On a small log Kirsten pointed out a bright yellow skin fungus she thought might be *Phlebia subochracea* : not recorded in the Atlas of Living Australia.

We also saw through the hand lens some tiny fungus on the *Eucalyptus rudis* nuts and on kangaroo poo.

Kirsten heard back from Neale who had made voucher collections, and was able to confirm the species were *Pisolithus microcarpus*, *Royoungia boletoides* (the truffle) and *Phlebia subochracea* – the yellow skin fungus.

Thanks to Kirsten and crew from the Friends of Lightning Swamp Bushland for a great walk.

UBC Recommendations - Perth and Peel @ 3.5 Million

The UBC in its submission on the strategic planning framework for Perth and Peel, released by the WA Planning Commission in May this year raised a number of concerns regarding the potential impacts of the proposed planning strategy, designed to guide residential and industrial development, and supporting infrastructure that will accommodate 3.5 million people.

The UBC recommended:

- The Strategic Assessment for Perth and Peel Region process, being undertaken under the EPBC Act, should be allowed to run its course, and the outcomes of that process then used as inputs for the Draft Perth and Peel @3.5 Million plan.
- This Plan should recognise that the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain have been nominated as a Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) and act as if the nomination has been upheld.
- There should be no further clearing of Banksia woodlands.
- All remaining native vegetation on the Swan Coastal Plain that is not in a completely degraded state should be classified as being "nationally significant" owing to its uniqueness, its ecological importance, its heritage value, its diminished extent, the species which it supports and the threatening processes which it faces.
- Mining should not be permitted in and adjacent to bushland areas
- Proposed urban infill rates should be increased to 80% of new housing and urban expansion should only be permitted on land cleared prior to 2015.

CONTEMPORARY URBAN TREE SPECIES SELECTION AND ECOLOGICAL DESERTIFICATION

By Kevin McLean

Why is it that as one travels around the suburbs of Perth one is increasingly struck by the dearth of native trees being planted by Local Government authorities (LGA), landscapers and property owners? Exotic trees are beginning to dominate species selections for many if not most streets and parks in a way they would not have a few decades ago. And if there are native trees being selected why are they are predominantly trees native to the eastern seaboard?

For some time LGA's have been promoting the concept of the "urban forest." It isn't a Perth invention but Perth has its own peculiar take on it. It sounds very environmentally progressive and enlightened but to what sort of forest are they referring? Well apparently it means creating a landscape where the great majority of trees have no natural ecological association with the local environment whatsoever. Perth has yet to overcome the "horticultural cringe" when it comes to such matters and it is not going to help our native birds and other fauna that depend on tree-types to which they have adapted over thousands and thousands of years.

But why is it that in these times of supposedly increasing environmental awareness, Local Government Authorities, landscape architects and landscapers are choosing to festoon our streets, parks and properties with trees that are not only non-local but not even likely to fit that very broad description of being "native"?

It has been claimed that when native plants came into vogue in the 1970's and 1980's much of the tree selection and landscaping was very injudicious and careless and that it was generally subject to inappropriately lax maintenance. As the story goes, many Eucalypts became too large and became a threat to property and human life, while native shrubs became woody, unkempt and eventually unmanageable.

This is the conventional wisdom purporting to explain the decline in popularity of native planting in more recent times. As an explanation it is superficially plausible but it doesn't really account for the extent of the shift away from planting native species.

What it really points to is the fundamental separation between conventional horticulture and approaching the design of the urban landscape with a view to sustaining or enhancing what is left of the local and regional biodiversity. And a key factor is the influence of horticultural trends. Put simply, native planting went out of fashion. Native trees were all the rage for a time – probably not for purely environmental reasons – and then "the industry" gradually decided it was time for something different.

By and large, landscape design and gardening are not "natural" in any real sense and they are heavily influenced by the vicissitudes of fashion and probably always have been. Trees and plants gain and lose popularity from year to year, from decade to decade, and from century to century.

Many contemporary horticulturists, landscapers and landscape architects would have us believe that native trees have been tried and have been proven to be innately inferior to exotic species in terms of aesthetics, public amenity, and maintenance requirements and that such considerations have provided the impetus for the planting of exotic trees that have become so predominant in urban landscaping over the past decade or more. But their analysis is essentially wrong. What really drives plant and tree selection in the horticultural world is fashion – not practical considerations at all.

It is remarkable to hear celebrated horticultural authorities asserting that Plane trees, Liquidambars and Tipuanas are all lovely clean trees compared to messy Eucalypts. Such claims serve to illustrate how little time many celebrated horticultural authorities have actually spent doing garden maintenance but also how issues relating to fashion tend to prejudice perceptions.

It is remarkable to see large Eucalypts cut down to be replaced by Liquidambars when the former are accused of lifting concrete, clogging drains, littering paths and blocking gutters. This is a solution only landscape architects could conjure.

It is also a marvel to see older style gardens with a variety of beautiful mature shrubs and trees, much favoured by birds, being put through chippers in the name of carrying out "garden renovations." Out with the old and in with the new - the "new" featuring "architectural" arrangements of strappy plants and Ornamental Pears. New? Yes. Improved? Hardly.

But that's fashion and that's the difference between conventional horticulture and prioritising the creation of genuinely ecologically attuned urban landscapes. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive but neither are they necessarily aligned.

The question is whether LGA's, with all the opportunities they have for selecting and planting trees, should be allowed the luxury or indulging the bad taste of a relatively small band of parks and gardens supervisors, and the landscape architects that influence them, or whether they should actually make the contribution to conserving our biodiversity that they could with appropriate planting policies.

Perth has cleared, and is clearing, far too much bushland and habitat for our native birds and insects to have a secure future. If our native fauna is to have chance of hanging on in the urban landscape and beyond, LGA's are going to have to wake up to their responsibilities to prioritise the planting of suitable native habitat trees and plants in streets and parks to protect our regionally - and even nationally - declining species.

Furthermore, if there are few native trees, especially local native trees, in our urban landscape what is to distinguish Perth from any other city? Would it be asking too much of LGA's to expect them to use native trees and plants to help create a distinctively West Australian urban environment?

Mangles Bay, feeding grounds of endangered little penguin

FREMANTLE
POINT PERON

THE GOVERNMENT IS SELLING 77Ha OF LAND THEY SWORE TO PROTECT

Point Peron is a place of treasured memories for many West Australians, and it's under threat

The 'Bush Forever' was established in 2010 to "secure long-term protection of biodiversity and associated environmental values" (planning.wa.gov.au), yet it's being sacrificed for commercial gain

The Point Peron area is vital to the continued survival of native wildlife, including the endangered Little Penguins

The Thrombolites of nearby fresh water Lake Richmond – the "living fossils" that have taught us about first life on earth – and migratory birds that also call it home are at risk from salt water intrusion as a result of canal excavations

HANDS OFF POINT PERON

What's best for WA Taxpayers? POINT PERON CANAL ESTATE OR COASTAL PARK?

Please join us at this free community forum

A World class conservation and recreation park in concert with Shoalwater Islands Marine Park and Lake Richmond

I planted this tree to have Pt Peron on 14 Sept 14

When:
Wed 5 August 2015
Doors open 7pm
For 7:30 – 8:30 pm

Where:
The Palms Community Centre
Cnr Nicholson & Rokeby Rds, Subiaco

A place for locals and visitors alike in harmony with nature and our heritage

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN

Hands Off Point Peron group took the fight to protect the precious Point Peron public land and Bush Forever area to the Western Suburbs on Wednesday 5 August 7pm at The Palms Community Centre in Subiaco where they held a community forum.

At the forum, presentations were given on the community driven **Cape Peron Coastal Park** concept plan and comparisons made with the Barnett Governments canal hous-

ing estate plan aka Mangles Bay marina proposed for our public land on Point Peron.

See websites at www.handsoffpointperon.com and www.cape-peron-coastal-park.com and Face Book pages Hands Off Point Peron and Cape Peron Coastal Park.

For further information please contact dawnjecks@gmail.com

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO STOP ROE 8

Over the last six months the Save Beeliiar Wetlands Campaign has been part of an amazing flourish of activism. With now nearly 30 groups working together in an alliance to stop the hideous freeway destroying wetlands, bushland, and aboriginal heritage sites and cutting a swathe through our suburbs. And this does not even get the freight to the port.

There are much better solutions to moving freight through the southern suburbs including freight on rail and the development of an outer harbour.

Our forum in the Fremantle Town Hall was received by a packed house of 500 and another 100 hardy souls watching on a screen outside. Speakers included Alannah MacTiernan, Scott Ludlam and the mayors of Fremantle and Cockburn. We saw the launch of the first few of a collection of before and after graphics to show the full horror of the road.

With so much activity and much more to come there is a great vibe in the campaign but still the government is dribbling out truly appalling propaganda and equally appalling attempts at coming up with plausible designs.

There will be many opportunities to be involved or take simple actions in the near future.

For up to the minute news and actions go to www.rethinkthelink.com or the facebook sites for Save Beeliiar Wetlands or Rethinkthelink.

Group News Group News Group News

The Friends of Ken Hurst Park undertook planting of 1375 plants of 37 species as part of the 2014 DPaW Banksia Woodland restoration grant between 11 and 20 July 2015.

Species planted were mostly *Banksia attenuata* and *B. menziesii*, but also included numerous *Eucalyptus marginata* and *E. tottiana*, *Calytrix fraseri* and *C. flavescens*, *Melaleuca thymoides*, *Daviesia seminuda*, *D. physodes* and *D. triflora*, *Lechenaultia floribundum* and *Xanthorrhoea preissii*.

More than 40 community members, assisted by two City of Melville Bush Crew and their water tanker and equipment trailer, planted 640 plants along a degraded track over three hours on a glorious Saturday morning on 11 July. Apart from the great company, Red-tailed Black Cockatoos serenaded us, and an Eleven-lined Skink greeted us from its hibernation in a plant hole. Thanks to the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council who helped on the ground and opened up the Regional Resource Recovery Centre for the fabulous lunch prepared by the Friends.

On Monday 13 July, 6 Green Army team workers plus supervisor and 2 Friends planted a further 435 plants over 5.5 hours along another track that is being closed.

This still left 300 plants which were planted in a third area by the Green Army team on Monday 20 July.

One of the biggest headaches, but really crucial to the survival of plants in Bassendean sands, is the provision of water. With climate change resulting in warm if not hot Julys and reducing rainfall, this is even more crucial. We have already lost more than 50% of our banksias in earlier hot dry spells, and these plantings are designed to replace those that have died. Even the City of Melville's 1000L water tanker is not sufficient to adequately water 640 plants after planting, and pulling 1 tonne of water along sandy bush tracks can be a recipe for a 5-star bogging. And when the water tanker is not available, carrying 200L of water in jerry cans by hand 300m along bush tracks is a logistical and physical nightmare, with many trips to water supply points required.

We have only enough funds to employ a contractor to water the plants once a month for 4 months over summer for the next 2 years, but I suspect this is not enough to guarantee more than 50% survival, let alone our target of 100%. And next year we will be planting a further 1200 plants which will also need watering.

Anyone who has innovative ideas on how to solve the watering dilemma is welcome to contact Eddy on phone 9310 2936 or 0428 345 231 or email wajonpub@bigpond.com.



Above: Volunteers at the planting day held on 11 July in Ken Hurst Park.

Below: *Ctenotus impar*

All photos by Jane Hilton, text by Eddy Wajon



Group News Group News Group News

Friends of Lightning Swamp Bushland

Lightning Swamp (LSB) is a 71 hectare class-A reserve situated on the North-West corner of Noranda. The reserve is now in relatively good condition considering the abuse, neglect and urban encroachment it has endured over time. With passionate and hard work of the friends group, local community and Council it has slowly been transformed into a valued wetland and important bushland of the Perth Metropolitan Region.

Over the next 12 months it will face one of its most difficult tests as man-made developments encroach and alter the surrounding landscape which forms an important buffer to Lightning Swamp. The first major project suddenly became a reality in February this year following signing of a tender. Although the project is to resolve a major local issue which had our support, the speed of when construction was to start was worrying to say the least.

Not to worry, I thought, as Main Roads (MRD) had received comprehensive written submissions two years ago in case the project was given the political go ahead. The submissions provided detailed environmental concerns and recommendations which MRD advised would be included in the project scope of works. Strangely, we received acknowledgement of the submissions on 30th April this year!

We undertook, however, to willingly and collaboratively work together with project management on resolving issues that could pose a detrimental impact to LSB.

This was greeted as a positive step forward by the project management and *in good faith* both parties agreed to meet frequently as the project was progressed and to iron out any potential problems.

How Wrong We Were!

We had managed to have one meeting with MRD in March at which they advised there was a community construction group to be formed and not a normal protocol convening a community reference group to address any potential issues.

OK, we accepted that change of protocol considering the limited time available with project commencement likely to start immediately.

One day in April, the local residents noticed a number of mature Marris along Malaga Drive had individually been marked with paint. Following some urgent enquires we were informed these Marris would be cleared to make way for a bus lane to cross the overpass. We quickly managed to organise an on-site meeting with the Civil contractor (MRD didn't show) to discuss this new development while literally the tree lopper was sitting around the corner ready with chainsaws. All we could do was pose the question: when did a bus lane come on to the plan? Followed by their response that it was a recent decision by Public Transport Authority to add to the plan and the 30 mature Marri trees would need to go immediately!

To avoid any more surprises we requested a detailed plan of the project as it would be helpful, especially, so the friends group could get a real perspective of what changes will occur to surrounding elevations and the areas of clearing along the fenceline of LSB. Surprisingly, we were informed there was no detailed plan as yet because the plans were still being finalised! But we could meet on-site to use the survey pegs as some idea of the scale of earthwork clearing and the changes to landforms elevations would have to come later.

As the clearing commenced on 4th May the contractor advised the urgent need for Western Power to access LSB to do changes to powerlines in conjunction with the project.

Fair enough, this sounded logical as the powerlines needed upgrading to pass over the project. The next hurdle was deciding the safest and the best way Western Power could access LSB without environmental damage. We suggested a route along an existing fire break entering the fenceline from the cleared area of the project works.

This sounded achievable by all parties and considering LSB already has about 3.6kms of limestone pathways, another pathway extension constructed at the Northern perimeter would be beneficial. The only condition was that a representative of the Friends group would need to be on site when the path is constructed to avert any problems and it must comply with the management design plan.

Well, the limestone path (sorry road!) was constructed with no one from the contractor bothering to contact the group or Council officers as managers of the reserve. Not forgetting this is class-A reserve, it was in disbelief I discovered while on a walk the limestone road (path?) had been done and not only had it been a disaster but a small number of Banksia trees were crushed.



Photo by J Williams

Damage to vegetation in the Lightning Swamp reserve caused by works associated with re-location of power lines.

Upon requesting an explanation the contractor admitted it has been "a complete stuff up" and the project management did not know the site supervisors had gone ahead and done the works. In their defence they stated they had no experience on how to construct a passive pathway in

bushland. In dismay we could only point them to the 3.6kms of existing pathway as an example. We questioned why they had not at least arranged their environmental officer to be on site for the construction of road (sorry path). Their response was he was too busy at the time with other sites!

Still no show of MRD who we understand is supposedly overseeing the project?

Let's go to the next catastrophe regarding stormwater management. At the last rare meeting with MRD in March we were given assurance that stormwater will not be allowed to directly discharge into LSB bushland.

Guess what, come late May the contractor advised us of construction of a stormwater catchment abutting LSB bushland. The stormwater would flow from road runoff to discharge into a confined large basin covering about 80 metres x 12 metres. The confined basin design is situated directly beside our Banksia woodlands which are mapped as one of our important dieback free zones.



Photo by J Williams

This drainage basin built just outside the Lightning Swamp reserve is designed to overflow into the A-class conservation reserve.

We obviously asked the question of what would happen in a major storm event if the basin were unable to cope. Silly me for asking, of course the stormwater could likely flood into the Banksia woodlands since the man-made catchment is lowered at one end to allow for this. What about the assurance given by MRD of no stormwater flooding into LSB I had asked? Their answer, it was not budgeted for and it would also cost too much to divert the stormwater to another location

Gee, if only I could now remember who were those people at MRD I had once spoken to?

John Williams

Friends of Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre

The sick chook principle

A while back at a UBC talk, I came away with an invaluable message. "You will never know who it is you speak to, what you say, or what you do that might be the turning point in your campaign to protect urban bush-

land, so go for it". I have since dubbed this the Sick Chook Principle as explained below.

Last year I rescued 5 chooks that had been dumped in a bag outside the Cockburn Wetlands Centre in the Beeliar Regional Park. Needless to say these chooks had no medical history or in fact no history at all, but we assumed they were quite old in chook years. As all domesticated animals have been bred to do, one of the chooks became obviously unwell on a Sunday morning. Investigations revealed the only reliable chook Vet in the vicinity was not too far away and we headed off. Two minutes into the consultation with the Vet, we were discussing conservation of wildlife. So it turns out this Vet has many strings to his bow and when he announced on facebook the maiden flight of his new quadcopter (drone) complete with amazing aerial footage, I was immediately suggesting flights over Bibra Lake. Now after a few months we have some impressive before and after graphics of the route of Roe 8 and the Perth Freight Link, something I have been struggling to get done for years. So there it is 'The sick chook principle'. You never know who, where, when or what is going to make the difference to your campaign. So go for it!

Poor old chook didn't make it, but at least she had her last few months happily free ranging in my big back yard.

Felicity McGeorge

Friends of Star Swamp Bushland

Friends of Star Swamp Bushland is working closely with the City of Stirling's Environment Officer to increase utilization of the Henderson Environment Centre by school groups. This will include an upgrade of education facilities at the Centre, with new educational resource material, a frog-garden and enhanced bushland garden, revamped displays and touch-material and, most importantly, an arrangement for key City staff and Friends members to open the Centre on weekdays to give primary school children an 'environmental education experience'.

As those who remember back to the dim past, one priority at the very first public Friends of Star Swamp Bushland meeting in 1985 was a feasibility study into developing an educational resource centre within the Reserve. In 1999, a local resident made a very substantial donation towards this project and, with financial and other support from the City and Karrinyup Rotary, a centre to be used to increase awareness and educate school children and the public was planned and built. The promised teacher never eventuated due to ongoing financial constraints at various levels of government, but now it looks like some progress is being made. We are looking forward to developing this plan and hope to have something in place for the summer school holidays.

Christine Curry

Group News Group News Group News

Allen Park Bushland under threat

Defence Housing Australia (DHA) intends redeveloping the Seaward Village in Swanbourne and aims to sell off approximately 25% of the area for private housing to help pay for it. With no cost analysis to justify DHA's choice to redevelop rather than refurbish the houses; no options to address impacts on the road network around Allen Park; no segregation of private from army housing to guarantee safety for Defence families, the Swanbourne community cannot support what has been proposed. It is also our understanding that many Defence families do not want their village to undergo a drastic facelift allowing many new privately owned residences within closer proximity of their homes.

While the process by which DHA has conducted itself been somewhat confusing, there is little to show for community collaboration. We have been represented at a number of meetings along with Friends of Allen Park in an attempt to engage openly and honestly with DHA, but their determination to redevelop holds strong. There is still a long way to go to get a consensus on future plans for Seaward Village that would be considered acceptable by village residents and the neighbouring Swanbourne community. A DHA Community Information session in June gave little comfort as our concerns had not been reflected in the Concept plan on display.

Impacts

What impacts are there for Allen Park bushland? As 25% of what is now an expanded footprint would be sold to help recover costs, the topography of our much loved elevated dune, "Melon Hill", would change significantly to allow for private housing to be positioned south of the village. This would mean slices would be taken off on the north western and western fringes of the hill, impacting on very good *Banksia sessilis* (Parrot Bush) feeding grounds for the Carnaby's cockatoos and nesting areas for the migratory Rainbow bee-eaters. A slice of land would be acquired from the Swanbourne Reserve (adjacent to Bush Forever site 315) on the western side and our "Seaward Corridor" connecting Melon Hill with Swanbourne Reserve narrowed to a width that will impact on the sustainability of the corridor and affect the passage of passerine birds and other wildlife.

On the 26th May a large contingent of Swanbourne residents turned up for the Nedlands Council meeting to witness and support a motion questioning impact on amenity, traffic, bushland and the planning process by which Council can be bypassed, i.e. using an Improvement Plan to fast track the project and take it directly to the WAPC, leaving Council powerless other than to comment. The motion was carried unanimously and amended to allow for the City's engagement with state and federal Members of Parliament and at least one senator on the issues arising from this proposal.



Photo by L. Shaw

This birds' eye view of "Melon Hill" could be changed forever if Defence Housing Australia gets its way. Flaming re Cockies' Tongues situated in foreground amidst thickets of Parrot Bush.

In the meantime, a Swanbourne Black Cockatoo Watch has been established on Facebook and getting lots of likes. And many residents are involving themselves in an effort to stop what could be an irreversible change to our area, and fauna and flora lost in the process.

Lesley Shaw

Friends of Mosman Park Bushland

Yes! We've got celery and spinach on the Swan River in Mosman Park! *Apium prostrata* and *Tetragonia tetragoinoides* (Warrigal Greens).

Not only has Mosman Park got the Indian Ocean dunes to care for, there is an abundance of riverside vegetation to look after. The river vegetation includes the last community of *Boronia alata* in the Perth metro area and probably the last native celery and spinach along the Swan River.

Friends of Mosman Park Bushland, the Town of Mosman Park and St Hilda's Year 6's think the celery is worth saving.

Roe Point is a low tidal area where salt tolerant plants such as samphire, sedges, *Sporobolus virginicus* (native couch), *Atriplex hypoleuca*, *Suaeda australis* and *Apium prostrata* like to live, except buffalo lawn doesn't mind it as well. The easiest method of buffalo lawn control is to mow it along with everything it grows over. The lawn area got bigger and the riparian native vegetation got smaller.



Photo by S Conlan

Restoration of the Swan River foreshore vegetation in Mosman Park.

Group News Group News Group News

Weeding it every month was not an option! As you can see from the photo (previous page), the buffalo got a chemical mow with a thick layer of mulch to cover the area before St Hilda's Year 6 students planted *Juncus* as a front line of defence with bare ground around the native tidal plants for them to recruit into.

Native celery will grow readily from fresh seed given the right conditions. Kept seed will go into dormancy!

For more information about the Friends of Mosman Park Bushland visit <http://mosmanparkbushland.org/>

Sue Conlan



Photo by S Conlan

Year 6 students from St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls planting along the Swan River in Mosman Park.

Friends of Underwood Avenue

University of Western Australia's approval to develop has expired.

The then Minister for the Environment, Donna Faragher, approved the University of Western Australia's development application for Underwood Avenue Bushland on 10 July 2010.

There were various conditions attached to the approval one of which was that 'The authorisation to implement the proposal provided for in this statement shall lapse and be void within five years after the date of this statement if the proposal to which this statement relates is not substantially commenced'.

This is a clear statement. Five years have elapsed and the University has not substantially commenced the proposal. This is because the University needs federal government approval which it has been unable to obtain.

The Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland has notified the State government that there are significant changes to environmental factors which are of such significance that an extension of the time to implement the housing proposal should not be given.

Both Carnaby's Cockatoos and Forest Red-tailed Black-cockatoos roost at the edge of the bushland and both

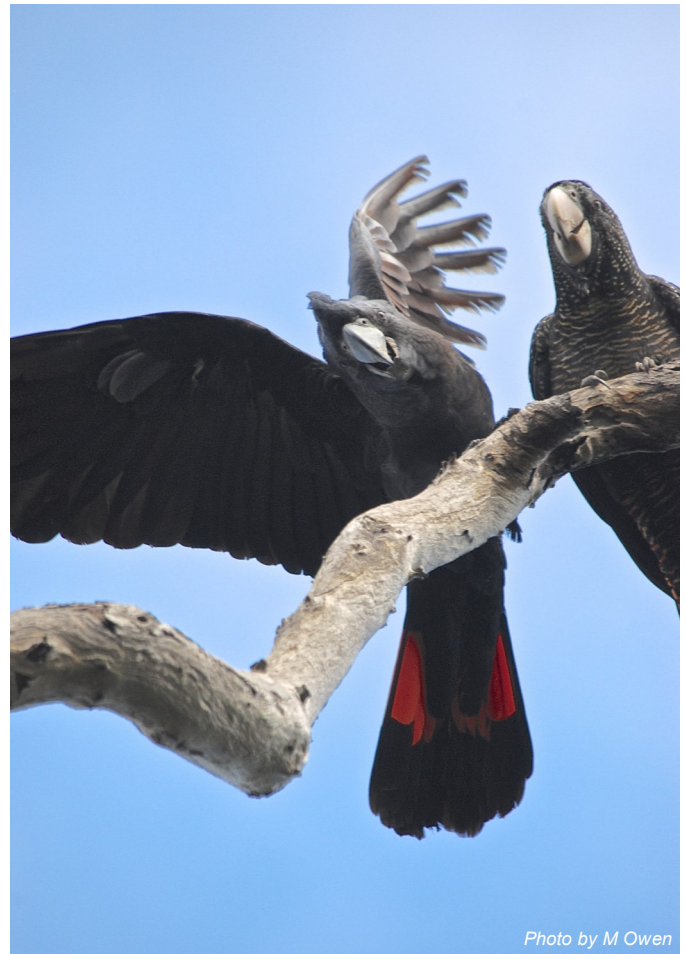


Photo by M Owen

need that bushland for food, shelter and probably for breeding. Both species have been seen and photographed mating in or near the bushland, and both species are preparing hollows.

The Friends urge the University to consider options such as having a world renowned Research Park, accessible to the public and for tourism. We can help the University.

That young woman who runs through every country might like to pause and to have a wander around our precious bushland, right on her doorstep.



Photo by M Owen

Striated Pardalote in Underwood Avenue bushland. The beaks of Striated Pardalotes are adapted for getting lerps off leaves.

Galls on *Bossiaea eriocarpa*

Article reprinted with permission from the Friends of Queens Park Bushland newsletter, The Gecko, Edition 8, July 2015

Photos by Sian Mawson and courtesy of Terry Houston.

Have you ever noticed galls and wondered what was inside them? Galls on the common brown pea, *Bossiaea eriocarpa*, can be seen during spring. They look like berries, up to 7mm in diameter and coloured green to red. They could easily be mistaken for the fruit of the plant until you see the real seed pods. Sian broke one open and inside was a black insect, but she didn't know what it was.



Above: *Bossiaea eriocarpa* and a plant with the galls, the round berries.
Below: Inside a gall.



When she got home Sian looked up galls in two of her books – 'Pests, Diseases and Ailments of Australian Plants' and 'Life in a Gall'. Both books explained that galls were the plant's reaction to a physical or chemical stimulus, usually caused by fungus or insect attack. Differently shaped galls are formed by different species. It is possible to tell what caused the gall to form by looking at the species of plant and the characteristics of the gall. In some instances, males of an insect species stimulate the creation of differently shaped galls to the females of the same species. In these cases you can not only identify the species of insect inside a gall, but what sex it is.

While the books were silent on what caused the galls on *B. eriocarpa*, 'Life in a Gall' discussed methods used to keep the gall and wait for the insect to emerge. Sian decided that this was what she had to do to satisfy her curiosity.

Sian collected some galls and placed them in a jar on her dining room table. In case the insects needed their galls to be attached to the plant to fully develop, Sian placed a cloth bag over a gall covered branch and secured it with a twist tie.



After five days Sian had an insect crawling around inside the jar on her table. With her eyesight not being what it used to be, all Sian could initially say was that it was three millimetres long and black. She could also tell that it wasn't very mobile. It walked everywhere. The only time it would fly was when a gall bumped into it from having the jar turned. And even then it only flew enough to get out of the way.



However, having a docile subject meant that handling it was very easy. Sian was able to transfer it from the jar to another container without fear of it flying away and being lost. This also made it easy to photograph. At last she could see what it looked like. However, that didn't help much because she still didn't know what it was. It was most likely a wasp, as most insect induced galls are made by wasps, but she couldn't see a well-defined waist. Could it be a fly?

The photos were sent to Terry Houston at the WA Museum and he was able to confirm that it was a chalcidoid wasp. Wikipedia says that there are 22,000 known species wasps in the superfamily Chalcidoidea worldwide with perhaps another 500,000 to be discovered and described. While most of the known species are parasitoids of other insects, some larvae feed inside seeds, stems or galls.

Okay, with those numbers we're probably not going to find out what species Sian had 'discovered'.

Terry also offered to see if he could narrow down the family to which the wasp belongs by examining it more closely. Sian accepted Terry's offer and set off to check the bagged branch in the field. She was pleased to find a wasp sitting on the outside of the bag just waiting for her to collect it. Inside, she found another five. They were easily transferred into a small plastic tube and delivered to the Museum.

Much to Sian's amazement, Terry was back to her the next day with not only a genus for her wasp but a possible species - *Tanaostigmodes* sp. (possibly *T. megalarus*). The book Terry was using to help identify the wasp has an index of plant hosts. Terry looked up *Bossiaea* and found there to be only one wasp genus listed as using this plant - *Tanaostigmodes*. It was then just a matter of comparing Sian's wasps to the description in the book and the identification was made. Terry says that this genus has some outstanding features, including the well-developed 'shoulders' that can be seen in the photos below.

Galls can be found on many species of native plants and most do little harm to the host plant. Have a closer look at the plants in the bushland and notice all of the bumps and lumps on their leaves and stems. When you consider that each lump represents a separate individual insect, and each type of bump is a different species, you start to realise how much of our wildlife is hidden from view and how dependent the insects are on healthy plant life.



Above and left: Photo courtesy of Terry Houston, WA Museum.



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THE URBAN BUSH TELEGRAPH



Urban Bushland Council's Events

WOODMAN POINT NATURE WALK

Saturday 22 August at 1.00pm-3.00pm

Enjoy an informative and delightful walk through a 'near CBD' and not often visited pristine remnant of Perth's urban coastal bushland. See old growth Tuarts and Rottnest Island Pine - further information on this important site is available at <http://www.bushlandperth.org.au/bushland-treasures/south-of-the-river/133-woodman-point-regional-park->.

This walk is led by the Perth Branch of Wildflower Society, jointly hosted by UBC that will also hold its General Meeting.

BYO your afternoon tea.

Meet at Woodman Point Café, 37 Jervoise Bay Cove (off O'Kane Crescent)

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

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