

## When the war is over: the end of Roe 8

By Danielle Brady



Celebration Walk 19 March 2017:  
Coolbellup to Bibra Lake  
Photo by S Stevens

Like many battlefields soon after the ceasefire, the Roe 8 reserve is eerily quiet, but for the sound of birds. A raw swathe of earth is dotted with huge piles of red mulch, all that remains of ancient jarrah and marri trees that once covered the centre of the reserve.

From November 2016 to March 2017 a battle was waged between those who opposed the Roe 8 highway extension and the contractors and police charged with executing the project. The landslide victory by McGowan's Labor in WA bought the project to a halt on March 11 but there is more to be said about the remarkable protest movement that helped make it happen.

In December 2015 the WA Supreme Court had ruled that the EPA assessment and recommendation to approve Roe 8, and the Environment Minister's subsequent approval, was invalid. After this ruling was overturned on appeal in 2016, Save Beeliar Wetlands sought special leave to appeal to the High Court. When this was unsuccessful on the 16<sup>th</sup> of

December 2016, commencement of works was incredibly rapid. Erection of temporary construction fencing along the Roe 8 reserve started on the Monday after the unsuccessful special leave hearing on a Friday. From that day a battle was fought with continuous onsite action, social media engagement, crowd-funded advertising and door-to-door community outreach by committed and organised protestors. The protest movement was initially based around a few community organisations but quickly grew to include new groups, who contributed their time and energy.

Non-violent direct action was an important part of the desperate battle to slow the rate of clearing until the state election. The 213 people arrested are still being processed through court and include local government councillors, teachers and academics, leaders of community organisations, minors and many who have never previously been charged with an offence. However, these were only a small

proportion of the hundreds who attended the site, kept watch around the perimeter, or participated in planned mass actions, often before work. It is likely that the 12<sup>th</sup> of January was the largest site walk-on in WA history. Multiple sources reported that more than 1000 people converged on a sleepy suburban street in Coolbellup, pushing over temporary fencing and surrounding a bulldozer before being pushed back by mounted police. In late January, a similar number stood in silence for an entire hour in Forest Place, Perth with only a small blue patch denoting their support for the Beeliar Wetlands. The Barnett government should have taken heed of these unusual events in a town

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# Editorial

Last year the Barnett Government released a draft Green Growth Plan (GGP) for Perth and Peel at 3.5 million people. The idea behind this plan was to carry out a strategic assessment of the needs of housing, mining, industry, infrastructure and conservation and to find an acceptable balance between them. The Government hoped that by doing this it could receive blanket approval from the Commonwealth for its development plans out to 2050.

The conservation movement welcomed the idea of carrying out a large scale strategic assessment instead of the usual piecemeal approach to development proposals. The draft GGP contained some good proposals, such as the promise to deliver on the long-awaited Peel Regional Park and extensions to Yalgorup National Park and the conservation of the Wilbinga area. The GGP also promised to introduce wetland buffer guidelines that have been blocked by developers for the past 20 years. However they will only apply to conservation category wetlands, which are less than 20% of the remaining wetlands.

The former Environment Minister, Albert Jacob, claimed that the GGP was a win for conservation because the Government intended to create another 160,000 ha of conservation reserves. While this is technically correct, it is very misleading because most of these "new" reserves are already in the conservation estate, having been purchased by the WAPC using the MRIF over the past 40 years. All that the Government really planned to do was to convert them from their current land tenure into reserves -- no new land was involved. In fact, on closer examination it became clear that the Government planned to downsize the current conservation estate by 90,000 ha. The draft GGP was no win for conservation -- it was in reality a great win for the real estate industry.

The GGP aroused considerable objections from the community and more than 600 submissions were received by the Premier's Department. Most of these objected to the proposals and pointed out numerous errors and omissions in the GGP. The UBC expressed great concern about the potential loss of about 30% of Bush Forever sites. Birdlife Australia and many others objected to the potential loss of 20,000 ha of Carnaby's Cockatoo habitat.

Since submissions closed in May 2016, many events have occurred that affect the GGP. In September 2016, the Commonwealth listed the banksia woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain as an endangered ecological commu-

nity. Also in that month protests occurred in Bayswater over the proposed filling of Carters Swamp for housing. In December 2016, massive public protests broke out against the clearing in the Beeliar wetlands for the proposed Perth Freight Link. In March 2017, the Barnett Government was resoundingly defeated at the polls and the Environment Minister lost his seat. Their callous attitude to the environment was cited by some election analysts as a major factor in their defeat.

The new McGowan Government has made a promising start by stopping the Roe 8 project and saving Carters Swamp. Now they must revise the GGP to genuinely address the needs of our community and the environment for the next 30 years.

The GGP is a once in a generation opportunity to develop a plan to conserve Perth and Peel's amazing biodiversity as the City grows to 3.5 million inhabitants.

We are calling on the Government to heed the views of the community and to carefully analyse the comments received on the draft GGP and to prepare a much better proposal which should be released for another round of public review later this year.

## JOIN THE UBC AT WALKS GUIDED BY LOCAL EXPERTS

Saturday 1st July, 8.00 am at **Landsdale Conservation Park**

Landsdale Reserve is Bush Forever site 199 of 15 ha. It is an endangered community type 20a, '*Banksia attenuata* woodlands over species-rich scrublands.' The reserve is in excellent condition with barely a grassy weed to be seen. The walk will be led by David Pike, whose knowledge of our Banksia Woodlands is awe-inspiring. Meet in Landsdale Rd, with parking on the verge approximately 120 metres east of the Evandale Rd intersection, Darch.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August, 9.00am at **Queens Park Bushland**

The Queens Park Bushland (BFS 284) forms part of Queens Park Regional Open Space. It contains remnant of Banksia/Marri bush land - beautiful, species-rich vegetation, including rare and endangered and priority flora. The walk will be led by Sara Saberi.

## AVAILABLE 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.

## Great gift idea

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

**\$10 plus \$2 postage**

**Available by mail order from the UBC office.**

## NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Compiled by: Renata Zelinova

PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO: [ubc@bushlandperth.org.au](mailto:ubc@bushlandperth.org.au)

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often dubbed “Dullsville”, because crowds of this size are normally only seen at sporting and music events.

The rate of clearing of Roe 8 was frenzied, but protestors were unwilling to concede defeat even after bulldozers entered the Beeliar Wetlands and destroyed an indigenous women’s site of cultural significance.



*Silence Speaks, Forest Place Perth, 29 January 2017.*

*Photo by S. Stevens*

Instead, actions were extended across the metro area through rallies, music concerts, banner drops, door-knocking, wobble-boarding and phone calling. There were countless letters, phone calls and emails to politicians, letters to the editor and calls to talkback radio. Innovative ideas and expertise were contributed by artists and performers, while filmmakers and photographers documented what was happening on site, including alleged contraventions to the project conditions of approval. Alongside them lawyers, consultant scientists, graphic designers and media writers gave their time pro bono. People worked in teams behind the scenes to comment rapidly on internet news, to ferry materials to tree-sitters, to prepare meals and provide medical support for site protestors, to hold fund raising concerts and co-ordinate activities. In the final weeks leading up to the election the Premier was surprised in his media appearances by a giant Carnaby’s cockatoo (looking for it’s offset) and a Pauline Hanson bride demanding her share of parliament.

It is difficult to summarize the hard work, passion, creativity and commitment of the protest movement. But despite all this, the government was unwilling to admit they had got it wrong and continued to clear banksia woodland right into the week before the March 11 election.



*Stirling Bridge Walk, Fremantle 5 March 2017*

*Photo by S. Stevens*

On election night when the Labor victory was announced, some campaigners shed bitter tears, crying “It was all for nothing”. They referred to the loss of a 30 meter wide strip running the length of the Roe 8 road reserve, the attendant loss of fauna and old growth trees – for a road that would not be built. For those involved in the campaign who had put their lives on hold; the victory was bittersweet. They rejoiced in the unseating of seven Ministers, including Environment Minister Albert Jacob who approved the project. But the intact urban bushland that they fought so hard to preserve has now been rent in two. In a bitter twist, the Liberal state president, Norman Moore, admitted after the election that the loss had been expected for a year. We now know that the frenzied clearing took place while they knew it was unlikely either Roe 8 or the Perth Freight Link would proceed.



*Re-erected temporary fencing around mulch piles in the Roe 8 reserve.*

Roe 8 was sufficiently important for McGowan to re-commit to stopping the project in his first press conference and to take action the following day. Community enthusiasm is now gathering for rehabilitation and groups assembled quickly to re-erect and monitor the once hated temporary fencing around the Roe 8 site to avoid further damage. Unusual summer rainfall in Perth has seen regrowth of marri stumps and zamia palms and banksia seedlings are sprouting in the areas first cleared.

However, enormous challenges lie ahead. One is removal of Roe 8 reservation from the Perth Metropolitan Region Scheme, a necessary precursor to any change of land use from road reserve to conservation estate. It is likely these changes will be slow and difficult, with the new Labor government still renegotiating the construction contracts.

The week following the election, a large crowd gathered again at the Roe 8 site. They met to celebrate the end of clearing and to share hope for the future. The bulldozers, security guards and razor wire were gone.

Amongst the crowd were indigenous elders, a senator, a federal MP, three local mayors and a newly elected state MP, several of her colleagues having given their apologies to attend their first cabinet meeting. Together they walked beside the Roe 8 reserve down the hillside toward Bibra Lake where thanks were given to the multiple groups who had worked together in loose coalition to achieve their common goal. During the battle, the Roe 8 protestors were derided by their opponents as “unemployed hippies” and “serial protestors” but the determined and ultimately successful protest against Roe 8 is clearly based in a strong, diverse community of spirit. Some members of that community have fought long enough to remember the halting of Roe 8 by the previous Labor government in 2001 and its later resurrection by the Barnett government. For those long term campaigners, this is only a ceasefire.

The war will be over only when the Beeliar Wetlands are preserved permanently at part of Beeliar Regional Park, and appreciated as an irreplaceable conservation asset to Western Australia.

*See page XX for more information on future plans for Beeliar Wetlands.*



# Bush Forever Coastal Dunes at Scarborough Beach Saved from Roads – How the Campaign was Won

By Robyn Murphy and Anthony James



Photo courtesy A. Richie, Community Newspaper Group

Celebrations broke out at *Beach Not Bitumen* on Thursday 4 May 2017 when the Minister for Planning Rita Saffioti announced that the new Labor Government would protect Bush Forever coastal dunes at Scarborough by ruling out the previous government's unnecessary, costly and environmentally damaging road building plans.

*Beach Not Bitumen* (BNB) has congratulated Minister Saffioti on her prompt and decisive action on Labor's commitment to protect Scarborough's regionally significant Quindalup coastal dune system by stopping the roads proposed by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority (MRA).

"The *Beach Not Bitumen* success is another example of the community being the last line of defence to protect our environment", BNB spokesperson said. "All efforts during our campaign to meet with the previous Minister or the developer, the MRA, were ignored and the local MP Liza Harvey was unconvinced of the value of these coastal dune systems and the retrograde nature of the roads proposal. The science and public opinion (93% of public submissions opposed the roads), as well as best-practice planning, was effectively being ignored by the decision makers."

The campaign to protect Bush Forever Area 310 (south) and Bush Forever Area 308 (north) began two years ago with the Friends of Trigg Beach and Friends of Trigg Bushland working to raise public awareness of the MRA's plans to extend the \$100m Scarborough Redevel-

opment into the protected sand dunes. "It became our responsibility by default to inform local residents and beach users as the MRA appeared to be hoping the road plans would sneak through under the radar. They could not have been more wrong and clearly underestimated how strongly people feel about preserving the natural environment along our coastline." Convenor of the Friends of Trigg Beach Robyn Murphy said.

In early 2016 a new group called *Save our Sand Dunes* was formed and then in October, *Beach Not Bitumen* was established to coordinate the campaign. Anthony James and Robyn Murphy became joint spokespersons within a campaign team bringing together experience and expertise from management strategy, PR, marketing, digital media, urban development, transport planning and environmental science. "We took our cue from the professional campaign run by *Rethink the Link* that was informed by the experience of the successful Melbourne campaign *Trains Not Toll Roads*. This enabled us to tap into the generously shared resources and expertise of *Rethink the Link* which was central to developing our campaign," Anthony James said.

*Beach Not Bitumen* was covered extensively through the Community Newspaper Stirling Times, which reported astutely and regularly on events as they developed. WA Today, ABC Perth Radio, and Channel 9, in particular, also followed and reported on the campaign. Channels 7, 10 & WTV, along with radio 6PR also covered the issue at critical times.

The campaign was crowd-funded, to further generate community awareness and participation, while producing professional branding, and a suite of quality material including Fact Sheets, colourful corflute signs, T shirts, posters, stickers, flyers, postcards and petitions which we utilised at "pop-up" stalls at the beach, local school fairs, markets etc. As the campaign became more visible so it gained more support through face-to-face engagement and professional social media reaching thousands of people weekly.

Support from the Urban Bushland Council and the Conservation Council of WA was invaluable, with Mary Gray and Piers Verstegen providing practical support and useful advice on environmental issues and campaign strategies.

The campaign team lobbied Councillors at the City of Stirling and turned up in significant numbers to Council



Photo by H. Dymond

Raising awareness and gathering support of locals for the protection of dunes north of the Scarborough Redevelopment site.



Photo by H. Dymond

*Beach Not Bitumen* supporters on the steps of Parliament.





Potions of Bush Forever Areas 310 (left) and 308 (right), where roads were proposed as part of the Scarborough Redevelopment.

meetings where debate occurred over the then Minister's attempts to get the City to hand over the two Bush Forever Areas to the MRA for their roads. To its credit the Council delayed the decision and effectively stymied the MRA "land grab".

The road threat prompted the Friends of Trigg Bushland to work with Botanist Bronwen Keighery to notify the Department of Parks and Wildlife of a stand of Rottneet Island Pine (*Callitris preissii*) growing on the proposed road route north of Scarborough Beach as a Threatened Ecological Community. The Friends of Trigg Bushland is awaiting the outcome of the notification. A positive outcome would have a significant impact on the MRA's plans and certainly make a mockery of its totally inadequate environment assessment of the area.

When no progress was being made with the Liberal Government, the MRA, the EPA or the local MP; the campaign team made a strategic decision leading up to the March 2017 State Election to support the party or parties that committed to protecting the sand dunes and ruling out the roads. Support had already been gained from Chris Tallentire MP who was the Labor Shadow Minister for the Environment and who presented our 3,000 signature petition to Parliament. Chris also provided the campaign team with invaluable advice about political and Parliamentary processes.

A series of meetings were held at the proposed road site with key MPs including Alannah McTiernan (now Minister for Agriculture), Tony Walker Labor candidate for Scarborough and Greens candidates Judith Cullity, and Alison Xamon, all of whom supported the BNB campaign. Leaflets were put in letterboxes throughout the Scarborough electorate urging people to consider this issue when they voted. A questionnaire was sent to all Scarborough and North Metropolitan Region candidates



Beach Not Bitumen 'pop-up' stall.

asking them that if elected would they:

1. Rule out the building of two new roads and car parks extending the Esplanade north and south of Scarborough Beach through Bush Forever Areas 308 and 310?
2. Protect forever the coastal dune systems north and south of Scarborough Beach for current and future generations?
3. Work with the community to improve pedestrian and cycling access and facilities and introduce sustainable transport options such as increased and improved public transport, bike hire, car sharing and light rail to facilitate public access to Scarborough Beach?

One Liberal candidate replied - Peter Collier MLC who supported current policy. Positive responses were received from Labor, the Greens and local candidate Steven Pynt. The responses enabled BNB to produce a "How to Vote" flyer encouraging voters to vote Labor or Greens. These were distributed in thousands of letter boxes and at polling booths on election day.

"The timing of the State Election was critical to the success of our campaign, as was the tireless work of our campaign team who effectively either put their lives on hold or multiplied their workloads for six months so they could devote an enormous amount of time to the campaign. That, along with the stress involved, took its toll and we had a few people "retire" but public support grew with each passing month as the absolute folly of the road plans became more apparent, so the campaign was consistently replenished with new energy and skills." Robyn Murphy said.

"It is remarkable how a group of people can come together and achieve a significant positive outcome, working intensively on a voluntary basis many without knowing each other previously, dealing with stresses and differences, all without any time or resources for dealing with those things. It's a credit to everyone involved, for keeping their eye on the shared vision." Anthony James said.

Beach Not Bitumen has a meeting with the new Minister for the Environment Stephen Dawson in July at which it will seek permanent protection for these locally and regionally significant coastal dunes north and south of Scarborough Beach. BNB also looks forward to contributing the wealth of research, ideas and expertise that it gathered throughout the campaign to the process of establishing genuinely sustainable transport planning for Scarborough Beach.

<https://beachnotbitumen.com/>

# Clearing of Threatened Ecological Community at Perth Airport

By Kevin McLean

## Documented history of natural areas conservation values at Perth Airport

At the time of Perth Airport's privatisation in 1997, the 2,100 hectare site contained about 700 hectares of native vegetation. This vegetation had been recognised for its environmental values in the WA Government's *Darling System, WA: proposals for parks and reserves/ System 6 Study Report to the EPA* published in 1981 – Perth Airport being Site M52. The relevant Recommendation in the *Report* was essentially that as much of the native vegetation and habitat on the site as possible should be conserved.

Further recognition of Perth Airport's environmental significance was manifest when the Australian Heritage Commission placed two very large natural areas at Perth Airport on the Register of the National Estate (RNE) in the 1999 – Forrestfield Bushland (234 hectares) and Munday Swamp Bushland (279 hectares). The Australian Heritage Commission was subsequently replaced by the Australian Heritage Council in 2004 and these sites were subsequently given the somewhat downgraded status of "Indicative Places" under that body but RNE listing is still supposed to have some protective effect on Commonwealth land.

Perth Airport's environmental values were also recognised in Bush Forever (Site 386) – though the Commonwealth has allowed the leaseholder to virtually ignore this status as being derived from a State initiative and therefore having no legal bearing on Commonwealth land.

But even an untutored person with a basic understanding and appreciation of natural history could easily reach the conclusion that Perth Airport's natural areas are substantial and diverse and indicative of that native vegetation and habitat that would have occurred on the Swan Coastal Plain generally at the time of European settlement. It is certainly not pristine and unaltered but neither is any other natural remnant around Perth.

The area has paperbark and tea-tree wetlands and upland banksia woodland ridges as well as the transitional slopes between them. The wetlands and bushland sustain a wide variety of native plants, birds, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. The area also supports large populations of the Southern Brown Bandicoot. Most of the natural areas are very beautiful though this feature is apparently of no real consequence in environmental assessment processes which purportedly give precedence to scientific criteria – despite the fact that these seldom amount to anything more than inventories of species and obscure combinations thereof. In short, any sensible person could come to the conclusion that in a region as heavily cleared as the Swan Coastal Plain – particularly south of the Swan River – large tracts of bushland and wetlands such as those at Perth Airport would have to be recognised as having substantial natural heritage and conservation value.

And this fact was to some degree recognised and accommodated in the *1999 Perth Airport Master Plan* released after the airport was privatised in 1997. This document and two five-yearly *Perth Airport Master Plans* approved subsequent to it (1994 and 2009) included two Conservation Precincts totalling about 310 hectares. People interested in the protection and management of the airport's natural areas did not think it was enough but Perth Airport argued it was an area to rival Kings Park in size. This claim actually appears to have been somewhat exaggerated but any perusal of *Perth Airport Master Plans* and *Environment Strategies*

released between 1999 and 2014 shows plenty of evidence of the leaseholder drawing attention to the Conservation Precincts and the precision with which they had been identified so as to encapsulate the best of the site's environmental attributes.

At the same time, however, the Commonwealth was approving massive developments which chewed into high conservation value native vegetation and habitat outside of the Conservation Precincts. Incredibly – especially in light of recent developments - rehabilitation work in Conservation Precinct areas was actually used as leverage for gaining approvals for the destruction of large areas of bushland outside of the Precincts. Some of this clearing has been assessed by means of Major Development Plans prepared under the Airports Act 1996 but some has not. In any case, as anybody who has prepared submissions relating to these processes would be sadly aware, environmental assessment at the Commonwealth level is little more than a bureaucratic formality and it really doesn't have much to do with environmental protection. Apart from providing work for bureaucrats and consultants it is difficult to see what the process achieves.

## So why the new Airport Master Plan no longer shows 'Conservation Zones'?

But even in this bleak context it was a massive shock to find the *2014 Preliminary Draft Perth Airport Master Plan* had simply erased from its pages the Conservation Precincts identified in the 3 previous approved five-yearly *Master Plans*. There is little doubt this was done with the prior knowledge of the Abbot Government's representatives and there is little doubt that the lessee would have received some indication that such a proposal would be likely to be favourably received. The pathetic excuse proffered by Perth Airport for the move was to allow the *EPBC Act* to determine development approvals rather than to have the *Master Plan* identify conservation priorities. And why not? After all, whereas the leaseholder is more or less required to conform to the *Master Plan* under the Airports Act 1996, history has shown assessment under the *EPBC Act* offers virtually no protection for the natural areas whatsoever.

The Commonwealth has been unbelievably generous and indulgent in its approach to Australia's privatised major airports generally. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the two major political parties, who both supported privatisation, have been willing to do practically anything to make their initiative appear to be a success and their indulgent disposition helps explain things like outrageous parking fees and any number of development approvals having serious environmental impacts or raising serious urban planning concerns.

The *EPBC Act 1999* was drafted to prioritise and protect development over and against natural heritage and it has been administered to prioritise and protect development over and against natural heritage. In the weird world from which this Act emanated, and from whence it is administered, only impacts on species and communities in really serious trouble warrant formal assessment and - going by long years of experience - that assessment is very unlikely to provide any worthwhile protection for the species and communities anyway. The fact that environmental impacts can and do occur on Commonwealth land would lead one to suspect the threshold for triggering *EPBC Act* assessment would be somewhat lower on Commonwealth land than that





Clearing of Banksia woodlands TEC at Perth Airport for development and to establish a 'Living Stream'. Photo by K. McLean

applied to non-Commonwealth land given that no other jurisdiction has authority to conduct assessments on that land. Well the Act seems to read that way. But that's just words. In fact the Act – certainly in the case of Perth Airport - is administered such that potential environmental impacts on this Commonwealth land must affect “matters of national significance” to trigger assessment even if a much lower threshold for assessment or clearing permit processes might apply if the land were under state jurisdiction.

### **The EPBC Act fails to prevent loss of Banksia woodland TEC at Perth Airport**

A major feature of Perth Airport's natural areas is its banksia woodlands. A good deal of this beautiful and disappearing landscape has been cleared since privatisation – much of the associated development being unrelated to aviation and undertaken for the purpose of allowing the primary leaseholder to sub-let Commonwealth land for commercial income. However, there are still exceedingly environmentally valuable banksia woodlands remaining on the site. They are certainly significant in the context of the Swan Coastal Plain, and, as this biogeographic region's specific range of native biota does not occur anywhere else in the world, they are nationally and internationally significant as well. As one indication of their importance, collectively their continued existence will probably have considerable bearing on whether the Swan Coastal Plain will continue to be able to sustain a number of species of native birds – especially on its eastern side.

On September 16, 2016, the Commonwealth Minister for Energy and the Environment, the Hon. Josh Frydenberg, declared Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain a Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) under the *EPBC Act 1999*. As it happened, Perth Airport had just produced a *Major Development Plan* for a very large Direct Factory Outlet near the domestic terminal that involved the clearing of about 2 hectares of Banksia Woodland of the Swan Coastal Plain. The plan had – at that point – not been approved. So did the declaration of the native vegetation's TEC status bring about any reconsideration of the site itself or its construction envelope? Of course not. The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon. Darren Chester, simply approved the plan as it stood, congratulated the proponent, and casually pointed out that they would have to obtain a Permit to destroy a TEC under the *EPBC Act*. And, as you would expect, submissions strongly opposing the approval of the *MDP* and the issuing of the *EPBC Act* Permit on environmental grounds had no effect whatsoever.

Not long afterwards Perth Airport had to release a variation to the *MDP* because they had not, in the original *MDP*, alluded to the fact that they intended to clear another 2 hectares of Banksia Woodland to the west of the site to relocate

one of the airport's two main drains running though the DFO site. This was considered to be part of their “Living Stream” initiative which, for some unknown reason, was never subject to a *Major Development Plan* or formal environmental assessment despite its cutting a very long and very wide swathe through land including high conservation value native vegetation and despite its potential to effect ground water levels over a substantial area. But even the fact that the proponent had to concede the Banksia Woodland TEC in the path of the drainage diversion was in Excellent Condition did not prevent the Minister from approving the *MDP* variation and it did not prevent the Department of Environment and Energy from issuing a Permit to destroy a TEC patch in Excellent Condition.

The “Living Stream” initiative – which has been proceeding for some years - involves digging a very wide channel to accommodate the airport's Southern Main Drain, constructing some exceedingly large compensating basins, and then revegetating the resultant ditches with native plants. It can be very difficult to see the native plants for the weeds but if the work had been carried out only in degraded sites it might have had some merit. But patches of very good quality native vegetation and habitat have been destroyed to establish the greatly expanded channel and the “Living Stream” is a very poor substitute. The expansive channel widening and massive compensating basin excavations produce very large quantities of sand and it raises some suspicions as to whether some rather convenient sand quarrying has been occurring.

The non-protection of Perth Airport's natural areas is an ongoing disgrace and the Commonwealth's manifest indifference to losses of Banksia Woodland vegetation at the airport – even subsequent to its listing as a TEC under the *EPBC Act* – demonstrates how little faith the community can place in the Commonwealth's endeavours with respect to protecting our natural heritage. As regards Perth Airport's natural heritage – and probably that of the Swan Coastal Plain generally – the *EPBC Act* has no efficacy in protecting the environment and no efficacy in conserving biodiversity.

Perth Airport is now planning to construct a major new runway – a quiet unnecessary runway – and this project will have really devastating impacts on the bushland and wetlands at Perth Airport. No doubt this initiative will be welcomed wholeheartedly by infrastructure-obsessed politicians and the usual corporate opportunists and their cheer squads but it is a generation of leaders putting the last nails in the coffin of the Swan Coastal Plain's ecological sustainability and they thoroughly deserve the contempt with which they are regarded by members of the community having a genuine concern for the nation's future.



# Group News Group News Group News

## Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor: the future of the Beeliar Wetlands.

By Felicity Bairstow

Around ten people shared the abundant snacks at the 2016 AGM of the Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor group (CCWC). But nearly 200 people attended the 2017 AGM on the 29<sup>th</sup> March at the Wetlands Education Centre in Hope Road, Bibra Lake. Many of the attendees and new members had been involved in the successful fight to stop Roe 8. CCWC, or “Cockburn Wild”, hopes to harness the incredible community spirit displayed over the past few months and to play a leading role in rehabilitation and protection of the Beeliar Wetlands. CCWC committee members have held meetings with the new Transport and Planning Minister Rita Saffioti, the new Minister for the Environment Stephen Dawson, local MPs Peter Tingley and Lisa O’Malley and the Building Roe 8 Alliance. A high priority is to have Roe 8 and 9 removed from the Metropolitan Regional Scheme and incorporated into Beeliar Regional Park. We would like to ensure funding is set aside for rehabilitation of the full corridor and to have a new Corridor Park Management Plan encompassing the economic, cultural, social and environmental requirements of the wildlife park.

Expert advice we have received is that the Roe 8 cleared areas should be allowed to regrow in 2017 with infill planting starting in 2018, hence the need to keep the fences up to protect the regrowth. There are other essential tasks such as removal of asbestos contaminated mulch piles and limestone road base from the site and a new site management plan to cover fencing, hygiene and weed control.

We had already set up a Revegetation Working Group and a Scientific Advisory Group with some of WA’s leading experts in ecological restoration. At the recent AGM, members received a briefing on CCWC’s vision of a wildlife corridor from the Beeliar Wetlands to the Indian Ocean (view our interactive map on the website below). A new and expanded committee was elected which will cover functions from youth engagement to grant applications and everything in between. The Roe 8 campaign has shown us what a committed community can achieve and we look forward to the enhancement of the wildlife corridor for future generations to enjoy. For more information about Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor, or to get involved, visit our site:

<http://www.cockburnwild.org/>

## Friends of John Forrest National Park

By Jan King

In its current form, the Friends of John Forrest National Park began in 2009 in the Priest Creek Catchment in the south west section of the park. About ten years previously a friends group had been active, but circumstances brought their attempts at controlling watsonia to a halt and the watsonia happily spread. A couple of “flatlanders” who had been working with the Mount Henry Peninsula Conservation Group for about 20 years



Joe King spraying heavy infestations of *Watsonia*. Photo by J. King  
moved up to the hills on the border of John Forrest National Park in their retirement. They could not bear to see the iconic John Forrest National Park succumb to a take-over by weeds.

Consultation with staff at the Department of Parks and Wildlife resulted in the provision of herbicide, backpack and garden spray equipment to the Friends. *Watsonia meriana* was chemically treated, hand dug and flower/seed heads removed in areas nearby Throssell Road and near catchments of creek lines and at the source of Priest Creek tributaries. Department of Parks and Wildlife then came with a 400 litres rig to spray large areas where watsonia dominated and the results were dramatic. Those areas have now regenerated with native vegetation. Follow-up back-pack control by the Friends Group has prevented watsonia re-establishing. Many woody weeds have been removed, and herbaceous weeds tackled as they arose in many areas of John Forrest National Park.

By 2010, a 300 litres spray rig with 100 metres of hose, mounted on a trailer towed with the park’s Kubota buggy was made available to the two volunteers. Areas along and beyond firebreaks could now be tackled. Then in 2011, a 400 litres Quickspray® rig mounted on a tandem trailer with dual hoses and remote control rewind was made available. By joining hoses to give a length of 600 metres, remote infestations of watsonia down steep, rocky, heavily vegetated valleys were reached. About 50,000 litres of various herbicides to control weeds has been applied since 2009 with no observable off-target



Val English, Jan King and Liz Middelberg removing Lavender. Photo by C. Levett



# Group News Group News Group News

damage. Monitoring has shown that the bush soon regenerates and clumps of corms deteriorate. An added bonus was finding and reporting several previously unknown populations of the threatened wild native rose (*Diplolaena andrewsii*) among wandoo trees in remote rocky outcrops.

From 2013, three successful applications were submitted for State NRM Community Action Grants with Jane Brook Catchment Group as sponsor, for a contractor to work on watsonia from 2014 through to 2017. This enabled management of further areas between Park Road Scenic Drive and the Heritage Trail, and this year, the western sector north of Rocky Pool. Concurrently a three-year Perth NRM Resilient Landscapes Grant has been obtained by Jane Brook Catchment Group for a major ecology project along the Heritage Trail, for which Friends of John Forrest National Park have made a major volunteer in-kind co-contribution. Work has proceeded from Clutterbuck and Mahogany creeks in the east, along Jane Brook as far as Pechey Road in the west and has included the old Hovea Station site, and around the picnic and tavern area.

Records and GPS photo points had been kept from the outset, but the grant criteria prompt substantial administration input, so brochures, invitations and newsletters have been produced. Regular community involvement has increased from two to 12, with weekly Bush Care Days each Saturday morning 8am to 10am, finishing with morning tea, from July through November. Our willing members are variously and professionally skilled, contributing with expertise in wildflower identification, chain sawing, youth work, ecology and electronic device application use. The future looks bright for the natural regeneration of John Forrest National Park in the care of this sound Friends group.

*Reprinted with permission from the Bushland News, the Department of Parks and Wildlife's Urban Nature Newsletter, Issue 101, Autumn 2017.*

## Bungendore Park Management Committee

*By Marg Owen*

The WA Insect Study Society was happy to assist the Bungendore Management Committee by participating in a Bio Blitz in October 2016. Around 20 members attended and the insects and arthropods found were placed in containers and given to David and Fleur Knowles for identification. These findings added to the knowledge of the spineless wonders of the Bungendore Park.

David may be known to UBC group members through his talks and as the creator of 'Spineless Wonders' ([www.spinelesswonders.com.au](http://www.spinelesswonders.com.au)). Many schools have had the benefits of David and Fleur's presentations. The hands on experiences enjoyed by school children and adults are unforgettable.

David had already sampled on two days and three nights in December 2015, January 2016 and October/November 2016 in Bungendore Park and 331 species were found. After the species were identified and photographed David returned them to the areas from whence they came. No



*Bio Blitz participants at Bungendore Park. Photo by M. Owen*  
animals are harmed in the process. David will be able to present a bound book to the Management Committee with photographs and identification of the fauna found.

Bungendore Park is 498 hectares and lies on the Darling Scarp east of Armadale. The average rainfall ranges between 1,100- 1,200mm. The vegetation consists of open Jarrah-Marri forest with smaller areas of Wandoo woodland and heath surrounding granite outcrops. The dominant vegetation complex is Upland Jarrah Forest.

David is an advocate for acknowledgement and respect for insects that make up nearly 80% of Western Australia's land fauna, and chelicerates, that is spiders, scorpions, ticks, mites and harvestmen, make up a further 15.99%.

## Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park

*By Kevin McLeod*

The Friends group is trialling a new method for lowering nutrient levels in the Goollelal Lake to reduce the midge problem in the Yellagonga Regional Park. With support from the Department of Parks and Wildlife, the Friends Group have installed floating beds of various reeds and water plants and a solar powered pump to help move water between treatment ponds in the lake.

Floating beds of reeds is a popular method of water purification overseas because of the additional benefits of providing bird and fish habitat. The Lake Goollelal trial is the first example where Western Australian reeds and sedges have been used (see page 10). Each floating bed unit consists of twenty sub-units. Observed differences in the root development of the different species is noticeable.

Sometimes it seems every duck in the lake wants to squat on the floating reeds which adds to the manure load in the pond. Good to have the ducks' endorsement.

The installation of the floating beds was made possible by Greening WA who helped to organise environmentally minded employees of Shell Australia and provided the technical expertise. Shell corporation funded all the materials for the floating beds.





Photo by K. Mcleod

*Floating bed of various species of WA reeds and water sedges.*

The solar powered water pump was installed to transfer water to the ponds containing the floating beds. The root mass of the plants on these floating islands support a range of bacteria and animals that help to reduce the dead material and convert the nitrites to nitrates and mineralise the dissolved phosphorus.

Water from the ponds with the floating beds flows back into the lake through the pond sand bank which provide additional filtering. The system of ponds should work better with an aerator which improves dissolved oxygen levels and increasing the effectiveness of the bacteria.

Purchase of the solar powered pump was funded through plants sales by the Friends Group. The solar unit was installed by the Solair Group.

A great effort and a lot of fun.



Photo by K. Mcleod

*The solar unit powering the water pump adjacent to the floating islands along the south west shore of Lake Goollelal, Kingsley.*

## Close to the Edge

### Threatened Species Art Exhibition

Canning River Eco Education Centre  
Kent Street and Queens Parks Road, Wilson

**Opening night Friday 2 June 6.30pm**

**Exhibition runs Sat 3 June to Mon 5 June**

**9am to 4pm**

**RSVP to CREEC on 94617160 or email [creec@canning.wa.gov.au](mailto:creec@canning.wa.gov.au)**

## OVER 600 RED-TAILS ROOSTING AT SHENTON PARK

*By Marg Owen*

One Sunday night I decided to try to count the Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoos as they fly in to roost at UWA Sports Park, Shenton Park, as they do every night. This is a very hard job as they delight in flying over and back and around, and then over and back again. When they fly away from the roost site, I put, for example, minus three, and when they fly back I put the number flying in. After a couple of hours when it had become quite dark, my paper was covered in numbers to add up and to subtract. In addition to the red tails at UWA Sports Park, others were roosting on the east side of Brockway Road on UWA's Lot 4, which includes Underwood Avenue Bushland.

To my amazement I had recorded 610 red tails roosting. If this is an anywhere near accurate count, it is no wonder that red tails are being seen by the community all over the suburbs. It is no wonder that a proportion of that 600 fly into Underwood Bushland every morning to eat Jarrah seeds.

The reason they are roosting in UWA Sports Park is because of Underwood Bushland.

Adding to this changing situation of increasing red-tails in the area, the Carnaby's black cockatoos are also seeking food. The presence of larger numbers of black cockatoos does not mean that the future is becoming brighter for both species. We have to stop destroying habitat such as Banksia and Jarrah woodlands and also provide water and food in our gardens and other possible places.

Apart from the continuing threat to Underwood Avenue Bushland, the proposed redevelopment at the Royal Perth Hospital Shenton Park site does not protect the small 3.4 hectares bushland link between two Bush Forever sites - Underwood and Shenton Bushlands.

We are looking to the new Labor government to follow State policies and we look forward to meeting Minister Dawson in the near future.



*Mary Gray, UBC President and Ron Johnstone, WA Museum with the Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo that was found on a road in Carlisle. Ron provided an update on the status of Black Cockatoos at the UBC Annual General Meeting. Photo by K. Sarti*



# Group News Group News



The Eastern Hills Branch of Wildflower Society of WA present a series of talks promoting the diversity of the country's flora. Visitors are welcome.

**Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> May**

Penny Hussey will talk on Native Gardens

**Friday, 23rd June**

Terry MacFarlane will present on the Delights of *Thysanotus*

**Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> July**

Janet and Robert Atkins will share their travels along the Tanami Track & associated places

**Venue:** Octagonal Hall, McGlew St, Glen Forrest

Please Note: Doors open at 7.30 pm for a start at 8.00pm  
\$2 entry

## The Friends of Shepherds Bush

*By Elizabeth Griffin*

The Friends group have scheduled two days of bushcare. 11th June - weeding/cleaning up; meeting at 9:30am at Shepherds Bush Drive entrance and 23rd July - planting; meeting 9:30am, Robertson Road cycleway entrance or Shepherds Bush Drive.

We have approximately 30 people who have shown interest in the Group so far and have already held three very successful weeding/clean up days with 16-20 people joining in each time. The City of Joondalup staff will be assisting with the planting day by providing approximately 85 indigenous plants and tools.

For information about the Group, find us on Face Book - Friends of Shepherds Bush or email to [Fosbush@gmail.com](mailto:Fosbush@gmail.com).

## Friends of Lake Claremont are hosting Night Chats at Lake Claremont

**When: Tuesday 23 May, 2017, 6-7 pm**

**Where:** Claremont Aquatic Centre, 12 Davies Road, Claremont

**Guest speaker:** Mary Gray, President of the UBC, an Environmental Scientist and honorary Life Member of the Wildflower Society of WA

### IS BUSH FOREVER REALLY BUSH FOREVER?

Lake Claremont is a Bush Forever Site. The talk will explore how effective the Bush Forever program is and what still needs to happen to stop the loss of urban bushland.

Doors open at 5.30 pm, please use the main pool entrance.

[www.friendsoflakeclaremont.org](http://www.friendsoflakeclaremont.org)

◇ What's new? ◇ What's new? ◇

## BOOK LAUNCH

22 May, the World Biodiversity Day, will be celebrated with the release of the first practical guide to biodiversity restoration of Banksia woodlands on the Swan Coastal Plain.

### BANKSIA WOODLANDS

#### A restoration guide for the Swan Coastal Plain

by Jason Stevens, Deanna Rokich, Vernon Newton, Russell Barrett and Kingsley Dixon

Launched by the Hon Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Environment

Monday 22 May 2017 5.30 – 7.00 pm

Aspects of Kings Park Gallery Shop off Fraser Avenue, Kings Park Parking at Wadjuk Carpark (main carpark)  
RSVP to [scienceadmin@bgpa.wa.gov.au](mailto:scienceadmin@bgpa.wa.gov.au)

## Banksia Woodland Management Workshop

The Department of Parks and Wildlife invites you to the Banksia Woodland Management Workshop on **Friday 16th June 2017 from 10am – 4.30pm** at the Keiran McNamara Conservation Science Centre, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Kensington WA.

We are planning a packed program of 21 speakers giving five, 15 and 20-minute talks for community and professional land managers of banksia woodland. Beginning with an overview of banksia woodlands on the Swan Coastal Plain and their recent federal listing as a threatened ecological community, Parks and Wildlife staff will then share outcomes from five years of the Banksia Woodland Restoration Project, as well as research on fire recovery and weed management. To follow, sessions will showcase studies from respected academics and researchers on the topics of dieback, groundwater, genetics, fire, and fauna, and feature case studies of banksia woodland management from local government and community perspectives. An opportunity for informal discussion will follow. The workshop is a free event with lunch, afternoon tea and refreshments provided.

Post-workshop field trip: Join us for a tour of Parks and Wildlife banksia woodland restoration site on Tuesday 20th June 2017 (10am – 12 noon) at Anketell Road in Oakford (self-drive).

To register, contact Julia Cullity at [Julia.Cullity@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:Julia.Cullity@dpaw.wa.gov.au) or on 9442 0320 (please indicate whether you will be attending the workshop, field trip or both). Registrations close Friday 2nd June 2017.

## 2018 Swan Alcoa Landcare Program Funding Open

SALP aims to protect, restore and manage natural assets with consideration to a broad ecological context, by funding the community to enhance and restore critical habitat and ecological linkages within the Swan Region.

The key objectives of the program are:

- To retain or restore habitats in our river, wetland and coastal foreshores and our bushland
- To protect and enhance the quality of ground water and surface water in our river systems and wetlands
- To improve ecological linkages across our region.

For more information go to <http://www.perthnrm.com/projects/swan-alcoa-landcare-program/salp-funding-applications-and-guidelines>

**APPLICATIONS CLOSE FRIDAY 2 JUNE 2017 AT 4.30pm**

The Program is funded by ALCOA Australia and the Department of Parks and Wildlife.



## Urban Bushland Council's Events

**Monday 29th May 2017**

**Guest Speaker: Kate Brown**, a highly respected ecologist with the Department of Parks and Wildlife in the Swan Region of Western Australia, working on the protection and restoration of regionally significant bushland including a number of threatened ecological communities.

She will share some wonderful news on the '*Return of the Australian Hollyhock and other restoration stories from Penguin Island*'.



**6.00pm light refreshments for 6.30pm start  
at Conference Room 7, City West Lotteries House, West Perth  
All welcome.**

**At all talks \$5 raffle door entry for great prizes.**

For details of planned guided walks see page 2.

## 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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<http://twitter.com/#!/UrbanBushlandWA>

