

## PROPOSED THIRD RUNWAY AT PERTH AIRPORT THREATENS HIGH VALUE BUSHLAND AND WETLANDS

Munday Swamp is a remarkable wetland situated in the heart of metropolitan Perth, yet many people would not be able to place it on a map. It lies hidden in relative anonymity and protected from urban sprawl within the Perth Airport. Now, in an attempt to keep up with the explosive growth of the city and Western Australia in general the airport is proposing to build a third runway. The recently released Perth Airport Preliminary Draft Master Plan 2014 shows that Munday Swamp and surrounding bushland is at risk from the proposed runway and supporting infrastructure.

There is no doubt that Munday Swamp is an ecologically and culturally significant wetland. It is listed on the Register of the National Estate and is also currently listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia. In the 2009 Master Plan Perth Airport acknowledged the importance of Munday Swamp and accordingly protected it within their 233 hectare Precinct 7 conservation area (page 40 2009 Master Plan). An additional 76 hectares of remnant bushland and constructed wetland comprised a second conservation precinct at the southern end of the airport land. Under the new Master Plan both conservation precincts are abolished (page 111 2014 Master Plan).

Munday Swamp is surrounded by vegetation representative of Guildford and Southern River vegetation complexes. These types of vegetation complexes have largely been cleared elsewhere within the Perth metropolitan area, with less than 10 percent of Guildford and less than 20 percent of Southern River complex remaining on the Swan Coastal Plain. Munday Swamp also includes examples of plant communities uncommon in the Perth region and three threatened ecological community types. In addition, the bushland contains the following regionally significant spe-

Perth Airport - Proposed 3rd Runway Development.  
Map based on Figure 3.2 in Perth Airport Master Plan 2014 p.105



cies: *Eucalyptus ssp elegantella*, *Tripterococcus paniculatus*, *Myriophyllum echinatum*, *Haemodorum loratum* and *Banksia telmatea*.

Munday Swamp provides habitat for a rich assemblage of fauna which together are representative of the regional environment. Surveys of the area

(Continued on page 9)

### Inside this issue:

Planning for Bushfire Risk Management	3
Call for control of Corellas	5
Group News	6
Local Biodiversity Program Legacy	8
Petition to save Carnabys' black cockatoos	9

# Editorial

After 14 years of Bush Forever implementation, the MRS Text Amendment for Bush Forever has finally been signed by the Minister for Planning, Hon John Day. But it does not give the much needed statutory protection for all Bush Forever sites. It simply says that the areas shown on the MRS map are Bush Forever Areas. It does not even define them.

The UBC yet again calls on the State Government to secure all sites for the exclusive purpose of nature conservation and public appreciation - by acquiring all freehold sites, ceding them to the Crown, and vesting them in a suitable land manager as A class nature reserves under the Land Administration Act.

The sites that *have been* acquired by the WAPC have still *not yet been transferred* to the conservation estate. Why this intransigence? Bush Forever is a world class conservation plan brought in by a Liberal government with bipartisan support, yet the Barnett government has not completed the implementation task and indeed has stopped progress towards conservation management of the acquired sites.

This whole process was to be finished in 2010, 4 years ago. The Government has interfered with the WAPC's role of acquiring sites and installing initial capital works and weed control funded by the Metropolitan Region Improvement Trust Fund (MRIF). This is both questionable and unacceptable. The money is there in the Fund.

This scenario is akin to leaving the roof off the Perth Arena and stopping the completion of its construction for some budget reason. Or acquiring the highly valued Mona Lisa and leaving it for months on the verandah in the sun, rain and wind until there is room in the gallery.

There is currently an 'Inquiry into the Potential Environmental Contribution of Recreational Hunting Systems' being conducted by the Standing Committee on Public Administration (Legislative Council of WA). The UBC together with the Wildflower Society appeared before the Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> August. The details will soon be available in Hansard and the Committee is due to report in December, so watch out for it.

The federal Department of the Environment is currently assessing the UBC's and the Wildflower Society's joint nomination of the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain as a Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) under the federal *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. As part of this process the Department of the Environment held a three day workshop with WA scientists in June. The final assessment report is due by December this year, so we hope that the federal Act stays in place and the Minister makes a decision. It is the threatening processes which are so widespread and potentially devastating.

There are problems with the interpretation of the revised *Draft Planning for Bushfire Risk Management Guidelines* released by the WA Planning Commission in May for public consultation as well as other bushfire risk management publications. Public consultation period for the *Guidelines* and a new draft *State Planning Policy 3.7: Planning for Bushfire Risk Management* closed in July and August. However, further opportunity exists to provide comments on a related document, the *Proposed Planning and Development (Bushfire Risk Management) Regulations 2014*, released for public consultation till 31 October. In July, the UBC organised a panel discussion addressing various aspects of bushfire risk management. See the article about this on page 3.

Western Australian Local Government Association's Local Biodiversity Program which started as the Perth Biodiversity Project (PBP) has come to an end due to lack of funding. Many challenges remain in protecting biodiversity locally and the story is given on page 8. The UBC contributed a few words about the benefits of this Program in the booklet released recently by WALGA 'Celebrating thirteen years of Action for Biodiversity'. We do hope this project continues so that all local governments have their biodiversity strategies in place and being implemented, including through integration into their Local Planning Schemes.

On a positive note, the EPA assessed the Keane Road Extension proposed by the City of Armadale as environmentally unacceptable and there were no appeals. We await Minister Jacob's decision based on this advice from the EPA.

## Auditor Wanted for UBC Audit of Financial Books

### Do you know anyone who would be willing to act as the auditor of the UBC books?

Our current auditor Jacqui Le-Fevre is retiring this year after many years of auditing our books at pro bono rates. Jacqui tells me the books take about one day to audit for an experienced financial person. The books are recorded on an Excel spreadsheet and available very early January each year. It is preferable that the auditor have CPA or similar qualifications as some grants require the books to be audited by such a person.

I am happy to discuss the books with anyone who may be interested in considering the role of auditor – contact me on [chrisallbeury@gmail.com](mailto:chrisallbeury@gmail.com) or 0407 292 323 after 9.15am most days.

Many thanks

Chris Allbeury, Treasurer UBC



# PROPOSED BUSHFIRE RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK

In May this year, the Minister for Planning released for public comment several documents designed to address bushfire risk management. Public consultation period had closed for two of them, the draft *State Planning Policy 3.7: Planning for Bushfire Risk Management* and the *Draft Planning for Bushfire Risk Management Guidelines*. The third document, the proposed *Planning and Development (Bushfire Risk Management) Regulations 2014* and the associated Discussion Paper are open for public comment till 31 October. The regulations are designed to complement the SPP 3.7 and the Bushfire Risk Management Guidelines and respond to recommendations made in a report on the Perth Hills bushfire February 2011 review.

The release of the revised *Planning for Bushfire Risk Management Guidelines*, prepared by the Department of Planning and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, highlighted the differences in interpretations of recommended bushfire risk management techniques by various stakeholders. To facilitate informed submissions, the UBC hosted a panel discussion.



On 21 July, a panel of six guests presented on various aspects of bushfire risk management and then responded to questions from the plenum. The panel members represented the Departments of Planning and Fire and Emergency Services, the Western Australian Local Government Association, and included a private landholder, a scientist and a Friends Group representative.

Following is a summary of the presentations and discussions as captured by Robert Atkins, one of the panellists.

## Summary of an oral presentation

### Introduction

We have lived on a residential block of just under 2 acres in Mundaring town site for 30 years. It has an extensive planted native tree and shrub garden with a non-native garden close to the house. There are a number of large remnant marri trees and planted river gums.

As we have a Shire approved non-standard fire break arrangement, we are inspected most years.

### *Interpretation of the Building Protection Zone (BPZ) Standard*

As written is reasonable and compliance should not result in widespread removal of trees. The major concern is the associated diagrams which indicate a 20m total clearance zone.

Examples of BPZ standard interpretation by various stakeholders:

*DFES* 'How prepared are you for a bushfire?' 'Generally consistent with the Standard except for a dot point "Remove shrubs and small trees under and between larger trees" which does not allow for large trees in gardens.

*Shire of Mundaring's* information sheet: Generally consistent with BPZ Standard but less detail in specifications.

*City of Swan's* New Bushfire Hazard Regulation & Firebreak Notice

- Firebreak notice – consistent with the Standard
- Brochure – inconsistent with the Standard – diagrams show a complete removal of trees within the 20m BPZ. If instigated on 2000m<sup>2</sup> blocks even the street trees would have to be removed.

Unfortunately people do not read detailed guidelines and generally go directly to simplified brochures and diagrams. This is causing much angst with over clearing of trees on properties and possible road verges.

### **The key issue – managing ground level fuel loads**

This is the elephant in the room! People are ignoring the ground level fuel issue, including grassy weed growth in back yards and peri-urban bushland, often exacerbated by 'controlled' burning. Burning is necessary but problematic where weedy grasses reinfest within 12 months and returning to high fuel loads well before the next 'controlled' burn.

### *Managing risk*

Wildfire risk should be managed to an 'acceptable' level of risk. While this will obviously consider protection of life and property as high priorities, it should also consider the balance between maintaining the hills treed landscape and fire protection. Blitzing residential areas of trees, as suggested by some diagrams, will degrade the amenity that people come to the hills and other peri-urban areas for.

People also live in coastal areas and cyclone prone areas and suffer storm damage as a consequence. The level of risk is managed by building design, at least in cyclone prone areas.

## BUSHFIRE RISK MANAGEMENT continued

I will quote from a letter I published in a local newspaper in April 2014:

“Trees are not the hazard, ground level fuel loads are, much of which often includes masses of weeds. It is this material that poses the greatest risk from ember attack. Maintaining a BPZ by removing the ground level fuel and under pruning trees up to 2m dramatically reduces the fire risk from ember attack. Trees within the BPZ maintained according to the DFES guidelines are protected from ground fire and can provide a wind break from a fire front.

There is no absolute protection from fire, but there are things we can do to reduce the risk without trashing the hills amenity that attracted most of us to live in the hills. We do not have to remove all the trees, just read and following the DFES Standards for BPZ.”

In summary, there is concern that the knee-jerk reaction to the unfortunate losses suffered in some of the terrible fires experienced in the peri-urban areas in the south-west of the State has been to blame the trees and clear the blocks. However while landowners and occupiers ignore the ‘elephant in the room’ of ground level fuel loads exacerbated by prolific weed growth the fire risk will remain significant.

### Some key summary points

The community looks to local government, DFES and WAPC for guidance on bushfire protection.

Draft SPP 3.7 is intended to apply to new planning decisions (zoning, subdivision & development approvals). There was some concern that the policy was being over zealously applied to existing housing and new development near bushlands within highly developed suburbs. The point was made that this should not be the case. Proper risk assessment needs to be done.

DFES BPZ Standard guidelines do not promote total tree removal within the BPZ. However due to the diagrams published in interpretive brochures including by local governments, the guidelines are being misinterpreted.

Weedy areas including weed infested bushland regenerates a high ground level fuel load within 12 months of fuel reduction burning. Weed management must be a key part of managing fuel loads in these areas.

### Actions

- Better public information on the DFES guidelines is required
- Appropriate risk management should be applied not risk aversion
- There needs to be an acknowledgement of the need to balance landscape values with fire risk management.
- UBC to write to DFES and WAPC as the leaders in this issue, to appraise these agencies of these points.



Please make a note in your diary for Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September 11-2pm for the ‘Save Our Point Peron Family Picnic & Rally’ at Point Peron. There will fun activities for the kids and tree planting, live music, information stalls, raffles, prizes and more. Come and celebrate your treasured memories of Point Peron and get an update on what the Hands Off Point Peron group are doing to realise the community’s vision for a Coastal Park NOT Canals for Point Peron. See <http://www.handsoffpointperon.com/our-community-vision>

You can RSVP for this event here <https://www.facebook.com/events/1483041741942091/>

Also we have a NEW online petition directed to Minister Hunt here at <http://ccwa.org.au/pointperon> Please sign and share through your networks ASAP to urge Minister Hunt to reject the Mangles Bay Canal Estate & Inland Marina development and to support the Community Vision <http://www.handsoffpointperon.com/our-community-vision> for the area instead. Also please like us on Face book <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hands-Off-Point-Peron/132054196858870> AND <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Point-Peron-Coastal-Park-Action-Group/1570055806554789>

*Dawn Jecks  
Hands Off Point Peron*

# Wake up call for Environment Minister Jacob: Cull Corellas

Harking back 50 years or so, the stirring and memorable film 'Elephant Walk' starred Elizabeth Taylor and Peter Finch. The plantation owner built a splendid multi-storied mansion right on the path of the elephants' then unused migration route. At the climax of the film, the elephants stampeded right through the mansion. An unimpressed critic wrote '*Pachyderm stampede climax comes none too soon.*'

This film came to mind looking over the houses and apartments rising into the Carnaby's cockatoo flight path at the Landcorp development at Perry Lakes.

Every evening the Carnaby's fly in to the East Lake from various directions, depending on where groups have been foraging. The East Lake is not just a place to come to drink. Here the groups meet up and young are fed by regurgitation. As the sun sets the Carnaby's leave the East Lake and fly to the tall roosting site trees 500 metres from the lake. These trees are at three corners of the busy intersection of Underwood Avenue and Brockway Road. Carnaby's maintain a fidelity to this roost site, despite the traffic.

This site is one of the ten most significant roost sites in the Perth-Peel area. Between the lake and the roost site, houses and apartments now intrude into their air space. Carnaby's have adapted and fly to the roost site by alternative routes.

The Carnaby's face other difficulties.. The East Lake is also the venue for the non-local (i.e. feral) *Corellas toassemble*. Corellas take great delight in launching aerial attacks on Carnaby's at the East Lake. As Carnaby's perch in trees around the lake getting ready to fly down to drink, one or two or more Corellas of the very large flock fly at the Carnaby's and force them to retreat. This unhappy scenario requires active management by DPAW for control of Corellas.

The obviously blocked gutters of a house under construction at the housing development by the lake has been an alternative place to drink in the evenings. Around 5pm numbers of Carnaby's flew to the gutters of this house to drink. After a little time the Corellas discovered the Carnaby's were going there and were at the gutters prior to the Carnaby's arrival.

Numbers of Corellas were increasing at Perry Lakes and were being a nuisance to Carnaby's cockatoos. Sometimes it seemed like a war was occurring in the skies above the lake. Sometimes Carnaby's could not manage to get a drink at the lake.

Corella numbers (Little Corella and eastern Long-billed Corella) as well as numbers of feral Rainbow Lorikeets had been - until funds were cut - kept in check because the Department of Parks and Wildlife (then DEC) operated a trial culling program. The State Government considered that techniques developed for humane control of these birds were effective for use by land managers including local government.

When the trial was completed, all local governments within the greater metropolitan area were asked to consider implementing an '*Introduced Rainbow Lorikeet and Corella Response Strategy*' and to make a contribution of \$5,000 each.

In other words DPAW funding was cut.

The UBC wrote a letter to the Minister for the Environment asking about the status of the culling program and local government participation.

The Minister replied (24 June 2014):

*"Of the 36 local governments contacted, responses were received from 22 councils (61 per cent). Of these responses, 11 (52 per cent) rejected the funding proposal, with a number of responses indicating they would either provide in-kind support only (2), or they would undertake any works themselves (2). Of the 11 responses that were financially supportive, four only provided in-principle support for possible future consideration.*

*Unfortunately, the level of commitment given across the metropolitan local governments was not sufficient to operate a strategic control program of this nature. Consequently, the responsibility for control of these nuisance birds now rests with individual land managers, including local governments on lands that they manage."*

What a cop-out! This is highly unsatisfactory with effectively nothing being done to control these introduced and pest birds. This is primarily a State responsibility. The problem will get worse as it is much easier for Corellas to breed than for Carnaby's. There is a recovery plan (but no legislation) for Carnaby's cockatoos but as clearing their habitat continues, they are losing their foraging habitat and food supply. Protection of Carnaby's is surely the responsibility of DPAW. But without any proper modern Biodiversity Conservation Act in place, the State and its wildlife department DPAW is failing dismally in its duty of care of nature and its rich and rare endemic species.

There is, however, another opportunity for control of feral bird species. Under the Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act (BAM) 2007, we believe that the Minister can declare the Corella and Rainbow Lorikeet species as pest species. But, according to the Department of Agriculture and Food, Corellas are not having an effect on agriculture yet and Corellas are not birds introduced to Australia, even though they have spread from aviary escapees.

However **they are** introduced and thus feral here in WA. The UBC is advised that **Corellas could be listed as pest species** under the BAM Act, and that **DPAW could thus have the power to control Corellas.**

In the interests of conservation of Carnaby's, the UBC calls upon the Minister for the Environment Hon. Albert Jacob to initiate this procedure under the BAM Act and to properly fund culling of Corellas and Rainbow Lorikeets especially within critical feeding and roosting habitats for Carnaby's Cockatoos.

The Carnaby's Cockatoo Recovery Plan 2012-2022 states that full recovery of the species will '*take many decades, requiring reversal of the threats and factors that have led to the decline in the species.....*'

Minister Jacob: How about acting now under the BAM Act on the threats of feral bird species? This is your Ministerial responsibility.



# Group News Group News Group News

## EPA Report 1518 gives Friends of Forrestdale hope

The Friends of Forrestdale were overjoyed when on June 30 we learned that the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) had recommended that the proposed Keane Road extension not be built through Anstey-Keane Dampland. As conveyed in Report 1518, the EPA recommendation was based on critical environmental concerns that could not be addressed.

We were later gratified to hear that the City of Armadale, the proponents of the road, did not appeal against the EPA's recommendations and according to the Office of the Appeals Convenor, no appeals were lodged.

This welcome result comes at the end of a six-year battle the Friends of Forrestdale and our many supporters have waged to try to protect this valuable ecosystem from being harmed by a road that would dissect it. And while we are still on cloud nine over the result so far, we are mindful that Environment Minister Jacob has the final say. His decision should be made known before the end of the year.

Bryony Fremlin



Proposed Keane Road alignment in winter, Anstey-Keane Dampland.

## Grants received to support Banksia woodlands

Landcare SJ Inc is sponsoring recipients of four Banksia Woodlands Community Restoration Grants. The funding of just over \$47,000 in total was awarded by the Department of Parks and Wildlife to Landcare SJ in May this year. The grants are to assist the community to manage and restore banksia woodland, especially for enhancing the habitat of Carnaby's Cockatoos.

The properties have significant remnants of endangered Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) – grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*) woodlands and shrublands (Swan Coastal Plain Community type 3c – Gibson et al. 1994), Marri (*C. calophylla*) – Jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) woodlands on sandy clay soils (SCP3b) and Marri (*C. calophylla*) – Kingia (*Kingia australis*) woodlands on heavy soils (SCP3a)

The remnants include a number of threatened and rare species including *Drakea elastica* (declared rare) *Stachystemon* sp. Keysbrook (only once previously recorded) *Hensmania turbinate* (extent of known range) *Hypocalymma erecefolia* (never previously recorded north

of Harvey), *Conospermum capitatum* (never previously recorded north of Busselton) and *Leucopogon aff. flavescens* (last known population).

The properties provide roost and considerable forage habitats for all three species of Forest Black Cockatoos, particularly Carnaby's. All three species are known to breed on the Darling Escarpment within 10km of the properties.

Grant funds will be used to protect and restore native flora communities largely through *Phytophthora* dieback assessment, treatment and mapping. One property will also undertake weed control of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* which has infested bushland areas and is reseeded freely.

Francis Smit

The Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park (Inc) have had a busy winter so far looking after their older sites and breaking in a new site along the western edge of Lake Goollelal. A lake shore smothered in Love grass, Kikuyu and evergreen Buffalo grass has been treated with more follow-ups to come.

Part of it has been slashed to allow a group of keen volunteers from Edith Cowen University office staff to come in and plant local provenance species. The next day the rain bucketed down. Nothing like nature's distilled water to give the plants a great start.

Quendas still survive after being released and the Friends are working on increasing their habitat and controlling their main predator the Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*.



Working hard to get the plants in before it rains.

## CREPA Celebrates 20 Years

An active and influential volunteer organisation in the Canning region is marking its 20th anniversary.

The Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association, or CRREPA, was founded in 1994 by Rossmoyne and Shelley residents who were concerned about the degradation of the unique Canning River and Bull Creek wetland areas.

It is an area that is enjoyed regularly by thousands of walkers, joggers, cyclists, anglers, picnickers, and other

# Group News Group News Group News

river users, and the efforts of the volunteer group have contributed strongly to its restoration and conservation through activities such as water sampling, erosion control, birdlife surveys, seed propagation and the replanting of foreshore vegetation.

CRREPA has also contributed to management plans for the river and used its influence to lobby local and State politicians on issues affecting the environment. The group regularly involves local schools and other community groups in its activities.

CRREPA publishes and distributes two informative newsletters each year and has been responsible for handling grant monies for significant revegetation projects.

Five long-term members of CRREPA along with seven other local volunteers were recognised for their efforts by having their names added to a commemorative honour board at the Blessing of the River ceremony last year. City of Canning Commissioner Linton Reynolds remarked at the ceremony: "The current condition of the Canning River and the surrounding areas has a lot to do with these volunteers who have given up their time to the protection of the environment."

CRREPA President Grecian Sandwell said the group had been very lucky in the support it had received from councillors and officers from Canning City Council as well as other organisations such as the Swan River Trust and the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL).

Ms Sandwell said the group had about 110 members, including families mostly from Rossmoyne and Shelley. They worked on active river care projects in small groups assigned to sections of the foreshore, or as a combined group on bigger projects.

She said membership gave people who were drawn to the area by the appeal of the river an opportunity to contribute to its health and future. It also gave people a chance to get to know their neighbours better and to form new friendships.

CRREPA held its 20th anniversary Annual General Meeting at the Canning River Eco Education Centre at Kent Street Weir on Thursday May 29. Other events including guided walks are also planned as part of the anniversary.

For further information please contact Grecian Sandwell on 93549734.

*Source CREPA Newsletter - Reprinted with permission*

## **LOT971, 52 Creaney Drive Kingsley is Saved.**

LOT971 is a 9,400m<sup>2</sup> remnant bushland block at the south end of Kingsley Park with approximately 112 Jarrah trees, 27 Banksia, 16 Sheoak, 16 Tuart, 15 Jacksonia and at least 150 Grass trees.

At the meeting of the Council of the City of Joondalup on

24/6/14 the Council decided to agree to the 1977 signature petition to retain LOT971 rather than sell it for development.

This has been a 3 year struggle from 2011 with two petitions raised.

Thanks to everyone in the Urban Bushland community who have provided the Kingsley and Greenwood Residents Association (KAGRA) with support.

<http://www.facebook.com/savekingsley>

*Dave Blackburn*

## *Letter to the Editor*

Some good news at last. Our EPA have recommended the protection of a Bush Forever site (EPA Report 1518).

Congratulations to Paul Vogel, his board and the staff but I am puzzled by something.

The EPA protects the Armadale site from a road taking less than 5 hectares because "the road would fragment a highly biologically diverse bushland ..., impact on the ecological integrity of the reserve through the fragmentation of ecological communities and .. change hydrological processes to impact the range and diversity of the micro inhabitants...".

Yet the same EPA recommended the total destruction of 40 hectares of Bush Forever at Point Peron, fragmenting the whole of the Cape against advice from DEC scientists and at the same time further risking two unique threatened ecological communities at Lake Richmond.

I wonder if the reason is that the EPA feels able to knock back Armadale Council but not powerful interests in the State Government.

This is the same EPA that the Abbott Government want to rely on to assess almost all environmental impacts in future. Help !! We do need a truly independent, fearless EPA to protect our environment.

*James Mumme, Shoalwater*

## **BUSH FOREVER SITES UNDER THREAT**

**Pt Peron/Mangles Bay** – marina and canal development and the adjacent critically endangered thrombolites of Lake Richmond

**Ocean Reef** – marina and coastal development

**Underwood Avenue Bushland** – UWA proposal for housing

**Anstey-Keane Damplands** – Water Corporation sewerage pressure main; EPA found local road proposal unacceptable, but Minister Jacob has not yet made final decision

**Beeliar Regional Park** – Roe 8 Highway Extension by Main Roads

**Kiara TAFE site** – housing and primary school development by Department of Housing. Recommended by DEC for addition to Bush Forever

**Stratton bushland** (originally proposed part of Talbot Rd Bush Forever site but not included) – housing proposal by Department of Housing

## LEGACY OF THIRTEEN YEARS OF ACTION FOR LOCAL BIODIVERSITY

After 13 years of collaborative effort to increase capacity of local governments to conserve biodiversity locally, the ability to continue this effort has been significantly reduced with the ceasing of the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)'s Local Biodiversity Program (LBP) due to lack of funding. The LBP incorporated the former Perth Biodiversity Project (PBP) and South West Biodiversity Project (SWBP) to support the identification, planning and management of local natural areas within local governments experiencing development pressures in the internationally recognised Southwest Australia biodiversity 'hotspot'.

On 22 August, local government representatives, program partners and supporters have gathered at a function to celebrate the achievements, reflect on lessons learned during the past 13 years and acknowledge all that contributed to the concerted effort.

PBP was established in 2001 in response to the State government's *Urban Bushland Strategy* (1995) and *Bush Forever* (2000), which recognised the role of local natural areas in preserving biodiversity in a region. However, there were major barriers to conserving these such as:

- No specific guidance on identification and prioritisation of local natural areas;
- Gaps in adequate statutory provisions for biodiversity in local land use planning frameworks, including limited scope to public lands;
- Disproportionate ratio of human resources with appropriate expertise in natural area management and an area of bushland and wetland requiring management.

### Overcoming barriers

Numerous strategies have been adopted and implemented to overcome these barriers. First, norms for local natural area assessment and prioritisation were developed including guidelines for local biodiversity planning, Natural Area Initial Assessment (NAIA) Templates, Reference Sites, on-line mapping viewer. Many of the external barriers have been removed by for example securing State government endorsement for the adopted methodologies, by providing access to data and information relevant to local government scale, and by providing technical, expert or financial assistance. Local governments demonstrated their commitment to local biodiversity conservation planning by supporting WALGA's biodiversity initiatives via annual subscriptions but also by contributing at least 50% towards local projects funded through the project's Targeted grants scheme. Finally, various communication strategies were adopted to encourage continuous engagement of all stakeholders.

WALGA expanded its support through SWBP, which was established in 2005 to service 13 local governments between Mandurah and Manjimup. Following the conclusion of SWBP in 2009, PBP was rebranded to the Local Biodiversity Program in 2012, to reflect the broadened geographic scope of servicing a total of 45 local governments between Geraldton and Albany.

### Key Outcomes

WALGA's biodiversity initiatives not only developed a number of important resources for local governments and other stakeholders that will remain relevant past the program's lifespan, but also demonstrated the effectiveness of the adopted capacity building strategies. For example, 90% of local governments in the Perth Metropolitan Region with at least 10

hectares of natural areas and additional eight local governments in the Southwest of WA used the NAIA Templates to assess ecological values of local reserves.

Seventeen local governments adopted a 'local biodiversity strategy', a key document to inform land use planning, reserve management and community engagement priorities in biodiversity conservation. Additional 10 have initiated or participated in the local biodiversity planning process. In the Perth and Peel Region Scheme areas, 60% of remaining vegetation outside lands with some existing protection is within 8 local governments that have adopted Local Biodiversity Strategies with quantitative targets for protection. Protection targets in these 8 Local Biodiversity Strategies aim to secure protection for 33% of this vegetation. When including proposed protection targets in adopted Local Biodiversity Strategies outside Perth and Peel, a total of 30,000 hectares of local natural areas across Southwest Australia are being targeted for protection by local governments into the future.

More information about the legacy of 13 years of action for local biodiversity is available through a new celebratory publication available via the LBP website.

### Challenges remaining:

- Limited ability to protect natural areas if they do not contain features with legislative protection.
- Lack of clarity or guidance on criteria for determining the effectiveness of ecological linkages and statutory protection for ecological linkages.
- Outside the Metropolitan Region Scheme area, limited opportunities exist to reserve lands for conservation.
- Necessary support for the use of public open space to protect regionally and locally significant natural areas in new urban subdivisions.
- Impacts of rural living subdivisions and associated clearing, including Fire Risk Management measures on the ability to retain biodiversity in rural and peri-urban landscapes.
- Continued access to current data providing regional and local context for vegetation significance (this was provided by WALGA's biodiversity initiatives).
- Can the consistency, transparency and rigour promoted through the local biodiversity conservation planning process be maintained?
- Support to local government continues to be dependent on unreliable grant funding.
- If on-going technical support is not provided, it may prevent local governments from developing local biodiversity strategies and integrating provisions into land use planning.

Visit WALGA's website to download available publications and on-line resources:

Local Biodiversity Program and PBP resources:

<http://lbp.walga.asn.au/>

SWBP resources: [www.walga.asn.au/AboutWALGA/Policy/SouthWestBiodiversityProject.aspx](http://www.walga.asn.au/AboutWALGA/Policy/SouthWestBiodiversityProject.aspx)

In 2014-15, two of the numerous services provided by WALGA's biodiversity initiatives will continue on a fee-for-services basis, the Natural Area Managers Network Forums and on-line Environmental Planning Tool. Access to the public mapping viewer will remain available until further notice.



have found seventy vertebrate species, including 43 birds, 19 reptiles, five ground frogs, two tree frogs and one mammal. Importantly, Munday Swamp provides habitat for the only known populations of the Crowned Snake in the Perth metropolitan area. Munday Swamp also supports populations of the Western Pygmy Perch and the Western Minnow which may be the only significant populations of these species in the Perth region (Department of Environment; Australian Heritage Database).

Section 71 (h) of the Airports Act 1996 requires each airport master plan to provide an environment strategy that details "the areas within the airport site which the airport-lessee company, in consultation with State and Federal conservation bodies identifies as environmentally significant..." However, the 2014 Perth Airport Master Plan claims that they have not identified any areas within the airport as environmentally significant. This statement is audacious and contradicts their 2009 Master Plan where they state that the swamp is "ecologically and culturally significant" (page 40 2009 Master Plan).

It is unsurprising that the rich natural resources found at Munday Swamp attracted Aboriginal occupation. The Noongar people consider Munday Swamp as one of their most significant cultural sites and one of the few that have survived the intensive development on the Swan Coastal Plain. Interestingly, for the Noongars the swamp performed a similar function to the airport. Like the airport, the swamp was a transitional zone and meeting place where groups would travel from all over the south west of Western Australia to partake in ceremonies and rituals. Munday Swamp is registered as a site under the WA Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 meaning that it has been determined to be significant and important. In addition, the sand dunes surrounding the swamp contain some of the largest known artefact scatters on the Swan Coastal Plain confirming the long term and substantial occupation of the area by Noongar people.

To Perth Airport recently commissioned the largest archaeological excavation ever undertaken on the Swan Coastal Plain. The excavation was undertaken at archaeological site #17502 "Adelaide Street" which is situated several hundred meters north of Munday Swamp. Unexpectedly, for the Swan Coastal Plain, the excavations uncovered archaeological material in reasonably intact stratified deposits. Thermoluminescence dating of the deposit puts Aboriginal occupation of the site at potentially 35,000 years ago. This would mean that Munday Swamp is one of the oldest Aboriginal sites in Australia.

Site #17502 was situated on a Bassendean sand dune close to a small swamp that would have provided fresh drinking water. Many other similar dunes that may contain ancient archaeological sites are situated around Munday Swamp and throughout the area to be developed for the proposed third runway. It is unknown how Perth Airport is going to mitigate against the potential destruction of Aboriginal archaeological sites that could be amongst some of the oldest in Australia.

Perth Airport has shown in the past that they take seriously their role as custodians of one of Perth's largest areas of remnant bushland. They chose to set aside areas of ecological significance and protect them. There is also a genuine and visible motivation within Perth Airport to engage and build strong relationships with Noongar stakeholders. This motivation was reflected in their notable decision undertake an archaeological excavation program that far exceeded the standard requirements. It was also reflected in the previous commitments to protect Munday Swamp within a conservation area. It is deeply disappointing then that the proposal under the 2014 Master Plan jeopardises the significant advances previously made by Perth Airport.

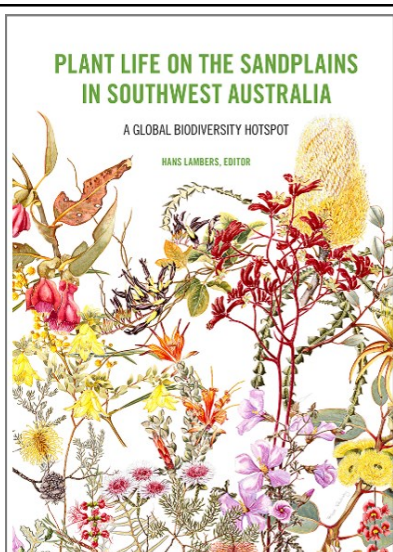
**Public consultation period closes 5pm on 15 September.**  
**For more information go to <http://www.perthairport.com.au/master-plan.aspx>**

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

### NEW BOOK

Plant Life on the Sandplains in Southwest Australia, a Global Biodiversity Hotspot  
Edited by  
Hans Lambers

The book is a comprehensive compilation of ecological research in the Kwongan over the past 30 years.



Available online at the UWA Publishing website ([www.uwap.uwa.edu.au](http://www.uwap.uwa.edu.au)) for \$69.95; 350 pages of richly-illustrated text.

### The results of the Great Cocky Count 2014 are out.

And it is not good news for the endangered Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. Its population is in collapse! The main reason? Loss of its habitat, including pine plantations which have proved to be crucial to its survival. Help us save its vital habitat.

**Please sign Birdlife Australia's petition NOW!**  
**Go to <http://www.savethebirds.org.au/disaster-in-the-wings-carnabys-cockatoo-crisis/>**

"If this rate of decline continues, we will see Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos disappear from the Perth region within two decades," warned Samantha Vine, Head of Conservation at BirdLife Australia, the country's peak bird conservation organisation.

# SUPPORT THE URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL

## Join or renew your membership

### Groups:

Membership with voting rights is available to groups committed to the protection of urban bushland for \$45 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

### Individuals:

Supporter membership is only \$35 per year (GST included). Supporters can attend meetings and receive copies of the "Urban Bush Telegraph"

Groups and supporters are reminded that annual membership fees include one printed copy of the *Urban Bush Telegraph* (currently published quarterly). Additional printed copies can be ordered at a cost of \$5.00 per copy per annum.

Send your name, address and cheque or postal order to: Treasurer, Urban Bushland Council WA Inc, PO Box 326, West Perth WA 6872

## Urban Bushland Council Activities

### 'Save Our Pt Peron Family & Picnic Rally'

**Sunday 14 September, 11am – 2pm**

The UBC will be there — look out for them. All welcome to come along and show support for retaining this special area.  
(See the notice on page 4)

### Spring bush walks

**29 September 10am - 12 noon**

**Hartfield Park, Forrestfield**

For information visit <http://www.bushlandperth.org.au/events>

## 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.

## NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Compiled by: Renata Zelinova

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

**Copy deadline - 10 November 2014**

### PERTH'S BUSHLAND BIRTHDAY & PERPETUAL CALENDAR

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

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

### Office:

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Urban Bushland Council WA Inc



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