

## BUSH FOREVER ROUND TABLE 2020

The UBC is pleased to report that we met recently with officers from the government agencies concerned with Bush Forever implementation: Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), Department of Planning Lands and Heritage (DPLH), WA Planning Commission (WAPC), and WA Local Government Authority (WALGA) on 23<sup>rd</sup> January at Kensington DBCA.

Recent progress with implementation and key outstanding issues were discussed. Implementation is now 10 years overdue. A major community concern is the lack of adequate conservation management at too many significant sites such as Anstey-Keane Damplands (BF342) – where off-road hoon vehicles and rubbish dumping has been so destructive. The last two blocks there are now in the process of being acquired. Long time bushland carers and campaigners Bryony Fremlin and David James presented a photo slide show (see photos below) that highlighted the natural



Photos by B & J Fremlin

diversity and beauty of Anstey-Keane Damplands as well as the ongoing management issues – many experienced in other bushlands sites across Perth.

There are 14 sites that are zoned Parks and Recreation (P&R) still to be purchased by the WAPC. There is plenty of money available to do this and to conduct initial capital works as the balance in the Metropolitan Region Improvement Fund (MRIF) was reported to be ~\$450 million. This is the fund that is used for infrastructure development – which includes Bush Forever. WAPC plans for 2020 however, do not include acquisition of all these sites.

**The site management gap remains:** The list of Bush Forever

### Inside this issue:

The challenge to retain native vegetation	3
Group News	6
Effective weed control model	9
Modernising the Environmental Protection Act	11

(Continued on page 2)

# Editorial

Community despair is increasingly expressed concerning the lack of adequate governance provided to protect and manage our nature in bushland.

WA has still not stopped major net losses of bushland in our world recognised biodiverse Perth region, the south-west region and in the Wheatbelt. This summer's catastrophic bushfires have brought to public attention the shocking loss of our native fauna species, such as cuddly koalas, quenda and our endangered black cockatoos.

Climate change is the reality with our Perth region having suffered much lower than average rainfall for 2019, an unusually hot winter and spring with an early start to summer.

It is time to demand a new approach where our State Government steps up with major new resources to *actively prevent the loss* of native vegetation and wildlife, to *restore* and to *regenerate* it. Our Bush Forever CAR reserve system for the Perth region must be completed and generously funded for on-ground management of *all sites*.

Threatening processes such as grassy weed invasions, feral animals, uncontrolled domestic animals, human induced fires and arson, dieback and groundwater decline from excessive abstraction all need new, greatly increased and active controls by Government.

This also presents a golden opportunity for promoting our wonderful, unique bushland biodiversity, '*rich and rare*', right here in Perth, by caring for it, engaging and learning. Connection with nature improves human health and well-being. This is so important for children as well as adults.

UBC Members and Supporters are encouraged to send submissions on the Native Vegetation in Western Australia Issues paper as on page 3. You are also encouraged to go and talk with your local State MP's in their electoral office, and hand them a copy of your submission. Tell them about the great weed control work done by your friends group in the public interest. Invite them to visit your local bushland. Tell them that greatly increased funding for native vegetation conservation and management of all Bush Forever Areas and local reserves and linkages is needed: Grassy weed control - in reserves and on roadsides - and arson control is needed to *prevent* fires. Prescribed burning on the Swan Coastal Plain is not supported as it kills wildlife and promotes grassy weed growth which worsens fire risk in following years.

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(Continued from page 1)

sites proposed to be transferred to DBCA's Parks & Wildlife for conservation management is still the same. The funding for this State responsibility has still not been allocated by the State Government and this is huge concern. Management for fire prevention is arguably the most important issue. Fire damages the bushland, kills massive numbers of fauna, produces Greenhouse gas emissions, produces air pollution and associated costly human health impacts, and damages property. The State Government needs to step up with greatly increased conservation funding of our south-west biodiversity hotspot and Perth region hotspot.

It was recognised at the Round Table by WALGA representative that there is a need to refund the program to facilitate and assist all local government authorities to complete their Local Biodiversity Strategies and Plans. When these are developed and adopted by a local government, they are informed of the science and values of biodiversity conservation in their local natural areas and better decision making results.

## NEXT STEPS

A reminder that 'the community has power'. We just need to focus on it and nurture it. A call for us all to:

- Make submissions to the government on current reviews such as the Native Vegetation Issues paper, which closes 10 February 2020
- In submissions include references to tourism (including things that will make money for the State, and things that will save money for the State) and to bushfires, so that the State is educated about detrimental impacts of prescribed burning. Tourism and Bushfire mitigation are two priorities of government.
- Invite Deputy Premier Roger Cook for a walk in local electorate bushland (e.g. The Spectacles (BF269) and Sandy Lake & adjacent bushland (BF270)).
- Invite your local MP and family for a walk in their local bushland. Keep it short. No more than an hour.
- Make an appointment to visit your local MP in their electorate office. Bring neighbours along. Simply explain your concerns about the need for acquisition of all Bush Forever sites and allocation of funds to ensure they can be well managed.

In summary, the UBC calls for

1. Acquisition of all Bush Forever sites not yet secured for conservation. Complete all initial capital works.
2. Transfer of all sites to secure conservation tenure as 'A' class nature reserves or 'A' class reserves for the purpose of nature conservation and passive recreation only, no other uses permitted.
3. Allocate all sites to suitable conservation managers.
4. Allocate State budget funding to DBCA Parks & Wildlife Swan Region to properly manage sites on the list to be transferred to them.
5. Require LGAs to properly fund sites to be transferred for their conservation management.
6. Greatly increase funding to DBCA Parks & Wildlife's *Urban Nature* program.
7. Funding for Community Friends group development and hand weeding

# The CHALLENGE to retain and protect our precious bushland – you can be the bushland's voice

Our national and international south-west biodiversity hotspot is recognised not only for its remarkably high number of unique species, but also because it is now under threat and increasingly so. Climate change with extreme weather events and devastating fires are now high profile. As stated in 'The challenge' on page 2 of the *Native Vegetation in Western Australia Issues paper* which is now open for public consultation:

*'The list of Western Australian threatened species continues to grow – between 2009 and 2017 our State's threatened species list jumped by 12% to 672. Of the 1,878 species classified as nationally threatened, 551 are found in Western Australia.'*

*'Of the 18 million hectares of Western Australia's native vegetation already cleared, most is in the State's south-west – coinciding with our most biodiverse ecosystems' with more than 8,000 native plant species, most of which are endemic. 'In some local government areas, more than 93% of the original vegetation is lost, including clearing of up to 97% of some woodland areas.'* This is especially the case in our Perth-Peel region sub-hotspot and the Wheatbelt.

The EPA has now identified 'clearing and degradation of native vegetation as a key threat to Western Australia's biodiversity.' 'It also faces ongoing degradation through fragmentation and loss of connectivity, over-grazing, weed invasion, altered hydrology (and especially falling groundwater levels on the Swan Coastal Plain), salinity, dieback diseases, feral animals, altered fire regimes and climate change. The cumulative impacts of multiple pressures means that much of our remaining native vegetation is also at risk.' Recent events attest to this.

This summer's dry conditions and extensive fires, with millions of fauna killed and harmed in the eastern states and here in WA, have triggered widespread calls from scientists and the community for urgent action on climate change – 'the climate emergency', and on the loss of native species of flora and fauna – 'the extinction rebellion'. For example in the news 6 November 2019, more than 11,000 scientists from more than 150 countries, including some Australians, said not enough action is being taken by governments on climate change and urgent action is needed especially in 6 areas, one of which is Australia. Dr Linden Ashcroft (University of Melbourne lecturer in Climate Science and Science communication) said 'we need to act right now'.



Photo by M Owen



Photo by M Owen

As Craig Challen, SC, OAM, joint 2019 Australian of the Year said: 'The hope that I gain from these terrible events is that they will finally precipitate a change in Australia's terrible record on addressing the threat of climate change. For too long we have ignored or evaded our contribution to this problem.' (Sunday Times January 26, 2020, p 38 Opinion).

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) has in 2019 released a series of three issue papers for public comment: Climate Change (comment period now closed); Modernisation of the Environmental Protection Act (comment period now closed); Native Vegetation in Western Australia (comments close 10 February 2020).

In the latter, four initiatives for improving native vegetation management are presented:

1. A State native vegetation policy
2. Better information
3. Better regulation
4. A bioregional approach

Improvement is certainly needed in these four areas of governance. UBC members are encouraged to have your say.

We need better regulation so that there is no further net loss of native vegetation in WA, **and** so that native vege-

tation cover is increased by regeneration and revegetation and reduction of grazing pressure.

Land clearing patch by patch needs to be legally stopped in our south-west biodiversity hotspot and in the Wheatbelt. Currently there are 41 'exemptions' under which a Clearing Permit is not required and clearing may take place. By declaring these two regions as 'Environmentally Sensitive Areas' (ESAs) under the EP Act, exemptions would not apply for these two regions.

Strengthened Clearing Regulations so that the Clearing Principles are rigorously applied in decision-making **and** are enforced will mean that no clearing can be permitted to take place in these two regions. Clearing at variance to one or more of the Clearing Principles must not be permitted under a strengthened EP Act.

A major State Government investment in protection and on-ground management of native vegetation is urgently needed to counter all the threats. This applies to all regions, but special focus and greatly increased State funding is needed to manage the south-west and the Perth hotspot region. Indeed for the Perth region, the UBC has for years been calling for the Government to fully implement the Bush Forever plan and program. Its completion is now 10 years overdue. Notably the Issues paper does not even mention Bush Forever. This is a major oversight.

To reduce the fire risk, a greatly increased investment in removal and control of grassy weeds in all Bush Forever Areas and local bushland reserves is essential. A major investment by the State Government is also needed in arson prevention.

UBC members are encouraged to make submissions on the **Native Vegetation Issues paper**. Closes 10 February.

Go to [An Issues Paper](#) To make an on-line submission go to [Native vegetation consultation](#)

OR you can email your submission to [nvs@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:nvs@dwer.wa.gov.au)

Make sure you address the questions asked in the Issues paper.

## TEC Tuart Woodlands At Whitford Cuspate

*By Mitch Sideris  
Mullaloo Beach Community Group*

In May 1984, the Whitford Nodes located in the northern suburbs between Sorrento and Mullaloo beaches, was purchased by the then Government for \$6 million, as an area of regional significance, which ensured the area was preserved as a major regional coastal area for future generations of Western Australians.

Currently the area of 79 ha includes native bushland, parkland, car parks and roads/tracks. Approximately 67 ha contains plant communities of high conservation value and, as such, is considered to be regionally significant, and is at the southern end of Bush Forever Site 325<sup>1</sup>.

In May 2018, a Third-Party Referral to protect the Whitford Cuspate Foreland from a local government development project, a Public Works, was lodged with the EPA by Mullaloo Beach Community Group Inc. This Third-Party Referral was subsequently dismissed as not being 'significant', as the project was still in a 'conceptual' stage, even though there was a real Capital Works project in play.

In June 2019, the City of Joondalup lodged a Clearing Permit, CPS 8601/1, with Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER). The Clearing Permit was assessed and approved, and now the subject of an appeal by Mullaloo Beach Community Group Inc.

DWER considered that the impact of the clearing permit on the Bush Forever Site was insignificant.

Why appeal the decision?

Aside from the historical background:

- it has been assessed and recorded as a diverse ecosystem in good to excellent condition;
- it is Bush Forever Site 325;
- it contains a number of EPBC Act Listed and DBCA Priority listed Flora and Fauna;
- the Whitford Cuspate Foreland is scientifically identified as TEC 19;
- it has been identified as a good example of a remnant Tuart wetland;
- it is now identified as a coastal TEC Tuart Woodland.

What is a TEC Tuart Woodland?

The Whitford Cuspate Foreland satisfies TEC 19 criteria, but does the entire area also qualify as [a "Tuart Woodlands and Forests of the Swan Coastal Plain: A Nationally Significant Ecological Community"](#)<sup>3</sup>?

*The Tuart (Eucalyptus gomphocephala) Woodlands and Forests of the Swan Coastal Plain are a nationally significant ecological community. The ecological community was listed as critically endangered by the Hon. Minister Ley MP on 4 July 2019 under national environmental law (the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 or EPBC Act*

*This nationally protected ecological community is comprised of woodlands or forests within which the presence of*



*An example of Tuart woodland at Whitfords Node. Photo courtesy Mullaloo Beach Community Group Inc.*

*Tuart (Eucalyptus gomphocephala) trees in the uppermost canopy are the primary defining feature. The community also often contains other native trees such as Peppermint, Bull Banksia, Candlestick Banksia or Jarrah, with a substantial diversity of understorey plants.*

*Southwest Australia, where the ecological community is found, is recognised as one of only two global biodiversity hotspots in Australia. The Tuart Woodlands and Forests are an important part of this ecological community providing habitat for a range of animal species, including some that are nationally threatened, such as Black Cockatoos and the Western Ringtail Possum.*

*The Tuart Woodlands and Forests occur on the Swan Coastal Plain in Western Australia between Jurien in the north and Busselton in the South, including some remnants in the Perth metropolitan area.*

*The ecological community of Tuart Woodlands and Forests includes the assemblage of plants, animals and other organisms that occur in association with Tuart (Eucalyptus gomphocephala) on the Swan Coastal Plain of Western Australia. It occurs where there are multiple Tuart trees with crowns separated by a distance of no more than 60 m, with an understorey containing a minimum number of native plant species or demonstrating other important conservation values.*

*A brief review of the Tuart Woodlands and Forests of the Swan Coastal Plain: A Nationally Significant Ecological Community, combined with a number of on-ground site visits, indicates that the area satisfies the Tuart TEC guidelines for the following reasons:*

*A Tuart “**patch**” must satisfy criteria in a two-step process.*

*Step 1: A patch must be identified as the Tuart Woodlands and Forests ecological community against the description and key diagnostics in the approved Conservation Advice.*

*Step 2: If a patch meets the description of the Tuart Woodlands and Forests ecological community, then its condition can be categorised under the condition thresholds in the approved Conservation Advice. The size and condition of the patch will determine whether national protection applies.*

*There are over 70 large mature and aged Tuarts present within prescribed distance as well as numerous saplings throughout the bushland.*

# Group News Group News Group News

With Step 1 complete,  
*The size and condition of the patch will determine whether national protection applies.*

*After the patch has been identified as meeting the key diagnostic characteristics of the Tuart Woodlands and Forests ecological community, the **second step** is to define the boundary and condition class of the patch in accordance with the approved **Conservation Advice**. This examination will determine whether or not the patch is nationally protected.*

Step 2 The Whitford Cuspate Foreland is greater than 5 ha.

Sound advice would be for the general community to look around their neighbourhoods and consider whether any local Tuart Patch (even if rehabilitated with Tuarts) meets both of the TEC Tuart Woodlands and Forests of the Swan Coastal Plain criteria. If it does, good practice would be to immediately consider the site to be A Nationally Significant Ecological Community and pursue assessment and listing to ensure national protection.

## References

1 Eco Logical Australia Whitfords Nodes Foreshore Flora, Fauna and Fungi Survey 2016

Ecoscape Whitford Node Stairway Ecological Assessment 2014

2 Semeniuk V & Searle D J 1986 The Whitfords Cusp - its geomorphology, stratigraphy and age structure. *Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia* 68: 29-36



Photo courtesy MBCG

*An example of Tuart woodland at Whitfords Node.*

## Friends of Trigg Beach concerned over inconsistencies in project implementation and the impacts on bushland in Class A reserve.

*By Robyn Murphy*

When the City of Stirling supported Norup+Wilson's application to clear a fire break on the South Trigg Beach Class A Reserve at the front of their Beach Shack apartment development, we were assured the area cleared would not be used for building materials from the construction site. You will see from the photos that these assurances have not been honoured. One photo is of how this land looked before the hessian was laid. And note that the informal access path that was used by pedestrians has been closed and fenced by N+W.

It is bad enough that public land in a reserve that has Bush Forever status and the highest conservation protection available (Class A Reserve), is being used for a private developer to meet its obligations to provide a fire break and access to its building, but salt is rubbed in the wounds when this land is being treated as storage for building materials.

The likelihood is that this will set a precedent for other new buildings that front onto the South Trigg Beach Reserve - will all the developers be able to use public land for their fire break and access? How much value has this added to the N+W apartment development?



*Coastal dunes at Trigg in September 2019, prior to construction of a fire break by Norup+Wilson and the same site on 30 January 2020.*  
Photos by R Murphy



Photo by M Owen

## 2020 Great Cocky Count - Sunday 5 April

Register to participate in this important initiative. Only **night roosts** are being counted so make sure to go to the roost site at sunset to see if they stay the night. Registration are open till **March 15** at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc3fBtfGsC9ouaYGv1VIDSdiiHyOtAaPk4JYZXY7CI4sGdcJg/viewform>

## Hands Off Point Peron campaign update

By Dawn Jecks

### They Are Back

When I read the media release issued by WA Planning Minister Rita Saffioti back on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 announcing the withdrawal of the Cape Peron Mangles Bay Canal Marina Housing proposal, I was understandably relieved and overjoyed. Maybe after over a decade of constant campaigning and lobbying our community could rest easy. However, when I read the last sentence of the media release, my heart sank because I knew in my heart that they were likely be back. The last sentence of the Planning Ministers media release read, "The State Government looks forward to working on alternative projects to boost jobs, and create new places for people to live and visit."

Roll on 2020, they are back and the 'They' are the WA Government.

The McGowan government is currently undertaking a 'planning investigation' into the future use of Cape Peron public land with 'residential opportunities' included in the Terms of Reference.

With a WA State Election only a year away voters need to speak up now and insist the McGowan Government gives Cape Peron public land the protection it deserves, enshrined in law now, by upgrading this land from it's current 'C' Class classification to 'A' Class reserve status.

It is important to note that Point Peron is in the electorate of the Premier Mark McGowan. The evidence shows that the Premier has had a long history of promoting projects that involve the urbanization of Point Peron public land including Bush Forever Site 355 going back as far as the start of his political life as a City of Rockingham Councillor back 1994. Our precious Cape Peron public land will continue to be at risk unless and until it is gazetted as an 'A' Class reserve. I urge you to speak up now by emailing the Premier Mark McGowan, WA Planning Minister Rita Saffioti and your local State MP and insist that the McGowan Government gives Cape Peron public land the protection that has been promised for decades, enshrined in law, by upgrading this land from it's current 'C' Class classification to 'A' Class reserve status as a matter of urgency.

Please then continue to follow up on your emails and keep the conversation going your local MP until we have reached our objective of 'A Class' classification for Cape Peron.

## Lessons from 2019 for Friends of Point Peron

By James Mumme

Make sure any grant application provides for some flexibility in budget allocation to meet contingencies without going over budget or having to justify a major variation. For example, we found that the location of the DBCA supplied 1,000L water tank required us to carry two litre bottles of water up to 120 metres to water new seedlings planted by volunteers. We had an old pump that we had hoped to use. But on starting it up, we found it had corroded (we did not know you should fill it with ethylene glycol when not in use). So we needed to buy a new one but could not use the funds from our grant because it was not included at the time of application and there were no usable funds.

While DBCA have filled the water tank every time the Group have asked, the volunteers were unable to meet the recommended schedule of four litres per plant once a month for all 2500 plants.

To increase our ability to water more plants, FPP volunteers repurposed a 750 L tank left over from past plantings, scavenged for posts, screws, star pickets and strapping and installed the additional tank =foe a direct cost of \$7.20 and 6.h hours work.

Our two direct seeding trials both failed completely. Nothing came up! We sprayed with Roundup three times before sowing and left it a full week. It rained not long after we sowed. We collected seeds of 12 locally endemic species, sowed 11 species in one 10x10m patch and

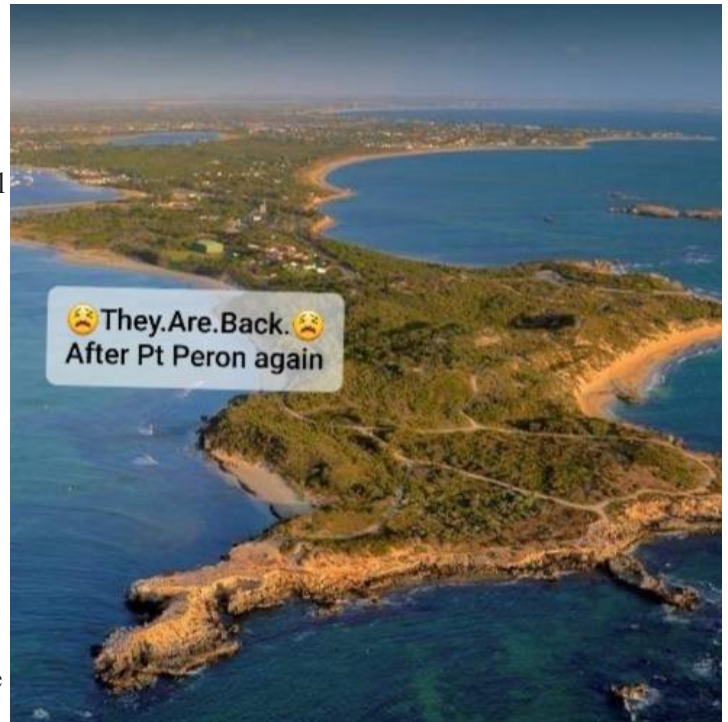


Photo by J Mumme

Friends of Point Peron volunteer with the reused water tank for watering seedlings over summer months.

# Group News Group News Group News

*Callitris preissii* in another. We used a wetting agent on 25% of the areas, kitty litter balls on 25% and raked the rest. No one we asked can suggest what went wrong.

Survival of plantings does seem to be worse than the previous two years. Some patches are already down to 50% survival, others are 70% and a few in sheltered positions under mature tuarts are up at 90%.

For 2020 we propose no more direct seeding but will continue to focus on weeding Italian buckthorn - our biggest threat at the moment - and community volunteers to tend our seedlings and plant the new ones. Our grant provides for 6 sessions of Conservation Volunteers Australia volunteers mostly to do heavy weeding targeted to remove female buckthorns before they ripen. Currently one volunteer is dealing with Brazilian peppers, targeting females which are coming into flower.

Earlier last year, Friends of Point Peron (FPP) approached the Conservation Council WA and Mark Webb, Director General of DBCA regarding the proposed route for the duplication of the sewer pipeline (SDOOL2) through BF 355 at Cape Peron and BF 358 alongside Lake Richmond and its TECs - unique thrombolites and Holocene dune sedge communities. Mark Webb offered a meeting which was taken up by FPP, the UBC and Prof Vic Semeniuk.

At the meeting we all pressed for the pipeline to be directed through urban streets instead of through the two Bush Forever Sites. Because of its long commitment to weeding Cape Peron, FPP was most insistent that the Water Corporation clean up the weeds around the site of

the stage 1 of the sewer pipeline (SDOOL1) many of which have spread. The UBC focused on need to adhere to clearing principles when considering the proposed project and Professor Semeniuk on hydrology. DWER decided to approve the Water Corporation's proposal as presented.

The Water Corporation wrote to FPP in August 2019 about their weed management program "*which aims to significantly reduce the presence of noxious woody weeds prior to construction commencing in 2020*" and promising to fund DBCA to control weeds in their easement for three years before undertaking the task themselves afterwards. FPP was pleased to read this although some concerns remain about the actual extent of the easement they were referring to.

The woody weeds of greatest concern are *Schinus terebinthifolius* (Brazilian pepper) and *Rhamnus alaternus* (Italian buckthorn). Both are prevalent along parts of the Water Corporation's easement within BF 355 and appear to have spread further afield. Both are dioecious and produce prolific amounts of seed which are spread mostly by birds. They both threaten over time to create forests in which nothing else can live.

The photograph shows two stems of *Schinus terebinthifolius* or Brazilian (or Japanese pepper) both from the same mature female about 25 metres from the Water Corporation drain and near the proposed excavation for the SDOOL 2. The stem on the left shows the beginnings of buds. The one on the right shows last year's fruiting stem with approximately 28 seeds remaining and at least three times that number of seed bearing stems. Presumably birds have taken many of the missing seeds or else they have fallen to ground. This tree is a sprawling multi-stemmed tree, about two metres tall and with a rough diameter of five metres. It would have well over 200 stems like the one in the photo: conservatively I'd say 200,000 seeds from a tree like this. You can get a sense of the potential of this species to reproduce. Over a period of years they become a dominating forest to four metres in height, outcompeting all others species, including their own seedlings. Examples of this can be seen on the north side of Pt Peron Rd east of The Cruising Yacht Club hardstand.

FPP has undertaken to assist Parks and Wildlife to control both weeds and has managed to reduce the numbers of mature female peppers considerably. But the Water Corporation's easement south of Pt Peron Road still has at least 30 mature peppers and needs management. As a tiny volunteer group FPP has its work cut out doing other things. So we are hoping that the Water Corporation will come to the weeding party and deal with the weeds around their pipeline.



Friends of Point Peron volunteers enjoying end-of-year breakfast.



Two stems of *Schinus terebinthifolius* (Brazilian pepper) from a female plant showing varied growth stages.

# Group News Group News Group News

## Exciting news from Friends of Lake Claremont

By Jenni Banister-Jones

Last year FOLC was selected as one of the 15 organisations in the Curtin Electorate to apply for a grant under the Commonwealth Environment Program. FOLC applied for \$18,000 to employ hand weeding contractors for invasive weed management. In late January we were informed that we had been successful!

Along with our revegetation efforts weed control has always been a focus at Lake Claremont. FOLC runs several weeding programs, such as the Adopt-a-Spot program, weekly weeding groups, monthly Busy Bees and our school community service program where weeding is an activity.

In 2019, the Town of Claremont instituted a policy of reducing reliance on chemical weed control, meaning that further resources will be needed in 2020 and beyond for hand weeding. The grant money will be used to augment the efforts of FOLC volunteers.

Effective ongoing weed management will assist with survival of the planting that FOLC has done over the last 16 years, and enhance Lake Claremont's function as an important ecological corridor between Herdsman Lake, Bold Park and the Swan River.

The Friends of Lake Claremont would like to thank Celia Hammond, Federal MP for Curtin and her staff for her nomination and their support during the application process.



Photo courtesy FLC  
Friends of Lake Claremont volunteers after a Busy Bee in January.



Photo courtesy FLC  
Contractors hand weeding at Lake Claremont. .



## Interpretative sign installed at Iluka Foreshore

By Don Poyton

Visitors to Iluka Foreshore, Bush Forever 325, not only have wonderful views from the lookout, but now, thanks to a recently installed interpretative sign, can read about the relationship between climate change, sea-level rise and transgression, dune formation and the vegetation complexes visible from the lookout.

The sign was designed by the Friends of North Ocean Reef-Iluka Foreshore (FONORIF) with the assistance of the City of Joondalup's Natural Areas Team who also arranged for the printing and installation. FONORIF paid for the sign using part of its 2019 Department of Planning, Land and Heritage's Coastwest grant.

The path between Burns Beach and Ocean Reef Boat Harbour is a text book for identifying and understanding the various plant communities within our foreshore reserve. However without information, such as that on the new sign, most people are unaware of the reasons behind the differences.

## An effective weed control model

By Amy Krupa, SERCUL

The South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) was formed in 2003 as an independent Natural Resource Management group in Beckenham. SERCUL brings together the community, business and government to develop and implement projects that improve the health of our waterways and other ecosystems. This is achieved through an integrated approach to catchment management.

SERCUL undertakes projects in four program areas - Environmental Education, Community Capacity, Landcare and Restoration, and Monitoring and Research. These projects are supported with financial and in-kind contributions from Commonwealth, State and Local Government agencies' funding programs and income generated by SERCUL's Environmental Services team.

# Group News Group News Group News

Environmental Services is the business arm of SERCUL with contracts undertaken on a fee for service basis. The specific intent of this delivery model is to generate income to support community groups and capacity in our region. It is recognised that in an ever tightening and diminishing funding environment there is limited external financial support provided to this area. Environmental Services undertaken by SERCUL are in the areas of Monitoring and Research, Environmental Education and Landcare and Restoration. The majority of proceeds that are generated by the Environmental Services Unit come from Landcare and Restoration through weed control, bushland maintenance and revegetation contracts for a wide range of clients.

One contract delivered by SERCUL Environmental Services has been undertaking weed control for the City of Nedlands in the City's natural areas since 2016. This has included grass selective (Fusilade) weed control, primarily targeting perennial veldt grass. The goal is to reduce the coverage of this transformer species in these bushland reserves.



Weed mapping at Wireless Hill Bushland. Photo courtesy SERCUL.

The weed control program has achieved excellent results with a large reduction in grass coverage. This is demonstrated by a 78% reduction in the amount of grass selective herbicide used in Shenton Bushland when controlling perennial veldt grass between the 2017 season and the 2019 season. On both occasions all the perennial veldt grass (*Erharta calycina*) was sprayed with the reduced chemical volume indicating a dramatic reduction in the coverage of grass. This is allowing the diverse native understorey room to thrive and reduces fire risk. Some populations of perennial veldt grass within the City have developed some resistance to Fusilade and have also been hand weeded to get 100% control.

SERCUL also has a contract with the City of Fremantle to manage weeds in the City's natural areas. This includes the remnant bushland at Samson Park where we have also been controlling perennial veldt grass. After two years of control using Fusilade there has been a dramatic reduction in grass coverage. Unfortunately there are occasionally fires lit in the bushland but anecdotally they have been less able to spread than they otherwise might, given the reduced fuel load from the reduced population of perennial veldt grass. The Friends of Samson Park have also started a hand weeding project in the Park to reduce fire fuel load and the reliance on chemicals to control weeds.

The Friends of Wireless Hill have been contracting SERCUL since 2009 to undertake manual weed management in the Wireless Hill Park area. Work has involved the management of perennial veldt grass and other seasonal weeds such as *Gladiolus caryophyllaceus* in the sensitive wildflower walk areas where chemical weed control is not viable. With the Friends Group successful in securing ongoing funding, weed management has been able to continue and excellent results over the past 10 years have been achieved. Due to the success of the hand weeding native orchids are able to flourish and fire risk is also reduced.

In addition to grass selective weed control programs SERCUL regularly manages all types of weeds across the Perth metropolitan area, from the coast to the hills, wetlands to bushland and revegetation areas. This work is for a wide range of clients including local governments and state government agencies. We generally adopt an integrated approach where we use the most efficient and effective approach for a given scenario. This includes both chemical and non-chemical methods including hand weeding, brush cutting, chain sawing and establishing dense native revegetation to exclude weeds in the longer term.

To find out more about SERCUL's Environmental Services go to [www.sercul.org.au](http://www.sercul.org.au) or contact SERCUL's Environmental Services Manager, Matt Grimbly, on 9458 5664 or [mattgrimbly@sercul.org.au](mailto:mattgrimbly@sercul.org.au)

To find out more about how SERCUL can support your Friends Group call SERCUL's Community and Grants Manager, Dan Friesen on 9458 5664 or email on [danfriesen@sercul.org.au](mailto:danfriesen@sercul.org.au)

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2020 ORDER OF AUSTRALIA AWARDS RECIPIENTS

This year's list of recipients of a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to conservation and the environment includes three dedicated and tireless volunteers well known to UBC members and supporters. They are

**Bronwen Keighery**  
**Greg Keighery**  
**Margaret Owen**

This is a well deserved acknowledgement of their long standing commitment.

## Modernising the Environmental Protection Act

*By Philip Jennings, Wetlands Conservation Society*

The State Government is planning to amend the Environmental Protection Act to correct several drafting errors and anomalies. A Discussion Paper and draft Bill was released for public comment over the summer holidays. The Government's plan is to correct some defects in the Act that have been discovered by EPA staff and independent reviewers over the past 20 years. Most of the proposed amendments are relatively minor and will serve to tidy up the Act and its procedures. The most contentious of them relate to delegating the EPA's powers to other agencies, such as Planning and Mines, and to private consultants. There is also a plan to allow the Commonwealth to delegate some of its powers under the Biodiversity Conservation Act to the State EPA. These are all dangerous ideas and the UBC and other conservation groups have strongly opposed them.

At this stage the Government has not indicated that it is willing to tackle some of the major defects in the Act and its regulations and procedures. Urban Bush Telegraph readers will be aware of several serious defects which include:

- The Court of Appeals ruled in 2017 that the EPA is not required to follow or consult its own guidelines and policies when undertaking assessments of proposals (e.g. the Roe 8 case).

- The Barnett Government was forced to ram through Parliament a Bill to validate numerous decisions of the EPA which the Supreme Court had ruled were invalid because EPA Board members had failed to declare their conflicts of interest.

- The EPA was unable to reassess the Maddington Kenwick Strategic Employment Area project after it discovered serious errors in its original assessment.

- The former Environment Minister, Albert Jacob, revoked three important Environmental Protection Policies in 2015 without any public consultation. Considering that EPPs require extensive public consultation and review before they are gazetted, the revocation process is clearly defective.

- Over the past 25 years there have been numerous cases of inadequate environmental reviews of planning proposals because section 48 of the Act authorises the WA Planning Commission to call for and assess public comments on the environmental impacts of rezoning land. The WAPC is clearly not qualified to do this job.

- The inadequate and anomalous appeals process in which the Minister determines appeals against the EPA's recommendations. The Minister is clearly not qualified to do this job and often has a conflict of interest when the Government itself is the proponent. All other States have recognised this problem by setting up independent courts or tribunals to hear environmental appeals.

- The lack of any requirement in the Act for the EPA to carry out regular State of the Environment reporting. The EPA produced State of the Environment reports in 1992, 1997 and 2007 and these were very useful for identifying trends and informing policy making. Every other Australian State and the Commonwealth carries out regular SoE reporting at 3-5 yearly intervals. WA has not produced an SoE report since 2007 and has no current plans to do so.

The Government is aware that there are many serious defects in the current EP Act and some of them are listed in a section of the Discussion Paper called "Further Issues". The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation states that further discussion of these issues is needed before it decides whether to address them.

The WA Environmental Protection Act is in serious need of major reform. We were the first State in Australia to set up an EPA in 1972 and our legislation inspired other States to follow suit. The EP Act was rewritten in 1986 and at that time it was regarded as best practice. However, since then many amendments have weakened it and the Government's proposals, if implemented, will weaken it further. A major overhaul is needed. Will the Government commit to this in time for the 50th anniversary of the EPA in 2022?

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## DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS

*By Pat Hart, Chairperson SERCUL*

A very much used title but oh so true out here in the south east region of the metro area. As development continues to spread out, more and more of our bushlands, wetlands and waterways are being lost. To add to the blow as there has been such a huge reduction of bushland in the Armadale-Gosnells-Canning areas there is very little bushland left as offsets, and now the offsets are being purchased well outside our metro area. The latest (although under public comment) is 5 hectares of Banksia woodlands where 15 hectares is proposed as offset to be purchased in Wannamal. As well as the loss to our biodiversity it is adding to heat increase and to the issue of water availability as a school and obviously oval is proposed to be built on a section of the proposed development site. All local governments in our sub-region and I presume elsewhere have use or nearly used up their allocations for groundwater extraction – but that's another issue that we hope to pursue.

One of the key issues among the listed concerns is the offsets process that I believe need urgent attention. What we at SERCUL would like to see is the financial value of the bushland which is to be removed used to manage similar bushland within the broader catchment that is obviously safely secured by adequate land tenure and planning. Too often we see 'secured by planning' bushland just left with no management where it deteriorates over the years with its biodiversity values severely lessened. How these funds are managed and by who needs to be identified, but it is a possibility and one that we believe should be addressed with some urgency. We will be putting in submissions on this through the opportunities we have with the three State reviews of acts currently out for comment.

# Group News Group News Group News

UBC and community walk through the Ocean Reef coastal bush-land area to make way for the Ocean Reef Marina.

Your last chance to see what will go. Clearing Permit approval is pending, have your say **until 21<sup>st</sup> February** here: <https://www.der.wa.gov.au/our-work/clearing-permits/clearing-permit-applications>

Learn what the community representative group, Joondalup Community Coast Care Forum (JCCCF), have had to do to get the best outcome possible for the birds, quendas, graceful sun moth, reptiles and much more.

The Bush Forever here took a considerable loss last year with MRS rezoning so the ecological linkage will be greatly diminished. At two points the [narrow linkage](#) for resident animals such as quendas, bob-tails, lizards, graceful sun moths will be treacherous as they attempt to cross roads.

The natural setting for those using the dual path for recreation and connection to nature will be spoilt as they pass by 1000 residences and hot carparks.

The building of the Ocean Reef Marina will create jobs and provide a bigger boating area to what already exists. However many more people will be affected by the loss of this irreplaceable coastal natural area that Aussies so much enjoy. We always prided ourselves on leaving the foreshore for all people.

See back page for the walk details.



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

## Do you know where Rainbow Lorikeets congregate at sunset?

By Robyn Pickering

Operation Rainbow Roost is a BirdLife Western Australia project aimed at finding roosting sites of the introduced Rainbow Lorikeet (<https://birdlife.org.au/projects/operation-rainbow-roost>) (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) and is currently funded by Lotterywest. Rainbow Lorikeets are a declared pest species in WA. Each February for the past three years, BirdLife Western Australia has coordinated citizen scientists to count Rainbow Lorikeets arriving at night roost sites across Perth. The counts help to estimate the overall population of the species in south west WA and help us to understand the distribution of this pest species and how these change over time. This information is used to work out future management actions and assess their effectiveness.



Rainbow Lorikeets roost together in tall trees each night when they are not breeding. The number of birds using roost sites peaks in summer after the main breeding season. Lorikeets arrive at the roost sites around sunset in noisy groups. They leave their roosts in the pre-dawn (prior to 5am during summer) and this means that early morning sightings are often distant to the roost site. Roost sites can be many kilometres from feeding sites that the lorikeets use during the day, so it is important to only report sites where you see lorikeets at sunset.

### Ways you can help Operation Rainbow Roost

- Contact us to report in any night-time roosts.
- Don't feed Rainbow Lorikeets.
- Cut back the dead leaves and stems on date or cotton palms to reduce Rainbow lorikeet nesting opportunities.
- Never release a Rainbow Lorikeet from captivity.
- Volunteer to count a roost site in February 2020 by filling out the form at <https://forms.gle/coP7aaaJFwFzL9nHA>

Contact: **Robyn Pickering**, BirdLife Western Australia, email [rainbowroost@birdlife.org.au](mailto:rainbowroost@birdlife.org.au) or phone 9383 7749

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Tuesday 3 March**

**6-8 pm at City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street West Perth**

Come along to UBC's Annual General Meeting and hear Greg Keighery talk about the '*blooming biodiversity*' of Western Australia. **Greg Keighery**, is a renowned botanist who has been largely responsible for regional scale surveys to establish conservation networks. He was recently awarded an Order of Australia Medal in the General Division for service to conservation and the environment.

#### **What is World Class about Western Australia? Blooming Biodiversity, why is it ignored?**

We know that WA is a State bigger than most countries, containing some of the world's oldest rocks, fossils and life forms, one of the world's oldest cultures and largest wilderness area. This very old land surface has led to the relatively recent burst of speciation in our flowering plants in southern Western Australia (Southwest). This is what is truly world class about WA, recognised internationally as being one of the original 25 biodiversity hotspots of the planet and the only one in Australia.

Why is this so?



*View of the site designated for the proposed Ocean Reef Marina and associated residential development. Photo by D Poyton*

### **Walk through the Ocean Reef coastal bushland to make way for the Ocean Reef Marina**

**Date: Saturday 4 April**

**Time: 8.30-11.30 am**

**Meeting place:** Ocean Reef Sea Sports Club, Boat Harbour Quays off Ocean Reef road. Nearest bus stop in Hodges drive. If you would like to carpool let Sue at UBC know [UBC@bushlandperth.org](mailto:UBC@bushlandperth.org)

Bring a water bottle, thermos and morning tea to share. Courtesy RSVP to [ubc@bushlandperth.org](mailto:ubc@bushlandperth.org)



### **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 \$60 a year (GST included). A growing membership strengthens the cause and groups benefit from the network.

#### **Individuals:**

Supporter membership is only \$50 per year (GST included). Supporters can attend meetings and receive copies of the "Urban Bush Telegraph"

The annual membership fees include an electronic copy of the *Urban Bush Telegraph* (currently published quarterly). Printed copies can be ordered at a cost of \$15.00 per annum for four editions.

Join or renew on-line (<https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/membership/>) or send your name, address and cheque to:

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

#### **Office:**

**URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL WA Inc**

**Lotteries House 2 Delhi Street West Perth WA 6008**

**Postal address: PO Box 326 West Perth WA 6872**

**Ph 9420 7207 E-mail: [ubc@bushlandperth.org.au](mailto:ubc@bushlandperth.org.au)**



**Urban Bushland Council WA Inc**



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

### **NEWSLETTER ITEMS**

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

**Copy deadline - 1 April 2020**

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