

QUENDAS IN STAR SWAMP BUSHLAND RESERVE

If you live near Star Swamp Bushland Reserve in North Beach/Carine, you may have seen a small brown animal that looks a little bit like a rat rummaging around in your garden, dashing across the road or crossing the tracks in the Reserve as you walk through. These are not rats, they are quendas – native marsupials that call Star Swamp Bushland home.

The quenda (*Isodon fusciventer*) is a sub-species of South western brown bandicoot, genetically slightly different from the species found in the Perth Hills. Small, ground-dwelling marsupials, quenda have a long, pointed nose and short, rounded ears and a shortish furred tail. Quenda fur is short, coarse and darkish brown, with a creamy-white belly. Female quendas have a backward-opening pouch and can carry up to six young, but usually have litters of two to four. They eat fungi, seeds, roots and insects and are mostly nocturnal, feeding around dusk, although they can be out and about at any time of day.

The Friends of Star Swamp Bushland had long thought that the Reserve had a small number of quendas, with tell-tale signs of their distinctive cone-shaped diggings, but none had ever been sighted. In 2013, the Department of Parks & Wildlife (now Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions), in consultation with the City of Stirling, decided to translocate four 'naughty' quendas from Ellenbrook. Naughty because they were digging up Western Swamp Tortoise eggs! An area of the Star Swamp Bushland was fenced off for quenda protection and the animals were introduced.

It seems that Star Swamp Bushland is paradise for quendas. The City of Stirling, with some support from the Friends group, undertakes population monitoring by cage trapping every 12-18 months. Animals caught are weighed, measured, checked for a microchip or have one inserted if necessary, and females are checked for pouch young. In the 2018 monitoring, around 50 quendas were caught, with about a quarter of them not previously microchipped and several had pouch young. Along the Reserve's limestone tracks and through the bush areas, quenda diggings make the area look like a minefield, with holes everywhere. The 'protective' fenced areas are totally redundant, with quendas sighted at all times of the day throughout the Reserve by walkers and bushcare workers.

A few issues have emerged as the population has grown. Some dog walkers in the Reserve let their animals chase and harass the quendas, despite informative signage being erected to educate the public; people are inclined to feed the animals that come into their garden, resulting in cases of scabies, fatty liver disease and even death; and, as the population expands, more and more animals are being killed on the surrounding roads. And bushfire is an ongoing threat to the local quenda population, so fingers are crossed every summer.

But, overall, it is a good news story. From the hint of a small quenda population in Star Swamp Bushland Reserve prior to 2013, there are now many animals and they are moving out into nearby pieces of bushland and visiting local people's gardens. And local people are putting out water and, in some cases, planting quenda habitat plants to provide shelter. Quenda populations are also established in nearby Trigg Bushland Reserve and along the beachfront managed by Stirling Natural Environment Coastcare. Nature's 'Little Diggers' are doing well in and around the Star Swamp Bushland Reserve.



Photo courtesy DBCA



Photo courtesy DBCA

Inside this issue:

Input to Royal Commission closes soon	2-4
Point Peron Future	4
Group News	7
Funding opportunities	10

Editorial

The Deputy Director of PEW Charity Trust recently spoke on ABC RN calling for 24,000 new jobs to be introduced by Government for greatly increased urban and rural landcare after the extensive fires and after the Coronavirus pandemic. A wake up call. This would help get people back to work and increase much needed long term conservation and land management to reduce fire risk, control arson, control weeds, feral cats, foxes etc.

Grassy weed control on the Swan Coastal Plain is a key action needed, with greatly increased government funding and a collaborative approach. This however, must not include prescribed burning as the UBC **has always** advocated against prescribed burning of vegetation on the Swan Coastal Plain as it damages biodiversity, *increases* grassy weeds and thus fire risk, kills fauna, produces smoke pollution. Reflecting on fire matters, four articles from the *Spring/Summer 1995 edition of the UBT* are reprinted on pages 3 and 4.

Members are encouraged to send submissions to the Royal Commission on Natural Disasters - see below. Our Bush Forever conservation estate complete with linkages and locally significant bushland areas all need much more collaborative on-ground management and protection. The UBC has suggested an addition of at least \$10 million be added to DBCA's Swan Region recurrent budget is essential to manage Bush Forever Areas. Also the Perth Biodiversity Project by WALGA needs to be restored.

New employment could involve infrastructure construction (e.g. fencing, paths and signage for all Bush Forever sites and local reserves), hand weeding by trained crews, and revegetation work.

The Forrestdale Environmental Centre as proposed by the Friends of Forrestdale in 2019 should be built and generously staffed. This will provide jobs and spinoffs for companies that provide the materials and construction, as well as extra bush management staff for DBCA. Ecotourism and beneficial primary school education in nature would be developed.

So now is time to reflect and plan ahead for recovery of us humans for expanded work opportunities, for health benefits by being in contact with nature, as well as for on-ground protection of our rich biodiversity and its iconic species such as our 3 species of black cockatoos.

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

Note the submission period has been **extended to 17th April**. See the notice below from the Commission. It is important that the Commission hears from many of us in WA.

If there was a fire in or near your bushland, please give your responses to questions 6 & 7.

It is question 8 which needs your response. Use your own words. Some suggestions for fire prevention:

- No prescribed burns on the Swan Coastal Plain of WA. (note UBC has always advocated against burning of vegetation on the Swan Coastal Plain as it encourages and increases growth of flammable grassy weeds and thus *increases fire risk*). Grassy weed control, fast attack in event of wildfire, and arson control are the key preparation and mitigation issues for action.
- The 200,000 ha target for prescribed burns each year for the WA south west forests should be abandoned. This target is not evidence based. Large scale burns kill wildlife and endangered species and produce emissions and reduce carbon sequestration.
- Indigenous knowledge and practices should be engaged.
- Long unburnt bushland is the healthiest and has the lowest fire risk.
- Experience and audits of past wildfires showed no relationship between hazard reduction burning and overall wildfire risk.
- A greatly increased focus and federal and state government funding is needed on fire prevention especially grassy weed control and fast response to wildfire.
- Arson watch and arson control programs need to be greatly increased at the local level. Community awareness programs for fast reporting of suspicious behaviour to fire brigades and arson watch especially in the vulnerable south west of WA is needed. The Juvenile And Family Fire Awareness (JAFFA) program (by DFES WA) should be greatly expanded, promoted and well funded.
- **Fast attack:** Greatly increased government funding is essential to deliver fast reporting of fires and increased capacity of local fire fighters and water bombers for fast attack to extinguish fires quickly after ignition. This is especially important for the WA south west biodiversity hotspot. It is also in the interests of human health. Smoke pollution causes huge costs to human health.

Submissions can be lodged via <https://naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/>

Fire Management in Urban Bushland in the 90's

The Urban Bush Telegraph has been published for about 26 years and over that time it has contained articles very relevant to today's issues. Edition 5 of the Urban Bush Telegraph Spring/Summer 1995 included articles about the UBC's two day conference '*Burning Our Bushland*' held August 25-26, 1995 and related issues. The cooperative and positive liaison that occurred from this conference is instructive, and four of the articles are re-printed below.

The first one here was the lead article in Spring/Summer 1995, Edition 5 of the UBT.

After the Fire Conference

What more is there to say? the proceedings say it all...

YES! The proceedings of our conference '*Burning Our Bushland*' are ready. Each member group as well as conference delegates have received a copy. Copies are also being sent to Local Government authorities and key libraries with assistance from the Gordon Reid Foundation.

The conference exceeded our wildest expectations in terms of gaining an open dialogue with the firefighting sector. Many groups have had follow-up contact with the WA Fire Brigade or local brigades. Richard Robertson also attended the September meeting of the UBC as our guest and heard first-hand experiences of members with fire. Members also learnt more about the fire-fighting system.

Member Groups have supplied information about fire sensitive areas of bushland for this summer. So if you have not heard from your local fire brigade, be ready to hear or perhaps follow up any immediate concerns directly with Richard on XXXXXXXX. He has already been to visit a number of community groups. Thank you to Richard and his colleagues for being so helpful.

In addition, the UBC has been invited to go on the Committee looking at guidelines for consideration of environmental impacts of fire operation. This committee is chaired by John Day (member for Darling Range) and is implementing recommendation 23 of the John Day report concerning fire hazard in the Darling Range. We have asked for the first draft of guidelines to be sent to key UBC groups for comment. So here is your chance for some input to help improve fire management practises.

The following are the terms of reference the Council has put forward to the committee:

That all fire authorities (including the BFB, WAFBB, brigades, local authorities, CALM and other land managers), take into account the ecological effects of

Fire hazard reduction practices

Fire suppression operations

...and that guidelines be prepared to address these.

Our common aim is to markedly reduce the incidence of fire in urban bushland.

The next 2 items were on page 6:

Common Misconceptions About Fire

By Mary Gray

Before attempting to improve fire management of urban bushland, we need to understand that there are common misconceptions about fire. These misconceptions form the basis of the common attitudes amongst the general community and amongst firefighters towards fires in bushland. Unfortunately, some attitudes are still actively promoted by CALM as a continuing response to the Dwellingup fires.

The view was expressed at the '*Burning Our Bushland*' conference that these misconceptions need to be addressed by a positive education program in order to change such community attitudes. There needs to be an appreciation of bushland, what is there, bushland values and how to manage it before it receives the respect it deserves.

The common misconceptions are:

- *Prescribed burns are the only way to prevent summer wildfires*
- *Regular burning of urban bushland is good for it*
- *Fires in urban bushland do not matter unless people and property (ie buildings) are threatened. Thus the Fire Brigade does not need to put bushfires out*
- *Smoke haze over Perth from prescribed burns is aesthetically unpleasant but is not otherwise harmful*
- *Firebreaks prevent fires and are therefore essential.*

Perhaps community groups and firefighters could take note of these misconceptions when planning education programmes and programmes to raise community awareness about fire and bushland management.

Fire Rescue at Kings Park

By Kirsten Tulis

A positive result of the terrible fire at Kings Park on January 20 may be the emergence of a crack team of fauna rescue volunteers. At the suggestion of Richard Robertson from the WA Fire Brigade, I called three fauna rehabilitation organisations. Sue and Keith Smith from Mundaring were not available as they were busy fighting fires and rescuing animals nearby. June Butcher from Kanyana Native Fauna Rehabilitation Centre took charge of wildlife recovery. She and seven of her volunteers plus veterinarian Gloria Chay from Fauna Rehabilitation in Malaga came very well prepared. The Chief of the State Emergency Service, George Sulc, was there to ensure safety and give us some quick search training while Brian Crisp from June's group led the party because of his previous experience as Kalamunda's Deputy Fire Chief. Richard took charge of the toilet paper (to mark our progress) and ripped his trousers. Pat Hart, Deputy Mayor, fire fighter and environmentalist from Armadale, and Bronwen Keighery were there too, though Bronwen had difficulty getting her eye in, because what we were looking for were not plants. Bob Dixon from Kings Park wasn't able to stay as he had to check trees in the Park. Bee-eaters, Brown Honey eaters and lots of big black beetles kept us company as we searched the grey and black landscape.

Sadly, we found among the still smouldering ashy soil and logs eleven dead bobtails, though six others were lucky and are being cared for by Kanyana until their later release into Kings Park. We also found four or so dead Burton's Legless Lizards and a handful of small skinks. About 20 skinks were caught for immediate release into nearby unburnt bush. Only one bird, a Tawny Frogmouth, was dead and thankfully we found no injured or dead possums. Almost all the understorey had gone, though there were patches where the trees were just scorched. We suspect the reptiles from the middle did not escape and were totally burnt since most of the living and dead were found in the perimeters.

We agreed at the end of the day to get a properly organised team going. It will be trained in animal search, rescue and care, with the WAFB and SES helping with safety, leadership and search techniques. If you are interested in being part of such a team, then call me so I can redirect you to the appropriate person when we work out the structure. In the meantime we welcome ideas too.

Perth is fortunate to have many dedicated fauna rehab volunteers, and this initiative will be a way of bringing even more people together in a caring and positive way. Today's group of 16 hopefully will grow so that when a fire strikes any bushland there will be a large pool of people to draw upon so that at least a few more animals will survive. Good on you Richard for thinking of starting this!

This one was in a box on page 7, UBT Spring/Summer 1995:

Fire Control of Your Urban Bushland into a Management Plan.

By Margot Ross

Following the recent Urban Bushland Fire Conference at Bibra Lake, CRREPA's (Canning River Residents' Environment Protection Association) President Margot Ross contacted Graeme Williams to arrange for a meeting with the Southern Region Office of the Fire Brigade. Graeme sent Garry Kennedy to a meeting to assist CRREPA in formulating fire control procedures into the management plan for the Yagan Wetland Reserve in cooperation with the Canning City Council and other groups. Garry agreed that improved fire control measures and management strategies are essential to reduce the threat of fire to the bushland. In turn people and property would be better protected. It was agreed that the potential fire hazard in the bush was a serious threat the question being not if, but when.

The meeting adjourned to try to find existing fire hydrants along Leach Highway, without success. Garry suggested that the two hydrants should be installed to protect the wetland and dryland planting program which will begin in 1996. Also, he suggested that Sherwin Lodge Retirement Village should install another fire hydrant to protect their residents who live right on the edge of the wetland bushland.

The result has been an extensive addition about fire protection of the bushland into the Yagan Reserve Wetland Management Plan which is now available for public comment.

Do you need fire hydrants next to your urban bushland to assist in quick eradication of fire? The fire brigade is most helpful and anxious to reverse the policy of letting the bushland burn until it's a threat to people or property. We must let them know what changes are needed.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF CAPE PERON

Please access the following links, particularly the first one which invites specific submissions regarding ecologically sound changes to tenure and landuse at Cape Peron. It's interactive and easy to use. PLEASE use your own words where possible.

Following the rejection of the rezoning for the Mangles Bay Marina, the Reserve became a Planning Investigation Area. Over the past four months a multi-departmental working group and a community reference group have been meeting. Public stakeholder meetings have been canned as a result of COVID-19 so the online comment is the best way to register your views.

You have until 24 April so please access:

<https://dplh.mysocialpinpoint.com.au/cape-peron/#/>

And for the background -

<https://consultation.dplh.wa.gov.au/land-use-planning/cape-peron/>

Friends of Point Peron offer you the following suggestions:

1. The Cape Peron Coastal Park proposal should be implemented ASAP. (See earlier version on Handsoffpointperon.)
2. No residential or industrial uses. Commercial uses only if they are low key and respectful and supportive of the ecology.
3. The whole of the Cape should be Class A reserve including the now obsolete Ports Installation zoning north of Pt Peron Road with arrangements for the fishing club and the yacht club. The Camp School, Water Corporation Treatment Station and Naragebup Environment Centre should be retained.
4. The cleared land, former the RSL Caravan Park and AIW Leasehold could become a low key RV friendly caravan park with only portable buildings.
5. The remaining leaseholds along Shoalwater Bay should either be reverted to conservation or be given longer leases on condition that they remove asbestos, support low key redevelopment of the area similar to the older part of Rottnest, and serve as low cost accommodation to the general public. Management should be similar to other DBCA managed areas.
6. DBCA's Draft Recreation Master Plan should be completed and implemented ASAP.

Who's responsible for the fires?

By Beth Schultz

We newcomers to Australia have largely caused the problems we now face with catastrophic fires.

Apart from our contribution to climate change, we have removed most of the big old trees, which don't burn easily and suppress the undergrowth.

We are still felling big old trees. Old growth karri continue to be sold as chiplogs.

We still log what's left of the forests and leave masses of dry logging debris on the forest floor.



Photo courtesy WA Forest Alliance

Logging debris in recently logged jarrah forest.



Photo courtesy WA Forest Alliance

Jess Beckerling, Convener of the WA Forest Alliance Inc on old growth karri logs at the woodchip mill, February 2020.

With the canopy opened up, the understorey dries out and becomes more flammable.

We have extensively replaced big old trees and fire-tolerant and fire-repellent native vegetation with flammable re-growth, crops and pasture.

Our mismanagement, especially frequent extensive prescribed burning, has eliminated almost all the ecosystem disturbers such as woylies and malleefowl, which reduce the 'fuel load' in searching for fungi or making their nests. One woylie can turn over 4.8 tonnes of soil in a year.

By burning the bush repeatedly, we repeatedly disrupt the natural decomposition of the litter on the ground even in conservation reserves, which have been burnt more frequently than State forest.

We have built and still build inappropriate structures in inappropriate places, then blame the places when disastrous consequences follow.

We have disregarded the knowledge and experience of the Indigenous land managers, who cared for this land for 50,000 plus years.

Inquiries into the recent bushfires must take full account of the many ways we have made the whole landscape more flammable, and recommend measures to correct our mistakes.

We must end all logging of our native forests and broadscale burning of our forests and conservation reserves, and work to bring back the natural 'fuel reducers' such as woylies, quenda and malleefowl.

And we must abandon the annual prescribed burn target of 200,000 hectares in the 2.25 million hectares of the south-west forest regions managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and instead develop indicators that relate directly to the achievement of risk mitigation.

Photos below: Prescribed burn, Mt Lindesay Priority Protection Area, November 2019. Photo courtesy WA Forest Alliance Inc.



Reflections on efforts to protect Perth's bushland

By Angela Carr

President of UBC between 1998-2001

When we moved to Manning in 1982 we became aware of System 6 areas within the suburb. They were the fringing vegetation along the Canning River adjacent to Clontarf and the banksia woodland at Mount Henry peninsula. These sites have since become Bush Forever sites managed by the City of South Perth and Aquinas College. This is the culmination of many years of lobbying by people keen to see important bushland sites with a secure land tenure and management. We now bikeride past both these sites, and occasionally weed them.

But I began my activism in conservation with a small patch of bushland which still is not protected. This was at Manning Primary school. We realised that the neighbours across the road from the school had taken responsibility for an autumn burn each year to keep the likelihood of a fire in the bush at bay. At the P & C we decided that parents could be responsible for managing the bushland. Children would be involved in planting out seedlings and have science lessons in the bush. As parents of children at Manning Primary School we have remained active managers of the school bushland for many years. However I became aware of the need to secure the tenure and management of all local bushland as well as the System 6 areas that were regionally significant. This is some of the story of my contribution.

A number of local residents were aware there were areas of bushland within the City of South Perth that needed management. We formed the City of South Perth Environment Association (COSPEA) and encouraged the City to appoint an Environmental Officer. This was the beginning of the City's active management of bushland areas. There were a number of pockets of banksia woodland within Manning including two areas attached to local schools. When the suburb of Karawara was redeveloped, a large group of people fought valiantly to have the Gillon St bushland left intact. But we failed. The bushland was sold off for housing. Despite lots of lobbying we only achieved having fencing erected around City owned bushland and the compensating basin of Gillon St was recreated as a wetland and bushland.

In the 1990's the Western Australian government responded to enormous community concern that large swathes of bushland were demolished regularly within the Perth Metropolitan Region. Many Friends Groups had been operating for some time and these groups decided to form the Urban Bushland Council (UBC) in 1993. This became the peak body to lobby for the long term protection of regionally and locally significant bushland. COSPEA became one of the UBC members.

These were heady days. The Urban Bushland Strategy of 1995 committed the government to produce a strategic plan for the conservation of bushland in the Perth Metropolitan Region. The government decided to identify regionally significant bushland and map which sites of bush should be retained to represent 26 vegetation types. It was hoped to keep 10% of all the vegetation types although this was not always possible as some vegetation types had largely been over-cleared. Perth's Bushplan was released in 1998 and identified 491 sites recommended for protection. Some areas were to be protected and managed as reserves under the Metropolitan Region Scheme (MRS), some were included in a Regional Park, and some areas were to have negotiated agreements with private owners.

By now I was a fully fledged member of the UBC and had learnt to lobby the Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes, with Mary Gray, President of the UBC and other members of the committee. UBC had a great team of advocates and submission writers as well as a network of Friends Groups doing on ground management of local bushland. After becoming President of the UBC in 1998, I represented the UBC on the Bushplan Reference Group which was appointed by Graham Kierath, the Minister for Planning. Nine of us met for 15 months with planning, community, mining and botanical representatives to make recommendations as to how Bushplan should be implemented.

As President of UBC I remember well my only meeting with Graham Kierath, public servants and a reporter that proved to be significant for the Minister and his staff. In the morning of the meeting with the Minister, I attended a workshop in Mandurah and while there I managed to persuade members of the Friends of Creery Wetlands to accompany me to this crucial meeting with the Minister for Planning. We had a lively discussion with the Minister. After the meeting, the attending journalist congratulated me on the discussion. The attending public servants later said that this meeting was also their first opportunity to hear what the Minister thought about particular issues under discussion. I was always very grateful for the support of the Mandurah Friends Group.

During Bushplan negotiations, a representative from the Cemetery Board had been on the news arguing their case for the government to give them a Bushplan site for future use as a cemetery. I contacted Mary Moody, the ABC journalist who had run the story to give me time on television to counter this proposal. After some convincing, on a very hot summer's day we went to the site and discussed why it was not okay to build a cemetery on banksia woodland. This was aired on the TV news that night. By further letter writing we persuaded the government to abandon this idea.

The UBC lobbied a number of Ministers of the Court Liberal government, including Cheryl Edwardes, Kim Hames, Colin Barnett and Doug Shave as well as the Chairman of the Western Australian Planning Commission Simon Holthouse. I would regularly meet Giz Watson, a Greens senator, at the UWA radio station to discuss Bushplan on air. Friends Groups and the Wildflower Society were very active in lobbying for the long term security of beautiful patches of bushland from Burns Beach to Beeliar, from the coast to the hills. A number of us attended the Bush Forever debate in Parliament. I remember Minister Peter Foss saying that it was the hippies who travel in Kombi vans and camp in bushland that are keen to have bushland retained. It was just light hearted banter as by now the government had been persuaded that Bush Forever was a way of providing certainty for developers and conservationists. It was agreed in Parliament in 2000 that 287 Bush Forever sites be included in the MRS. This achievement was the result of a team effort of a large number of Friends Groups, botanists, public servants and the government. I think members and friends of UBC can be very proud that we played a significant part to achieve the retention of regionally significant bushland. I only wish we could secure the long term tenure of our Manning Primary School bushland that we've tried so hard to regenerate!



Photo by B Fremlin

Harrisdale Swamp (Bush Forever site 253)

By Bryony Fremlin and David James

Named after a pioneer family of the area, Harrisdale Swamp is a 98.4 ha reserve within the City of Armadale. The reserve originally consisted of seven privately owned titles with two additional uncleared blocks later being added to the northern end. The WA Planning Commission has progressively been buying the blocks over the years, the final one acquired just recently. Three houses, some shacks and internal fencing have subsequently been removed.

The reserve predominantly consists of banksia woodland, some jarrah, and paperbarks that fringe the swamp. The swamp occupies the central area of the reserve.

Part of Harrisdale Swamp is currently managed by the WAPC. The remainder is part of the Jandakot Regional Park and is administered by DBCA. It is intended that in due course the reserve as a whole will be included in the JRP and managed by DBCA.

An old quarry site on the southern end of the reserve has undergone some revegetation work as part of an offset resulting from the clearing of banksia woodland at Jandakot Airport. Last spring, several native wetland species were planted in the northern section of the swamp and banksia seedlings were planted in a partly degraded area west of the swamp. These plants were provided by DBCA.

The reserve unfortunately contains invasive weeds such as *Acacia longifolia*, *Dipogon lignosus* and various introduced grasses. *Acacia longifolia* is well established, particularly around the margins of the swamp and beneath the two power lines that run through the reserve. Most of the mature trees have now been removed, but because of the long-established seed bank, hundreds of seedlings are emerging and will need to be monitored and removed over several years, ensuring none go to seed, until the seed bank is finally exhausted.

Dipogon lignosus was first detected some years ago as a mass of vines enveloping a patch of *Melaleuca preissiana* trees. These plants have been treated, but since then seedlings have sprung up in dense bracken and spearwood thickets in the vicinity, making them difficult to deal with.

The swamp itself consists of two open sections, separated by a thicket of *Melaleuca preissiana* and *M. teretifolia*. The northern shallower end, which in the past has been cultivated, is covered with exotic grasses and other weeds. The southern end is deeper and therefore less affected by weeds.

Many state, federal and local organisations have contributed towards the eradication of *Acacia longifolia*: DBCA, Conservation Volunteers of Australia, Work for the Dole, SERCUL, Friends of Forrestdale and private contractors. A SALP grant has funded some of this work, as well as the spraying of couch grass in the swamp. Another grant of \$13,000 for weed eradication, including *Dipogon lignosus*, has been approved but is yet to be spent.

The area of the reserve most affected by neglect and abuse was the large southern block. When this block was acquired, much work was needed to bring it to an acceptable standard. Car bodies and large amounts of rubbish were removed by the WAPC and new fences and signage installed. As a result, Harrisdale Swamp is now in much better condition and, with the existing tracks and firebreaks enabling easy walking, a visit to the reserve can be a most enjoyable experience.

Group News Group News Group News

INVERTEBRATE SURVEY AT WIRELESS HILL

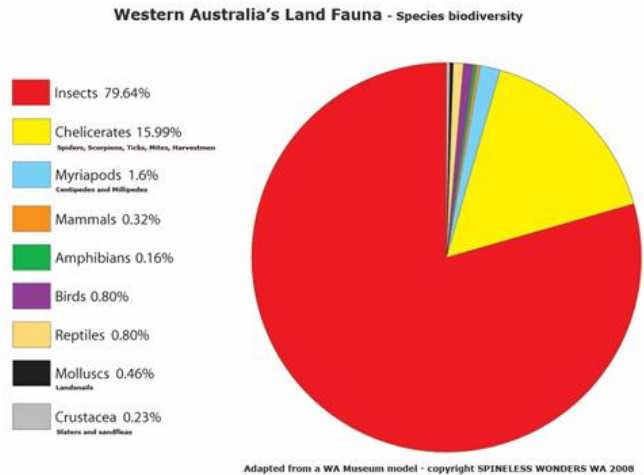
By Margaret Matthews

The Friends of Wireless Hill are very grateful to have received a grant to undertake a survey of the macrofauna (mostly the invertebrates such as insects and spiders but also reptiles and amphibians) at Wireless Hill. Most (97%) of the macrofauna are invertebrates as shown by the pie chart.



Photo by B Fremlin

Photo left: A Tau Emerald Dragonfly (*Hemicordulia tau*).



The money has been provided by the Federal Government Community Environment Program through the Electoral Office of our local member the Hon Ben Morton MP. This will be the first invertebrate survey done in the City of Melville.

The Friends group will engage David Knowles of Spineless Wonders to do the survey with lots of help from the Friends and the local community.

Insect populations are in decline throughout the world, mostly due to the use of pesticides and insecticides and light pollution in urban areas.

It is very important for the ongoing health of the plants and animals at Wireless Hill that we have the right pollinators, especially for orchids, and enough insect food for birds, many of which are also pollinators. There are actions we can



Photo by B Fremlin

A Blue-banded Bee visiting *Dianella revoluta*.

take if we need to assist insect populations, such as particular plantings and managing light sources.

The survey will be done in late September/early October, depending on the rainfall as insect populations respond to soil moisture and will involve sampling and trapping at three sites in the Park over three days and nights. Animals are caught and photographed then released.

We hope to involve the local schools and residents living around the Park. Most of the work will involve light trapping during the nights, a fun social activity! Hopefully we are again able to enjoy social activities by September/October!

Plans for spring - Murdoch Branch Wildflower Society of WA

By Kim Dravnieks

Murdoch Branch are planning for a series of wildflower walks during spring, when we can once again enjoy times out of doors and the beauty of our nature.

Some dates are yet to be confirmed so keep an eye out for announcements closer to the time:

Sun 30 Aug - Wireless Hill Walk (TBC) - The land here was once fairly well fully cleared but now has an impressive display of wildflowers to be admired each Spring along well developed path networks. In conjunction with Friends of Wireless Hill.

Group News Group News Group News

Sat 5 Sept - Rehabilitating Roe 8 Walk (TBC) - A walk through the rewilding of land decimated in some sections over 3 years ago. Much has been done to protect the regrowth and a considerable amount of replanting has occurred. The abundance of species in this wildlife corridor is worth a visit.

In conjunction with the City of Cockburn, Rehabilitating Roe 8 and Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor.

Sun 13 Sept - Orelia Joys in Kwinana - An annual event to look at bushland close to suburbia but still with treasures found in the ancient landscape of Banksia woodlands on Spearwood and Bassendean soils. In conjunction with the City of Kwinana.

Sun 20 Sept - Samson Park - A remnant bushland tucked deep in the suburb of Samson with a mix of Tuart, Jarrah, Marri and Banksia woodland. There are some surprising spring wildflowers still showing off each year. In conjunction with the City of Fremantle and Friends of Samson Park

3-5 Oct - Tarin Rock Wildflower Tour (TBC) - A 3 day/2 night trip 250km south east of Perth visiting Tarin Rock and North Tarin Rock Nature Reserves, both gems of the Wheatbelt, some 25 km west of Lake Grace. The reserves are underlain by granite and granitic gneisses, covered by alluvial soils in the valleys, sands on the slopes with laterite cap rock on the ridges. The maximum elevation is 430 m. The vegetation types are diverse and include woodlands, mallees, tall shrublands, heathlands and breakaway associations. Wildflowers include many species of *Melaleuca*, *Verticordia*, *Stylidium* and Goodeniaceae. A couple we will be looking out for are *Lechenaultia tubiflora* (the flowers turn from white to red after pollination) and *Grevillea insignis* (the wax grevillea with radiant pink flowers.)

News from the Quinns Rocks Environmental Group (QREG)

By Renata Zelinova

How disappointing to discover that despite all the effort put in by the Group to minimise the impacts of major infrastructure works in the North Western suburbs, the delivery of mitigation measures proven to be unsatisfactory. During a late Spring walk organised by QREG, it was discovered that the fauna underpasses designed to facilitate the movement of larger fauna through Neerabup National Park were not finished to the anticipated standard (set out in the approved project's Flora and Fauna Management Plan) and were being vandalised. Even more disheartening as during the walk we saw an emu cross our path and local community is sharing images of disoriented emus on the Freeway and Marmion Avenue. A follow up examination by QREG showed an increase in vandalism since the Spring visit and found four large gaps in the fencing along the new Neerabup Road which is now dividing the

widest section of the Park. The QREG will continue liaising with relevant agencies to improve the current condition of the large underpasses.

The ability to maintain adequate infrastructure to support fauna movements is of concern as there are multiple road and railway projects being proposed between the current extent of Mitchell Freeway and Yanchep, with further significant impacts on Neerabup National Park, Nowergup Nature Reserve, Bush Forever site 289 and the connectivity between these areas and other conservation areas nearby. Conditions put on development approvals are only as good as their implementation. We have witnessed a failure of these conditions now in two important cases; failure to ensure east-west connectivity between the coast and the Neerabup National Park (the only potential for a contiguous corridor in the Perth Region acknowledged in Bush Forever, 2000, Volume 2, Figure 7, with others being the Swan and Canning Rivers) and now in the condition of the underpasses designed to facilitate large fauna. It should be noted that the small culverts also delivered as part of the Neerabup Road construction meet the design criteria. While emus, kangaroos and wallabies are not threatened species they are part of our landscape and should be retained to continue to play their role in the local ecosystems.

On a positive note, before COVID-19 stopped our planned activities, we held two successful events in early 2020.

On February 16, we hosted a very inspirational talk and walk by Marissa Verma from Bindi Bindi Dreaming, with bush tucker flavoured morning tea. This oversubscribed event was the first in a series of activities supported via the City of Wanneroo Community Grants 2019/20, with four more planned.

On 2 March, QREG held clean up events at two locations; the Quinns Rocks Foreshore and Neerabup National Park. Over 60 volunteers joined in the clean up over the two sites. Cleaning up in the National Park focused on the inside and the surrounds of the fauna underpasses.



Photo by R Zelinova

One of the fauna underpasses in Neerabup National Park without any underpass 'furniture' and evidence of vandalism (October 2019-March 2020).



Photo by R Zelinova

QREG volunteers after clean up at Neerabup National Park on 2 March 2020, Clean Up Australia Day.

Group News Group News Group News

City of Stirling Conservation Volunteers Support Program

By Christine Allbeury

Late last year the City of Stirling released its Conservation Program to support its local Friends Groups. As part of that program funding may be sought from Registered Friends Group. If your group is within the City of Stirling and not registered with the City, you may consider becoming a Registered Group.

The program is in its early stages and the first Registered Group is working through the detailed arrangements with the City. Further information will become available during 2020.

The program includes financial assistance up to \$1,500 per year to cover administrative and operational requirements. To apply for these funds, Groups need work with the City officers to develop an approved [Friends Group Annual Work Plan](#).

For those Groups that are Incorporated the City will reimburse up to \$500 of annual insurance premiums. In addition to this annual payment, the City has established a Conservation Groups Special Projects Grant – pool of \$30,000. Registered Groups are able to apply for up to \$6,000 per year to fund projects that are included in the Friends Group Annual Work Plan that they wish to undertake within their adopted bushland/wetland/coastal reserve. Preference will be given to resolve long-standing environmental issues. For further information please contact the Manager, Parks and Sustainability, City of Stirling.

EPBC Act Discussion Paper: <https://epbcactreview.environment.gov.au/resources/discussion-paper>

Comments are due by 17 April 2020

You can use the online form <https://epbcactreview.environment.gov.au/> OR

You can send your comments by email to epbcreview@environment.gov.au

There are 4 terms of reference and 26 questions asked for comment. You do not have to answer them all but please send in your comments to this first stage of this review of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

One key change needed is to get real on-ground enforced PROTECTION and RESTORATION of listed Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). This would mean for example no more clearing of our Banksia woodlands and Tuart Woodlands, and no more clearing and loss of critical habitat for Carnaby's Cockatoo. And national government funding for this too.

Bush Forever acquisition update - March 2020

Of the lands reserved under MRS Amendment 1082/33 – “**Bush Forever & Related Lands**” the following lands are still to be acquired.

Bush Forever Site	Land to be acquired	Area (approx.)
2 North East Ellenbrook Bushland, Bullsbrook	Ptn Lot 38 Great Northern Hwy	9.52ha
125 Holmes Street Bushland, Southern River/Huntingdale	Lots 1611,1606 & 1606 Barrett St, Southern River	19.38ha
227 Mount Henry Bushland, Salter Point	Lot 1 Kwinana Freeway Salter Point	9.44ha
268 Mandogalup Road Bushland, Mandogalup	Ptns Lots 1,23 & 100 Mandogalup Road, Hope Valley	62.38ha
270 Sandy Lake and Adjacent Bushland, Anketell	Lots 12 & 14 Thomas Road, Anketell	63.72ha
271 Cardup Brook Bushland, Cardup/Peel Estate	Ptn Lot 521, South West Highway, Byford	9199m2
295B Flynn Drive Bushland, Neerabup	Ptns Lots 9151 & 9148, Flynn Drive, Banksia Grove	39.36ha
342 Anstey/Keane Dampland and Adjacent Bushland, Forrestdale	Lots 67 & 171 Skeet Road, Forrestdale	104.08ha
378 Henderson Road Bushland, Peel Estate	Lot 399, Henderson Road, Hopeland	55.2ha
413 Balannup Lake and Adjacent Bushland, Southern River/Forrestdale	Ptn Lot 1627, Ranford Road, Southern River	1.89ha

Bushland sites at risk - March 2020

- ◆ Perth Airport Bush Forever including Munday Swamp: at risk from new runway and non-aviation commercial development. Indigenous heritage values ignored.
- ◆ Jandakot Airport, Bush Forever: clearing for non-aviation purposes of Conservation Precincts which are supposed to be *protected in perpetuity*.
- ◆ Lake Richmond Bush Forever with *critically endangered and unique* thrombolite community. At risk from Water Corp SDOOL pipeline adjacent to shore.
- ◆ Lot 102 Farrall Road Midland, Bush Forever site sold by Department of Housing to Satterley. *Critically endangered* TEC SCP 20a proposed for clearing.
- ◆ Lot 1002 Preston Beach Rd. limestone and sand quarry proposal. Clearing and risk to surrounding Yalgorup National Park with Ramsar wetlands at risk of hydrological impacts.
- ◆ Reilly Road bushland, Harrisdale
- ◆ Bush Forever site 119 Lot 4 Underwood Avenue Shenton Park. UWA freehold land at risk of clearing for development.
- ◆ Bushland linkage from corner Underwood Avenue/Brockway Road, running between Underwood Avenue and UWA turf farm. This is critical habitat and flight path for Carnaby's cockatoo. Risk of clearing.
- ◆ Mature native trees on the west side of UWA's Lot 4 Underwood Ave. Cleared understory but important mature native trees, for Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, and critical habitat for Carnaby's Cockatoo. Risk of clearing.
- ◆ Bushland adjoining Wembley Golf Course.
- ◆ Southern section of Anstey Swamp will be cut off from northern section by the construction of a road extending Dampier Drive eastward to Nairn Drive Karnup. This further decreases the ecological linkage between Anstey Swamp and Paganoni Swamp.
- ◆ Vlamingh Parklands Greenway 224 linking the Indian Ocean and Swan River, 'River to Sea'
- ◆ Lot 1 Gay St Dianella, TEC SCP 20a. Formerly Channel 9 bushland surrounding helipad and critical link to Cottonwood Crescent Bush Forever.
- ◆ Landsdale Bush Forever, risk of severe degradation by excessive, unnecessary prescribed burns by City of Wanneroo.
- ◆ Manning Primary School – [Ley St, Manning](#). Owned freehold by the Education Department.
- ◆ Curtin Primary School – [Goss Ave, Manning](#). Owned freehold by the Education Department.
- ◆ Bushland associated with the dental hospital in [Mt Henry Rd, Salter Point](#). Owned by WA Dept Health:
- ◆ Lot 506 Jellicoe Rd and Lot 487 Holbrook Rd Glen Forrest. Water Corporation land at risk of rezoning by Shire of Mundaring to rural residential.

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

The Riverbank Grants Funding round 2020-21

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' (DBCA) Parks and Wildlife Service is inviting expressions of interest for foreshore stabilisation, restoration and improvement projects.

Objectives of the Riverbank Program are to:

- protect and enhance riverbanks and shorelines to mitigate threats to environmental, recreational, aesthetic or cultural values
- protect, enhance and manage fringing native vegetation and habitat; and
- improve enjoyment of the foreshore by addressing risk to public amenity values, infrastructure and the environment.

Riverbank funding is supported by the Burswood Park Board and DBCA and is guided by river-wide condition assessments of foreshore assets and services such as built structures, natural shorelines, vegetation and the Swan Canning Riverpark's public amenity.

Expressions of interest applications will close at 5pm on April 17, 2020. For more information, visit <http://www.pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/riverbankfunding>

The Swan Canning Riverpark, which supports a diverse array of plant and animal life, covers 72.1 square kilometres of river reserve and adjoining public lands. This beautiful waterway has an enduring connection to the Whadjuk Noongar people spanning some 40,000 years.

Coastwest funding round 2020-21

Grants between \$5,000 and \$50,000 to support rehabilitation and restoration of the Western Australian coast. Applications close **12pm (midday) Friday 24 April**. For more information go to <https://www.dplh.wa.gov.au/coastwest>

Australian Geographic Society Grants 2020

Support for scientific and environmental research and community projects up to \$10,000. Round 1 applications close **30 April**. For more information go to <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/society/sponsorship/2019/12/apply-for-sponsorship/>

Swan Alcoa Landcare Program

Provides funding to restore and manage natural areas and build ecological linkages within the Swan Region. Application close **6pm Friday 15 May 2020**. Funding guidelines are available via <https://www.perthnrm.com/programs/living-landscapes/swan-alcoa-landcare-program/salp-funding-applications-and-guidelines>

Australian Bird Environment Foundation

Community grants of up to \$5,000 for 'hands-on' projects supporting BirdLife Australia's core programs. Applications close **31 May** and more information is available via <http://birdlife.org.au/who-we-are/our-organisation/awards-scholarships/australian-bird-environment-foundation>



The last page of the newsletter normally lists the upcoming UBC events. Due to the challenging times with the coronavirus impacting communities and causing changes to our daily lives, all planned events have been postponed. Stay connected and share what are you doing, positive stories or ideas on continuing to enjoy and help out with bushland protection.

Here are just two examples of how to volunteer from your living room and stay engaged:

- Sign up to help reviewing thousands of images documenting the impacts of feral predation on native species, collected via DBCA's Western Shield project: <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/birgus2/western-shield-camera-watch>
- Download the FrogID app, create an account at **FrogID.net.au** and contribute to the Australia's first national frog count, recording frog call in your garden or local bushland during your daily walk, whilst maintaining physical distance from others.

After the Pandemic

Philip Jennings, Wetlands Conservation Society

As I write, we are in the grip of a pandemic caused by a novel coronavirus. We are bombarded with disturbing news about thousands of new cases and new deaths every day. Interstate and overseas travel has been banned and we are all required to self isolate until further notice. The normal functioning of society has been severely disrupted and many businesses and government agencies have closed.

We are all struggling to adapt to these sudden changes in our lifestyle. Environmental issues have fallen off the national agenda and are rarely mentioned in news bulletins, when did you last hear them mention biodiversity, or climate change or even the recent bushfires?

We don't know how long this situation will continue, but one thing is already clear, the world will be a very different place when it ends. Many people have lost their jobs and may never regain them. Children have lost important learning time, and some of us will have lost loved ones.

After the pandemic has subsided, our country will have an enormous economic debt, and governments will have to focus on budget repair. We have not had much success in recent years in persuading governments to address important environmental issues such as climate change and loss of biodiversity as they have been grappling with budget problems created by the GFC, 12 years ago. Now there will be additional economic and social problems created by the pandemic and these are likely to dominate the political debate for the rest of the decade.

It will be much harder for us now to argue for good environmental planning, but we must continue to do so. Land management will also be more difficult as a result of budget stress, so it will be even more important for Friends Groups to contribute voluntarily to maintaining and restoring our precious biodiversity.

Above all, we must never forget that many of the world's economic and social problems are caused by environmental destruction. It is widely accepted that the coronavirus responsible for this pandemic came from an infected bat that was illegally sold for human consumption in the Wuhan fish and animal market. Wildlife exploitation and overpopulation also caused the SARS epidemic in 2003. Wildlife and its habitat need to be protected if we want to have a healthy planet.

Economic stress is understandably a primary focus of our community at the present time, but we need to remind our governments that it is often caused by poor environmental management. If we don't rise to this challenge, nobody else will.



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



Urban Bushland Council WA Inc



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

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

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PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

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