

# FRIENDS OF ALLEN PARK BUSHLAND GROUP



## AUTUMN 2020

The Coronavirus put paid to volunteer bushcare activities in Allen Park. Fortunately the watering program continued in the Boobook Sector until lock down. It is now hoped that some level of activity will be resumed, though sadly we haven't been able to plant much this year. There are however many jobs that will need to be done as restrictions ease.

### **Boobook Sector**

Thanks to all those who volunteered to help water seedlings in the Boobook Sector. It was a long stretch right through spring, into summer and then autumn. It was a mammoth task, hauling the long hose and multiple trips back and forth with watering cans.



The Boobook Sector up near Jones Park continues to live up to its name, as seen in the adjacent photo. A healthy pair of Boobook owls is roosting in a peppermint tree, so it is hoped that they have their sights on nesting in one of the tuart hollows nearby. Historically Boobooks favoured the big old trees and roosted with a couple of generations of offspring in the fig tree adjacent to the playground. At that time the fig tree had a big canopy and they must have liked that. Today the fig tree has an open canopy with drooping limbs, so the Boobooks have taken to roosting in the peppermints instead.

*Two boobook owls in a peppermint tree*





*Three tuarts in the Boobook Sector*



*One casualty*

One in the row of three big tuarts pictured above took a hit several weeks ago and dropped a very large limb (far right). The same tree had previously supported a swing and it is hoped that the drop will encourage a level of caution by those who play nearby. If you're passing by, take a look at the stack of bracket fungi growing at the point where the limb fell away to appreciate the size of the tree and how greatly the tree has suffered.



*Swing and bike jump etched into hill*

The girth of this tree measured 515cm when surveyed a number of years ago and is the biggest of all the tuarts in Allen Park. Exactly how old these trees are is not known, but estimated to be several hundred years old and Allen Park has a number of them of this vintage.

The bush has become a target of vandalism not seen for over a decade, with newly created tracks, bike jumps, cubbies and tree damage (see right). It is unfortunate that the damage caused is not in the perpetrators' consciousness, though some may argue otherwise. It is up to us as custodians to share the love and respect for our local bushland and teach those who may not be aware of their actions a greater appreciation for nature. The friends' group has weathered this kind of behaviour before and will endeavour to engender the care and respect for the bush; its plants and the wildlife that is so dependent on it.



*Tuart under attack south Melon Hill*



### **Path Restoration in Allen Park**

Defence has undertaken repairs and resurfacing to the paths crossing over Melon Hill. We are delighted with the outcome. It has been a long time coming and we are very pleased to see that the log-and-chain has been restored and the pot holes gone at last.

Those venturing over Melon Hill will now see the steps leading down into the Corridor have been replaced with a sloped path matching other paths through the reserve.

A special thank you to Peter B for undertaking restoration efforts to retain the embankment alongside the log-and-chain as well as near the bench on the crest of the hill.



Planting has now been undertaken on the sides of the log-and-chain to curb erosion and minimise the rain channels created when dogs run alongside the path.



This is a very popular exercise circuit as the steps are challenging. Enthusiasts are known to use this area as a training circuit for the Kokoda Track, and probably for a range of similar exotic hikes.

### **The Cottage**

Many will know there has been an ongoing saga in relation to the restoration of the Allen Park Cottage, the only original cottage in the Heritage Precinct. Deliberations have continued for over 4 years and the cottage's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday is nigh.

At the height of our angst, we sought to gain as much community support as possible to demonstrate the value the cottage has to locals, and set up a stall and display in the Swanbourne village, and then began an online petition. Aside of the hard copies gathered at the display and door knock, there were 210 signatures, and over 100 wonderful comments documented. This was very encouraging. The comments have now been collated and we have presented the petition and comments to Councillors to show that the cottage is very much a part of the Allen Park hub and the budgeted funds should be spent to maintain the building.

If only it was that simple. The woes continue, as the impacts of "Black Summer" are far reaching. The future of the cottage in light of the Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) regulations is another hurdle yet to overcome. Proximity to the bush on the western end of the cottage is the sticking point. The City proposed that the cottage could be rebuilt a little lower down the slope. Credit for the City for a novel approach, however, a new build doesn't quite resonate in the Heritage Precinct, and is not an idea we had

entertained. Covid-19 has made a big dent in Council expenditure, so we anticipate big plans to be revised right down. With the groundswell of support to keep the cottage, we shall endeavour to have the cottage fixed in situ and work to achieve the BAL if we can determine that the cottage remains a non-habitable building (intermittent use – not occupied most of the time). Budgets are being finalised, and Councillors are now aware that the cottage is worth keeping.

### **Children's Hospice**

A couple of months ago, we were approached by the Perth Children's Hospital Foundation as they were in search of a premises upon which to build a facility much like the Bear Cottage in Manly, Sydney. They set their sights on the old bowling greens behind the Bridge Club. Given this was not specifically a bushland issue, it was important to draw sentiment from residents further afield. In the heart of the pandemic, a public gathering to discuss this issue was not possible. Opinion was sought and ultimately the proposition did not get support from the community, as it is believed that the recommendations outlined by the Allen Park Master Plan do not include any solid infrastructure, such as buildings. Instead it lists the wishes of the community for a nature play space, outdoor exercise area, and/or dog exercise area and pathway linking the Bush to Beach trail.

### **The Swanbourne Beach Oval Project**

There has been a transformation on the approach to the Swanbourne Beach Oval. At the northern end, the revegetation of the area reclaimed as part of the northern corridor linking Melon Hill and Lot 1, (the Bush Forever site 315). Sadly we were unable to partake in the planting of this area. There is now a rabbit proof fence bordering the site, so there is no reason to protect the plants with green bags. This project was Stage 1 and Stage 2 will roll out on the southern end of the oval subject to approved funding from Coastwest in the coming year.



*Thousands of seedlings  
behind rabbit proof fence*

### **Rainbow lorikeet nesting sites**

In a recent edition of the POST, there was an article lamenting the absence of ringnecks or 28 parrots as they're otherwise known. Some may still get to see or hear the 28's, but more likely to hear the squawk of the lorikeets.

If you are aware of any rainbow lorikeet nests on your property, Birdlife would like to know.

They can be contacted at [wa@birdlife.org.au](mailto:wa@birdlife.org.au)

### **Asbestos management**

Asbestos fragments are found occasionally during bushcare activities. They are remnants of the past, whether from old buildings, or fences bordering properties. It is up to us to manage the presence of them and collate data on these findings. Inductions are taking place to enable us to respond to the material if chanced upon, and to better inform our members, a Management Plan has been created specifically



to address the issue. We advise you to read through the material attached to the email.

### **Bushcare Activities**

As restrictions ease, groups are coming out to complete winter planting activities and it is hoped you will be able to join us for the July bushcare day on the 4<sup>th</sup> July. 9-11am. So, if you're itching to plant some of the last lot of seedlings, do join us on Saturday. Please bring your own gloves and trowel if you have one.

Contact us: [foapbg@gmail.com](mailto:foapbg@gmail.com)

You can also visit us on the Urban Bushland Council's website at <http://www.bushlandperth.org.au/member-groups/3-north-of-the-river/44-friends-of-allen-park-bushland>

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