



Newsletter of the Urban Bushland Council WA Inc  
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# The Urban Bush Telegraph

## CELEBRATING SIXTY YEARS OF COMMUNITY ACTION Armadale Branch's first event in 2021 for their 60th Anniversary – Tree Planting Ceremony

By Linda Mason

This year, the Armadale Branch of the Wildflower Society is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to kick off this exciting year, we have held our first event at the Environmental Centre where we hold our meetings on a beautiful sunny afternoon on 28 March 2021. Our original 'start off' event could not go ahead due to Covid-19 restrictions but Kim Fletcher, one of our oldest members, had his own vision of a tree planting ceremony and this turned out to be a wonderful community event.

Kim Fletcher, as master-of-ceremonies, welcomed everyone in attendance to what he described as a 'very auspicious' occasion. After a Welcome to Noongar Country, he introduced the Armadale councillors who were present, namely Mayor Ruth Butterfield, Gary Smith, Jeff Munn and Hugh Jones who is now a representative in the Western Australian parliament. He said that the Armadale-Kelmscott Wildflower Society began on the 28 March 1961 exactly 60 years ago, by the urging of Rev. Ewan Watts who kept the society going for some time. Rev. Watts left in 1965-1966 for Collie where he started a similar society to study the wildflowers there.

The first tree to be planted, a *Eucalyptus lane-poolei*, was planted by Mayor Butterfield. She acknowledged the work of the Armadale Branch of the Wildflower Society and in particular Kim Fletcher in identifying species of plants that needed to be protected in the Armadale area when so much development was taking place and would continue to take place. Mayor Butterfield was a member of the Wildflower Society in the past and was responsible for many fabulous speakers coming to Armadale. She asked the children present to think about becoming members.



Photo by K. Sarti  
 Roger Harington, Kim Fletcher (rear), with the descendants of Rev. Ewan Watts; Dr Howard Watts (seated), Geoff Watts and Josephine Watts about to plant a *Eucalyptus lane-poolei*. Rev. Watts was instrumental to the establishment of the Armadale-Kelmscott Wildflower Society in 1961.

(Continued on page 3)



Photo by K McNamara  
 Mayor Ruth Butterfield watering a planted *Eucalyptus lane-poolei* watched by Roger Harington, current Branch President.

### Inside this issue:

Priority actions for the newly elected Government	2
New weed discovery	4
Fight for Erindale Road Bushland	5
Fire & Biodiversity Forum	7
Events	8

# EDITORIAL

## It's Time for Action

As expected, the McGowan Government was re-elected in March 2021 for another 4-year term. Their win was based on the competent way in which they managed the covid-19 pandemic and the State budget. They deserved this reward from the voters of WA and the UBC congratulates them on this achievement.

During their first term of Government they were focussed on the twin challenges of budget repair and the threat from covid-19. As a consequence, their performance in other areas, such as climate change and conservation was modest. They did stop the construction of Roe 8 through the Beeliiar wetlands and they funded the restoration program. They attempted to remove the Roe 8 reserve from the MRS, but this was thwarted by the Liberals and their allies in the Legislative Council. However, they did convert most of the Government-owned land in the Beeliiar Regional Park to Class-A reserves. They also commenced an impressive plan to convert many large Government-owned properties in the regions into national parks (Plan for Our Parks). They also introduced a container deposit scheme for recyclables and moved to phase out some plastic bags. All these initiatives were welcomed by the conservation movement and we thanked the former Minister, Stephen Dawson for them.

However, there was very little progress on the key issues of climate change and loss of biodiversity. The Labor Government abandoned the strategic assessment of land use in the Perth and Peel regions, preferring to stick with ad hoc planning. They declined to produce a State of the Environment Report for WA, making them the only State Government in Australia that does not carry out this important assessment on a regular basis. Further, they abandoned the Biodiversity Audit 2, after many years of careful scientific work had been put into it. Very little progress was made in urban conservation, with Bush Forever still unfinished and no new regional parks created in Perth or Peel. The wetland buffer guidelines are still in preparation, 25 years after they were promised, and the Perth Air Quality Management Plan has still not been updated as recommended by a review in 2007. The Environmental Protection Act has many shortcomings and deficiencies and the amendments that were made in 2019 were only designed to fix minor technical and semantic issues. A climate change policy was released but it avoided the hard questions of setting a date for carbon neutrali-

ty and a timetable to achieve it. The two key government agencies responsible for conservation and environmental protection were underfunded, poorly structured and unable to carry out many of their statutory functions.

We welcome the new Environment Minister, Amber-Jade Sanderson, the member for Morley, and that she will also take on a portfolio for Climate Action. We hope that she will carefully analyse the Government's successes and failings in its first term and seek to build on these successes and address the failings. We would like to see her do the following over the next 4 years:

- Develop a serious climate action plan with goals and targets
- Publish a 20 year audit on Bush Forever achievements and complete the implementation of Bush Forever
- Create at least 5 new regional parks (Gnangara, Lower Serpentine, Peel, Yule Brook and Swan/Helena rivers)
- Resume regular State of the Environment reporting
- Complete and publish Biodiversity Audit 2
- Complete and implement the wetland buffer guidelines
- Complete the implementation of the Plan for Our Parks
- Remove the Roe 8 and 9 reserves from the MRS and convert them to parks and recreation reserves
- Establish the Cockburn Wildlife Corridor and put in place adequate mechanism for establishing landscape connectivity
- Continue to phase out the unnecessary uses of plastics and establish recycling industries in WA
- Ensure that the Departments of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and Water and Environmental Regulation are appropriately structured and adequately funded to carry out their statutory functions.

This is an ambitious agenda, but it is essential and urgent, and it is achievable if the Government is committed to the long-term health and prosperity of our State. If action is not taken on these issues during the current term of Government serious irreversible changes in the natural environment may occur and these will have adverse long-term consequences. The UBC will continue to push this agenda and we wish Minister Sanderson every success in implementing it.

## AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENT 2020 REPORT

In March 2021, the Australian National University and TERN released the latest report on the status of the environment, using the Environmental Condition Score.

The score is based on seven components: inundation, streamflow, soil protection, tree cover, leaf areas and the number of hot days. Of 10 points, Australia scored 3.1 and WA only 1.4. For details on the environmental condition of any region, including Local Government area within Australia, go to

[www.ausenv.online](http://www.ausenv.online)

## Clontarf Hill Community Planting Day Sunday 13th June, 2021

Roll up your sleeves, put on your hats and gardening gloves and come and join us for our annual planting day.

Meet at the Clontarf Road side of the hill **from 10am**

We will be lighting up the barby for a post planting sausage sizzle so hang around, there is always plenty for everyone and it's a great chance to meet the other people in the Friends of Clontarf Hill community.

Please bring gloves, a hat, a spade, sturdy shoes and your friendly Sunday morning smiles.

Get in touch if you would like to volunteer at a planting station, email to [clontarfill@gmail.com](mailto:clontarfill@gmail.com)

# Group News Group News Group News

(Continued from page 1)

The second tree, also a *Eucalyptus lane-poolei*, was planted by willing family members of Rev. Ewan Watts – grandson Geoff and great-granddaughter Jo-Jo. Dr Howard Watts, the son of Rev. Watts was also in attendance, but was too frail to plant the tree, however, he provided much enthusiasm and humour.

The third tree, a *Corymbia calophylla*, was planted by Irene Morcombe and watched on by Michael Morcombe. Michael and Irene are inaugural members of the Armadale Branch and both have amazing talents with a camera and have produced many books on ornithology, wildflowers and national parks. Michael is also an artist and was also the first vice-president of the branch. Irene's dad, John Davey was a president of the branch for a total of 14 years and our own library at the Environmental Centre is named in honour of him.

The fourth tree, *Eucalyptus rudis* or Flooded Gum was planted by Roger Harington (current branch president) who was described accurately as a 'powerhouse of the organisation who got things done'. Without Roger's energy and enthusiasm, much of what is achieved these days at the branch would simply not happen. Roger's dad, Rob Harington, was branch president for 10 years.

The fifth and sixth trees, both *Eucalyptus wandoo*, were planted by four students from the local Armadale Primary School and Pioneer Village School. Both schools have been involved with the Wildflower Society at different events over the years and even one where the students learned how to plant trees properly!

The Armadale Primary School choir consisting of 32 students and ably assisted by choir leader Sarah, sang "Give Me a Home Among the Gum Trees". The final entertainment was given by Keith Lethbridge who played "We are Australians" as well as "Advance Australia Fair" firstly on a gum leaf and then a non-native leaf.

Kim Fletcher finished his part of the proceedings by hoping that in the not-too-distant future there would be a fully developed arboretum on the site where the event was held. He said there was twelve different species of *Eucalyptus*, *Casuarina* and *Melaleuca* that could be planted to be a showcase of local trees for future generations. Presently, there are too many *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and



Armadale Primary School students planting *Eucalyptus wandoo* watched by Roger Harington and Kim Fletcher.

*Corymbia citriodora* trees on the site as a result of self-seeding of mature trees planted many decades previously.

Roger Harington thanked everyone for coming and participating in this celebration of the Armadale Branch of the Wildflower Society and advised that the next event would be Garden Week which will be held at Langley Park at the end of April. The main 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration event will be held in September when the Wildflower Society will take over the entire Armadale District Hall to promote and hopefully enthuse people attending about the beauty of our amazing wildflowers.

As stated earlier, this is the first event of our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we sincerely hope that the events planned for later in the year are as successful. For anyone who is interested in joining us with our celebrations, there will be a substantial presence at the Perth Garden Show to be held from 29 April to 2 May where we will showcase our beautiful wildflowers alongside the Australian Native Nursery and other environmental organisations in the area.

We are planning wildflower walks to reserves in our area with details of these to be found on the Wildflower Society website in due course.

From 9 - 13 September we will be holding our final event which will be hiring the entire Armadale District Hall and filling it with as many wildflowers as we can. This will include live specimens of local and Western Australian wildflowers as well as the beautiful artworks in our Wildflower Botanical Exhibition. There will be a musical event held by the Giovanni Consort as well as lots of food and activities for children. It would be wonderful if you could attend this event and help us celebrate a wonderful 60 years of the Armadale Branch of the Wildflower Society operating successfully with so many fantastic people over these decades making their mark on the local environment.



Armadale Mayor Ruth Butterfield, Dr Alex George with Irene and Michael Morcombe at afternoon tea following the tree planting.

## New weed found in Bush Forever Coastal Reserve

By Don Poynton

Volunteers working with **Friends of North Ocean Reef-Iluka Foreshore** (FONORIF) recently found a number of plants of Mossman River Grass or Burrgrass (*Cenchrus echinatus*) growing along the edge of the coastal dual use path that runs through Bush Forever 325 at Iluka. The species is a native of South America and southern North America.

While a single plant was found several years ago near Burns Beach, this is the first time multiple plants have been seen. So far they have been found over a distance of about one kilometre but unfortunately volunteers cannot check any further south as the path has now been closed, and will remain so for several years, due to the construction activities associated with the Ocean Reef Marina development.

According to the Atlas of Living Australia, Mossman River Grass is a weed of tropical, sub-tropical, semi-arid and arid climates that infests footpaths, urban parks, lawns, roadsides, disturbed sites, waste areas, coastal areas, waterways, wetlands, pastures and crops.

It is mostly an upright and loosely tufted short-lived annual grass, usually growing 25-60 cm tall, but occasionally up to 100 cm in height. The leaf blades are 5-25 cm long and 3-12 mm wide and usually have some hairs pre-



Photo by D Poynton



Photo by D Poynton

New weed species, Mossman River Grass or Burrgrass (*Cenchrus echinatus*) found spreading in the coastal reserve at Ocean Reef.

sent, particularly along their margins. The leaf sheaths, especially those on younger plants and lower stems often have a reddish or purplish-coloured tinge.

One of the distinguishing features is the flower head which is spike-like in appearance and is 3-10 cm long. This seed-head consists of 5-50, stalkless, burr-like structures which are 4-10 mm in size, each bearing many sharp rigid spines that are 2-5 mm long and also hairy bristles. These burrs contain a cluster of two to four flower spikelets and each flower spikelet usually produces a single seed. The plant is spread when the burrs become attached to animals, vehicles and clothing. It is likely the plants at Iluka were derived from seed brought in on a vehicle or a path sweeper.

As the weed is most likely to be found along paths, regular surveys, a sharp eye and hand weeding are the most effective methods for keeping it from spreading.

## Friends of Trigg Beach

By Robyn Murphy

The Friends of Trigg Beach are disappointed in a recent decision by the WAPC which puts private interests before the public interest when approving a new SurfingWA building within the Trigg foreshore reserve. Despite community feedback, there has been no reduction in the size or purpose of the proposed building and most of the public park will be lost with no compensation for the public who use this public open space. There has been no compromise here on the part of SurfingWA or the planning authority.

If it proceeds this development will result in an overall loss of public space on the Trigg Beach foreshore and an in-

crease in vehicles both business and private using the public car park. All within 100m of the shoreline. This is poor planning and public policy in an environmentally sensitive area and a poor result for the public, the environment and the taxpayer.

What planning system enables a public park within a protected Bush Forever area so close to the shoreline, to run what is essentially a business, spending a taxpayer funded \$4m Commonwealth grant. And this has been approved by the very Department that is responsible for the protection of Bush Forever areas, parks and recreation reserves, and our coastline. To make matters worse there is no avenue of appeal for the public.

## SAVE ERINDALE ROAD BUSHLAND

Article by Marie Giorgi and photos by Marie Giorgi and Ian Hakanson



Community raising awareness about plans to turn over 11 hectares of Banksia woodland into housing in Hamerley.

'Save Erindale Road Bushland' is a community action group created by Hamersley locals out of concern for an area of bushland on which the Hamersley radio tower is located. Broadcast Australia is seeking approval to rezone 13.55 ha of this land for residential development including the clearing of 11.44 ha of the bushland. 74% of this remnant native bushland has been assessed as being in very good to good condition containing ecologically sensitive communities of Banksia and Tuart woodlands and providing a foraging habitat and breeding trees for the endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoo.

The Environmental Protection Authority is conducting a Public Environmental Review of this proposal in response to 170 submissions from the public seeking the protection

of this regionally and locally important bushland. The 'Save Erindale Road Bushland' action group considers this a small win, after rallying around the community and informing them of the opportunity to provide comment to the EPA.

The Erindale Road site is an important part of the remaining banksia woodland in the northern suburbs of Perth, and is critical to the survival of the endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoo. Our hope is that this bushland remains a protected habitat for the endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoo and one that can be enjoyed by generations to come.

For more information, please follow our Facebook group, 'Save Erindale Road Bushland' or send an email to [saveerindaleroadbushland@gmail.com](mailto:saveerindaleroadbushland@gmail.com)

## FIRE AT ELLEN BROOK NATURE RESERVE

By Jan Bant

On 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 90 per cent of the Ellen Brook Nature Reserve, was burned. The Reserve was burnt from Great Northern Highway to Almeria St and fence to fence. Trees along Lexia St, on the other side of the road were virtually untouched. The fire stopped at the western fence and didn't cross the rail line. Some areas of the Reserve have been totally burnt out and only black ash remains, but there are several areas of trees, burned but still standing, which should come back. Also, one of the areas recently planted may regenerate from the light burning it experienced.

The Reserve is home to the last self-sustaining population of Critically Endangered Western Swamp Tortoises. One tortoise died in the fire and one was found dehydrated and taken to the Perth Zoo to recover. Fortunately these little reptiles are superbly adapted to their ecological niche and the bushfire season coincides with their aestivation (a kind of torpor). They should all have been cosily tucked up underground while the fire swept overhead.



Baby tortoise. Photo courtesy Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise.

Staff from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the land managers) are preparing a rehabilitation plan for revegetating and to enhance cover in key habitat areas. Once the tortoises come out of aestivation, they spend many hours swimming and eating in the swamps, but need vegetation to hide under when they are resting on land.

Thanks to our colleagues at Chittering Landcare, about 6000 appropriate plants will be available for this season. It was too late to order more seedlings, and all nurseries are under pressure from many groups, all wanting to revegetate their patch. We will be ordering in September, for 2022 planting.

In order to do something **NOW**, the Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise held two successful **seed bomb making sessions**. We made small balls of clay, compost and local provenance seeds, (*Melaleuca lateriflora*, *M. viminia*, *Calothamnus quadrifidus*, *Kunzea recurva* and *Leptospermum erubescens*) which have been dried and stored until it's time to distribute them in areas of the Reserve that are difficult to reach for direct planting. When the rain comes, they break down and the seeds germinate. This way we will have a succession of sowing, with tube stock giving an early coverage, followed by the germinating seeds.

As nature does, some parts of the bush are showing early signs of regeneration, so we are ever hopeful.

# Group News Group News Group News

## Carnaby's cockatoos deserve not to be starved.

By Marg Owen

Prior to flying in to roost for the night, Carnaby's Cockatoos around Perry Lakes feed and drink in streets around Floreat. The suburb has many trees and some of the residents have more than one bird bath in their front yards for the birds to drink.

On 28th March, our little group counted 246 Carnaby's cockatoos at our Perry Lakes Great Cocky Count site. Since that time numbers of Carnaby's roosting there have risen as more arrived from the Wheatbelt.

It is impossible to count individuals when the whole flock suddenly flies across to the roosting place, but the camera can catch a 'snapshot' of the amazing scene.

From the photo (right) taken a week after the Great Cocky Count, 460 birds were counted.

It is worrying as all these birds need food. Being very clever they have adapted to new foods- nuts like macadamia and almonds; seeds of tipuana, jacaranda and liquid amber; and also pines.

Ten years ago, there was 23,000ha of pine plantations. As native trees have been cleared for development, many black cockatoos learnt to adapt and fed on pine seeds at the plantations. Between 5,000 and 7,000 birds fed and roosted there. However the pine plantations are being cleared and will be cleared completely by 2022.



Photo by M Owen

Looking to the future, shouldn't good planning by the state government have committed to the replanting of native food trees as the pine plantations were cleared?

In desperation, Birdlife's black cockatoo project coordinator Adam Peck initiated a crowd-funding campaign, and the community planted 10,000 native trees last year. These trees will take time to produce food for cockatoos.

It is a terrible thing that cockatoos could be starving under our watch. The community wants black cockatoos to survive and even to prosper and positive action by government is immediately needed. The community will volunteer its help with planting.

## VALE KEVIN McLEOD

Text and photo courtesy Friend of Yellagonga Regional Park.



Kevin McLeod in front of the floating islands at Lake Goollelal.

Members of the Friends of Yellagonga Regional Park Inc (FOY) are all mourning the passing of our recent Chair, Kevin McLeod. It was not unexpected but we are deeply feeling his loss as a friend and the driving force behind our group.

Kevin was a mentor to many, an environmental warrior, quiet achiever and protector of wildlife. He was always coming up with innovative ideas on how to improve our Regional Park and protecting its wildlife. He lobbied for environmental improvements at every turn – undertaking turtle studies, installing bat boxes, owl boxes and cockatubes, seed collecting – to mention but a few.

His passion and care for the environment was his life. He also enjoyed being part also of similar organisations such as UBC, Conservation Council, Volunteering WA, Advisory Committees at the Cities of Joondalup and Wanneroo and others, to learn and contribute. He would lobby for the betterment of our Park to any one who would listen.

One of his pet projects was designing, building and installing the floating islands in Lake Goollelal as a trial to improve the water quality and ultimately mitigate against increased midge population.

His contribution to making FOY the strong progressive group it is today testament to his ongoing efforts.

Kevin was one of a kind and will be so sadly missed.

Our heartfelt sympathy to his lovely wife, Hiroko, and family and also to the flora and fauna of Yellagonga Regional Park which have all lost a wonderful advocate.

# Fire and Biodiversity FORUM



**Friday 4 June 2021**  
**Margaret River HEART**

47 Wallcliffe Rd Margaret River WA

Broadscale prescribed burning is used extensively as a fire mitigation tool in the South West of WA. In this forum we will examine its effectiveness and the ways it interacts with the natural landscape, including its impact on all living things. Our objective is to further develop an informed and nuanced conversation around fire mitigation, responses to fire, biodiversity, people and places, in the face of a changing climate.

## Program/Speakers

- **Convenor** - Dr Carole Peters
- **Compère** - Dr Mignon Shardlow
- **Welcome to Country** - Mr Isaac Webb & Dr Wayne Webb
- Dr Liz Barbour & Mr Mikey Cernotta
- Emer Prof Don Bradshaw
- Dr Valerie Densmore
- Prof Kingsley Dixon
- Dr David Galloway
- Mr Ed Hatherley
- Dr Anna Hopkins
- Mr David Knowles
- Emer Prof Carmen Lawrence
- Prof Stephen van Leeuwen
- Dr Alison Lullfitz & Aunty Lynette Knapp
- Adjunct Assoc Prof Philip Zylstra

**Additional Workshop & Field Trip options on Sat 5 June**

## Sponsors



For more info: [fabforum21@gmail.com](mailto:fabforum21@gmail.com) | Registrations: [margaretriverheart.com.au](http://margaretriverheart.com.au)



Visit <https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/events/> to keep up to date on walks and talks hosted by the Urban Bushland Council

## EVENTS

### CULTURAL LEARNING with DJIRRILY DREAMING

When: Saturday 1 May 2021

Time: 10am to 12.30 pm (Registration at 9.30am)

Where: Natures Playground, Iveston Road, Lynwood

The Bannister Creek Catchment Group would like to invite you to a special event to learn about Australia's oldest culture. Guided by our amazing Kangeang/Biblemum Noongar educator, Berlinda Cox from Djirrily Dreaming.

This is a family-focused cultural education workshop with a dash of organic self-care wisdom in the mix for the adults to take home and glam up! Interactive activities for the little ones and bush medicine for the adults to enrich their body, mind and soul.

This is a FREE community event for all! Find us on [Facebook](#).

RSVP before 30th April at [darrenobrien@sercul.org.au](mailto:darrenobrien@sercul.org.au) or phone us on 9458 5664.

This project is funded by the Swan Canning River Recovery Stage 3, supported by Perth NRM through funding from the Australian Government.

The event will be following very closely on the latest WA COVID 19 measures.



### FUND RAISER

### Garage Sale @ 87 Kenwick Road, Kenwick

All proceeds go to the Darling Range Wildlife Shelter

Sat 1st May & Sun 2nd May between 8.30 am and 1.30 pm

Sat 8th May & Sun 9th May between 8.30 am and 1.30 pm

Bargains galore; clothing, shoes, hand bags, DVDs, CDs, books, games, jigsaw puzzles, plants electrical goods, toys, furniture, pictures, picture frames, cushions, double bed, and more

Contact: 9459 2964 or 0407 544 679



### 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

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Urban Bushland Council WA Inc



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#### NEWSLETTER ITEMS

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