

This report is for the calendar year January to December 2021 inclusive.

### Conservation of bushland and wetlands

Despite all our advocacy meetings, and submissions and appeals sent during the year, there remains inadequate protection of our endangered Banksia Woodlands and critically endangered Tuart Forests and Woodlands, and of our iconic endangered species such as Carnaby's Cockatoo, Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, and the Numbat – our State fauna emblem. Threats and threatening processes are not being controlled and adequately managed. Land clearing of vegetation that is supposed to be protected is being allowed, patch by patch. Lack of government commitment and funding to protect and properly manage our south west biodiversity hotspot, and especially the Bush Forever Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) reserve system remains a major issue.

On the positive side, our network of friends groups continues to make a huge contribution to bushcare on their patch, where they collaborate with the respective land manager. Notably however, the State (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) or Local Government Authorities have the overall responsibility of bushland management at each site. Greatly increased funding is much needed for many more government officers to be employed to do this work especially with increasing threats of climate change and with increasing extreme weather events. The UBC's *Science and Conservation Jobs stimulus* proposal still applies.

Local campaigns to save bushland sites under threat are ongoing. Great achievements in awareness raising and scientific surveys of bushland were made, for example at 179 Erindale Road Hamersley, and at Lot 123 Mortimer Road Casuarina. Both these sites should be added to the conservation estate. Also the Friends campaign to save the Underwood Avenue Bush Forever Area 119 continues.

### Bush Forever progress

Another Bush Forever Round table was held 21 April at Kensington to discuss progress with Bush Forever implementation and the way ahead. Twenty attended with 10 agency staff, 9 UBC folk, and two from WALGA. 13 Bush Forever sites are still to be purchased. We were advised that an **Audit of Bush Forever** would be released after the WAPC's June meeting. The Audit report was approved by WAPC at its December meeting and is yet to be released although this is promised along with a briefing to UBC folk as requested. This process has been remarkably slow.

The Premier has advised by letter that *'the McGowan Government remains committed to Bush Forever'*. So we need to keep reminding Ministers and our local MPs about this when calling for securing of all sites and for greatly increased funding to properly manage the whole Bush Forever CAR reserve system.

Bush Forever is 21 years old in 2022. Whilst we continue to campaign for full implementation, UBC will be working with Ministers for Planning and Environment to celebrate the amazing and sustained efforts of local friends groups in their care for these special natural areas.

### Meetings with Environment Minister

We met only twice with Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson on 11<sup>th</sup> May, and on 4<sup>th</sup> November. The key issues discussed concerned Bush Forever and the need to transfer all sites acquired by the WA Planning Commission (WAPC) (funded by the Metropolitan Region Improvement Fund (MRIF)) to 'A' class reserves for conservation, and for a major State budget funding allocation to manage these sites. Government action to complete implementation of the Bush Forever program now 21 years old remains too slow and is inadequate. It is good that the capital works to set up the Anstey-Keane Damplands (BF342) are at last taking place.

### Capacity Building Workshops

Generous member donations combined with significant pro bono contributions enabled us to employ a part time Project Officer (Rosemary Glass, then Colma Keating) to design and deliver 2 workshops:

1. *'Why your patch matters - keys to understanding attributes, land management, threats, support and resources'* held Sun 25<sup>th</sup> July at CWLH, 16 attended from 12 groups.
2. *'Working with Local Government decision makers and land managers'* held 28<sup>th</sup> August at Bendat Community Centre, Wembley. 17 attended from 14 groups.

**A UBC Coordinator** (Felicity Bairstow) was also engaged on a part time, short term contract to investigate diverse funding opportunities (e.g. grants, philanthropic, donations, user-pays) and to engage with teenagers.

### **Native Vegetation Policy for WA**

A ‘*Consultation draft Native vegetation policy for Western Australia*’ was released by Hon. Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA Minister for Environment in August 2021. The ‘*Purpose*’ includes ‘*protect areas of high conservation value*’ and ‘*achieve a net gain in native vegetation extent*’. But the delivery details and actions were somewhat confusing.

A submission writing workshop organised and facilitated by Christine Richardson and Colma Keating on the draft was held 7<sup>th</sup> October at State Library Great Southern Room. We are grateful for the contribution from Brett Loney, Chair Wildflower Society's Conservation Sub-Committee. UBC also had a dedicated campaign page with comprehensive submission response, and used zoom meetings, web blogs, mailchimp, e-mails and articles in the Urban Bush Telegraph to encourage and support members and the wider community to submit a response. It was great that many groups and individuals later sent their own submissions. Much greater protection of native vegetation and ending of land clearing in our SW biodiversity hotspot is needed.

The UBC also made many submissions on unacceptable clearing and development proposals as tabulated below.

### **Prescribed burning and fire risk to biodiversity**

This remains a contentious issue. In June, a very well coordinated and attended 2 day Fire and Biodiversity Forum was held in Margaret River. Key messages and outcomes are shown in the winter 2021 edition of the Urban Bush Telegraph. It includes that scientists and Aboriginal elders called for the DBCA target of burning 200,000 ha in the SW to be abandoned.

Smoke from prescribed burns (eg as in Perth hills 2021) causes more human health impacts than wildfires.

The UBC does not support prescribed burning on the Swan Coastal Plain as it increases grassy weed invasion and thus fire risk, it kills and starves wildlife, and causes human health impacts from smoke.

**Mountain bike trails** have become a major issue in conservation sites, some of which are promoted by DBCA.

We made submissions objecting to proposals in bushland conservation areas. The Friends of Manning Park Ridge held a very good seminar on 24 October 2021: ‘*Protecting and reserving Manning Park Ridge*’ at which scientists Prof. Kingsley Dixon and Cate Tauss presented the facts about degradation caused by biking and called for rejection of all proposed new trails in bushland conservation sites.

### **2021 State NRM Program Community Stewardship Grant application**

At the end of 2021, the UBC was successful in receiving approval of a project to be funded with \$90,424 for: ‘**Building capacity to care for urban bushland**’. A part time Project officer will be appointed in 2022 and the project will run for up to 18 months. The project will be guided by a UBC Steering group. The project will facilitate establishment of new friends groups for specific sites, and will revitalize some existing friends groups. The application process and ongoing planning and reporting requirements were complex and time consuming and Christine Richardson is commended for doing all this work.

**Refurbishment of City West Lotteries House (CWLH)**, and displacement of UBC office from room 10.

During the year major renovations at CWLH meant that the conference room was not available for our general meetings. So we had to hold meetings and workshops at other venues – which had a substantial cost.

In addition, the UBC was displaced from room 10 without being offered an alternative. Alternative sites were carefully considered and we decided to stay at CWLH. We were finally offered room 16 and had to pay overlapping rent for both while we moved and set up. Our rent increased as room 16 is a little bigger. Special thanks to our Committee members who all helped to sort records and contents, shifted and refurbished the office equipment. This was a major task, well completed.

### **Urban Bush Telegraph**

There were 4 editions produced in 2021. Many thanks to our Editor Renata Zelinova and all those who wrote articles. Special thanks to all those groups who shared news of their activities.

### **UBC Strategic Planning**

The Committee held a strategic planning day 21<sup>st</sup> November. It was an important opportunity to reflect on UBC’s achievements, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats across our operating environment, and to commit to continue targeted conservation efforts whilst supporting committee, working groups and members even better. Succession planning and a review of governance procedures are tagged for early 2022. Appointing a coordinator is also high on the agenda.

## UBC Council meetings and guided walks held 2021, with lots of positive information sharing

Our theme for 2021 was “Is your bushland/wetland under threat?”

- 2<sup>nd</sup> March: AGM and guest speaker Emeritus Prof Philip Jennings: ‘What is happening to our environment?’
- 8<sup>th</sup> April: Council meeting with guest speaker Dr Judy Fisher: ‘How the latest approach to saving worldwide biodiversity can save Perth bushland’.
- 13<sup>th</sup> May: Council meeting with Prof Margaret Brocx and Dr Vic Semeniuk: ‘What is Geoheritage?’
- 10<sup>th</sup> June: Council meeting with Professor Kingsley Dixon on Zoom: ‘National standards for ecological restoration’. Attended by 42 + 19 on Zoom.
- 28<sup>th</sup> July: Council meeting with Panel Discussion by 3 member groups plus Q&A: ‘Influencing your local MP’.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1-3pm: Guided walk in conjunction with Friends of Warwick Bushland to see Treasures in Warwick Bushland. Very well attended by more than 90 people.
- 25<sup>th</sup> August: Council meeting with Sara Saberi, Heidi Hardisty: ‘Influencing Your Local MP’ - held at Bendat Community Centre.
- 12<sup>th</sup> September 9-11am: Guided River foreshore walk with Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association (CRREPA), at Nurdi Park and the Lower Canning River (Riverton, Rossmoyne, Shelley).
- 17<sup>th</sup> October 11am-2pm: Guided walk with Friends of Hepburn/Pinnaroo at Hepburn Heights. 24 attended.

A very special thank you to our dedicated and energetic UBC Committee members Christine Richardson, Margaret Owen, Chris Allbeury, Colma Keating, Sue Conlan, Cathie O’Neill, Heidi Hardisty, Lynn MacLaren. Sadly Cathie resigned during the year due to ill health. On October 22, 2021 we were profoundly sad to lose Cathie to her battle with cancer.

Thank you also to UBT Editor Renata Zelinova, and many others who helped with submissions, and advice on key issues. It is very much a friendly team effort to provide a voice for the bush, share scientific information and advice, and to help others.

It is the wonderful ongoing collaborative and extensive on-ground bushcare work done by UBC member groups which we acknowledge and treasure.

## SUBMISSIONS, SITE ISSUES AND CAMPAIGNS

Below is a summary of the key site issues that involved our attention during 2021 in conjunction with our Member groups. Also attached is a list of the submissions on proposals and Clearing Permits and appeals that were submitted by UBC 2021. The contribution of many members in doing all this work is gratefully acknowledged.

No	Site or issue	Submission or action on	Outcome
1	<b>Ocean Reef Marina proposals</b>	Gnamma hole not recognised as an Aboriginal Registered site despite its significance. 120,000 year old fossil site found. Local government breeches of the <i>Local Government Act</i> . DevelopmentWA was granted a clearing permit but had not entered into an agreement. Inadequate business plan.	<i>This social significance ignored.</i>  <i>Federal Minister for Environment ignored Aboriginal heritage values and significance of the Ocean Reef development area.</i> <i>The City of Joondalup accepted the business plan for the major <u>land transaction of 11.7 ha of coastal land to be transferred to the state government for \$2 for the purpose of a Marina.</u></i>
2	<b>Underwood Ave BF 119</b>	Foxes present and destroying Rainbow Bee-eaters tunnels were reported to University of WA (UWA) Property Manager.  Friends group met Vice Chancellor of UWA. Ongoing issues of ‘Market led proposals’ being used by UWA.  Friends petition with <u>12,853 signatures</u> to the Premier asking for Government to acquire all of BF 119.	<i>Property Manager advised that a pest controller engaged to address fox problem. Inadequate management is ongoing.</i> <i>The odour buffer zone around the Wastewater Treatment Plant was reduced from 500m to 200m despite increased capacity of the Plant.</i> <i>Rally held on steps of Parliament House Wed. 10 November 11.30am.</i> <i>Petition finally presented 26 November 2021 to Hon. Katrina</i>

No	Site or issue	Submission or action on	Outcome
			<i>Stratton at her office.</i>
3	<b>Perth Airport Munday Swamp and surrounds.</b> <b>BF 386</b>	Issue of need for recognition of Aboriginal heritage values and heritage listing and protection of Munday Swamp and surrounds.  UBC and Nature Reserves Preservation Group (NRPG) representatives attended Perth Airport's Airport Consultative Environment & Sustainability Group (ACES) Group meeting at Perth Airport P/L on 19 <sup>th</sup> February, and 10 <sup>th</sup> September.	<i>Failure of federal and state governments to list and protect these significant Aboriginal Heritage sites. Also Perth Airport has failed to respect these values. No commitment to conserve (former) Conservation Precincts. New runway proposal approved by federal Government in March 2021.</i>
4	<b>Mountain bike trails</b>	Mary presented the 'Community conservation perspective' at the LeadershipWA workshop 22 <sup>nd</sup> February, 'to explore the controversial issue of mountain bike activity/infrastructure in Bold Park'. A new mountain bike trail is unacceptable. <u>Seminar held 24 October 2021: 'Protecting and reserving Manning Park Ridge'</u> held at Coogee Community Hall. Good speakers including Prof. Kingsley Dixon, Cate Tauss.	<i>Outcome of proposal in former drive-in site and Bold Park not yet known.</i>  <i>Call for <b>rejection of all</b> proposed new mountain bike trails.</i>
5	<b>Caversham Airbase West Swan</b> <b>BF 200</b>	UBC submission to City of Swan on proposal by Vintage Sports Car Club WA for Dual Carriageway through the Bush Forever site. The old Brabham race track being used by motor bikers, kangaroos being injured and killed.	?
6	<b>Roscommon Reserve Floreat</b>	Bike riders degrading vegetation by constructing tracks. Rain causing erosion of tracks and damage. Reported to DWER Pollutionwatch.	?
7	<b>Campaign to Stop clearing SW forests</b>	Rally organised by Wafa at Dumas House and lots signed postcards <i>Stop clearing SW forests</i> delivered to a Labor MP. UBC folk present.	
8	<b>Prescribed burning</b>	Wed 28 <sup>th</sup> April: smoke alert over Perth due to an inversion during and after burns in Perth hills. 5 <sup>th</sup> May: Don Bradshaw critical of PB extent with risk to and loss of endangered Numbats on ABC TV news. 4-5 June: 2 day <u>Fire and Biodiversity (FAB) Forum</u> held in Margaret River, supported by UBC. Target of PB 200,000 ha/year called out by scientists. Many UBC folk attended.	<i>Human health risk and significant impact with hospital admissions.</i>  <i>A summary of key issues raised by speakers is published in UBC's Urban Bush Telegraph Winter 2021</i>
9	<b>Save the Ngorlarks (= Carnaby's)</b>	May: UBC supports campaign being organised by Wilderness Society, Birdlife WA, Wafa, CCWA, WWF. Concern about starving Carnaby's to extinction within 3 years as last 6,000 ha of pines are cleared, and clearing of bushland and forest continues.	
10	<b>Jandakot Airport bushland</b> <b>BF 388</b>	Draft Jandakot Airport Master Plan 2021. Does not include former Conservation Precincts and the Ministerial conditions for their protection in perpetuity.	<i>Lack of retention of Conservation Precincts which were supposed to be protected 'in perpetuity' (97 years)</i>
11	<b>Cat control</b>	UBC supported Friends of Lake Claremont proposal for cat control. Stray cats are a significant predator in bushland and need to be controlled especially by Local Government Authorities.	
12	<b>Lots 802 &amp; 803, at 179 Erindale Road Hamersley</b>	Proposal for subdivision and clearing for urban development of quality bushland, formerly owned by Broadcast Australia, is Banksia Woodland of the SCP TEC and significant black cockatoo foraging habitat. Owned now by Digital 4 Pty Ltd. and was referred to EPA under s.38 of EP Act. Should be added to conservation estate.	<i>City of Stirling supports retention and conservation of this site. EPA Assessment on Referral Information (ARI) being done. 176 public submissions made on level of assessment.</i>

No	Site or issue	Submission or action on	Outcome
		Active Friends group formed and continue to campaign against development.	
13	<b>Duncraig Library bushland</b>	Proposal for clearing and development. New friends group formed to campaign against the loss of bushland.	
14	<b>Mt Claremont Fields, part is BF 312</b>	Christ Church Grammar School land adjoining Bold Park is ~8.3 ha of which ~20% is bushland and part is BF. School proposal to apply to rezone it to urban and subdivide and sell to developers.	
15	<b>Draft Native Vegetation Policy for WA - consultation</b>	Numerous briefings given by DWER on the Draft. UBC conducted a workshop 7 October for UBC folk to help them prepare submissions.	<i>UBC submission sent. Many UBC members sent their own submissions.</i>
16	<b>Lot 123 Mortimer Rd Casuarina in City of Kwinana</b>	Referred 21/12/2018 to Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) under EPBC Act for proposed subdivision. City of Kwinana had independent assessment by botanist Cate Tauss. Site has v high conservation values with CCW, TECs, MNES in excellent undisturbed condition.  Should be acquired and added to <u>conservation estate</u> as advised by DBCA officer 7/4/2020 (owner then wanted excessive \$60m to sell it.), and also by DWER and DBCA officers in October 2021. Its conservation also supported by City of Kwinana Environment officers.	<i>Declared a Controlled Action 2018/8379 under EPBC Act.  Also being assessed by EPA  Outcome not yet known.</i>
17	<b>Anstey-Keane Damplands BF 342</b>	After last 2 blocks acquired, fencing and restoration works slow to proceed and off-road vehicles, rubbish dumping continued. Requirement for a clearing permit for fence construction held up work.	<i>UBC helped by advising DWER of the situation and Clearing Permit then issued. Fencing and extensive clean-up work started. Big job.</i>
18	<b>Western Swamp Tortoise habitat threatened by city of Swan subdivision proposal</b>	The area is subject to the Western Swamp Tortoise (WST) Environmental Protection Policy (EPP) which means the subdivision is an unacceptable threat.	<i>The Friends of WST objected to the sub division proposal.</i>
19	<b>Yule Brook Regional Park proposal</b>	Wildflower Society and UBC representatives E/Prof. Hans Lambers, Bronwen Keighery, Mary Gray and others met with Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) officers. Proposal presented by Hans.	<i>Still not implemented</i>
20	<b>Local Government Reform consultation</b>	Open for public comment from November 2021 until 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2022.	<i>UBC to provide submission notes in 2022.</i>
21	<b>Western Suburbs Regional Organisation of Councils (WESROC) Greening Plan</b>	Update from original 2002 Plan available from City of Nedlands from 19 November 2021.	

#### SUBMISSIONS 2021

Vintage Sports Car Club WA development, Henley Brook Avenue Dual Carriageway into and through BF 200, Caversham Airbase bushland West Swan/Whiteman. To City of Swan 26 January 2021.
Level of assessment by EPA for Tonkin Highway expansion to 6 lanes To EPA for PER assessment 1 April 2021.
Major Land Transaction, Ocean Reef Marina Business Plan in 11.7 ha of Lots 1029 and 1032 Ocean Reef Road for \$2. To City of Joondalup 14 April 2021.
Development for industry in 14.02 ha with clearing in Lot

#### APPEALS 2021

Appeal 18 March 2021 against CPS 6808/3 extension of time request by City of Busselton for a further 2 ha of Meelup Regional Park for trail bike riding. .Clearing permit 'reasons' unacceptable. UBC also met with Appeals Convenor 16 <sup>th</sup> April.
24 March 2021: Appeal against CPS 9009/1 Peppermint Grove Rd Shire of Waroona for 5 trees. Also met Appeals Convenor 16 <sup>th</sup> April re this Appeal.
29 October 2021: Appeal against granting clearing permit CPS 9257/1 for Duplication of Warton Road between Ranford Road and Nicholson Road in Canning Vale.
9 November 2021: Appeal against EPA Report 1714

<b>SUBMISSIONS 2021</b>
902 Flynn Drive, Neerabup. To EPA for PER level of assessment April 2021.
Proposal by City of Belmont to rezone P&R land to urban at Ascot for unit development. Belmont Ratepayers and Residents Action Group campaigned against this. To City of Belmont. 10 May 2021.
CPS 9182/1 application for clearing 3.42 ha to construct Trail bike and walk tracks in Albany Heritage Park. To DWER 9 May 2021 recommending the Permit be refused.
Jandakot Airport Preliminary Exposure Draft Master Plan 2021. To Jandakot Airport Holdings, June 2021.
Guideline for Native Vegetation Referrals – Draft. To DWER 28 July 2021
EPBC 2020/8620 for Lot 1401 Fifty Rd Baldivis. Controlled Action under <i>EPBC Act</i> as 4 x MNES present. Comment on preliminary documentation to DWER 27 June 2021
Part Lot 402 Yangebup Rd Yangebup: School expansion proposal. To EPA for level of assessment as PER 6 July 2021.
Draft Native Vegetation Policy for WA. To DWER 23 October 2021.
Planning Reform Consultation 3.9. To DPLH 31 August 2021.
State Infrastructure Strategy. To Infrastructure WA 7 September 2021
Gnarabup Tourism Development, Margaret River area on 8.11 ha. Referred to EPA by Preserve Gnarabup Group. To EPA for level of assessment as PER October 2021.
EPBC 2021/8883 General Industrial Development Lots 20 and 42 Marriot Road, Wellesley. Submission 17 November 2021.

<b>APPEALS 2021</b>
Bunbury Outer Ring Road – Southern Section Assessment Report.
11 November 2021: Appeal against granting clearing permit 9448/1 Great Eastern Highway Bypass Interchanges (Roe Highway and Abernethy Road).