



Think Global. Act Local.
EST. 1996

Summer Newsletter 2024

A big thank you to all those who have been helping to keep seedlings alive during this very long hot and dry summer. Thankfully Swanbourne had 23mms in a downpour during January, which might have been a life saver for many emerging seedlings.

The heat has taken its toll. About a third of the previous year's banksias made it through to the end of spring, but many have not survived the relentless heatwaves this summer. It appears that those with a greater degree of shading from adjacent plants, do fare better. This is hard to achieve in restoration areas with little canopy and being so exposed to the elements.

Given a team of volunteers has been watering weekly over the past 3 months, it would be good to offer them some relief, so if you haven't done it before, perhaps you can spare as little as 30 minutes up to an hour and help watering on a Tuesday morning. We meet behind Mattie Furphy's House at 8am, where we spray footwear before going to site. It's been proven that with 8-10 people, it halves the time needed to get the job done.

Rainbow bee-eaters in Allen Park



Rainbow bee-eater nest site in background adjacent to pvc pipe

Rainbow bee-eaters have made their presence known again by breeding in the grassland area next to the fencing marking the hospice site. Adults were observed burrowing into the soft sand and once detected, the area was cordoned off to discourage disturbance to the nest. It is hoped that the birds will have fledged by the time earthworks begin. In flight, the bird's colours are truly spectacular, and interestingly a larger flock size has been observed this year, with over 20 birds in flight over the coastal dunes and Melon Hill.

Children's Hospice Boodja Mia (Sandcastles)

On a boiling hot day in February, the Premier launched the building project with a sod turning ceremony for invited guests only.



Boodja Mia Launch



Western Australia's first hospice for children, Boodja Mia, was officially launched on 8 February 2024 at the construction site. Boodja Mia will be owned by the Perth Children's Hospital Foundation (PCHF) with clinical management by the Department of Health and an ongoing contribution to non-clinical operational costs by PCHF.

There is currently a proposal before the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage to amend the Metropolitan Region Scheme to allow a hospice to be built within Allen Park. People are invited to make submissions before the 12th March 2024. Attached to this newsletter is relevant information including a submission form. News to hand on 22nd February, a letter from the Minister's Office (DPLH), stating that under Part 17, the Government's fast tracking significant projects that was created to stimulate the economy during Covid, approves such developments in advance of the MRS being assessed.

Timing of the beginning of construction will be critical for the Rainbow bee-eaters that are currently nesting along Boodja Mia's fence line and will be close to fledging before they migrate to the northern fringes of WA's coastline and beyond. Those who have passed by the site may have come across pink flagging tape and notices requesting walkers and dogs to avoid the area for the duration. We wrote to the Boodja Mia team to offer our local expertise and to update them on the Rainbow bee-eater burrow near the fence line.

Mr Ian Campbell, the Chairman of PCHF has assured the community that detailed consideration of all environmental impacts, including light pollution, was part of the Project Design Brief. Mr Campbell stated that Boodja Mia will enhance crucial linkages to the preserved coastal bush and have no impact on the remnant native vegetation or the bush corridor. He has also said that Boodja Mia will meet WA's needs for at least 25 years, that there will be no need for expansion and that firebreaks and parking will be fully accommodated on the excised land. The situation is evolving, as you will see from the discussion in the last 2 Post Editions (16 and 23 February 2024). Our key concerns are maintaining the wildlife corridors and public access, and delivering the Norn Bidi.

Even though we did not get an invitation to the launch, we hope to work with the Boodja Mia team as part of the promised ongoing stakeholder engagement to ensure this beautiful bush location can enrich the lives of our most vulnerable children and their families, as well as the wider community, and in perpetuity.

Judy's a champion!

Judy, who's been our Secretary for more than 20 years, deservedly received a Certificate of Appreciation at Nedlands' Citizens Awards ceremony on the 25th January. Judy's a tireless and quiet achiever, often seen targeting her pet hates: Pretty Betsy and Flickweed. We're so grateful to have Judy keep us on our toes and reminding us about activities. Well done, Judy!



Judy receiving her certificate from Kate Chaney MLA

Habitat for wildlife

There are more quenda sightings in neighbouring suburbs. There were two observations in Allen Park several years ago, so there may be a chance that they could return. The phrase, '*provide habitat and they will come*' leads us to provide sanctuary for this endearing animal. We will build 3 quenda 'bungalows' between Allen Park and the coast to encourage a natural repopulation of the area, and support neighbouring reintroduction programs such as at Lake Claremont. What is needed is your help by coming along on the **4th May**, to create the structures in the selected sites. We will provide details nearer the time.

Check out what Craigie Bushland has found out:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewjb>

Without a predator proof fence, quenda will be much more vulnerable to attack by foxes and dogs off lead. Fox control is a regional issue, and our Councils work collectively to control and minimise the number of foxes across the suburbs. That leaves the issue of dogs off lead; which is fixable, and something that we can all do to manage if we all play our part. The City of Nedlands' new Local Dog Law was published in the Government Gazette on 20th February, and comes into effect on the 5th March. Those who made submissions will be advised of the outcome. New signage may take some time to be displayed, but will reflect the need for owners to keep dogs on the lead on paths in bushland areas. Local wildlife will have a greater chance not being harassed, and be better protected. We are grateful to bushwalkers and 4-legged friends who do take this into consideration. Please spread the word.

We wrote supporting the City's application for a grant to build bird watering stations in various locations across Nedlands over time. One has been flagged to be installed on the slope above the Heritage Precinct, where the birds favour looking down from a height and where they would feel safe. This is great news as the installation in Hollywood Reserve is proving popular with a range of bird species. In dry months, the elevated water troughs are well sought after. There are wonderful installations popping up across a number of reserves, and some are very artistic – Star Swamp Reserve has a work of art.

Allen Park cottage

There is noticeably no building activity on site, and another summer slips by. It is understood that the funds will not be spent in this financial year. We will ask that better protection is provided on the exposed western elevation and what is being done about termite control. Meanwhile the contents of the cottage fill the MAYO shed, and fortunately, FAWWA continues to provide access to the kitchen to boil the kettle after our bushcare sessions, as well as allowing storage under the house, which is not ideal. However, we will pursue the possibility of occasional use of Tom Fricker Cottage.

Signage in Allen Park

Visitors may have noticed some signs in coastal and bushland areas to inform the public that planting seedlings other than those arranged through our planting program is not permissible. The best intentions may be at the heart of those choosing to plant their own seedlings in reserves, but there are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration that explains why this practice is discouraged, including:

- The risk that the seedling may not be from an accredited nursery, and may carry disease, unintended weeds, or contaminated soil.
- The seedling may not be local provenance. We collect seed from Allen Park that are either propagated for the winter program, or stored in the seed bank, in safe keeping, in the event of a catastrophe, such as fire or disease.
- If the plant has been dug up because it's germinated in the wrong place and then planted somewhere else, (such as too close to the houses in the Heritage Precinct), it may transfer pathogens with it. We have witnessed tree death which we've seen happen almost overnight, and by minimising disturbance and transfer of soil that may carry pathogens from one area to another, we can help save our trees.
- Plants do grow in communities, and the structure of this bushland is a mosaic of plant communities, so we hope to retain the uniqueness of our bushland by keeping these communities as they should be.

Much has been learned over decades working to preserve and restore the bushland, so we hope that the more we share our understanding with those who love visiting here and volunteering with us, the better.

Norn Bidi section of the Whadjuk Trail

The detailed design for the Norn Bidi is currently being reviewed by the City before being finalised. Thereafter it will go out for tender and then construction gets underway. The Norn Bidi will snake its way down from the Bridge Club and across the grassed area to meet the beach oval and Seaward Corridor. Watch this space! The design is looking very promising, and the style of it is in keeping with the name

'norn' (snake). We are meeting the project manager early in March to view the design before the project goes out to tender.

Clean Up Australia Day

Sunday 3rd March 8-10am

Meet near the limestone wall in the Bridge/Rugby Club car park. We will focus on collecting rubbish in areas near the car parks, beach oval and Swanbourne Beach. Please wear suitable clothing.

Tawny Frogmouth does it again



Another little family is growing very fast in the gnarly branches of a peppermint tree. One keen photographer has shared images of the little family.



At this stage, it was hard to know whether the female had just this one chick. However, 2 weeks later it was confirmed there were 2.

Credits: D Downing

ALLEN FAMILY REUNION AT MATTIE FURPHY HOUSE

Jenni Allen has penned this tribute. Jenni is one of our Tuesday volunteers, and has a very special and close association with Allen Park.....

John Allen's great great grandson, Ryan Allen was the initiator of the family reunion held on 14th January at Mattie Furphy's House. Ryan, who is only thirteen years old, had spent some time researching the family tree, and was trying to add names onto Ancestry.com. He was very excited about meeting more family members, so suggested Minnie Allen's (commemorative) birthday would be a good date.

We only had a small number, but loved looking at the Family Tree and catching up on news.



Alan and Peter Hale, Ray Buscall Jenni Allen (Grandchildren of John Allen)



My mum (Margaret) looking out at the garden at her residential home

Of course, I asked if anyone would like to come and join us for Bushcare. We look forward to more reunions in the future



Ryan and Jenni

EPA rally draws a big crowd

Some of our members attended the rally at Parliament House on the 13th February to hear respected advocates for the environment share their concerns and present the Premier with an open letter to reject proposed changes to the EPA. The Vogel-McFerran review occurred without public consultation at the end of last year, prompting the Conservation Council to alert individuals and groups like ours, to show that the proposed changes will be damaging for our environment.



Credit: John Blakey, quenda near Jandakot

The EPA is failing us. The EPA needs to be independent (including board members affiliations), rigorous, science based and consultative. We need an EPA that remains independent, has stronger environmental assessment processes and is effective in its crucial role in protecting the environment. Taking away public appeal rights and the Office of the Appeals Convenor isn't going to help nature – nature needs our voices now more than ever.

An example of the failure of nature laws in WA is the proposed Surf Park at Jandakot. Over 3Ha of banksia woodland (a Threatened Ecological Community) and 1.48Ha of Conservation Category Wetland at risk of being cleared. Our watchdog, the EPA deemed it did not warrant a formal environmental assessment.

move the surf park



Stop the waves of destruction

UBC AGM

6th March, 6pm for a 6.30 start.

Lotterywest House, Delhi St, West Perth

Keynote speakers Richard Yin & Giz Watson on Save our EPA – Protect WA Nature

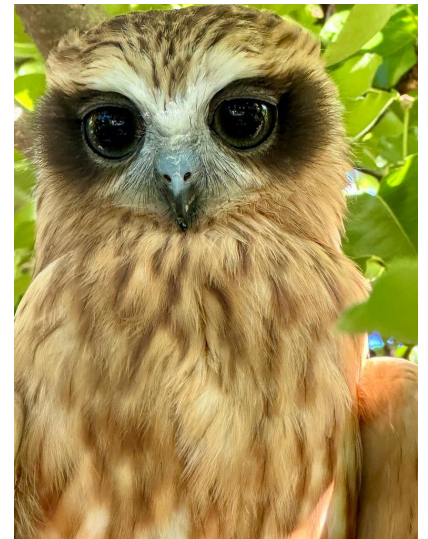
You may join by Zoom, email ubc@bushlandperth.org.au to request the link

Upcoming activities

3rd March Clean Up Australia Day 8-10am, Swanbourne

6th April Nedlands Volunteers Appreciation Day, Allen Park

Nature Walk - Insect Study Society. Details to follow



Credit: A Casson

If you'd like to keep up to date with activities please consider.....

Are you a member – if not would you like to join?

Contact us by email melonhillbg@gmail.com, or Secretary Judy jhe74786@bigpond.net.au

see us on the Urban Bushland council website

Find us on FaceBook,

Instagram @Melonhill_bushland 

Please consider the logo – **Think Global, Act Local**: Join us to help care for our local patch. You can make a difference!