



# CRREPA NEWS

## Newsletter of the Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association (Inc)

Editors: Stephen Johnston and Sue Stanley

**ENJOY YOUR FORESHORE RESPONSIBLY**

Members please contact us by phone (9259 4434) or email ([CRREPA@gmail.com](mailto:CRREPA@gmail.com))

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## CRREPA-CITY OF CANNING PLANTINGS ADVANCE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY



**O**n two beautiful sunny days in July, 29 CRREPA volunteers supported by staff from the City of Canning Natural Areas Team (NAT) planted more than 1100 seedlings, 560 at Wadjup Point and 610 on the foreshore near Beatrice Avenue. It was the first stage of a three-year joint CRREPA-City of Canning foreshore revegetation project funded by a grant from the State Government's Community Rivercare Program.

The plantings are consistent with the City's Local Biodiversity Strategy which Council passed unanimously on 19 June. The Strategy recognises the criticality of "ecological linkages" which include the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore corridor between the Canning Regional Park and the Bull Creek reserves, starting with the Yagan Wetland Reserve. The Strategy also emphasises the importance of enhancing biodiversity by increasing the proportion of local native species on public land within the City's boundaries.

Most of the seedlings were purchased by CRREPA from Planrite with the grant funds and these were supplemented by the 500 the City provides to community landcare groups each year. The purchased plants were selected by Grecian Sandwell on the basis of occurring naturally in the local area and being tough, proven performers in previous foreshore plantings. They have all had an excellent start with the above average rains in July and August.

The main species chosen, *Juncus krausii* (Sea rush), which were all planted at the Beatrice Avenue site, grows in coastal marshes, salt marshes and within the tidal zone along the shore line of coastal salt water lakes and estuaries. The next three main species selected were *Facinia nodosa* (Knotted club rush) which occurs in sandy coastal areas near lakes and sea in all states except the Northern Territory; *Gahnia trifida* (Coast saw-sedge) which is found around southern Australia on the edge of coastal saltmarsh or farther inland near saline and sub-saline lakes and watercourses; and *Conostylis candicans* (Grey cottonheads) which is native to Western Australia but is finding increasing popularity as a garden plant because it is drought tolerant and its small clusters of yellow flowers appear prolifically over a long period through spring.

Other species planted included *Dianella revoluta* (Blueberry lily) which is found widely over WA and is very hardy, *Pattersonia occidentalis* (Native Iris or Purple flag) and the yellow flowering *Hibbertia racemosa* (Stalked guinea flower).

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A final planting of some 220 seedlings provided by the City of Canning – *Facinia nodosa*, *Juncus krausii* and *Conostylis candicans* - opposite 187-189 Riverton Drive was carried out by nine CRREPA volunteers on 17 August. Meanwhile the City has been very active in revegetation work with infill and replacement tree planting along the grassed areas of the foreshore, for example opposite 183-191 Riverton Drive where five eucalypts were planted to replace the old *Eucalyptus rudis* (Flooded gum).

At our most problematic foreshore site near Central Road (opposite 51-63 Riverton Drive), the NAT and Ecojobs workers firstly removed the Pigface which is not native to the area but was planted by CRREPA about four years ago as an interim measure to control weeds in a bare strip between the pathway and the sedges on the river's edge. While the Pigface had grown very well and fulfilled its purpose, it can become an invasive weed. There had been success with subsequent plantings of local natives thanks to the efforts of CRREPA, particularly former vice president Sallie Bryant and, after Sallie's move to Queensland, Sue Stanley, with assistance from nearby residents. So, the NAT and Ecojobs have followed on and revegetated the site with appropriate local native species.



## FORESHORE MANAGEMENT PLAN PUSHED BACK BY SHELLEY BEACH MASTERPLAN

The high-profile priority for the City of Canning's Parks and Place Improvement branch to holding public consultations and draw together a draft masterplan for the Shelley Beach Park has pushed back consultations and development of the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore management plan by many months.

The City's intention is that their consultants for development of the management plan, Urbaqua, will engage with community stakeholders before preparation of the draft and that there will also be opportunity for commenting on the draft once it has been prepared. Presentations to the Council's Sustainability and Environment Advisory Group and Community Advisory Group will be included in the preliminary consultations. Two community workshops are proposed, one to identify values and opportunities and the second for developing concepts.

Advice from the City in February this year was that we could expect Urbaqua to contact CRREPA by early March. But a month later we were advised that the community stakeholder engagement for the management plan had been delayed to allow for completion of the consultation on Shelley Beach Park, which itself had been delayed until June and July because of internal staff changes. With those consultations now completed, a brief is being, or has been developed, by Council officers for an external consultant or the City landscape architects to draw up a draft masterplan for Shelley Beach Park by about October. This draft plan will go out for community consultation, possible revision in light of those consultations and then to one of the early 2019 Council meetings for final deliberation. Amid all this activity, we may see the foreshore management plan starting to move back onto the agenda by the end of the year.

There are two definite advantages flowing from this delay. Council passed unanimously the Local Biodiversity Strategy in June and the Street Tree Strategy in July, both of which provide further powerful complementary support for continuing revegetation of the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore with local native species. The Local Biodiversity Strategy must now be the essential strategic guide for the foreshore management plan recommendations.

The possible advantage of the delay is that the Urbaqua consultants should have received a copy of the CRREPA submission after it was sent to the City on 28 March and have (hopefully) read it thoroughly. If so, it will provide a very good foundation for their consultations with CRREPA.

## MEMBER DONATIONS GIVE NEW HOMES FOR BIRDS

The generosity of CRREPA members has enabled three nesting boxes to be installed along the foreshore. The boxes will hopefully be used by Striated Pardalotes which are frequently seen along the foreshore where they busily forage for insects in the foliage of Eucalypts.

Two nesting boxes are in *Eucalyptus rudis* (Flooded gums) near Rob Bruce Park and the third is in a *Eucalyptus gomphocephala* (Tuart) at Wadjup Point.

The boxes were designed, made and installed by Simon Cherriman from iNSight Ornithology, a one-man environmental business "which aims to engage and inspire people about the environment, mainly through the science of birds."



Stanley



Stanley



Stanley

## Striated Pardalotes



Bill Lamb

Lamb

**Striated Pardalotes (*Pardalotus striatus*)** are more common than people think and are found throughout Australia, living in any habitat that has trees or shrubs but they favour eucalyptus forests or woodlands.

There is a considerable variation in plumage characteristics. All birds have white eyebrows with a yellow spot in front of the eye, olive-grey backs and a white stripe in the wing. Depending on their location in Australia, the wing stripe width may vary and the coloured spot at the front end of the wing may be red or yellow. The black crown may also lack fine white stripes. The young resemble the adults but the colouring on the crown and face is notably paler.

Striated Pardalotes feed in the foliage at the top of trees, sometimes coming closer to the ground in lower shrubs. They feed on a large variety of insects which they pick from the surface of leaves.

During breeding season they form pairs in groups of up to six and nest close to the ground in tree hollows or tunnels in earthen banks. Both sexes care for the young and other members of the group help with the feeding.

## A drop of water goes a long way



Stanley

For the second successive year we appear to be winning the war against plant death in summer due to lack of water.

Keeping the same master plan as last year we again had 23 members take part on our water roster for three sites. The City of Canning did fortnightly waterings of five sites and SERCUL (South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare) lent us their 600 litre tank and trailer on alternate weeks.

Thank you to all members of the watering team, your efforts are greatly appreciated.

# LOCATION WILL DETERMINE RIVER SNAGGING ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS VS COSTS

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) is funding a project managed by OzFish Unlimited, supported by RecFish West, to install large woody debris (LWD) in the Canning River at two sites opposite the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore.

It is intended to install opposite the freshwater drain near 185 Riverton Drive, the Flooded gum (*Eucalyptus rudis*) that is to be removed from the foreshore east of the Fifth Avenue-Riverton Drive, Rossmoyne intersection. The tree was infected with white ants and had split at ground level. The City of Canning had an arborist inspect the tree over the past five years and while work was done to extend its life, it was finally concluded it was a safety risk. OzFish also plan to transport other LWD, that has been felled by Main Roads Western Australia, on a jet-powered barge equipped with a 4-ton crane from Deepwater Point to a location opposite the drain near Beatrice Avenue that forms Grecian's Spit.

The project is another step in the reversal of the modification of the Swan Canning River system that commenced with European settlement and was similarly applied to rivers and streams across large parts of Australia. Dredging and removal of fallen tree snags were intended to improve access for boats and remove obstacles for stream flow, thereby reducing the risk of flooding. This work was strongly supported for nearly 100 years by legislation, government funding and institutional arrangements. While de-snagging certainly increased stream flow, it had major adverse environmental impacts including “spatially extensive bed degradation, massive channel enlargement, loss of fish habitat and bird roosting sites. Recognition of the need for more integrated land and water management, and new research on the hydraulic, geomorphic, biogeographic and ecological significance of large woody debris and the values of indigenous riparian vegetation during the 1980s led to a major shift in river rehabilitation.” \*

CRREPA supported in principle the LWD proposal when it was first raised by RecFishWest late last year. But we had concerns about the then proposed location just off the western side of Wadjup Point because of the risk of over-fishing as it became known as a good location for Black bream and because the logs might be used as fishing platforms which could compromise their attraction as roosting sites for birds. Now that principal responsibility for the project rests with OzFish, CRREPA is concerned that the proposed LWD locations may still result in more detrimental environmental impacts than benefits, particularly as both are important places for birds, providing fresh water, foraging and resting areas. Unless the LWD is located well out of casting range from the river bank or shallows, there are again real risks that they could become popular fishing spots, which could disturb birds, and that fishing hooks and line could become permanently lodged in the LWD which could entangle birds and dolphins. With the very low tides during summer, the casting range extends a long way from the foreshore.

A DBCA officer has advised that “part of the project involves monitoring for wildlife entanglements and reporting any to the Department, bird usage of the LWD and fish activity to determine whether the project has been successful in its aim of improving fish habitat. OzFish are also required to submit a construction environmental management plan prior to deploying the LWD including how established vegetation will be protected, protecting the river from litter and other foreign material during deployment, and vehicle and machinery entry/exit points. If the project is not deemed to meet its habitat objectives two years (by June 2021) after completion of the project, the LWD will need to be removed.”

\* *Desnagging to resnagging: new directions in river rehabilitation in southeastern Australia*, Wayne D. Erskine and Ashley A. Webb, April 2003



Stanley

# DISCOVER UNDERWATER LIFE IN THE SWAN RIVER AT THE CRREPA AGM



**As the Harbour is to Sydney, so the Swan River is to Perth, one of the city's most loved identifying features. But what lies beneath its surface?**

You can find out at **7.00 pm on Thursday 20 September** at the Canning River Eco Education Centre (CREEC), corner of Kent Street & Queens Park Road, Wilson (near Kent Street Weir) when experienced scuba diver, Mel Turner, will talk about underwater life in the Swan River before the CRREPA annual general meeting (AGM).

Mel has been an avid scuba diver for more than 20 years and has seen some incredible things while diving interstate and overseas. But nothing fascinates her more than the creatures she sees while diving in the Swan River. Since her first dive in the Swan seven years ago, Mel has become devoted to documenting the life she sees there, particularly around Bicton Baths, Blackwall Reach, Point Walter, East Fremantle and places like the Coombe in Mosman Park. Her commitment to the project gets stronger every time she hears reports that the Swan River is "dead".

Mel is passionate to demonstrate that – not only is the Swan River very much alive – but is host to some surprising and special creatures. Her illustrated talk will take us through where she dives, what is around these sites such as wrecks, the creatures she sees - including fish, crustaceans, mammals and nudibranchs - and others she knows are there but is still searching for them.

On the conclusion of Mel's talk, the formal AGM will commence with brief reports by myself, our treasurer, Bill Lambe and retiring former foreshore coordinator, Grecian Sandwell. We will then hold the election for the 2018-19 committee.

After 14 years on the committee, including two two-year terms as President, Grecian is stepping down along with Roslyn Bartholomaeus who has been on the committee since 2011. We appreciate their many years of service - more will be said at the AGM - and we need members to step up and take their place in 2018-19 and beyond. Committee roles are not demanding and enable you to have an even more direct involvement in the protection and restoration of the Rossmoyne-Shelley Foreshore. If you are interested in finding out more about what the committee does, please call me on 0447 273 727.

Please **advise Roslyn Bartholomaeus as soon as convenient that you are coming to the AGM**, so we can advise CREEC on catering. Roslyn's number is 9457 4590 or you can email her at [CRREPA@gmail.com](mailto:CRREPA@gmail.com).

We hope to see you at CREEC on September 20th!

## Sad loss of two dolphins

**It is with great sorrow we have to report the death of two more dolphins related closely to their entanglement in fishing lines.**

The female dolphin 'Highnitch' was found deceased on the banks of the Swan River in Como. The fishing line was wrapped around her tail and dorsal fin and had a plastic bag caught in it. The Parks and Wildlife service managed to remove part of it allowing her to swim more freely but there were signs of infection on her skin which might have resulted from the entanglement. Low salinity in the river due to heavy winter rain might have helped to promote the rapid spread of the infection across her body.

Highnitch's 18 month old calf 'Splash' was found floating near 'Perth Flying Squadron yacht club' in Dalkeith a week later. The calf also had fishing line wrapped around its tail.

Highnitch and Splash have been taken to Murdoch University for assessment.



Source: "Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia"

# MANUAL REMOVAL AND HERBICIDE PLAY COMPLEMENTARY ROLES IN FORESHORE WEED CONTROL

While the heavy winter rain has been wonderful for our newly planted seedlings, it has also triggered enormous weed growth. But CRREPA volunteers have been up to the challenge and we have been delighted with the numbers who have responded consistently to our calls for assistance. Weedings have been at sites near Rob Bruce Park, the 2016 planting site opposite 123-129 Riverton Drive, the embankment west of Halophila Bay which was planted last year and the "Living Drain" (aka Murray's Ditch) opposite 235 Riverton Drive, Shelley.

We thank all volunteers for giving their time for this important work and we hope that we will continue to receive strong volunteer support as the warmer temperatures of spring stimulate further weed growth. The idea is not to keep a whole area weed free. While that would be wonderful it is both impractical and not essential to our objective of increasing the spread of local native vegetation along the foreshore. What is essential is to remove weeds growing near the small plants so they are not smothering them and competing for soil nutrients, water and sunlight. A broader objective is to remove weeds, or at least remove the seed heads of weeds, before they ripen, mature, leave the plant and settle down to germinate in the following season.

While CRREPA strongly supports a conservative approach to the use of herbicides, the only way to control the introduced grasses, Couch (*Elymus repens*) and Kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*) in our restored areas is to spray them with Fusilade. Although these grasses can be hand-pulled, the roots remain and the constant regrowth is vigorous. On CRREPA's request, the City's Natural Areas Team assists by spraying sites that we have planted up and where the grasses have not been successfully killed off in the initial site preparation.

Over the years, some CRREPA members have expressed concerns about the use of Fusilade. By way of general reassurance, we include the following information from a WA government publication, *Water Notes for Rivers Management*, WN22, April 2001:

*Fluazifop-p-butyl (Fusilade®) is a selective herbicide, which is designed to kill grasses (members of the Poaceae family), and is safe to use on most other plant species, including rushes and sedges. It has a low toxicity to bees and rats and is practically non-toxic to ducks and mammals (PMEP 1999). It also has a low toxicity to fish and aquatic organisms (Brain and O'Connor 1988). Fusilade® has been tested in Western Australia and was found to be highly effective in removing introduced grasses, while having no detectable impact on aquatic invertebrates (Woodcock et al 1993). It is rapidly absorbed by plants and is rainfast within 1 hour. The plants begin to wilt 1- 2 weeks after application and may take up to five weeks to completely die. Spraying should occur before flowering (Crop Care Australasia Pty Ltd 1997). Fusilade® is only slightly soluble in water, and is rapidly degraded, with a half-life of one week in moist soils (Moore and Fletcher, n.d.). It is commonly used for control of Veldt Grass, Kikuyu, Couch and Water Couch where native plant species are present.*



Stanley



Keating



Keating



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## JOIN US FOR A PLANTING MORNING AT YAGAN



A special joint planting morning in the Yagan Wetland Reserve between CRREPA and the Friends of Bull Creek will be held on Saturday 8 September 2018 between 9.00 and 11.00 am.

This will be a rare opportunity for CRREPA members to contribute to the continued enhancement of this wonderful area that is sandwiched in between Leach Highway, Adventist Care's Rossmoyne Waters and Bull Creek. The 5.4 hectare reserve comprises about three hectares of remnant wetland through which Bull Creek flows and about two hectares of modified dryland.

As a Bush Forever site, Yagan's significant features include its dense vegetation, relatively unmodified fringing rush vegetation, the protection it provides for the Bull Creek backwater which is a bird refuge and fish nursery and having been (and possibly still remaining) the only known location in the Perth metropolitan area where a rare skink species, *Egernia luctuosa*, is found. More generally, Yagan provides a remarkable contrast to the roar of traffic along the Leach Highway and the eight-storey apartment block under construction that towers above.

This Reserve is one of the areas that has benefited from a State Natural Resource Management (NRM) grant to the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) for the Community Restoration of the Bull Creek Catchment. The joint planting day is a nominated activity under the grant.

The planting site is just down from the Bull Creek weir that is within a short distance of the Leach Highway embankment. A lot of Typha (Bullrushes) and other weeds have been poisoned recently by spray teams leaving a soft sandy area free for planting local native wetland seedlings.

**Where to go:** drive in along the unsealed access track that runs between the reserve and the Adventist Homes property off Bull Creek Road, Rossmoyne between the Creekview Close and First Avenue intersections. You will be directed where to park and then escorted to the planting site.

**When to go:** arrive at 8.50 am on Saturday 8 September to allow time to walk to the planting site. You can work for an hour or two – however long you wish. Morning tea will be provided at the end of the planting session.

**What to wear:** gardening clothes and sturdy shoes/boots but particularly if you have them, gumboots, as the route to the planting site is wet and muddy in places and the planting site itself is quite damp.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and THANK YOUS

We are very grateful for the support provided by the City of Canning, SERCUL and Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)



### YOUR CRREPA COMMITTEE 2017 - 2018

**President:** Stephen Johnston  
**Vice President:** Grecian Sandwell  
**Secretary:** Sue Reynolds  
**Treasurer:** Bill Lambe

**Committee Members**  
Roslyn Bartholomaeus,  
Sue Stanley and David Thwaites