



CRREPA NEWS

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

Editors: Stephen Johnston and Sue Stanley

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Members please contact us by phone (0422 590 029) or email (CRREPA@gmail.com) or postal address (CRREPA Members Officer: 16 Nearwater Way, Shelley 6148) To see your CRREPA Newsletter in COLOUR view or download it from the SERCUL website.

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10-YEAR FORESHORE BLUEPRINT AWAITS COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT

by Stephen Johnston

The draft Shelley-Rossmoyne Foreshore Management Plan will go before Canning Council for endorsement at its meeting on Tuesday 17 September 2019. It is difficult to overstate the importance of this vote because once endorsed, the Plan will direct the future management of our foreshore for at least the next 10 years.

As with the first 2001 foreshore plan, the new plan uses and acknowledges a lot of the CRREPA submission written by Grecian Sandwell, Colma Keating and me. CRREPA's submission was with the City of Canning awaiting consideration by the consultants, Urbaqua Land and Water Solutions, when they commenced work in earnest on the plan in October last year. The depth of detailed knowledge, experience and historical perspective in the CRREPA submission, its bird list and before-and-after photos of restoration sites, provided one of the foundations for Urbaqua's work. This was complemented very well by much of the feedback in the community consultation sessions at CREEC.



All of that however may not have borne as much fruit if the consultants had not had sufficient knowledge of, and empathy with, environmental management. The City of Canning chose well with Urbaqua, experienced environmental consultants whose expertise includes foreshore and coastal management. Further support for the plan's overall direction and specific recommendations came through the public response to the draft. Thank you to all those members who responded to my email of 16 May seeking your supportive comments to the City of Canning. Some of the best features of the draft plan I highlighted were:

All of that however may not have borne as much fruit if the consultants had not had sufficient knowledge of, and empathy with, environmental management. The City of Canning chose well with Urbaqua, experienced environmental consultants whose expertise includes foreshore and coastal management. Further support for the plan's overall direction and specific recommendations came through the public response to the draft. Thank you to all those members who responded to my email of 16 May seeking your supportive comments to the City of Canning. Some of the best features of the draft plan I highlighted were:

- recognition, as its number one objective, of preserving and enhancing the natural environment and ecological linkage of the foreshore;
- priority given to continuing revegetation with local native species to provide a multi-storey habitat;
- recommendation for formal recognition of four significant habitat areas, identified by CRREPA, at Shelley Bridge, Wadjup Point, Beatrice Avenue and Pleasant Place dampland; and
- support for continuing improvements to water quality of stormwater flows into the Canning River through measures including modifications to more drains.

Once the plan is endorsed by Council, the critical issue will be how much of the City's environment budget can be allocated to support its implementation. For example, to deal with the biggest threat - vegetation vandalism - the City needs to look at how other councils have used camera technology to deter and detect offenders and acquire that capacity for application in high-incidence areas like near Central Road, Rossmoyne. To deal with the biggest constraint on revegetation between the path and the river, the City needs to implement the recommended provision of a "temporary source of water (possibly a temporary water tank) to assist in establishment watering for revegetation sites for at least two summers."

THERE'S ALSO A NEW MASTERPLAN FOR THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER.....



While CRREPA welcomes the imminent endorsement of the new foreshore management plan, sound management of the northern foreshore is also vital for the future of biodiversity on the lower Canning.

The high natural values of parts of the Salter Point to Clontarf strip were nationally recognised nearly 30 years ago when it was included on the register of the National Estate and they are summarised in the 2000 management plan: “.....the most extensive wetlands in the lower reaches of the Swan and Canning Rivers, providing the largest habitat area for many wildlife species.” “..... it is a link in a chain of wetlands on the Canning River from Mount Henry to the Canning River Regional Park. Its condition is relatively undisturbed compared with other foreshore wetlands...wide and therefore provides protection for the river embayments... provides habitat for insects, frogs, reptiles, birds and mammals few fringing forests have such significant understorey vegetation. The plan quotes a 1983 report: “There is no similar foreshore vegetation else-

where along the Swan and Canning Rivers.”

In April this year the City of South Perth endorsed the Clontarf-Waterford-Salter Point (CWSP) Masterplan prepared by Urbis consultants. The 134-page document is a very comprehensive, detailed and well-illustrated analysis of the 34-hectare reserve with many recommendations which, if implemented, should generally see the area retain its environmental values while enhancing its recreational amenity. The consultants put a lot of emphasis on community feedback from which the strongest single message was a desire for maintaining a connection - particularly a visual connection - with the Canning River. The challenge for both sides of the river is to deliver that for the people while still ensuring that the ecological corridor value of the foreshore is enhanced with enough upper, middle and lower storey trees, shrubs and plants that are local to the area.



Unspoilt wetlands need preservation

There are two notable examples in the CWSP Masterplan recommendations where the anthropocentric perspective has clearly predominated over the environmental imperatives.

Of greatest concern is a recommendation for investigating opportunities for creating an elevated walkway into the Andrew Thomson Reserve to a viewing platform over the river. This would directly compromise one of the most outstanding characteristic of this reserve - that it has been left intact without access paths for people and domestic animals except around the perimeter, therefore providing a wonderful, relatively secure habitat for wildlife.

The recommendation contrasts with “key messages from the community”: “Improvements, but not at the expense of the conservation values” and “Bird life and aquatic animals are highly valued.” It is reminiscent of the City of Melville’s proposed boardwalk across Yagan Wetland Reserve that sparked community opposition and led to the creation of CRREPA in 1994. There is plenty of opportunity to *look* into each of these reserves without having to *walk* into them. Hopefully the recommended “feasibility study to determine the community benefit, appropriateness and potential location” along with the influence of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions will come down against the proposal.

The second concern relates to the Salter Point Parade section of the foreshore which is opposite houses but has very limited tree cover. Trees are recommended to be planted to provide shade but “strategically located to minimise impact on views”. There is no consideration of the trees’ biodiversity value and how that might be considered in the planting.



Treeless Salter Point Parade

CRREPA CELEBRATES ITS 25TH BIRTHDAY



1994 was the year that Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first black president, O.J Simpson was arrested for two counts of murder and the film, Forrest Gump, launched actor Tom Hanks' into fame. In Western Australia, one former Labor Premier, Brian Burke was sentenced to eight months' jail while one of his successors, Dr Carmen Lawrence, won the Fremantle by-election and later in the year became Federal Health Minister.

Meanwhile, at a local level the Swan River Trust's Draft Lower Canning River Management Plan was released, the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program (SCCP) commenced and two Rossmoyne residents, Margo and Cam Ross founded CRREPA. The fledgling association fought - and won - its first conservation battle the following year against a proposal for a boardwalk in the Yagan Wetland Reserve. Its longer-term goals were those that we still actively pursue - to work collaboratively with the City of Canning and other agencies to protect and preserve the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore of the Canning River and Yagan Wetland Reserve; and to restore and revegetate these areas.

It is so easy to take the current state of the foreshore for granted and assume it was always so. But as a 1990 State Government report made clear, it was then not in a good state with vegetation limited to "small clumps of sheoak and paperbark. These have little evidence of regeneration and the communities are stressed by lawn maintenance and weed proliferation. There are some areas of fringing rushes which add definition to the foreshore line. The foreshore vegetation is already stressed as most of the vegetation was disturbed by infilling and there is an abundance of lawn species encroaching on the communities".

To help rectify this so many local residents, sadly some no longer with us, have spent countless thousands of hours in diverse tasks from seed collection and plant propagation to weeding and watering, from drain modifications to revegetation plots. As founding member, life member and long-serving officer bearer, Dianne Matthews recalled: "We faced many unknowns such as what plants to put in, how far apart they should be and when was high or low tide to allow access? They were little things, but we didn't have the experience so had to learn as we went along. It was always for the environment and the people along the way made it all possible, such terrific, generous people."



CRREPA'S property moves to a new home

CRREPA property, tools, soil additives, hoses, signs, protective gloves, glasses and first aid kit, are all finally coming together in one storage facility thanks to our lobbying and the initiative of Dion Johnson, City of Canning Executive Manager of Parks and Place Improvement.

The Shed - we welcome suggestions for nicer titles - was constructed by the City in July. It is three by three metres, has a brick floor, a lockable door, is well shaded and will allow easy access through a padlocked gate when we are loading up and returning equipment. Thanks to the generosity of CRREPA members, Di and Gary Matthews and Rosalie and Alan Spencer, we have three sets of 1.5 metre high shelves and some additional hoes, a weeding fork and shovel.

It's a fitting anniversary present for the Association which has demonstrated a very high level of self-reliance throughout its 25 years exemplified by life member, Max Risbey, who collected seeds from remnant trees, shrubs and rushes on the foreshore, raised them as seedlings in his back garden and made his own tools to plant them. Other CRREPA members have stored equipment in their sheds and garages for years and provided space to temporarily hold new plant deliveries.

In December 2016 the CRREPA committee recognised that we should no longer have to rely on members to keep CRREPA property, particularly as our holding had grown considerably, and approached the City of Canning for assistance. The first response was that we could make a submission for storage in the Shelley Beach Masterplan. That was clearly unacceptable - we would be waiting a long time and quite possibly not get anything. But meanwhile Friends of Rossmoyne Park heard of our plight and suggested that we might share their small facility at the Central Road, Rossmoyne toilet block. In January 2017 Colma Keating and Grecian Sandwell moved a lot of our property from their garage into the Central Road facility. We were also given a square metre of storage space at the Shelley Beach toilet block to enable CRREPA to store its hose reel, safety cones, buggy and watering cans.

Over the past two and a half years we have enjoyed a great relationship with Friends of Rossmoyne Park. While the space was very tight, the mutual respect between the two groups ensured there were no issues and we enjoyed the wonderful ease of access, backing up metres from the door to load and unload. Unfortunately, we had a very different experience with the Shelley Beach storage which prompted our ultimately successful approach to the City for a better solution. We hope CRREPA can remain at the shed for a long time to come.



Updates...

The City is currently preparing three concept plans for Shelley Beach Park which will be presented to Council at a Strategic Issues Briefing in September, after which, they will be advertised on the City's *Your Say* page for public comment.

OzFish Unlimited has until the end of September to obtain all the necessary approvals for the placement of logs to form large woody habitat for fish in the Canning River opposite the Beatrice Avenue drain and sedge land. If OzFish do not meet this requirement within the deadline, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions may reallocate the Community Rivercare Program grant funds that were provided for this project to other successful applicants for the third and final year of grant funding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and THANK YOUs

We are very grateful for the support provided by the City of Canning, SERCUL and DBCA.

David's Parks teams leave a lasting legacy

As a champion young sportsman, David Mort learnt more than a few things about the values of teamwork, the importance of good leadership and the capacity to absorb the hard knocks and get on with it. They are qualities that have stood him in good stead for his subsequent local government career as he had led teams of staff in parks management and dealt with resident complaints.

David came to the City of Canning in 2018 with thirteen years' experience at the City of Rockingham, where he rose from an entry level position in parks operations to become the inaugural conservation coordinator responsible for natural areas including 55 kilometres of foreshore dunes, and four years as a supervisor with the Shire of Dardanup. Preceding and then sandwiched in the middle of these local government positions were two quite different jobs - wool sampling with the Australian Wool Testing Authority in Fremantle and two years of the FIFO lifestyle helping re-establish and then operate a Pilbara mine-site.



It was towards the end of his time in the Pilbara that David came to recognise that mining was not for him and that his real vocation was parks management. During the long night shifts doing monotonous process work he would reflect on days spent working on the Rockingham beaches doing dune restoration, working with local primary schools or developing the Adopt a Beach program. Now at Canning: "What I love about this job is that every day there is something different, whether it's liaising with a community group, dealing with the performance of a parks team member or arranging for a collapsed drainage pipe to be fixed. All the time I'm helping build beautiful parks, planting trees and leaving a legacy for years and years to come".

As the City's Passive Spaces Supervisor in Parks and Place Improvement, David and his teams of 34 staff looks after 22 areas of natural wetland, river and bushland sites totalling 58 hectares along with 204 other passive green spaces totalling 231 hectares and ranging in size from less than 0.1 hectare to 3.6 hectares. He also has another two staff who undertake the City's pest control operation. Of greatest importance though in David's domain for CRREPA members is the Natural Areas Team which has played a such a crucial role for many years with CRREPA volunteers in the management and rehabilitation of the path-to-river conservation strip of the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore.

Parks staff have probably the greatest exposure among City employees to residents so not infrequently have to bear the brunt of complaints, most commonly about trees. Responding to these requires a mix of diplomacy and clear explanation that staff are simply implementing policies that have already been determined by the elected councillors. A prime example is *ET525, Trees in Streets, Thoroughfares and Parks* that was adopted by Council in 2006 then revised and adopted again 10 years later. A core underlying commitment that is expressed more explicitly in the City's *Urban Forest Strategy* is to increase tree canopy cover from its current lowly 7.6 per cent. Trees on public land will only be removed if they are dead, dying or dangerous – not because they drop leaves, shade solar panels or block television reception.

Communicating that to elderly residents with a Queensland box (*Lophostemon confertus*) dropping nuts and leaves on their verge or Canning Vale residents bearing the legacy of the property developers' love of English plane trees (*Platanus × acerifolia*) with their huge annual leaf fall, can be challenging and frustrating. David says he always tries to deliver a positive outcome for both the City and the ratepayer so, for example, in Canning Vale an additional street sweep was organised during leaf fall and if residents have particular concerns about Glyphosate they can request their properties to be included on the "no spray" register. "We try to train our staff to be as polite as possible, to thank residents for their feedback, assist them where they can, but pass on their supervisor's contact details if they require a more detailed response."

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

River Guardians

<http://www.riverguardians.com> (inc Dolphin Watch)

Birds of the Canning River

<http://www.canningriverbirds.com>

Friends of Queens Park Bushland

<https://www.friendsofqueensparkbushland.org.au>

Praise from passersby

by Sue Stanley

It makes everything worthwhile when members of the public stop our volunteers working on the foreshore and thank them for the work they are doing.

This has been another productive year along the foreshore. We started in July planting over 1100 seedlings at Beatrice Ave spit and Wadjup Point. These plants are part of our Community Rivercare grant from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). We also planted Beatrice Ave spit, Wadjup Point and our new site opp 187 Riverton Drive with our yearly donation of 500 + seedlings from the City of Canning (CoC).

With the help of 21 watering volunteers we managed to keep the plants thriving with very little loss along the whole foreshore. This year we had six sites to water and we thank the City of Canning for their fortnightly watering of four of our sites and South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) for their fortnightly donation of a water tanker so we could water four sites. We had 32 general weeding sessions as well as many individual efforts producing 231 bags of weeds that CoC picked up and disposed of for us. The total volunteer hours we tallied up this year was 1166 which equates to one full time person on the foreshore for 29 weeks. A big pat on the back to all our volunteers.

As reported in the last newsletter (April 2019) a couple of our members, Colma and Grecian, took the initiative and collected bark shed from the gum trees along the foreshore to use as mulch. I noticed that the gums at the Riverton Leisureplex also shed a lot of bark and was given permission by CoC to collect it for use on the foreshore.

In keeping with this philosophy of recycling, with help from CoC, we acquired the remnants of the *Eucalyptus rudis* (that was removed opp 185 Riverton drive) for use as woody habitat on our new site opp 187 Riverton Drive. This should provide a good home for the fauna in the area and also a resting spot for some of our birdlife. Unfortunately some smaller branches we had deposited at our Central Rd site are constantly being stolen or moved. I've learnt that in future, when requesting branches, we make sure they are of a size that is large enough that they can't be removed easily.



FROM URBAN DRAIN TO LIVING STREAM – JOIN US TO HEAR ABOUT THE RESTORATION OF BANNISTER CREEK



The restoration of Bannister Creek has been one of the best environmental good news stories in the Perth metropolitan area of the past 20 years.

CRREPA members can hear all about it before the CRREPA annual general meeting from Cat Williams, immediate past Community Landcare officer at the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) funded by the City of Canning as Coordinator of the Bannister Creek Catchment Group (BCCG).

The 23.35 square kilometre Bannister Creek Catchment is a highly modified natural system converted to a drainage network that winds through parts of the City of Gosnells and the City of Canning before it discharges into the Canning River, downstream from the Kent Street Weir. The drainage network receives water from both stormwater runoff and groundwater, with Bannister Creek flowing permanently.

In her illustrated talk, Cat will tell us how Bannister Creek was 20 years ago and how it has been restored, the triumphs, the challenges and the frustrations that are all part of these projects. Much of the catchment has been cleared for industrial and residential purposes; however, there is remnant vegetation in Canning River Regional Park and along Bannister Creek at the northern tip of the catchment. As with the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore, this has been enhanced through revegetation and weed removal projects undertaken mostly by volunteers. The full impact of these can best be appreciated through the comparison of before and after photos which Cat will show us.

On the conclusion of Cat's talk, the formal AGM will commence with brief reports by our president Stephen Johnston, treasurer, Bill Lambe and foreshore coordinator, Sue Stanley. We will then hold the election for the 2019-20 committee.

We hope to see you at CREEC on 19 September!

Please join us for your 26th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

WHERE: Canning River Eco Education Centre
Kent Street Weir (cnr Kent St & Queens Park Rd)

WHEN: Thursday 19th September 2019 6.45pm for 7pm
RSVP 12th September

Essential to let us know if you are coming and for catering.
Please ring Liz on 9457-8656 or e-mail crrepa@gmail.com

Nominations are open for CRREPA's 2019/20 Committee

We are always keen to have new members on the committee. The roles are not demanding and enable you to have an even more direct involvement in the protection and restoration of the Shelley-Rossmoyne- Foreshore. If you are interested in finding out more about what the committee does, please call Stephen on 0447 273 727 or e-mail him at crrepa@gmail.com

Too many casuarinas spoil biodiversity



The proliferation of *Casuarina obesa* (Swamp sheoak) along the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore and the need for the City of Canning to obtain a new permit for removal of Casuarina saplings following the expiration of a five-year permit in April, prompted a meeting with renowned botanist, Greg Keighery, to get his perspective on the issue.

The foreshore meeting on 25 May, that was facilitated by Colma Keating who has known and worked with Greg for many years, was attended by Sue Stanley and Stephen Johnston along with City of Canning officers, Jenni Andrews and Merise Blackburn.

What CRREPA and the City want to achieve is a consensus approach with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to Casuarina control based on science, a botanical survey of the foreshore to be commissioned by the City and observations and photographs over the last 20 years by CRREPA members. This approach would better recognise that the City has the primary management responsibility for the foreshore, supported by the requisite resources, skills and experience. Nevertheless, for matters like Casuarina control, its management is constrained by the same permit system that applies to private landowners, complete with strict conditions and financial penalties.

A key issue arising from the meeting with Greg Keighery was the extent to which *Casuarina glauca** (Eastern swamp oak), which is native to Queensland and NSW, has spread to the foreshore. Unlike *Casuarina obesa*, which is native to WA and grows naturally along the Swan-Canning, *Casuarina glauca** spreads naturally by suckering and can also hybridize.

Aside from these two differences, the two Casuarinas share some marked similarities in their impact. Greg said that while *Casuarina obesa* is not known for suckering naturally, reduced rainfall associated with climate change and the greatly increased salinity of the lower Canning could induce them to spread by suckering. Observations by CRREPA members are that they also sucker after their shallow roots are nicked by City Park's staff mowers. Both Casuarinas form dense monocultures as their shade and the allelopathic effect of the thick mat of their fallen needles kills any existing understorey and then represses any regrowth. Monocultures are the antithesis of the diverse local species, multi-storey vegetation that is required along the foreshore if it is to provide good habitat and form an effective ecological corridor.

The City's application for a new Casuarina control permit is now in preparation and awaiting input from its foreshore botanical survey which will, among other things, determine whether and to what extent *Casuarina glauca** is present. What CRREPA and the City are seeking is permission to remove self-sown and suckering *Casuarina obesa* where they are not considered the dominant tree species and in recent revegetation areas. They would be replaced with less dominant locally indigenous plants. We would also like to adopt Greg's recommendation of the selective thinning of *Casuarina obesa* to encourage the growth of larger trees rather than dense thickets. Weed control techniques for removal of *Casuarina glauca** should include cutting the stump and painting with herbicide to reduce suckering.