

# 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 (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.

[www.sercul.org.au/crrepa](http://www.sercul.org.au/crrepa)

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## IT'S BEEN A BUSY SIX MONTHS ON THE FORESHORE

by Sue Stanley

**As the temperature drops and the nights bring welcome morning dew it's a good time to reflect on our achievements in the last six months.**

As usual, we had a good turnout of 21 volunteers over four sites for the spring – autumn watering sessions. The City of Canning (CoC) has installed portable 1000lt water tanks at our Central Rd and Beryl Ave sites and these have reduced the need to carry heavy containers of water over long distances and across roads. Feedback from the volunteers has been very positive so far. We gratefully received a Direct Community Action Grant (small) Swan Canning River Recovery Program via Perth NRM (Natural Resources Management) to pay SERCUL (South East Regional Centre for Urban Land Care) to water a further three sites on alternate fortnights with the CoC. All this has led to a high retention rate of our plants over the long dry months.



On October 17<sup>th</sup> 2020 we had our annual 'Big Day Out Amongst The Weeds' at the Central Rd site. It was well attended and one of the main weeds we focused on was *\*Fumaria capreolata*. This is a low spreading creeper with white flowers that grows rapidly and smothers our native flora. We managed to remove 18 bags.

Another weed that is becoming a nuisance on our foreshore is Fat Hen (*\*Chenopodium album*). It has spread through the sedges all along the foreshore. Although it can be contained with glyphosate this can't be used without poisoning the sedges as well so the only way of removing it at the moment is by hand. CoC Natural Areas Team have been working alongside CRREPA to remove it. There are only a few small patches left.



The initial stabilization works on the western side of Wadjup Point were completed in November 2020. The improvements include sand renourishment, brush wall installation, reconfigured brush matting and sedge planting. The hope is this will be enough to stabilize the point for the future. The sand renourishment will be a yearly event. There are other options that can be taken if more stabilization is required but we have our fingers crossed.

Corflute signs have been installed on the fencing at Wadjup Point to deter the public from disturbing the birdlife on the beach, keep their dogs on leads and not access the land behind the fence. While most people follow the rules there are still a small number who ignore the signs. In the coming months the permanent 'Significant Habitat' sign will be installed near the path on the western side of the beach. We hope that this will draw more attention to this area.



# VEGETATION VANDALISM PROSECUTION WELCOMED - BUT IMPROVEMENTS IN RESPONSE NEEDED

by Stephen Johnston

**The conviction on 22 January 2021 of a Shelley property owner for illegal cutting and removal of trees and shrubs in Rob Bruce Park was most welcome but the incidents and the responses to them highlighted some issues that need to be better handled in future.**

The most striking deficiency was the failure of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to take any action on the damage to trees and dumping of branches on the foreshore which is within their Development Control Area (DCA) opposite the Park and occurred around the same time as the Park vandalism. The Department was notified promptly about the incidents and provided with relevant information, but their senior compliance officer was on leave.

At a meeting in March between City of Canning and DBCA officers to review the incidents and the agencies' responses, it was agreed that DBCA would lead an investigation if the offence was committed in its DCA but the City would lead investigations in collaboration with DBCA where an incident crossed over from the DCA to the City's land. It was also agreed that details of any future vegetation damage incidents would be exchanged between DBCA and the City, including the details of alleged offenders where the agency taking lead compliance action required further information from the other to proceed.

Timeliness of a public response by both City and DBCA to the Rob Bruce-foreshore incidents was lacking. Damage to foreshore *Melaleucas* and dumping further upstream of branches from trees that do not grow on the foreshore was first reported by CRREPA members on 12 August 2020. Within three days these members had also confirmed that the Rob Bruce damage was not the work of Western Power contractors and had identified where the vandalism commenced. Yet nearly a month later – on 8 September – the vandalism was continuing. It wasn't until 17 September that the City located its illuminated trailer sign at the bottom of Rob Bruce Park but with an oblique message: "Report suspicious activity," which left people unclear as to what they should be looking out for.

While it is essential not to compromise an investigation and the prospects of successful prosecution, there is still plenty of scope for disseminating public information immediately after vegetation vandalism incidents which might dissuade the perpetrator/s from continuing their criminal activity. The most direct and therefore probably most effective form of public intervention is the prompt erection of a sign at the vandalism site advising that it has occurred and asking people to report any incidents. It took nearly two months after the first reported incident for DBCA to install a sign at the site of the foreshore vandalism and about another five months for a similar City sign to be installed at Rob Bruce Park.

We sincerely hope the City's commitment to Promapp the vegetation vandalism incident process will bring significant improvements in future responses.

**Damage to foreshore vegetation in the DCA should be reported to DBCA's Duty Officer on 9278 0981 from 6.00 am to 10pm Monday-Thursday and 24 hours from Friday to Sunday and public holidays. This number is used for reporting other serious matters including pollution, rubbish and fish kills so the Duty Officer will assess relative urgency based on the caller's information. DBCA will aim to attend the site immediately if the alleged offence is still occurring. If not, the Duty Officer will collect details of the incident and aim to investigate within 48 hours.**



# Vale Gary Matthews 22-9-1934 to 7-2-2021

by Colma Keating

**With couples in the community conservation movement, you often see an active individual but not their partner – because their partner is either at work, bringing in the money to enable the community volunteering and/or at home looking after the kids or putting a meal on the table and one in the oven for when the volunteer finally returns.**

Gary and Diane Matthews were different.

To this end, because of all their effort (and, lucky for the environment and us –achievements) they made significant contributions to understanding, managing and advocating for the natural world around us. A similar thought, as I think of all the truly solo contributors to community conservation. Thank you.

As we should be, we are thrilled about the contributions community volunteers make through one group, together Gary and Diane were involved – often extremely actively - in 10 groups starting 35 years ago in 1986 with the Conservation Council. In 1994 they became inaugural members of CRREPA.

Whilst they were often inseparable, when thinking of their efforts for community conservation, they also had their individual styles and their specific, dedicated contributions.

## Shining a light on Gary....

Whilst many of us have clear memories of Gary working on finances, audits, grant applications, project reports, grant acquittals, photos, photo edits and the like, there are also all the physically active contributions he made as attested to solid memories of Gary lumping all the tools CRREPA needed for weeding or planting, alongside the morning tea paraphernalia, week in and week out with his trusty trailer. And when needed to protect us and the Boy Scouts, school groups, corporates and others from sun, rain or wind, the cumbersome tents and their poles and flaps were also carted, erected and dismantled.

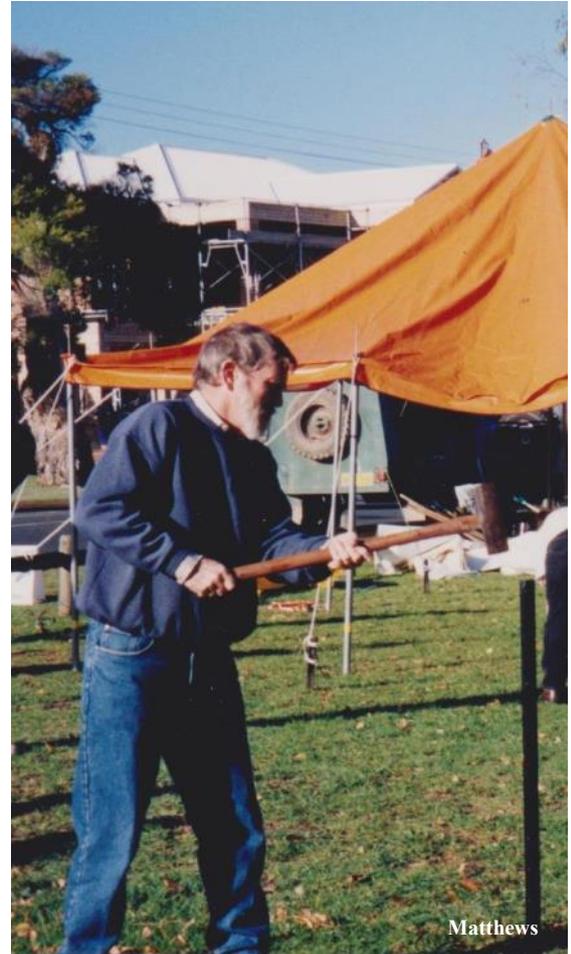
In addition to many and demanding ‘casual roles’ for CRREPA, Gary also accepted and delivered on the formal roles of:

- Honorary Auditor until 2014. (We are a bit wobbly about when he started but it will have been the late 1990s, so 15+ years of service.)
- Water Testing Group 1995-2005
- End-of-Year Sundowner Group

We can't go past the water testing group led by John Cooke (RiP) without acknowledging their efforts being critical in the State Government upgrading the riverside sewage pump stations. CRREPA's monthly water testing along the river (as part of Ribbons of Blue) provided data that showed the supposed 'fail-safe' system was not working and sewerage was leaking into our precious river. In 1997 the State Government committed \$2.5M to upgrading the system and installing a radio-activated alert system.

In 2005, the Water and Rivers Commission acknowledged that CRREPA's assessing and reporting on the quality of water draining into the Canning River for the past 10 years, was the longest of any monitoring groups in WA.

In 2004 Gary was awarded CRREPA Honorary Life Membership in acknowledgement of his significant contribution to hands-on foreshore care, formal meetings, celebrations, computing and technological issues. Gary was also acknowledged for the support that he gave that enabled Diane to also give so much to CRREPA (Diane was also awarded an Honorary Life Membership in 2004).



continued ....

In 2013 the City of Canning acknowledged Gary's significant and sustained contribution to the Canning environment via CRREPA by including him in the City's inaugural Environmental Honour Board erected outside the Canning River Eco Education Centre at Kent Street Weir.

Finally, a thank you Gary for your quiet, considered and consistent strategic, administrative and hands-on care for our natural world along the Lower Canning River and the community that cares for it.

Our thoughts are with Diane, Sam, Tim, Robyn, Grace, extended family and friends.

*I was really sad to hear about Gary's death after a very difficult few years. My abiding recollection of Gary is of a patient, intelligent and dedicated person.*

*I remember first meeting Gary and Diane in 1999 when I started preparing the old Shelley Rossmoyne Foreshore Management Plan. They were very generous with their time and knowledge, and I learnt so much from them as they shared their deep and detailed understanding of the place and the complexity of influences and issues that affect it.*

*I know also of the many, many hours over years that he dedicated on-ground and in planning and organising.*

*The Canning community and the City of Canning have been very fortunate to have environmental volunteers of Gary's calibre.*

Mary Ross

Manager Natural Area Management and Conservation  
City of Canning



Connie Risbey

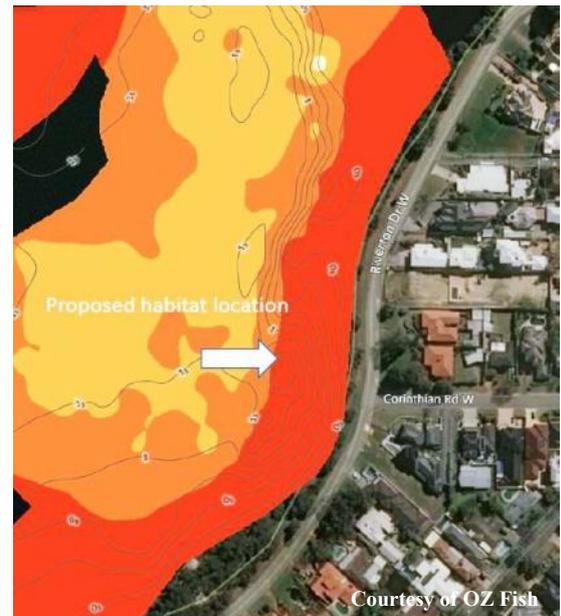
## CLOCK IS TICKING FOR MUCH DELAYED LARGE WOODY DEBRIS PROJECT

**Nearly three years after they made their original grant application to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to install large woody debris (LWD) as fish habitat in the Canning River, OzFish Unlimited has nominated what they hope will be the installation site - 46 metres off the river bank at CRREPA's Corinthian Road revegetation site.**

The site was one of five selected by Ozfish for a round of community consultation late last year. The other four sites were off Salter Point, two off Mt Henry and one in Bull Creek. OzFish's previously favoured site off Grecian's Spit had been ruled out after sustained opposition from CRREPA because of the expected impact on birdlife from increased numbers of anglers casting out to the LWD.

Andrew Matthews, Senior Project Officer for OzFish, said the Corinthian Road site was preferred over the other sites because there was less likelihood of affecting other users or compromising social and biological values. It was clear of navigation markers, the riverbed was suitable and deeper water deployment could provide bird roosting sites at low tide. The main concerns about the site were boat traffic and the impact of fishing.

Mr Matthews said OzFish hoped to proceed quickly so that deployment could be completed in six weeks or by mid-April. But he was reminded by DBCA that its approval, and that of the Departments of Transport and Planning, Lands and Heritage was required. DBCA also needed clarification of site details, a Construction and Environmental Management Plan and a Monitoring Plan before an amended permit could be approved. It usually takes six weeks to obtain or modify a DBCA permit. All works will need to be completed by 30 June 2021.



# KEEP AN EYE ON SPEEDING BOATS THAT DISTURB THE BIRDLIFE

**Waterford Bay to the north-east of Wadjup Point and the stretch of the Canning River upstream to the Shelley Bridge has in recent times seen some of the largest congregations of Black Swans that would be found anywhere along the Swan and Canning Rivers. Flocks of 100 or more are now a commons sight, often accompanied by large numbers of Musk Ducks and Eurasian Coots.**

The appeal to waterbirds of this part of the Canning is probably due to its broad expanse of shallow water that provides a good feeding ground and part of it being protected from the westerly winds by Wadjup Point. It is also some distance away from the disturbance of speeding motorboats and jet skis in the Mt Pleasant Water Ski Area. The eastern boundary of the Water Ski Area is downstream from Salter Point, at the bend where the Canning flows south-west near 137-139 Riverton Drive, Rossmoyne. Above that point, boats must not exceed five knots. At that speed they usually cause minimal disturbance for birdlife and the watercraft's wake does minimal damage to the shoreline. But It is a quite different story when the speed limit is ignored. The loud noise of the motor and rough water from the boat's backwash can have a profound impact. As a Department of Transport boating guide for the Swan Canning Riverpark says: "Travelling at high speed in the Riverpark stresses birds and interferes with their feeding activities."



CRREPA Foreshore Coordinator, Sue Stanley, has seen a number of speeding boats and jet skis , particularly at Wadjup Point. Having her camera always on hand, Sue has managed to photograph the offending craft and send her photos with the relevant details to the Department of Transport (DoT) for follow-up action. As many of us now carry cameras in the form of iPhones, we too should report speeding boats and jet skis in restricted areas. But Sue has found that the Department has a few important reporting requirements for the marine officers to caution or prosecute the jet ski/boat owners:

- If you see a vessel allegedly speeding, take a video of the vessel showing the location background and make sure the craft's registration number is clear.
- If the vessel is a Jet Ski inside the restricted area (which is anywhere upstream from Salter Point) you just need to take a photo of the vessel showing the location background and also making sure the craft's registration number clear.

Go to the Department of Transport <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/contact-maritime.asp> website and fill out a Marine Non Compliance Report Form. You will need to send the video / photos along with the form to [marine.investigations@transport.wa.gov.au](mailto:marine.investigations@transport.wa.gov.au) so the officers can determine the vessels location and speed by the vessels position in the water, size and shape of the wake, noise of the engine and the speed in which the background passes. DoT welcomes any new reports provided. These reports assist the department to align its compliance and education patrols to ensure that areas of greatest need can be effectively targeted.

Other misdemeanors that should be reported are boats that are tied up to shore-line trees and shrubs or are landed and left lying on the riverbank for a significant period (over 24hours) instead of being removed from the foreshore or secured to a mooring. To report these offences, take a photograph of the boat, ensuring the registration number can be seen and ring the DBCA duty officer on 9278 0981 during and after business hours. Supporting photograph(s) and information can be sent to this email address: [rivers.info@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:rivers.info@dbca.wa.gov.au) which is monitored during business hours.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and THANK YOUs

**We are very grateful for the support provided by the City of Canning, SERCUL, DBCA, Perth NRM and Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources**

## DBCA FINALLY RECOGNISES CASUARINA THREAT TO FORESHORE BIODIVERSITY

**The major threat to biodiversity on the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore posed by the spread of River Sheoak (*Casuarina obesa*) has finally been recognised by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) after persistent advocacy by CRREPA and the City of Canning based on more than 20 years of observations and photographic records.**

Among examples brought to the Department's attention was an area opposite 303 Riverton Drive where CRREPA commenced revegetation in 2002. Over the next 15 years the growth and spread of *Casuarina obesa* resulted in the death of almost half the plot's understorey despite ongoing revegetation efforts.

Possibly because the issue has apparently not been identified elsewhere along the Swan and Canning River foreshores, the tree is a local native and the Department is committed to protecting foreshore native vegetation, past applications for the removal of the *Casuarinas* had brought unsympathetic responses. For example, in rejecting an application by the City to remove some *Casuarina obesa* saplings and trees at Wadjup Point in August 2016, the Department said the trees were "in the correct area for their occurrence (the foreshore juncus and samphire margins of the river)". It did not accept that the trees had a detrimental effect on the understorey of the riverine edge nor that removal was a valid form of management and said there was no support for it in the literature.

What CRREPA and the City finally brought home to the Department in a foreshore tour for Rivers and Estuaries Branch senior officers on 17 September last year and in a subsequent meeting with City officers, was that the dominance of *Casuarinas* along 43 per cent of the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore was largely the result of land reclamation works in the early 1960s. Hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of riverbed were deposited along 2.4 kilometres of the foreshore from Beatrice Avenue to Shelley Bridge which buried much of the original riverine vegetation communities, particularly sedgeland and saltmarsh. Substantial sections of the dredged sandy wastes were colonised by *Casuarina obesa* which are fast growing, form dense stands that prevent the penetration of sunlight and produce a thick cover of needles which inhibit growth of other plants.

At the Department's suggestion, the City is proposing to trial five approaches to control *Casuarina* spread and reduce its current density:

- reintroducing native mistletoe as a type of biological control;
- thinning dense thickets with a cut and paint method;
- hand removing seedlings and saplings;
- raking and removing needle mulch; and
- underpruning large trees.

*Casuarina glauca* from the Eastern states along with *Casuarina obesa/glauca* hybrids would be removed. Local native understorey and overstorey species would be planted where the *Casuarinas* had been removed.

The trials would take place at seven key foreshore locations, near: Corinthian Road, Rob Bruce Park, Pleasant Place, the Beatrice Avenue revegetation site extending east to the sedgeland bordering Grecian's Spit, Beryl Avenue, Wadjup Point and Shelley Lagoon. The City acknowledges that many variables could affect the trial results, but it is nevertheless expected that they will influence best-practice, long-term management of *Casuarina obesa* along the foreshore.



Courtesy of the City of Canning

Shelley Rossmoyne Foreshore 1960, pre-reclamation ([City of Canning](#))

## VALE NORM GOOD

One of the stalwarts of the Lions Club of Booragoon's foreshore weeding team, Norman (Norm) Good, passed away on 29 November last year. Norm was born in 1937 and served in the Navy, rising to the rank of lieutenant commander. He joined the Lions Club of Booragoon in November 2006 and was the Club's "Lion of the Year" in 2009, His wife, Anne, is also a member of the Club.

## BIG DAY OUT AMONGST THE WEEDS



### 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>

**Urban Bush Council**

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

### YOUR CRREPA COMMITTEE 2020—2021



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Madeline Radestock

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Bill Lambe

**Foreshore Coordinator**

Sue Stanley

**Membership Officer**

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