

THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN[©]

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Contributions to this publication are welcome. Please send any articles, advertisements, membership inquiries or donations to:-

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UPDATE ON AIRPORT RESERVE

by Col Gibson

Regarding the proposed new road through Airport Reserve on Milperra Road, Chris Brogan and I attended an on site meeting with Glenn Brookes, MLA for East Hills, and Leida Holdings executive Tom Gundry, on August 8th. We learnt that a 60 metre wide corridor is sought on the west side of the canal located at the east end of the reserve, along with a slip lane to approach from the west along Milperra Road.

Mr. Gundry explained that he had originally sought to get access via an existing set of lights to the east of Airport Reserve (Murray Jones Drive) that gives access to the de Havilland car park. This was refused due to a set back surrounding an Air Services Australia communications facility, a Non Directional Beacon (NDB) in the form of two

towers, which are located just to the north of the car park. The set back around the towers prohibits any buildings or other improvements on the car park. This set back also covers the far eastern end of the reserve. Therefore the existing set of lights at Murray Jones Drive cannot be utilised for the new road access to the development site on the airport precinct.

Enquiries confirm that the NDB is an out dated piece of technology, which is likely to be rendered redundant in the near future. Once modern technology replaces the NDB then there would be no problem utilising the existing set of lights.

The Bushland Society does not want to see Airport Reserve cut in two by a 60 metre wide road corridor. We do not want to see a long section of the Melaleuca regrowth sliced off to make way for slip lane access to the road corridor. Nobody wants to see yet another set of lights on Milperra Road. If the set of lights at the de Havilland car park cannot

presently be utilised for access to the airport precinct at this point in time, then we believe access to the BAC Devco development site should be by way of Tower Road and Starkey Drive at the far west end. Access is also possible via the set of lights at Bunnings.

The development site on the airport precinct is technically not part of land controlled by Bankstown Airport Limited, but is controlled by an administrator (KordaMentha) on behalf of BAC Devco Pty Ltd. As Airport Reserve is crown land, the Minister for Primary Industries is the consent authority for any development application. No development application has yet been submitted.

Another recent concern in the airport vicinity is the fate of Georges River Golf Course, which BAL wants to buy so as to expand the airport. If this happens hundreds of beautiful native trees will be destroyed. Residents, golfers and environmentalists are all opposed this.

HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN THE WORLD SUPPORT?

by Dr. Paul Willis

Here's a simple thought experiment: imagine a glass seemingly empty apart from a scum on the bottom. That scum is yeast that doubles its size every day and you know that, after 60 days, the glass will be full to the brim with that yeasty scum. Question: on which day is the glass half full?

Answer: day 59. Just one day before the glass is filled to capacity it's half full. That's the sneaky thing about exponential growth. The final spurt happens so rapidly. Take the world's human population. We only made it to the first one billion people within the last 300 years. But then we really started packing them in. When I was born in 1963 there were 3.5 billion people. Now, just 47 years later, we're double that figure and still climbing rapidly.

The question then becomes: how many people can the world support? There's surely nothing wrong with 7 billion people, or 10 billion or 20 billion if everyone gets what they need to live. And there's the rub. It takes a defined amount of water for each person to drink each day (a few litres for survival depending on local conditions) and the food we eat needs to be grown on land, the size of which is dependent on what we choose to eat. Air can be

endlessly recycled but air quality needs to be maintained to keep it breathable.

Unfortunately the choices most of us make mean the consumption of more water than is available, the tilling of more arable land than exists on earth and pollution of the air to make it toxic to the hundreds of millions of people who have to breath it in the heavily populated megacities that are growing rapidly around the world.

The carrying capacity of the world is more than a simple question of how many people there are or will be. It's the matter of how the resources of the world are divided among those people that is the current problem. There is the concept of seven Earths: that it would take seven planets like ours to provide the resources consumed by the Earth's current population if they all had the standard of living comparable to that of Australia or the USA.

The sad fact is we in the West can only maintain our standard of living at the expense of the rest of humanity. 1.6 billion people do not have enough to eat and half the world's population consumes less than a tenth of all the resources used by humanity. We are quite literally living a fine life at their expense.

And it gets worse. Do the sums and even stealing from the less well-off does not square the account of the profligate consumption of resources in the advanced economies. We can only maintain the high life by taking resources from another source: fu-

ture generations. When we burn fossil fuels that can't be renewed we both deny their use by our kids and generate a pollution problem that they will have to solve.

When we feast on a steak we expand our footprint on the planet in both land area and water required to raise that cow. When we export wheat, we are sending our topsoil off shore never to return. We do not regenerate the fossil fuels, the food for the cattle or the topsoil for the wheat and thus we take those resources away from our kids.

OK, we could live more simply and consume fewer resources. Currently the average footprint for an Australian is about 8 hectares. That's enough land to grow all the food we eat. For the average person living in India, that footprint is around one hectare. But even if we tread more lightly on the planet, we still have the 'glass half full' problem of population growth.

No matter how lightly we step, we still leave an imprint and the more imprints we leave, the more resources we use as a species. Given that many of those resources are limited in quantity, falling in quality and nonrenewable, a point has to be reached where the numbers of even the most frugal species outstrip the resources needed to support them.

As a biologist, I'd have to conclude that we're knackered. We've seen this experiment run countless times in other species: a glut of their host resources leads to an explosion in the popu-

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lation only to crash when the resources inevitably run out. This time it's different. We are that species under observation.

Our population is exploding, our resources are running out and the day of our capacity on Earth is fast approaching. We don't really know when, but the glass is more than half full.

This article first appeared in The Punch on 5 December 2011

HUNTING IN NATIONAL PARKS

by Pat Bell

Prior to the last NSW state election NSW voters were assured that there would be no hunting in National Parks under a Coalition Government.

After the election Premier Barry O'Farrell announced that his government would not allow our National Parks to become hunting reserves.

I find it appalling that the premier has now done an about face to gain the support of the Shooters and Fishers Party in the Upper House.

Our National Parks exist to protect native flora and fauna and

this situation should not be changed for purely political reasons.

The Society has written to the premier to ask him to reconsider his decision, which we consider to be incompatible with good environmental management.

There is no reputable evidence to suggest that ad hoc hunting of feral animals by recreational shooters is effective.

Recreational hunting in National Parks represents a danger to other users of the reserves, including risks to walkers, campers, etc., and to the native fauna. We have been told that there will be a \$200,000 fine if a hunter shoots a native animal or bird. In our letter to the premier we have asked how this is going to be enforced. We have also asked what the penalty will be when a walker or camper is injured or killed.

Another query we have is whether alcohol will be prohibited when these hunters go into our National Parks and how this could be enforced if this was the case.

Our precious National Parks should be protected for all Australians, not used as a bargaining chip.

A note from The Editor
 Any person is encouraged to contribute to The Bushland Bulletin. Simply mail your article, letter, advertisement, pledge or other item to :-
 The Editor, PO Box 210 Panania 2213
 e-mail: greenaissance1@gmail.com

ATTENTION

If anyone has interesting sightings of birds, frogs, reptiles or mammals in the Bankstown district or needs identification assistance, I would be happy to hear from you.
Please call Darryl on 9708-5283
 e-mail: sternmaalbifrons@unwired.com.au



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THE BEGINNING OF BUSH REGENERATION IN BANKSTOWN

by Col Gibson

The basic principles of urban bush regeneration were developed by amateur environmentalists concerned about the deterioration of remnant bushland near their homes on the foreshores of Sydney Harbour. Unchecked urban expansion, dumping of building rubble and garden waste, were chronically affecting the health of urban bushland.

Through the 1960's and 70's the celebrated Bradley sisters and others raised awareness of the effectiveness and the need for bush regeneration work to rehabilitate weed-affected bushland in order to tip the balance in favour of the native plants. In 1976 the National Trust set about to promote the ideals of conservation through bush regeneration and soon won contracts for projects around the Sydney Harbour sandstone bushland.

In 1971 Joan Bradley published "Bush Regeneration", a handbook based on her observations in the field since 1964. It may have been this that inspired members of the Bankstown Conservation Society. According to Terrill Nordstrom they experimented with asparagus removal at Lambeth Park in about the mid 70's.

I was involved with a small privately funded project behind mangroves at "McKaske's Flat" on Salt Pan Creek below the Henry Lawson Drive bridge, from early 1978 through to the end of 1979, cutting out lantana, privet and pit-

tosporum, and spraying blackberry. This was my first experience with bush regen.

I started working at the Native Garden at Sylvan Grove in 1981, and Robert Miller started there a year later. The garden had some really serious weed problems, with much of it, particularly the upper section, being engulfed by *Pittosporum undulatum*. In 1978 at "McKaske's Flat" I had followed the instructions of my employer, Clyde McKaske, to cut out the pittos. This just seemed common sense, we concluded it made no sense to cut privet out but leave the pittos; despite pittos being native we could see they were crowding out the native shrubs and ground covers in the same way as the privet. The benefits of removing both became apparent.

So, five years later, at Sylvan Grove, Robert and I set about systematically culling the pittosporum. By this time pittosporum removal at the National Trust had become a controversial issue, some of the old school Bradleyites were dead against it.

Even at the Native Garden we weren't free of the controversy, for when the work was well advanced the Council nurseryman (who also happened to be the Tree Preservation Officer) put a stop to it, ordering that only pittosporums under three metres could be removed. Still, the results here were pleasing, we had opened up a lot of extra space for garden flora and expansion of the rainforest area.

Much of the fortune spent on environmental enhancement in Bankstown from the 1960's onwards was more to do with landscaping, which often resulted in

damage to associated bushland. Council had little or no funds to spend on bushland restoration work. This was also a period of great weed proliferation in urban areas. Community groups had opposed destruction of bushland areas but the whole idea of bush regeneration remained a little known concept to government authorities and the wider community.

A positive step was taken in 1986 when the NSW government enacted State Environmental Planning Policy No.19, which covered remnant bushland in urban areas. SEPP 19 obliged local government to assess the impact of development on public bushland, and to act accordingly to prevent its destruction and promote its protection and rehabilitation. Urban bushland now had some degree of legal standing.

The implications of SEPP 19 came to force with the announcement in 1986 of the plan to develop the Salt Pan Creek foreshores as a Bi-centennial project which would include a walkway between the east Hills rail line and Henry Lawson Drive. A report in the Daily Telegraph of 31/5/1986 headed "Polluted Creek to Become Million Dollar Playground" added a worrying line about "draining some swampy areas as well as clearing several mangrove plantations".

Already in November 1984 and in March 1985 the National Trust had expressed concerns over Council's plan for the dredging of Salt Pan Creek where, in June 1984, the rare plants *Ghania filum* and *Wilsonia backhousei* had been found.

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Council had not responded to these earlier concerns, but now, nearly two years later, with SEPP 19 in place, found it must.

Following the article in the Daily Telegraph, Robert Miller and I walked over the site, well before any work had commenced, finding the rare plants *Acacia pubescens* and *Leucopogon amplexicaulis* as well as a range of sensitive wetland species. We provided this information to Council and the National Trust. Council, however, didn't show much interest in it and the following year rushed into the project, clearing the track without giving any thought for the need for a proper vegetation survey.

The original design indicated a track width of 3 metres to allow vehicular servicing, the track itself was poorly routed, and initial construction works destroyed the small population of *Leucopogon amplexicaulis* (a plant which at the time was listed as nationally rare).

Excavated soil was carelessly dumped on surrounding vegetation and local sandstone smashed up to line the track. The original planting scheme of predominantly exotic species (more than a few of them outright weeds) was further cause for concern. Council, relying on reassurances from its project consultants, tried to head off criticism where it could. Under pressure from the National Trust, Council looked to Robert Miller (who was still working at the Native Garden) to help talk its way out.

Robert was asked to act as Council's environmental supervisor of the project but, when he found that he was to be taken out of the Native Garden for this purpose and not replaced, he withdrew his services. Robert was of the view that his employer was not stepping up to its full responsibilities.

The upshot of this was that, probably for the first time, a qualified ecologist, Ian Olsen, was engaged to undertake a vegetation survey and report. Robert and I made the information we had collected available for the report, which was printed in November 1987. The report strongly recommended that bush regeneration work be undertaken in connection with the project.

To Council's credit it took up this recommendation and later, in 1988, employed its first bush regenerator, on a one-year contract, a former Sutherland Shire Council horticulturalist by the name of Ian Perkins. Only a handful of councils were at this time employing bush regenerators in this way. Bankstown City Council has since maintained its commitment to bush regeneration at many sites through its Bushland Management and Bushcare programs.

In 1990 Padstow TAFE offered for the first time the Bush Regeneration Certificate (introduced the previous year at Ryde Horticultural College). Pam Harris was the first theory teacher while I led the practical sessions.

Half way through the course Lyn Wiley joined me and, when I had to decline the work after a year, Christine Guthrie replaced me. I used those first practical sessions to get the ball rolling on a range of mostly clay-soil sites in Bankstown, including Marion Street Reserve, Deepwater Park, Norfolk Reserve and Bullecourt Forest (Western Sydney University) at Milperra.

Since 1991, Bankstown Bushland Society has operated bush regeneration grants resulting from successful applications to National Landcare and the New South Wales Environmental Trust. The Society has been able to do important grant funded work at Lambeth Park, Deverall Park Bush, The Crest, Chullora Railway Yards, Airport Reserve, Ashford Reserve, East Hills Park, Monash Reserve, Lansdowne Reserve, Norfolk Reserve, Irene Jones Bush, Smith Park, Milperra Wetland, Lake Gillawarna, Riverlands Golf Course and Marion Reserve. We have also contributed volunteer efforts at our grant sites as well as Bernard Road Bush, Deepwater Park, Yeramba Lagoon, Carysfield Park and Thornton Reserve.

Bankstown today is well known and respected for the attention it gives its bushland. It is up to Council and the community it represents to continue the commitment.

Vale Jean Brian

It is with much sadness that I report the passing of our dear friend and long time Bushland Society member Jean Brian who passed away on August 4th after a short stay in hospital.

Jean and her husband Harry, joined the society in the early nineties because of their strong love and commitment to the environment and, in particular, the remnant bushland of Bankstown. They played a huge role in our volunteer bushland regeneration program and could always be relied upon to turn up regularly despite advancing years. In this way they set an example to their generation and to the broader community that few can equal. Their favourite sites included Lansdowne, The Crest, Yeramba Lagoon and Lambeth Park and the Carysfield Park Bushcare site.

Jean contributed much enthusiasm and goodwill for the society's undertakings, it was always a pleasure to be in her company and talk about native plants and bushland. Jean would also invariably bring home made cakes or biscuits to share in the breaks, which always brought smiles all round. We offer our deepest sympathies to Harry and all his family.

Thanks for your friendship and love of the bush, Jean, we will miss you.

Pat Bell

(Pictures show Jean at Smith Park (top), Norfolk Reserve with husband Harry (lower left) and with friends at Yeramba Lagoon (lower right).



BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Bankstown Bushland Society meetings are held at Padstow Progress Hall (annex), Ryan Road, Padstow.
3rd Wednesday of every month. In annex at the rear. Time: 7.00 pm
Tea and biscuits provided. All welcome.
Further inquiries please ring : 97852374

The Passing Of Michael McMahon

News came to us earlier this year of the unexpected death of Michael (Mick) McMahon. Mick was a bush regenerator of long standing who first worked for the Bushland Society at Norfolk Reserve in the late 1990's, and who went on to become our field supervisor from 2003 to 2006. He was at the forefront of important work at many reserves, including Lansdowne, The Crest, Norfolk Reserve, East Hills Park and Lambeth Park and Milperra Wetland.

Mick's main employer was the National Trust for which he was a trusted full time supervisor at many sites in the Sutherland and St George areas. He was a dedicated and diligent worker who took no prisoners when it came to weed eradication, particularly with regard to the stabilisation of bushland margins, an often neglected aspect of bush regeneration work.

Mick made great contributions to remnant bushland in Bankstown and many other places and will long be remembered by the many who knew and worked with him.

Col Gibson



(Mick McMahon in action at Milperra Wetland)

NOTICE FOR AGM

Unfortunately we have left this notice a little late so Padstow Progress Hall will not be available for the forthcoming Annual general meeting. Therefore the meeting will be held at 7.00 pm at the Gibson's residence at 32 Apex Avenue Picnic Point on **Thursday 6th December**. The meeting will be short and sweet, to elect office bearers for the year to come. All are welcome; there is always a need for new committee members.

Next year we hope to reboot a one Sunday morning a month regen day for our sites at East Hills, namely Smith Park, East Hills Park and Monash Reserve. Anyone with the interest and the time please keep this in mind. Exact details have not yet been finalised. For further info contact Col on 97886232 or Pat on 97852374.

**ALL THE BEST TO
EVERYONE FOR
THE SEASON AND
THE NEW YEAR**

WHY NOT JOIN THE SOCIETY ?



The Bankstown Bushland Society is an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 1984.

We are Bankstown's only incorporated association dedicated to protecting our City's environment.

The Society's objects are:

- To protect the environment of Bankstown
- To assist other persons in the protection of the environment in Bankstown
- To foster better community awareness of environmental issues
- To lobby through Government, commercial and other persons for the maintenance of a high quality of life through the progressive improvement of the environment

If you are concerned about the local environment, then consider joining our Society. As a member, you receive one year's subscription to this newsletter, and can participate as a voting member in the direction and decisions of the Society.



Yes, I wish to join the
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc:

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Membership fees
 Family/Group - \$20
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