



## ACHIEVEMENTS AT LANSDOWNE RESERVE

by Col Gibson

(see sketch by Susan Roberts on page 4)

Bankstown Bushland Society first programmed volunteer bush regeneration work at the northern end of Lansdowne Reserve in October 2000. This work received a significant boost when the first of a series of New South Wales Government Environmental Trust grants was awarded to BBS in 2003, for work in the Turpentine/Ironbark Forest community adjoining Tillett Parade. This community extends southward to the edge of the Lansdowne Scarp where it is transitional with Cumberland Plain Grey Box Woodland. Many rare and regionally significant species occur within this habitat, including *Acacia pubescens*, *Pimelea spicata* and *Marsdenia viridiflora*.

Three unsealed roads define the area: Tillett Parade in the north, Watt Parade in the west and Lansdowne Road in the east. The subject area is less well defined in the south which is contiguous with the larger part of Lansdowne Reserve, dominated by Cumberland Plain Woodland remnants that are degraded to varying degrees by clearing, landscaping, recreational facilities and environmental weed invasions. Since 2003 work has steadily progressed to enlarge a weed free core area within these boundaries, and southwardly towards the rim of the Lansdowne Scarp where the topography dips towards the valley of lower Prospect Creek. The boundary here can be taken to be an east-west linking bush track that traverses the heads of the minor gullies that fall from the scarp.

Work at Lansdowne with the Dry Rainforest Flora grant since July 2009 has had several main foci, including consolidation of the extensive perimeters, the regeneration of the old road that had been ripped by BCC in 1991 (the extension of Watt Parade as shown on some old maps) and the opening of new fronts along

the rim of the scarp south of the ripped road, and in the western corner where Watt Parade diverges from Tillett Parade. This work is summarised as follows:

**Tillet Parade Boundary (Northern Perimeter):** This strip is approximately 250 metres long, the lower eastern half of which is dominated by open expanses of Couch, Purple Top, Pigeon Grass, Lambs Tongues, Vetch, Creeping Mallow, Burr Medic, Dock, Fleabane, Carpet Grass, African Lovegrass, Umbrella Sedge, Fireweed, Milk Thistle etc. These expanses front the core woodland area to a width of up to 7 metres, extending from the edge of the eucalypt/melaleuca thickets to end abruptly at the hard edge of the road itself. Many of the weeds have colonized and spread from road base and gravels along the edge of the road. The road itself acts as a dam, forming a sump along the bushland perimeter, which is periodically flooded by heavy rain events that drain slowly towards the catchment of Burns Creek (Villawood drain).

Targeting of Purple Top and other of the more conspicuous weeds began here in 2003, but a concerted effort to eradicate all weeds did not begin until February 2007, when the policy of spraying the dominant expanses of couch was instigated. Repeat spraying glyphosate, combined with targeted follow up by hand weeding around resurgent natives, has transformed this section of the perimeter. Many colonizer native species, not before apparent, have proliferated as a result, including, in the dryer locales, *Chloris truncata*, *Wahlenbergia gracilis*, *Einadia hastata*, *Euchiton sphaericus*, and *Chamaesyce dallachyana*. In the damper locales there has been a mass spread of *Centella asiatica*, *Hypericum gramineum*, *Lachnagrostis filiformis*, *Cyperus flaccidus* and *Juncus spp.*, with seedling recruitment of *Melaleuca nodosa*, *Persicaria decipiens* and *Kunzea ambigua*. Native species are colonising to the edge of the road

itself, including areas of dispersed road base. No planting or transplanting has been done here; though site sourced *Juncus* seed has been locally broadcast. The upper western half of the Tillett Parade perimeter drains more freely along the edge of Tillett Parade; no sump is formed here and woodland thickets grow almost to the hard edge of the gravel road. However, a strip a two to three metres wide along the road edge has for long been dominated by grassy and herbaceous weeds, in particular *Rhodes Grass*, *African Lovegrass*, *Coolatai Grass*, *Parramatta Grass*, *Paddy's Lucerne*, *Cobblers' Pegs*, *Lambs Tongues*, *Petrorhagia nan-teullii* and *Crow's Foot Grass*. Systematic spot spraying along the degraded verge combined with hand weeding the adjacent woodland has greatly reduced weed infestation.

In the core area in from Tillett Parade we have poisoned two stands (c. 60 trees) of planted Tallow Woods that had also been planted by Council back in the 1970's. With Tallow Wood no longer dominant at canopy level, within a relatively short time there has been a spontaneous resurgence of natives such as *Microlaena stipoides* and *Ozothamnus diosmifolius*.

**The Western Margin:** The bushland adjoining this sector has been repeatedly swept in the past for Pigeon Grass, Burr Medic, *Briza subaristata*, Bridal Veil Creeper, Privet, Lantana, Pimpernel, *Lepidium africanum*, Cobblers' Pegs, Paddy's Lucerne, *Ehrharta erecta*, Lambs' Tongues, Cats' Ears, Vetch etc, and has regenerated well. However, it backs onto an extensive, unmown, open weed infestation, a 1,250 square metre red area dominated by Kikuyu, *Briza subaristata*, *Paspalum dilatatum*, Dock, Vetch, Paddy's Lucerne, Spear Thistle, African Lovegrass and Purple Top. The native vegetation was cleared from this site decades ago and, apart from its margins, now appears to be devoid of native species, though the original

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soil profile appears to be intact. A large spread of ornamental Wisteria has also been cut out from one side.

This degraded area separates the major bushland core from a strip of bushland extending towards the intersection of Tillett and Watt Parades. The grant has enabled us to begin treating this expanse of weeds aggressively, by blanket spraying with the intention of eradicating weed biomass and stimulating regeneration of native clay soil colonizer species. Between July 2009 and September 2011 the site has been sprayed with glyphosate 1:100 five times by BBS and once by Bankstown City Council contractors. It was again sprayed by BCC in August 2012 and most recently by BBS in January 2013. It is intended to exhaust weed seed sources and allow natural regeneration by native colonizer species, with some transplanting of native ground covers from the surrounds (*Microlaena stipoides* etc.). The eventual incorporation of this area into the bushland core will have the benefits of reducing the bushland perimeter here by two-thirds its current length, as well as connecting the core to the narrow bushland strip that extends towards the intersection of Tillett and Watt Parades.

**The Watt Parade Extension:** This is the strip of bush mentioned in the preceding paragraph extending towards the intersection of Watt and Tillett Parades. *Marsdenia viridiflora* occurs here. It is a level area, which has few direct impacts on it other than some garden refuse dumping and mowing intrusions. The resident of the nearby cottage has maintained a mown walking path through one corner of the site. The upper western half of the Tillett Parade frontage forms its boundary on the northern side. This frontage has been spot sprayed and hand weeded numerous times, the road, as elsewhere, being adopted as a weed free margin to work to. The Watt Parade extension had not pre-

viously been worked and was heavily infested with Paddy's Lucerne and, in places, Cobblers' Pegs, Bridal Veil Creeper, Wandering Jew, Lambs' Tongues, Prairie Grass, Kikuyu, African Lovegrass, Moth Vine and localised outbreaks of *Ehrharta erecta* and an ornamental creeping Aloe. Most of these weeds have been brought under control, although Paddy's Lucerne is still abundant in places. Progressive regeneration here, along with the transformation of the adjoining red area bordering the western margin, will facilitate incorporation of this strip into the greater bushland core. The Eastern Margin: This runs beside the gravel-based Lansdowne Parade in a generally north-south alignment for a distance of about 150 metres from the locked gate at the Tillett Parade intersection. The northern end of the Lansdowne Road perimeter links with the eastern end of the Tillett Parade frontage. Significant infestations of African Lovegrass, Couch, *Briza subaristata*, Mother of Millions, Cats' Ears, Cobblers' Pegs, Burr Medic and Paddy's Lucerne are typical along Lansdowne Parade, but there are localized infestations of Paspalum, Wandering Jew, Aloe, Asparagus Fern, Bridal Veil Creeper, *Linum trigynum*, Pimpernel, Pigeon Grass and *Ehrharta erecta* as well. The northern half of this perimeter has received the most attention in recent years, with near complete eradication of African Lovegrass being achieved, and a substantial reduction in a number of other weeds, notably Pigeon Grass, Paspalum, Cats' Ears, Paddy's Lucerne and Mother of Millions. The new grant continued this effort with a focus on *Briza subaristata* in grassland adjoining the woodland thickets. This species can be difficult to distinguish when not heading, so it is usually prioritized in spring when the seed heads can be distinguished.

The southern half of the eastern margin also received attention with the Dry Rainforest Flora grant; this strip had not previously received any treatment. *Marsdenia viridiflo-*

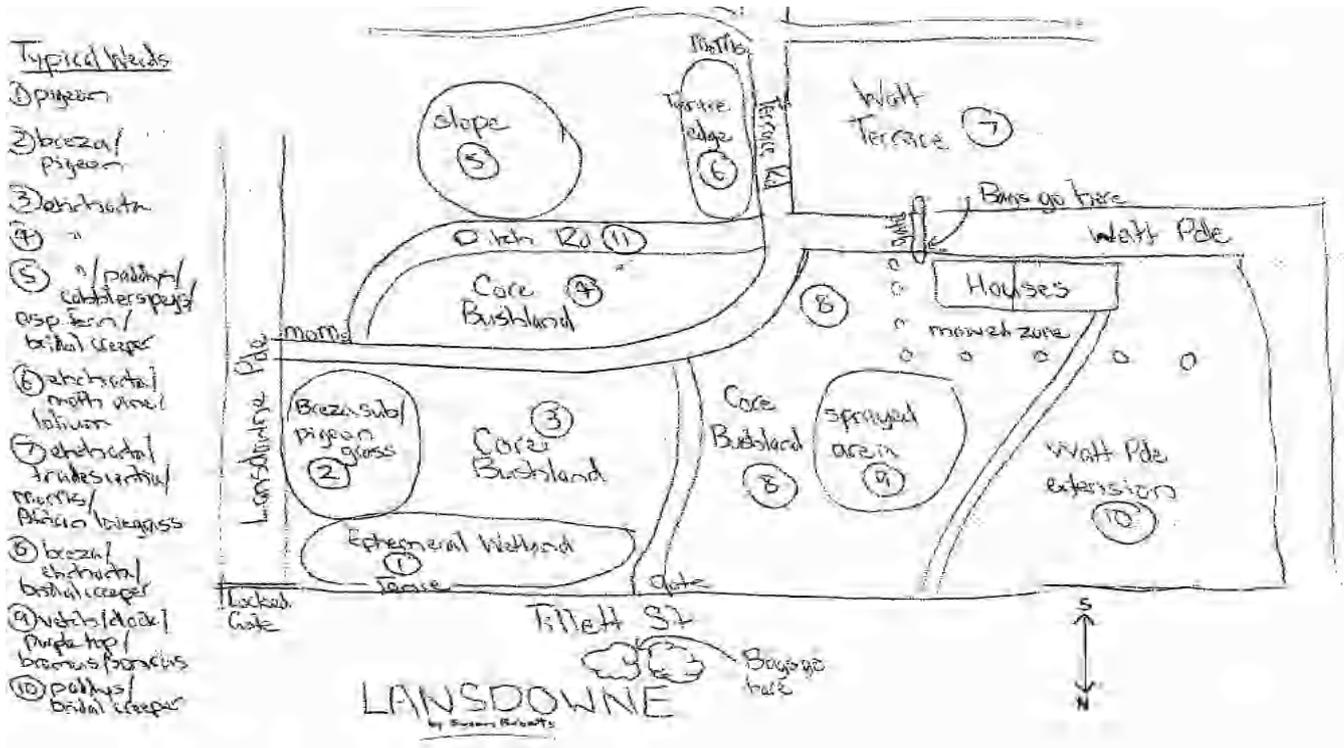
*ra* and *Acacia pubescens* occur here. At this location clumps of African Lovegrass were sprayed and resurgent plants were dug out along the roadside. Garden escapes such as Vinca, Asparagus Fern, and Mother of Millions were treated at the northern end, although a very extensive infestation of MoMs remains a challenge here.

**The Southern Boundary:** Work is being focused here (edge of Lansdowne Scarp) to extend the core area southward into Grey Box Woodland habitat in the larger part of Lansdowne Reserve. Most of the situations here have not been previously worked and include extensive infestations of *Ehrharta erecta*, Moth Vine, Cobblers' Pegs, Bridal Veil Creeper, African Lovegrass, Mother of Millions, Wandering Jew, Kikuyu, Carpet Grass, Freesia, Spider Plant, Paddy's Lucerne, Lambs' Tongues and Asparagus.

At the western end, close to the gate at the end of Watt Parade (Watt Terrace), swathes of Kikuyu, Buffalo Grass, African Lovegrass and Wandering Jew were sprayed, with hand removal of Moth Vine, African Olive, Paddy's Lucerne, Lambs' Tongues, Cobblers' Pegs, Fleabane, Mother of Millions and *Ehrharta erecta*. Watt Terrace adjoins a small area to the south that has been regenerated by Bankstown City Council contractors over recent years, and the grant has given us the opportunity to link our work with Council's.

Watt Terrace was planted with introduced Spotted Gum in about the 1970's. In keeping with its own bushland management policy regarding the progressive removal of non site indigenous plantings of Australian native trees, Council has in recent years removed Spotted Gum from the southern part of Watt Terrace, whilst BBS has drilled and poisoned about 75% of the planted stand on the adjoining (northern) part of Watt Terrace.

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In the central part of the southern boundary, in the head and surrounds of a small gully, we have been focusing on herbaceous weeds which interlace the shrubby understorey on the south facing side of the Lansdowne Scarp. A dense swathe of African Lovegrass was progressively eradicated on the rise that divides the two main south facing gully heads. The top of this rise was once the site of an old shack, long since removed. MOMs is still prolific further to the south. The work in the central part, particularly in the more easterly of the two gully heads, is an extension of ground covered by the earlier grants, at which time the dominant expanses of Blackberry, Lantana and Privet were reduced and eventually removed.

The eastern part of the southern boundary links with the Lansdowne Road perimeter. Recent targets here have included African Lovegrass, *Ehrharta erecta*, Fireweed, *Aloe sp.*, Asparagus Fern and MoMs.

By the end of the Dry Rainforest Flora grant in 2011 we had established an extensive relatively weed free core area at the northern end of Lansdowne Reserve, the largest of its kind in our area. in the form of Lansdowne Road, Tillett and Watt Parades. A follow up grant was intended, but unfortunately

we were unable to apply. **The good news is that we now have a volunteer group for Lansdowne running again. The group is scheduled to work the last Thursday morning of the month, from 9 am. The meeting place is the end of Watt Parade. Anyone wanting to participate please ring yours truly on 97886232 or email greenaisance1@gmail.com.** Council is also putting contractors on parts of the site – another step forward – and has plans to continue the gradual expansion of the core bushland area.

After many years of degradation and neglect, a quality conservation area is developing here. There is a long way to go, but at last we can see the good results of our hard work.

**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: [sternaalbifrons@unwired.com.au](mailto:sternaalbifrons@unwired.com.au)

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## 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 : 0449505319

Lansdowne Ephemeral Wetland along Tillett Parade



**08/01/2004 (A mass of couch, pigeon grass and other weeds)**



**22/8/2007 (Flooded after rain event)**



**17/09/2012 (Regenerating native herbs and sedges)**

## THE STORY OF LOT 5 AND RIVERLANDS (EAST HILLS) GOLF COURSE

by Colin Gibson

### Part One

Born in Inverell in 1910, Ern Smith spent most of his childhood on his family's 14-acre Revesby property, surrounded by natural bushland. Ern and his brothers knew the river well and would spend their holidays at a weekend cottage located near the river, playing and fishing. It was Ern's job to catch the horse and drive his father and brothers in a sulky to Bankstown railway station (*The Torch* 13-9-1995).

Much of Milperra still had lots of bushland when, in the late 1930's, Ern, his brothers Alan, Eric and Frank and their brother-in-law Jack Bowers took out a fifty year lease and began clearing to create the 34 hectare East Hills (now Riverlands) Golf Course. The Second World War broke out while the first nine holes were being constructed. The site contained a magnificent river terrace forest, comprised of scribbly Gum, rough-barked apple, grey box, blue box, red mahogany, forest red gum, she oak, paperbark, ironbark and stringybark. The men worked hard turning bushland and swamps into the original nine-hole golf course, the first club house was completed in 1964, the course enlarged to eighteen holes in 1964. "We worked hard, no other way about it," Frank said. "During the week we'd go to our jobs as builders and on the weekend we'd come to the land and there was heaps to be done." (*The Torch* 26-1-1986).

"Some trees were three feet in diameter and 60 feet tall," recalled Jack Bowers, "Amongst them were massive stumps left behind by the timber-getters of bygone years, and the scrub was so dense that to mark out

each fairway we took up positions along its proposed line, waving long socks aloft to indicate the centre line. From this line a clearing had to be made 25 yards wide on either side." (Unpublished manuscript reproduced in part in "*The History of Milperra*" by Andrew Molloy, 2006). Old stumps were blasted out with gelignite and many trees felled, though hundreds were retained to line the various fairways; it is these remnants of the original forest that help to give the course, and Milperra itself, its charm and aesthetic appeal.

Approaching retirement, the brothers looked to selling their property in the early 1980's; the opportunity first presented to East Hills Golf Club to purchase directly for a figure of around \$600,000, said to be all the brothers were asking (Tony Richards pers. comm.). The board however decided against pursuing a deal. The brothers then entered into a deal with developers Zoverton Pty. Ltd., who intended a residential style development with a redesigned golf course, including the opportunity for the Club to buy the course over a period of years.

In 1984, developers Zoverton, on behalf of the Smith brothers, owners of East Hills Golf Course, submitted to Bankstown council an application for the development of the course, which included plans for 615 residential homes, as well as sporting and recreational facilities (*The Torch* 19-12-1984). This application produced a backlash by local residents who claimed they would lose one of the last natural bush areas in Bankstown. A resident action group was formed and Council rejected the re-zoning application. Local resident, Ian Stromborg, said "I am outraged by the whole thing, by what it meant for us. The way we see it, it would ruin Milperra." (*Bankstown Express* 24-7-1985; reprinted in "*The History of Milperra*"). Some 400 Milperra residents attended one meeting with the developer at East Hills Golf Course.

Following this Council made unsuccessful representations to State and Federal Governments for funding to purchase the site from Zoverton (*The Torch* 11-12-1985). The following year Zoverton re-submitted a slightly amended application for 599 homes which included the following concessions: a buffer zone between the residential properties in Mayor Close, an open space reserve in Prescott Parade, a 30 metre wide foreshore reserve along the Georges River and a 2 storey height limit. Again, there was furore among the residents who packed the gallery early in December 1985 when Council met to discuss the development proposal. Alderwoman Jill Barber, supported by Ald Tony Stevens called for a conference between the developers, residents and a council working party. "Perhaps we can come to some arrangement that will keep everybody happy by retaining the course and allowing some residential development", she said. *The Torch* reported "the meeting was heated as was the reaction by the gallery when Ald. Barber's motion was carried after the council split six-six, and the mayor, Kevin Hill used his casting vote to carry the motion" (*The Torch* 11-12-1985).

At the meeting, Ald. Boulten said the area surrounding the golf course was "one of the last stands of natural open space in Bankstown" and urged Council to "get rid of the development once and for all and approach the owners and see if they would sell the site to Council." Ald. Buchanan favoured the Zoverton plan, telling the meeting it was wrong for the ratepayers of Bankstown to have to subsidise a minority of residents in Milperra. Ald. Bill Lovelee pointed out the negative side of the development for Milperra residents, saying "only the developers will benefit". Ald. Max Parker also criticised the development, pointing out that Ald Barber's motion only served to keep the matter alive and that "it would be very un-

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The name of the residents' action group opposing the development was Raw Dehl, and its chief spokesman was Ian Stromborg who rose to prominence from this issue to become councillor, and later mayor of Bankstown. After the early December meeting, Ian Stromborg went on record in *The Torch*, saying "It was a sad day for Milperra", aiming at Ald. Hill, saying that in 100 years time the people of Bankstown would "damn him for decisions such as this... He used his casting vote not once, but twice to allow this atrocious proposal to proceed to the next stage. It is a terrible day for Bankstown when people in positions such as that seem to place developers' interests before ratepayers and the future generations and it is hoped they are remembered for their action. We are prepared to go to any lengths to prevent this development from proceeding and will adapt any strategy necessary to achieve our objective" (*The Torch* 11-12-1985).

The Smith brothers stood by their deal with Zoverton, Frank saying "We have had better offers in terms of money for the land, but they weren't right for the golf club," declaring that the residents "have forgotten that where their houses are built used to be bushland inhabited by all kinds of wildlife - now its all gone. But the course will still be there, there will still be plenty of open space left and the golf club will still have a home" (*The Torch* 26-1-1986).

The push for Council to seek a loan to purchase the site strengthened at the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> December, and in February 1986 a unanimous decision was made to pursue such action, to seek a loan allocation from the State Government. (*Bankstown Express* 26-1-1986 & 12-3-1986) This move was made in the wake of a declaration in February, by Premier Neville Wran, of support for the residents in their opposition to the

housing proposal. The Premier also declared his support for the allocation. Ald. Phil Boulten stated, "It seems clear now that the State Government is implacably opposed to any development of that land. We should ensure the land is publicly owned to stop any future governments allowing such housing development on it" (*Bankstown Express* 12-3-1986).

Even those aldermen who had strongly favoured the original application were now just as strongly opposed, Ald. Michael Owen stating, "It's the most sensible alternative I've heard" (*Bankstown Express* 12-3-1986). The result of this was that the proposed environmental study was cancelled, and that Council began immediate negotiations over the purchase price with the developer.

Things did not run to expectations, however. It appears that although the grant from the Wran government was guaranteed, for the purpose of purchasing the golf course, "Club members convinced the owner to sell to a developer" (Ald. Bill Lovelee, *Bankstown Express* 28-8-1990). Zoverton submitted another plan in May 1987 (*The Torch* 14-11-1990), but later, via Serge de Kantzour's Land Equity Group, set in train sale of the site to a Japanese consortium for a reputed \$16 million (*The Torch* 16-11-1988); approval for sale being granted in December 1988. The consortium, represented in Australia by Chiyoda Australia Pty. Ltd. (later Pross Chiyoda Ltd.) planned a country-club style development, intending to enlarge the existing 18-hole golf course to 27 holes. Greg Norman had been involved in the marketing program which featured "the natural beauty of the Georges River setting with its established stands of mature trees", such trees that "are an asset not associated with many of the newer golf Course sites" (Raine & Horne Commercial, associate director Peter Halyard, quoted in *The Torch* 16-11-1988).

Milperra resident, and now Alderman, Ian Stromborg went on record saying, "As long as the land is used as a 27 hole country-style venture I welcome the scheme. I don't believe the added traffic will harm local residents. It will be nothing like the traffic that would have been evident if Council had agreed to a proposal by the Zoverton company two years ago. I believe all of Bankstown will be proud of the development" (*The Torch* 16-11-1988).

At this stage local residents were generally relieved to think that large scale development of the site had been averted, though as yet no specific plan for it had emerged, but the new golf course surely could be expected to preserve the natural qualities of the area, in particular the many fine red gums, rough-barked apples, scribbly gums, etc. Some scepticism prevailed however, and golf club members expected substantial hikes in playing fees and there was a degree of resentment that the course had fallen into foreign ownership.

(to be continued in the next Bulletin)

#### BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY COMMITTEE

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**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership fees**  
 Family/Group - \$20  
 Ordinary - \$15  
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