

THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN[©]



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Contributions to The Bushland Bulletin in the form of stories, observations and opinions are welcome. We are happy to receive items concerning bushland and related issues in Bankstown and the Georges River region. Simply mail or email your article, letter, etc., to the above address.

Great News for Lansdowne

Bankstown City Council deserves a big tick of approval for securing the core bushland area at the top of Lansdowne with protective bollards that will prevent unauthorised access to vehicles and machine operators; which is something we and certain local residents have been advocating since the previous set of barricades was suddenly removed some years ago. This is one of the best pieces of Cumberland Plain Woodland in the area and is full of rare and uncommon flora. The elimination of all unauthorised vehicles from the core area is a very positive action.

Council has also nominated Lansdowne as a Biobanking offset, to which the State Government is expected to

contribute \$600,000 from its Environmental Trust to secure 6.7 hectares of the best part of the reserve (which, incidentally, is the northern area, where BBS has concentrated its efforts over the past decade and a half, funded also by the Environmental Trust). The benefit of this is that it will ensure a consistent source of income for regeneration and other protective measures for targeted areas.

Biobanking is a scheme by which developers can contribute funds to protect bushland areas as a way of compensating for the destruction of bushland

resulting from their projects. Although Biobanking has the potential to do good for the offset areas, the peak conservation group, the Nature Conservation Council (with which BBS is affiliated) has expressed reservations about some aspects of it. For instance, it does not necessarily compensate for the loss of the same type of habitat on another site.

The Society's main concern about Biobanking is that it might become the green light to developers to inflict damage on other bushland areas; it should not become an easy way to get development approval simply by paying Biobanking credits. No remnant bushland in Bankstown is worth sacrificing in this way.

Inside this issue...

- ◆ **Little Homes Are Getting Chopped**
- ◆ **Looking after the bush: Why natural regeneration is better than planting**
- ◆ **Badgerys Nightmare....**

Little Homes Are Getting Chopped

Letter published in *The Torch* 15-1-2014

"I am pleased with the planting of new trees in the area, but am most concerned with the lopping of trees, for instance in Victor Avenue. There were three healthy trees, providing not only shade but homes for wildlife. The other, on the corner of Kennedy Street and Stretham on the footpath, gone! These trees not only provide shade and as you know – absorb carbon. As a community we should be planting more trees, not removing them, we need shade and a healthy planet on these very hot days."

Lyn, Picnic Point.

Editor's Note: The Society has received a number of complaints in recent months from local residents shocked to find landmark indigenous trees being cut down in their streets as in the case above. The tree in this case, on the corner of Stretham Avenue, I have walked and driven past thousands of times over the past 40 years. It might even have been the last Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) in Picnic Point.

beautiful adornment to the street, this tree was growing on the sidewalk not on private property, and was in perfect health, but, like so many other healthy native trees in the area it was deemed a threat and had to be removed. A few years ago the last but one or two Snappy Gums in Picnic Point, in perfect health, was removed from the

roadside in Burns Road.

Glance around suburbs like Picnic Point and Panania and you will see not only the old houses being knocked down, but the old backyard and kerbside ironbarks, turpentines and grey gums etc., which are in the way of the new ugly box-like double storeyed dwellings that are so much out of character with the area. This style of development allows no room for trees let alone gardens, and I'm not aware of any effort being made to collect seed from the trees being cut down.

Another case occurred in Carinya Road recently, where Council pounced on four grey gum trees, much to the dismay of local residents who'd lived beside these trees for many years. *"We make no apology for aiming to protect the health and safety of our residents"*, said a Council spokesperson, thumping his chest.

To this a local resident responded in *The Torch*, *"That's an absolute joke. These trees are healthy and are a favourite with parrots and other birds. There is nothing wrong with these trees."* It seems that the residents were too preoccupied with admiring the coming and going of the parrots to notice that their lives were in danger.

On private land owners are never offered incentives to retain the trees, and on adjacent Council strips, even if they don't want the trees cut down, well tough luck, buddy.

The fact is there has been an assault on the taller trees on Council median strips in recent times. The threats are more to do

with Council's concern it would be held liable for any damage done by trees that are on land it is responsible for. I'm not here referring to the run-of-the-mill ornamental plantings like conifers, liquid ambers, oaks and non-indigenous eucalypts such as tallow woods and lemon scented gums, which do not have the historical and aesthetic significance of the original species that have stood their places since before urbanisation, and which are being progressively destroyed, such as the locally indigenous *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*, *E. paniculata*, *E. beyeriana*, *E. parramattensis*, *E. siderophloia*, *E. resinifera*, *Melaleuca decora*, the list goes on.

Add to this the 1,300 veteran indigenous trees that will be destroyed if Riverlands is rezoned and we have an attack on our indigenous trees that is almost unprecedented in our area in modern times. Riverlands is unique in possessing scores of nesting hollows in trees that have lived to a great age. Even in our best Cumberland Plain Woodland bushland at places such as Lansdowne and The Crest you will not find anywhere near as many hollows; Lansdowne, predominantly, is 60+ year old regrowth, and possesses few trees old enough to produce hollows.

Home owners should have the right to plant, prune or remove ornamental plantings if they become a problem, but the remnant indigenous trees with their historical and habitat values are deserving of more consideration, and should not be lumped in with the rest.

Looking after the bush:

Why natural regeneration is better than planting

By Jeff Jugovic, Biosis Research

(editor's note: This is a slightly amended version of an article which appeared in Indiginotes, the newsletter of the Indigenous Flora & Fauna Association, in March 2011. Although it is written with the Victorian scene in mind, it makes a lot of very relevant points for us in Sydney where provenance of local indigenous stock in many cases is not well attended to; a classic example of this is the many non-indigenous varieties and forms of Dianella that are being passed off as local species, some of which are proving to be aggressive invaders of bushland margins, at the expense of the often rarer local indigenous forms. Another point Jeff makes is the competition for nutrients by non site indigenous Eucalypts. In Bankstown the worst offenders would probably be Tallow Wood (Eucalyptus microcorys) and Spotted Gum (E. maculata). These species shade out and rob nutrients from native grassy and shrubby understorey, eventually leading to its replacement with weed species. Good examples of this process can readily be seen at two small but fascinating bushland remnants at Maluga Reserve and Band Hall Reserve at Birrong).

Introduction

Well-intended but inappropriate planting has occurred within native vegetation for many years. However, planting has become more of an issue in

recent years due to Victorian government policy requiring an 'offset' for legally permitted clearing of native vegetation. Offsets usually include 'recruitment' plants which are in practice mostly planted rather than obtained by natural regeneration, although natural regeneration is allowable under the policy. Where planting occurs within native vegetation it is referred to as 'supplementary planting'.

Inappropriate planting reduces the ecological integrity of native vegetation. If it is an offset site this only adds to the total impact given that the site generating the offset was cleared in the first place. Consequently, remnant native vegetation is under significant threat from poorly conceived or applied offsets throughout Victoria. Here I give examples of adverse impacts followed by a discussion on how to avoid this problem, which is basically to avoid planting in native vegetation except in certain circumstances. Native

vegetation is best managed by weeding and facilitating natural regeneration.

Inappropriate species

A typical example is in a conservation reserve south-east of Melbourne supporting grassy woodland, swampy woodland and swamp scrub vegetation. From the age of some trees, planting appears to have been going on for some years. As part of an offset for vegetation cleared elsewhere, more plants were also planted within part of the reserve. These plantings were placed within plastic tree guards, which at least made them easy to recognise.

Unfortunately, few or none of the plantings were appropriate. In particular, species that do not naturally occur in the reserve were planted, including Messmate Stringybark *Eucalyptus obliqua*. Some *E. obliqua* seedlings were planted below existing mature Silver-leaf Stringybark *Eucalyptus cephalocarpa* and Swamp Gum *Eucalyptus ovata* (figure 1.). Such plantings below or near existing trees compete with and stress these trees, or else fail and waste resources. They also undermine the ecological integrity of the site, turning it into a plantation rather than authentic self-sown natural vegetation that has undergone natural selection.



Figure 1. Messmate Stringybark planted where it does not naturally occur. Species that occur within the

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reserve were also planted outside their natural habitat within the reserve, such as Common Tussock-grass *Poa labillardierei* in grassy woodland where none naturally occurs. Not surprisingly many of the plantings died, particularly the *Poa* as it needs more moisture than is generally available in grassy woodland, especially during drought. The correct *Poa* for the site is Soft Tussock-grass *Poa morrisii* which is already present.

Another reserve in southern Melbourne was identified as an offset site for clearing elsewhere. In this case the natural vegetation is plains grassy woodland dominated by River Red-gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. The proposal was to extensively plant the reserve with shrubs. Firstly some of these shrubs do not naturally occur in this plant community in this area, and secondly the vegetation is a grassy woodland not a shrubby woodland and such plantings may stress the existing trees. Fortunately the management agency recognised the risk and prevented the planting. Many more sites are subject to such disastrous proposals.

Naturally treeless grasslands are often at risk of misguided tree planting, in both northern and southern Victoria, for example in a flora reserve near Echuca, where tree planting has occurred, possibly over endangered Red Swainson-pea *Swainsona plagiotropis*.

There are other issues with planting besides introducing species that are not site-indigenous.

The identity of plants used in planting can be an issue. The species may not be the one intended due to misidentification during the collection of propagation material or some other mistake in the nursery. A classic example is the planting of South African Angled Pigface *Carpobrotus aequilaterus* instead of Karkalla (Pigface) *Carpobrotus rossii* in coastal revegetation. Angled Pigface is widely naturalised as a result.

The provenance of species, even if they are the correct species for the site, can be an issue. Non-Victorian forms of Spiny-headed Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia* are often seen in plantings and they perform poorly in drought conditions, affecting the reputation of indigenous plants. The provenance should be from the same or similar geology and climate. The issue of local versus non local provenance has long been debated (see Hufford & Mazer (2003) and McKay et al.

(2005)). However, that debate is important as it assumes the actual species are correct for the site (site-indigenous). This article makes the point that the species themselves can be inappropriate, which is more fundamental than the provenance question.

Site preparation for planting can be damaging to existing native vegetation. Spraying and mulching can kill or smother native plants, native grasses frequently being affected. This is also likely to promote weeds. One site in southern Melbourne was heavily mulched, killing wallaby-grass, and then planted with Manna Gum *Eucalyptus vimimalis* where only Swamp Gum *Eucalyptus ovata* naturally occurs. Furthermore, seedlings were planted below the canopy of the existing trees, where they will either die or compete with the trees.

Spraying herbicide during the maintenance of plantings can damage existing indigenous species. For example in one reserve herbicide was applied around the plantings apparently even where one of the plants was dead and the tree guard had fallen over. This killed areas of indigenous Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides* (figure 2). Weeds such as Panic Veldt-grass *Ehrharta erecta* subsequently established within the bare areas, increasing the impact.

In many cases planted tubestock contains nursery weeds in the tube soil and these are often intro-



Figure 2. Sprayed now dead indigenous Weeping Grass around a planting.

Other issues

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Badgerys Nightmare.....

(editor's note: The writing appears to be on the wall for Badgerys Creek, nonetheless former Fairfield City Councillor, and long time opponent of the airport proposal, Peter Cork, sends us the following)

The Airservices Australia Website notes that Sydney airport is constrained to a cap of 80 aircraft movements per hour, and those surrounding suburbs protected by a non operational curfew between 11pm and 6 am. Even then there are noise minimisation plans to direct aircraft movement out over the sea to help those inner city NOISE affected residents.

The proponents for an airport at Badgerys Creek, at the back of the Sydney basin, will only accept a no curfew airport "to attract the necessary international market". The only water which can be flown over from Badgerys Creek is that of Lake Burrangorang and Prospect Reservoir, the water which everyone in Sydney drinks and relies on. Extremely poor air quality is already a major issue for the area at the back of the Sydney Basin.

How is it then, that the people of the Blue Mountains and western Sydney can be regarded with such utter contempt? Are the people of western Sydney and the Blue Mountains all to be regarded as if expendable?

Sydney airport is at a coastal edge:

- It does NOT have temperature

inversion issues which traps sound, (and air pollution) such as western Sydney has up to 90% of the time- It does NOT have a range of mountains which would effectively reflect sound back into western Sydney populated areas, such as the Badgerys Creek site would have, with the Blue Mountain immediately to its west. - It does NOT have the extreme negative air quality issues which Western Sydney has.

- It does NOT have water quality and supply issues, such as Lake Burrangorang to the immediate west and Prospect Reservoir to the east, both of which are in direct flight path of the airport proposed at Badgerys Creek.

- It does NOT have the major risk factors to NSW and Sydney Metropolitan critical backbone supply infrastructure (gas, electricity, water supply pipelines) in high risk crash areas, which if damaged has the potential to cripple Sydney or the entire state of NSW for "months or years".

- It does NOT have the operational constraints of a mountain range which is EIS noted as being too high for many aircraft to safely negotiate, requiring them to turn hard and fly over Lake Burrangorang and Warragamba Dam wall, or fly over the world heritage listed mountains with minimal clearance.

- It does NOT have the same wind shear, or extreme fog levels that the Badgerys Creek proposal exhibits, particularly given that almost all operations must be directed towards the heritage listed Blue Mountains because of prevalent South/South Wester-

ly wind conditions.

The ONLY way to access the Badgerys Creek site is by low level flying over enormous areas of densely populated cities, often with steeply banking turns, or under existing Sydney airport flight paths, over densely populated areas well away from Badgerys Creek.

- The ONLY thing constraining aviation operation at Sydney airport is noise impact and complaints from local surrounding suburbs. Look at the proposed airport flight paths and cross over areas (from the EIS) provided on this site; <https://www.facebook.com/nobadgeryscreekairport> BEFORE deciding that an airport at Badgerys Creek is an acceptable proposal.

The Badgerys Creek airport proposal is planned to be 24 hour no curfew operation and as a freight focused airport would obviously attract freight based aircraft which are commonly smaller companies using older aircraft, which are noisy, and less safe because of their age and cheaper maintenance and repair programs

Why would anyone foist a nightmare such as this on any community, anywhere in the world? Is our physical and mental health and well being, and our physical environment regarded as worthless by these "business" people?

Millions upon millions of RATEPAYER and TAXPAYER dollars have been spent over a great many years, and COUNTLESS community dollars and

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(Looking After the Bush, continued from page 4)
 duced into native vegetation. Common nursery weeds often found in tubestock include Glandular Willow-herb *Epilobium ciliatum*, Creeping Wood-sorrel *Oxalis corniculata* and Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua*. Good nursery management should prevent this.

The genetic quality of propagated material may be an issue but it is poorly understood. Eucalypt seed collected from a single isolated tree is likely to have a high proportion of inbred seed. If they germinate, inbred seedlings of species with a high 'genetic load' of mutations are likely to be weak and would tend to die out in nature, but in optimal nursery conditions they may survive and be planted out. Nursery propagation can there-

fore bypass the early stages of the plant life cycle which are an important part of natural selection.

Natural recruitment is better than planting

Natural recruitment is preferred to planting because the result is authentic site-indigenous native vegetation that has undergone natural selection rather than an anthropogenic plantation.

Inappropriate planting could be averted if recruitment is obtained by natural regeneration only, which is allowable under the offset policy but is not usually undertaken. This would mean that the plants are site-indigenous, assuming they are not the progeny of wrong plantings themselves. However,

some sites do not need additional plants, such as many grassy woodlands where there is already too much biomass due to lack of fire or grazing, and additional plants may further shade out species diversity. There are also implications for fauna as the habitat becomes more woody and overgrown. Planting is usually undertaken rather than facilitated natural recruitment, and seedlings in tree guards are now all too familiar within bushland. It is simpler and sometimes cheaper to plant rather than to manage a site over several years to facilitate recruitment. This is called 'tree guard dreaming'.

(To be concluded in next issue)

(Badgerys Nightmare, continued from page 5)
 hours of effort, defending us from this nightmare, and now it appears as if the Badgerys Airport proposal is once again a potential reality.

If it was regarded as no good in the past, how could it possibly be even vaguely considered as viable now? If it was ever a good thing then why did so many people, politicians, councils and governments and community organisations rise up to oppose it so vehemently in the past - each and every time it has risen its head?

Where are our paid representatives who previously professed to be opposed to this proposal in the past, as election platform issues, and why are they being so silent now? Are they all on the proponents payroll, as so

much of the media obviously is?

Where are the government departments and local councils who are paid to protect our environment and lives? Why are there so many people in positions of public responsibility who are clearly breaching their duty of care by either saying and doing nothing when they should be, or actively promoting this nightmare when they clearly know how dangerous and damaging it would be?




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
0419148931**






BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY ON FACEBOOK

BBS is now on Facebook and anyone who shares an interest in Bankstown's bushland should like this. Facebook will provide us with opportunities for posting information relevant to the natural environment of our area, remnant flora and fauna, as well as updates on bush regeneration projects, nature walks and so on. All members and friends are welcome. Just type in **Bankstown Bushland Society** and you'll be in.

ELECTRONIC BULLETINS

The Bushland Bulletin is available electronically to members who so desire. All you have to do is send your email address to the Bulletin editor at:

grenaissance1@gmail.com.

Members are entitled to both printed and electronic forms, but if you would rather have just one or the other please let us know.

SLIDESHOW

"The Rare Flora of Bankstown"

By Colin Gibson

Come and see slides of Bankstown's rare and rarely seen native flora, to be shown at Padstow Progress Hall, 7.00 pm, Wednesday October 21st. Tea & bickies afterwards



Pomaderris prunifolia, The Crest

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: 7.00pm.

Tea and biscuits provided.

All welcome.

Further enquiries please ring Col on 97886232

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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 support the Society's aims in protecting bushland in Bankstown and the Georges River, then the best thing you can do is become a member.



I wish to join the
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

Attached please find my payment of:
(\$.00) _____
(amount in words)

Membership fees
Family/Group - \$20
Ordinary - \$15
Concession - \$10
"student/unwaged/pensioner"

Send payment to:
**The Secretary,
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.
PO Box 210
Panania NSW 2213**

**Or pay by direct transfer to
BSB 512 170 Account Number 100087319, and don't
forget to put your name on the transfer form.**



**Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.
PO Box 210
Panania NSW 2213**

