

THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN[©]



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KOALAS IN BANKSTOWN

A report came to us mid year that the body of a koala had been found dead on Henry Lawson Drive up near the Picnic Point sub station. Local naturalist Darryl McKay then checked the online NPWS database and found that there had been a record of a koala having been sighted in 2012 in the vicinity of Cattle Duffers Flat. This is the first ever record of a koala in the Bankstown LGA.

Darryl then set about examining trees around Yeramba Lagoon and found that many of the Grey Gums on the western side of the lagoon had scratch marks on the trunks that are typical of those made by koalas (see picture). Some of these scratch marks appeared to be quite fresh.

Then in October a Picnic Point resident reported a koala scratching at his back door, and a couple of weeks later another resident took photos of a koala in a Grey Gum at the back of his place, one of which appears here courtesy of Ralph Cartwright's Facebook page. It is possible that koalas have been present on this

side of the Georges River for some years, and may have migrated across the river from other known habitats. The size and range of the population is unknown, but there is also suitable habitat available along other parts of the river foreshore, as at Mickey's Point, Beauty Point and Oatley Park.

Traffic along the Drive is no doubt a threat, but given that the speed limit is fixed at 60kms an hour (as opposed to the 80kms per hour it was back in the 90's), it is to be hoped that the road will not taking a critical toll on the population.



CLEARING OF NEW BRIGHTON GOLF COURSE AND DAMAGE TO WURRUNGWURRI RESERVE AT MOOREBANK

With regard to Wurrungwurri Reserve, a magnificent 40 hectare bushland that has recently come under management of Liverpool City Council, much damage has been done by heavy machinery accessing the site as a short cut through to adjoining development areas. Without doubt Wurrungwurri is one of the most significant bushland remnants of its kind in the outer suburbs of Sydney, and is full of rare flora that is only just being discovered. For instance, a good population of the rare plant, *Epacris purpurascens*, was only recently discovered here, and not long after flattened by a bulldozer: apart from one or two struggling plants at Strathfield Golf Course, this is probably the only known occurrence of this species in the whole of Western Sydney.

At Wurrungwurri, inappropriate access by heavy machinery in wet weather has totally ruined what was a very pleasant old walking trail. As well, dumping of spoil has ruined stabilised bushland margins, putting them at renewed risk of colonization by environmental weeds. The grading of a road through the centre of the reserve, with ineffective erosion control measures, permits damaging vehicular impacts into what should be a conservation zone for rare and uncommon flora and fauna. Unrestricted access to this road by heavy machinery in wet weather has wrecked the road surface, adjacent bushland and wetland margins.

Surely Endangered Ecological



Bulldozed track through pristine bushland



Bulldozing of wetland margin

Communities should be treated more sensitively than this: heavy machinery and motor vehicles should be excluded from the core area, leaving it as undisturbed habitat to be managed for its conservation and educational

values. BBS has written to Liverpool Council to protest the damage done, but has not yet received a response.

Liverpool City Council is

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INDIGENOUS TREES FOR THE CHOP AT EAST HILLS PARK?

In June, after a long and hard fought campaign, the decision was made by Council to rezone Riverlands Golf Course. This campaign was largely based on the future of hundreds of indigenous trees lining the fairways, many of which possessing habitat hollows. Although significant concessions have been made to preserve some hollow bearing trees, the great majority of the old trees will be lost. It therefore came as a great shock to learn that a group of about fifteen similar trees on public open space at East Hills Park were advertised for tenders to remove in August, and this on top of a similar tree removal program at East Hills Park which destroyed the big old Scribbly Gums in 2005.

Councillor Jim Daniel pointed out that the car park needed to be improved on the grounds of safety. This, of course, is commendable, yet at the same time he was unaware of any trees that needed to be removed. This suggested that the trees themselves were never a safety issue in the first place, but became one when it was decided that a car park could be built in their location. These trees include fine, healthy examples of Grey Gum, Red-fruited Mahogany, Cabbage Gum, Rough-barked Ironbark and Rough-barked Apple. Some of these have habitat hollows.

We have voiced our concerns to have these trees spared the chop, and have asked Council to stop any plans it has to cut them down. Hopefully this is just all a

misunderstanding that went further than it should have, but if the advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* calling for tenders had not been spotted the trees would probably have been down before the public knew anything about it.

The trouble is that Council does not recognise the significance of remnant indigenous trees in its Tree Preservation Policy. If it did then incidents like this would be much less likely to occur. This is a point we are making in Council's current review of its Tree Preservation Policy. If Council was to list the indigenous canopy species of Bankstown as of special consideration in its Tree Preservation Policy, it would create awareness that could better inform decisions that affect the future of our diminishing indigenous tree resource.



Bankstown Bushland Society's Col Gibson with one of the old growth trees earmarked for removal at East Hills Park.

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opposing construction of the controversial Moorebank Intermodal on the grounds that it will destroy "environmentally sensitive" areas, but one has to question whether Liverpool Council knows what these areas are: for not only has it not blinked at the damage to Wurrungwurri, but has permitted the destruction of hundreds of indigenous trees lining the fairways of the old New Brighton Golf Course, all of which were remnant of the Endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland Ecological Community.

LCC seems to have been very poorly advised here given that many of the trees possessed active habitat hollows, the significance of which seems to have been completely ignored by LCC and its ecological consultants. Not one of these trees remains since the entire site was clear-felled a few months ago to make way for residential development.

This points to the reality of what now can only be considered to be a full scale assault on the indigenous trees of this part of the Georges River, with the numbers being lost on areas rezoned from open space now totalling not in the 100s, but in the 1,000s.

The losses are also significant in our built up areas where the conversion of our leafy suburbs such as Panania into opportunities for developers to pack in ever more duplex and town houses is destroying once beautiful urban forest and heritage an alarming rate.

THE DEATH OF YERAMBA LAGOON

By Col Gibson

Yeramba Lagoon is dead. I point this out just in case anyone hasn't noticed yet. For years the lagoon has slowly been silting up, but in the last five years or so this process underwent a rapid and spectacular acceleration when the extensive privet infestation at the head of the lagoon was totally eradicated by a team contracted by the National Parks & Wildlife Service.

Many have wanted to see eradication of the privet forest, including ourselves, but when finally the removal took place in about 2009 it was done wholesale and too quickly, on the basis of no management plan and with no allowance for follow up or the re establishment of native swamp species necessary to stop a massive silt slug from releasing into the lagoon. This took place in several stages following heavy rain when stormwater flooding from the drain at the end of Amberdale Avenue carried the silt slug into the lagoon.

The result of this within a few years has been the almost total conversion of extensive wetland habitat into terrestrial environment, which has quickly been colonized by the woody weed *Ludwigia peruviana*, a species with only a limited distribution at the site until now. Only the very front of the lagoon, dammed at Henry Lawson Drive, retains any wetland characteristics, and this is almost completely smothered in introduced water lilies. Many birds that relied on the wetland have subsequently left the area.



2007



2015

How the former lagoon surface will develop in the future is anyone's guess, but weeds are likely to dominate for a long time to come. Already seedlings of Swamp Oak (*Casuarina glauca*) are establishing, and will soon develop into a Swamp Oak Woodland community, one where it is likely that weeds such as *Ludwigia* will continue indefinitely to dominate at

ground level and where other weeds such as privet could also take advantage of the new conditions.

What can be done? There are murmurs going round that something should be done: according to *The Torch* of 18-2-2015 the Georges River Combined Committee "has

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written to the NSW Government calling for funding solutions to restore the lagoon”, but what exactly these “solutions” are is not yet clear. Somewhat of concern is the rather simplistic approach of the National Parks & Wildlife Service, which claims “It's been recognised that the most sustainable approach to the long term management of the lagoon is to reinstate tidal flushing by removing the weir... tidal flushing of the lagoon would prevent nutrient build up.” (The Torch 18-2-2015).

Who recognized that, I wonder? The “remove the weir” call has been echoed by the Mayor, who, with good intentions, has said “a permanent solution to the weed problem, such as the removal of the weir, should be funded by the NSW Government” (The Torch 4-4-2012).

It is good to hear for a permanent solution to the weed problem to be called for; and yes, it should be funded by the NSW Government, but nutrient build up is only the tip of the iceberg and vastly underestimates the stark reality of the problem, for there is no way tidal flushing can remove more than an insignificant amount of the existing sediment mass that has down-washed into the lagoon.

The fact is that without substantial funding the lagoon is almost beyond redemption. A lot more is involved than simply controlling Ludwigia, for if the lagoon is ever to be a lagoon again the silt that has filled it has to be physically removed by excavation and transported away from the site: a very costly

exercise.

However, doing this would be pointless if the source of the problem - the massive, unstable silt slug at the head of the lagoon, is not re-mediated and fully restored to its original habitat (which is Swamp Woodland of *Eucalyptus robusta* and *Melaleuca linariifolia*) as originally proposed by BBS back in 1993, at which time we proposed a permanent solution to the weed problem when we applied unsuccessfully for a five-year grant of \$250,000 to fix the situation, and foretold “A potential disaster looms if action is not taken soon to remedy the problem” (The Express 29-6-1993). Sadly, that opportunity was missed.

If the authorities cannot wrap their heads around the full extent of the problem, then the throwing up of arms, the periodic expressions of concern and the searching for cheap and easy answers is likely to go on for a long time to come.

WIDENING OF HENRY LAWSON DRIVE BETWEEN PICNIC POINT AND MILPERRA

There have been a number of recent reports in the local papers that the Roads and Maritime Services is looking to widen sections of Henry Lawson Drive in the vicinity of Panania, East Hills and Picnic Point. We have written to the Minister to find out more about this. Widening of the Drive at East Hills and Milperra would involve destruction of bushland within narrow road easements through Monash

Reserve, East Hills Park and Deepwater Park, with severe impacts on these reserves, their wildlife and rare flora. Lambeth Park could also be affected. The worst impact would be on Deepwater Park where the road winds past Kelso Beach Reserve. Here, a very significant section of the bushland on the run up to Webster Street could be destroyed

The only way peak hour congestion can be dealt with on the Drive is for a major upgrade of the Milperra Road intersection, which would probably include a flyover. Congestion is much less of an issue south of the M5, where traffic passes smoothly along at 60kms an hour through East Hills, Picnic Point and through the Georges River National Park. There is only a single set of lights at East Hills. Since the reduced speed limit was introduced in the mid 90's this stretch has become relatively accident free. Despite the fervour for it from local politicians, there is no case for road widening here.

Henry Lawson Drive, especially from the M5 through to Padstow Heights, as well as being an important arterial, passes through a scenic urban and bushland landscape, the qualities of which should be maintained. The need to improve the flow of the Drive should not be at the cost of our rare and beloved bushland.

Throwing money at the existing road reserves will not help, and will only result in the unnecessary destruction of beautiful bushland and rare plants. BBS will continue to stand opposed to this.

RECENT SIGHTINGS OF LOCALLY RARE FLORA & FAUNA IN BANKSTOWN



Podolobium ilicifolium at Carysfield Park, 3-7-2015



Square-tailed Kite, 3rd record for Bankstown, 1st record for Georges River National Park, 8-8-2015



Cassinia laevis at Carysfield Park, Bass Hill, 3-7-2015.



Scorpion Fly (*Tipula* sp.) at East Hills Park, 6-10-2015.



Daviesia acicularis at Band Hall Reserve, Sefton, 3-7-2015.



Daniel with *Grevillea mucronulata* at Carysfield Park, Bass Hill, 3-7-2015.



Grevillea mucronulata at Carysfield Park, Bass Hill, 3-7-2015.



BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY ON FACEBOOK

Bankstown Bushland Society is now on Facebook. Anyone who shares an interest in Bankstown's bushland is welcome to like this. Facebook will provide us opportunities for posting information relevant to the natural environment of our area, remnant flora and fauna as well as updates on our bush regeneration projects, nature walks and so on. Anyone interested in local bushland is welcome to become a friend.

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:

greenaissance1@gmail.com.

Members are entitled to both printed and electronic forms, but if you only want the electronic form instead of the printed please let us know.

NOTICE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 18th November 2015.

Notice is hereby given of our AGM in November. A number of serving committee members are stepping down for personal reasons, including our long serving treasurer, John, who at age 95 has decided he's done his bit. Thanks John, you are a hero in so many ways.

We are therefore in need of new people to support the committee as office bearers or ordinary committee members. Bankstown Bushland Society is Bankstown's only fully incorporated community based environmental organisation. With your support we can form the new committee and continue the work.

Bushland Society meetings are held at Padstow Progress Hall, Ryan Road, Padstow, on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (except December & January), in the Wal Browning Meeting Room at rear of hall.

All welcome.

Time: 7.00pm.

Tea and biscuits provided.

Further enquiries please ring Col on 97886232.

CALL FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY

The only reason BBS exists is because we have members; many of them long term faithfuls who have maintained their support, in some cases even long after leaving the area.

WE THANK YOU.

Membership means parting with \$10 or \$15 dollars to help us top up our very modest general account with which we pay for things like insurance for our activities, hall hire, NCC affiliation and the costs associated with producing submissions and our quarterly Bushland Bulletin. BBS is also very much in need of new members to guarantee the continuation of its environmental advocacy.

Our membership arrangement is changing from the financial year to the calendar year, so anyone who has paid since the start of the new financial year can consider themselves subscribed up to the end of 2016. The same applies to all who pay from now on.

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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

Bankstown Bushland Society has lobbied effectively for the protection of bushland and the natural environment since 1988. With your support we can continue the work. By joining the Society you can make an important contribution to our local environment.



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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode _____

Telephone Number: _____

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 put
your name on the transfer form.**



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

