

# THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN<sup>©</sup>



No. 82 WINTER (August) 2017

A publication of the Bankstown Bushland Society Incorporated

Reg. No. Y15576-12

[www.bankstownbushlandsociety.org](http://www.bankstownbushlandsociety.org)

For all enquiries contact The Secretary, Bankstown Bushland Society, PO Box 210 Panania NSW 2213, email [greenaissance1@gmail.com](mailto:greenaissance1@gmail.com) Telephone: 97886232

## BOTANIC GARDENS RESEARCH BANKSTOWN'S ENDEMIC HIBBERTIA

In July, botanists from the Australian Botanic Gardens Mount Annan visited Bankstown Airport to take specimens of the rare *Hibbertia puberula* ssp. *glabrescens*, which is known to occur only at this single site. The species was discovered by a member of Bankstown Bushland Society in 2006. One of their aims is to study the genetics of the species to determine whether it might warrant elevation to specific rank, which botanist Barry Conn of the National Herbarium, Sydney, believes is

likely. Consideration is also being given to trying to establish back up populations on other sites if suitable habitat can be found. This could take many years and success is not guaranteed, so Bankstown Bushland Society has expressed general support with the proviso that the only known existing habitat at the Airport is maintained as the primary population. Only a handful of plants are known to exist in a few scattered patches under the airport flight path. The whole

assemblage of remnant vegetation at the site is unlike any other in this part of the Georges River floodplain. for the area. which is at the site. The photo shows Doctor Peter Cuneo, Manager of Natural Heritage at Mount Annan (left) and Nathan Emery, Scientific Officer, Mount Annan (right), selecting material for propagation and analyses.

Picture taken by Greg Steenbeeke, Senior Threatened Species Officer, New South Wales Office of Environment & Heritage.



## Destruction of Beverly Grove Bush

*by Col Gibson*

We have written to the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, to express our great disappointment that, despite our protests and the Wolli Creek Preservation Society and others, Beverly Grove Bush was bulldozed during work associated with the widening of the M5 in September last year. What is most painful is that we are led to believe that the clearing of the bush was to make way for a temporary car park for construction vehicles.

In 2016 we received a letter from Mr. Marcus Ray, Deputy Secretary Planning Services, telling us that “the project’s strict conditions of approval require there to be a net increase in trees as a result of works”. From our view, planting more trees does not mean better habitat, and in no way compensates for the loss of bushland which is far more complex in terms of structure, habitat and species composition. In densely urbanised areas, the few remaining bushland remnants and the native wildlife they support are irreplaceable and should not be sacrificed to accommodate temporary conveniences for construction workers.

Mr. Ray informed us that a biodiversity offset strategy for the Cooks River Castlereagh Ironbark Forest remnant to be destroyed at Beverly Grove was being prepared as a condition of the Minister’s determination of the West Connex New M5 project. With regard to this, in March we asked the Minister: i). where is the biodiversity offset site to be? ii). is it of like habitat? and iii). How much money is to be contributed to that site?

In a letter dated 26th May, on behalf of the Minister, Mr. Ray had the following to say: “Mature trees at bevery Grove Bushland were removed to establish a construction compound with parking for use until 2019. However, after this, the area will become part of the permanent widened motorway. The Department of Planning and Environment takes the protection of bushland very seriously. Alternative places for the compound

were examined but proved unsuitable. In assessing the project, the Department accepted the impact was unavoidable because of the need to balance biodiversity impacts against other environmental, social and economic considerations.

The Department determined 40 ecosystem credits were required to offset the impact of removing the bushland. It considers replacing lost trees and offsetting biodiversity impacts to be a reasonable. The proponent has identified possible offset sites in the region and is making arrangements to secure them. Like-for-like offsets are available, subject to the final site agreements, and funding arrangements will be finalised when the sites have been secured.”

I find it impossible to believe no alternative site for the compound was available. Could not a small part of the adjacent public golf course, or the parkland to the south of the site been temporarily used for this purpose? When no longer needed, this could have been restored to its original use with no harm done. In 2012, in a phone conversation, I enquired of Canterbury Council whether the forecasted widening of the motorway would impact on the bush, and was told that as far as they were aware the widening would be confined inside the existing

motorway boundaries, and that they were not anticipating destruction of any bushland. This could only have been information they had received from the RMS.

The real truth is that allowance could have been made for the bush if the will had been there. I find it pitiful that such a heavy handed approach was taken simply for convenience. It was easier to invoke the offsets clause, to be done with the bush, justified by throwing some money tree planting in some as yet to be disclosed “offset”. We still don’t know where this will be, or what price they’ve decided to put on our Beverly Grove Bush. Beverly Grove itself was the recipient of offset money from the destruction of other sites, to the tune of some half million dollars. To us, of course, it was priceless. I can’t help thinking that destruction of Beverly Grove was a show of how the government intends to deal with other public bushlands and environmentally sensitive areas they might consider to be in the way of developments they intend to pursue. This is cause for concern for many bushland remnants in our area.

**Photo: Residents look on as Beverly Grove Bush is demolished by the Roads & Maritime Services in September 2016.**



## How urban bushland improves our health and why planners need to listen

*by Pierre Horwitz, from The Conversation.com, posted 14-5-2017.*

Urban bushland has health benefits beyond being a great place to go for a walk. It filters our air and water, helps cities avoid extremes in temperatures, and is linked to lower rates of chronic disease. But these and other health benefits are virtually never accounted for in local and state land development processes. Urban planners need to consider these health benefits when making decisions about the future of our cities.

### What do we mean by urban bushland?

Urban bushland ranges from a bush park of native trees, to wetlands – in fact any native vegetation characteristic of the local region. With its undisturbed soils and associated wildlife, urban bushland is more diverse than other types of green spaces in our cities, like parks. So it adds significantly to neighbourhood biodiversity. The more unfragmented the landscape, or unaltered the bushland, the more likely it will be to retain its biodiversity. Hills, watercourses and gullies, or a mixed forest, have greater biodiversity than flat land or a plantation of trees. Landscapes that change by the season add to that diversity.

The health benefits of green spaces (and urban bushland) partly comes from this biodiversity. In cities, health benefits work at two levels. Not only do local residents receive health benefits when they use urban green spaces, the wider

urban population also feels the health effects.

### Healthy locals

The closer residents live to green space, particularly if it is accessible or usable, the better they report their health. For an individual, access to green spaces contributes in multiple ways: it reduces stress, it helps us recover from illness or injury, and our thinking abilities improve when we are more contemplative and mindful of our green surroundings. Our health improves when we use green spaces for physical exercise. And we benefit from the social engagement involved in caring for them.

The quality of green spaces plays a role in the health benefits for locals. For example, views of diverse vegetation more effectively lowers stress compared with less-diverse vegetation. Exposure to biodiversity from the air, water, soils, vegetation, wildlife and landscape, and all the microbes associated with them (the sort retained in uncleared bushland and wetlands) enhances our immunity. This is thought to be the key to the health benefits of nature.

### Wealth and health

The relationship between health benefits and living close to urban green spaces, including urban bushland, might be interpreted as being an effect of wealth. We know wealthier people tend to

live in greener suburbs and wealthier people tend to be healthier. But many studies take wealth into account, with the weight of evidence suggesting a direct health benefit from exposure to biodiversity.

So if the health benefits are due to the urban green spaces itself (and not related to wealth), they should be spread more evenly across the population. Perhaps the health of poorer city dwellers will improve by living near to diverse green spaces, like bushland. Failing to provide access to nature entrenches health inequalities.

### Healthy city

Urban bushland provides health benefits not just for local residents but for the whole city. Forests and woodlands clean our urban air by removing particles and absorbing carbon dioxide. This reduces premature death, acute respiratory symptoms and asthma exacerbation across the city. A recent review highlights the host of physical health problems that are reduced in urban areas with more nature, including less heart disease, obesity and diabetes. Mental health is also improved in urban areas where people are living with more green space.

Urban bushland improves city water. Wetlands and the vegetation around them clean our water by filtering, reducing exposure to pollutants carried in groundwater or surface

*(continued on page 6)*

## PROPOSED REVESBY STATION TO MICKEY'S POINT WALKING TRACK

*by Col Gibson*

Urban residences backing onto bushland and national park cause all sorts of management problems, notably when a well-intentioned but misguided residence decides to undertake his own "improvements" to degraded bushland. Neville Clasper Reserve (the site of an old "Happy Valley" seasonal workers camp) adjoining Georges River National Park at Padstow is such a case. For a number of years, a local Bushcare group operated here with the assistance of both NPWS and Bankstown City Council, but things fell away after the passing of the group's founder, local resident, Neville Clasper.

Since then another resident has taken it upon himself to make up for it by spraying out all the weeds, mulching with wood chip and planting ornamentals such as Bromeliads, Coleus, *Cassia coluteoides* and Cordylines on the bushland margin. It does look 'nice', but this is a national park, not a private garden, and in the process, he has sprayed out all the native ground covers so that nothing but weeds now flourishes here.

The person responsible has been very resistant to complaints from other local residents, but has since been informed by NPWS that all his introductions must be removed. The ongoing problem is: what to do when all the ornamentals are gone, what other than weeds will replace them? Without volunteer participation,

there seems simply to be no way properly managed bush regeneration program will start again here. Council regards it as an NPWS problem and NPWS' pockets are empty.

While we were investigating this, we came to realize that similar situations occur all the way along the border of Little Salt Pan Creek from Virginius Reserve down to Henry Lawson Drive where some sections belong to Council, some to NPWS. Bits of track can be followed through saltmarsh and bushland that is in parts degraded, in other parts taken over by extended backyards, but there are some areas of excellent quality saltmarsh and bushland as well. Most of the old sections of track are long disused and overgrown, so what might benefit would be a single track to link all the pieces together. If funding could be found for track restoration and construction it could also contribute to regeneration work for the much-neglected bushland along the route.

In fact, the head of such a track could be Revesby Station, the corridor passing through nearby Council managed Montgomery and Virginius Reserves, down the eastern side of Little Salt Pan Creek, through Neville Clasper and on to Henry Lawson Drive opposite Mickey's Point; Mickey's Point being one of the best (and least accessed) bushland segments of the Georges River National Park on the Bankstown side of the river. This would provide a walking

track to the northern side of the national park accessible by public transport. The possibility of linking up other bushland destinations along the river could also come into play.

This is all just an idea, but one that was received well when we took it recently to David Coleman, Federal Member for Banks. David has recently got hold of several hundred thousand dollars for much needed rehabilitation work at Yeramba Lagoon. He has said he likes the idea of the track and would be prepared to apply for significant funding with the support of Council and NPWS, provided they can be got on side. He has undertaken to contact NPWS while we are trying our luck with Council, with whom we are in the process of organizing a site inspection in the near future.

.....



## Stop The Parks Sell Off

*by Col Gibson*

Bankstown Bushland Society has written to the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, expressing concerns over the plan to sell off parkland in the Local Area Plans submitted by Canterbury-Bankstown Council for approval. In these plans 15 parks are proposed to be sold, while other areas of open space, notably in the centres of Padstow, Revesby and Panania, are proposed for rezoning to allow for redevelopments that may threaten their viability. Chief among these are Ray McCormack Reserve at Revesby, Carl Little Reserve at Padstow, and the grassy cartilage surrounding Panania Library.

We support the views of our federal Member for Banks, David Coleman, who has put his personal concerns about aspects of the Plans on record. The idea that southern Bankstown has too many parks (as alleged by Canterbury-Bankstown Council) is preposterous. Why has this view been taken when in the past the number of parks in the area has only ever been proudly extolled by Council as a good thing? It has never before been suggested that the area has too many parks, which is an absurd claim at a time when growing population pressures need to be met with more parks, not fewer. This is simply a weak justification for the opportunity for Council to raise cash from sales of public land.

According to Council, the parks to be sold have "limited recreational, social or environmental value", yet there have received no complaints

about the parks from local residents – ever. The residents living near these parks we have spoken to are shocked at this, and one group, at Gascoigne Reserve, has protested vehemently, at the last Council meeting before it was dismissed, successfully prevailing on Council to reverse its decision to sell. All of our then Councillors approved the rest of the sell offs; not one of them stood up for the parks long entrusted to their care and which they have only expressed pride of in the past.

We are told not to be too concerned because only parks of less than 2,000 square metres are to be flogged off. Suddenly, all our small parks seem vulnerable. Is it only size that protects some of our parks? The area chosen is an arbitrary one; what is to stop the next round of park sell offs being sent up a notch to 2,500, or 3,000 square metres? In any case, by what criteria have these areas been judged of limited recreational, social or environmental value? Open space of all sizes is valuable for a variety of reasons, not least for visual amenity. All are accessed by birdlife for foraging. It is claimed that some parks do not attract many visitors: are quiet green places where you can have a bit of space to yourself of no value then? There is a need for quiet places like these as much as there is for the larger parks and sports fields with all the recreational infrastructure.

As the population grows, we have more of everything – duplexes, town houses, multi storey apartments, traffic

congestion, but, if Council has its way, less open space. Council has plans to create upgraded community centres and commercial opportunities in the centres of the suburbs of Padstow, Revesby and Panania. There is no reason why these developments cannot be designed around the existing parks and green areas instead of on top of them, yet Council sees fit to give no more than a promise to apply the Tree Preservation Order to any trees that may be in the way. The guarantee we have asked for, that the parks in their entirety will have a future, has not been forthcoming. This is unacceptable.

We are also concerned that no Environmental Protection Zones have been proposed anywhere in Bankstown, which puts at risk small but floristically diverse bushland remnants on government owned land on the grounds of the University of Western Sydney, Milperra (Wonga Smith's Bush), and the former Railway Workshops at Chullora. No bushland on any land appears to have been examined with regard to its potential for this, despite the high biodiversity values of the remnant bushland in the Bankstown area being widely recognised, including in Council's own internal documents such as its Biodiversity Strategic Plan. There is simply no discussion of this in the Local Area Plans.

The Minister is yet to make his decision. The proposals to rezone to allow for redevelopments in

*(continued on page 6)*

## Work Scaled Back on Henry Lawson Drive

As reported in The Torch 12-7-2017, due to our persistent representations, culminating in an onsite meeting attended by Chris Brogan and a local resident with Roads & Maritime Services officials, the planned widening of Henry Lawson Drive has been scaled back to the installation of a safety barrier on the low side of the road east of the entrance to the electricity sub-station. This will not only make the road safer but project the native heath on the rock shelf on the north side of the road, the complete removal of which had been foreshadowed in the original proposal.

We are all for making the road safer. We made a major contribution to this when in 1995 we advocated the lowering of the speed limit, which was done, since when there have been no fatalities or serious accidents on this stretch of the Drive. But it is important to balance this with maintenance of the environmental values of the adjacent national park, especially for the fact that this area is accessed by koalas, wallabies and other native animals for crossing from one side to the other. The lowering of the speed limit, speed cameras, cambering of the road shoulder and safety barriers ensure that this balance is being achieved.

“Koala Crossing” signs are also to be put in place. Chris Brogan has put special effort into the negotiations with the RMS, and is to be congratulated for what appears, at this stage, to be a very good outcome for all parties, including koalas.

.....

## *How urban bushland improves our health* (continued from page 3)

water run-off. Vegetation also moderates extremes of temperature providing shade when it is hot and less exposure when it's cold and so reduces heat- or cold-related illnesses.

### Shrinking urban bushland

Where new suburbs are developed on the outskirts of cities, the end result is usually near-complete clearing. Urban bushland is replaced with smaller, fragmented, more sanitised, open and neat spaces. These are designed for a narrower (but still important) set of usable attributes, like a bike path, lawns and a playground. But the original values of the bushland are lost. This pattern is repeated in the expanding suburbs of cities across Australia.

### Planning for better planning

Planning processes need to use ways to assess what we might lose and what we might gain from clearing bushland. This could involve asking what types of services existing bushland provide for local residents and the city in general. These will include their role in providing clean air and water, controlling floods, cycling nutrients, as well as their recreational or spiritual services. These could be compared with services the proposed development offers. The comparison should make decision makers, and more importantly the public, better able to judge the true worth or cost of a development.

Such cost-benefit analyses are usually used somewhere in planning processes but rarely, if ever, are the values of biodiversity and ecosystem services considered, or the cost savings from health benefits of bushland. These sorts of cost-benefit analyses can also be used to account for the health effects associated with local bushland. Such health assessments (or health impact assessments) need to be more widely used. And where land subdivision, road building and suburban housing developments are planned, health assessments may need to be compulsory to better account for the contribution of urban bushland to health.

.....

## *Stop the Parks Sell Off*

(continued from page 5)

the suburban centres (as mentioned here) that make no provision for the retention of existing green spaces, should also be rejected. The Local Area Plans also need to be revised to investigate the potential for classification of bushland areas as Environmental Protection Zones. We stand with David Coleman in requesting him not to approve the Local Area Plans until after the September elections when a reinstated Council can thoroughly review the situation.

.....



## ***BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY ON FACEBOOK***

Check out Bankstown Bushland Society on Facebook. Anyone who shares an interest in Bankstown's bushland and bushland generally is most welcome. 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.

**SAVE  
Ray MacCormack  
Reserve, Revesby.**



**If you haven't signed already, don't forget to go online and sign the BBS petition to the Minister urging not to rezone Ray MacCormack Reserve for development.**

**<https://www.change.org/p/nsw-minister-for-planning-the-hon-anthony-roberts-save-ray-mccormack-reserve>**

**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.**

**Time: 7.00pm.**

**Tea and biscuits provided.**

**All welcome.**

**Further enquiries please ring Col on 97886232.**

## **BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2017**

***President:***  
Christopher Brogan

***Vice President:***  
Wal Browning

***Secretary:***  
Colin Gibson:  
9788 6232

***Assistant Secretary:***  
Skye Virgin

***Treasurer:***  
John Gibson:  
9772 3549

***Committee Members:***  
Darryl McKay  
Erica Brogan  
Peter Gardiner

***Bushland Bulletin  
Editor:***  
Colin Gibson

© Copyright 2002 Bankstown Bushland Society Incorporated. This publication is copyright. Other than for the purposes of and subject to the conditions prescribed under the Copyright Act, no part of it may in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, microcopying, photocopying, recording or otherwise) be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transferred without prior written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to the Editor.

## 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**

