

# THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN<sup>©</sup>



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

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## Swamp Woodland Habitat Restoration at Yeramba Lagoon

In the early to mid 90s, Friends of Yeramba Lagoon did a lot of work on privet infestations around Yermaba Lagoon, but the biggest infestation in the Swamp Woodland habitat at the head of the lagoon was too big for FoYL and BBS to handle. We tried for a grant without success.

During (and after) the consultation process for the Yeramba Lagoon Masterplan in 2009 (which included a limited amount of funding for field work), BBS advocated again for the eradication of privet at the head of the lagoon. This is the

only location on the Bankstown side of the river in the Georges River National Park where this type of habitat still occurs.

About a year later work commenced on this and good results were achieved, but the work was not completed, and no follow-up work had since been done. Consequently, the privet made a comeback. It would be a shame if the very good work that was accomplished here should be allowed to defeat the aim of the original effort.

In September last year, on the

back of Federal Member for Banks David Coleman's funding for Green Army projects at Yeramba, we contacted David's office and wrote to the Minister for Environment & Heritage with a suggestion that work be resumed on the privet infestations. The response came in October from NPWS Regional Director, Deon Van Rensburg, who told us that "*a Green Army team will shortly commence work at Yeramba Lagoon to undertake key weed control programs including the management of privet infestations surrounding the lagoon.*"

And so it was that in about December last year work recommenced on the privet at the head of the lagoon in fine fashion. The results so far are impressive, but will require a lot of follow-up. Well done to NPWS and the Green Army, and to David Coleman for securing the funding. Read more on Yeramba Lagoon on page 6.

**Privet removal in Swamp Woodland habitat at head of Yeramba Lagoon, December 2017. Pic by Darryl McKay.**



## The Dianella Dilemma

by Col Gibson

The Society has written to Council to draw its attention to the situation regarding planting of non-local forms of *Dianella* in and around bushland. This is not just a problem for Bankstown, but just about everywhere in the country, *Dianellas* now being extremely popular in landscaping and Landcare remediation projects. The problem is that in many cases the *Dianellas* are not sourced from seed collected on site, but come from places where the forms may differ genetically. Consequently, more vigorous forms dominate in the nurseries, and where they are planted put

the less vigorous local forms (that are often quite rare on site) at risk of being dominated by the introduced ones.

For instance, *Dianella caerulea* has many forms, some of which are, in fact, distinct but as yet unnamed species. (Our attention to this was drawn by noted authority on the genus, Geoff Carr of Melbourne-based Ecology Australia Pty Ltd). A few of these forms are indigenous to Bankstown, but others come from distant parts of the known range of the species as currently recognised. Many of

these are available from native nurseries, yet all go under the one name – *Dianella caerulea* – hence the problem. This also applies to other species of *Dianella*, notably *D. revoluta* and *D. longifolia*. I cite the following examples of recent plantings of non-local forms of *Dianella caerulea* in Bankstown:

**Irene Jones Bush at Padstow Park.** In recent times, two non-local forms of *D. caerulea* have been planted through the bushland area. One is a probable rainforest form from northern New South Wales, the other is a coastal form. The local form of *D. caerulea* does occur here, but it is localised to one small part of the reserve. The introduced forms now dominate the reserve and must be considered threats to the long-term viability of the site indigenous one. If *D. caerulea* is to be planted here it should be the local one; the introduced forms should be removed.

**Lambeth Park.** A strongly rhizomic form of *D. caerulea* which is not naturally occurring to the site has been planted along the margin adjoining the car park, and further along at the base of the rocks below the former site of the old dance hall. This form (probably a coastal form) spreads vigorously to form extensive masses and, while it is a good landscaping ground cover, it is a threat to the site indigenous form which is only weakly rhizomic in comparison. The introduction of non-local forms to a site risks the potential for dilution of the gene pool of the locally occurring form.



Botanist Robert Miller with non-local 'rainforest' form of *Dianella caerulea* planted at Irene Jones Bush, Padstow Park

(Continued on page 3)



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**Kelso Beach Reserve.** Here, an area within the bushland perimeter has been mulched and planted with the coastal form of *D. caerulea*. Firstly, mulching, while fine for landscaping or formal gardens, is an inappropriate management practise in native bushland as it changes the soil chemistry to the advantage of weeds over natives, and extinguishes the potential for natural regeneration of species local to the site. Other recent examples we have noted of mulching along bushland margins include Lambeth Park, Monash Reserve and Carysfield Park. At Monash and Lambeth, tree-prunings were put through the chipper and the chips sprayed directly into the bushland.

I have been keeping record of the native species at these and other sites over many years, and have never observed *D. caerulea* to occur naturally at Kelso Beach Reserve. On this alone it is not an appropriate species to be planting there (although two of the local variants do occur naturally not far away in Deepwater Park).

This situation with the proliferation of introduced forms of *Dianella* to bushland remnants is not confined to Bankstown – it is happening everywhere. Suppliers cannot be relied upon for provenance as the taxonomy of the many forms of *Dianella* is much in need of re-evaluation. Many unnamed species of *Dianella* have found their way into the nurseries before the taxonomists have had a chance to study and properly classify them.

To quote Geoff Carr: “almost all *taxa* have been very inadequately circumscribed, causing many problems in nomenclature... and leading to radical ‘lumping’... It is now evident that far more *taxa* exist than currently described in Australia and elsewhere...” (*Telopea* Vol. 11 (3), 2006).

Canterbury Bankstown can take the lead here by removing any planted non-local *Dianella* from its bushland and ceasing to purchase *Dianella* from suppliers. I strongly recommend that *Dianella* for use in or at the edges of bushland areas should not be purchased from any supplier unless the specific site where the seed is to be obtained is first identified to the supplier by the bushland manager.



Mulched bushland verge at Kelso Beach Reserve planted with non-local form of *D. caerulea*.

## **The Moorebank Intermodal** *by Christopher Brogan*

This project will have a highly negative impact on biodiversity and water quality of the Georges River. During the assessment process *Hibbertia fumana*, a species not previously recorded since 1836 and thought extinct was discovered at the site. This information was suppressed until after the approval was given. A local group, Residents Against Intermodal Development, is challenging this in the Land and

Environment Court. Parts of the site are contaminated with a carcinogenic chemical used as a fire retardant. There are no plans to remediate toxins. During the construction phase it is proposed to dump 2.2 million cubic metres of fill at the site. This is the equivalent of a line of trucks 12,000 kilometres long.

The Aboriginal Heritage assessment was inadequate as is illustrated by a scar tree with a shield shaped scar 1.2 X 0.9 metres located on Moorebank

Avenue not being included in the study. This tree will be destroyed if this project proceeds. Bankstown Bushland Society has notified the Gandangarra Local Aboriginal Land Council as to the presence of this tree, who have, in turn, notified the Office of Environment & Heritage. If determined as Cultural, the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act could be enacted to halt this project.

### **More on Moorebank** **From the EDO**

Residents Against Intermodal Development Moorebank Inc v Minister for Planning and Qube Holdings Ltd.

Resident action group, RAID, represented by Environmental Defenders Office NSW, has appealed to the Land and Environment Court to protect a Critically Endangered plant species thought to be extinct for almost two centuries. RAID is asking the Land and Environment Court to undertake a full reconsideration of the approval of the large industrial shipping container facility at Moorebank, in Western Sydney, because the critically endangered *Hibbertia fumana*, thought to be extinct but recently rediscovered in the area of the development, wasn't considered when the development was approved in December last year.

The *Hibbertia fumana* was rediscovered in the vicinity of the proposed terminal only 2 months

before the Moorebank development was approved. The facility is a major development expected to process 1.5 million shipping containers every year. In December 2016, the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) approved the development, but was not told about the existence in the area of the rediscovered species, or the impacts that the development may have on the species. Just four days after the PAC approved the development, the NSW Scientific Committee publicly listed the rediscovered species as critically endangered.

*Hibbertia fumana*, a delicate shrub with yellow flowers, was last documented in 1823 and was thought to be extinct. The Moorebank area where the development is located is the only known population of *Hibbertia fumana*. Biodiversity is essential for a prosperous economy and healthy environment, but as a nation we are not doing enough to protect it. The *State of the Environment Report* tabled in Parliament by the Commonwealth Government

in March 2017 paints a worrying picture of the rapid decline of threatened species in Australia: "*The outlook for Australian biodiversity is generally poor, given the current overall poor status, deteriorating trends and increasing pressures.*"

Threatened species are being pushed to extinction development by development, a phenomenon often referred to as 'death by a thousand cuts'. It is critical to determine whether or not this development will bring about one more extinction. Our client is asking the Land and Environment Court to undertake a full reconsideration of the SIMTA development approval, including the potential impact on the *Hibbertia fumana*, and the community more broadly. This is a 'merits appeal' based on the public's interest in protecting Critically Endangered species and protecting biodiversity. We are grateful to barristers Andrew Pickles SC and Dr James Smith for their assistance in this matter.



## Wonga Smith's Bush – another “Riverlands”?

by Col Gibson

University Western Sydney plans to move out of its Milperra campus to a high-rise site in the centre of Bankstown in the next few years. That means the Milperra campus will be available for rezoning and could possibly become another Riverlands-style environmental battle. A very unique piece of rare and endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland is to be found at the site at the corner of Horsley Drive and Bullecourt Avenue. Research by BBS member, Mark Sweeney, found this to be the last remnant of what in past times was known as “Wonga Smith's Bush”. In the Local Area Plans, despite our recommendation that it deserved to be considered for Environmental Protection zoning, this area is designated for “Educational Facilities”, and could just as easily be zoned for residential.

Canterbury Bankstown Council has entered into what can only be seen at this point in time as a very shadowy “Memorandum of Understanding” with UWS.

Nothing about this Memorandum has been released to the public, the parties involved committed to keeping it all to themselves, so we can only guess what it involves. A new Vice Chancellor has been appointed to replace long-serving Professor Janice Reid who always responded positively whenever we raised concerns over the management of the bushland. For instance, in a letter dated 28-10-2015, Prof. Reid said: *“we [UWS] have been actively involved in ensuring the remnant woodland is intact and we have been regenerating the area on a continuing basis. We have also undertaken an extensive study on the area including bush fire protection and management and a flora and fauna assessment. UWS is committed to maintaining the Cumberland Plain Woodland and will continue to monitor the area in the future.”* We can only hope that her successor, Vice Chancellor Professor Barney Glover, thinks the same way.

To get a handle on the situation,

we have recently written to Professor Glover, Canterbury Bankstown Council, and to Federal MP for Blaxland, Jason Clare. We expect to hear only good news from them about Wonga Smith's Bush, for only good news will be acceptable. If there is not a clear-cut undertaking from all parties to secure future protection for the bush, then we are ready to throw everything we can at it to make sure the developers do not get their grubby hands on the bush. Any talk of putting a sum of money up for a biodiversity offset or Biobanking scheme (which is how the destruction of Beverly Grove Bush was justified) will be decried.

Ideally, we want to see the bush rezoned for Environmental Protection and transferred to the ownership of Canterbury Bankstown Council. As it will be a big development, the Minister for Planning can put this condition on it as part of the development approval process, so he will be getting a letter from us in the near future too.





## Restoration of Yeramba Lagoon, Picnic Point

by Col Gibson

As most of us are only too well aware, there is a severe infestation of the shrubby weed *Ludwigia peruviana* right across the lagoon, which has shut the lagoon down as a nesting site for native waterbirds. BBS and the former Friends of Yeramba Lagoon undertook volunteer bush regeneration work there for many years and now, with David Coleman's recent Green Army funding, OEH (NPWS) is formulating a strategy for fixing the weed problems at the lagoon.

In September last year we wrote to the Minister asking how the OEH intends dealing with the *Ludwigia* problem, which is on such a scale as likely to be beyond the capacities of the Green Army. Physical removal by hand would be very labour intensive and require vast resources given the scale and sensitive wetland situation. We suggested the *Ludwigia* might be vulnerable to relatively low dose non residual herbicide while reshooting after suffering the defoliating effects of last years' cold winter, but NPWS did not think this would work.

The response to our letter came from Mr. Devon Van Rensberg, Director, Greater Sydney NPWS, who tells us in a letter dated 23-10-2017: *"The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are aware of the aquatic weeds in Yeramba Lagoon, including the presence of Ludwigia peruviana. As you may be aware, the Georges River Combined Councils Committee, led by Bankstown Council with the support of NPWS and other stakeholders, developed the Yeramba Lagoon Catchment Masterplan. The Masterplan recognises that the current state of the lagoon is directly attributed to the cessation of inter-tidal flow from the Georges River and eutrophication of the lagoon from the wider catchment.*

*These are complex issues that require a multi-stakeholder approach for resolution. NPWS is reluctant to invest in weed treatment at Yeramba Lagoon until the lagoon is restored to its natural ecology. NPWS is currently working with relevant stakeholder to secure significant funding to lead the Yeramba*

*Lagoon restoration project that will run over the next few years. The project will involve modifications to the existing weir to restore tidal flows and significantly alter the ecology of the site back to a natural wetland/estuary. NPWS believes these changes will allow effective treatment of the aquatic weeds (including Ludwigia) in the lagoon. The project will include weed control and native plantings following the weir modifications to facilitate the native wetland/estuary restoration."*

I point out that at the time of the Masterplan (August 2009) there was no *Ludwigia* in the lagoon, which shows how quickly it has spread. It seems from this that there will be no quick fix to the *Ludwigia* problem, and in the meantime the focus will be on other targets such as privet, as was outlined on page 1.

**Chronic *Ludwigia peruviana* infestation at Yeramba Lagoon, Georges River National Park, Picnic Point.**





**Check out BANKSTOWN  
BUSHLAND SOCIETY on  
FACEBOOK**

The BBS Facebook page provides us opportunities for posting information relevant to the natural environment and flora and fauna of our bushland regeneration projects, nature walks and such. Anyone interested in the Georges River and bushland generally is welcome to join our page.

#### **ELECTRONIC BULLETINS**

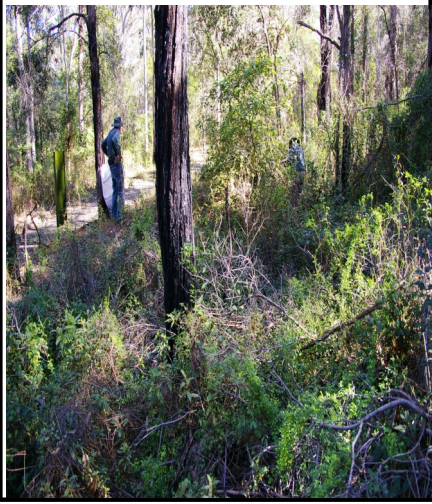
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**THE CREST of  
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volunteer  
BUSH REGEN MORNING  
Saturday 17th February.**

**Join us in the shade of  
the rare and beautiful  
Turpentine Brushforest  
at The Crest at Georges  
Hall. Meet at 9.00am in  
the car park in from the  
McClean Street entrance.  
For details contact Skye:  
0411584295**



**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.**

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BUSHLAND  
SOCIETY  
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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)

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### Membership fees

Family/Group - \$20

Ordinary - \$15

Concession - \$10

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Send payment to:

**The Secretary,  
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PO Box 210  
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**Or pay by direct transfer to**

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**Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.  
PO Box 210  
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