

THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN[©]

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Southern Emu Wren in Canterbury-Bankstown

In March this year, bird watcher David Sinnott saw a female Southern Emu-wren in the heath above Yeramba Lagoon at Picnic Point. This is the first record in living memory of this species in the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA.

It appears that the bird has taken up residence either as an accidental migrant from south of the Georges River or, more

likely, as a refugee from the bushfires which wiped out their habitat at Voyager Point in January. David James says he has seen Southern Emu-wrens at Voyager Point and nearby in Lieutenant Cantello Reserve, as well as at Holsworthy.

David Sinnott's observation is not only the first for the C-B LGA, but the first between

Georges River and Parramatta, and as there is suitable areas of habitat at Picnic Point it is to be hoped that the Southern Emu-wrens has come to stay.

#

Note by Darryl McKay: I can confirm that this is the first record for the C-B LGA. The species has been recorded in the Georges River National Park on the south side of the river during a 2012-13 fauna study undertaken as part of the Biodiversity Survey Priorities program for NPWS. The birds were said to occur in sea rushland bordering Estuarine Saltmarsh between Alford's Point Road Bridge and Mill Creek.

Also of interest is a recent sighting I made of a Rockwarbler just below the Sub-station at Picnic Point on 5th September this year. This is only the third record for the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA, the first record since 21st February 1971 and the second record recorded by myself on 8th February 1994.

This species is also resident on the south side of the river. #



Southern Emu-wren. Photo by David Sinnott

Destroying Deerbush Park

by Col Gibson (pics courtesy Deerbush Park Alliance)

The photos below show the impacts of work now underway to construct an Adventure Playground in Endangered woodland in Deerbush Park at Fairfield Showground, hitherto designated for conservation.

The first image is of a sign Fairfield City Council put there informing that the area is set aside for “*natural regeneration*”. The second photo shows exactly where the sign was placed in front of a stand of rare *Acacia pubescens*; the sign declaring that “*some of these plants are of regional significance*” and asks the community to “*please respect this site*”. This is what anyone would expect in such a place. The third photo shows how little Fairfield Council respected its own sign and the site’s regionally significant plants.

Last year, Mayor Carbone told us that “*any significant Flora & Fauna will be retained and prior to approval the correct process required was followed and measures have been put in place*

to enable both the playground and significant bushland to Co exist” – we see the effect of those “*measures*” here. FCC also assured us that “*a stringent process was applied to fully investigate and consider environmental factors as part of the planning works at the Fairfield Showground and environs*” – more hollow words.

There are many places where an Adventure Playground could be put, but bushland cannot be moved and relocated. Here, FCC has chosen to destroy the bushland and replace it with a fun park. If Council sees good reason to put signs up to ask people to respect the ecological values of a site, it should the example by respecting them itself.

Last year the Society wrote to Department OEH, which replied that it was a matter for Council as the consent authority to decide. Council simply told us that the playground would be good for the bushland, that it would not have any harmful effects and serve to attract me people to the site. Since they have the final say, we can expect to see more developments of this kind in

similar settings in the future. But when I recently looked at the OEH guidelines for Endangered Ecological Community Recovery Plans, I didn’t find any mention of Adventure Playgrounds. I did find, however, that “*disturbance and damage by recreational users*” is listed as a threat to EECs. The Department’s “*Recovering Bushland on the Cumberland Plain*” has this to say: “*Clearing has led to fragmentation of the landscape, resulting in increasingly isolated small remnants that are more vulnerable to impacts, provide less and less habitat, and support fewer species. The more fragmented a landscape is, the more difficult it is to successfully manage it as a network across the landscape*”. This is exactly what Fairfield City Council is doing to Deerbush Park.

Sadly, Council has dumped its commitment to maintain Deerbush Park “*for the natural regeneration of native ground covers, shrubs and trees*” simply because it wants to do something more exciting with the site. The sign in front now looks like a sorry joke. #



Voyager Point Bush Sliced Off for Development

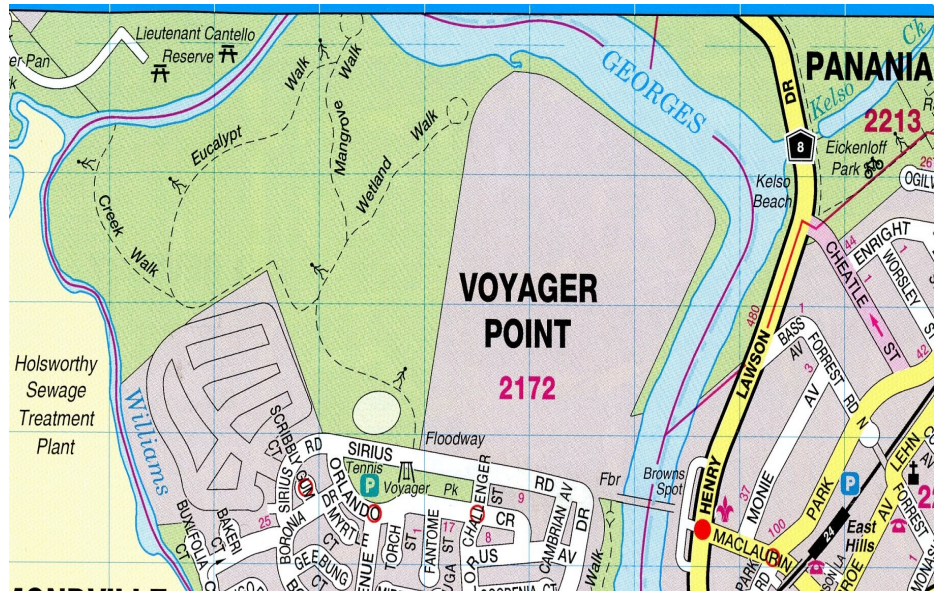
by Col Gibson

About six months ago several hectares of privately owned bush on the north side of Sirius Road at Voyager Point (opposite East Hills) were cleared for a new residential development. This came as a great shock to all familiar with the wonderful bush surrounding Ted Trainer's Lagoon at Voyager Point, this being one of the best remaining bushland remnants fronting the Georges River in the Liverpool LGA and containing perhaps the last remaining natural freshwater wetlands on the lower Georges river floodplain.

It was all the more shocking since back in January the whole site went up like a bomb in the terrible summer fires. What responsible society would allow a residential area to be established in such a place where it will be surrounded on three sides by flammable bushland? More bushland will very likely need to be cleared to establish protective firebreaks.

There has been a lot of talk among officialdom about how we are paying the price for situating residential developments in areas of high fire risk because it is only inviting disaster. Previous development applications for this site have been rejected by Liverpool Council for this very reason, as well as for their damaging impacts on biodiversity.

Indeed, we've been informed that Liverpool Council, supported by the Rural Fire Services, rejected the latest DA, but the owner took Council to the Land and



Environment Court and won. We can only conclude from this that the Land and Environment Court is not interested in arguments against developments in fire prone areas simply because they put lives in danger.

Dr. Surrey Jacobs, the Royal Botanic Gardens expert on waterplants, after visiting the site in 1989 declared it to be the best surviving wetland of its kind in the Sydney area. On the strength of this, in 1995 the Voyager Point Wetlands were placed on the Interim List of the National Estate Register. In 1992, Liverpool Mayor Mark Latham,

citing Sydney's "appalling record of riverbank housing estates", applied to the State Government's Open Space Heritage Fund for \$15,000,000 to purchase the area, but at that point the government suspended the fund. Eventually the western half of the area adjoining Williams Creek was dedicated a reserve, but not the half adjoining the Georges River to the east which includes the freshwater lagoon.

What is to become of this? To lose any more of this wonderful bushland would be a disaster. #



Clearing of bushland at Voyager Point in 2020. Pic by Karlo Taliana

#

Green Space in Suburban Centres by Col Gibson

In June the Canterbury-Bankstown Local Planning Panel approved the Draft Consolidated Canterbury-Bankstown Local Environment Plan which now awaits final approval of the Minister for Planning. Of concern in the LEP is the uncertain fate of green space in the business centres of Padstow, Revesby and Panania.

In Revesby, Ray McCormack Reserve (1 Macarthur Avenue, Revesby) contains canopy remnants of Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest, an Endangered Ecological Community. Some fine specimens of native Woollybutt, Honey Myrtle and Grey Box trees survive here. These, along with a handful of Woollybutts on the north side of Revesby Railway Station have not been planted but are the last remnants of the original pre settlement forest in the centre of Revesby. These trees were retained by Bankstown City Council to provide shade and aesthetic enhancement to the Revesby business zone which is now subject to new zoning and multi storey development.

Council's enthusiasm for multi storey development at Ray McCormack Reserve is contrary to its own internal advice in the Bankstown Development Control Plan 2015, Part A1, March 2015 (Amended January 2016) which states: *"The desired character specific to precinct 4B is to have Ray McCormack Reserve function as a public open space for residents in precincts south of the railway line, should be*

enhanced. Its function of providing passive recreation opportunities should be retained." The DCP goes on to say that *"In the long term, there is potential for relocating the activities associated with the existing community building and possibly removal of the building, but only with further community consultation. The relocation of the community hall would allow a significant physical extension to the Reserve enhancing informal play opportunities. In this regard, any extension to the Reserve should consist of open grassed areas with tree planting limited to the periphery."* Suddenly the focus changed from expanding the reserve to how much development can be packed into it.

Zoning to accommodate six-storey buildings now extends from Revesby Workers Club right down to River Road, including the tiny Ray McCormack park. When in August 2016 we wrote to Council seeking an assurance that Ray McCormack would not be negatively impacted by future development, we were informed that *"opportunities to retain*

significant trees, as part of the civic space, will be considered in the detailed design phase." (CBC to BBS 2-8-2016). The trees at Ray McCormack are already the main feature of a civic space but will not survive when six storey buildings are erected on top of them. There is fair scope for development of adjacent areas, but the Society believes that the park in its present configuration is the only way the trees will have a viable future.

The curtilage around Panania Library is another area that could be drastically changed by the new zoning for six-storey buildings; Carl Little Reserve at Padstow likewise for eight storeys. These areas are now available for complexes of mixed community, retail and commercial use, potentially leaving little or no open areas within the business zones. These green spaces near the railway hubs were created by Council to serve the community for the purposes they still do and the community is very satisfied with them. They should not be replaced with them with multi storey mixed commercial complexes. #



More on Moorebank

Bankstown Bushland Society has written to the state government objecting to further expansion of the Moorebank Intermodal Precinct West - Stage 3 SSD – 10431. Of particular concern is the massive amount of earth fill being imported to the site for mega developments such as this and those underway at other locations on the Georges River Floodplain such as at Bankstown Airport.

At the Intermodal site it is intended to import approximately 820,000m³ of fill. The entire area of Moorebank, Wattle Grove, Holsworthy and Milperra, suffer flood-water displacement during times of major flooding as we saw at the beginning of the year. Catchment runoff of flood water exceeding speed-of-collection and volumes are at levels not seen for many years.

The bends of the river and its banks almost completely surround the site as an 'island', and are already overloaded with imported fill which should never have been allowed. People who have invested in homes in this region would never have thought such threats to their safety and property values would occur so dramatically.

The entire site has long been known as a complex habitat for native flora and fauna including Threatened and Endangered species such as the koala. Any and all clearing for a works compound and other infrastructure will put extreme pressure on this remnant woodland and riverine floodplain. Proposed earthworks, such as roads, buildings, utilities installation, stormwater and drainage, signage and landscaping mean that more of the native ecosystems will be lost permanently.

Rare Tertiary Woodland habitat is to be obliterated with impacts on a number of rare species including the recently rediscovered *Hibbertia fumana*. Bushland on the lower Georges River floodplain is being destroyed at an unprecedented rate to make way for massive growth and infrastructure projects such as this.

Progressive subdivision of the site is obviously going to cause additional destruction to the surrounding woodlands as buildings are constructed and trees removed for being too close to a site boundary. Confined as it is by the Georges River floodplain, the site is causing traffic congestion in adjacent residential areas and should never have been considered for an infrastructure project of this scale.

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Moorebank Intermodal complex on the Georges River floodplain

Extract from **“The Gods of Urban Man”** by *Prof. Dexter Dunphy, Uni New South Wales, in “Of Times and Deeds and Empty Cities”, Australian Natural History Special Supplement, Sept 1976.*

Society is increasingly organised to reward those with a bulldozer mentality. Only now when natural areas are dwindling fast is there an emerging appreciation of bushland and its native life. Only recently has any variety of native plants been deliberately planted in backyard gardens and suburban parks. Ironically, the bulldozer often scours off the bush, houses are built and then the new inhabitants buy back topsoil, bushrock and cultivated native plants at considerable expense.

Our concentration on short-term economic benefit, our enshrining of the ‘rip-off’, has led us to lose our sense of the wholeness of life. We fail to see that nature consists of interdependent life support systems and that our incursions into the total ecological system have inevitable repercussions on other parts of the system. Natural areas in urban settings are reminders of the interrelatedness of the different species of plant, insect and animal life. A wetland area consisting of swamps and

mangroves, for example, is a living laboratory where such interrelatedness can be studied. Here the small fish can be seen gathering nutrients from plants and mud in the shallows; water-birds and large fish can be seen feeding on small fish and insects; municipalities need natural areas as a focus of educational activity.

Alienation from nature is alienation from self for we are ourselves part of the natural order. The modern city is an image of ourselves – fragmented, chaotic, hurried and out-of-control. The more the modern city gets out-of-control, the more we try to bend it to our ill forcibly. We cut wider swathes through it, lay more concrete, erect taller buildings. All is hard lines and harsh sounds, taut shapes, surfaces reflecting heat and light. The bush by comparison may be equally impressive in size but has softness of form and colour, light and sound, and moves at less hurried rhythms.

Our Western intellectual heritage, in large part, cuts us off from responding to the non-rational parts of our own nature – our ‘wildness’ – and so we try to restrain the wildness or wilderness outside us also. Modern man needs to get out of

his mind and regain his senses. Accepting wilderness or wildness in urban areas has a deep psychological significance. It is the beginning of learning to stop constantly manipulating the environment as if it were an inanimate external object and stopping long enough to appreciate it, respond to it and have our behaviour modified by it. In this way we may rediscover what it means to respond, to be responsive to our environment – in all its aspects – personal, social and natural. When we stop manipulating long enough to respond, we may then learn to act cooperatively with the world rather than exploitatively and destructively. We may then begin to act responsibly and humanely to each other.

The alienation of urban man from the matrix of the natural world and from himself carries a heavy price. It is now clear that, despite advances in modern methods of hygiene and medicine, we in the cities are experiencing a major deterioration in life style, an increase in tension and anxiety, and a series of typical urban symptoms of increased crime rates, drug abuse, mental and emotional instability and physical ill health. The unavailability of open areas is not the only factor in urban decline, but it may well be a more significant one. Of the deprivation of the urban poor, environmental deprivation ranks as a serious cause of discontent. Maintaining or restoring natural areas in our cities is part of the process of restoring wholeness to the city and to urban industrial man. #





***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

The Bushland Bulletin is available to subscribers in hard copy or digital form or both. To obtain a digital copy all you have to do is send your email address to the Editor (see front cover).

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.

**NOTE: HALL MEETING
SUSPENDED UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE DUE TO
CORONAVIRUS**

**Further enquiries ring Col or
Skye**

BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY NOTICE of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**To be held at 65 Sturt Ave,
Georges Hall at 7.00pm,
Wednesday 18th November
2020. Members wanting to
attend and/or nominate for
committee positions please
notify BBS Secretary
Chris Dewhurst:
dewhurst2626@gmail.com**

**BUSHCARE
Bush regen at Monash
Reserve, East Hills, off
Henry Lawson Drive, with
C-BC Bushcare,
from 9.30 am to 12.00
every 4th Tuesday of the
month. Contact Skye:
0411584295.**

**BBS END OF YEAR
PICNIC
at Monash Reserve, East
Hills, Saturday 28th
November from 11.00am.
*See you there.***

**BBS RETURN & EARN
You can help the Society
by donating your cash
returns from recyclables at
the following R&E
stations:
Bankstown Golf Course
Milperra,
Arena Sports Club
Yagoona,
Woolworths Bass Hill
& Aventus Soccer Club
Bankstown.
Opportunity lasts till
21st February 2021.**

BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY COMMITTEE for 2020

President:
Ashlie Stevenson

Vice President:
Skye Virgin: 0411584295

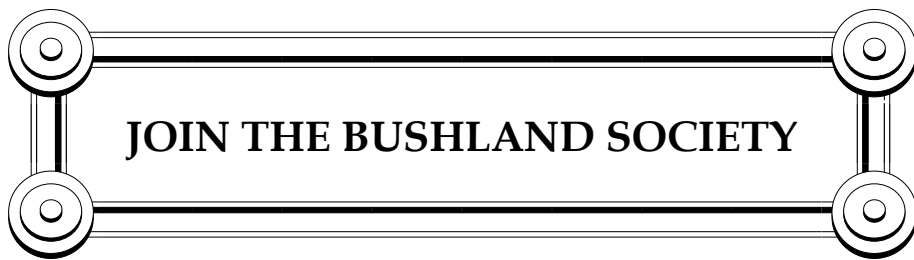
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John Gibson: 9772 3549

Committee Members:
Wa Browning
Darryl McKay
Karlo Taliana
Ian Bailey

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



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 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.



I wish to join

Bankstown Bushland Society Inc:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode _____

Telephone No. _____

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 put
your name on the transfer form.**

Enquiries: greenaissance1@gmail.com



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

