bushland news

urban nature

Issue 135 **Spring** 2025 *Time of Djilba and Kambarang in the Noongar calendar.*

Landcare Expertise Exchange and Leadership Academy

Photo – Mike Norman.

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of **Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Bushland News *is a quarterly newsletter of the Urban Nature program to support community involvement in bushland conservation.*

bushlandnews urban nature
Issue 135 Spring 2025
Time of Djilba and Kambarang in the Noongar calendar.

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Contacts

Urban Nature office
Julia Culity 0400 017 977
Grazyna Paczkowska 9442 0322
Email urban.nature@dbca.wa.gov.au

Parks and Wildlife Service
Parks and Wildlife Service, Swan Region Office
Cnr Australia II Drive and Hackett Drive, Crawley WA 6009
Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983

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Next issue

Summer *Bushland News*

Summer *Bushland News* contributions should be sent to Urban Nature by **Monday 10 November 2025**. *Bushland News* seeks original contributions. If your submission has been or may be published elsewhere please let us know. Compiled and edited by Jaimee Nobbs, Louise Kaestner, Rebecca Dassens, Diana Biondini and Diego Lara. Lara.

Landcare Expertise Exchange and Leadership Academy

By Vanessa Slater

Continued next page ...

WA Landcare Network volunteers are learning about virtual fencing and impact grazing at Gabyon Station in Yalgoo in June 2025. At the event, volunteers heard from pastoralist owner of Gabyon Station, Gemma, and guest speaker and regenerative Mexican rancher, Alejandro Carillo (to the left of Gemma). Alejandro Carillo has turned his property into a thriving grassland through rotational grazing. Photo - Sarah Jeffery.

The WA Landcare Network (WALN) is the peak body for community Landcare in Western Australia, representing and building capacity for more than 6,000 West Australians who are involved with community landcare, coast and water care and environmental action in WA.

In 2023, WA Landcare Network members around the state held a range of events to celebrate 40 years of landcare in WA and the amazing achievements of the movement. Key to these celebrations was the launch of the WA Landcarers' Hall of Fame, recognising the champions of the landcare movement from around the state with an initial induction of 12 incredible, committed landcarers.

The Hall of Fame grew by 12 people in 2024 with eight more inducted this year and the logical next step began to appear. "The absolute wealth of knowledge that exists within the Hall of Fame is a huge resource for the community landcare movement in WA and nationally", said WALN CEO Jacqueline Lahne.

Continued next page ...

Front cover: WALN is the peak body for community Landcare in Western Australia. Member groups such as the Friends of Sorrento Beach, here at a planting day, are amongst 6,000 West Australians who take actions to protect their local environment. The Landcare Expertise Exchange and the Landcare Leadership Academy are two new initiatives to help build capacity within the conservation community. Photo – Mike Norman.

"Increasing numbers of younger people are joining the landcare movement which is a fantastic trend, and we want to link the individuals demonstrating great leadership with the champions in the Hall of Fame so they can connect and cross-pollinate, enjoying powerful and productive mentoring relationships that will benefit the environment and the community." WALN is in negotiations with a number of potential supporters of the Landcare Leadership Academy and invites contact from interested parties.

The second blossoming from the 40 Years of landcare celebrations was the advent of the Landcare Expertise Exchange, designed to connect WA Landcare members, the sector and the broader community through an online platform on the WALN website where expertise and information can be exchanged and collaborations brokered, extending best available practice for the benefit of the environment.

WA Landcare Network volunteers, Paige and Kara, in action holding gladioli flowers at the Porteous Park weeding day in July 2012. Photo – Mike Norman.

Dedicated WA Landcare Network volunteers weeding at Goode Beach and Tondirrup National Park as part of the community landcare initiatives running year-round. Photo – Linda Mathews.

As the Landcare Expertise Exchange Facilitator, my role is to moderate the platform and connect people to expertise, advice and information while curating a library of resources which we hope the whole sector will contribute to.

The Landcare Expertise Exchange is a brilliant innovation for community landcare giving the opportunity to people to share the vast amount of practice wisdom and experience they have, with one another. Having been a landcare coordinator for years I know the opportunities this can create for people working in the environment to support one another and collaborate.

We are aiming for a soft launch in spring and will keep everyone posted on our socials so they can jump in and have a look and a post!

WALN will continue to advocate for funding, from a range of sources, for landcare coordinator positions with the intention to be place-based with community landcare groups around the state. "The loss of 70 landcare coordinators in WA over the last decade has been massive in terms of opportunity cost to the environment and the community", Jacqueline said. "We are also working with a number of key stakeholders to advocate for an Environmental/ Natural Resource Management Strategy for WA. This would enable small and larger scale environmental actions to be more coordinated and potentially have a multiplier effect across the state."

Contact

Vanessa Slater
WA Landcare Network
email leef@landcarewa.org.au
web www.landcarewa.org.au

Urban Nature update

More in the toolkit for African lovegrass control

By Carl Gosper, Julia Cullity and Grazyna Paczkowska

African lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*) is an invader of disturbed bushlands, particularly roadsides and railways in the heavier soils on the eastern side of the Swan Coastal Plain, where it can impact threatened flora such as *Grevillea curviloba*.

African lovegrass is resistant to grass-selective, group 1 herbicides (fops herbicides such as Fusilade®) and most practitioners use glyphosate to control it in WA. In 2019 DBCA set up a herbicide trial and our results show that the grass-selective herbicide flupropanate is effective in controlling African lovegrass in the Mediterranean climate of southwest WA. No off-target impacts were detected on co-occurring native plants when grouped as similar life forms, nor was *Grevillea curviloba* impacted when deliberately treated with flupropanate.

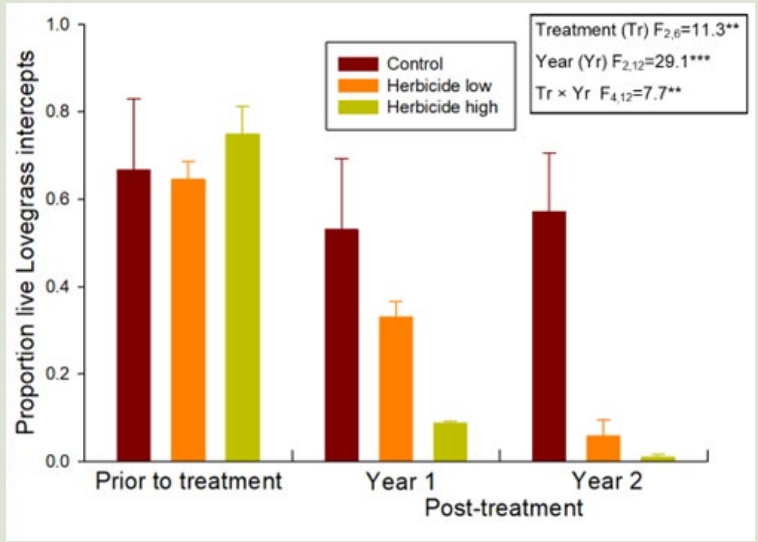
Flupropanate is sold as either a granular or liquid herbicide and applied by scattering granules on soil or as a foliar spray. The herbicide has low contact activity and is mainly absorbed into the soil and taken up by the roots when it rains after application. African lovegrass grows actively during the warmer months and in the southwest the best time to control with herbicide is October – May. We wanted to test whether the minimal summer rainfall we experience in Perth would impact herbicide effectiveness. We sprayed in November 2019 and 2020 at both the label rate for WA (3ml/L) and a half rate (1.5ml/L). Flupropanate was effective and significantly reduced African lovegrass cover with a greater reduction at the higher, label rate.

Flupropanate is slow acting and the label highlights it might take 3-12 months to see results. In our case plants were dead within a year but unfortunately, we didn't measure how long it took.

We also measured off-target damage to the co-occurring plants. The study site was highly disturbed with dense weed cover. It's likely the roots of most plants in the treatment plots would have been exposed to flupropanate. There were insufficient data to statistically analyse at species level, so plants were grouped in similar life forms: invasive annuals, invasive perennial groundcovers, native perennial groundcovers and native shrubs. No adverse effects of the herbicide were detected for any of the functional groups but there was some evidence that a native rush *Desmocladus virgatus* was impacted. A word of caution, further testing of flupropanate is required in less degraded sites to fully appreciate off-target effects. It is also worth noting that flupropanate had no control on weedy perennial veld grass (*Ehrharta calycina*).

We selected this study site because it was adjacent to a population of threatened flora *Grevillea curviloba*, a species requiring protection from African lovegrass. We deliberately sprayed three potentially 'sacrificial' *G. curviloba* and, from this limited sample, there were no deaths or changes in plant condition.

After years of using broad-spectrum glyphosate for the control of African lovegrass, it's great to have another option with an effective, selective herbicide.



The effects of flupropanate on African lovegrass before and after two years of herbicide control. The higher label rate (green bars) resulted in a greater decline in weed cover in the first year post-treatment, compared to applying at half the label rate. Although a second application further reduced African lovegrass at both herbicide rates, the difference between rates was maintained. Photos – Grazyna Paczkowska.

New boots on the ground for Greater Brixton Street Wetlands *By Cat Williams*

After two decades working in landcare across Perth, I'm thrilled to join the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) in a new role as an operation officer conservation for the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands made possible through a State Government funding boost. My journey has taken me through various not-for-profit environmental organisations, including APACE WA and SERCUL, where I've been deeply involved in community-driven conservation efforts.

My background is diverse, starting in electrical engineering in the UK, and evolving into environmental grant writing, budgeting and project implementation here in Western Australia. I'm passionate about practical, hands-on work such as seed collection, revegetation and weed control. I find great satisfaction in seeing restoration projects come to life. I also enjoy volunteering with my local bushland group Roleybushcare and sit as vice-chair on the Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group, thus contributing my skills to community based landcare.

Over the past five years, I've worked closely with DBCA and local communities through Perth NRM's Threatened Ecological Communities project.

This collaboration enabled several successful restoration initiatives in Greater Brixton Street Wetlands, and I'm excited to continue this work from within DBCA.

In my new role, I'll be working alongside the Friends of Brixton Street Wetlands and other land managers, including my former employer, SERCUL - as we implement their latest WA State NRM grant. This partnership is a great example of how government and community can work together to protect and restore our unique urban bushland.

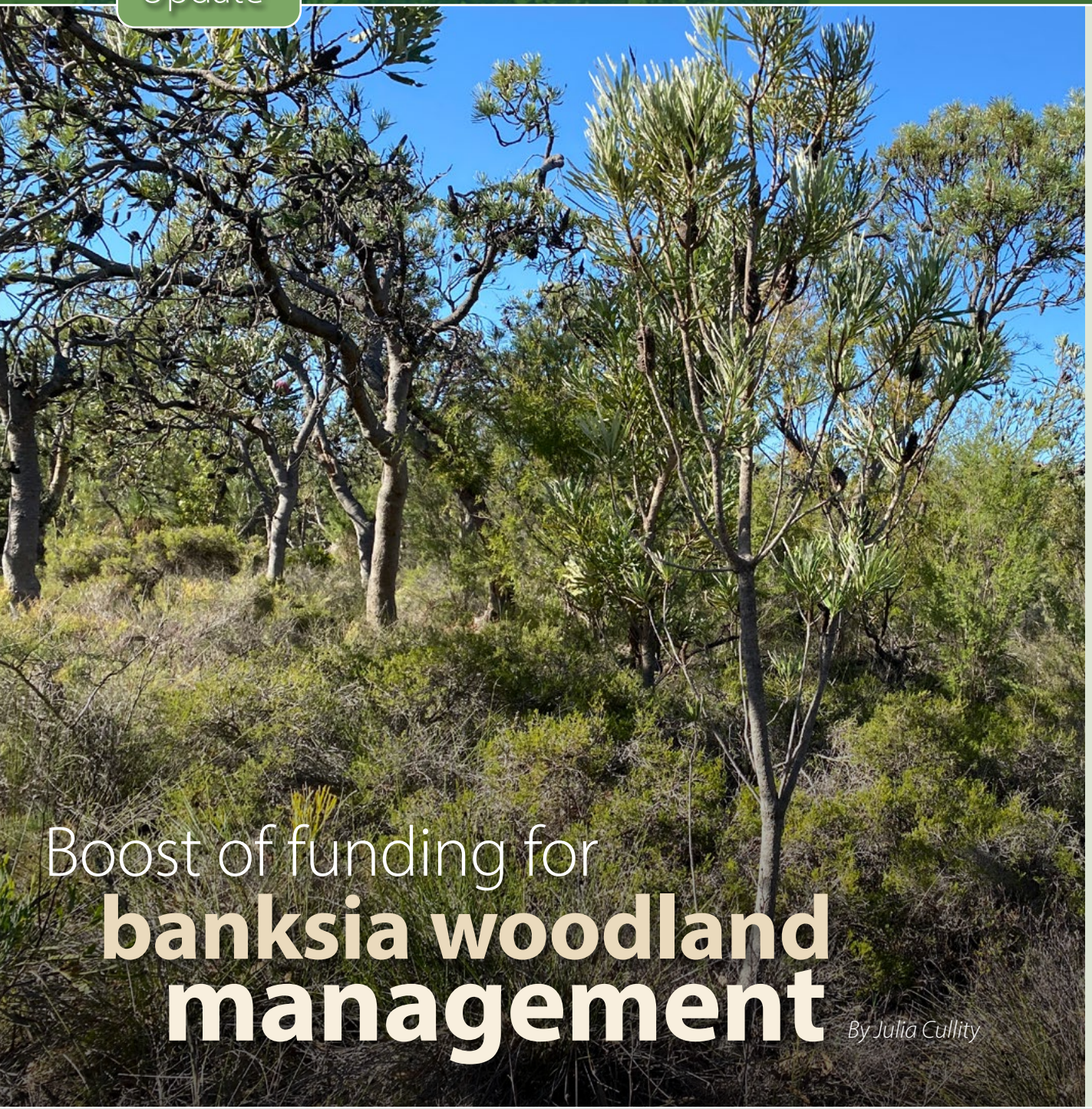
One of the highlights of this transition is sharing an office with DBCA's Urban Nature Team. Their depth of knowledge and willingness to share insights has already made a big impact on my work. I look forward to learning more from them.

I'm excited to contribute to the conservation of one of Perth's most biodiverse wetland areas and to continue building strong relationships with the community and fellow landcare professionals.

Contact

Cat Williams
DBCA
phone 0447 929 291
email cat.williams@dbca.wa.gov.au

Cat at a recent Roleybushcare weeding event at Colquhoun Reserve in July 2025. Photo – Paige Boyatzis, Roleybushcare.



Boost of funding for banksia woodland management

By Julia Cullity

The Urban Nature team are excited to announce a new four-year partnership project between DBCA and Perth NRM, supported by the Australian Government National Heritage Trust. The project aims to further improve and protect priority sites of Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain threatened ecological community. This funding will support the restoration and management of banksia woodlands at Paganoni Swamp, Wandi Nature Reserve and Neerabup National Park.

This welcome funding will continue Perth NRM's support of the Friends of Paganoni Swamp and DBCA's weed management, feral animal control, planting and dieback treatment at Paganoni Swamp, 700ha of regionally significant banksia and tuart woodlands and wetlands. Funding will also allow us to undertake some strategic weed management of perennial veld grass at Wandi Nature Reserve. Wandi Nature Reserve is banksia woodland in excellent condition and, at only 30ha, needs periodic treatment of grasses invading from the edges to help maintain its condition. Work at Neerabup National Park will focus on gathering important baseline data on bushland condition and invasive plants and animals, controlling weeds and ferals and revegetation in degraded areas.

The Urban Nature team look forward to working together with Perth NRM at Paganoni Swamp and Wandi.

Excellent condition banksia woodland at Wandi Nature Reserve. Thanks Perth NRM for your helping hand to keep it that way. Photo – Julia Cullity.

Little robin (*Geranium purpureum*) big problem

By Greg and Bronwen Keighery

Predicting the invasiveness and impact of weeds is challenging, particularly when data is limited. In the right habitat and climate, free from natural constraints, the impacts of weedy plants can be surprising.

Geraniaceae: from ornamentals to invasives

Members of the plant family Geraniaceae are widely grown, especially *Geranium* (430 species) and *Pelargonium* (280 species). Most of our garden 'geraniums' are in fact pelargoniums from South Africa. Some *Erodiums* (80 species) are common weeds of temperate and arid Australia, especially common storksbill (*Erodium cicutarium*). Rose pelargonium (*Pelargonium capitatum*) is a serious invasive coastal weed, and garden geranium (*Pelargonium alchemilloides*) is a national alert weed with an established population near Hamelin Bay.

In general, the three species of *Geranium* naturalised in Western Australia are thought to be very minor weeds. However recent observations have raised cause for concern. Little robin (*Geranium purpureum*) is an erect annual herb with small pink flowers. The species is closely related to herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and is often listed as Geranium *robertianum* subspecies *purpureum*. Currently, the two are treated as separate species differing in little robin having smaller flowers, broader leaf lobes, foliage not malodorous and yellow, not purple, anthers.

A widespread global distribution

Little robin is a widespread species, occurring naturally in southern Europe, north Africa and west to Iran. Its range continues to extend through northern Europe and has naturalised itself in Korea, California, South America, New Zealand, and Australia. The species was introduced as a garden plant in Australia and has since naturalised in New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia. The species adapts well to Mediterranean climates and is considered invasive in California where it can dominate oak woodland understories. However, little else is published on its impacts.

The current range in Western Australia

Herbarium records show that the species has a recent naturalisation in Australia. The first records appear in 1976 in New South Wales and then in 2000 in Western Australia. However, it is believed that introduction and naturalisation had occurred prior to these records. For example, in Western Australia the few naturalised records from Yundurup and east of Augusta are more than 200km apart.

In Western Australia, the current recorded main range of the weed is the near coastal sands of the Scott Plains east of Augusta. During recent surveys of these coastal woodlands, extremely dense stands of little robin were recorded in peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*), the main vegetation that dominates this area.

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*Despite its pretty bloom and delicate features, little robin (*Geranium purpureum*) is a major invasive weed that threatens native flora.*

*Little robin (*Geranium purpureum*), big problem. The spread of this invasive weed is extensive as it smothers native understory in coastal peppermint woodlands in the Scott Plains east of Augusta. Photos – Bronwen Keighery.*

The ecological risks to native species

Plants of little robin can completely dominate the understory of these coastal woodlands, which normally contain a diverse range of herbs, sedges, grasses and shrubs. Standard (100m^2) flora survey quadrats established by the Wildflower Society of Western Australia in peppermint dominated woodlands normally record 25–40 species per quadrat. Those dominated by little robin show a reduced diversity and abundance of these understory species from 40 species prior to invasion down to 31 in one quadrat and 27 to 15 in another, mainly displacing the annual herbs and orchids which are common in these coastal sites.

The dense stands of this species are likely enhanced by fire removing shrubs and increasing nutrients. This is demonstrated on road verges where increased nutrients and disturbance have resulted in very dense populations dominating the understory. Annual weeds in other Western Australian woodlands have been shown to inhibit regeneration of woody shrubs.

Coastal peppermint dominated woodlands extend from Busselton to east of Albany. The woodlands are the major habitat for the endangered western ringtail possum. Peppermints are also highly vulnerable to myrtle rust, which could aid little robin invasion by degrading the overstory. Currently the weed is relatively localised but beyond eradication.

An emerging threat: herb-robert and little robin

Herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*), is distributed from the Mediterranean north to Britain and the Baltic, and east to Japan and is recorded as a weed in North and South America, New Zealand, and Australia (New South Wales and Victoria). The species is cultivated in Western Australia, seeds freely and establishes self-sustaining populations in gardens in Perth and Denmark. Given it is larger and able to hybridise with little robin, this species is also a potential threat to coastal woodlands and shrublands.

Prioritising removal and management strategies

Both species should not be sold in nurseries to lessen the chance of further naturalisation events. There are beautiful native alternatives of Geraniaceae such as native Geraniums (*Geranium dissectum*, or *G. Solanderi*) or native Pelargoniums (*P. Littorale*, *P. Australe*, *P. Drummondii* or the lovely *P. Havlassae*). Many of these are available from community nurseries such as the Geographe or Leschenault nurseries. These plants are better suited and more beneficial for home gardens.

Removal of new small infestations of little robin outside the current main range to limit spread, both west and east, would limit potential long-term effects. Prioritising if the outlying population near Mandurah is still extant would be a good starting point for mitigation efforts.

Contact

Greg and Bronwen Keighery
DBCA
post Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA, 6983

*Herb robert (*Geranium robertianum*), with its delicate bright flowers, is closely related to little robin (*Geranium purpureum*). Both species share not only a striking resemblance but also pose a significant invasive threat to coastal woodlands, where their rapid spread can displace native understory flora. Photo – Stephanie von Gavel.*

Insect Investigators: citizen science

By Dr Andy Howe and Dr Erinn Fagan-Jeffries

Citizen science is playing an increasing role in environmental monitoring and research. Insect Investigators is one program that delivered school-based projects coupling education with 'real science' experiences for school students. Insects are everywhere. It turns out they can teach us a lot, not just about ecosystems but about the process of science itself.

In our citizen science project, Insect Investigators, students from 50 regional and remote Australian schools joined forces with entomologists and educators to document local insect biodiversity. Along the way, they learned about insect taxonomy, conservation, ecosystems and how their involvement in science is linked to caring for nature.

In Western Australia, 17 schools participated in the Insect Investigators project from 2022–23. From Kwoorabup Nature School in the south, to Kalumburu Remote Community School in the north, educators from Herdsman Lake Discovery Centre, operated by Gould League WA, visited schools to engage students in entomology and the scientific processes of documenting insect species.

Insects are crucial for healthy ecosystems

Insects form the backbone of nearly every terrestrial ecosystem on Earth. We know they pollinate, recycle nutrients, control pests and provide food for countless other species. However, there is still so much to learn about their diversity and distribution.

A malaise trap trapping eager students into learning about insects. Photo – Erinn Fagan-Jeffries.

An avid student netting themselves. Photo – Nathan Ducker.

Surprisingly, only about one-third of Australian insects have been formally described leaving two-thirds as 'dark taxa', which means unknown to science. This makes it challenging to manage ecosystems and conserve biodiversity. Without knowing what's out there and where or what it is called how can we protect or communicate about it?

Students as researchers!

As part of Insect Investigators, students deployed Malaise traps. Malaise traps are like a tent which specializes in catching flying insects. The students deployed these traps on school grounds to collect local insect species. Specimens were DNA barcoded and some were sent to taxonomists to be described and named. Many schools helped name new species, including numerous parasitoid wasps that emerged from caterpillars of invasive pests like the fall armyworm, *Spodoptera frugiperda*. So far, Insect Investigators have described over 17 species. Kids have the opportunity to name the insects they find. Isn't that awesome?

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Many of the tiny wasps that students documented are part of Australia's natural ecosystem defense. They help in regulating pest population. Discovering where they occur directly supports sustainable pest management strategies. Another group of insects that schools collected were insects of economic and potential biosecurity importance to agriculture. Schools' data on almost 10,000 species is publicly available on the Atlas of Living Australia.

Insect Investigators investigating insects. Photo – Nathan Ducker.

"I didn't think wasps could be good"

One of the most powerful impacts was how school participation in citizen science projects, like Insect Investigators, has the potential to change students' attitudes. Surveys showed that after participating, students were more likely to value insects and more willing to engage in pro-environmental behaviour, such as spending time in nature or encouraging others to protect wildlife.

Citizen science aligns seamlessly with curriculum

Citizen science is a chance for teachers to develop their own and students' skill sets. Participants received flexible, curriculum-aligned lesson plans and kits that included sweep nets, ID guides and videos (all available on the Insect Investigators homepage). Throughout the project, educators and researchers engaged schools with scientific experiences from hands-on collection of specimens, videos of the sorting of trap contents and exploration of schools' data on the Barcode of Life Database (BOLD). This exposes students to authentic scientific practices. One teacher said "…the skills and mindsets taught throughout [the project] promoted the fact that we can all undertake citizen science."

Ecosystem awareness from the ground up

From a science education point of view, projects like Insect Investigators show that ecosystems don't have to be remote rainforests or coral reefs. They can be as close as the nearest flower bed. By working together, scientists, teachers and students help to build a national picture of insect biodiversity while fostering ecological awareness and scientific literacy.

Students deliberating on naming and describing a newly discovered insect. Photo – Nathan Ducker.

In a time of growing environmental uncertainty, empowering young people to notice and care for the small creatures in their own backyards could be one of our most powerful strategies for long-term conservation.

Contact

Dr Andy Howe
University of the Sunshine Coast
email ahowe@usc.edu.au

Dr Erinn Fagan-Jeffries
University of Adelaide
email erinn.fagan-jeffries@adelaide.edu.au
web www.insectinvestigators.com.au

Polyphagous shot-hole borer: managing the pest into the future

By Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Since 2021, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has been responding to an incursion of the polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB). PSHB is an invasive beetle that damages trees by tunnelling into trunks and branches and spreading a fungus, which can lead to tree death. This tiny pest poses a threat to Perth's urban canopy and horticultural industries.

After more than three years of eradication efforts, Australia's leading plant biosecurity experts have determined that eradication is no longer technically feasible. DPIRD is now developing a national Transition to Management plan to transition from the eradication response to a management phase from 1 July 2025.

This decision was based on several factors, including the difficulty in early detection, control before reproduction, and the lack of effective chemical controls. Continuing with eradication would have required the removal of a significant number of trees from Perth's urban landscape, with little chance of success.

Subsequently, the response is now entering its next phase: transitioning from eradication to long-term management. The initial focus is on slowing the spread and containing the pest within the Perth metropolitan area, as well as knowledge transfer and capacity building. DPIRD is working closely with State Government, local government, industry, and the community to build the knowledge and capacity needed for long-term management.

The State Government has committed significant funding to canopy restoration and research, including:

- $7.2 million in Tree Recovery Grants and rebates for local governments and residents
- $2.17 million for research through the Western Australia Agricultural Research Collaboration
- **Reporting is still essential: especially in the outer metropolitan area**. Community members can continue to play a vital role by staying alert for signs of PSHB.

Look out for

- Small, round entry holes (about the size of a ballpoint pen tip)
- Black galleries in the wood (caused by fungal staining)
- Gumming or staining
- Frass (sawdust) on the trunk or branches
- Branch dieback or canopy thinning

Report signs of PSHB via the MyPestGuide® Reporter app, email padis@dpird.wa.gov.au, or call (08) 9368 3080.

The PSHB Quarantine Area and wood movement restrictions remain in place to limit the spread of the pest. For more information, please visit https://www.dpird.wa.gov.au/pshb.

Together, we can help protect WA's trees and natural environment for future generations.

Contact

Courtney Butterworth
DPIRD
email Courtney.Butterworth@dpird.wa.gov.au

*Close up of the devasting Polyphagus Shot Hole Borer (*Euwallacea fornicatus*) on a pile of saw dust. Photo – DPIRD.*

PSHB holes being measured utilzing the MyPestGuide magnifier card available in libraries. Photo – DPIRD.

Trapdoor tripping

By Jason Bird

Typically, citizen science programs are centred around a large, boisterous species which makes finding the target much easier. Attempting to find a burrow that is roughly the size of a 10-cent coin and individuals that only come out of their burrow after rain and usually at night, made this one of the more challenging citizen science programs we have undertaken in recent years.

Yet volunteers from Wirambi Landcare, South Metropolitan Tafe students, Rehabilitation Roe 8, the Friends of Booragoon and Blue Gum Lakes, Friends of Applecross Foreshore and staff from DBCA and the cities of Cockburn and Melville took on this challenge. This year we welcome the City of Mandurah. By using a strip survey method, walking in transect lines, counting trapdoor burrows for 20 minutes, we can discover a lot about the 17 trapdoor sider species that occur around Perth. On the sandy country on the coastal plain, the lidless trapdoor species are more common, with lidded species being more likely to occur in the hills.

*The burrow of a black wish-bone spider (*Aname mainae*) found in the Perth hills. Photo –Geoff Barrett.*

In last year's tally a total of 86 surveys were completed by 56 community volunteers, across 69 sites. Of the sites surveyed, 21 (30%) were occupied by trapdoors, and across these 21 sites, the average number of burrows recorded per survey was 3.2. The highest density of burrows was recorded at Lowlands Nature Reserve, with an average of 10 burrows per hectare. As they grow trapdoors enlarge their burrows so, like growth rings on a tree stump, large burrows identify old spiders and small burrows (<15mm diameter) identify young spiders. Both large and small burrows occurred, indicating recruitment at some sites.

Understanding trapdoors helps us to see the bushland in a different way. They are sensitive to disturbance so, if you find them, you are standing on ground that has escaped the worst impacts of grazing animals, weed invasion and human activity.

Both male and female trapdoors spend most of their time in burrows, ready to pounce on beetles, slaters and even baby skinks that that wander too close, activating trip-lines which extend from the entrance. This sit-and-wait lifestyle makes for a long life, particularly for females, with one individual recorded by researcher Barbara York Main, to have lived in the Wheatbelt, in the same burrow, for 43 years. To attract a male, some species will lay a silk 'doily' at the entrance of the burrow, making it easier to find.

This year's tally begins September 1st and finishes October 31st. Participants can log opportunistic observations by joining the iNaturalist group

*The lidless banksia trapdoor spider (*Proshermacha tepperi*) often constructs a burrow at the base of a small shrub, to protect itself from being dug up by quenda or black rats. Photo Geoff – Barrett.*

Trapdoor Spider Tally – Swan Coastal Plain or by emailing us the date the species was found, location and a photograph to help identify. The other option is the strip survey method, you can email us for the instructions and data sheet.

Look out for workshops and training days on our Facebook page in September this year to learn how you can be involved and help protect trapdoor spiders on the Swan Coastal Plain.

Contact

Jason Bird
email wirambilandcare@gmail.com
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/wirambilandcare

Please send us your regional report (400 words) and one or two photos by Monday 10 November 2025. Text may be edited in response to volume of submitted reports.

From one watering can to sixty volunteers: The growth of FOY's Tanah Close site

A picture from our latest event, 60 eco warriors who successfully planted over 800 native seedlings. Photo – Ashleigh Fairchild.

In 2019, a dry, barren stretch of land on the western banks of Lake Goollelal seemed almost impossible to rehabilitate. The site now known locally as "Tanah Close" was little more than a sandy expanse, void of flora, wildlife, and even worms. But for Friends of Yellagonga (FOY), this challenging space was the perfect place to begin something meaningful. That first year, one committed volunteer and his children planted dozens of tiny banksias, hand-watered them from the lake with watering cans and returned week after week to keep them alive. There was no irrigation system, no shade, and no guarantee of success, only a hope that with care and perseverance, nature would respond – and it did.

Over the next three years, through consistent community planting days and ongoing stewardship, those fragile seedlings transformed into thriving trees. Today, the Tanah Close site is living proof of what a small group of dedicated people can achieve.

What was once a treeless void is now a vibrant patch of native habitat, playing a small but important role in the ecological restoration of Yellagonga Wetlands.

Fast forward to our most recent planting event in July 2025 and what a milestone. More than 60 local eco-warriors came together to plant over 800 native seedlings in a single day. The smiles were wide, the shovels were busy, and the sense of community was tangible. But behind every successful event like this is a group of volunteers who do the quiet work: prepping the site, collecting seedlings, towing trailers, delivering equipment, and attending monthly planning meetings. While we're incredibly proud of the turnout at our public planting days, we're now seeking more behind-the-scenes heroes to help keep the momentum going.

If you care about the future of Lake Goollelal and want to make a lasting impact, we invite you to join the Friends of Yellagonga Committee.

An aerial photo of the Tanah Close site in 2019 prior to work beginning (above) and the same site in 2024, after revegetation.

We're currently looking for new members ahead of our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 1 October. The time commitment is just a few hours a month, but the contribution you make will last for generations.

Contact

Friends of Yellagonga
email friendsofyellagonga@gmail.com
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofYellagongaRegionalPark/

Protecting Albany's urban western ringtail possums: community-led conservation in action *By Emma Sommerville*

South Coast NRM, with support from the Australian Government's Saving Native Species Program, is leading a climate resilient conservation project in Albany. The project focused on the critically endangered western ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirus occidentalis*). Once widespread across southwest WA, the species has declined sharply and now survives in only three strongholds—Albany being one of them. Urban areas are emerging as important climate refuges for their survival.
The project delivers a suite of on-ground and community engagement activities aimed at improving habitat and awareness in urban Albany. These include:

1. Wildlife friendly gardening and urban greening initiatives
2. Climate mitigation strategies
3. Reducing pet predation and promoting responsible pet ownership
4. Road safety measures
5. Citizen science monitoring
6. Community awareness and education

Community members are actively involved in citizen science spotlight surveys in five urban bushland remnants, including Mt Clarence, Mt Melville and Bayonet Head. These biannual surveys, running from Spring 2024 to Autumn 2026, will help establish baseline data on possum abundance and distribution.

South Coast NRM is also encouraging recovery actions for western ringtail possums in urban and semi-urban gardens. This is being done by offering a range of garden-friendly incentives such as possum nest boxes, water sources, rebates for cat enclosures and possum- safe dog fencing, along with locally native, possum-friendly plants. So far, 50 nest boxes, 50 bird baths and over 1,000 seedlings have been distributed to support backyard habitat.

Rebates for responsible pet ownership are also being rolled out. As part of the urban greening efforts, two new public sites have been established to boost canopy connectivity—critical for possum movement and survival. These sites were selected for their combined habitat and community value and were planted by the Southern Aboriginal Corporation Rangers using a diverse mix of locally native trees, shrubs and understorey species known to benefit western ringtail possums. The rangers have also supported planting efforts on semi-urban properties and at a local primary school.

Additionally, installation of new signage across Albany is underway to help reduce possum road mortality—one of the most significant threats in urban environments. Through workshops, spotlight walks, community events and education, this project is raising awareness and inspiring local action.

This project is being delivered in partnership with Oyster Harbour Catchment Group, Torbay Catchment Group, UWA Albany, City of Albany, Southern Aboriginal Corporation and Cat Laws and Wildlife Survival Group. By combining science, habitat restoration and community stewardship, South Coast NRM and its partners are supporting both possum populations and deeper connections between people and nature across Albany.

Contact

South Coast NRM
email info@southcoastnrm.com.au
web https://southcoastnrm.com.au/urban-possums/

Look up, down and all around! A western ringtail possum spotted during a spotlight survey at Mount Clarence. Photo – Emma Sommerville.

Community member, Aline Gibson Vega, in the process of installing her possum nest box she received as part of the project. Photo – Bronte Van Helden.

Biophilic public art - City of Melville

By Ruby Kingsmill

In June 2025, the City of Melville hosted a first-of-its-kind, four-day immersive Biophilic Public Art Lab. The Lab brought together fourteen artists, landscape designers, and architects from across Australia, all drawn to public art through practices that engage deeply with place and the environment.

Participants collaborated with some of Western Australia's leading experts in biodiversity conservation and life sciences, brought together by renowned ecologist and science communicator Mandy Bamford; with an introductory Two Knowledges Walk led by Noongar Elder Dr Noel Nannup, and Professor Stephen Hopper. A further twelve expert speakers shared their rich insights through the Lab; broadening participants' understanding of biophilic principles, ecological systems and the challenges of caring for remnant outposts of these in urban environments.

Framed by the vision that public art can care for another species, the Lab explored how creative practice might strengthen our connection to place, tell the story of habitat, and support biodiversity, particularly in dense urban areas where natural restoration is limited.

Artists examined how art and design could respond to ecological challenges through practical and poetic interventions such as creating roosting, watering, or resting structures for wildlife that also carry aesthetic and cultural meaning.

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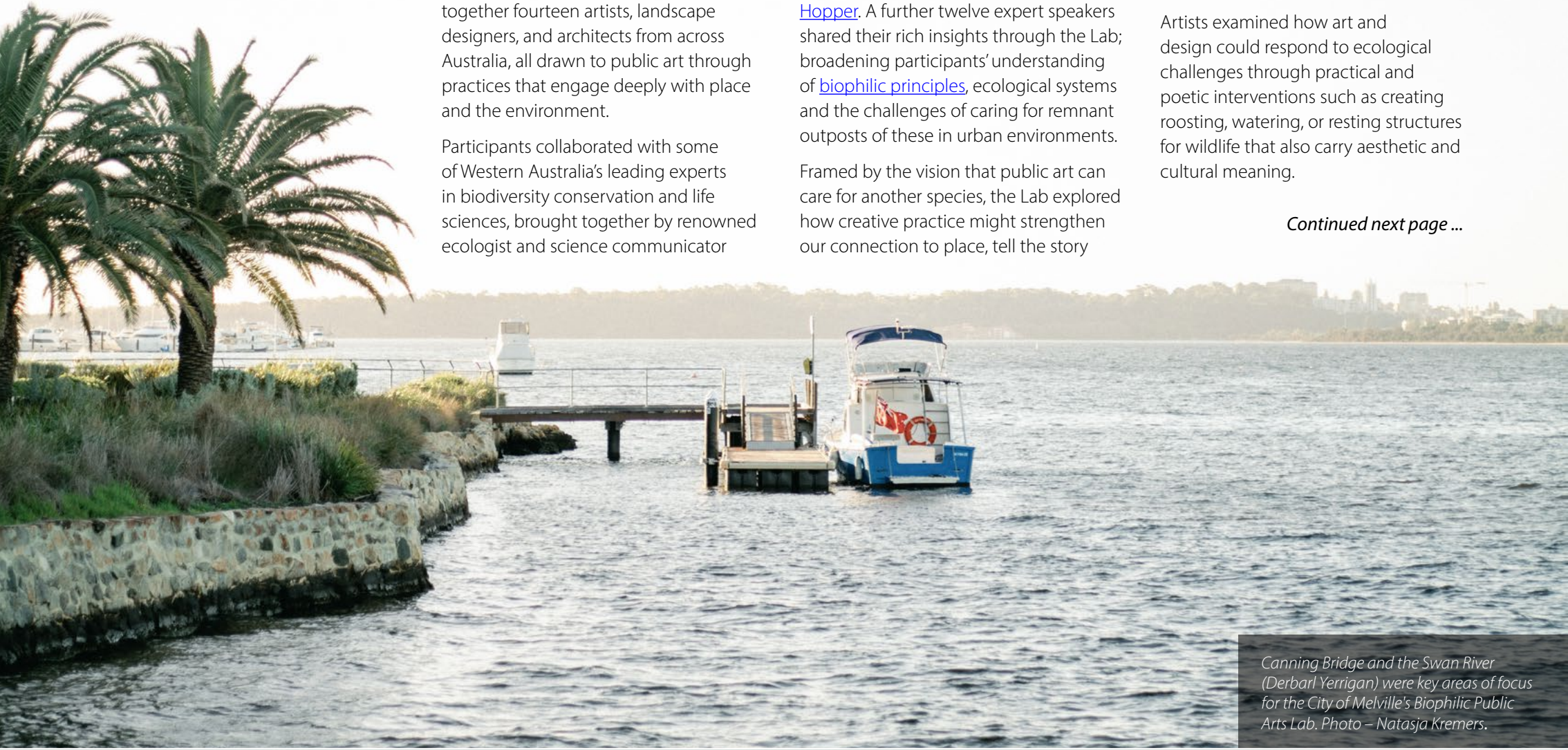

Canning Bridge and the Swan River (Derbarl Yerrigan) were key areas of focus for the City of Melville's Biophilic Public Arts Lab. Photo – Natasja Kremers.

A beautiful shot of all the smiling faces that attended the Biophilic Public Art Lab in June 2025. Photo – Natasja Kremers.

While it became clear there is still much for artists to learn in this space, the Lab created a vital platform for collaboration and cross-disciplinary exchange. Artists expressed a strong desire to continue working with scientists and environmentalists to develop informed, impactful, and ecologically responsive outcomes.

The Lab reflected a meaningful shift in the City of Melville's public art direction, embedding long-term cultural and environmental thinking into the foundations of planning and commissioning. Building on this momentum, the city will undertake further research and development to ensure future public art projects integrate biophilic principles grounded in knowledge-sharing, genuine care, and real-world ecological solutions.

Contact

Ruby Kingsmill
Detail
email ruby@detail.com.au

Friends of the Shelley Rossmoyne Foreshore, old group with a new name

By Stephen Johnston

Our community conservation group works with the City of Canning to protect and enhance the natural environment of the Shelley Rossmoyne foreshore. Recently we have changed our name for the first time since establishing 31 years ago. Originally named the Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association, it is now the Friends of the Shelley Rossmoyne Foreshore (FoSRF). The original name was too long so the association was most often referred to by a phonetic version of its acronym: 'creepa'.

Our name didn't refer to the area we focus on and didn't promote our local identity which is so important in seeking new members. Another consideration was that since it originated in the early 1970s, the 'friends of' nomenclature been embraced by so many local community conservation bushcare and landcare groups across Australia that it has become a strong generic brand for these groups.

While public recognition of a name change always takes a little time, I'm confident that the community would soon use "the friends group" as an abbreviated reference for FoSRF. It certainly connotes a warmer, more positive feeling than 'creepa.'

The former "creepa", now known as the Friends of the Shelly Rossmoyne Foreshore, showcase their change of name by means of a bold banner inviting as many as possible to join them in their conservation work. Photo – Stephen Johnston.

Contact

Friends of Shelley Rossmoyne Foreshore
web www.sercul.org.au/crrepa/
email crrepa@gmail.com

Long-billed? Thrilled! The first case of Baudin's cockatoos (*Zanda baudinii*) breeding in an artificial tree-hollow

By Simon Cherriman

Every time I reach up to the opening of a nest-box and prepare to peer down and examine its contents, the same excited feeling of anticipation fills my mind. What will I see? Will there be a creature inside? A bird? A mammal? A much more cryptic reptile or invertebrate?

I still vividly remember picturing these possibilities while constructing the first nest-box I ever made in the mid-1990s. And it has been the same for the following three decades. The feeling of optimism and the potential for seeing a wild animal nesting or finding refuge inside an artificial tree-hollow made from recycled materials is like the excitement a child feels as they wonder what they might find inside their Christmas stocking!

Earlier this year, the familiar feeling bubbled up as I dangled on a climbing line 25m up in the magnificent canopy of Wadandi Boodja (the Augusta – Margaret River region). The first time I had scaled this tree was seven years prior. I had made a little wish back then that one day, a threatened cockatoo would nest here. Today that wish would come true.

As my eyes adjusted to the dim light, I could make out a large, healthy white-tailed cockatoo nestling swaying back and forth, but I was not sure which species. Its bill seemed longish, and the culmen laterally compressed, but I would need to photograph its parents to confirm its identity.

Although south-western Australia's two endemic white-tailed black cockatoos look almost identical, and were for a long time thought to be the same species, the Carnaby's (short-billed, *Zanda latirostris*) and Baudin's (long-billed, *Z. baudinii*) cockatoo have many differences. Work by Ron Johnstone and Tony Kirkby (2008, 2015) from the WA Museum has shown their calls are unique and their landscape-scale breeding ecology vastly different. Also, their success in using any of the (probably 1,000s of) artificial tree-hollows installed throughout the southwest region in the past two decades are like chalk and cheese. Carnaby's cockatoo has readily accepted such hollows as nesting sites, but there are no known records of Baudin's cockatoo successfully doing the same.

I zipped back down to earth (both physically and emotionally!) and that evening waited and watched. At dusk, a pair of cockatoos arrived to perch in the tree adjacent to the nest-box, and the adult female unmistakable 'wicha-wicha' contact call confirmed the inkling I had after hearing recordings taken by the property owners several days prior. They were Baudin's cockatoos!

Soon after, the female flew to the box, leaned into the entrance, and was seen and heard feeding the nestling, her long upper mandible clearly visible. The pair remained in the vicinity for some time, flying between the box and a nearby perch.

The first large, healthy Baudin's cockatoo nestling thriving inside a nesting box. Photo - Simon Cherriman.

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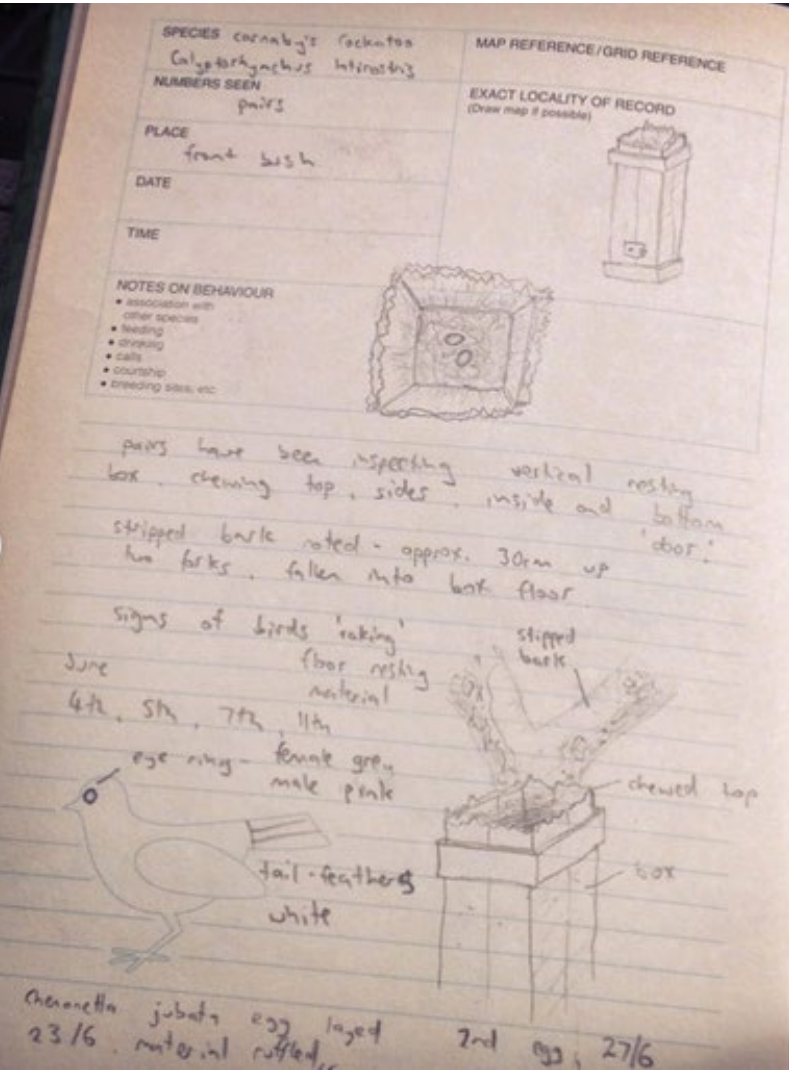

First iteration of the 'top entry' box by Simon Cherriman sketched on his notebook, showing the components and ideas behind it. Photo – Simon Cherriman.

Then after one more feed by the adult female, they left and the nestling descended into and remained in the box. By then it was almost totally dark.

This was the first confirmed record of Baudin's cockatoo successfully breeding inside an artificial tree-hollow. But what does it mean?

Carnaby's cockatoo has successfully bred in artificial hollows for many years but this has not led to an improved conservation status. The species (endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) is still declining due to ongoing habitat loss. We have a lot of work to do to improve this situation.

However, this finding is significant because it proves the same nest-box design is suitable for all three species of endemic black cockatoos in south-west WA. I based the 'top entry' box on a design I sketched in my bird-watching notebook more than 25 years ago, and it was built using measurements provided in 2011 by the WA Museum. This is a positive finding, because it provides proof that such hollows can assist with the species' recovery, provided they are used strategically and are monitored and maintained regularly.

*Adult female Baudin's **c**ockatoo perches atop artificial nest-box, her distinctively long bill visible, caring for her young inside. Photo – Simon Cherriman.*

Contact

Simon Cherriman
Insight Ornithology
email waalitj84@gmail.com
web www.simoncherriman.com.au

Tucked away, amidst the urban environment, Bob Blackburn Flora Reserve supports remarkable biodiversity. Through community environmental stewardship FoBBFR hopes to protect the reserve so all can appreciate this local ecological treasure. Photo – Michelle Davis.

Friends of Bob Blackburn Flora Reserve

Friends of Bob Blackburn Flora Reserve: protecting a local ecological treasure

By Michelle Davies

In the heart of Seville Grove, a hidden remnant bushland quietly thrives. Often overlooked, yet unforgettable to those who discover it, the Bob Blackburn Flora Reserve, a 4.2ha Bush Forever site (062), is one of the last local remnants of the *Banksia attenuata* and/or *Eucalyptus marginata* woodlands of the eastern Swan Coastal Plain threatened ecological community.

Despite being surrounded by roads, residential areas, a light industrial zone, carparks, and various community facilities; the reserve supports a remarkable diversity of native flora and holds significant ecological and local value. However, it has not always received the attention it deserves.

Friends of Bob Blackburn Flora Reserve (FoBBFR) has re-formed with the goal of restoring community care for this important bushland reserve.

A rekindled community effort

From the mid-1990s to early 2000s, a previous friends group cared for the reserve, supported by the Wildflower Society of WA (WSWA) Armadale branch. They were instrumental in early conservation work and rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the group dissolved, leaving the reserve without a friends group for almost 20 years.

Captured during Clean Up Australia Day, March 2025.FoBBFR's debut public event! A fantastic team effort at Bob Blackburn Flora Reserve from local volunteers, WSWA Armadale Branch members, city staff, and two proud FoBBFR representatives. Through strong community effort we can restore the natural beauty of this cherished bushland Photo – Kim Sarti.

That changed in spring 2023, when as a new local resident I attended a Wildflower Society wildflower ramble at the reserve. Impressed by its biodiversity and the society's long-standing connection to the reserve, I also noticed its vulnerability to multiple threats due to its modest size, fragmentation, and isolated location.

Inspired by other friends groups, and discovering no current group existed for the reserve, in February 2024 I joined the City of Armadale's Bushcare and Environmental Working Group (BEWG) and began laying the foundations for a new friends group.

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Laying foundations

With my background in conservation biology, volunteer coordination, business management, and event promotions, I spent 2024 laying a solid foundation for our group. This included reviewing historical records, liaising with city staff, learning from other groups, site surveying and monitoring, creating community awareness, strategic planning, and developing volunteer management resources.

We became a group of two in January 2025 and, membership has grown to five by June, with each member contributing valuable skills, knowledge, and interests.

Support and partnerships

FoBBFR has received great support from the city's Bushcare program, which offers annual grant funding, access to training, peer networks, technical support, and strategic guidance. Partnerships with the WSWA and Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group also offer field and technical support for the group. Whilst the city's bush crew continues to provide essential on-ground maintenance for the reserve.

A reserve under pressure

The reserve features a canopy of jarrah, woody pear, banksia, and marri, with an understorey that includes blueboy, yellow buttercups, balga, smokebush, brown pea, couch honeypot, and the many-flowered honeysuckle.

Its urban location brings multiple pressures including weed invasion, littering, and dumping, dieback spread, vandalism, off-leash dogs, roaming cats, feral bees, and arson. Despite these challenges, the group's dedication remains strong, and its efforts continue to drive meaningful progress.

Right: Signs of ecological resilience at Bob Blackburn Flora Reserve, with native flora like woody pear and balga regenerating after a fire caused by arson. However, invasive weeds have followed, adding pressure to the landscape; a reminder of the ongoing conservation challenges FoBBFR faces. Photo – Michelle Davies.

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Early achievements

Since forming, FoBBFR has steadily increased its presence both on the ground and in the community. Key activities have included:

- Ongoing promotional, educational, and networking activities, including an active Facebook page.
- Collaborations with WSWA Armadale branch on events and flora surveys.
- Regular liaison with citystaff, reporting issues such as vandalism, illegal dumping, dieback management, asset repairs, and feral bees.
- Successful grant applications and acquisition of equipment and materials.
- A litter reduction strategy, including:
  - Monthly member clean-ups.
  - Keep Australia Beautiful's Adopt-a-Spot program.
  - Clean Up Australia Day 2025 event with 16 volunteers, supported by the city, WSWA, and ABC Radio Perth.
  - Containers for Change registration.
- Stallholder at the city's Native Plants for Residents Day.
- These efforts have helped reintroduce the reserve to the wider community and laid the groundwork for future plans.

Current priorities

With 2025–26 BEWG funding, FoBBFR is progressing several core projects:

- Volunteer management – developing systems for onboarding, safety, engagement, and retention.
- Flora monitoring – verifying past records, creating an herbarium, and photopoint monitoring.
- Weed management – targeted removal of perennial veldt grass.
- Litter reduction – ongoing clean-up activities supported by a long-term rubbish reduction strategy.
- Promotion, education & community engagement – developing brochures, signage, digital content, and community events.

Final word

As the group builds confidence and capacity, we look forward to expanding our goals. Through steady planning and collaboration, FoBBFR are working to ensure this small but significant bushland reserve is cared for well into the future.

Contact

Michelle Davies
FoBBR
Email FoBBFR@gmail.com
Facebook www.facebook.com/bobblackburnflorareserve

FoBBFR group photo following a morning of hands-on conservation, including litter collection and collaborative discussion about the reserve's remarkable flora and fauna, the threats it faces, and the group's future plans. Garry Beck (left), Barry Kennedy, Rachel Kier, Michelle Davies. Photo – Michelle Davies.

Strength in Our Roots, DIG 2025

By Pip Soulsby

We're excited to announce the Dieback Working Group's annual Dieback Information Group Conference, 23–25 September 2025 at Murdoch University, Boorloo (Perth). A leading national event that brings together researchers, land managers, Traditional Owners, policymakers, and community members to tackle environmental biosecurity challenges head-on. Attend in person or online.

This year's theme, "Strength in Our Roots," highlights the importance of grassroots leadership and community-driven action in protecting our natural ecosystems.

Field trip at the Inglewood Triangle to see Dieback Management – part of DWG Green Card™ Training at DIG 2024. Photo – Amy Priemus.

Through collaboration and knowledge-sharing, we can build stronger foundations to address threats like Phytophthora Dieback and other plant diseases and pests.

What can you expect from DIG 2025?

We are delighted to announce a wonderful line up:

- Expert speaker presentations showcasing a diverse range of Phytophthora Dieback science and management.
- Sessions covering other plant diseases and pests of environmental significance.
- Interactive workshops and activities.
- DWG Green Card™ Training. Australia's leading biosecurity hygiene awareness training.
- Dieback Management field trip (available to on-site attendees only).

Whether you're joining us at Murdoch University or tuning in online, there's something for everyone passionate about protecting our environment.

Registrations are now open! Together, let's embrace the strength of our roots and support grassroot and community-driven environmental action. Spaces are limited, so grab your ticket and secure your spot today!

Contact

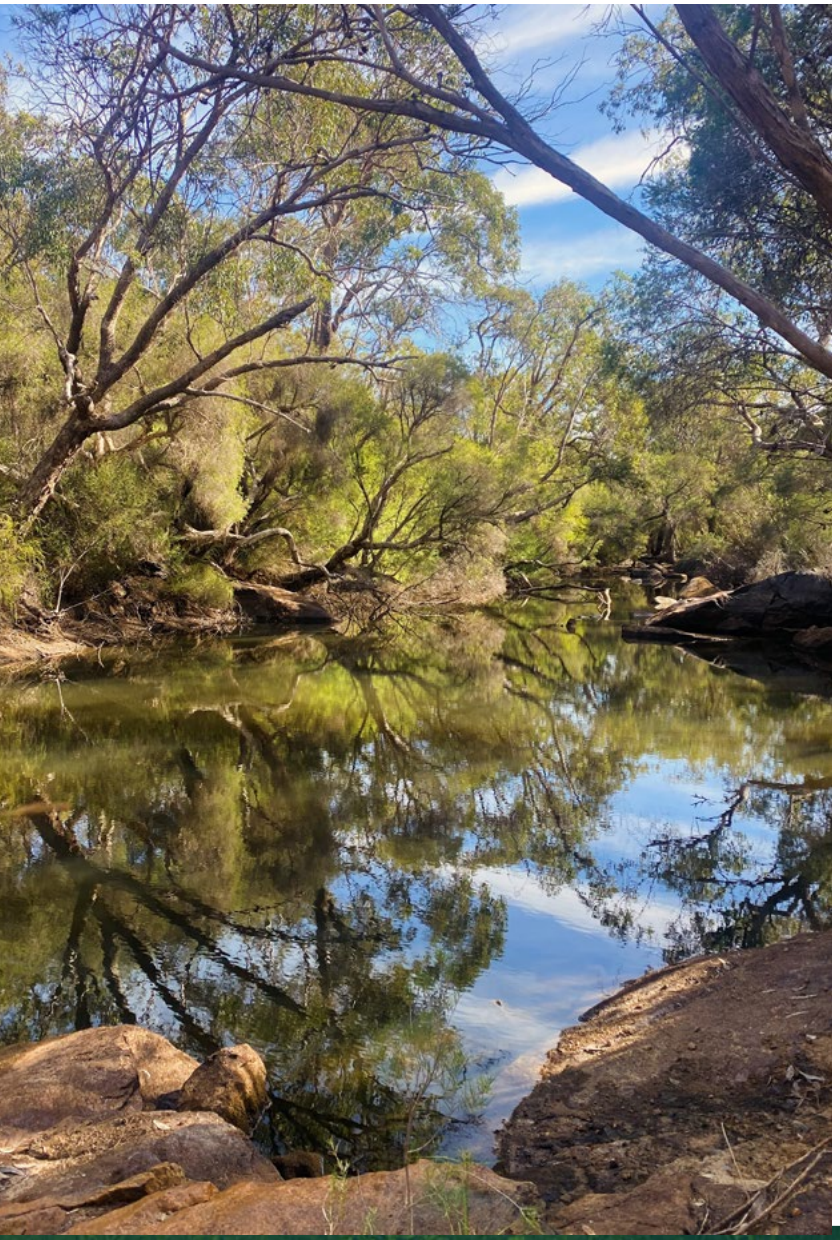
Karyn Lovatsis
email project.officer@dwg.org.au
Pip Soulsby
email pip.soulsby@dwg.org.au
Dieback Working Group
web www.dwg.org.au

Dieback WORKING GROUP INC

Melanie Davies from WALGA presenting at DIG 2024 on creating resilient urban forests. Photo – Amy Priemus.

Mandoon Bilya BioBlitz 13–19 October

By Francesca Flynn



River restoration will enable idyllic landscapes to flourish along the Lower Mandoon Bilya (Helena River). Photo – Francesca Flynn.

Bibbul Ngarma Aboriginal Association (BNAA) are hosting their first Mandoon Bilya BioBlitz in October 2025 to celebrate the Mandoon Bilya (Helena River).

A BioBlitz is a snapshot study where scientists and community record all the plants, animals and fungi at a specific location within a set timeframe. These large-scale citizen science events are fast becoming a popular way to catalogue biodiversity in Australia.

The Mandoon BioBlitz is part of BNAA's BoorYul-Bah-Bilya program which aims to restore river health, reinvigorate cultural heritage, and build community connection to rivers.

The BioBlitz event will feature:

- A week of BioBlitz activities from 13–19 October at public parks along the lower river.
- A free community festival 10am–3pm Saturday 18 October at Mundaring Sculpture Park with speakers, performances, family activities, giveaways, and community stalls.
- Do it yourself. Upload photos of plants, animals and fungi on the lower river to iNaturalist and share your discoveries on social media.

The BioBlitz will allow BNAA to collect important biodiversity data, increase knowledge of the river's ecosystem, and encourage participation in community-led science and conservation.

Through BioBlitz, local schools will learn from Noongar Elders and scientists about the river's significance and its ecological and cultural values.

Shout-out to our wonderful event supporters: Inspiring WA; Scitech; Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation; Shire of Mundaring; Saferight; and our research and event partner Edith Cowan University.

We hope to see you there!

Contact

Francesca Flynn
email manager@bibbul.org
web bibbul.org/mandoon-bilya-bioblitz

Funding opportunities

Australian Wildlife Society Conservation Group grants fund up to three groups yearly, specialising in wildlife conservation and the preservation of wildlife habitats. Applications **open year-round**.

Treebates open to Western Australians to claim up to $150 rebate on the purchase of native trees that will reach at least three meters in height when mature. Up to 10,000 rebates per year for **next four years**.

Lotterywest Grassroots Community-Led Grants fund community efforts to care for, sustain and enhance local biodiversity. Applications **open year-round**.

Royal Society of Western Australia Poster Day 23 September 2025 invites PhD, Masters and Honours students to showcase their research, hone their science communications skills and network with other scientists. Up to 10 cash prizes of $1,000 each. Expressions of Interest **close 12 September**.

The Swan Canning Riverpark Urban Forest program provides funding to public land managers to improve the Swan Canning Riverpark's ecosystem health , amenity value and use of the urban forest landscape. Approach your public land manager to partner in projects. Applications **open year-round**.

Purves Environmental Fund gives funding to projects focusing on the mitigation for the exploitation of natural resources and the protection of freshwater habitats. Applications **open year-round**.

Feliman Foundation offers support to organizations doing on ground conservation projects, as well as organisations raising environmental awareness. Applications **open year-round**.

Santos aims to provide funding to support and protect biodiversity. Applications **open year-round**.

Emergency Actions for Threatened Species offers funding towards preventing the extinction of native plants and animals. Grant proposals **are open now**.

PHCC funding **community onground works** fencing, weed and feral control, revegetation and native pasture and fodder. Applications **close 30 September.**

The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation funds land acquisition or management projects that deliver benefits to Indigenous Australians through the **Our Country Our Future Program**. This includes on-ground activities to maintain or improve the condition of Country (land, water, biodiversity, and cultural heritage). They accept applications **year-round**.

The Ian Potter Foundation supports big picture thinking that focuses on issues such as biodiversity loss and climate change. Expressions of interest **open in November**.

IGA Community Chest raises funds to support local communities, charities and other worthwhile causes. Approach your local store **year-round** with a pitch.

The Hamer Sprout Fund supports environmental leadership and stewardship. Proposals **close 30 September**.

Holdsworth Wildlife Research Endowment funds post-graduate research in ecology, wildlife management and natural history studies. Applications **close 30 September**.

Harvey Water provides funds to support sustainable solutions, and management practices in the communities of Harvey, Waroona, Dardanup, and Collie. Applications are open now.

Wettenhall delivers funding for biodiversity projects in Australia that maintain and improve the natural environment. Applications **close 8 December** for funding in February 2026.

BHP supports not-for-profit initiatives both within Perth and in regional Western Australia. Port Headland and Newman applications are open all year around. Round 3 applications for Kalgoorlie, Kambalda, Leinster, Leonora, Wiluna and Kwinana **close 11 November** 2025.

Feeling stuck? Check out this fabulous **Grants and Program Finder** tool brought to you by the Australian Government. This refinable search engine allows you to hunt down the perfect grant for your land and wildlife conservation project or goal while conserving your valuable time and energy.

The Linkwest Open Grants Opportunities website is another great resource to assist you in finding a grant. This information is relevant with new grants opening all the time.

Local government and place-based community grants. These local governments and groups provide small grants to their communities which may fund environmental management and restoration projects. Eligibility varies. Armadale **closes 1 October**, Cockburn Sustainability Grants **open all year**, Broome Quick Response **open year-round**, Derby/West Kimberley **open year-round**, Gosnells **close 24 each month**, South Perth **open year-round**, Wanneroo **open year-round**.

Slender clematis (*Clematis linearifolia*)

The flower of the Clementis linearifolia photographed in Bunbury, Western Australia in August 2021. Photo – Andrew Wallace.

By Louise Kaestner

Graceful, white petals unfurl as they reach towards the sun to caress its lifegiving rays. Filaments spring forth to protect the stamen. The perennial *Clematis linearifolia* awakens. From July to October, the slender clematis splashes the Western Australia coastal landscape, in proliferation, from Shark Bay to Albany and along the southern coast near Esperance.

The slender clematis or old man's beard is a hardy plant, native to WA and adapted to the environment. It prefers, of all things, sand, limestone and an alkaline coastal environment, tolerating the sun. This vine is a woody climber meaning that the slender clematis needs support to grow upwards. Otherwise, it sprawls at its leisure, gracing the ground with its delicate leaves.

The *Clematis linearifolia* is part of the buttercup family, Ranunculaceae. There are over 350 known varieties reaching every corner of the globe. Don't be confused, *Clematis linearifolia* is native to Western Australia but it used to be called *Clematis microphylla* a name now reserved for the closely related eastern Australia native which also shares the common name of old man's beard.

If you're out and about on Western Australia's spectacular coast this spring, be sure to keep your eyes peeled for this superb specimen. Please remember, our native wildflowers are protected by legislation. You can snap a pic but all wildflowers must otherwise be left alone

Contact

Louise Kaestner
email lcmckwd@gmail.com