



Annual General Meeting
of the Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network Inc
Tuesday, 31st March 2015
CWCN Centre, Chapel Hill

President's Report

The Cubberla-Witton Catchments has continued to thrive and can proudly look back at another successful year thanks to the efforts of our volunteer members. Our work has again been aligned with the key areas of CWCN's Strategy Plan Landcare and Biodiversity, Water Care and Pollution, Community Engagement and Education, and strengthening our own organisation.

We continue to be concerned about local biodiversity loss and the effects of the SEQ Regional Plan on our Inner West catchments, especially as key areas within our wildlife movement corridors are assigned to 'emerging communities' and with that for development. The SEQ Regional Plan is under review, however, in announcing this the previous government had "an increased focus on economic development". We remain concerned. Although Brisbane's current City Plan defines high ecological corridors, we have yet to see that these areas receive full protection. Our experience of the recent past has shown that defined ecologically valuable creek corridors and green spaces will fall victim to development and infrastructure projects including bikeways, the latter at the expense of bushland, play areas, and buffers protecting the waterway. In all known cases in our catchments area the natural environment has been treated as a second class citizen easily replaced with concrete. It is disheartening to see as our natural assets are not only valuable to local biodiversity but also essential for the wellbeing of residents.

In order to protect our biodiversity and evaluate the functioning of corridors, we need to know what fauna can sustain itself now and monitor changes over time. Through our many bushcare groups flora is under constant surveillance, and individuals like myself assess fungi and lichens. In the past year CWCN has put a particular focus on **wildlife monitoring**.

- With the help of ecologists Harry Hines and Jesse Rowlands we have been assessing **frog populations** along our creek. The survey has included training sessions and guided walks, but the vast majority of the survey is done by recording frog calls without handling animals. We are proud to report that the vulnerable tusked frog calls our Inner West catchments home, yet many of the species that should belong here, haven't been recorded. At least partially, improved habitats could make a change, and we need to incorporate that into our rehabilitation planning.
- Under the guidance of Lyn Cole we are also re-assessing our **bird populations**. With seasonal bird walks in an increasing number of locations (i.e. Qld University Mine, Rainbow Forest/Cliveden Park, LfW properties Fig Tree Pocket, Mount Coot-tha, St Lucia Esplanade/Tarcoola Track). We collect data at different times of the year and compare them with data known from the period 1960-2000.
- With the help of a Brisbane City Council grant we have been able to evaluate our **microbat populations** for the first time. The recording data collected from multiple locations in our catchments is currently undergoing assessment and species identification. Bat ecologists Dr Monika Rhodes and Dr Martin Rhodes have enthusiastically and generously shared their knowledge and expertise during a workshop and several bat walks. Thanks to a privately owned

Anabat recording device, long term monitoring was enabled in several locations, improving our knowledge of local insectivorous bats and their habitat tremendously. In cooperation with other organisations CWCN will host a Bat Festival on 9th May during which the results of our bat survey are announced, and where opportunities arise to provide an informed understanding of these flying mammals and their importance for our environment and for us.

Our existing **wildlife movement corridor projects *Cubberla Creek Connect, Witton for Wildlife, and Toowong Creek Turnaround*** and areas in the **Brisbane River catchment** have received a substantial financial boost thanks to grants from all government departments and have allowed/are allowing for improvements and advancements. The grants were either written by CWCN or CWCN plus local bushcare group, or were/are sponsored by CWCN.

- **Brisbane City Council's *Community Conservation Assistance* and the *Lord Mayor's Environment and Sustainability Grants*** programs have enabled projects this past year at
 - Banksia Park (completed)
 - Dillingen Street Park (one project completed, one currently under way, one about to start)
 - Merri Merri Park (under way)
 - Brushbox Court (under way)
 - Greenhill Reservoir (completed)
 - Ironside Park (completed)
 - St Lucia Esplanade (about to be completed)
 - Taringa Parade (under way)

- **State Government's *Everyone Environment Grant*** has allowed for larger scale rehabilitation at
 - Ironside Park (completed)
 - Brisbane Forest Park Toowong (South of Freeway; in its second year)

The latter was partially guaranteed by previous MP for Mount Coot-tha, Saxon Rice, and we are grateful. Also ongoing, inspired by CWCN support, yet independently carried out for local environmental benefit

 - Indooroopilly Scouts grounds

A National Tree Day planting took place at Toowong Creek under the banner of Planet Ark and in fulfilment of grant conditions with around 650 plants planted by around 80 to 90 participants, and again supported by Lions Club and their help with the catering. We also had a team from Bunnings Indooroopilly on site who not only got down and dirty planting, but also brought with them boxes of gloves and trowels, various tools and watering cans, all of which are highly desirable items for a community group like ours. Their use will help with many projects to come. We are very grateful for their generosity. CWCN was singled out during the opening of their Indooroopilly store receiving a framed acknowledgement of their participation. We reciprocated on the occasion.

- **Federal Government *Caring for our Country* funding, applied for by SEQ Catchments in cooperation with individual catchment groups and Brisbane Catchments Network, devolved via SEQ Catchments** and part of a Brisbane wide project "***What's your Nature?***". We are indebted to Louise Orr/SEQ Catchments for coordinating this Brisbane wide project. Beneficiaries locally have been/are so far
 - Cubberla Creek at Akuna Street Park/Burns Parade
 - Little Gubberley/Kenmore South State School
 - Brisbane River at St Lucia Esplanade (as part of Brisbane Catchments Network's allocation of the funding)

Brisbane City Council contributed generously to the project at Cubberla Creek providing all machinery work and preparing the site, so that our contractors could install extensive jute matting and plant the banks out. We thank Chris Goopy/BCC Roads and Drainage West for this fruitful and successful cooperation. A highlight of the *What's your Nature?* project was a Family Fun Day with community planting at Akuna Street Park where around 750 plants went into the ground, where

despite the heat over 200 people participated, and where entertainment and education was provided. CWCN volunteers worked hard to make it a success, as did our friends from the Brisbane Inner West Lions Club whose help with the catering is always gratefully acknowledged. Cr Margaret de Wit through the **Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund** sponsored the event.

- **Legacy Way Offset Funding** has allowed for rehabilitation work to be carried out at the Fig Tree Pocket Equestrian Centre. The work came about after extensive lobbying by CWCN and was carried out by contractors engaged by Brisbane City Council.
- **State Government Funding** was issued to SEQ Catchments for flood recovery work to be done on the Brisbane River. Contractors are continuing to work on an extensive site in Fig Tree Pocket to improve habitat conditions in the location.
- All above sites need to be maintained by volunteers, mostly by members of the many **Habitat Brisbane Groups** we have in our catchments. They work hard and "own" their areas and deserve not only our but the local residents' gratitude. All of us who do on-ground rehabilitation work at Habitat Brisbane sites know how enormously supportive our **Habitat Brisbane Officer** Cath Cleary and her team are. Cath understands the sites, the volunteers, sees the big picture and is a huge and essential asset as well as a knowledgeable guide, and deserves a big thank you and our appreciation.

We are delighted that the Banksia Park Group now has full Habitat Brisbane group status, and that the Cubberla Creek Revegetation Group has been revived and continues the work previously convened by Jill Skattebol.

Apart from Bunnings Indooroopilly as described above, we have also received support from our friends at **Golder Associates** who again came to working bees at Merri Merri Park and at Dillingen Street Park. Golder is currently restructuring and we will have a new liaison person, but they have already expressed their determination to continue the cooperation.

Through **Conservation Volunteers Queensland** several of our sites have benefited from working bees of corporates and students. We are highly appreciative.

And Toowong Creek received a working bee boost by Young Liberals and members of the LNP, all working hard to further the local habitat conditions.

Brisbane's Inner West has very few **Land for Wildlife** properties, in parts because Brisbane City Council does not allow larger properties into the program if they are located in areas zoned as 'emerging communities'. The remaining properties are of increasing importance like the ones spreading over 11 acres in Fig Tree Pocket and being rehabilitated by the 'Foambark Gully Gang' with a lot of enthusiasm and determination. These properties are a treasure trove of mature trees and plant variety, and provide habitat for animals which now become rarer in our catchments. This past year they have also become the host for over 300 Richmond Birdwing vines.

Rehabilitation across the catchments will be helped from now on by a beautiful new **trailer sponsored by Brisbane City Council**. It will allow for easier transport and avoid using private cars for the movement of plants, dirty tools, water crystals etc. We are grateful to BCC and for the support of the Creek Catchments Officer Program in securing the sponsorship.

We continue to be delighted at the commitment of **Brisbane Girls Grammar** to rehabilitating the creek line adjacent to their Sports Campus. They have already made a huge difference, and the school is keen to combine rehabilitation with active on-site learning. CWCN participates in working bees, supports with advice and materials where and when required and possible, and enjoys the outcomes which will bring us yet another step closer to *Cubberla Creek Connect(ed)*.

We also work with Kenmore South State School to bring their project site to completion and influence the long term outcomes for a healthier Little Gubberley Creek.

Links go beyond our catchment borders, equipment is regularly borrowed by The Gap State School and by Bunyaville Environmental Education Centre.

Our rehabilitation work influences water quality results. Water Quality Monitoring under the guidance of Waterwatch elder and guru Ray Kelly continues to be carried out regularly in our catchments. Tony Pressland and Henry Camacho in particular do the sampling, and Tony and Ray feed the uniDap database which was developed by SEQ Catchments and uniDap. Data, once approved, are provided to the Bureau of Meteorology and are used by State Government Departments and consultants. We thank Ray, Tony and Henry for their dedication.

At the initiative of Norrie Sanders CWCN also started the development of a **New Waterway Condition Framework for CWCN's Inner West creeks**. The project was introduced to the membership and was well received. It has expanded and now also includes the mapping of catchment spatial characteristics and fauna and flora locations and is likely to receive university student participation. Norrie, Tony Pressland, Chris Begbie, Christopher Robson, Christian Witte will continue to work on the project(s) with Norrie likely to develop the values assessment in cooperation with local involved members next.

CWCN's **Clean Up Australia Day** participation was started by our late member Joan Redgrave some twenty years ago. Tony Pressland has taken over the baton and keeps the tradition going, this year with the help of Brian Venz and Sue Hanson and a large group of participants, many of them children.

Children are at the Centre of our current **education program**. During school holidays CWCN now offers an **Enviro Detectives series** for prep to early primary school age. Among the themes for fun-filled learning are

- ***Dora Droplet and Ruben Rubbish*** (Water)
- ***Chloe Cloud and Randolph Rainbow*** (Weather)
- ***Fenella Flutterwing and Munching Mike*** (Butterflies)
- ***Roaring Ronda and William Whisper*** (Sound, Noise)
- ***Sandra Seedling and Benjamin Bean*** (Plants)
- ***Erik Echo and Wendy Wing*** (Bats)
- ***Moira Mud and Louis Loam*** (Soil)
- ***Tristan Truffle and Pixie Cap*** (Mushrooms)

The program is now highly successful and provides some limited income for CWCN. We are currently evaluating the potential to offer these activities to local schools.

Craft activities which have at their core sustainability and the reuse of materials also continue to be on the agenda. Christmas and Easter items are high on the agenda and provide endless opportunities.

I am grateful for the help I have received Gitta Siemund in conducting these children's activities. Gitta brings her professional expertise to running these events.

The CWCN Book Club featuring environmentally themed books is in its second year and a runaway success with everyone enjoying the lively debates and the good company. It's a third Wednesday of the month afternoon well spent. The Book club has also turned into a little money earner. The club is Robin Trotter's brain child. All participants are highly indebted to her for inspiring literature

choices and a great time. Because of its success, Robin now evaluates starting a film club which will screen similarly themed documentaries and movies. Thank you, Robin.

CWCN continues to expand its reference library which continuously grows, partly because members like Joan and Andrew Martin have donated some highly valued field guides and other literature. CWCN is looking for a keen book lover who would like to look after our library, its database and the general keeping of books, DVDs and audiotapes.

Our **bi-monthly General Meetings** continue to be not only social occasions for members and friends, but also provide an opportunity to attend presentations of interesting guest speakers with topics related to our work. We continue to celebrate volunteering on these occasions and especially at the last meeting of the year where tradition has it that awards/gifts are handed out to those deserving.

Our Centre continues to be heaven sent or rather Council provided. It continues to make a huge difference to the work we are now able to do, and I believe nobody can imagine that we ever worked without it. It is gradually turning into a community hub with other organisations using it, in the past year i.e. Richmond Birdwing Conservation Network, Queensland Frog Society, Queensland Mycological Society, Conservation Volunteers Australia, and the Brisbane Catchments Network, and individuals starting to seek us out.

Our Network is in the process of changing to be prepared for future challenges. Thanks to Brian Venz we are now a charity and are hoping to receive tax deductability status in the near future. We will need to change our constitution for this purpose and tackle this issues at the next general meeting.

CWCN is now also GST registered which avoids a few complications with grants. It appears that governments do not wish to factor in GST amounts although we would have to pay them to any contractor. An organisation of our size and income cannot, under no grant scheme, pay for money we don't have and will not be reimbursed for, so we were left with no choice but to apply for GST registration. Our treasurer has been patiently dealing with the issues and the ATO and will work her way through a temporary maze of regulations and grant related issues. A big thank you is owed to Lois Eden.

Money is naturally a big issue for any organisation having to cover the running of multiple activities and a Centre. Thanks to the committee and especially Mick Capelin our CWCN prospectus is now completed and can be used to source funding in the corporate community.

To prepare CWCN for the future, to improve its running, to ensure financial sustainability, to spread the work load and to overall strengthen the organisation, we have been working with Mark Creyton/Volunteering Queensland on strategies to overcome current hurdles. This was enabled through financial support through the Creek Catchment Officer Program. With support from Mark and Louise Zimmerman we developed role descriptions and started developing ideas/plans for social enterprises which are meant to secure financial income. We also worked with Louise Hepworth on public relations plans. We have made inroads in all areas and will continue to develop ideas and put them into practise.

After a long absence in cyberspace, CWCN has again a website www.cwcn.org.au and has also added a Facebook page. Both are very well received, however, our aim is to find younger members to attend to these.

On a personal note and because I will today step down as president after ten years in the position, I would like to thank the committee for their work and would like to thank all members for their support and the trust they have put into me. I am also grateful to all friends, collaborators and supporters for incredible opportunities they have provided. It has often been challenging, but it has also been very satisfying, because we *did* make a difference in many ways. These ten years provided many learning opportunities for me, all of which I loved. We live in a wonderful part of Brisbane with beautiful natural assets, all well worth preserving. CWCN will continue to thrive. Thank you.

31 March 2015

Jutta Godwin
President