

## **Annual General Meeting of the Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network Inc**

**Tuesday, 30 March 2010, Meeting Room Indooroopilly Library**

### **President's Report**

The Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network Inc has again had a very active year with results that are remarkable considering that our group has by far not the numbers of many other catchment groups.

We continue to work hard to conserve and improve our precious bushland remnants and waterways all of which are under additional pressure as our Inner West catchments area has not one but two of the transit oriented development precincts allocated, Indooroopilly and Toowong. Much higher density of residential dwellings will be one of the results with consequences for our catchments and for the still amazingly rich biodiversity of Inner West.

**14 bush care groups plus six sub groups** dedicate their volunteer time to improve quality and habitat conditions of our natural areas and creeks in Inner West. Cubberla and Witton Creeks are CORE HABITAT CORRIDORS within the Brisbane Biodiversity Network. Toowong Creek has the potential to become one and is now classed as a Stepping Stone Corridor. That leaves us with a lot of responsibility to help protect those and other natural areas along the Brisbane River for generations to come. Our groups deserve a huge thank you for their tireless efforts.

Not all rehabilitation goes according to plan as we all know by observing Main Roads and Greening Australia having worked on the **Waverley Road site** adjacent to the Western Freeway. State Government and Brisbane City Council land have been cleared without consultation with CWCN and the local community. Money ran out once heavy machinery had removed woody weeds, so very little replacement planting occurred, and no maintenance budget exists for the site. Weed cover is almost back to where it was. Considering that this site is part of the Witton Ck Core Habitat Movement Corridor for native fauna, this is especially annoying. We have also recently learned that State Government has now declared it 'Emerging Communities' land. CWCN had allocated a corporate volunteer group to work on the Council owned part of the land, only find asbestos on site when discussing final preparations for a planting day. We are now hopeful that the area will be cleaned up and weed clearing and planting can proceed within a reasonable amount of time.

After a draft version was displayed for public consultation purposes at Toowong and Indooroopilly libraries and a public meeting was held, we are now in possession of a finalised **rehabilitation plan for Toowong and Sandy Creek and the St Lucia area**. We thank Conics (previously Natural Solutions) for the hard work in putting it together, and local Crs Prentice and Matic for providing the funding. When planning for implementation was about to start we were told LAS West that there was no manpower to deal with the plan, and there was a total stop on Habitat Brisbane groups. We are hoping for the BCC budget to accommodate our needs, so that we can then go forward finding the funding for some of the projects developed in the plan and work with the local community.

Comprehensive rehabilitation plans are also needed for the above mentioned core habitat corridors following Witton and Cubberla Creeks so that improvements and protection can be implemented with a strategic approach, and potential as well as threats are identified and used as a basis for future work.

CWCN participated in the Green Heart City Smart Green Up Day at Perrin Park in 2009. The event was the last one of its kind and more localised than the recent Green Days. We exhibited the Rehabilitation Plan for the area and made excellent contacts and saw much interest in the project with the local community now waiting for it to start.

Waterwatch continues to be an important part of our activity with especially Ray Kelly monitoring our four creeks on a monthly basis using our Horiba device kindly sponsored by Cr de Wit through the Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund. Calibration is carried on a monthly basis by SEQ Catchments in return for our data.

For anyone interested in waterways, our regular fish snapshots have always been a draw card attracting many especially younger people. Unfortunately, BCC Natural Environment and Sustainability did not renew their animal ethics registration and the community access clause under which we used to work. BCC City Life's registration doesn't include fish. We were forced to cancel our scheduled snapshot in December. Since then we have been informed that NES will reinstate everything and that the registration should be through by end of June. We are hoping to conduct the next survey in October. We are also hopeful that we can revive other planned fauna survey like one on micro-bats for which planning was put on hold for the same reasons as described above.

On a positive note, the fish ladder prototype under Moggill Road bridge has withstood the testing brilliantly, and Ross Kapitzke/JCU has been given authorisation by LAS West to obtain quotes. All things going well, the prototype should turn into the 'real thing' in the next financial year. We thank LAS West for their support of this project and Ross for his patience and perseverance in developing it. Cubberla Ck has been the starting point for fish ladder implementation in several Brisbane creeks.

We have been exceptionally lucky with corporate volunteers working in our catchments area. Creek Ranger Michael Thorley has developed a permanent site at Rainbow Forest with Connell Wagner with approximately two working bees per year, and is currently engaged with Golders who had their first working bee in support of Merri Merri Park and Greenford Street only very recently. The latter are very enthusiastic and intend to conduct three to four events per year and are also keen to provide expertise and material support. I have developed an excellent relationship with Lend Lease Retail (Indooroopilly Shopping Centre) who have had their second working bee at Moore Park and are keen to come back. I also would like to thank Habitat Brisbane for helping to prepare the sites for planting and Michael for digging many planting holes and supporting the event on the day. Sullivan Nicolaides had intended to work on the Waverley Road site but had to be put on hold until the asbestos is cleared which we hope will be soon.

Work with schools continues to be very important to us. The earlier we start to create an understanding the better our future will be. Creek Ranger Michael Thorley has developed excellent relationships with some of our many schools and is a frequent visitor at those schools, involving, in rotation, some of them in the Goa Billboard Competition and in the Creek Ranger Program based Catchment Kids program as well as in project based activities. He has also taken over the visits of Glenleighden School and now also supports the school with a rehabilitation project. Glenleighden also had their annual planting day at Rainbow Forest where Ros Laundon and her group supported the event. Moore Park Bushcare Groups continue their many years old good relationship with Indooroopilly State School culminating in an annual event consisting of planting, other activities, and talks. The last event happened along Taringa Parade where over 100 students came and (in rotation) either planted with Michael Thorley and two Habitat Brisbane Officers or listened to a talk on habitat by Tom McHugh, or joined Lois Eden to look at soil microfauna under the compound microscopes and filter dirty water through several soil layers, or joined myself in collecting invertebrates from pitfall traps and look at them with the help of magnifying glasses and dissecting microscopes. The children enjoyed their experience, but we had chosen the by far hottest day possible, and even the shade under our marquees couldn't cool us down.

CWCN also invited schools in the western suburbs to participate in a school competition focusing on sustainability with some staggering results. Indooroopilly State School and Indooroopilly State High took home the three main prizes for a very lively and creative TV Show dealing with paper waste and for exceptional pieces of art. We thank Energex for kindly sponsoring the prizes.

The introductory workshop for our dung beetle and ant surveys were filled to overflowing just before our last AGM. Unfortunately, the enthusiasm didn't carry through to putting pitfall and bait traps out. That meant the majority of work involved with the survey was on very few shoulders. We thank entomologists Chris Burwell/Queensland Museum and Geoff Monteith for their enthusiasm and sharing their knowledge with us. We have learned that our Inner West suburbs are rather rich in biodiversity with

results that surprised us. We have even more reason now to work towards healthier catchments. Brisbane City Council kindly sponsored the surveys with funding.

Before the last AGM we entered Manaton Park into the Spotless Suburbs competition for the Walter Taylor Ward. Unfortunately, the citywide winner was not in our Inner West Catchments. This year Moore Park was entered as it seemed to fit many of the criteria outlined in the entry form. There is strong competition from about everywhere in Brisbane, but we keep our fingers crossed.

Like every year many individuals and groups in the Inner West catchments participated in Clean Up Australia Day, among them long term participants Joan Redgrave in Kenmore and Barbara and Geoff Robins. This is one event where many of our members participate or initiate without CWCN needing to encourage.

One of the CWCN highlights was our creek rehabilitation workshop with hydraulic engineer Grant Witheridge. We had chosen the workshop because we considered erosion issues of high importance in rehabilitation work and felt we were all ill prepared for the heavy flows we had experience in the months before the workshop. 83 attendees valued Grant's extraordinary presentation and Jenny Leask's additional information on plant choices. Everyone learned and was inspired. We are grateful to LAS West for agreeing to sponsor the catering and thank Michael Thorley and Neil Millstead for organising food and drinks. We are also indebted to the Anglican Church for agreeing to use our marquees in exchange for the parish hall fee.

A second highlight was most certainly our Recycling Festival attracting a total of around 800 people. CWCN was able to provide an exceptional program consisting of displays by renowned artists Chris Trotter, Terry Summers, and Nils van Amsterdam, of the much loved performances by the Dumplings and the Pantastic Steelband, by interactive offerings with Bob Mud, Reverse Garbage, by Pullen Pullen Catchment Groups Wildlife Safari. Children's theatre, nature's recyclers, second hand goods, sustainable food, and information provided by a variety of environmental groups and more. We thank all of them for their contribution, and we thank LAS West for supporting the running of the festival on the day, we thank Michael Thorley for organising additional tents, ice cream, drinks, additional generators, and running around helping to make it run smoothly. We are indebted to the sponsors Qld Government, Brisbane City Council, Energex, Lend Lease, mobile muster and Planet Ark.

Our Network also held a Family Fun Day off Brushbox Court focusing on the local area and the Habitat Brisbane site developing under Audrey Watson's guidance. It included a public planting including of a *Flindersia australis* to honour our late member Val Peterson. The program was again geared to attract young families and provide entertainment and a learning experience. Creek Ranger Michael Thorley organised the day and we thank him for the work put into making the day a success.

The last but definitely not least highlight of this past year was the long awaited launch of 'Catchment Voices II', the second volume in our excellent oral histories project. We are indebted to all our 'historians', to Judy Bieg for typing the recordings, and especially to Robin Trotter who again has created an immense treasure by capturing our catchments' past.

Our friends at THECA have revamped/improved the Hut where we rent office space. It is a very attractive venue. CWCN has a little more space than we used to have, but even once we have bought an additional cupboard it will not satisfy our working and storage needs. Our organisation has by far outgrown the available space and need additional room to let CWCN work to its full potential and make life for our volunteers easier. We have received a letter from the Lord Mayor confirming that we will have a house. City Properties has been working on finding a location and on costing the moving of a building and its set up. We are hoping on moving sooner rather than later.

CWCN participated in a Dog's Breakfast introducing our organisation to dog lovers at Green Hill Reservoir where, at one stage, the potential location for a CWCN home was considered. But our future abode will most likely not be at the Reservoir. We are thanking Cr Prentice for supporting our needs so strongly.

CWCN members continue to collect data on our native fauna, flora, fungi and lichens, and also continue, albeit in small numbers, to raise seedlings.

The CWCN library, although currently in need of shelving, is growing and is already an excellent source of information for our work. We thank David Kemp for the creation of a special software program and Kon Michnowsky for cataloguing our publications, now supported by Joan Redgrave.

Our General meetings are connection points for our members and friends and always have interesting guest speakers covering a variety of relevant topics, providing catchment and generally environmentally linked information.

This year I have given presentations/talks about CWCN at meetings of Rotary Kenmore as well as Toowong, at the Lions Club in Indooroopilly, and at Probus Club Brisbane. I also gave presentations on fungi on Bribie Island and on lichens at the University of the Third Age in Brisbane.

Our Network and/or individual members has/have written submissions or provided support/material/information, or have actively participated in or contributed to the SEQ Regional Plan, the Brisbane City Plan, the SEQ Natural Resource Management Plan, the Kenmore Bypass debate, the Long Pocket project, the Mt Coot-tha Visioning project, and the Indooroopilly Centre Community Planning Committee, and more.

Our Network has enormous opportunities to safeguard or improve the environmental values of our catchments, to contribute to the regional and local debate, and to help distribute knowledge about the importance of waterway health, ecological values, sustainability etc. To achieve best outcomes we need an even stronger organisation. We invite you to be part of upcoming planning and interest group meetings.

30 March 2010

Jutta Godwin