

Annual General Meeting of the Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network Inc

Tuesday, 25th March 2014
CWCN Centre, 47-57 Hepworth St, Chapel Hill

President's Report

For our Network which was formed at the end of 1999 and incorporated in 2004, 2013 has been the most successful year to date. The obvious highlight was the move into our own centre, generously provided by Brisbane City Council. We finally have a home, almost everything is under one roof now. We can at last improve the way our organisation works and build and expand our activities.

Our gratitude goes to Brisbane City Council for generously providing location and house, setting it up for it to fulfil public building needs. Special thanks are owed to

- Cr Julian Simmonds/Chair of Finance and Councillor for the Walter Taylor Ward for unwavering support, for his patience, and for the financial backing;
- Cr Margaret de Wit and her support, especially for coming to the financial rescue when the centre roof leaked;
- Peter Simpson, Keren Sweeney, Tom McHugh and Peter J. Brown for their unstinting support and making the Centre a reality against many odds.
-

We thank Queensland Government (past and present) for grant through the Gambling community Benefits Fund and the Sports and Solar Community Grants scheme. Both provided essential funds in setting the Centre up and allowing for professional working conditions. We are grateful to The Hon. Scott Emerson MP/Member for Indooroopilly for helping us to overcome time hurdles in regards to using the solar grant to its full potential.

Last but certainly not least we thank Mrs Jane Prentice MP/Member for Ryan without whom the CWCN Centre would not have come off the ground.

Around 100 people attended the official opening in August of last year. It certainly was a day of celebration, supported by Cr Julian Simmonds who generously footed the bill for the day, by the BrizWest Concert Band and by our friends from the Lions Club who organised our catering with great skill and enthusiasm. A commemorative plaque next to our entrance door marks the occasion.

The Centre is well equipped thanks to many donations from members and friends (too many to name), to the above mentioned grants, and thanks to the hands-on hard work of members.

In the months since the opening the house has truly established itself as a community centre which has also been used by other organisations including by Queensland Mycological Society, Conservation Volunteers Queensland, and the Brisbane Catchments Network.

At the core of CWCN's work continue to be the **protection of our remaining local biodiversity, the repairing, building and enhancing of corridors for wildlife movements**, and to achieve all that, **bushland and waterway rehabilitation**.

The focus of our rehabilitation work is channelled through corridor projects:

- **Witton for Wildlife** concentrating on work along Witton Creek including that of four bushcare groups registered with BCC's Habitat Brisbane Program plus three sub-groups and the work done at the University of Queensland Experimental Mine site as well as the one at the Indooroopilly Scout site.

A **Caring for our Country** grant led to the rehabilitation of a large section of **Moore Park**. We are grateful to the Federal Government for providing the funding and thank Moore Park Bushcare Group Convenor for the uncounted hours in organising the work. We thank a large group of CWCN and Moore Park volunteers for organising the concluding Family Fun Day and the linked community planting. The event drew over 300 people to Moore Park loving planting, music, children's theatre, wildlife show, raffle, and lots of sausages and cake.

The **Greenhill Reservoir** in the upper reaches of Witton Creek is now the recipient of a CWCN sponsored Lord Mayor's Community & Sustainability Environmental Grant and work is under way for the benefit of Witton Creek.

We congratulate **Indooroopilly Scouts** for their successful **Everyone's Environment Grant** which will see a further area of the Witton Creek corridor rehabilitated. It is mentioned here because CWCN organised seed funding that set the early rehabilitation in motion and triggered the Scouts' enthusiasm to continue.

- The **Toowong Creek Turnaround** corridor project continues to be carried by one bushcare group, the Toowong Creek Roving Rehabilitators in close cooperation with CWCN. A current State Government provided **Everyone's Environment Grant** will see the Mt Coot-tha Reserve section in Toowong on this side of the Western Freeway move towards substantially healthier habitat. Weed tree felling will start at the end of this week and contractor work will continue over a period of three years
Brisbane Boys College concluded their half year of participation along Toowong Creek in 2013 which saw many plantings in the upper reaches established. We are grateful for the college to integrate rehabilitation work in their *Life and Belief* program.
- **Cubberla Creek Connect** is our third and probably most important wildlife corridor project. Six bushcare groups plus two sub-groups work along the reaches of Cubberla Creek. 2013 saw **Merri Merri Park** receive support through **BCC's Community Conservation Partnerships program**. The same program has also seen two rehabilitation stages in **Dillingen Park** along the bikeway off Greenford Street come to fruition. The first one is about to conclude through corporate plantings, and the second one will follow soon. Additional work will be done by **Conservation Volunteers Queensland** who have received funding through the Lord Mayor's Community & Sustainability Environmental Grants program.
Golder Associates has provided substantial additional support at Merri Merri Park over the course of several years with four working bees each year. We are enormously grateful. A Family Fun Day was meant to say thank you and invite locals to join the rehabilitation efforts in their neighbourhood. Not for the first time, it rained. However, the locals and especially their children were determined to make the day work. Despite the weather all plants went into the ground, the children's theatre, the raffle and the face painting, the craft stall were a success. Lots of umbrellas surrounded the wildlife show. Around 100 people withstood the weather. We are grateful for the Creek Catchment Officer Program providing logistic help and our friends from the Lions Club for challenging the wet conditions with big smiles, drinks, sausages and cakes. CWCN and the Merri Merri Park bushcare Group are more than appreciative to the Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund and Cr Margaret de Wit for footing the bill for the educational/entertainment part.
- The **Brisbane River** Corridor increases in significance in regards to rehabilitation with now five bushcare groups working from Fig Tree Pocket to St Lucia and contributing to Brisbane's unique river asset through rehabilitation along the banks or in its vicinity and by connecting stepping stones for the benefit of local wildlife.
St Lucia Esplanade Bushcare Group has now received funding through the CWCN sponsored Lord Mayor's Community & Sustainability Environmental Grant which will help to restore mangrove habitat along the Brisbane River.
Legacy Offset Funding has been allocated to the Fig Tree Pocket Equestrian Centre and the rehabilitation of the main gully on their site. This is a CWCN started and fought for initiative. We have learned that a contractor has been appointed. We are looking forward to learning about the extent of the work and the timeframe.
State Government funding will be used to rehabilitate the river banks below the equestrian centre where mangroves, destroyed by the 2011 floods, are slowly coming back. The intended rehabilitation work will complement the regrowth as well as the work done in the gully, the previous 2 million trees plantings in the vicinity and the work done on nearby Land for Wildlife sites. SEQ Catchments is employed to supervise the river bank restoration. We are grateful.

The Brisbane wide **Caring for our Country** grant under the motto "**Brisbane Communities Working Together**" will bring further benefits for our catchments area. The grant jointly applied for by SEQ Catchments and Brisbane Catchments Network will enable the rehabilitation of several additional sites across our catchments and will start in the next financial year.

All our bushcare sites have received guidance and immense support by BCC's wonderful **Habitat Brisbane team**. We are appreciative of a second Habitat Brisbane Officer having been allocated to Brisbane's West as this has enabled additional support and consultation possibilities providing benefits for our rehabilitation work.

Our efforts towards biodiversity protection and wildlife corridor building do not come without **problems**.

This last year saw us negotiate the **effects of Legacy Way construction work on our Witton Creek system**. We thank all our volunteers involved in this process, especially Ross Kapitzke who provided his professional expertise. We had some small success in not having Witton Creek turned into a drain below the Moggill Road exit off the Western Freeway. Awaiting the rehabilitation of the site we have now learned that the Department of Transport and MainRoads has instructed Transcity to abandon the site because the future bikeway bridge will create renewed damage to the same area of which we don't know the details yet, but are hoping an upcoming meeting with TMR will clarify issues.

The **Western Freeway is now being upgraded** and Mt Coot-tha Reserve will again be the loser. We have seen small aerial views of the construction area. We were neither allowed to keep these A3 aerial views with overlays nor where we allowed to copy or photograph them so that we could further study them and see i.e. the effects on local waterway tributaries. We all knew the widening of the Freeway would happen at one stage, however, it seems details cannot be shared in such a way that we can come to an informed opinion about the effects.

Another problem is the **Cubberla Creek Bikeway/Centenary Bikeway Link/Akuna Street Pathway**. It is meant to be a "Secondary Bikeway" in the Brisbane Bikeway Network. We were told that it would happen according to BCC's design no matter what we said. We are concerned because the bikeway is meant to go through green space and in some areas destroying or at least damaging it. The mentioned references on which the design is based are "Standards" which at closer inspection do not request the bikeway location where intended. We are concerned because we consider the little bit of green space we have in Brisbane's Inner West important for a variety of reasons, not least because it forms a buffer protecting the waterway, because it is an essential part of a corridor of high ecological significance according to the Draft City Plan, and because it is valued by the vast majority of local residents. We also know that the adjacent Akuna Street has such a low traffic volume that biking on the road is appropriate according to BCC's own guidelines. Additionally, BCC's Schedule 80 funding once naturalised the waterway and volunteers spent many hours establishing plantings along the watercourse.

Protection Biodiversity and creating healthy habitats also means we need to know what natural treasures we have in our Inner West Catchments and **how to assess habitat conditions**. For the latter a **new methodology** is currently being developed and we are grateful to Norrie Sanders for contributing his professional expertise to this aim. This methodology put into practise is meant to inform rehabilitation decisions and approaches much more strategically.

CWCN's intention is to regularly monitor our aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity and the water quality of our creeks.

Thanks to Brisbane Catchments Network and funding from BCC's Creek Catchment Officer Program **Animal Ethic Permits** are now in place.

2013 saw us conduct a **frog workshop**. Unfortunately, the hot and dry weather conditions didn't allow for actual surveys to be conducted. We will continue the effort over the next two years and hope to confirm the presence of well known species across the catchments and to find some less common species too. We thank Harry Hines and Jesse Rowland for leading us in these efforts.

A **CWCN Birder Group** has been formed visiting sites across Inner West on a regular basis to identify not only the species present but also to see seasonal changes. We are highly appreciative of Lyn Cole guiding the bird walks and feeding the database.

BCC funding for a **microbat survey** in our catchments has been granted, and we are very interested to see which species call our Inner West home. Nightly surveys will be preceded by a workshop to be run by microbat specialist Monika Rhodes.

The first **fish surveys** for a long while will be conducted in our creeks shortly, at the end of the warmer season. Thanks to the newly acquired Animal Ethics Permit mentioned earlier, CWCN will restart surveying our fish populations twice a year.

CWCN members were able to attend a Brisbane Catchments Network run **fish survey training workshop**, funded thanks to the Creek Catchment Officer Program, and held at Cubberla Creek and the CWCN Centre.

Monthly water quality monitoring continues to be conducted in our all local creeks by Ray Kelly, now with support of Tony Pressland. We thank SEQ Catchments for the regular calibration of our electronic water quality monitoring device. The intention is to have more members trained in 2013, preferably with accreditation.

Working with Schools has always been an important component of our work. However, for the first time in 14 years of cooperation our annual activities day with all Grade 5 students from **Indooroopilly State Primary School** didn't take place because of unseasonal heat and dry weather conditions which didn't allow for plantings and some of the other outdoor activities. Let's hope 2014 can make up for it.

Students from **Brisbane Boys College** spent the first half of 2013 attending weekly working bees at Toowong Creek planting and weeding. We appreciate BBC integrating bushcare into their *Life and Belief* Program.

We are excited about our cooperation with **Brisbane Girls Grammar**, the new owners of the ex Marist Brothers sports fields. BGGGS has developed a master plan for its new sports campus and, to our delight, has included rehabilitation and facilitation of learning experiences into the plan. Students from BGGGS have attended two special working bees at Rainbow Forest, staff has attended CWCN workshops and bird walks. We were able to meet with all BGGGS staff on a special day out and tour the Rainbow Forest site introducing the rehabilitation potential, and we will be working with BGGGS in developing plans for rehabilitation along the Cubberla Creek line. This rehabilitation will over time benefit our **Cubberla Creek Connect** project greatly.

Four CWCN members attended **Healthy Waterways' Up the Creek & Down the Drain Workshop** at Ithaca Creek, run by Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre. We were introduced to the story thread method of teaching. CWCN will work with Healthy Waterways on tailoring appropriate "stories" around our own local creeks with the aim to engage teachers of our many schools in Brisbane's Inner West and integrate the importance of healthy waterways into curriculum based teaching. We are grateful to Healthy Waterways for this investment. Thanks to our new CWCN Centre we have also been able to offer **school holiday activities** and started with interactive storytelling and the topic of soils (hands-on and through the microscope). The upcoming Easter holidays will see natural materials being used to create egg decorations, and recycled paper to shape little nests. We are in the process of developing more programs.

National Recycling Week saw community engagement at the CWCN Centre including the screening of two documentaries "Bag it" and "Plastic Planet", saw Christmas decorations made from discards, Children's theatre promoting the proper rubbish disposal, musical instruments being made of junk, and saw children engaged with an animal menagerie created of discards, and a magic nature night walk featuring fauna, flora, fungi, and also pixies and fairies, all made of reflective throwaways and needing a torch. Star of the week was Natrasha Turtle, made by Brisbane artist Tim Rice, provided by Healthy Waterways and carrying plastic rubbish from Moreton Bay under its shell. Natrasha was on display at the CWCN Centre every day, as were picture displays of litter bugs and messages of keeping our waterways clean. We thank Healthy Waterways, Doc & Film International, Pullen Pullen Catchments Group for their contribution and especially Transcity for funding all activities.

CWCN is a member of and engages with Landcare Queensland, SEQ Catchments, Healthy Waterways, and the Brisbane Catchments Network.

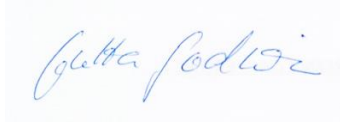
CWCN's monthly Book Club linked to titles with environmental issues has had its first two sessions with excellent titles, vibrant debates, and lots of enjoyment had by all participants. We thank Robin Trotter not only for having the idea but also for hosting the sessions with aplomb.

In addition to the substantial number of rehabilitation grants, CWCN is grateful to Brisbane City Council for funding towards our administrative costs, to SEQ Catchments for funding which will enable the purchase of a camera and audio recording equipment, and to the Federal Government for funding helping towards the costs of our multiple activities.

Insurance needs for our activities are covered through **Queensland Water and Landcarers**. We are extremely grateful for public liability, volunteer workers, and association liability insurance.

CWCN thanks all volunteers who share their enthusiasm and skills and who contribute many hours of work to make our Inner West catchments a place where local biodiversity thrives and a community is informed and engaged.

25th March 2014

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jutta Godwin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light blue rectangular box.

Jutta Godwin/President CWCN Inc