

bushlandnews



Issue 138 **Winter 2026** *Time of Makuru and Djilba in the Noongar calendar.*

Post-fire recovery in the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands

Photo – Cat Williams.



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



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

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Page 7 An unexpected sighting: the narrow-banded shovel-nosed snake



The narrow-banded shovel-nosed snake spends much of its life hidden beneath the sandy soils and leaf litter in Perth's bushland, making it a rare species to observe. Photo – Ben Hicks.

Next issue

Spring *Bushland News*

Spring *Bushland News* contributions should be sent to [Urban Nature](#) by **Wednesday 12 August 2026**. *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 and Diana Biondini.

Post-fire recovery in the



Greater Brixton Street Wetlands

By Cat Williams

Despite a rapid and coordinated response from firefighting agencies, including aerial support, a large bushfire occurred on 11 December 2025 within the [Greater Brixton Street Wetlands](#). The fire burned across approximately 118 hectares of nature reserve and adjoining properties. This followed an earlier fire in March 2025, which affected 47 hectares in the northern extent of Greater Brixton Street Wetlands. Notably, there was an overlap of 17 hectares between the two events, exposing parts of this sensitive ecological community to multiple fires within a single year.

Fire causes considerable damage to clay-based wetland systems such as those found at Greater Brixton Street Wetlands, and recovery in these environments is typically slow and fragile. Minimising access—particularly by vehicles—is essential both during and after fire events. One of the

defining features of the reserve is its network of cracking clay wetland basins, commonly referred to as [gilgais](#). These shallow basins develop patterns of small mounds and depressions over time as soils expand and contract through wetting and drying cycles. This micro-topography provides specialised habitat for a range of flora and fauna.

However, gilgai landforms are extremely vulnerable to disturbance. Even light impacts, such as footprints or vehicle tracks, can cause long-lasting damage. In many cases, these tracks remain visible for decades and can alter [natural hydrology](#) and vegetation patterns. Protecting these soil structures is therefore a critical priority during recovery.

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Front cover: New growth emerging from grass trees and banksia at the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands in April 2026, signalling the early stages of post fire recovery. Photo – Cat Williams

*Carpets of orange fungus *Pyronema omphalodes* were triggered by light rain in early April. This fire loving fungus colonises burnt ground, stabilising topsoil and reducing erosion risk whilst breaking down charcoal and organic residues to release nutrients back into the soil. Photo – Cat Williams.*

Supporting [natural regeneration](#) processes is central to post-fire management. While the ecosystem recovers at its own pace, targeted intervention is also required. Weed control is one of the most significant components of recovery work. Following fire, there is typically a window of approximately two years in which weed density can be effectively reduced across a reserve. At Greater Brixton, many of the priority weed species are [grasses that respond aggressively to fire](#), rapidly colonising exposed areas. Fortunately, these species are more easily detected post-fire and can be treated with minimal disturbance to regenerating native vegetation.

The fire also passed through several dense shrubland areas, exposing a significant amount of legacy rubbish and household waste—much of it dumped prior to the land being designated as conservation estate. This presented an opportunity for remediation. In an eight-hectare section of the Wanaping Block alone, more

than 24 cubic metres of rubbish were collected and appropriately disposed of. Larger items, including rusted vehicle bodies, water tanks and coils of old wire, have also been removed, improving both ecological condition and site safety.

Encouragingly, signs of ecological recovery were evident within two months of the December fire, highlighting the resilience of the wetland system. Vegetation response has varied across soil types. Areas of [Bassendean Sands](#) have recovered more rapidly than the clay flats, with species such as [Xanthorrhoea preissii](#) and [Xanthorrhoea brunonis](#) producing new leaves within weeks. In wetter areas, resprouting species including [Melaleuca raphiophylla](#), along with obligate seeding species such as [Hypocalymma](#), are beginning to re-establish. Some plant species have even flowered within weeks of the fire, despite minimal rainfall, demonstrating the remarkable adaptability of native flora.



Founding member Trevor Drummond of the Friends of Brixton Street Wetlands receives a community grant funded electric brushcutter, strengthening the capacity of volunteers to undertake conservation work. Photo – Cat Williams.



SERCUL contractors removed more than 24m³ of waste, including old fridges, tyres and glass bottles after fire passed through dense shrubland on the eastern side of the Wanaping Block. Photo – Cat Williams.

[Post-fire fungi](#) have also played an important role in early recovery. Carpets of vibrant orange fungus, [Pyronema omphalodes](#), appeared after light rainfall in early April. This species is known to colonise burnt ground, forming mats of [mycelium](#) that contribute to nutrient cycling. By breaking down charcoal and organic residues, the fungus helps release nutrients back into the soil, supporting plant growth. These fungal mats also assist in stabilising topsoil, reducing the risk of erosion in exposed areas.

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Following significant losses during the December fire, surviving bobtail lizards have begun to reappear at the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands. Injured animals rescued by volunteers from Kanyana Wildlife and Darling Range Wildlife Shelter during black walk surveys are being rehabilitated for return. Photo – Cat Williams.

A significant boost to recovery efforts has come through targeted Western Australian State Government funding. This support has enabled a strong and coordinated post-fire response, including regular site monitoring, early identification of emerging issues, and timely implementation of on-ground conservation works. Increased staff presence has been particularly valuable in managing threats and supporting recovery across the reserve.

In addition, grant funding has been made available for community-led conservation and engagement initiatives that promote the natural values of the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands. These programs play an important role in fostering stewardship and raising awareness of the site's ecological significance.

We congratulate the recipients of the first round of funding: [Friends of Brixton Street Wetlands](#), the [Urban Bushland Council](#), and the University of Western Australia (Honours Project). Their contributions will help strengthen both on-ground outcomes and community connection to this unique landscape.

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Some species responded rapidly to fire and within two months species such as this fringe lily were in full flower in February, despite minimal rainfall, demonstrating the remarkable adaptability of native flora. Photo – Cat Williams.

Urban Nature update By Julia Cullity

We've downsized! Bushland News is now in its [thirty fifth year](#). Information exchange is now so rapid and with social media at most people's fingertips we've decided to prune our short-form, bulletin board sections and concentrate on a smaller selection of longer articles. We hope that we continue to inspire and inform you with research into local biodiversity values, community innovations in bush care, technical information relating to bushland management and group profiles that celebrate the work of conservation volunteers. Enjoy the read!

We've also had some problems with our email subscription service. If you or someone you know hasn't received our newsletter please [resubscribe](#) – it's free.



The Urban Nature team, Julia (left) and Grazyna at Ellenbrook Nature Reserve, taking a rare autumn trip to the claypans to revisit vegetation condition mapping when the wetlands are completely dry. Photo – Cat Williams.



[Woodvale Waters Friends of Beenyup Channel](#) and Urban Nature have set up a very simple trial to test whether [flupropanate herbicide](#) will have a residual effect on the germination of African love grass compared to using glyphosate. Here in Perry's Paddock at Yellagonga Regional Park there is little chance of off-target damage! Photo – Bryan Saunders.



Over the years Urban Nature, supported by DBCA marine rangers and dedicated volunteers, has been involved in trialling a range of restoration methods for reestablishing perennial vegetation on Penguin Island. We have gained valuable knowledge about what works and what doesn't. Building on this experience, the marine rangers with the ongoing support of the Penguin Island volunteers have continued the restoration by establishing a small plant nursery. This nursery produces plants specifically for use in localised on-island planting programs. Seedlings are propagated from seeds and cuttings taken from plant species naturally occurring on the island and are grown using island soils. This approach significantly reduces the risk of introducing biosecurity hazards such as weeds or diseases, while supporting effective and targeted vegetation restoration. From little things big things grow – Ben (left), Georgie, Matt (the brainchild behind the nursery and driving force keeping it going) Carla and Grazyna and with some of the seedlings grown at the nursery. Photo–Spencer Chapple.

An unexpected sighting: the narrow-banded shovel-nosed snake

By Odessa Grant



The narrow-banded shovel-nosed is instantly recognisable by its distinct red-brown to cream colouring, narrow dark bands, and shovel-shaped snout. Photo – Ben Hicks.

A recent and uncommon sighting of a narrow-banded shovel-nosed snake (*Brachyuophis fasciolatus*) in Perth's bushland has been a welcome and exciting surprise. Despite decades of clearing and fragmentation, pockets of Perth's bushland still support an extraordinary range of biodiversity.

Earlier this year, Ben Hicks, an [avid wildlife photographer](#) and Conservation and Wildlife Biology student, photographed a narrow-banded shovel-nosed snake. This species is incredibly cryptic in nature as it is a fossorial reptile, meaning that it lives most of its life hidden beneath sandy soils and leaf litter. For Ben, the discovery of this snake was very exciting as, "it was the first time I'd seen the species", he said. "They're pretty rarely observed in the Perth region now. There have only been a handful of sightings since the 1990s".

The narrow-banded shovel-nosed is instantly recognisable by its distinct red-brown to cream colouring, narrow dark bands, and shovel-shaped snout. Ben describes these nocturnal fossorial snakes as "harmless, not dangerous to humans. They are mildly venomous but unlikely to cause harm as they are reluctant to bite people in the first place."

Ben credits experience, research, and an understanding of the species' life history to his observation of this species. Years of birdwatching from the age of 11, followed by a growing love for reptiles and amphibians from the age of 15, helped him to develop the skills needed to locate this elusive animal.

In recent decades much of Perth's northern suburbs have been heavily developed, resulting in loss and fragmentation of banksia woodland. The impact for this reptile species is that now, "They're restricted to just a few areas of continuous habitat," Ben explained. "A lot of reptile species in the Perth region are really uncommon and have patchy distributions, but they're often overlooked."

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While urbanisation is harmful, remnant bushland plays a crucial role in supporting species like the *Brachyurophis fasciolatus*. The retention and connection of these patches of native vegetation are essential for maintaining biodiversity in Perth. These remnants act as refuges, allowing species to persist despite the surrounding development. And since this snake lives predominantly in arid to semi-arid habitats, specifically favouring sandy, open woodlands and shrublands including spinifex grasslands and desert dunes, our remnant native areas are the perfect habitats for this fossorial species.

Paul Doughty, Head of [Terrestrial Zoology](#) at the Western Australian Museum has emphasised the significance of Ben's find, stating that: "This beautiful species occurring in the Perth region reminds us of what a special place in the world we live in: to be able to share it with creatures like this *Brachyurophis* snake is great, so it's nice to see the photograph to let us know they are still here. This species is completely harmless to people, and owing to its burrowing habits is rarely seen but is still here in the Perth area, and certainly worth conserving by



There are approximately 24 snake species recorded in the Perth metropolitan area. This is another photo taken by [Ben Hicks](#) of a reticulated whipsnake, primarily found in Western Australia. Photo – Ben Hicks.



From the age of 11, Ben Hicks has been bird watching, sighting the likes of the Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*), before developing a growing love for reptiles and amphibians, which he attributes to the recent sighting of the narrow-banded shovel-nosed snake. Photo – Ben Hicks

smart reserve design to ensure these animals are in our midst for future generations."

The tracking of species like the narrow-banded shovel-nosed snake is a very important but difficult job because of the species' cryptic nature. Observations like this are extremely helpful and allow the scientific community to track and record its distribution and abundance, allowing for continued studies on the species.

Ben's discovery highlights the role of young people in documenting and protecting local biodiversity. To maintain this preservation of bushland areas he suggests that we all, "Make use of the abundance of

resources around to gain an understanding of what species are found in what areas and about their life histories."

In a region where many small reptiles are declining quietly and unnoticed, this observation reminds us that even the most cryptic species can persist when its habitat is protected.

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The fight to save wildlife from rodenticide poisoning

By Karen Majer and Boyd Wykes

Not long after we first discovered [masked owls](#) breeding in Margaret River, our joy was tempered in 2018 by Mike Lohr and Rob Davis at Edith Cowan University (ECU) finding alarmingly high levels of [second generation anticoagulant rodenticide \(SGAR\) exposure](#) in southwest boobooks. Our analysis of regurgitated pellets of fur and bones showed that masked owls were specialist rodent predators and liver testing of dead owls confirmed our worst fears. Local and national research has since established that these persistent poisons are showing up throughout the food web, with exposure documented in a wide range of birds of prey, reptiles, frogs, fish and marsupials, including endangered species such as quolls.

Dedicated volunteers commenced an [Owl Friendly Margaret River campaign](#) in 2019 to raise awareness and promote community action to protect our local wildlife with masked owls as ambassador.

Soon after, the national poisons regulator, the [Australian Pharmaceutical and Veterinary Medicines Authority \(APVMA\)](#), began its first review of [anticoagulant rodenticides](#), and in December 2021 the APVMA announced that, based on the response, it would review scientific evidence. A concentrated response from scientists, organisations and concerned public had detailed the impacts of SGARs on native wildlife.

The outcome of the APVMA review [Special Gazette 16 December 2025](#) finally recognised that the risk of SGARs to wildlife is unacceptable. However the APVMA proposed SGARs remain on sale to the public and for use by pest controllers and farmers with main restrictions limited to labelling changes, a pack size limit for householders, and requirement that bait stations be used outdoors. These conditions failed to heed the logic and science that wildlife also access bait stations (primary poisoning) and that rodents that eat poison move away for up to 18 days to be eaten alive and dead (secondary poisoning). Submissions were invited by 14 March 2026.

What followed was a public outcry including intensive campaigns by [Birdlife Australia](#), [Owl Friendly MR](#) and a consortium of scientists, conservationists and legal professionals to facilitate submissions calling for an immediate ban on SGARs. During the submission period new research was released by scientists at ECU, graphically proving the devastating effect of SGAR poisoning on masked owls and the inadequacy of bait stations as a means of reducing risk to wildlife.

In a surprise move, on 10 March 2026 (before the end of the submission period), the APVMA released [new regulations](#) detailed in [Gazette 5](#). The APVMA certified that it is in the public interest for chemical products containing any SGARs to be declared [Restricted Chemical Products \(RCPs\)](#).

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As rodent specialists, masked owls are at great risk of poisoning from second generation anticoagulant rodenticides which persist in the bodies of the rodents they poison. Photo – Steven Castan.



ECU Associate Professor Rob Davis (right), and author Dr Boyd Wykes with dead masked owls that were tested and found to have toxic or lethal levels of SGARs. Photo – Karen Majer.

Declaring SGARs as RCPs would restrict use of SGARs to individuals who meet specific training and licensing requirements. A decision to adopt that certification is being considered by the [Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry](#) in consultation with state and territory authorities, including in relation to any training and licensing requirements.

What the science tells us is that if pest controllers are permitted to use SGARs in outdoor bait stations, there remains a high risk of primary and secondary poisoning of wildlife.

In the meantime, from 24 March 2026, there is a one-year “suspension” meaning no further manufacture or new import orders. Retailers such as hardware stores can continue to sell existing stocks of SGARs in smaller pack sizes as long as they hand out new instructions for use that override the label on the product. Pest controllers can use SGARs in outdoor bait stations close to buildings.

The fight to save wildlife from rodenticide poisoning continues. [Owl Friendly MR](#) and others are campaigning for RCP status to be enacted by the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, and for commercial use to be banned except for exceptional purposes such as removal of introduced rodents from islands for conservation purposes.

SGARs were never a silver bullet solution. Integrated Pest Management is required, starting with hygiene, traps and as a last resort, safer rodenticides. Rodents can still be [effectively controlled](#).



Wildlife can also access bait stations, here a phascogale is entering a bait station at ECU Bunbury Campus. Photo – ECU.

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Herbicide control of environmental weeds By Julia Cullity

In Australia, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Authority (APVMA) assess herbicide products to ensure they are safe for humans, animals, the environment, and trade before they can be registered for sale. The registration has strict conditions and once approved it can only legally be used under those conditions which can be found on the herbicide's product label. The target market for herbicide manufacturers is agriculture, therefore the data they supply supports registration primarily for agriculture. As a result, very few herbicides are registered for use in bushland in Australia.

To legally apply herbicides in a situation not on the product label, a [minor-use permit](#) (sometimes called an off-label permit) must be acquired from the APVMA. Here the APVMA assess the suitability of a herbicide in the new situation (e.g. bushland) or new method (e.g. knapsack) and can apply conditions to minimise environmental or health impacts.

There have been recent changes to off-label permit approvals for the control of environmental weeds and declared plants in Australia. Off-label permits are now being sought for small groups of similar acting herbicides (up to five) rather than previous permits that combined many herbicides for the control of environmental weeds. Landcare groups would be familiar with PER133333 that had more than 27 approved herbicides. Future permits will now list up to five herbicides, and detail who can use the permit, the jurisdiction it applies to, the situation, application method, dose rates, target weeds, critical use comments, withholding periods and all have an expiry date.

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Most herbicides do not include bushland in the conditions for use on the label. To legally apply herbicides in a situation not on the product label, a minor use (or off-label) permit must be acquired from the APVMA. Read your herbicide label and check the [current minor use permits](#) to determine which herbicides can be used for the control of environmental weeds as there have been recent changes. Photo – Cat Williams.

Relevant permits for weed management in Western Australian bushland

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) have applied for 13 off-label permits for the use of selected herbicides in natural areas within Western Australia and eight have been approved with another five pending.

PER13333, held by Forest Products Commission, is still valid for the control of environmental weeds until 30 September 2026. After that date, it will be superseded by new off-label permits now held by DBCA.

PER9792, held by NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, selected herbicides from group 0,1,2 and 9 for control of tussock grasses expires 31 December 2030.

PER96652 selected group 5 PPSII inhibitors for woody, grass and broadleaf weeds expires 31 March 2028.

PER96570 all formulations of glyphosate expires 28 February 2031.

The following permits expire 31 March 2031:

PER96598 selected group 2 sulfonylureas for annual grass, broadleaf, bulb, rhizome, Brassicaceae and Asteraceae weeds.

PER96609 flupropanate and pine oil for grass weeds.

PER96635 selected Auxin mimics in group 4 for woody, vine, Asteraceae, Fabaceae and broadleaf weeds.

PER96642 selected Auxin mimics in group 4 for broadleaf, woody and succulent weeds.

PER96645 selected Auxin mimics in group 4 for broadleaf and woody weeds.

Also useful for bushland management

PER13534 for the control of Phytophthora in native vegetation expires 31 December 2028.

PER7250 small-scale trial permit allows the use of any herbicide to be trialled on up to 10m² or 100 non-crop plants and remains in force until cancelled.

And the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development hold off-label permits to control declared plants:

PER92452 glyphosate and selected Auxin mimics in group 4 expires 29 February 2028.

PER93063 selected herbicides from groups 2, 4, 5, 6, 12, 29 and 34 expires May 2028.

There are also [limitations](#) on the herbicides that can be used in water catchment areas.

Or search for another permit using the [APVMA's permit search](#).

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The author applying herbicide in a cut stump application during a field trial for Casuarina glauca control under the small-scale trial permit PER7250. Photo – DBCA.

Frequently asked questions

Does an off-label permit apply to me?

It depends. You don't need an off-label permit if the situation and/or weed is already on the label. If not, then the person applying the herbicide needs to know they are covered by an off-label permit. Don't rely on your supervisor, client or friend's advice or instructions. It's the responsibility of the person using the herbicide to know that they are using it legally and appropriately.

What weeds are on label for use in bushland?

Glyphosate 360g/L active ingredient allows for general weed control use in all situations (which includes bushland) in all states. Veldt grass in bushland is listed on fluazifop labels. Annual and perennial grasses and *Watsonia* spp. in non-crop areas are on dalapon labels. African love grass, *Sporobolus* spp., *Nassella* spp., *Paspalum* spp., couch, Johnson grass, kikuyu and Columbus grass in non-crop areas and nature reserves are on flupropanate labels.

Where do I find herbicide labels?

Product labels can be found on the product container, the manufacturer's website or by searching the APVMA's 'PubCRIS' (Public Chemical Registration Information System) database.

Can I blend herbicides?

Yes, you can use blends of different herbicides if that blend is permitted on the manufacturer's label. The off-label permit allows for a minor use to be applied to a situation not on the label. In our case the change in situation is for a target species or land use.

Can I use rates that are higher or lower than the label or off-label permit?

The label or off-label permit only needs to list a maximum dose rate. You can't go over the dose rate, but you can use a lower concentration.

Why isn't bushland on the label?

Most herbicides are only registered for use in agricultural situations like pasture or cropping which supplies the bulk of the market. In most cases it isn't economically viable to carry out the research to register the product for environmental weeds or bushland situations. However, if that research is done by other organisations and published in a scientific journal with the effective rate and target species, the manufacturer may choose to put that information on its label. In all other circumstances, you will need a minor use permit from the APVMA.

What if my herbicide isn't on a minor use permit?

If you are doing weed management in bushland and used a herbicide on PER13333 and it's not on the new minor-use permits, it may be because the APVMA didn't approve that herbicide going forward, or is waiting on technical data to be supplied to assess the permit. Contact weeds@dbca.wa.gov.au for more information. New herbicides on the market may not be on the new permits, and DBCA is interested to hear of any small trials that can be considered to support a new minor use application.

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How the Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group began

We start them young! An AGLG officer giving a planting demonstration. Photo – Ben Yew.



How the Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group began



By Pat Hart

In 1993, the Swan/Avon Integrated Catchment Program (ICM) was created with funding from the Commonwealth Government to provide a coordinated, community-led approach to catchment management in the Swan and Avon catchments.

Through my lobbying and concerns about the Canning River, I was encouraged to apply to become a member of this amazing group of stakeholders from the Avon and Swan Regions including numerous government agencies which ran the program. I became the Chair of the Swan ICM program and Mike McPharlane, a farmer from Doodlakine, was Chair of the Avon ICM. Noel Robins, Chairman of the Swan River Trust, was appointed Chair of the overall Swan/Avon ICM group. So began more than a year's worth of monthly meetings at the Shamrock Hotel in Northam working through many aspects of the program requirements. The Swan ICM saw the setting up of the Swan Working Group (now [Perth NRM](#)) of which I became Chair, and the Swan Catchment Centre in the old Fisheries building in Adelaide Terrace.

One of the key objectives of the Swan Working Group was to set up community rivercare groups along the Swan and Canning Rivers. At this stage, the only group was the Bayswater Catchment Group. The Swan Catchment Centre was set up with numerous staff and funding to assist this requirement in partnership with the then Waterways Commission. The result was amazing, with many groups along the Swan Canning waterways and tributaries being setup.

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Sedges are so important for maintaining the health of our creeks and rivers, AGLG officers always have time to discuss sedges with our volunteers. Photo – Ben Yew.

The Upper Canning project evolved out of this, with the requirement for the cities of Armadale and Gosnells to be partners with community and the Swan River Trust. The area also involved the Wungong and Southern Rivers, which at the time were mainly rural, and saw a smaller project headed by the Department of Agriculture's Senior Officer, Gerry Parliviet, as a partner with the Upper Canning project. We were originally called the Upper Canning Southern Wungong Catchment Group. As the years went by the agriculture project component on the Wungong finished and the area became more urbanised, so we changed our name to the [Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group Inc \(AGLG\)](#).

The first meeting was held in April 1996 at then Settlers Commons building in the City of Armadale. The original program was managed by the Swan River Trust through Senior Officer, Daryl Miller, as well as Chairperson, Brett Tizard; Coordinator, Nicole Seimon and Rural Landcare Officer, Wes Horwood. The Swan River Trust provided secretarial support and the cities of Armadale and City Gosnells both gave in-kind and financial support of \$30,000 each.

The two community groups attached to this program were the Armadale City Rivercare Group, which I convened, and a community group in Gosnells led by Ray Julian, called the Canning River Residents' Group. The first community projects were with Armadale City Rivercare Group at Roley Pools in Roleystone, and with Canning River Residents Group at Southernwood Creek in Gosnells. Noting that it took nearly 12 months after approval for the funding to flow through, which can be the case with Commonwealth-funded projects.

And so, AGLG's journey began with lots of highs and a few lows; but, the City of Armadale and City of Gosnells have always supported us in many ways over the past 30 years.



City of Armadale Mayor Ruth Butterfield (left), AGLG Chair Pat Hart and City of Gosnells Councillor Diane Lloyd at the 30-year celebration of the AGLG. Photo –Shane Hunter.

For the past 15 years, through our formal business plans, we have received commitments for full financial and in-kind support for our officers which has seen us grow from strength to strength.

A formal partnership with the cities of Armadale and Gosnells

The AGLG's five-year business plans with the two councils are in-depth documents taking months to finalise, ensuring worthwhile value of the investment by the Councils both financial and in-kind.

Each council has different, but similar business plans that must be approved by councillors. AGLG finances and staff are managed by the AGLG chair, deputy chair and a senior officer from each council. The AGLG Committee consists of eight community members, a councillor and a staff member from each local government, along with AGLG staff however only the community members have voting rights.

The critical importance of partnerships

In the 2023 Federal elections we worked with the South East Regional Centre of Urban Landcare (SERCUL), four local governments and three federal politicians and gained \$10 million for the Canning Waterways. Prior to the election, we worked with SERCUL, DBCA Rivers and Estuaries team, and all stakeholders in the Canning Catchment to draw up a plan as to what is being done and what is required to assist in the repair and management of the Canning Waterways. It was this plan that we based the Federal funding request on.

With more than 30 years' involvement with Landcare, I know that to succeed it is critical to have either formal or informal partnerships with Local, State or Federal Government. Together our objectives are to improve our natural environment and, although our pathways are sometimes challenging, it is only by talking and working through these do we find the outcomes we are all seeking.

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cockie's tongues

By Diana Blondini

Templetonia retusa commonly known as cockies' tongues or flame bush, is an evergreen, medium shrub with large pea-shaped flowers that are most notable during winter and spring. Belonging to the Fabaceae family, it grows both in South Australia and south-western WA.

Cockies' tongues are found predominantly in coastal woodlands and heaths over limestone in Western Australia, such as along the coastal areas from Shark Bay southwards to Esperance, including Rottneest Island, the Mount Eliza escarpment in Kings Park and pictured here at Blackwall Reach on the Swan River.

The plant features leathery, blue-green or grey-green leaves with a distinct "blunt" or notched tip, giving the species its name (*retusa* is Latin for blunt), and can reach heights of about two metres.

Cockies tongues produce large, vibrant "pea-shaped" flowers which are usually deep, rich red, though yellow and white variants do exist. They bloom from winter to early spring (April to November) with flowers that grow to around 25–40mm long. The fruit is followed by flat, linear-oblong seed pods, which can be 40–80mm long.

The flowers are highly attractive to nectar-feeding birds, especially honeyeaters who are easily able to see its bright red colour. It is also a major food source for native butterflies and bees and serves as a larval host plant for the long-tailed pea-blue butterfly and native caterpillars.

Some fun facts about *Templetonia retusa*

- In Noongar culture, *Templetonia retusa* is known as Yackal Djarr. Its flowering was historically used as an indicator for when to fish for skipjack trevally.
- The flowers of cockies' tongues are edible. Tea can be made from the seeds after crushing them.
- The name cockies' tongues is derived specifically from the unique shape and colour of the flower parts, mainly the keel. The keel is the notched bottom petal structure that closely mimics the blunt, fleshy tongue of a cockatoo.

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