

THE GECKO



Edition 31
April 2021

Welcome to the April 2021 edition of The Gecko.

We had a mixed bag of group activities this quarter with watering, holding our AGM and walking the future State Football Centre site.

The City of Canning has also been of great help by dealing with some of the unwanted bushland visitors. From cat trapping and controlling rabbits to dealing with a burnt out vehicle, the bushland would be very much poorer without the City doing so much of the heavy lifting.

January to March 2021

26 January 2021

What better way can there be than to start Australia Day by watering our seedlings? That is what 11 members did for the first couple of hours of the day.

With so many hands helping, the watering was done in a flash and we were able to spend time catching up with those helpers we hadn't seen in a while.



A treat for the young, and young at heart, was for each of them to take home a feather. The feathers had been found in the bushland and will be a reminder of the morning. They are also an educational prompt as the new owners learn more about their feather's original owner.

28 February 2021

Nine members attended our Annual General Meeting. Our committee for the next 12 months is:

Chair: Sian

Vice chair: Kade

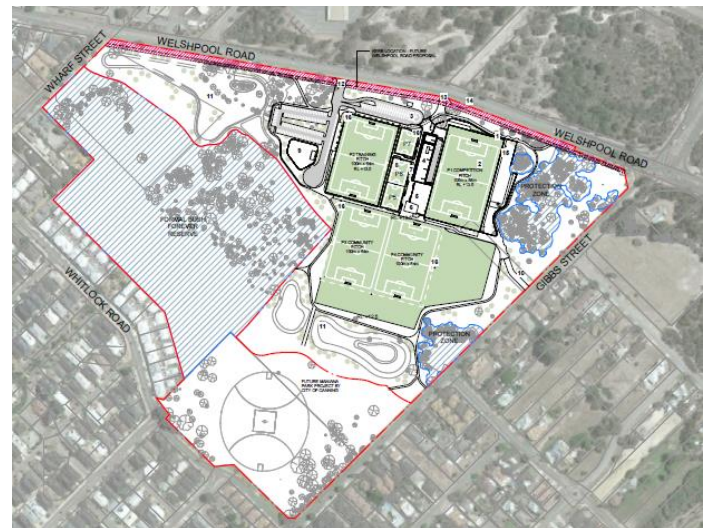
Secretary: Jackie

Treasurer: Sian

Ordinary committee members: Barbara, Ronnie and Ian

28 March 2021

We took this opportunity to walk across the future State Football Centre site to try to imagine what will go where and how it will fit amongst the existing bushland.



Joining us on the walk were City of Canning councillor Graham Barry and the City of Canning's Queens Park Neighbourhood Manager James Murphy. Both Graham and James were eager to hear what we had to say about the development and share how they could help, should the need arise.

It was pleasing to see that the development is mainly situated in areas with no native vegetation. The native vegetation that will be removed will have its seed collected or, for plants like the Zamia Palms, be translocated. Large pieces of timber will be retained for habitat and a wildlife spotter will be used to relocate animals displaced as vegetation is being cleared.

The 12 people attending were then treated to a morning tea of homemade cake and biscuits. Thanks to James and Barbara for being so generous.

A big THANK YOU goes to Aliyya, Barbara, Frank, Graham, Ian, Ikhlās, Jackie, James, Jessica, Judith, Kade, Louis, Omar, Ronnie, Rosemary, Shirley, Sian, Ubaydah, Zaid and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

Upcoming events

April – To be confirmed
May – To be confirmed
June – To be confirmed

Details of some of our activities are yet to be finalised but will be distributed by email and advertised on our website.

Also this quarter

The City of Canning's Natural Areas Team (NAT) conducted cat trapping in our reserves. Over seven nights of trapping they caught three cats. They were taken to the City of Canning's cat management facility where their owners were attempted to be identified and contacted. Their photographs were also displayed on the City of Canning's [website](#) but, if nobody claimed them, they will have been rehomed or destroyed.



Cat number 1 in a cat trap. Photo: Janelle.

The NAT is able to trap cats in all of the bushland areas in order to help protect the wildlife. This means cat owners should ensure that their cat doesn't go into the reserves. Any cat in the reserves is at risk of being trapped and impounded.

Also, if you have cats visiting your property you can borrow a cat trap from the City of Canning. Once caught, the City's rangers will visit you and impound the cat. To save your cat from being trapped, make sure it doesn't stray from your home.



Cat number 2 in a cat trap.

The Southwest Group, made up of six local government areas in the south-west of Perth, has developed a webpage about domestic cats called Happy at Home - <http://www.southwestgroup.com.au/natural-resource-management/happyathome/>

This page aims to educate people of their responsibilities as a cat owner and demonstrate how keeping their cat at home benefits both the cat and native wildlife.



Cat number 3 in a cat trap.

The review of the City's Cat Local Law received 31 submissions (including submissions from us and many of our supporters) with most asking for cats to be confined to their owner's property. Unfortunately, the state's *Cat Act 2011*, as currently written, does not allow for local governments to include such a provision.

A law that has the effect of confining cats to their owner's property is able to be made in the state *Cat Act 2011*. Alternatively, provision could be made in the state *Cat Act 2011* that allows local government authorities to introduce a local law to confine cats to their owner's property.

Through the City's [Sustainability and Environment Advisory Group](#) (SEAG), the City will be asked to request an urgent review of the *Cat Act 2011*. When the Act is reviewed, which is due mid-2021, the City has been asked to make a submission to change the *Cat Act 2011* to the effect that all cats are confined to their owner's property, and/or, that local government authorities can introduce a local law that allows for the district wide confinement of cats to their owner's property.

We will also be able to make a submission regarding the *Cat Act 2011* and we'll let you know how you can make a submission when the time comes. The more people who make submissions asking for change, the more chance we have of changing the law.

Rabbits have also been a problem in the bushland recently. They dig warrens that can kill plants by directly digging them out of the ground, or by allowing the air to dry out their exposed roots. Not to mention that rabbits will eat the native vegetation, which stops seedlings replacing aging plants and allows weeds to take over.

Further, rabbits attract foxes, which then go on to eat the native wildlife when rabbit numbers decrease or they become too hard to catch.

In one of our reserves, the pest controllers found and treated 10 rabbit warrens in 2.3 hectares of bushland. If the same density of warrens is found across all of our reserves, it suggests we have a large number of rabbits living in, and eating, the bushland.

Our thanks go to the City of Canning for helping control the rabbits.



Two rabbits come for food placed in front of a trail camera.

A vehicle was driven through a fence into one of our reserves and then burnt. As the vehicle can no longer be driven, and some of its tyres are now flat, it will cause much more environmental damage to get the vehicle out of the bushland than it did getting it in. Fortunately, the fire didn't spread far from the vehicle before being extinguished by the fire brigade.

Again, our thanks go to the City of Canning which will now have the task of removing the vehicle and repairing the fence.

