

THE GECKO



Edition 47
April 2025

Welcome to the April 2025 edition of The Gecko.

Have you seen it yet? One drop of rain and the weeds start germinating! Now, if only we could get some cooler weather as well.

On the bright side of landcare, we found a new native species in our patch – *Thysanotus sparteus*, a summer-flowering fringed lily (see page 2). It is moments like this that make the hard work worthwhile.

January to March 2025

Watering

Watering has been our main activity for the summer. We have been watering one site every three-four weeks on Sundays and another site every second week on Tuesdays. The City has watered the same sites on a fortnightly basis. Together, we've been able to keep many of the plants alive!

It has been amazing to see so many volunteers come out to help. Given work and family commitments, not to mention the 7am start, and, at times, oven-like weather conditions, we have been so happy to see anyone. And it is so pleasing to see that many of you have been volunteering with us for the first time. Your help made the watering easier and your company made it more pleasant. Thank you!

While on one of our watering sessions, we were pleased (or horrified, depending on your disposition) to see a group of Australian Golden Orb Weaver spiders, *Trichonephila edulis*. These are big spiders that build large webs, often at head-height across a path, and sit in the centre along with a trail of debris. The web is strong and has been known to ensnare small birds.

What made this particular group of spiders interesting was the sheer number in the community. A count of 26 female spiders was made with many more males also seen (the males are tiny in comparison to the females). Luckily for us, the webs were well above head-height and there was

vegetation beneath, so we wouldn't be caught as we walked along a path.



The larger dark points are female of Australian Golden Orb Weaver spiders. The males are too small to see in this image.

AGM

We held our AGM on 23 February and are pleased to announce that we have the same committee members in the same positions as last year -

Chair - Sian

Vice Chair – Kade

Secretary – Jackie

Treasurer – Sian

Ordinary committee members – Katrina, Cat and Ian

Sian noted in her Chair's report that we collectively gave the bushland 1,320 hours of work in the 2024

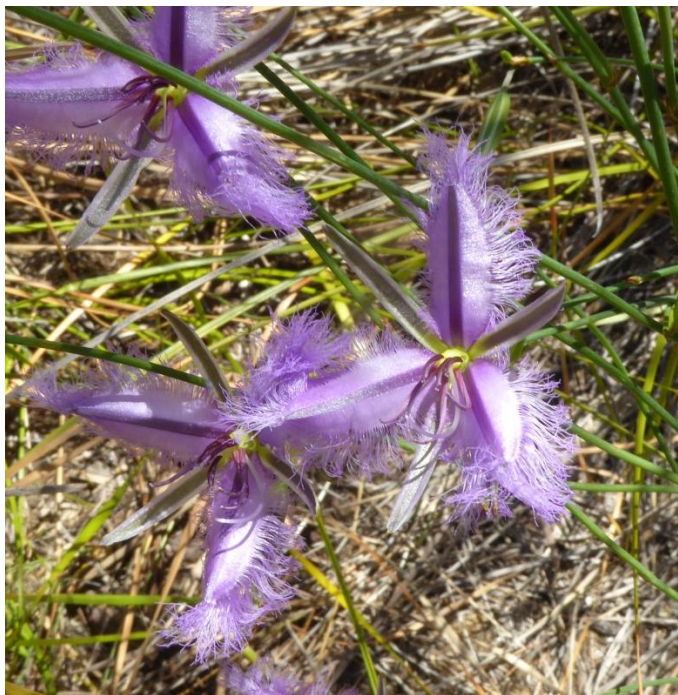
calendar year. That's the equivalent of a person working full-time for more than 8 months on our patches of bushland.

We also thanked ex-Councillor Amanda Spencer-Teo for putting forward a motion to have our insurance expenses reimbursed by the City. And we thank the Councillors for supporting this motion as it relieves us of a significant financial burden.

A big THANK YOU goes to Emily, Greg, Ian, Jackie, Kade, Katrina, Max, Mic, Nick, Nicki, Rosemary, Sian and Tammy plus Bryce from SERCUL and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

Also this quarter

Thanks to Jackie and Ian's observation skills and detective work we now have a new native species to add to our flora list – the Leafless Fringed Lily, *Thysanotus sparteus*.



This species was found in one of Canning's more-recently acquired areas that has undergone intensive rubbish removal and weed control for the last five years. Through improved growing conditions, species that have previously occurred on the land are able to return.

While it is possible that the four plants we have found were there all along, we have been conducting regular flora surveys and have been keeping an eye open for 'new' species. Plus, the Leafless Fringed Lily is noticeable by flowering in summer – a time when there are not too many other flowers in the understorey. As we haven't seen this species before, it is probable that it persisted as seed in the soil and has now taken the opportunity to grow and flower.

Finding a new native species return to a previously neglected site makes all of the hard work of weeding and rubbish removal worthwhile.

Speaking of rubbish removal, over summer we collected a substantial amount of rubbish and rubble from this same reserve.



Some of the rubbish. Photo: Bryce

Bryce, SERCUL's Canning Community Landcare Officer, was instrumental in helping us dispose of it. He borrowed a ute from SERCUL, helped us load the ute, then took the rubbish to the City's waste transfer station. To everyone's surprise, there was 700kg of waste in just a single ute-load. Thank you, Bryce!



Rubble being unloaded at the waste transfer station. Photo: Bryce

Before and after

Staying in the same reserve, let's also look at the improvements that have been made from a weed perspective. This bushland was acquired by the City of Canning in 2019. As well as cleaning the rubbish out, we also began weeding immediately. It is often hard to remember what places looked like when you first start work on them. Thankfully, photos were taken before any improvement was made. We can now see what we've achieved in the past five years.

The photos from today may look a little bare in comparison, but those lush weeds were pushing out the natives. It will take a while for the natives to reclaim their rightful spot.



Above – In 2019 there was a wall of Brazilian Pepper.

Below – With the Brazilian Peppers removed, the *Melaleucas* can start to reclaim the land.



Above – In 2019 weedy grasses covered the foreground.

Below – Unfortunately the *Banksia* in the middle of the photo didn't survive the summer of 2023-24. But, with the grasses removed, revegetation efforts have begun with a translocated *Zamia* and Grass Tree. There are also seedlings in this photo but they are still too small to see.

