

THE GECKO



Edition 39
April 2023

Welcome to the April 2023 edition of The Gecko.

Hot weather, water seedlings, pick up rubbish, remove weeds and repeat. That is our usual routine

in the bushland over summer and autumn, and this year is no different.

But the wildlife of our area has a different routine and we were privileged to see snippets of their lives.

January to March 2023

10 January 2023

As you would imagine, our Tuesday group meets every Tuesday morning. Our Tuesday activities are not usually advertised as most people are going to work or getting ready for school when we meet. However, as it was school holiday time, we made an exception for this day.

Normally we have four or five people meet up on a Tuesday but on this day we had 11 volunteers come together to collect rubbish. At least picking up rubbish was the plan! Upon seeing a large patch of weeds, seven of our group decided to pull up weeds instead while the other four were left to pick up the rubbish.

We ended the session with four bags of weeds and one bag of rubbish and everyone went home feeling satisfied that they had made a difference.

29 January 2023

With hot weather forecast for the next week, watering our seedlings was the right choice of activity for this day. Five volunteers carried water from the cars to the plants and gave them 2-3 litres each.

The plants watered include those that were translocated from the State Football Centre site.

These are looking healthy and appear to approve of their new home.



As we were packing up, we spotted a small beetle feeding on the leaves of Flooded Gum, *Eucalyptus rudis*. This beetle is part of the group of beetles called leaf beetles and has the scientific name of *Paropsisterna variicollis*.



The Flooded Gum is probably one of the most productive trees in our area. It supports myriad lifeforms, including the leaf beetle. That is why they can look a little worse for wear in autumn – every insect in the vicinity has taken a nibble over the summer. Don't despair when you see a denuded tree – in most instances they recover remarkably well. Instead, think of all of the insects they have fed and the wonderful job the tree has done in supporting the environment.

26 February 2023

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

Chair: Sian

Vice chair: Kade

Secretary: Jackie

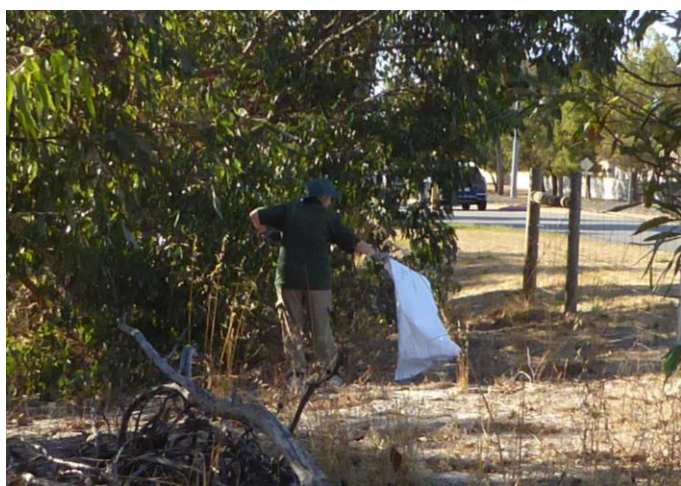
Treasurer: Sian

Ordinary committee members: Ronnie, Katrina and Ian

See the Chairperson's and financial reports at the end of the newsletter.

19 March 2023

The weather was perfect for four volunteers to venture to this smallish reserve to collect rubbish. The Australian Golden Orb-Weaving Spiders were out in numbers and made us take detours around their webs. But one hour and four full bags later and we were done.



A big THANK YOU goes to Barbara, Catherine, Cody, Hailey, Ian, Jackie, Kade, Katrina, Mia, Ronnie, Rosemary, Sian, Tegan, Ubaydah, Zaid and the City of Canning's Natural Areas Team for helping out with these, and other, activities in the bushland.

Also this quarter

Link it and they will come. We started looking after a small patch of bushland seven years ago and have been intensively weeding it for the last five years. This involves visiting the site several times each week.

Last year, associated with the construction of the State Football Centre, a compensation basin was reshaped and it was revegetated during winter 2022. The plants growing close to the water have grown thickly and provide dense cover for wildlife. The revegetated area provides near-continuous vegetation to link a larger patch of bushland to our small patch.

Much to our surprise and delight, while working in our small patch in February, we found the shed skin of a Bobtail, *Tiliqua rugosa*.



The shed Bobtail skin.

During the time we have been working in this patch we had not seen any signs of Bobtails. Yet only six months after it was linked by the revegetated compensation basin to the larger patch of bushland, we have evidence that suggests that a Bobtail used the linkage to access the small patch of bushland. It is hoped that as the vegetation matures more wildlife will use the linkage and visit this small and previously isolated patch of bushland.



A Bobtail.

One morning in the bushland, we spotted a blue thing close to the ground. It looked like something trying to escape its pupal case.

It didn't appear to be moving (even when we poked it) and we assumed it had died.



About five minutes later we looked again and its eyes were now visible. It was immediately recognised as being a cicada. But we didn't know we had blue cicadas. How exciting!



Another five minutes passed and the cicada had emerged even further. It now had its stubby little wings out.



Back at home we looked through the book *Australian Cicadas* by Max Moulds. Just as we thought – there aren't any blue cicadas in Perth. Maybe it's a pupation thing. We read the text about pupating but it didn't say anything about them being blue. There are photographs of an emerging cicada in the book, and it does appear blue/greenish in colour, but the adult of the species shown is usually green anyway.

It looked like the only way we were going to be able to work out the identity of this cicada was to go out and find it again. About four hours after leaving the emerging cicada we managed to find an adult cicada in the vicinity of the now-empty pupal case. It attempted to fly away from us but couldn't get off the ground.



The cicada was a Sandgrinder, *Arenopsaltria fullo*. It would appear that this cicada takes its common name from the sound of its song. It definitely sounds like someone grinding sand.

Interestingly, there is a photo of a recently emerged [Sandgrinder](#) on Atlas of Living Australia (ALA). The ALA specimen has got to the stage where it has fully emerged from the pupal skin, with its wings expanded, but has not yet moved away from its skin. This individual is quite pale with only a hint of blue remaining.

Cat trapping occurred in our bushland in February and three cats were caught. They were all taken to the City of Canning's cat management facility where it was found that none of them had a collar or microchip implant.

Without a microchip their owner/s can't be identified. Their photographs were displayed on the City of Canning's [website](#) but, if nobody claimed them, they will have been rehomed or destroyed.

Our reserves have been declared cat prohibited areas by the City of Canning 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.



The trapped cats. Photos courtesy of Ash.

Chairperson's report

By Sian Mawson

Welcome to the Friends of Queens Park Bushland 2023 annual general meeting. Once again, it has been my great pleasure to lead the group through the last 12 months.

Group Activities:

COVID-19 again disrupted our monthly group activities this year, but we managed to hold nine group activities. These activities, combined with our Tuesday group and individual work, saw us give the bushland 958 hours of volunteer effort during 2022.

The most satisfying activity would have to be planting the plants that had been salvaged from the State Football Centre site. These plants are being watered weekly during their first summer; they are doing well and making a valuable contribution to the environment.

Media:

Our website analytics show that we had 16,358 individual visitors in the 2022 calendar year. We peaked on September 2, when there were 514 visitors. More normal days have around 40 visitors during autumn and 60 during spring. While the number of visitors on the peak day is much larger than last year (514 versus 343), the total number of visitors (2021 = 20,100) and daily average is down slightly (2021 = 50 and 80).

This exposure, however, has led to us having 246 supporters receiving our quarterly newsletter – 16 more than 2021.

Greeting cards:

Our greeting cards are still very popular with sales totalling a few cents shy of \$200.

Containers for Change:

Containers for Change, the state's container deposit scheme, is shaping up to be our main source of income. In 2022 we returned 4,182 containers earning us \$418.20. Thank you to everyone who has collected containers and directed the refunds to the group.

Appreciation:

We have been very successful in meeting our aims of helping the community connect with nature through protecting, regenerating and restoring the bushland. The notes here provide an insight into what's happened in the last year but can't fully express the work that has gone into running and organising our achievements in that time.

We have only been successful because of the continued support of our committee and members. I thank you, and the City of Canning, for your commitment and dedication to the group and the bushland, and for your support and friendship.

Friends of Queens Park Bushland

2022

Income and expenditure for period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

Income		
Donations	540.00	
Card and photo sales	199.10	
Cash4Containers	418.20	
Interest	21.90	
Lotterywest grant for Website redevelopment \$6753	3,861.36	<u>5,040.56</u>
Less Expenditure		
Administration	54.55	
Insurance	425.80	
Website hosting	360.91	
Website development	3,861.36	<u>4,702.62</u>
Net gain		337.94

Balance sheet as at 31 December 2022

Assets		
Cash at bank - Bendigo	3,490.21	
Cash at bank - Bankwest	8,544.79	
Petty cash	32.65	
	<u>12,067.65</u>	
Less liabilities		
GST to be remitted to the ATO	311.31	
Grant money not yet spent		
Bankwest Happy Communities Grant 1	788.70	
Lotterywest	2,891.64	
	<u>3,991.65</u>	
Net Assets		8,076.00
Equity		
Retained earnings as at 31 Dec 2021	7,738.06	
Net gain 2022	337.94	
	<u>8,076.00</u>	