



THE IMPORTANCE OF URBAN BUSHLAND

Based on P Adam (1995), reference below.

Surprisingly, cities contain many areas of bushland. Even places not usually considered bushland can contain remnant populations.

Trees For Life has 13 Bushcare sites located within cemeteries and a number of sites in the North and South Parklands of Adelaide.

Indeed Adelaide must be one of the few cities in the world, where one can see remnant vegetation within a 5-10 minute walk from the central business district.

You can also find remnant vegetation on golf courses, airports and of course, roadsides.

Urban bushland usually occurs in small patches or along narrow road verges and paths. Consequently it is prone to invasion by weeds, feral animals and domestic pets.

Settlement has dramatically changed the natural environment.

For example road construction results in increased water, nutrients and light. How often do you see the greatest number of weeds on the edge of the road?

Biological diversity

Urban bushland is important for conserving the three components of biological diversity:

1. Genetic diversity

The range of variance within one species is the basis for the ecological versatility of that species, enabling it to adapt to ecological change. *Acacia pycnantha* (golden wattle) in Folland Park will be genetically distinct from *Acacia pycnantha* in Belair National Park.

2. Species diversity

This refers to the number of different species in a given area. Almost every Bush For Life site will have one or more plants of regional and/or national conservation importance.

The regionally vulnerable drooping cassinia (*Cassinia arcuata*) can be found in the Willaston cemetery whilst one Mitcham Council site is home to the nationally endangered small scarf pea (*Cullen parvum*) (Lang and Kraehenbuehl 2000).

3. Community diversity

This refers to the type of plants found in a given area. For example, a stringybark woodland contains a different range of plants than a saltbush shrubland.

Trees For Life has Bushcare sites

which contain rare or threatened communities including *Banksia marginata* low woodland and *Eucalyptus microcarpa* woodland.

Learning about bushland

Many people see urban bushland every day without realising it. Others use it to develop ecological understanding. The Upper Sturt Primary School even has Heritage Agreement bushland within its grounds.

Public speakers regularly talk to local communities about ecological issues.

Informed people learn about bushland as they care for it.

Recently, the combined vigilance of Trees For Life Bushcarers' and their Regional Co-ordinator prevented the loss of native vegetation to driveways in a new subdivision development.

The Future

The continued growth and expansion of urban populations will inevitably place further demands on the environment and almost certainly reduce biological diversity.

Examples could include the degradation of a nationally rare grass species for a new freeway and further reduction of nectar producing trees and shrubs that maintain honeyeater populations.

Threats to diversity

Threats to biological diversity can be lessened, **BUT NOT ERADICATED.**

Careful planning, decreasing the overuse of our precious natural resources and implementing our existing environmental legislation are all important factors.

This last point requires both the social and political will within our society.

It has been suggested that the natural environment is no longer a serious political issue.

In fact Doug Cocks, a CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology divisional fellow states that: "This is illustrated by the fact that both main parties fought the last federal election with barely a mention of the environment" (1999).

Equally, there has been a continuing failure of politicians and society at large to address population growth in Australia and even today there is a great reluctance to even contemplate debate on this issue.

We have the opportunity to identify sites of value in advance and to plan urban development in ways

that will maximise the retention of biological diversity.

New subdivisions must not be in direct contact with bushland.

This will reduce the risk of weed invasion and the demand for bushfire hazard reduction.

Imposing restrictions on the type of garden plants that are used can reduce negative impacts on bushland.

Native vegetation vs cottage garden

Researcher, biologist and writer, Tim Low, states that keeping known bushland weeds out of the garden is vital.

Thirty percent of Australia's worst weeds are garden plants and two thirds of recently emerging weeds are garden plants (Low 1999).

"In southern Australia, bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) and boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*) now dominate the understorey in many eucalypt woodlands, replacing a wealth of native shrubs, grasses, orchids and lilies" (Low 1999).

As Low points out "we can probably learn from a recent New Zealand success. The Northland Regional Council has produced *The Good Plant Guide*, endorsed by the nursery industry, which lists hundreds of ornamental plants, both native and exotic, that are safe to grow".

There is increasing recognition of the importance of roadside habitats and the development of management guidelines, which recognise conservation values. Nevertheless, work on existing roads and the construction of new ones will inevitably impact on the environment and reduce biological diversity.

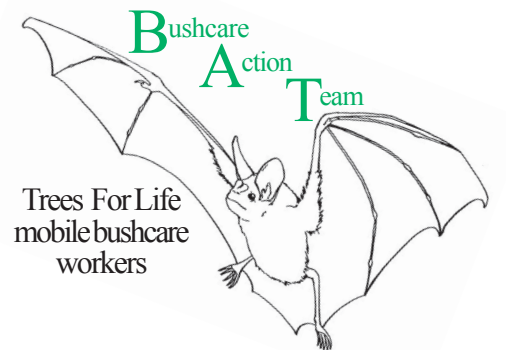
Peter Tucker

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Bushcare Action Team 2000

Well, 1999 was pretty successful and we have even more sites for 2000!

Starting again in April, any volunteers interested in receiving good training in Bushcare plus valuable on site experience should contact us.

Bushcare Action Teams work on various sites around the State.

Join a team if you'd like some extra experience, or if you're preparing to start work on your own site. It's also a good way to spend an enjoyable day working in the field if you can't take on your own site.

Enjoy the camaraderie and call us for a schedule.

Garry Forrest



Mt Lofty YHA hostel

There's a BAT in my hostel

A recent BAT activity at Norton Summit, adjacent to Black Hill/Morialta Conservation Park, used the local Youth Hostels Association hostel as a lunch and amenities venue.

If you have a Bushcare site near a YHA hostel, you may consider using it as a day base or overnight stop. The costs are low and there is a special rate for groups and families. Phone them on 8231 5583.

Operated by YHA of SA Inc. some of their unique 'limited access hostels' are in or adjacent to National Parks. ('Limited access' means that the supervision is from the Adelaide Office rather than there being a resident manager).

YHA hostel locations include Sandy Creek, Norton Summit, Mt Lofty, Mylor and Kuitpo. They also have links interstate and overseas.

