

Bandicoot Tails

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park

No. 158
April-May, 2015

President's Words:

Working bees and contractors have continued to make steady progress on Almanda and North and South Bushrat Creeklines. Willows have been re-treated and Erica regrowth near Bushrat North eradicated. Work along lower Almanda Creek is really going well with John Wamsley putting in many extra hours of toil. It won't be very long before this creekline (and many others) are showcases of riparian restoration.

The Good Friday walk was very well attended and we enjoyed perfect weather. We had a pleasant walk up to the Twisted Chimney and about half the group, keen for a longer (and slightly more tiring) walk headed off, returning after we had eaten most of the treats. The ever thoughtful Donna baked a delicious cake to wish Sue and me Bon Voyage. Thanks to everyone who came along, it was a great day.

A recent Science Show on ABC hosted a discussion between leading Australian environmentalists. The show was entitled "Survival of the Cheapest" and focused on just how to prioritize spending on our most threatened and endangered species. Seemingly the bottom line is there just ain't enough money to go around, so some species will be allowed to quietly slip into oblivion. This is against a background of declining funds for conservation and many species being on the edge. Two figures are worth contemplating. **Spending on the Australian military is around \$30 Billion/annum. Tourism brings in around \$24 billion/annum. If just the GST from the tourism dollar (and many tourists come to see our iconic species) were spent on saving species there would be no need for the drastic measures that seem to be inevitable.** I will leave it to you to decide whose priorities need to change.

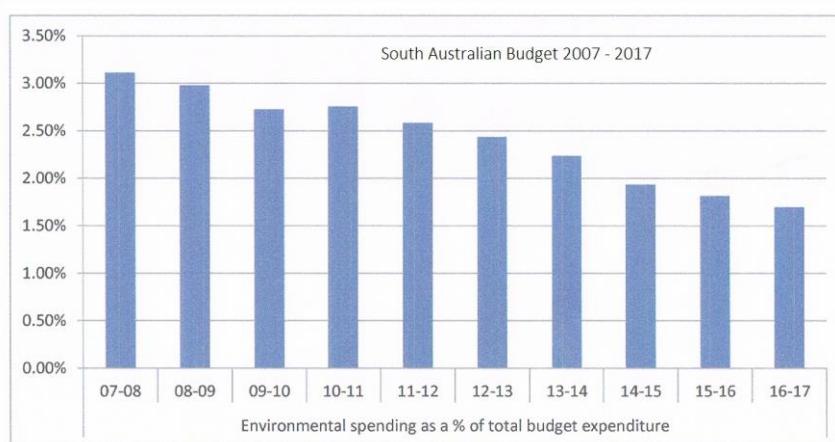
Below is an excerpt from three environmental groups prior to the last State election. The graph alone tells the sorry story of the not so gradual erosion of funding for our environment. Given the continuing decline of so many species the continuing cuts directly contradict all the motherhood statements we hear about our Governments concern with species loss. Halving the environmental budget over the past eight years seems an odd way of addressing and turning around, species decline and loss.

South Australian Environment Groups
2014 State Election Asks -*Background Document*
Leading South Australian environment groups:
• **Conservation Council SA**
• **The Wilderness Society, and**
• **Nature Conservation Society SA**

‘The 2013 State of the Environment report identifies continued decline of the state’s natural assets and trends in environmental quality over the last 5 years. The Report concludes that of the 27 environmental aspects reported on, 20 (74%) were assessed to be in poor condition, 4 (~15%) in very poor condition and only 3 (11%) in good condition. No aspects were assessed to be in very good condition. These results are obviously of serious concern for the future of the state. The Report also states that “despite our best efforts, biodiversity in South Australia continues to decline.” 56% of our state’s mammals are threatened or presumed extinct. This figure is 34% for our birds, 30% for amphibians, 23% for reptiles and 14% for plants.

When we look at how our ‘best efforts’ are being funded, the findings are not so surprising. Since the previous State of the Environment report in 2008, funding for the environment portfolio as a proportion of the state budget has been on a steady decline, which is projected to continue in the forward estimates (see graph). The 2013/14 budget for the state environment portfolio is \$363 million, only 2.24% of the total budget. Budget cuts in recent times, with very significant cuts in staffing now seriously undermining the viability of some of its policies and programs. If our biodiversity and environmental statistics look as bad as they do now, how much worse will they be when the legacy of the current cuts manifests? To make matters worse, the South Australian government is pursuing a massive expansion of the mining industry and related infrastructure that will put our struggling species under even greater threats. Meanwhile, Australia has been abandoning climate change programs at the state and national levels, making it harder to secure a strong global response to a problem expected to cause more extinctions of our precious wildlife.

We urgently need to reverse the decline in environmental funding in order to significantly improve the State of the Environment Report indices. This requires doubling the funding for the South Australian government’s environment portfolio as a proportion of the total budget, within the next term of government. The environment is after all the foundation for our quality of life and all economic activity in this state.’



Bird banding:

We were thwarted in February by extreme weather. Our date with the Mackereth Creek site was cancelled due to a total fire ban for the weekend. Our only date with our avian friends was on the Sunday, 15th. March at Derwentia, where our normal Saturday start was also thwarted by hot weather.

Results for the day were moderate. 12 birds were trapped, which included 7 species. There were 2 retraps, both Superb Fairy Wrens, with one being 5 years old, having been banded as an immature in 2009. The morning's highlight, however, was the Fantailed Cuckoo which didn't see the net until too late. After processing, it was the target for our photographers. We will show an image of the bird in our next bulletin.

John Wamsley**Plant of the month – Bell Creepers?**

Since we have spent some time pulling out Sollya (*Billardiera heterophylla*) which is a weed in the Park, I thought we could look at some of its relatives growing in the Park.

Firstly we have *Marianthus bignoniaceus* which was recently considered to be a *Billardiera*, before that a *Marianthus* where it shared with *M. procumbens* (a rare K.I. species) and now moved back where it probably always belonged while *procumbens* has been moved to *Rhytidosporum*. We do love musical chairs don't we?



Then come the remaining Billardieras. The most common is the blue one, *B. Cymosa* (Sweet Apple-berry or Blue Bells), although you have to wait till they are pretty ripe to be sweet. This one is reasonably common throughout the Park.



Then there are the relatively uncommon yellow (or cream, green or white depending how you feel on the day) Apple-berries which are probably as sweet as the others. *B. versicolor* (Pale Apple-berry or Multiple Flower Green Bells) has terminal multiple flowers on side shoots from the stem. Some of the flowers tend to purple with age. This one must be in the Park somewhere. It is reasonably common not far from the Park.



Finally, *B. uniflora* (Single Flower Apple-berry or Single Green Bell) has terminal single flowers on side shoots from the stem. The flowers seem to all go purple together with age. This one is rare in the Park.



Programme April - June 2015

All working bees meet at 9.00am at Gate 16 Almada Car Park

NOTE: WORKING BEES CANCELLED IF FIRE BAN
ANNOUNCED FOR MOUNT LOFTY RANGES

Month	Date	Activity	Location
April	3	Good Friday Walk	Gate 3 –Bandicoot Track to Currawong & Twisted Chimney, 9.30 am.
	7	Tuesday Working Bee	Broom, Erica E of G5
	12	Sunday Working Bee	Erica & Broom N of Stringybark Tk (G9)
	19	Bird banding	Gate 3 Crossroads, 7.00 am.
	25	Saturday Working bee	Broom & bulbs, Upper Bushrat Ck, G7
May	2-3	Bird banding	Gate 4, 7.00 am.
	3	Belair Open Day	Belair Nat Park-We will have a promotional stall
	5	Tuesday Working bee	TBA
	10	Sunday Working bee	TBA
	14	Business Meeting	TBA
	16-17	Bird banding	Gate 3 Crossroads, 7.30 am.
	23	Saturday Working bee	TBA
June	2	Tuesday Working bee	TBA
	6,7	Bird banding	Gate 7, 7.30 am.
	14	Sunday Working bee	TBA
	20,21	Bird banding	Gate 11 site
	27	Saturday Working bee	TBA

Officebearers:

Any queries on Friends activities, please contact your office bearers.

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Friends Website:

<http://friendsofscottcreek.org>

East areas	West areas
1 - Number 1 block	21 - Scott Creek
2 - Blechnum Creek	22 - Mineshaft
3 - Bronze Wing	23 - Stockyard
4 - Viminaria	24 - Echidna Trk
5 - Bushrat north	25 - Alminda
6 - Bushrat south	26 - Quarry Ridge east
7 - Helipad Hill	27 - Greenhood east
8 - Kangaroo Gully	28 - Quarry Ridge west
9 - Fern Gully north	29 - Greenhood south
10 - Fern Gully east	30 - Greenhood north
11 - Fern Gully south	31 - Panhandle east
12 - Neville Rd north	32 - Panhandle south
13 - Neville Rd west	33 - Panhandle north
14 - Mackereth Ck west	
15 - Mackereth Ck north	
16 - Fox Bog	
17 - Pennant Ridge	
18 - Mackereth Ck south	
19 - Cave Creek	
20 - Blue Gum Flat	

Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park Working Bee Areas

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