

Centenary and District
 Environment Action
 Incorporated
PO Box 432
 Mount Ommaney Qld 4074

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Contact Editor at
editor@cdea.org.au

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**NEXT MEETING –
 THURSDAY 10th MAY**
**Professor
 Anthony Richardson –
 "Climate change in
 Australia: A lot of hot air
 or in hot water?"**

Despite 98% of climate scientists agreeing that climate change is happening and caused by humans, many people in Australia remain unconvinced. What is the evidence for climate change and how do we know it's happening? In this talk I will first take a global perspective and then focus on the impact of climate change in Australia and Southeast Queensland. I will describe some of the major impacts on plants and animals, and people.

"THE BIG FIG" IN TENNENT STREET, WESTLAKE

(Report & Photos by Ed Parker)

Following a report received by Ray Lane recently, that our locally famous Fig Tree had suffered damage, we have learnt that "The Big Fig", as we dubbed it several decades ago, unfortunately has come to the end of its life. It was located in the Pullen Reach bushland, near the northern end of the Coucal Trail, at Tennent St/Westlake Drive, Westlake. My 17 year old [Nature Watch article, No. 16 for Centenary News - February 2001](#), describes a story about this tree (Small-leaved Moreton Bay Fig, *Ficus platypoda*) in its heyday. Glenda and I inspected the site in February, 2018.



Panorama view to south 16 years ago, with The Big Fig in all its glory. (August, 2002; Photo © Ed Parker)



Similar view to south, showing the canopy gap once filled with the large fig tree. (22nd February, 2018; Photo © Ed Parker)

Several years ago, one of its dual trunks (the westerly oriented one) had been removed by arboricultural action after it suffered health problems. Now the remainder of the trunk (easterly oriented) has collapsed, falling east towards the residential area.



The fallen Big Fig when it was first noticed. (22nd February, 2018; Photo © Ed Parker)

The fall has exposed to view, that at least 80% of its trunk cross-section had rotted out. The remaining annulus of the trunk perimeter was also severely damaged. Inside the butt of the trunk/root is a hole nearly a metre in depth below ground level. Although this fall has only just come to our attention, observation suggests that the tree had fallen weeks, if not months, ago.

Broken saplings have re-grown branchlets, and of course there is crop of opportunistic, colonising weeds, making the most of the cleared canopy. The most obvious weeds at first, quick sighting, include: Cobblers Pegs, Giant Devil's Fig, Lantana, possibly Castor Oil Plant, and probably small-leaved and broad-leaved privet (to be confirmed). We didn't have time to do a detailed survey.

The next step will be to inspect the site, to check the damage, and the regeneration of natives and weeds, as a prelude to determining the best way forward. Not sure yet, until such further inspection, whether the mother tree had yielded any progeny that may have survived the fallen tree.

Consultation will need to be held with the current *Westlake-Riverhills Bushcare Group (WRBG)* members, and Brisbane City Council regarding possible action. Depending on the assessments and consultation, this may also be a possible site to include in the future program of WaCC's BushWaCCers.

One saving grace about all this is that our original Westlake Riverhills Bushcare Group members kicked off what is now the very successful revegetation buffer around the fig tree, back in [about 1998](#), with the aim of "*maintaining a buffer of native plants around a magnificent 80+ year old Fig Tree*" (SORB Newsletter #10).

The newsletter extract continues: "*The site of the work was at Tennent Street, Westlake, where the Fig Tree is a remnant of the original native vegetation at the riverfront site. The Fig Tree was featured in June this year (1998) on the television program Totally Wild.*"



Members of the [Westlake Riverhills Bushcare Group](#) at site of the Big Fig. (August, 2002; Photo © Ed Parker)

INAUGURATION OF CENTENARY RIVERFRONT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CRAC)

CRAC, which was the forerunner of Centenary and District Environment Action (CDEA), was established in 1996.



CRAC inaugural management committee members were (L-R) Desley Brough, James Chen, Leighton Brough, Councillor Christine Watson, Walter Wood (President), Ray Lane (Treasurer), Shirley Gilkens & Geoff Rudd. (circa 1996; Photo © Ed Parker)

REMEMBERING THE FLOODS OF 2011 (PART 2)

(prepared by Vaughan Kippers)

The following photos were taken after the peak of the flood on Wednesday, 12th January, from Thursday 13th January to Saturday 5th February.

To the best of my knowledge, the *Nearmap* plane was not given permission to take off from Eagle Farm airport on the day of the flood, so the aerial views the following day show the aftermath of the flood. On the photo below, you can see that the floodwaters were considerably higher the previous day.



Aerial view to west, of Gertrude McLeod Golf Course with Tekapo Street adjacent to golf course, the day after peak of flood (13th January, 2011) (Photo © nearmap.com)

The Army set up a “camp” at the Westlake Shopping Centre, and were a great help to local residents.



Australian Army Bushmasters in Tekapo Street, Westlake (13:19, 16th January 2011; Photo © Vaughan Kippers)

A few weeks later there was still evidence of the effects of the floodwaters.



Boat crushed by pontoon, on southern bank of Brisbane River just downstream from Centenary Bridge (6:33, 25th January 2011; Photo © Vaughan Kippers)



Flood-affected Jindalee Boat Ramp area of Brisbane River (10:50, 29th January, 2011; Photo © Vaughan Kippers)



View of mud on bank of Mount Ommaney Creek in Jindalee Bushcare Group revegetation area, Westlake (9:41, 5th February 2011; Photo © Vaughan Kippers)



Flood-affected trees on bank of Brisbane River near quarry on Mount Ommaney Walk, Jindalee (10:01, 5th February 2011; Photo © Vaughan Kippers)

Any readers who have photos of the 2011 floods, could submit them to me at editor@cdea.org.au for inclusion in a future Newsletter.

SHARKS & RAYS OF BRISBANE RIVER & MORETON BAY

The February presentation by Professor Mike Bennett from the School of Biomedical Sciences at The University of Queensland (UQ) was enthusiastically received by the audience. Professor Bennett has been involved in a [shark net trial on the Northern Beaches of NSW](#).



Audience in Mount Ommaney Library, listening to Mike Bennett's presentation on evening of Thursday 8th February (8th February, 2018; Photo © Ed Parker)



Mike Bennett explaining the anatomy of sharks and rays. (8th February, 2018; Photo © Ed Parker)



Mike Bennett framed by the jaw of a shark. (8th February, 2018; Photo © Ed Parker)

If you would like information on 10 myths about sharks, UQ has a web site entitled "[Sharks are jaw-some](#)", which is very well presented.

The ABC also has published this article about white sharks in Western Australia: [Great white shark numbers stable, CSIRO research shows, as drum lines ruled out for WA](#).

The Conversation, a daily website published by Australian academics, has published "[World-first genetic analysis reveals Aussie white shark numbers](#)". You can "subscribe" to this "newspaper" free.