

## President's Report August 2010 to August 2011

Below is a brief summary of CDEA's activities over the last 12 months, it varies from sitting in court contesting the impacts of a huge development to putting up a display at an environmental forum. The activities all follow CDEA's purpose to protect the natural environment and reduce the impact of development in the Centenary suburbs and local districts. Education and the provision of information continue to be priorities. Giving the local community a voice on environmental matters is also important.

### PROVIDING OPEN SPACE FOR PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

#### **Wacol State Government Precinct, the 200 hectares promised open space**

In August 2006 the then Premier, Peter Beattie, promised 200 hectares of public open space as part of the 'Westgate' development proposal. By the end of 2009 nothing much had happened so in November CDEA, Save Our Riverfront Bushland (SORB) and Friends of Pooh Corner (FoPC) formed a delegation to meet with Premier Anna Bligh and members of the Cabinet at the Community Cabinet meeting held at Forest Lake.

This meeting resulted in a confirmation by Premier Anna Bligh of that promise and a new initiative to implement it. The *Wacol Land Use Working Group* was formed and consisted of the two local Members of Parliament or their representatives, government bureaucrats and representatives of CDEA, Save Our Riverfront Bushland and Friends of Pooh Corner. The first meeting was held in December 2009 and the last in February 2011. The meetings started off being productive but soon major points of difference became apparent and they became almost stalemated. Originally the aim was to put together a joint document of various options of land use to inform the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. This did not work out so the working group put in an options paper that consisted of three parts: a mostly informative section of history and general information, a section outlining the government delegation's options and a section on the environmental groups' options.

One stumbling block in the project was the large area of buffer zone Corrective Services required adjacent to their facilities and the sex offender houses on Wacol Station Road. The other was the tenure of the land and who would be responsible for ongoing management. The environmental groups were adamant that the land would be for public use for ever and not for the short time suggested by the government delegation.

The community groups were invited to a meeting with Julie Attwood MP on 12 April 2011 also attended by Minister Annastacia Palaszczuk MP and her electoral officer, plus Dr Geoff Allan, chair of the WLUWG. It was a productive meeting and compromises were made on both sides. After this on 18 April, the community groups put in their section of the options paper.

Last week Julie Attwood MP advised the environmental groups that the Minister had agreed in principle to the areas on the map we had submitted and that the Lord Mayor of Brisbane City Council had agreed in principle to BCC managing the land. The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) had agreed to take over the land from Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) and it would be leased in trust to BCC. The final agreement and legalities all have to be finalised but the environmental groups are confident that this will all go ahead.

An area of 26 hectares will remain with QCS as a buffer along their facilities on Wacol Station road. This land will be revegetated and will remain open to wildlife but closed to the public. We still need to have negotiations with other government departments to include 15 hectares of land between Wolston House and the Brisbane River. QCS had also agreed to include a strip of land along the Brisbane River for public Riverwalk.

These all add up to the promised 200 hectares of open space, of which only 26 hectares will not be open to the public. The community groups are very pleased with this result. Many thanks to Julie Attwood MP for persevering with this difficult and delicate issue to get this fine achievement.

### MITIGATING DEVELOPMENT

#### **Metroplex Proposals for the Former Sanananda Barracks in Richlands**

CDEA was one of 13 parties in a case in the Planning and Environment Court where Metroplex appealed against BCC for a deemed refusal of their development application for a multimillion dollar industrial and office park at the previous Sanananda Barracks in Richlands. CDEA, SORB and Friends of Pooh Corner were three of those parties. The case was held in 2008 and the appeal by Metroplex was dismissed in November 2009, basically on planning issues. However, Metroplex appealed that decision and won on legal points in November

2010. They had meanwhile submitted two new development applications, one of which has been approved by BCC. Metroplex are appealing against certain development conditions and are trying to limit the development conditions that the three environmental groups may influence.

The three environmental groups missed the submission opportunity for the eastern side of the new proposals but put in submissions for the western side of the site which is the side where most of the environmental issues occur. This means we will all be able to partake in any further court actions.

### **Wacol Station Road**

Friends of Pooh Corner have an undertaking from the former Lord Mayor that BCC will fund fauna fencing along both sides of Wacol Station Road. This is to stop the kangaroo deaths and the concomitant danger to car users along that section of road. However, in consultations about the fence with BCC at the end of last year, the environmental groups noticed that the plans included the removal of 97 mature native trees along the boundary with Pooh Corner. If they were not on road reserve land, they would be classified as an endangered Regional Ecosystem and would be legally protected.

As the fauna fence plans are included in future road upgrade proposals this was apparently seen as an opportunity to remove the trees for the future road. CDEA has worked with the new Lord Mayor, local Councillors and State Members to save these trees. The new proposal includes a strip of State land on the other side of the road from Pooh Corner which only has a few exotic Pine trees on it. A further undertaking by Council is to include some form of fauna crossings with the road upgrade to stop the kangaroo/car conflict.

### **Hare Krishna Temple Proposal for the Seventeen Mile Rocks Escarpment**

The development application for a temple and ancillary buildings on the Seventeen Mile Rocks Escarpment was approved earlier this year. Requests by CDEA that Council purchase the site for parkland, both to the old and the new Lord Mayors, both before the application and after its approval, were refused.

We are still angry about the removal from the *Western Gateway Local Plan* of restrictions regarding the protection of the escarpment's visual amenity, removal done without consulting CDEA or SORB. The visual protection came about as a result of SORB's win in its case in the Planning and Environment Court in 2001, in which CDEA, (then Centenary Riverfront Advisory Committee) was a Co-respondent. The Seventeen Mile Rocks escarpment is one of the few wooded escarpments along the Brisbane River. When the Hare Krishna temple is built, the visual amenity of this section of the escarpment will be destroyed and the temple will completely dominate Rocks Riverside Park. The temple has two towers of 12 and one of 18 metres high, which are all well above the 9 metre height restriction. CDEA has appealed against these heights.

Only 7 trees will remain of the urban bushland remnant, and the likelihood is that these will die as a result of construction. So much for the wooded escarpment. CDEA will be talking to Council to try and understand how this all happened.

### **Turf Farm**

There is yet another development application to BCC for the Turf Farm in Sinnamon Park. The latest proposal is for a 283 multi-unit aged care complex. Complicated issues arise from the high flood levels on that site in January this year. Planning is still in preliminary stages. However, the green space on the current application has not changed from the original application. CDEA will be keeping an eye on this proposal.

### **Atthows Park, Darra**

There were major earthworks and the removal of a large number of native trees at Atthows Park in October 2010. This was a major concern to CDEA as it had been done without a proper master plan, only a plan for the sports fields. CDEA met with Council officials who said the master plan was the responsibility of the sports club. We disagreed. We are still working on getting new trees planted to replace those removed and also for the reparation of construction damage done to the neighbouring bushland.

Also in October, a CDEA member noticed a Laser Squad (Skirmish) using the bushland next to Atthows Park. After enquiries, BCC informed us that Laser Squad said that they had an agreement with the baseball club to sub-lease the bushland for their activities. However, the baseball club did not have approval to sub-lease, and even if they did, BCC must approve all activities of the sub-lessee. Fortunately the Laser Squad activities were stopped very quickly. Their activities would be very damaging to the bushland and the fauna there. Even more disturbing is that this situation could have arisen in the first place.

### **Seventeen Mile Rocks Road and Sumners Road upgrades**

CDEA was very pleased to have had good consultations with BCC representatives on the tree removal and intersection proposals, including landscape works and new tree plantings along a portion of Seventeen Mile Rocks Road. The Duporth Road intersection is on hold as its funding was needed for flood reparation.

### **Pampling Street Pathway**

This is will be a pathway linking Edenbrooke through bushland to the park along Jindalee Creek and on to the shopping centre on Monier Road. This was another good consultation process with BCC. We worked with Council to get the best possible route so the minimum number of trees is removed, to have bare spaces revegetated with local native plant species and to have a number of weed trees removed. Council agreed to reroute the construction channel into the park side of Jindalee Creek so that mature bushland trees will be retained and not removed as first planned.

## **Allambi Court, Corinda**

Brisbane City Council has recently approved a development proposal to subdivide the southern section of a block of land right next to the Fort Bushland Reserve. The southern sections of the two neighbouring blocks are expected to be developed in future. CDEA asked the Lord Mayor Graham Quirk to buy the three sections in May this year but were refused.

There is dry rainforest on the land and it is classified as an Endangered Regional Ecosystem. However the area is less than 3000 square metres so is not protected. CDEA will be following up this flaw in the legislation with the State government. The proposed subdivision would create a hole in the forest, and trees on the block would probably die even in Environmental Protection Zones. As bushland, the area would create a weed barrier between houses and bushland. That tract of bushland was almost smothered by weed vines when it was purchased by Council after a campaign by local residents and CDEA. The bushcare group has made a huge difference with their weed clearing.

CDEA has written again to the Lord Mayor asking that Council buys only the one section at present as one of the problems was a lack of Council funds. The two blocks are for sale for \$449,000 each, negotiable.

## **Jindalee Boat Ramp Park Plans**

CDEA is in the process of commenting on the plans for Jindalee Boat Ramp Park which was badly damaged in the January floods

## **Submissions**

CDEA put in submissions on:

- Council's *Draft Outdoor Recreation Strategy for Brisbane's Natural Areas* in December 2010;
- Allambi Court development application in January 2011; and
- the environmental groups section of the Options paper to the *Wacol Land Use Working Group* in April 2011.

## **PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **Kangaroo Management Strategy for Wacol**

There was one meeting in March 2010 with no results as yet. We are following this up.

### **Kangaroo and Wallaby data base**

In 2010 Ed Parker started a data base of kangaroo and wallaby sightings and road-kills for the local district so please report any sightings and deaths to him or me. This will be useful information for future planning.

### **Feral Deer**

There has been some success in removing the deer from the Centenary suburbs but it is a difficult task. They are becoming more and more wide-spread and are much bolder. They continue to be very destructive to Bushcare Groups' revegetation and cause serious soil erosion to the reserves. They have damaged many street trees by stripping off and eating the bark. They have been involved in a couple traffic accidents. CDEA feels more funding and people are needed to address this fast-growing problem. We will continue to lobby council to rid Centenary suburbs of deer. They arrived in 2000.

### **Flying Foxes at Westlake Drive**

Flying foxes have become a noise problem along Westlake Drive on McLeod's Golf Course over the last couple of years. Cr Bourke says BCC has done all it can about the situation under their Damage and Mitigation Permit from DERM. Advice is that the flying foxes were originally disturbed by the removal of the understorey vegetation which was being done by the Golf Club to help get rid of the deer that lived there.

A committee has been formed to try to resolve problem of noise to local residents and CDEA is working with this committee. We sympathise with the people and the flying foxes. A decision has been made by the Golf Club to build a fence along Westlake Drive to prevent the deer from disturbing the bats and eating future understorey plantings in an area further away from houses. This will also help prevent car accidents involving deer. The Golf Club is seeking funding for this.

### **Removal of Mangroves adjacent to Carnegie Street, Westlake**

In September 2010 CDEA was told of possible illegal tree removal and mangrove removal on the Brisbane River adjacent to Carnegie Street. Four members visited the site and took photographs and assessed the situation. This information was submitted to BCC who followed up the tree removal and brought in Queensland Boating and Fisheries to follow up the mangrove removal. The owners of the adjacent house had to plant three new trees in the location. We believe the tree lopper was fined. Queensland Boating and Fisheries were taking the matter to court but we don't know the outcome. Hopefully, these actions will discourage future tree and mangrove removals from along the river.

### **Bushcare Groups**

There are 8 Bushcare Groups in Jamboree Ward and CDEA continues to support and promote them.

### **Wolston and Centenary Catchments (WaCC)**

This group continues to develop and CDEA supports its efforts.

## PROVIDING EDUCATION, INFORMATION AND PROMOTION ON LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### Web Site

The CDEA web site is once again being changed to accommodate a new version of software. Thanks to web master Brian Korner and to Keith Faulkner, a volunteer from BCC who gives Brian help when needed.

### Newsletter

Julie Vejle and Jos Hall continue to produce four excellent newsletters each year. They have a constant high standard of interesting content and layout. The newsletter goes out to 190 households.

### Brochure

We have a new look brochure this year. Elizabeth Ryan has produced a standard fold-out brochure of CDEA information and contact details. In it are two inserts which are updated regularly: a sheet with *Current Hot Issues* and *Successful Outcomes* and a membership application.

### Presenters at General Meetings

- *August 2010*: Bruce Carey on "What are we doing to our soils and the implications for our food supply?"
- *November 2010*: Cr Peter Matic on BCC's "Draft Outdoor Recreation Management Strategy", Kristelle Darr of BCC Community Planning and Engagement Team on the 'Draft Darra Oxley District Neighbourhood Plan' and Sean Marler of BCC on "Environmental Education in Brisbane"
- *February 2011*: Matt De Glas, Regional Co-ordinator for Natural Environment in BCC's Local Assets Services on "How Council is rehabilitating Pooh Corner and Wacol Bushlands"
- *May 2011*: Grant Witheridge of *Catchments and Creeks Pty Ltd* on "The River is talking but who is listening?"

The presenters were all excellent and the meetings well attended.

### Pooh House

CDEA and WaCC have been pursuing an environmental centre for this area for several years. We have applied for a couple of houses that could have been relocated to Pooh Corner. However, someone else got the first one and we believe the second was badly damaged in the January floods and is no longer suitable. We will continue to look for another one.

### THECA forum

CDEA set up a display at the popular THECA Forum in September 2010.

### Media

- *The Satellite*, the *SW News* and the *Centenary News* have printed several articles highlighting local environmental and social issues involving CDEA.
- Channel 10 TV News had an item on the Hare Krishna development in Seventeen Mile Rocks and interviewed CDEA committee members and Cr Bourke at the site.
- Also on the Hare Krishna development, I was interviewed for radio by *QUT News Brisbane*.

### Centenary Rocks!

CDEA displayed its brochures on the *Wolston and Centenary Catchments* stand in July 2011.

## RECOGNITION

### Lord Mayor's Australia Day Awards 2011

On Australia Day 2010 Dianne Ruffles was honoured to receive an Achievement Award as part of the *Lord Mayor's Australia Day Awards*. Dianne was recognised for her work in no less than seven local community and environment groups, one of which was CDEA.

### SINCERE THANKS TO:

- all CDEA members for their ongoing support
- the Management Committee for their commitment and hard work
- Julie Vejle and Jos Hall for the excellent CDEA newsletters
- Elizabeth Ryan for producing the CDEA brochure
- Elizabeth Ryan and Tricia Dakin for stepping in as Minutes Secretary while Dianne Ruffles took a break
- Brian Korner for being our efficient Web Master
- Geoff and June Rudd and Ann Walker who provide the suppers at CDEA meetings
- Noel and Claire Wilson for monitoring the mail box
- Julie Attwood MP, and Crs Matthew Bourke and Milton Dick who represent us in their respective areas of government
- The local press for their continued coverage of environmental issues.

*Shealagh Walker, President, 25 August 2011.*

*Report kindly photocopied by Cr Bourke's office.*