

## President's Report August 2011 to August 2012

**This report gives a brief summary of CDEA's activities over the last 12 months. It is different this year with the continuation of several projects and a movement towards community environmental education and working to protect the local environment from feral animals.**

**The activities still 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 fundamental.**

### PROVIDING OPEN SPACE FOR PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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

The transfer of 200 hectares of state land at Wacol to 'public open space and recreation' is close to being finalised. It's been a long haul since the start of this process in 2006.

We are getting results from a meeting in October last year on the future of the project. The meeting was between CDEA, Save Our Riverfront Bushland (SORB) and Friends of Pooh Corner (FoPC), the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM), now with a few new names, Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) and Brisbane City Council (BCC). The relevant department of the previous DERM would now be the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM).

We had discussed the in-principle agreement between council and the state government whereby 122 ha of state land was to be transferred from Queensland Corrective Services to DERM who in turn will lease it to BCC for environmental and recreational and sporting purposes. 26 hectares was to remain with QCS as a buffer along their facilities on Wacol Station road but this land would be retained as bushland accessible to kangaroos and other wildlife.

The surveying has been completed. It took longer than anticipated because of rain and the fact that the new alignment of Wacol Station Road had to be surveyed first. The environmental groups were dropped out of the loop for a while in the final layout of the boundaries but that has been sorted out. In the resulting survey, QCS facilities plus the buffer will be approximately 76 hectares. This will not be accessible to the public but the bushland component will be accessible to wildlife, kangaroos in particular.

Approximately 103 hectares will be used for environmental purposes and approximately 36 hectares will be for recreational and sporting purposes. This is in addition to the 17 ha already developed as sporting fields.

The community groups are very pleased with this result and are keen to get the agreement on boundaries and conditions finalised.

#### **Industrial land next to Pooh Corner**

The same environmental groups continue to ask BCC to buy the land on the corner of Wacol Station and Wolston Roads. We have been told that once the QCS lands come over to BCC, the council will seriously consider the purchase. It is expensive, small and has no vegetation on it but as an industrial property, it does not fit into the surrounding bushland and rural landscape. We will keep trying on this one.

#### **Environmental Centre at Pooh Corner**

The prospect of an Environmental Centre at Pooh Corner is exciting. Cr Bourke knows that WaCC and CDEA have been pursuing an environmental centre for this area for several years.

As you may have seen in the papers, the Lord Mayor and Cr Bourke made an election promise of \$250 000 and more to come for 'the construction of an environmental centre' at Pooh Corner. They were both re-elected so we are looking forward to the environmental centre.

CDEA has already had some discussions with Cr Bourke. The finances have to be worked out as well as the staging. This was scheduled to happen after the council budget in June. The community and local groups will be consulted on their needs and a site will be chosen. We will let you know when this starts.

## **MITIGATING DEVELOPMENT**

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

In 2008 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 the 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 appeal by Metroplex was dismissed in November 2009 on planning issues.

However, Metroplex appealed that decision and won on legal points in November 2010. It had meanwhile submitted two new development applications which included protecting some of the areas the three environmental groups (CDEA, Save Our Riverfront Bushland and Friends of Pooh Corner) had advocated for during the court process. Some further minor outcomes were achieved by the environmental groups through an appeal of one of the development applications. Overall, while some old-growth scribbly gums will be saved within parkland, the Metroplex "development" will result in the destruction and loss of important ecological values including endangered ecosystem, connectivity for wildlife and hundreds of hollow-bearing and koala trees.

### **Wacol Station Road Bridge**

CDEA has had a meeting on site in July with representatives of BCC regarding the new bridge planned for Wacol Station Road. The project will include dry shoulders under the bridge for fauna to cross under the road, and kangaroo fencing to guide them there and keep them off the road. We will be providing council with information on local fauna and have provided suggestions of local plant species to use in the project. Information on kangaroo road deaths and crossing places is being provided from a data base of kangaroo and wallaby sightings and road-kills for the local district set up in 2010 by Ed Parker. We supported the idea of using a retention basin as a frog pond. Consultations will continue.

### **Pampling Street Pathway, Edenbrooke**

The Pampling Street creek crossing was completed December 2011. It links Edenbrooke, through bushland, to the park along Jindalee Creek near the shopping centre on Monier Road. This was a good consultation process with BCC. CDEA worked with council to get the best possible route so the minimum number of trees was removed, to have any revegetation done with local native plant species and to have a number of weed trees removed. Council even agreed to reroute the construction diversion channel onto the park side of Jindalee Creek so that mature bushland trees would not be removed as first planned.

### **Allambi Court, Corinda**

Last year council approved a proposed subdivision of one block of land into three, adjacent to the Fort Bushland Reserve in Corinda. The block is protected by an endangered Regional Ecosystem type but slipped through the cracks of legislation as it is under 2 hectares in area. It is also state classified as 'Essential Habitat' which seems to have been overlooked.

CDEA has made several requests to council and the Lord Mayor to purchase the land and add it to the Fort Bushland Reserve, but sadly the two blocks have been bought by someone else to build a house.

### **Submissions**

CDEA put in a submission on the Turf Farm in December 2011 – we are still waiting to hear the decision.

## **PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **Bird Survey of Mt Ommaney Bushland Reserve**

Meg Gordon, a CDEA member, and a group of birders have been conducting a bird survey of the Mt Ommaney Bushland Reserve under the auspices of Birdlife Southern Queensland. The survey started in March 2009 and will run to December 2012. Meg is using the results to determine the value of the reserve to birdlife, comparing the results with Chris Wiley's survey of 1998 and noting the influences of different habitat types and feral pests. Meg will make conclusions and recommendations on the birdlife in the reserve and CDEA and other groups will be able to use the information to protect the reserve and its birds. Meg is currently working on doing a similar bird survey of Pooh Corner which will also be very useful. David Niland has been conducting a bird survey at the Fort Bushland Reserve over the last year.

### **Feral Deer**

The feral deer problem continues to grow as the deer move into more and more areas. There has been some success in removing the deer from the Centenary suburbs but CDEA believes much more effort and money need to be committed. The rate of removal will not be keeping up with the deer birth rate which is three times every two years. The deer continue to be very destructive in several Bushcare sites and local bushland areas. They continue to damage many street trees, some quite mature trees are now dying. BCC maintains it does not have the resources to put tree guards around the trees.

The deer arrived in the Centenary suburbs from over the Brisbane River 12 years ago. CDEA helped lobby successfully for them to be declared a Class 2 pest animal and landholders are required to control numbers on their land. CDEA will increase its representations to council and state government to rid Centenary suburbs of feral deer.

## **Foxes**

CDEA and the Jindalee Bushcare Group have been asking council to increase its removal of foxes. The bird survey of Mt Ommaney Bushland Reserve shows that there are hardly any ground-dwelling birds remaining and this is largely put down to foxes. We will increase our efforts on this issue.

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

Over the last couple of years Flying Foxes have become a problem to some residents along Westlake Drive on McLeod's Golf Course. 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.

The new LNP government is changing the way Flying Foxes are managed. We are waiting to see what this will bring. However, Flying Foxes are protected animals and must not be harmed or killed by law. They are vital pollinators of Eucalypts which in turn are food trees for many wildlife species including the already embattled Koala. Eucalypts also have commercial significance.

Over winter there has been an increase in the number of Flying Foxes, probably from southern Australia. We expect them to return down south when the weather warms up there.

### **Bushcare Groups**

There are 8 Bushcare Groups in Jamboree Ward and CDEA continues to support and promote them. These groups are very important in looking after their respective bushland areas. In each case where CDEA has been instrumental in gaining a bushland area, we have helped start a Bushcare Group and these Bushcare areas are thriving, along with the other Bushcare sites.

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

WaCC was initiated by CDEA members to cover work that other environmental groups could not do and to care for the local catchment areas. This group was incorporated in May and has an executive committee. Most unfortunately, BCC recently cut its Creek Ranger program from 10 to 4 rangers and WaCC lost its excellent Creek Ranger, Sean Marler. He had really got the group operating well after a slow start. He initiated several restoration and community projects. The combined catchments cover an area of 44 square kilometres which was a big job even for one person. CDEA made several representations to keep our own ranger but to no avail. We thank Sean and wish him all the best for the future.

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

CDEA has several and varying ways of community environmental education.

### **Web Site**

CDEA has a new look easy to use web site updated by webmaster Brian Korner. I recommend you have a look at [www.cdea.org.au](http://www.cdea.org.au) and if you have anything to contribute please contact Brian or me.

The web site has all the CDEA newsletters, the fascinating monthly Fort Road Newsletters by John Lahey, information on Bushcare Groups, lists of native plants for local gardens, information on native and feral animals and plenty more.

### **Newsletter**

Julie Vejle continues to produce four excellent newsletters each year. These are entertaining and informative. We are now putting them out midway between General Meetings rather than just before. The Notice of Meeting now goes out before a General Meeting. The newsletters go out to over 190 households.

### **Brochure**

Last year Elizabeth Ryan produced a standard fold-out brochure of CDEA information and contact details. She continues to update the inserts of *Current Hot Issues* and *Successful Outcomes* regularly. We always hope that *Hot Issues* move quickly to the *Successful Outcomes* section. She also put out a brochure called *Demystifying Local Groups, Environment and Sustainability* which sets out the roles of local groups and gives contact details.

### **Volunteer and Community Groups in Centenary Suburbs**

Tricia and Warner Dakin maintain a list and contact details of all the community groups in the Centenary suburbs, which is very useful.

### **Presenters at General Meetings**

Our General Meetings are free and open to the general public. They have interesting topics and provide an opportunity for people to be kept up to date on CDEA activities and issues and to get together socially.

This year the presenters and topics were:

- *August 2011*: Ed Parker on "Our Neck of the Woods – Bushwalking in the SW Brisbane corridor"
- *November 2011*: Janelle Rees on "Urbanisation and the Environment"
- *February 2012*: Dennis Gannaway of BCC on "Recreating Brisbane's Forests"
- *May 2012*: Rob Mollison of BCC on "Wacol weed survey of important ecosystems"

The presentations were varied and very interesting and the meetings well attended.

## Displays

CDEA and WaCC set up a display at the popular **THECA Forum** in May 2010. and CDEA displayed its brochures on the WaCC stand in July 2012 at **Centenary Rocks!**

## Memberships

CDEA is a member of two other organisations. We support them and they in turn support and help us.

- *Environmental Defenders Office.* Due to the decision by the State Attorney-General to cease all State funding to EDO Qld from 30 June 2012, it is very limited in the help it can now give. EDO is investigating other funding sources but will be very grateful for any donations.
- *Queensland Conservation*

## RECOGNITION

- Ed and Glenda Parker, received the Rotary Club of Jindalee and the Satellite's annual **Community Gem Award** mainly for their post-flood clean-up and reconstruction of the Rocks Community Garden
- I was presented with a **National Volunteer Award** by the Honourable Bernie Ripoll MP in the 2011 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers.

## REASSESSMENT OF CDEA'S GOALS AND OPERATION

The CDEA Management Committee has recently undertaken an assessment of where CDEA stands now and its future directions. Considerable brainstorming was done with CDEA's constitution used as a basis for discussions. In summary, it was agreed that CDEA continues to have an important role in addressing current local environment issues, an ongoing commitment to public education and the function of being the local voice in consultative processes with all levels of government. We continue to work to protect the local environment.

The committee decided to streamline its operations so there is only one Management Meeting between General Meetings. Extra meetings can be called if necessary. We do a lot of discussion via email which shortens meetings. We also decided to have one or two outdoor meetings a year.

To start we will have an end of year celebration at one of the Bushland Reserves we have been instrumental in creating. The first will be at Wolston Creek Bushland Reserve, overlooking the 200 hectares at Wacol. We will have a tour of the bushcare site and the 2Million Tree plantings, finishing up with a picnic overlooking the Brisbane River.

## SINCERE THANKS TO:

- all CDEA members for their ongoing support
- the Management Committee for their commitment and hard work
- Julie Vejle for the excellent CDEA newsletters
- Elizabeth Ryan for producing CDEA handouts
- Brian Korner for being our efficient Web Master and to Keith Faulkner, a volunteer helper from BCC
- 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, now retired, who was very supportive
- Crs Matthew Bourke and Milton Dick for their support
- The local press for their continued coverage of environmental issues and CDEA.
- Meg Gordon for her bird surveys.

## CONCLUSION

Ending on a very good note, you will have read in the newsletter of the Koala seen in Wacol Bushland Reserve at end of 2011. Koalas were also heard along Wolston Creek in July 2012. To add to this, a Kangaroo and a Wallaby have been seen recently in the Horizon Drive Bushland Reserve after a long absence. New bird species are moving into the Mt Ommaney and Fort Bushland Reserves as habitat is restored and expanded. Horizon Drive Bushland looks a treat with its flowering Wattles and the Fort Bushland Reserve is almost unrecognisable from the weed infested forest it was when BCC bought it in 2004, it looks great.

CDEA and its members have had a great influence on the protection of the natural areas of Centenary and district and on preserving and encouraging its unique wildlife. Many thanks to you all.

*Shealagh Walker, President, 23 August 2012.*

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