



President's Report for 2004-2005

25 August 2005

This was my second year as President and it had a couple of big highs and a couple of lows. Fortunately the highs have far outweighed the lows.

I will remind you what CRAC's general platforms of activity are and how we have performed on them. These platforms are:

- **Community voice on environmental and recreational issues**
- **Education**
- **Advice to the local Councillor**
- **Watchdog for the local environment**
- **Provision of parks and facilities for the Community**
- **Umbrella body for local Bushcare groups**
- **Networking with other Environmental and Community groups.**

Several of these tend to overlap one another but **the common threads are the environment and the community.** Working along these lines, CRAC had a couple of big wins and several smaller ones this year.

The biggest win was being part of combined effort to have Brisbane City Council purchase the Passionist Fathers' land which borders on the suburb of Seventeen Mile Rocks but is actually Oxley.

The combined effort came from Cr Felicity Farmer, Julie Attwood MLA, the Fort Road Action Group, Margaret Ferguson, and CRAC. Many, many thanks to everyone who helped bring to fruition the idea of BCC purchasing the land for the people and environment of Brisbane.

CRAC sent its first letter regarding the protection of this bushland to Cr Farmer in July 2002. Three years later in July 2005, BCC agreed to purchase land from the Passionist Fathers with \$4 million from the Bushland Levy. A small area of land will remain with the Fathers, the rest, 10.6 hectares, will be retained as bushland. There will be no development on the site!

We have an unusual amount of wildlife in the Centenary suburbs and were becoming more and more despondent about any of it surviving the recent wave of development. The Fort Road bushland can now become a refuge for the surviving wildlife displaced from Edenbrooke and Verandah, as well as continue to provide habitat for its current wildlife which includes wallabies and squirrel gliders.

The purchase by BCC will also ensure the continuance of the remarkable remnant dry rainforest in the gully.

The second big win started off as a definite loss at Tennant Street, Riverhills.

Through a line of misunderstandings, BCC cleared an area next to the park in Tennant Street in Riv with the intention of providing more grassed area for the local community. However, the Westlake R Bushcare Group were NOT HAPPY as they had not been consulted or informed and regarded the a bushland. Cr Farmer convened an on-site meeting of local bushcarers, CRAC, and officers from BC result of this was a revegetation plan drawn up between WRBG and CRAC and implemented by BC area has now been mulched and planted up with local native plants. A mulched track has been left o walkers.

And to make it even better, BCC has constructed an extension of the Coucal Track which CRAC and WRBG have been lobbying for over the last few years. The path cost over \$200 000.00 and was constructed as part of a training programme for long term unemployed people with a limited knowledge of English.

Everyone is a winner, the local community who now has a beautiful walking track, WRBG whose bush area has painlessly expanded vastly, Cr Farmer and BCC who now have a great asset, the local wildlife which has been given a boost of habitat, and the unemployed people who learned useful skills and the satisfaction of a job well done. I urge you to go and enjoy this wonderful new track when it is complete in the middle of September.

A couple of minor wins offset rather a big loss at Fremont Street, Seventeen Mile Rocks

The loss was the bushland at the top of the ridge above the new Rocks Riverside Park being allowed to be developed for housing despite a court win by Save our Riverfront Bushland and CRAC to have the previous housing estate disallowed in 2000.

However, there was a significant win from the court case whereby no structures were allowed to be built from the river thus protecting the wooded ridgeline from becoming lined with houses as required in the Town Plan.

The walking track along the ridgeline was preserved for community recreation but sadly it has lost its bushland character.

Another win was persuading BCC to use local native tree species for the street trees they will be planting. This is an extension of a pilot scheme that BCC has in using native species for street trees and hopefully will encourage the further use of local species for street trees.

The housing estate is trying to be environmentally sustainable so hopefully this is a by product of our case win.

On the important education front:

- The CRAC webpage is poised and ready to go as soon as we decide on a new structure and name. We are very lucky to have the extremely persevering Brian Korner as our webmaster. Web pages are powerful education tools.
- Ed Parker and I have been invited to talk to the students of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Design at QUT. Our subject will be our experience of community consultation. Importantly, it will allow us to access the upcoming generation.
- We continue our quarterly meetings with a wide range of interesting speakers and topics.

More contributions to the environment and recreation

- CRAC put in submissions on BCC's Draft Pest Management Plan and also the very far reaching Regional Plan.
- We are working with Felicity Farmer, BCC and the developers of Zoe's Place to mitigate the impact of the development on the already environmentally depleted 'Hospital Site'.
- Yesterday CRAC participated in an information session with the proposed developers of the Catholic School site in Horizon Drive, Felicity Farmer and local members of the Catholic church. We discussed the retention of trees and the protection of any remaining wallabies.

Networking and partners

Felicity Farmer said that local Service Groups were interested in participating in more projects and suggested that a meeting of the RSL, Rotary and CRAC would be useful to develop a co-ordinated master plan for the shared areas adjacent to the hospital site. To this end CRAC has worked with Rotary for the provision of several shade shelters and a revegetation exercise on Sunday 28 August. Hopefully this will be the first of many.

CRAC has also had two plantings with BRAIN, the Brisbane Rainforest Action and Information Network at the Goggs Road Rainforest Remnant. 500 plants were put in and a TAP! One more planting is planned for September.

Once again I refer to the successful combined community push to preserve the Bushland owned by the Passionist Fathers in Seventeen Mile Rocks.

Another HUGE win which we supported in a minor but serious way was the saving of Pooh Corner, which is now as Bushland in the public realm. Along with the Bushland rescue was the ongoing provision of HABITAT for the Eastern Grey Kangaroos who spend their days decorating the lawns in front of the prison in Waterloo.

Future Directions

- We have all discussed the future structure and name of CRAC and this will be decided at the 2008 AGM.
- We will forge greater ties with the new Bushcare Groups.
- Our webpage will be developed further and we will endeavour to get the newsletter revived.
- We will lobby to have deer declared pests and try to remove them from our local area where they are causing great damage to the environment including eating our Bushcare plantings and out-competing the wallabies. Common mynah birds are another focus for being declared as pests.
- Continuing to maintain our platforms of activity and extend them as required.

Sincere thanks to:

- all CRAC members for their support
- the Management Committee for their commitment
- Julie Attwood MLA and Cr Felicity Farmer who represent us in their respective areas of government
- Noel Wilson in particular, for all his organising, administration and support.

Shealagh Savage, President.