

Centenary and District Environment
Action Incorporated
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Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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Keep Australia Beautiful Week 2020 (17-23 August)

“Keep Australia Beautiful Week is held late August each year to raise awareness about the simple things we can all do in our daily lives to reduce our impact on the environment and encourage action.

The Keep Australia Beautiful Network (KAB), consisting of an independent federation network in each State and Territory, is a national organisation that is recognised as Australia’s independent litter prevention thought and practice leader, for a litter free and sustainable Australia.

Established by Dame Phyllis Frost in 1968, KAB has almost 50 years of experience in engaging Australians to care for their local environments. KAB Programs include, Tidy Towns, Clean Beaches, Sustainable Cities, National Litter Index, Eco-Schools, Adopt a Patch, and Keep Australia Beautiful Week in August.

KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL WEEK 2020 (17-23 AUGUST)

From their website at <https://kab.org.au/keep-australia-beautiful-week/> : (copy & paste)

Vision

A litter free and sustainable Australia.

Mission

Recognised as Australia’s independent litter prevention thought and practice leader.

Objectives

- to lead, influence and advocate for environmental sustainability
- to honour achievement in environmental endeavour
- to provide support through education, innovation, engagement and research
- to deliver effective partnerships and programs ensuring mutually beneficial environmental outcomes.”

The **Tidy Towns Awards** have been presented nationally since 1990, and the Queensland Finalist for the 2020 Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns – Sustainable Communities is **Gympie**. The Awards event has been rescheduled to 13 & 14 October 2020.

2020: A CRUNCH YEAR FOR THE BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE EMERGENCIES

The global and local celebrations of World Environment Day, scheduled for June 2020, were cancelled. It had a **Spotlight on Biodiversity**: For further detail, read <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/2020-crunch-year-biodiversity-and-climate-emergencies> (copy & paste)

“Over the last few months, the scientific community has repeatedly sounded the alarm on biodiversity breakdown and the climate emergency. Scientists and most governments agree that the world is facing an unprecedented environmental crisis with huge numbers of species on the brink of extinction and global temperatures continuing to rise. Nature-based solutions offer the best way to achieve human well-being, address climate change and protect the planet. Yet nature is in crisis, as we are losing species at a rate 1,000 times greater than at any other time in recorded human history.

Humans depend for their very survival on stable and healthy ecosystems and urgent action is needed in 2020 to get the world on track to a more sustainable future. This is a “super year” for the environment—a make or break year in which key international meetings will set the tone and agenda for environmental action in the decade ahead.”

WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

For further detail from the Australian Museum, see https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/science/biodiversity/what-is-biodiversity/?gclid=EAlaIqobChMltbOFzJOe6QIVzTUrCh2UNwFQEAAYASAAEgJHo_D_BwE (Copy & Paste)

“Biodiversity comes from two words Bio meaning life and diversity meaning variability.

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things; the different plants, animals and micro organisms, the genetic information they contain and the ecosystems they form.”

Levels of biodiversity

“Biodiversity is usually explored at three levels - genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity. These three levels work together to create the complexity of life on Earth.”

Genetic diversity

“Genetic diversity is the variety of genes within a species. Each species is made up of individuals that have their own particular genetic composition. This means a species may have different populations, each having different genetic compositions. To conserve genetic diversity, different populations of a species must be conserved.”

Species diversity

“Species diversity is the variety of species within a habitat or a region. Some habitats, such as rainforests and coral reefs, have many species. Others, such as salt flats or a polluted stream, have fewer.

In Australia, more than 80% of plant and animal species are endemic, which means that they only occur naturally in Australia.”

Ecosystem diversity

“Ecosystem diversity is the variety of ecosystems in a given place. An ecosystem is a community of organisms and their physical environment interacting together. An ecosystem can cover a large area, such as a whole forest, or a small area, such as a pond.”

Megadiversity

“Megadiversity describes countries with very high levels of biodiversity.

Twelve of the megadiverse countries, including Australia, contain about 75% of Earth's total biodiversity.”

Gondwanan diversity

“Australia was once part of the great southern supercontinent Gondwana, which also included South America, Africa, India and Antarctica.

Due to the geological process known as plate tectonics, Gondwana began to break up some 140 million years ago and about 50 million years ago, Australia eventually split from Antarctica.

Australia's unique biodiversity and our high number of endemic species (that is, they only occur naturally in Australia) is mostly explained by the isolation of our continent from other land masses.”

Conserving biodiversity

“The best way to conserve biodiversity is to save habitats and ecosystems rather than trying to save a single species.

Many high profile conservation campaigns focus on rescuing a single endangered species from extinction, such as blue whale, bilbies, koala. No organism, however, exists in isolation. If a species is at risk, then the habitat in which it lives is probably under threat too.” (my emphasis – Ed.)

JINDALEE BUSHCARE GROUP

(Shealagh Walker – Group Leader)

Start-up

The beginnings of Jindalee Bushcare Group date back to 1995 when Brisbane City Council constructed a new walkway through Coolaroo Crescent Park, meandering from Mount Ommaney Drive down and along the Brisbane River, through to Summit Place off Westlake Drive.

Once the walkway was completed, the local councillor at the time, Cr Christine Watson, held an interest meeting to start a Bushcare Group. It was at the Mount Ommaney Drive entrance to the walkway and included a demonstration planting and information, plus encouraging words from Christine and Walter Wood, President of the Centenary Riverfront Advisory Committee (CRAC, eventually to become CDEA).

Bushcare groups were a new thing then and people didn't quite know what they were about – it was sold as feeling 'ownership' of the bushland, we didn't understand that back in 1996.



Early photo of Jindalee Bushcarers on steps at Mount Ommaney end.

Christine went on to convene a meeting of 'interested persons' at the Jamboree Ward Office. Not knowing what was entailed and having little knowledge of native plants or bushland rehabilitation, Noel Wilson somewhat reluctantly volunteered to be Group Leader and Claire Wilson, his wife, volunteered to be publicity officer. Noel said later that: "this was a very good thing for us - newly arrived in the district but placed in contact with a bunch of wonderful people with a great variety of backgrounds but a common interest in bushcare".

Work begins

The first working bee was on Sunday 3 November 1996 and the task was to attack the weed-infested rocky slope at the Mount Ommaney Drive end of the walkway and replant it with native plants, quite an undertaking for a group with little idea of even what a weed was in the first place. They were fortunate to have advice, equipment, and plants supplied by Brisbane City Council.

Claire took charge of administration while Noel took charge of operations, they were a great team.

Claire started off providing the food for morning tea but made it quite clear that she didn't like baking. Luckily, June Rudd, new bushcarer Geoff's wife, didn't much care for doing bushcare so she took over making the morning tea. Everyone was happy and it, and the socialising that goes with it, have become an important part of the working bees. The group has luckily nearly always had a morning tea provider, with much grumbling, rosters and bought biscuits in between times.

Noel organised which areas to work on, what was to be done where, plants, mulch and whatever was needed. Each month he gallantly loaded up his ute with all the bushcare equipment which was stored in their garage and drove it to the top of the walkway, then packed it all up again after morning tea and took it back to their garage.

During working-bees, Claire used to work around the walkway entrance to keep an eye on equipment, do weeding, sweeping and

tidying and directing bushcarers who arrived a bit later to where the work was being undertaken that day. She was magnificent at engaging passers-by in conversation, telling them about bushcare and encouraging them to join up.

That was the start of a 16 year stint by the Wilsons to lead the Jindalee Bushcare Group, the second Bushcare Group in Jamboree Ward.



Jindalee Bushcarers at Mount Ommaney end, Mt Ommaney Drive. (Photo © Shealagh Walker, October, 2012)

Rehabilitating the rocky slope

Greening Australia had planted some native plants up near the entrance from Mount Ommaney Drive so the Bushcare Group started up there and moved down the slope gradually rehabilitating the weed-infested land down to the Brisbane River. That took about three years of monthly working bees. The slope was quite steep and the ground very hard and stony; hard to believe the enormous trees that grew there, very hard to plant new ones. To cap it all, we had to hammer in three stakes for every plant to support a plastic plant guard to stop wallabies and possums nibbling our new plantings. The slope is rehabilitated now and JBG goes there about twice a year, mainly to weed.

Confusing names

The funny thing about Coolaroo Crescent Park was that there actually is no access from Coolaroo Crescent; houses block the

way. Claire Wilson and Centenary and District Environment Action (CDEA) fixed that up with council in 2009 and the 'park' is now called the Mount Ommaney Bushland Reserve.

Another funny name fact, Jindalee Bushcare Group operates in the Mount Ommaney Bushland Reserve. The Reserve is partly in both the suburbs of Mount Ommaney and Jindalee. The actual 'mount' of Mount Ommaney used to be in the reserve but most of it was taken over by the water authorities as they have a large concrete water reservoir at the top.



Jindalee Bushcarers enjoying morning tea under shelter shed, Summit Place, Mount Ommaney. (Photo © Shealagh Walker, 10:44, 18th Oct, 2009)

Changes

As the Bushcare Group became established we asked for and were given more facilities, starting with a notice board for public education and interest, two benches along the walkway, bins, taps with bubblers and dog dishes, a fabulous shipping container to store all our stuff, a dunny with a beautifully decorated door and best of all, a picnic shelter for morning teas! Of course, these are all for the community to enjoy as well.

Over the last twenty years the Bushcare Group has expanded its area and now covers most of the Mount Ommaney Bushland Reserve. The Mount Ommaney Walkway is called Wilsons Walkway and the dry rainforest remnant at the Westlake Drive end is called Wiley's Scrub, but that's all another story.

(A future newsletter will have separate articles on Wilsons Walkway & Wiley's Scrub – Ed)