



NEWSLETTER

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Centenary and District Environment
Action Incorporated

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2020 World Environment Day 2020 – Spotlight on Biodiversity

“World Environment Day is celebrated every year on 5 June to focus the world’s attention on a pressing environmental issue. The Day strives to raise awareness and encourage action for the environment. It offers an opportunity to reflect on accomplishments and renew our resolve in overcoming the environmental challenges facing the world today.”

“Biodiversity—the variety of life forms in any given habitat, from large animals to plants to fungi to the smallest of organisms—is threatened like never before. We are on the verge of a mass extinction: within the next 10 years, around 1 million species may be wiped off the surface of the planet.”

Read more at
<https://p.widencdn.net/bedxcl/WED-2020-Working-Brief>

LOCAL CELEBRATION OF WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2020

In the Centenary suburbs, World Environment Day 2020 was scheduled to be celebrated at Pooh Corner Environment Centre in Wolston Road, Wacol, on Sunday morning, 7th June. This had been organised by CDEA, in conjunction with WaCC. **Globally, COVID-19 has caused group celebrations to be cancelled and our local celebration is no exception.**

IN THE BUILD-UP TO WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY, A UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME GLOBAL CAMPAIGN ON NATURE

Read further detail at <https://p.widencdn.net/bedxcl/WED-2020-Working-Brief>

“The 2020 World Environment Day global campaign aims at highlighting how we as humans are inextricably linked to and depend on nature for our existence and quality of life. Recent events, from bushfires in Brazil, United States and Australia to locust swarms to the COVID-19 outbreak, highlights how meddling with ecosystems and biodiversity from its natural state is creating unprecedented challenges for humankind on a global scale. Human activities such as pollution, unsustainable use of land and sea, exploitation of organisms, climate change and invasion of alien species, are leading to biodiversity breakdown and the decline and degradation of natural ecosystems at an unprecedented scale. The crisis also reflects our connectedness to one another and how actions and events in one part of the world affect us all. It also brings to the spotlight the need for international cooperation and coordination in responding to the challenges posed by environmental degradation. Yet, these events are symptomatic and require us to address the decline of nature through transformational and sustained reforms with nature at the heart of decision-making. This World Environment Day, the need to heal our relationship and start living in harmony with nature, perhaps, has never been this stark in modern history. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is calling on governments, businesses and civil society to work together in building global understanding of biodiversity and nature’s key contribution to our survival.

With less than three months left to this year's celebration *, the whole world finds itself engulfed in the COVID-19 outbreak. A number of countries throughout the world have put in place stringent measures such as travel restrictions to prevent and curtail further spread of the disease. Citizens are encouraged to stay away from crowded places, limit outside activities to only those that are essential and strictly observe social distancing. Several key international events have also either been cancelled or postponed and the fate of many others also hang in the balance. UNEP is redesigning this year's celebrations primarily around a global digital campaign aimed at increasing knowledge and engagement in virtual spaces on the theme of biodiversity.

The global digital campaign will be launched in April 2020 to draw attention to the need for restoring nature and reversing biodiversity loss. It will feature a distinct visual identity and will run using the hashtag #ForNature. A key objective of the campaign will be to build understanding on how all living things on Earth are connected in the web of life. The campaign will develop many assets, including interactive visual stories to showcase the interdependence of all life on Earth, tied together through the interconnectedness of people and biodiversity. These connections make up the fabric of nature—weakening or removing one form of life impacts the entire biodiversity ecosystem, making species vulnerable to extinction and natural systems less resilient. As part of the campaign, UNEP will also be producing communication toolkits for partners, including the private sector, that will contain key messages and actions.

To celebrate World Environment Day [from 25 May through 5 June 2020], UNEP invites the global community—families, friends, peers, neighbourhoods, government and non-governmental organizations, and small and large businesses—to show their commitment to protecting nature and to the sustainable use of nature's resources."

* - this UN article on the website was written at the beginning of 2020.

REDEVELOPMENT OF OXLEY STATE COLLEGE SITE

(Shealagh Walker)

Construction on the Oxley State College site redevelopment (Oxley PDA) starts sooner than expected

Two Development Applications?

The big machines moved onto the old Oxley Secondary College site off Seventeen Mile Rocks Road towards the third week of May 2020 (bearing in mind this article is being written on 31 May). The asbestos was going and so were many trees - over 600 out of a total of 1003 trees surveyed, of which only 52 were weed trees.



Oxley PDA site showing the start of construction (Photo © Theresa Hoyle 22nd May 2020, 14:29)

The community was alarmed and surprised, knowing that the comment period for the Proposed Development Scheme Development (DEV2020/1099) had been on Monday 11 May, and the clearing work was approved in the same week. It didn't seem nearly enough time for all the public submissions to have been read and considered.

However, it turns out that the clearing and earthworks were on a separate development application (DEV2020/1111) that was accepted for approval consideration on 9 April. The Proposed Development Scheme development application (DEV2020/1099) had been accepted for approval consideration on 3 March, just over one month earlier.

The first application was for the layout plan of housing, the child care centre etc. for Stage 1 only. The second application was for the clearing of trees and the bulk earthworks to make a place for the whole project, Stages 1 and 2 presupposing, we could assume, that both stages will go ahead.

So, although the second application went in second, it was approved first. One reason this could be is that it didn't have to go out to public comment. Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) who are the state authority running this project, has started on these clearing and earth-shaping works before the proposed plans of what's to go on the site have been approved: **How does that work?** What if the state government, the approval agency, rejects the proposed plans and all those trees have been felled and earthworks done for no reason?

All very confusing to the community who feels it has not been kept completely informed.

Four years from consultation to construction

The first community information session and survey were held in May 2016, where EDQ basically produced options of a few low, medium and high rise housing types and you could put dots on the display boards which you preferred. However, the community wanted other uses, especially public open space, and expressed this. In response the Oxley Community Panel was formed and Ed Parker and I volunteered to join. The panel had several sessions with EDQ and there were a couple more community surveys and other groups consulted. The panel produced a very comprehensive report on all facets of the site including ecology, recreation, flooding, land slippage, traffic, history, education, indigenous people and community preferences. Finally, the panel came to an agreement with EDQ on a mix of separate dwellings, open space, relocation of an existing child care centre, and an aged care facility containing a community space. The final proposed plan is not quite what the panel agreed to which is disappointing.



“Ancient” eucalypt on Oxley PDA site. (Photo © Shealagh Walker 10th July 2016, 11:45)

Wholesale removal of native trees

One of the main grievances expressed by the community on its Oxley Secondary Site Community Group Facebook site is the wholesale removal of native trees. This is especially so in the south-west area of the site, which was previously classified by Brisbane City Council (BCC) as being of High Ecological Significance because of the massive and ancient Eucalypts there. State government does not have to abide by the

BCC planning scheme, only its own laws and regulations. Initially EDQ said it would put larger housing blocks in this area with building envelopes so that some of the massive trees could be saved. However, in the final development proposal, except for the trees in the area described on the clearing plan as the Endangered Remnant Vegetation area, (the Regional Ecosystem) and the Bushcare Protection Zone, the plan indicates that only seven native trees will be retained.

Generally, the scale of the native tree clearance is unnecessary and would adversely affect several aspects of the ecology and amenity of the land, including recreational use, wildlife habitat, soil erosion and slope slippage. This is especially true of the south-west corner. It would be much better made into a low impact public park, respecting the huge, ancient trees. The current development plan is short of public green space and this could be part of the answer.

Frighteningly, all native trees on the clearing site plan including in the 'ERVA', are marked with a yellow circle, which according to the legend means that "Tree may be previously removed as part of preliminary remediation work" [sic]. It is unclear what this means, however the ambiguity suggests that all trees may be damaged or removed.

We can only hope that the submissions on the Proposed Development Scheme will be considered before all the trees are cut down. It would take decades, even a couple of centuries for the new trees planned to be planted to help replace the ecological and amenity values of the ones that hopefully still exist on the site today.

Find out more, do something

There are other issues in the development plan under consideration, which are comprehensively outlined in Councillor Nicole Johnstone's submission, sent out with this CDEA Newsletter, with her permission. It is concise and clear and I urge you to read it.

You can also refer to the state government Master Plan and Stage 1 Priority Development Area, Oxley
<http://www.yourneighbourhood.com.au/masterplan-stage1-oxleypda/>

If you have comments or questions, you may also contact Jess Pugh MP, the local state member for the electorate in which the Oxley PDA lies.

CDEA applied to the Brisbane City Council for a Lord Mayor's Community Sustainability & Environmental Grant and has recently received \$1870.

BushWaCCers Roving Bushcare Group - Wolston and Centenary Catchments



WaCC members (See [https://reportcard.hlw.org.au/?currentYear=2019&show=null&action=null®ions\[0\]=region.Lower%20Brisbane&tab=overview](https://reportcard.hlw.org.au/?currentYear=2019&show=null&action=null®ions[0]=region.Lower%20Brisbane&tab=overview))

"Wolston and Centenary Catchments (WaCC) was formed in 2008 as the community-based catchment group to keep a connected, engaged and motivated community in the area covered by WaCC. In 2017, WaCC established a roving Bushcare group called BushWaCCers. With no funding, the project involved volunteer leaders managing volunteer workers on Brisbane City Council reserves, mainly Spine Street Park at Wacol and Wau Road Park at Darra, on a monthly basis."

WaCC's objectives are to "achieve environmental, social, educational and economic outcomes that protect the Wolston and Centenary Catchments natural environment, in line with Council's restoration guidelines. They aimed to promote healthy land and water biodiversity with innovative solutions to protect and restore the natural environment."

The group has been "successful in overseeing and driving community involvement in protecting and enhancing the environment in the area covered by WaCC."

Related to COVID-19, BushWaCCer activities have been suspended until further notice.