



# Newsletter

## Editorial

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Amazingly, we are already past the shortest day of the year and things already seem to be warming up.

My apologies for the lateness of this edition; I'm sure you've all been hassling your postmen for it. I was in Indonesia for half of June and July, travelling around some of the eastern islands, climbing volcanoes, dodging Komodo dragons and such.

That part of Indo is not the tropical paradise of Bali etc. It's much drier, and the some of the vegetation is the same as here in Australia. One of the islands I visited (Sumba) is pretty well covered in blady grass, which the locals use for thatching houses.

And yes, we did see Komodo dragons. They are just like goannas, only bigger, fatter and lazier. Apparently they also kill people.

Greenlink has continued to tick over in my absence. Many thanks to those people who kept things going and performed some of the essential administrative details.

Northern Beaches Envirolink is gathering steam, with a range of endeavours that look as though they will keep a few of these dedicated people busy for a while.

More on this inside.

Hopefully by the time the next edition of this newsletter comes out, we will have been notified of the successful outcome of our 2002 Greenlink application (fingers crossed).

There are a number of new groups that are set to join the project, with some pretty interesting and innovative approaches to protecting the environment on the Northern Beaches.

I have been in contact with a few of them over the last weeks to get the planning process moving, as if we are successful, we will have to make things happen very quickly.

Coming up in the next few weeks are a number of the regular field / work days, a biodiversity survey of Wheeler Creek, tree plantings and plenty of other activity. Details are on the back page.

We always like to see new faces, so feel free to bring a friend and just turn up.

*John Harkin.*

Bushcare



  
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# New Work

Greenlink's tentacles are expanding southward.

**McKillop Reserve** just near the Harbord Diggers' is the latest recipient of Greenlink money, in an effort to control a huge crop *Coprosma repens* (Mirror Bush) that has taken over the coastal heath.

This little patch of bush is really quite amazing in diversity, as it ranges from heath to rainforest vegetation in the space of a few metres.

The work is being carried out by National Trust Bush Regeneration, and involves the killing of these shrubs that are just a bit too much for the volunteers there to manage on their own.

This will add to the excellent volunteer work of the Friends of McKillop Res, and revegetation and track work that has already been completed north of the headland, by Warringah Council.

**South Creek** up at Beacon Hill is also enjoying the tender ministrations of the National Trust. This area has had some work in the past, and the new work will expand on that, as well as assist the efforts of the new bush regeneration group up there.

Past efforts have focussed on eradicating *Ludwigia* and an extensive planted area that is now well established.

In coming months, several huge old willows will be removed. These are right up the top of the creek and are probably the parents of dozens of these pestilential vermin trees downstream.

With a bit of luck (and follow up) that will be the last we see of them.

# Katandra open for visitors

Katandra Bushland Sanctuary is open for public visits every Sunday from 10.00am until October.

The vegetation and views are amazing and a very pleasant loop walk can be completed in a bit under an hour (if you don't stop to smell the flowers).

Katandra is located on Lane Cove Road Mona Vale (just off Mona Vale Rd).

Because Katandra is run entirely by volunteers, all visitors are asked to make a small donation to the Trust that manages this beautiful spot. This pays for general upkeep.

# Dee Why Lagoon project under public scrutiny

The long awaited Dee Why Lagoon excavation has just completed a public exhibition period.

This process was deemed necessary as the project is adjacent to native bushland.

It seems a bit ironic that the project which is designed to resolve an environmental problem has to go through an awful lot more scrutiny (and expense) than the work that caused the problem.

Funny how these things go, but hopefully, the process will lead to a better outcome than would have been achieved otherwise.

# Northern Beaches Envirolink news

Greenlink's parent organisation is gathering steam, following a workshop and a meeting of some of the working groups. There is an enormous amount of enthusiasm that is slowly but surely being harnessed productively.

Envirolink seeks to:

- Increase community awareness, education and involvement
- Support, manage and promote collaborative community based projects and innovative approaches
- Participate in strategic advocacy of effective sustainable management, integrated planning and decision processes.

This has meant taking an active role in some of the critical planning issues that are affecting the Northern Beaches area. They are also represented on the Northern Region Noxious Weeds Committee, and are overseeing a number of environmental projects.

All of the members participate voluntarily, and therefore often have to juggle a number of commitments. Envirolink welcomes new members who share the vision of a sustainable future for the Northern Beaches and are keen to get involved in making it a reality.

## ***National Tree Planting Day***

Thanks to all of those hardy souls who joined us on July 29th in Dee Why Park.

Pearce Brosnan couldn't make it unfortunately, but his absence was more than made up for by the strong representation of Warringah Council 007 look-alikes, Jim Casimir and Greg Narker. The Mayor Peter Moxham also dropped in briefly, in spite of a dreadful cold that would have kept most people in bed.

About 20 people including entire families from as far afield as Allambie braved the steely skies and whistling winds to plant almost 500 tubestock and move several cubic metres of mulch before lunch.

**Fantastic effort!**

The aim of the project is to revegetate as much of this creekline as possible, so that it can function as a wildlife corridor between Dee Why Lagoon and the Wetlands behind the Time and Tide Hotel.

Warringah Council provided the mulch, watered the area and has agreed to maintain the planted areas into the future, to ensure that they don't get over run by weeds.

## ***More Tree Planting***

Just upstream from the July 29th planting site is the Heron Place Bushcare site. The title "Bushcare" is not exactly appropriate for this group, as their site is the edge of playing fields, and has been a mown area for years.

But they have taken on the challenge of revegetating this patch, in the hope that the trees and shrubs planted there will eventually provide habitat for the many small birds that flit through the park.

This is really a fantastic effort, as most of the parks, golf courses and other open public areas provide scarcely any shelter for the little blue wrens, scrub wrens, cisticolas and white-eyes. The wide expanses of mown grass leave them completely vulnerable to attacks by other territorial birds, cats etc and without any natural sources of food.

The group has committed themselves to planting, mulching and then maintaining the area, with the permission and help of Warringah Council.

It would be great if we could get more of this sort of thing happening, so if you know of any public open mown space (eg your local footy field or bowling green) that could use a few thousand trees, let us know and

## ***Still More Tree Planting (and not sausage sizzle)***

If all of this tree planting activity is making you feel a bit left out, read on.

OzGREEN's Greenlink site at the Dee Why Wetlands has come along in leaps and bounds over the last year. It was looking a bit weedy a few months ago, but they have managed to get on top of the super vigorous kikuyu and couch grasses that are competing with the hundreds of plants that they have put in.

Students from Cromer Primary school have been a fantastic help. Just last Thursday they planted close to 200 tubestock and mulched large areas adjacent to the creek.

If you can spare a few hours on **Saturday 1st September**, the OzGREEN crew will be back down at the site **planting more trees and sizzling up some not sausages** (ie sausages that don't pretend to have meat in them) around lunch time.

All Welcome. See back page for details.



## ***Fifteen minutes of fame.***

It seems that as the days of Doctor Who and The Goodies have faded into the distance, there is a whole new world of children's television.

Last Thursday's tree planting at Dee Why Wetlands was filmed by a crew from Nickelodeon, a children's cable TV channel. The (no doubt gripping) footage will appear on that channel in a program called **'The Big Help News'**, which features community projects that involve kids.

Cromer Primary's student body appears to be swollen with budding actors, as the lure of the camera proved to be somewhat stronger than that of the mulch.

If you don't have cable TV at home, you still have about a month to get it hooked up, as the program will be aired on 29th October. They didn't know what time, so you'll have to watch all day.

## ***Signs of the times***

The Greenlink signs have finally started to happen!

Yes, it's almost unbelievable, so long have they been in the pipeline, but it's true.

The first of these magnificent timber signs was erected on Friday 27th 2001 in Dee Why Park. Some of the local youth (?) must have thought it would look better as a water feature, as it was found in the creek the following Sunday.

No harm was done, however, and the sign was repositioned on Tuesday. More concrete, deeper holes.

Over the next few weeks they will spread out like a rash across the peninsula, hopefully attracting a lot of attention (positive) and assisting in the ever challenging task of recruiting new members.

Many thanks to **Bayview Fencing** for the excellent work, and the generous discount they have given this community project.

## ***More work at Long Reef***

One place we never seem to have any trouble getting volunteers is Long Reef. The beautiful views, fresh air and prospects of getting decapitated by a hang glider or model plane seem to draw people from far and wide.

The last work day attracted 31 people (is this a record?) for three hours of weeding and a bit of planting. Unusually, no *Themeda* was planted and no bitou bush was cleared. At the end of the session, the entire area was vastly improved, as many of the weeds were rooted out, making room for the natives to take over.

**See back page for details about the next work day.**

With all of this enthusiasm, we have decided that it may be possible to rekindle the Thursday Group.

This group ran for some years until fairly recently. The fantastic work started by them is slowly sliding backwards and the weeds are moving in, so it would be great to fire it up again before it's all to late.

For more information, see Positions Vacant column.

## ***Give a man a fish...***

One of the long standing issues with Greenlink and all environmental projects is that to be fully effective, they must provide people with the tools to continue their work after the funding has finished. As the saying goes, "give a man a fish and feed him for a night. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime".

Some of the ways Greenlink has attempted to do this are:

- Providing training programs with the local councils,
- Publicising events to try to attract a wider crowd of people,
- Encouraging council officers to attend field days,
- Building networks of people and trying to link groups up for support.

We have had mixed success in these efforts. The Greenlink training days held earlier in the year attracted a few people, but we felt that there was not enough involvement to continue with them.

Instead, Warringah Council has adopted a system similar to that operating in Pittwater. So now, each registered 'Friends of the bush' group will get a trained supervisor every month for 4 hours. The supervisor will attend the regular work days, or at another agreeable time.

This represents a great chance for any interested people to join up and **learn new skills** from **professional bush regenerators**. Learn weed and native plant identification skills, weed eradication techniques and how to work more effectively with less effort.

**See back page for details as to how you can join in and get training.**

## ***Positions Vacant***

**Hardy go getting mountain goat types** required to head small, dedicated hard-working group. Million dollar views in much sought after location. You will be required to watch things grow and kill things if they grow too much.

**Essential:**

Enthusiasm, dedication and a desire to work unpaid.

**Desirable:**

A bit of knowledge of bush regeneration techniques and weed identification is preferred, although training will be supplied.

**Salary:**

Your reward will be in heaven (yet to be confirmed).  
Call John Harkin 9970 8402 for details.

# ***True confessions of a bush regenerator***

Righto, it's confession time.

How many of you reading this who have been involved in bush regeneration work have started clearing an area and got a little over enthusiastic only to find later that you can't keep up with the regrowth of weeds?

If this describes you, then you are guilty of **OVER-CLEARING**.

This is probably the most oft committed crime in the bush regeneration world, especially amongst groups who are new, fresh and enthusiastic. It's understandable that this is the case, as it is really tempting to see all weeds as the work of the devil that must be rooted out fast.

But, one of the first and most important principles in bush regeneration work is that the **bush must dictate the pace of the work**.

In simple terms, this means allowing the native vegetation to help compete with the weeds. If you clear all the weeds straight away, they will be replaced by weeds. This means you will then have to return to the same area and weed it again...and again...and again.

What's worse, you may find that the relatively slow moving weeds like lantana get replaced by worse weeds, such as Acetosa or Madiera vine, or more commonly, some of those really fast growing annuals like fleabane, cobbler's pegs etc.

Other serious dangers are erosion and the loss of habitat for various little birds, invertebrates and reptiles.

**So how do we prevent overclearing and still get work done?**

This is where having a plan and a bit of experience comes in. If you first work out where the good bits of bush are, you can focus your attention there. It's much easier to **keep the good bush good** than it is to make the bad bush better.

You should always try to find the edge of the weed invasion; that is, where the weeds have most recently reached. There should be less weed seed in the soil here, and the native vegetation will quickly fill any gaps you make by clearing weeds.

**If you have a small group, or don't meet regularly, this may be all you should aim to do.**

**Next step.**

Moving into the weedy patches is dangerous. You must really control your enthusiasm, put away the chainsaws, machetes and dynamite and work out a strategy that ensures the best outcome.

When you do this, you have to be thinking well into the future.

As an example, the Lincoln Ave Bushcare group has cleared a patch of lantana (about 3m x 3m) right in the middle of a veritable sea of this weed. At first appearance, this seems a bit strange, but the intention is to join this cleared patch up with an area that has shown good regeneration.

It will probably take the group four to five years to achieve this, as they are not planting anything. The native seed in the soil will eventually fill the gap left by the clearing and with a bit of help will continue to keep the weeds down.

Ultimately, they plan to strengthen the native vegetation in patches like this throughout the area and then join them together. They will leave the lantana around the edges (as this keeps out dumpers, feral animals and other weeds) until the core bush has regrown enough to manage without this protection.

So as you can see from this example, the lantana is a bit of a pain, but the group is using it to benefit the project as a whole.

The same can be said for the bitou bush at Long Reef Headland. Recent clearing there has adopted a mosaic pattern that leaves the weed in strips that serve to hold the soil, shelter newly planted themeda seedlings and provide habitat for the plethora of small birds and other critters that get about down there.

When it comes down to it, all you need to prevent overclearing, is a little bit of caution and forethought. If you need advice or a second opinion on where to clear next, you can always call your Council's Bushcare person, or speak to someone with more experience.

References: Bradley, J. 1988 [Bringing Back the Bush](#)

# Nervous ticks

It seems a bit redundant writing about ticks in this newsletter. But, it's coming up to that time of the year again.

You have probably noticed that it was a wet summer and a mild winter. Guaranteed the ticks noticed it as well. They are already active, in fact they didn't seem to slow down over winter.

Bill Conroy, the area's tick authority, reckons they can sense mammals from up to 10 metres, and will happily plunge from overhanging branches (just like drop bears) onto unsuspecting walkers / gardeners or anything that smells tasty.

Avoid them if you can, as repeated exposures can increase sensitivity and they can carry diseases.

Obviously, this is often more easily said than done, but here are a couple of tips (no responsibility taken):

- Surface spray (Mortein or whatever) on clothes, hat etc immediately before wearing.
- Soak clothes in permethrin solution over night, hang out to dry, then wear. This apparently lasts up to 5 washes.
- Apply repellent containing DEET especially to neck, waist and other areas that are especially attractive whenever you go outside.
- Try this chemical free repellent:  
100ml Witch hazel  
1 t lavender  
1 t citronella oil  
Dash of tea tree oil  
Dash of eucalyptus oil  
Dash of clove oil.  
*The proportions here are approximate. A bit of fine tuning may be necessary. Shake well before applying liberally.*
- Move to the inner city and take up renovating instead of regenerating.

## What's on (now – Nov)

### Aug 30

How to live Energy Smart Community Meeting. Coastal Environment Centre 6-8 pm. Ph Jane Baxter 9970 6905 for enquiries.

### Sep 1

Reefcare work day. Long Reef Point 8.45 – 12.00

OzGREEN planting day and not sausage sizzle. Opp Mobile Service Station Fisher Rd North 10.00am – 1.00.

### Sep 2

Friends of Warriewood Wetlands bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet end of Katoa Cl, Warriewood.

Friends of John Fisher Park picnic and tree planting. John Fisher Park Curl Curl.

### Sep 6

Northern Beaches Envirolink AGM 5.30-7.30 at the CEC

### Sep 14 – 16

Wheeler Creek Valley biodiversity survey. Day and night volunteers needed phone Judith Bennet for details 9905 2135.

### Sep 16

Friends of Dee Why Lagoon bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet Richmond Av.

### Sep 30

Lincoln Av Bushcare work day. Contact Jim Casimir for details 9942 2439

### Oct 3rd

Community Walk though Wheeler Creek Valley 10.00am phone Judith Bennet for details 9905 2135.

### Oct 6

Reefcare work day. Long Reef

Point 8.45 – 12.00

OzGREEN regeneration day. Opp Mobile Service Station Fisher Rd North 10.00am – 1.00.

### Oct 7

Friends of Warriewood Wetlands bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet end of Katoa Cl, Warriewood.

### Oct 21

Friends of Dee Why Lagoon bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet Richmond Av.

### Oct 28

Lincoln Av Bushcare work day. Contact Jim Casimir for details 9942 2439.

### Nov 3

Reefcare work day. Long Reef Point 8.45 – 12.00

OzGREEN bush regeneration. Opp Mobile Service Station Fisher Rd North 10.00am – 1.00.

### Nov 4

Friends of Warriewood Wetlands bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet end of Katoa Cl, Warriewood.

### Nov 18

Friends of Dee Why Lagoon bush regeneration 9.00-12.00 meet Richmond Av.

### Nov 25

Lincoln Av Bushcare work day. Contact Jim Casimir for details 9942 2439

### Nov 30

Warringah Friends of the bush end of year get together. Manly Dam 4.00-7.30pm. Call Jim Casimir for details 9970 2439.

For more details about any information in the newsletter, or to join in on any of the activities, or to contribute to, complain about or offer praise, call John Harkin Project Officer of Greenlink: Ph / fax 9970 8402 or email [greenlink@telstra.easymail.com.au](mailto:greenlink@telstra.easymail.com.au).