

Bushland Sub-Committee AGM Report 2022

The Bushland Sub-Committee of the School Board was established to manage the conservation and regeneration of the area of bush within the school grounds and to support the School staff in the development of educational and conservation programs that will actively engage students with the bushland.

The Sub-Committee, with the guidance of Gemma Broderick, developed a comprehensive Management Plan for the bushland which was initially adopted by the School Council in 2011. The Plan is updated annually and reviewed every 3 to 5 years. It is available to Association members through the School office. During 2021 the Bushland Management Plan was reviewed and an independent review was completed by David Pike. The current Plan was approved by the Board in December 2021.

Membership

The Sub-Committee is convened by a member of School Board and membership is open to all members of the School community. In 2022, the Sub-Committee was: Peter Cardy, Laila Miller, Ruth Bradley and Joy Chela.

Anyone interested in joining the Sub-Committee should speak to Laila Miller or leave their name at the School Office.

Regeneration program

The program — begun in 2015 with the upper and lower primary students — of regenerating native species in degraded areas of the bushland, continued in 2022.

In June 2022, under supervision by the Sub-Committee, approximately 30 lower primary and upper primary students planted 40 native plant seedlings in the retaining wall west of the Pre-Primary buildings and along the visitors' parking area in front of the School. Students also tended the retaining wall seedlings (weeding and watering) during 2022. In the upper primary classroom, a series of jobs are available which focuses on the native species planted and their characteristics.

Revegetation work conducted from 2015 to 2018 on the hardcourt banks continues to be informally monitored. No new plants have been planted in that area since 2019.

Sub-Committee members and volunteers watered all new plants during the warmer months (October 2021 through March 2022 and October 2022 through March 2023) to help improve survival rates. Thank you to all volunteers and their families who assisted.

School Bush Walks

The School hosted the annual series of bush walks during the second week in September 2022. Staff and students invited parents to walk the perimeter of the bushland along the firebreak and take the opportunity to identify plants and wildlife. These activities are supported by the Sub-Committee who maintain plant identification signs at various locations along the walk.

Grants

During 2022 the Bushland Sub-Committee planted native plants with the support of the Northern Suburbs Branch of the Wildflower Society of Western Australia, with its nursery located at Landsdale Farm. Thank you to Joy Chela, David Pike and the Society for their support.

During 2022 the Bushland Sub-Committee utilised funds received through the State Natural Resources Management Program (NRM) sponsored by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. This grant provided for weed control during 2021 and 2022. Thank you to NRM for their support.

Fire Protection

A hazard reduction burn took place in the School bushland on Saturday, 17 September 2022, under the guidance of the City of Joondalup Bushfire Risk Management Officer and was supervised by the City of Wanneroo Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer and volunteers. This hazard reduction burn removed an estimated 50-60% of the bushland fuel load. Hazard reduction burns take place every 7 to 10 years to reduce bushfire risk to the School and surrounding area. The last hazard reduction burn at the School's bushland took place in July 2013.

A contractor was engaged by the School in October 2022 to clear the firebreak and the area between the firebreak and the boundary fence. This included the removal of overhanging branches encroaching on the firebreak and the removal of substantial fallen branches/tree trunks.

Volunteer parents and staff attended a Busy Bee on 5 November 2022 to clear the Fire Safe Building area west of Pre-Primary. Thank you to the small but hard-working group of volunteers and their families who make these Busy Bees enjoyable and productive.

Weed Control

The ongoing program of weed control was continued in 2022 with the employment of a contractor during the July school holiday period to undertake the annual spraying of veldt grass. This preventative work was funded by NRM during 2021 and 2022. No other weed spraying was done in the bush during 2022.

During August and September 2022, the Bushland Sub-Committee supervised interested Upper Primary students in the removal of weeds along the east, south and west boundaries of the School bushland firebreak. Students were taught the names and identification of weed species. This program was carried on from 2021 and continues to be highly successful with much enthusiasm amongst students and a significant improvement in weed control and aesthetic of the bushland along the firebreak. Bushland Sub-Committee members also provided training to IB students to complete hand removal and disposal of invasive weeds in the School bushland during August and September 2022 as part of the IB students' service to the community.