



## Annual Report for 2020

### Summary

The past year was difficult due to the covid-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions and lockdown. Our AGM had to be deferred from April to October and several other activities were affected. Despite this, we continued with most of our ongoing activities connected with wetland appreciation, education, monitoring, management and revegetation. The focus of our work was through the Wetlands Centre Cockburn, where the Society is based.

### Highlights

- The 16th Wetlands Management Conference was held at the Jack Bendat Family Centre in Wembley on 31 January 2020 and was attended by 200 delegates.
- Revegetation work continued on the land damaged by the previous Government for the Roe Highway extension (Roe 8).
- The City of Cockburn commenced construction of the extensions to the wetlands precinct at Bibra Lake and it continued uninterrupted by the pandemic. The project is expected to be completed in May 2021.
- The Westport Taskforce report was released in November 2020 and it has recommended a new harbour in Cockburn Sound, near James Point. There will be no impact on the Beeliar Regional Park or Mt Brown. This site is the one that we supported and advocated.
- Most of the land in the Beeliar Regional Park that is vested in the Conservation Commission has been converted to Class A reserves.

### Disappointments

- The State Government failed to complete any new Ramsar nominations and the updated State Wetlands Conservation Policy was not released.
- The State Government introduced a Bill to amend the MRS to remove the Roe 8 reservation through the Beeliar wetlands, but it was blocked by the Opposition in the Legislative Council.
- The WA Planning Commission has deferred the release of the draft wetland buffer guidelines until after the 2021 State Election.
- The EPA approved of potash mining at Lake Disappointment, which is a major breeding site for the black-winged stilt. We lodged an appeal and the Minister made some minor improvements to the conditions of approval.
- The Water Corporation plans to construct a sewer through the Little Rush Lake reserve.
- The State Government appears to have abandoned the Strategic Assessment of the biodiversity and land use in the Perth and Peel Regions that was commenced by the previous government.

## Activities

Amongst the many activities that members were involved in this year were:

- The Beeliam and Jandakot Regional Park Community Advisory Committees.
- The Jandakot Groundwater Community Advisory Committee, the Roe 8 Rehabilitation Committee, Rethink the Link and the Bibra Lake Wetlands Precinct Committee.
- The Wetlands Coordinating Committee, the Australian Wetlands Network and the TEC19 and TEC33 Recovery Plan Committee.
- The WCS assisted with the planning and running of the 16th Wetlands Management Conference held at the Jack Bendat Family Centre on 31 January 2020.
- One General meeting and two Committee Meetings were held.
- Submissions were made on the proposed new harbour in Cockburn Sound, possible extensions to the Beeliam Regional Park, the proposal to mine potash in Lake Disappointment, proposals for new regional parks, including the proposed Yule Brook Regional Park, the proposed Ramsar nominations, the proposed mountain bike trails at Manning Park, the proposed Alfred Cove Bird Sanctuary and the review of the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.
- An excursion was held to Lake Mealup on 18 October 2020.
- Work continued, in collaboration with the City of Cockburn on the upgrading of the Woodland to Wetland Trail at Bibra Lake.
- The WCS supported the Friends of Southbank with their conservation project at Bibra Lake.

## Ongoing Issues

Some of the unfinished business that the Society will be working on in 2021 includes:

- Updating of the State Wetlands Conservation Policy
- Further Ramsar nominations of WA wetlands (Lake McLeod, tributaries of the lower Blackwood, Fortescue Marsh, Lake Carnegie, Brixton Street Wetlands)
- Proposals to expand the Regional Parks System (Lower Serpentine, Gngangara, Peel and Yule Brook)
- Completion of the wetland buffer guidelines
- Planning for the new harbour in Cockburn Sound
- Implementation of the Beeliam Regional Park Management Plan
- Deletion of Stage 8 of the Roe Highway from the MRS and revegetation of the damaged areas
- Further revegetation work at North and Bibra Lakes
- Enhancements to the Wetlands Centre and the local precinct

## Acknowledgements

- I would like to thank all members for their support last year. It was a difficult year, but we maintained a high level of activity due to a good team effort.
- The Committee Members for 2020 were Philip Jennings (President), Denise Crosbie (Vice President), Felicity Bairstow (Secretary), Rex Sallur (Treasurer), David James, Jeff Mengler, Robyn Pickering, Mark Hutchison, Doug McColl.
- Special thanks to Denise Crosbie and Rex Sallur for their outstanding work in coordinating the landcare and environmental education programs at the Wetlands Centre.

Philip Jennings  
President  
April 2021