

ANNUAL REPORT 2005

This report must start with our most devastating happening of 2005 - the death of Josephine Te Puni, resulting in a loss to this organisation that will be felt as long as her name remains alive among its members. Josephine was still at the height of her powers and more deeply involved than ever in the administration of PPG in all its aspects when struck down by cancer. Though she had made her arrangements to continue to the extent of her abilities during what she expected to be a convalescent period following her operation; it was not to be and she died in the early hours of Sunday morning, 6 November.

Now back to the beginning of 2005 which saw PPG already with the knowledge that, following determined efforts by Josephine, Lake McLarty would be accepted as the site in W.A. for the Shorebird project, through a \$20,000 grant from Canberra's Department of Environment and Heritage under the patronage of the World Wildlife Fund. Following a meeting of a steering group, comprising members of PPG, Conservation Council of W.A., City of Mandurah, CALM and Landcare, James Duggie (Cons. Council) was anticipated to be in charge of the project. Josephine passed to him two names of bird experts (recommended by Marcus Singor) who may be interested in being employed to undertake a survey and be instrumental in preparing an educational pamphlet for surrounding landowners and Shire of Murray, but he asked Josephine to take charge of the task. Consequently, Josephine met Bianca Priest (WWF), briefly over from Tasmania, in the afternoon of 3 February and was surprised to find that WWF expected the project finished by May, though PPG had only been advised three days prior! Fortunately Bianca Priest promised to apply for an extension. This left Josephine with the task of deciding on and drawing up a contract employing Bill Rutherford to do the survey, dealing with State Government departments, politicians and other organisations, plus what Josephine found to be necessary - appealing against planning decisions already in place - a huge and daunting task. Josephine managed all this, possibly to the detriment of her own health. Also she flew to Tullarmarine for a conference with WWF and co-ordinators of other Shorebird projects in other States. Additional funding is to be provided into 2006 to complete the project and a PPG sub-committee has been formed to carry on.

This was by no means PPG's first interest in Lake McLarty. For a very long time, Brian Bucktin had done water testing at the lake and new arrangements were tentatively in place for its continuance by Matt Williams, environmental instructor at Coodanup High School. Unfortunately, that did not happen and guess who (?) did the water testing - Josephine, wading out into the lake and delivering her samples for analysis to Dorothy Crook at Water and Rivers. PPG had participated with Pinjarra High School in the revegetation around the lake, with good results and Josephine was urging CALM to get on with establishing a Management Plan, which is now in place. The material for the production of the 20 page educational booklet is now in the hands of Perth Museum, delivered by Fiona O'Connor, who leads the sub-committee comprising Nancy Fardin, Maureen Campbell, Lyn Dickman (finance), Sybil Smith (communication) and Vic Beacham it has taken to replace Josephine.

All through 2005, PPG has protested at Mandurah being fobbed off for the loss of vegetation and wetland reserves resulting from clearing for the South-West Metro Rail by a degraded piece of land, already owned by the State Government at Karnup - not even within the area of loss in Mandurah - and against Government's own rules that mitigation should be like for like and within the area of loss. Judy Trembath and Shirley Joiner have been the dedicated leaders of this protest, in putting forward the alternative purchase of a stretch of land close to Marlee Wetland Reserve, up for sub-division into rural lots by Mirvac Fini. The area has been surveyed for its flora values by our own Marion Timms together with a S-W rail botanist and City of Mandurah has been requested to back PPG's pressure with some of its own. We are still hopeful that our voice will be heard, with support from Council and a little added pressure on the Minister from David Templeman.

Also way back in January, PPG received advice from the City that a Trust was to be established for Remnant Bushland Buy-back. We made enquiries as to the process of appointing the Trustees, because it was hinted that PPG would take part. To date we have not heard that nominations to the Trust have been called. This is clearly a project of keen interest and must be followed up early in 2006.

PPG is always scraping the bottom of the barrel to pay rental on our broom-cupboard size office in this building but is always thankful to be able to hold our meetings in this section. We did have a small stall

at Uniting Church one Saturday morning that raised \$133 and \$68 from the Creery walk, but are currently hopeful that now Peel Community Health is vacating the premises in Ormsby Terrace, that Council will open its heart and let organisations like ours, Mandurah Wildflowers , U3A, etc. benefit in having a better home and meeting place at low rental. Our committee member (Coral Richards) who is on the Arts Council is of the opinion that we have Buckley's hope, as they too have made an approach to Council and been privately advised their pockets will not be long enough.

Likewise the proposal for an Environmental Centre in Mandurah has died a natural death, reportedly because Mandurah lacks a champion like Bob Gooddale and, therefore, it is not a viable proposition.

The Minister for the Environment, Dr. Judy Edwards, announced late in December 2004 "Tuart Reserve to be Expanded". Later this was followed by Ecoscape's very complicated "Tools for Identifying Indicative High Conservation Woodlands". Again the area around Marlee Wetland Reserve was nominated by PPG. Nothing has come of that as far as we know. Funny, how these announcements are made with great fanfare and then the whole idea seems to die on the bush !

Apart from large issues, ordinary routine office and recording functions have to be carried out. Sybil Smith continues to be our very efficient Office Manager and Web Weaver; was away in China briefly in mid-year, and is very pleased with over 3,000 hits on our website www.green.net.au/ppg. Sybil, together with our Treasurer (Lyn) has been busy cooking up a grant application to Lottery West that should provide PPG with the most up-to-date computer/professional printer/scanner and fax equipment to dream about, plus a make-over for the website. In the meantime our Printer 'gave up the ghost' but those wonderful people "The Muscateers" came to our rescue and we are still in business. Keep your fingers crossed for a successful outcome to our grant application - if successful our old outdated stuff will go to "The Muscateers", who will recondition it and pass it to someone needy. Better still volunteer for office duty on Monday mornings then, if we get our Lotteries grant, you could have a happy time playing with it, between the not onerous duties of answering the phone and referring people to our website for environmental info they are after. Sybil had a "funny" happen recently - a woman from Denver, Colorado, emailed her enquiring if a species of toad was endangered or not? Sybil was quickly on to Google and there was the information with a picture of said toad right there in Denver, Colorado - quickly passed to the woman on the spot.

It was a very happy day when Marion Timms became a member of our committee. Her knowledge of native flora (always on the tip of her tongue - the Latin names just flow seemingly without effort) is so extensive, it takes your breath away and is of enormous advantage to PPG. Apart from that, Marion is not shy in expressing her opinion on planning projects and offering advice with regard to changes in management practises for reserves, public open space and parks. This is now being appreciated and sought after by Local Government and TAFE. If you didn't take part in the guided tour over the conservation area of Creery Wetlands last month, the opportunity will come up again in the New Year when suitable weather permits.

That is Vic Beacham behind the video camera there, recording events today and ever ready with his camera at meetings, bushland gatherings and in areas requiring attention - like the dumping of tyres causing fire and environmental hazards in a reserve area. His valuable historical knowledge of Peel is well known and frequently called upon. His long-time work to obtain justice for bore owners adjacent to the Port Mandurah canal development whose water has become too saline to use on their gardens is now complete but the lasting benefit to those adversely affected, leaves them in Vic's debt for evermore.

Peel Deviation, has been exercising the collective mind of PPG, Politicians and Council for many years. In the first instance "Is it necessary ?" and PPG found the answer to be "No" in that S-W Highway could be updated instead, thus saving large tracts of productive farmland, pristine bush and wetland. A small PPG sub-committee with Nancy Fardin and Fiona O'Connor in the lead and expert support from Marion Timms has put on pressure to change the proposed route of the southern section since it became evident that Main Roads will go ahead with it, and instead of adhering to an earlier route plan, now propose to go through bushland instead of through a pine plantation already partly cleared, excavating a hill to a depth of 10 metres, with wide batters to accommodate it, thus taking large tracts of excellent bushland. Meetings with politicians (David Templeman and Sally Talbot), a site walk with Kim Hames (opposition member for Dawesville) and we were even successful and interesting Vic Sememiuk in our efforts. He has had a long-standing academic interest in the area, was interesting to listen to and gave us the benefit of his advice. Kevin Strapp has agreed to speak with Mr. Sememiuk, but Main Roads is well known for its arrogance, has made past mistakes - like the damage caused when building the Polly Farmer Freeway. However, PPG will pursue this matter vigorously to its conclusion in an endeavour to

get it right.

The Draft Foreshore Focus 2020 plan is about to be presented to the Mandurah community for its comment, closing on 3 March. By now the public consultation meetings will be over. PPG's aim is to retain the environmental values of the foreshore. We have already lobbied hard, addressed Council Meetings and will continue our campaign in this regard, led by the embattled Judy Trembath.

If you haven't read the latest edition of 'Preservation Times' do so. It has eight pages full of interesting reading and not an advertisement in sight - a publication triumph and a credit to contributors, Fiona's editing and design, not forgetting the end work of photocopying and stapling.

I have left out a heap of problems PPG has had to face during 2005 to fulfil our purpose in protecting the Peel environment, in order to keep the length of this report within bounds, but there is still an important matter about to come to a head. That is the latest proposal for Lots 400 and 440 Wanjeep Road. PPG has tried to have this area on the banks of Serpentine River declared the Kings Park of Mandurah and saved for posterity because of its central position and the high quality of its flora. I call on all present here today to put pen to paper and take part in community comment on the proposal as soon as it is advertised by Council. As a member of MEAC (Mandurah Environmental Advisory Group) as well as PPG, I fortunately will be in a position to have input.

I have been secretary of PPG for twelve years and am retiring as of this meeting but will, of course, remain a member. It has been a demanding, frustrating, but sometimes rewarding position. Thank you for having me.

Kathleen Malta