

# ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

Compiled by Fiona O'Connor

Presented by Judy Trembath

## Introduction

The past year has been varied in activities and events for PPG members and supporters - a veritable palette of enthusiasm, incredible effort and real dedication. As pointed out in previous years, it is still amazing just how much a few people can achieve in their work to preserve our environment in the Peel Region.

Once again, PPG committee members have helped influence decision makers on the environmental front, and eagerly informed their members and the wider community about the absolute need to ensure the biodiversity...that we are so lucky to have around us...is preserved in the future.

I will acknowledge long-time campaigners on specific projects a bit later, but please keep in mind while you listen to this report that around a dozen people collectively put in hundreds of hours of work each year writing submissions, organising talks, mounting displays at events, fundraising, attending seminars, liaising with other environmental and community organisations, and representing the PPG on local and State Government committees and working groups....not much really!!

## Activities

- **Highlights of the Year**
- **Workshops/Conferences/Seminars/Events**
- **Submissions**
- **Grants**
- **Special Mentions**
- **The Future**

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## Highlights of the Year

### **Guest Speaker Series Continued**

The PPG, in partnership with the City of Mandurah, has continued this important guest speaker series that was started two years ago.

Our first guest speaker was Mandurah MLA David Templeman who kindly spoke at the 2006-07 Annual General Meeting about WARR...not the Iraq War, which is in the news so much, but Waste and Resource Recovery, which should be in the news more - especially in WA - as David stated that West Australians are the highest consumers and producers of waste in the world. Being the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change at the time, David also spoke about upcoming climate change bills, and the need for sustainable development and water conservation.

In April, we invited Capel Councillor and climate change advocate Kingsley Gibson to remind a packed Tuckey Room of the need to address climate change issues now. His talk was a riveting one in which he emphasised that the worst-case scenario was already at the world's doorstep and that more serious work had to be done at all levels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, especially by using renewable energy.

But Kingsley also used much of his lecture to talk about practical ways we could all become more

energy efficient in our homes, our offices, and our transport choices. It was an impassioned lecture and really jolted those of us, who thought we were being quite sustainable, into doing a lot more.

### **'The Power of Community'**

A wonderful and inspiring movie 'The Power of Community – How Cuba Survived Peak Oil' also backed up this sustainability message strongly when the PPG, in association with the City of Mandurah and Reading Cinemas, organised a special screening in early August. This movie illustrated the beauty of self-help, when the whole Cuban community pulled together to overcome the near catastrophic effects of a 34 per cent drop in Gross Domestic Product and 80 per cent fall in imports, including oil, and exports following the break-up of the Soviet Union.

The status quo had to be rethought and many alternative sources of energy and food production had to be utilised, with permaculture coming to the fore. WA resident Sue Hartley, who was involved in some of the permaculture projects in Cuba during this time, also gave a short talk following the movie. Thanks to Brian Bucktin for showing the PPG a DVD of the movie, which led to the special screening. People also enjoyed the light meal which we provided. We plan to have another film soon.

### **Getting the message out at Crab Fest**

Part of our strategy to get the sustainability and environmental preservation messages out there is to promote them at special functions and events. The PPG has taken up promoting the environmental preservation of the Peel Region at the annual Crab Fest, held by the City of Mandurah every March.

Being the largest regional festival in WA, this event has previously attracted about 60,000 people – both residents and visitors – over the two-day festival. However, the advent of the train increased the visitor numbers this year by another 25,000 or more so the PPG was able to take advantage of distributing information about our precious local environment to a lot more people than in previous years.

This also meant that we had more opportunity to attract more people to sign the Sustainability Pledge, which details 10 immediate and simple actions anyone can take to start reducing greenhouse gas emissions now. Residents and visitors alike were also very interested and concerned about the Bridgewater North highrise development proposal, which presents risks to the foreshore and to the osprey nest only 24 metres from a proposed two-storey block of units.

### **Conservation Council Awards**

The PPG nominated PPG Committee Marion Timms to be added to the 2008 Honours List as part of the Conservation Council of WA Environment Awards this year, so we were very pleased when Marion received an award for her tireless work and dedication to the restoration of degraded bushland and wetlands.

That same evening, the City of Mandurah's Coordinator EcoServices Jane O'Malley (also nominated by the PPG) received the John Oldham Conservation Employee Award for her long-term commitment and work to achieve a more sustainable community Australian Day Awards

It was also a great thrill when Vic Beacham was announced the City of Mandurah's 2008 recipient of the Premier's Australia Day Active Citizenship Award for his active commitment to preserving the environment for future generations by continually highlighting unsustainable practices by developers and even the three tiers of Government.

### **Invitation to speak at an international conference**

We were delighted to receive an invitation late last year from the International Association of Environment Impact Assessment to present a paper at the association's conference in Perth in May. This was a unique opportunity for the PPG to highlight some of the problems with the environmental impact assessment process in Western Australia.

After much consultation, the PPG decided that the fight to save the Creery Wetlands in the 1990s and the subsequent decision to allow canal development on them would be the best example to present to the conference. Griselda Hitchcock and Beryl Francis who had been leading members in the cause prepared the paper. Beryl represented the PPG at the conference and gave a very detailed, passionate and articulate presentation of the decade-long community fight to save the Creery Wetlands, which generated much interest and follow-up questions.

Thanks Beryl for her effort and also to John Devlin from Guelf University near Toronto in Canada for inviting the PPG to present this significant case study to the conference, which attracted 800 delegates from across the world.

### **Workshops/Conferences/Seminars/Events**

PPG members attended the following during 2007-08

- Guest speaker talks with Mandurah MLA David Templeman, Kingsley Dixon, and Susan Hartley
- Crab Fest stall and Sustainability Pledge
- Tuart Recovery Workshop at the Lake Clifton-Herron Community Centre to demonstrate to local landowners ways in which they could participate in a trial to assist the recovery of stressed tuart trees
- A community lecture on Ramsar Wetlands at the Peel Waterways Centre and another workshop at the centre to discuss the Draft Water Quality Improvement Plan
- Launch of the Lake McLarty Management Plan
- A workshop on Acid Sulphate Soils
- A meeting to support local efforts to exclude boats from areas of the estuary to help protect birds
- An information session at the Lake Clifton Herron Community Centre on the proposal to extend the limestone quarry at Lot 5 Old Coast Road
- A FRAGYLE information forum at Preston Beach where first hand information was received from scientists, researchers and leading representatives from Government Departments on topics relating to Ramsar Wetlands and their significance, hydrology of the Yalgorup Lakes area, geo-heritage values of the Yalgorup Lakes System, the health of the Tuart forest and the Lake Clifton thrombolites
- Deputations to Council on the Bridgewater North proposal on the need for increased setbacks to wetlands and lower building heights
- Deputation to CoM on need to preserve bushland on Lot 9025 Parklands and to consider it for the Bush Buyback Scheme
- Site visit with Southern Gateway Alliance to proposed Mandurah Entrance Road
- Attending New Metro Rail Committee meetings over a period of 5 years.

### **Submissions**

PPG members wrote many submissions during the year, including:

- A proposal to quarry sand and limestone on Lot 22 Old Coast Road between Timbers Edge and Parkridge
- A proposal to quarry limestone on Lot 5 Old Coast Road, Herron
- The Bridgewater North development proposal
- The Draft Water Quality Improvement Plan for the Peel-Harvey Estuary
- The Draft Inner Mandurah Precinct Plan
- State of Play
- Mandurah Entrance Road suggestion for mitigation for impinging on wetland buffer and destruction of hundreds of mature trees including in Marlee Reserve.

### **Grants**

- During the past year, the PPG was successful in receiving a City of Mandurah Community Assistance Grant to help print our newsletter "The Preservation Times".
- A grant from Lotterywest to update The Waterbirds of Goegrup and Black Lakes in the Peel Inlet Region publication.

### **Special Mentions**

Thanks should go to all PPG Committee Members for their work during the year but special mention goes to the following:

- Nancy Fardin, Coral Richards, Judy Trembath and Lyn Dickman for the writing, editing, copy tasting and production of The Preservation Times – PPG's Newsletter – over the year.
- Vic Beacham for his continued work to clean up dumped tyres, groundwater water monitoring and his push to have covenants banning the use solar hot water heaters on roofs in some housing developments overturned.
- Marion Timms for her informative walks through the Creery Wetlands, bushland reserves and her continued work on vegetation surveys and revegetation management plans. Marion also helps with submission writing and catering for special events.
- Shirley Joiner for carrying on two very labour intensive roles of secretary and tending to the PPG office, especially with the additional task of updating the PPG website.
- Lyn Dickman for her continued dedication to PPG in her role as treasurer
- Maureen and Ross Campbell for always being ready to lend a hand.
- Fiona O'connor for her expertise on computers.
- Lyn Frings for joining the team with lots of experience and enthusiasm.
- A very warm welcome to Mr Dave Thomas for joining the team.

The PPG would also like to acknowledge the work of the City of Mandurah's EcoServices section, particularly Jane O'Malley, Lisa Wray and Shane Kearney – it was sad to see Shane leave the City recently - for their continued support of the PPG's mission to preserve the natural qualities of the Peel-Harvey Catchment and Estuary.

Others to thank for their support and assistance are FoRPeel, Men Of The Trees, Friends of Island Point and Friends of Lake Clifton, Canoe Trail Friends of Mandurah and Pinjarra, Mandurah Wildlife Rescue Group, Friends of Marlee Reserve and lake Mealup Preservation Society.

## **The Future**

As usual, the future is always full of challenges and opportunities. The PPG will continue to liaise and network with other environmental groups, lobby all tiers of Government, support individuals and community groups with hopefully some younger members as our ranks are starting to thin.

Issues that will require our dedication and energy in the future include:

- Climate Change and How to Act on It
- A continued watching brief on the New Perth-Bunbury Highway and Road A or Mandurah Entrance Road.
- The Network City idea to link up with other environmental groups in WA
- Production of a booklet on Lake Clifton once we obtain funding
- Draft Peel-Harvey Water Quality Improvement Management Plan and its implementation
- Preservation of Caddadup Reserve Bushland
- Eastport Canal Development – Stage 5
- Mining and Quarry developments in the Peel Region, especially the Lot 5 Old Coast Road in Herron and Lot 22 Old Coast Road in Dawesville.
- Amarillo or Keralup as it has been renamed.
- Recruitment drive for the PPG – we really need younger members on board
- Better linkage and co-ordination with other local environmental groups in Peel region.
- Continuing our goal of including Geogrup Lakes in the listed Ramsar Treaty.
- Continue to work with other groups to preserve the health of lake McClarty and other freshwater lakes east of the Estuary.

## **Other development threats**

Over the past year, the PPG has also been involved in meetings on, discussions and/or writing submissions on the following developments, which the group considers inappropriate for a number of reasons, including development on proximity to sensitive wetlands (the kidneys of our ecosystems),

health issues, acid sulphate soils, and pressures on estuarine or riverine ecosystems.

These include:

- Point Grey and the Satterley development – South Yunderup in the Shire of Murray
- Clifton Beach – Cape Bouvard Investments – City of Mandurah and Shire of Waroona
- Preston Beach – Satterley & Mirvac in Shires of Waroona and Harvey
- Melros Beach – Port Bouvard proposal

Thank you for coming today and we hope to see most of you during the following year.

Thankyou

Judy Trembath, Nancy Fardin and Fiona O'Connor