

PPG Annual Report - November 2009

Another year has flown by with the dedicated team at Peel Preservation Group finding many opportunities to care for and fight for our precious natural environment.

We did, however, give ourselves a holiday in January as the scheduled meeting day (the first Thursday of the month) was New Year's Day. Dedication did not extend quite that far!

PPG has had another busy, and hopefully fruitful, year.

We held a major display at Crabfest where we distributed information, gave out pamphlets, displayed photographs and generally spread the environmental message. We shared our space with Fur & Feathers Wildlife Rescue and Release. Next display was the FRAGYLE (Friends of Ramsar Action Group for the Yalgorup Lakes Environment) – so made a “Green” spot on the foreshore.

Members have been involved in making nine formal submissions - starting with the Water Quality Improvement Plan late last year; comment concerning 207 Park Homes at lake Clifton (imagine our reaction); Southwest Wetlands Watch; comment on the City Precinct Plan; supporting the classification of the Thrombolites as a threatened environment; comment on coastal issues from Dawesville to Binningup; planning documents including Directions 2030 and Perth to Peel 2031; and finally the Foreshore Management Plan for section of Mariners Cove. Besides that, many letters and e-mails expressing our views on a range of (mainly) local environmental issues and matters have been sent.

Attending Conferences has always been a great way to keep up with the latest information. We regret that some are priced out of our budget so have been grateful for (complimentary) inclusion to those hosted by City of Mandurah, including the Australian Coastal Councils Forum.

Briefings or information sessions with various developers and planners have enabled us to hear the plans “from the horse's mouth” , make comment at the time and have a better understanding of the situation when preparing submissions.

We always appreciate the good relationship with our local State and Federal politicians and have met with David Templeman and Sally Talbot as regularly as their busy schedules allow. Both have a proven love of the environment and can ask searching questions where it counts most!

There have been highs and lows in the past year.

With the intention of engaging young people and bring the environment into the spotlight, we applied for and received a Community Assistance Grant from City of Mandurah, for the purpose of building a Christmas Pageant Float. The students at Coodanup Community College are partnering with us – busily welding, shaping and hammering – to make a pedal powered, environmentally friendly float. As the project develops we are looking forward to some innovative decoration as well. There is a suggestion that the Corellas we made for “Stretch” may be re-used or, perhaps we should say, given a new life. Perhaps the ultimate recycling...?

Peel Area Consultative Council (now Regional Development Australia) granted us funds to enable connection to Broadband, purchase of a website editing tool and to pay for some training. It is amazing how much easier the fast internet makes our communication tasks – we love it. We are gradually working towards a new look website, whilst retaining useful older information in our archives page.

Lotterywest have provided us with a substantial amount to cover the cost of updating the “Bird Count” statistics in the PPG publication “The Waterbirds of Goegrup and Black Lakes”. Waterbird surveys have taken place every ten years since 1989 with present raw data being collected by Dick Rule and his team from Mandurah Birdwatchers. This updated report is due to be released in 2010.

Judy Trembath, a highly respected member and industrious worker retired last year and we farewelled her at a December afternoon tea held at Marion's lovely house overlooking the estuary. Mayor Paddi Creevey and Jane O'Malley also attended and acknowledged Judy's dedication and her achievements.

We welcomed Dave Thomas to our ranks. His input is greatly appreciated. As a Parklands resident his knowledge has been invaluable when dealing with matters of the Mandurah Entrance Road and Marlee Reserve.

Some of our members got "arty" and manufactured "larger than life" paper corellas for the Stretch Festival. They were equipped with suitcases and backpacks to emphasise their "Tourist" status, though I fear "environmental refugees" is a better title – looking for a better place to live! Their efforts raised a substantial amount of funds for the group – well done!

PPG joined in the celebration of the Purchase of City of Mandurah's second Bushland block at Dawesville in April and at the presentation in June of Peel Harvey Catchment Council's launch of their DVD "Birds of the Peel-Yalgorup". Mayor Paddi Creevey narrates this is an interesting and informative short movie. We regret the reduction of funding to Peel Harvey Catchment Council and hope there will be another "print run" of the DVD.

Meetings have taken place with DEC officers regarding the construction of a birdhide at Lake McLarty as a memorium to the late Josephine Te Puni. We expect plans will be completed ready for application for funding early in the new year.

Our disappointments include discovering that the Osprey pairs in the area have not had a good breeding record this season, with the death of several chicks. WE were also disappointed that we could not prevail to alter the extent of the clearing for the Mandurah Entrance Road, or its timing to allow the baby birds to leave the nests. Without the efforts of several dedicated wildlife carers (our own Linda Frings and husband John included) and Michelle Mularkey (employed at that time by the construction group) rescuing and transporting the eggs and nestlings, the outcome would have been even worse.

Last year we held two Lectures – one by Eddy Wajon, Conservation Council representative on the Perth Bunbury Highway, giving us an update on its environmental aspects. The other was an inspirational but timely (scary) warning about Marine Debris by Wally Smith. We intend to resume our Lecture Series next year with Andrew Brown, one of the co-authors (together with Kingsley Dixon), speaking about their recently publishing book about orchids.

Those of you who receive the quarterly Preservation Times will know that I have mentioned but a few of the issues – those who don't get a newsletter need to 'sign up' and get involved!

Without our hard-working and dedicated members Peel Preservation Group would not function and I fear the Peel would be a poorer place if we did not. I wish to thank each and every member (especially the committee) for their outstanding effort.

You will, perhaps notice that long standing member Fiona O'Connor; our "flora expert" Marion Timms and the "Waroona/FRAGYLE connection" Laurie Snell are not standing for re-election. We acknowledge Fiona's tremendous contribution, especially her editing of the newsletter where her wealth of knowledge was invaluable. Marion's identification of the local flora has been a great asset – we are ever in awe of the way the Latin names just roll off her tongue. Laurie's input on the southernmost extent of our Peel region has been a great help. Our thanks go to each of these members and we do recognise that sometimes there is just enough time to do everything we would like to.

I also would point out that there is always room for more 'like-minded' helpers – so don't be shy to offer your services or comments.