

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2006

NUMBER 12

Editor: Peter Bird

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## President's page

A chorus of bird calls has helped to make the recent working bees very enjoyable. In addition it's been great to see Buff-rumped Thornbills and a family of Superb Blue Wrens. Also spotted were a Tawny Frogmouth and in a tree hollow near the working bee table a pair of Musk Lorikeets.

Lower down amongst the understorey, a multitude of small copper-tailed skinks have been wriggling through the grass and along fallen branches. A larger rapidly retreating snake was also seen, the first one that I'm aware of this season. There have also been more frequent sightings of kangaroos in the reserve usually early or late in the day near Leafhopper Gully.

Your committee strives to give something back to our supportive membership and in this spirit two special members' events are being organised. A *Spotlighting Evening* may see the kangaroos but is more likely to track down possums, bats and owls as well as other species of interest. Thanks to Peter Bird for leading this and also thanks to Peter Lang for offering to take the forthcoming *Wildflower Walk*. Regardless of the season there will be many things of botanical interest to amuse and amaze us.

The lack of rain has meant that the little spring adjacent to the track in Wild Dog Glen has not flowed this year. But just uphill the plants put in by Sue Durand and her family are thriving. Thanks to all involved, and also to all of the helpers on the working bees. There really is quite a difference being made by both the Friends and the work crews under the supervision of Stephen Wait and Grant Joseph.

The spring working bees are a great time to enjoy the Reserve and there are always a variety of tasks and people to meet. Stephen and Grant's organisation and Annette and Andy Baker's BBQs continue to add to the success of the working bees.

A special thanks is also due to all of the growers of seedlings. These have been germinated from seeds collected in the Reserve and it's very pleasing to see the increased number of seedlings planted over the winter and spring months. Your committee is organizing a depot of potting mix, tubes, boxes, etc. to help members raise more seedlings for next year. If you would like to be part of this please let us know at a working bee or contact me on 8338 4443.

Grant Joseph has also been busy mapping the plant associations and collecting soil and botanical data from the reserve as he compiles information for a revegetation plan. We hope to have some preliminary results available for members to see at the *Wildflower Walk*.

All members are invited to join other Friends of the Waite Reserve, Friends of the Waite Arboretum and the Friends of Urrbrae House for Christmas drinks on Monday evening 4 December. This is a good opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the year and to acknowledge the work that has been done. You would be most welcome and I hope you can come along and enjoy this as well as the other members' events over spring and summer.

Chris Kaczan

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## ***More volunteers needed for Working Bees***

There is a loyal [but rather small] group of members who are regular participants at the working bees on the Reserve.

The Committee would like to involve more members in this activity, and so we extend an invitation to you to join in. We meet at 9 am and conclude at about 12.45 pm, alternating between 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday mornings. Remaining working bees for this year are:

Sat Sept 2	Sun Sept 17*
Sat Oct 7	Sun Oct 15
Sat Nov 4	Sun Nov 19
Sat Dec 2	

(\* followed by wildflower walk)

We carry out a range of tasks, principally removing exotic weeds, of which the olive is one of the most widespread and invasive, but by no means the only one.



*David Kaczan tackles an olive*

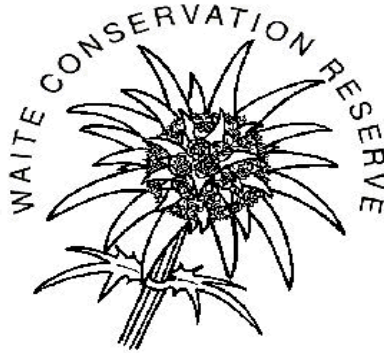


*Grant Joseph adds to the revegetation effort*

The work is not physically strenuous. There is a pleasant social time at the end of each session when members share a sausage sizzle, which is provided without charge as a 'thank you' to workers.

We are planning to conduct regular surveys of plant species at key monitoring points, and there may be opportunities for members to be trained to participate in this new activity.

If you would like to ask questions about joining in, or would like to be met and introduced to the activities instead of arriving alone, please contact our Secretary, Joe Haslam on 8271 2660. We warmly invite your involvement.



## **Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve Inc.**

*cordially invite you to a*

# ***Spring Wildflower Walk***

**12-00 Noon Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

Spring is a delightful time in the Reserve with many native species in flower. Enjoy a walk along easy tracks looking at some of the springtime colour and beauty on display. Find out some of the secrets of the bush from experienced botanist Dr Peter Lang.

### **Details**

- We invite you to enjoy a sausage sizzle with members of the Friends group who have been working in the Reserve during the morning (see Working Bees on p.2).
- A botanical display including some wonderful '*Wildflower Cards*' will be available for your perusal and for sale.
- The guided walk starts shortly afterwards and gives you the opportunity to see some of the more interesting parts of the reserve
- We will conclude around 2-30pm.
- All transport from the meeting place will be organised by the Friends group and to help facilitate this and the catering please register your interest by emailing Joe at [haslamparkside@optusnet.com.au](mailto:haslamparkside@optusnet.com.au) or please return the form below.
- Meet at "Garretts Gate" near Eagle on the Hill, a map will be sent to all participants upon registering.

### **All welcome**

Enquiries: Joe 8271 2660, Chris 8338 4443

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YES, I will attend the Members' Wildflower Walk, accompanied by ..... guests and..... children.

Member's name and address

.....  
.....P/code.....

Please post to Joe Haslam, 9 Anglo Ave, Parkside 5063

## ***President's report 2005-06 – Chris Kaczan***

***“In the end our society will be defined, not only by what we create but by what we refuse to destroy.”*** John C. Sawhill, the late President of the Nature Conservatory.

We can get a lot of satisfaction from working in a patch of tranquil bush as found up in the Waite Reserve. Whether it's observing lizards on rocks or the butterflies attracted to the hilltop flowers or watching a pair of musk lorikeets checking out a nesting hollow, it all gives us a sense of joy.

The vegetation now standing on the first line of hills overlooking suburbs and freeways has had to contend with a number of challenges in the past. Sheep, cattle, fires and the pressures of clearing and feral plants and animals have all had an impact, but a lot of the vegetation has been resilient. More than 270 species of native plants are still growing less than 10 kilometres from the centre of a capital city.

The less disturbed parts of the Waite Reserve are real gems in that they give us an insight into the nature of the country in times gone past. Other larger sections of the reserve need more rehabilitation. They are benefiting from the removal of the ubiquitous olive and the natural regeneration is being helped along with some replanting.

The future challenges of a warming world are only just being perceived but it is likely that a healthy ecosystem freed from the competitive effects of choking weeds will be in a better position to withstand future impacts. So in addition to the personal benefits and satisfaction, the working bees provide an opportunity to both preserve a bit of the past and to perhaps toughen up the present so that it might be better prepared for whatever the future brings.

The working bees continue to be a major part of the committee's activities. Last year 13 working bees were held involving more than 30 members. As a result more than 300 hours of work were donated to help the Reserve.

The capable organisation by Stephen Wait and Grant Joseph has contributed significantly to the success of the working

bees. Newsletters and Working Bee Bulletins have continued to provide communication between Friends of the reserve. Andy and Annette Baker's ongoing donation of a BBQ and hot drinks is a highlight of the working bees and is very much appreciated.

The committee has continued to foster the growing of native plants from locally collected seeds. With the increase in the number of seedlings raised, the committee is mindful of the need for a revegetation plan that outlines the most appropriate species for each section of the reserve. Grant Joseph has been busy doing preliminary vegetation mapping and we appreciate his efforts towards a final revegetation plan.

While we are having an impact on the olives and other weeds, not all of us have the time or the physical ability to actively participate in the working bees. Nevertheless this work can still be supported by membership of the Friends group and/or by contributing donations towards the practical work in the Reserve. I'd like to publicly record our appreciation for the donations given to the Friends group. This money is used to purchase equipment, signs, and most recently we have earmarked \$1000 to go towards a revegetation plan for the Reserve.

The committee is also working on an Adopt-a-Patch proposal which will enable interested individuals to look after their own small patch of the Reserve over the longer term.

While our activities are focused primarily on the protection and rehabilitation of the reserve we have also provided comment on broader issues by contributing a submission to the Senate Inquiry into Australia's National Parks and Reserves System. A major thrust of our submission was that a continued effort was needed to protect the long term biodiversity values of our reserves.

In conclusion the Friends has had a successful year and I am indebted to all the committee members and I sincerely thank all the volunteers for their dedication and achievements in the Waite Conservation Reserve this year. Thank you.



# Spotlight on the Reserve

*If you've only ever visited Waite Reserve in daylight, you've only experienced half the story. Most of the reserve's mammals, and assorted birds, lizards, frogs and invertebrates only do their thing when the sun goes down.*

*Join the committee for a sunset cuppa and cake (everything supplied) then take to the bush with biologist Peter Bird for a walk on the dark side as he puts the spotlight on the night creatures of the bush.*

**Date:** Friday 20 October

**Time:** 7.00 pm sharp at the gate. Walk time 7.45 – 9.15 pm

**Location:** Meet at "Springwood Park" gate (ex-Andrew Garrett's) – the first driveway on the right, off the Eagle on the Hill Road (old freeway) coming from the city. (People will be ferried from there in a lesser number of vehicles).

**Bring:** warm clothing & sturdy non-slip footwear, torch & binoculars

**For more information:** Peter Bird 8352 3046 or [bird.peter@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:bird.peter@saugov.sa.gov.au)

## ADOPT-A-PATCH BUSHCARE

The patches are identified and the protocols are written. After a long gestation, the Adopt-a-Patch Bushcare scheme is ready... well, almost! All we need now are a few unsuspecting WCR Friends to road-test the scheme before it is unleashed on the wider public.

To refresh your memory, 'Adopt-a-Patch' is simply volunteer bushcarers (you) undertaking ecological restoration work in your own nominated part of the reserve at your own pace and time, rather than as part of a formal working bee.

You need a partner in crime so as to work safely in pairs, so either nominate a friend or we can match you up with someone.

Get in early if you have a favourite or conveniently located part of the reserve you wish to adopt. Once on board, we'll visit your patch with you to run through some basics to help you safely care for it.

Sign up now. Contact Jennifer Gardner at [jennifer.gardner@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:jennifer.gardner@adelaide.edu.au) or 8303 7405.

## JOE'S JOURNEYS

Our Secretary Joe Haslam and his wife Barbara have recently returned from a holiday in France and Switzerland. He has jotted down a few recollections.

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It has been terribly hot this European summer. While we were there, London recorded 36 degrees, the hottest July temperature ever. Cities like Munich, Vienna and Zurich have had several weeks of temperatures in the range of 30 to 33 degrees, which is most unusual.

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Very few commercial buildings, and almost no private homes and apartments, have air-conditioning. This has given rise to a lot of comment in the newspapers and the TV over there about the onset of global warming. The evidence is certainly mounting. One report suggested that, of the 10 hottest years ever recorded, seven have occurred since 1980. That's a bit frightening.

We did some hiking in the Swiss Alps near Interlaken, at an altitude of 2100 metres, which is above the tree-line. The spring flowers made a brilliant carpet. I now know where the deep blue colour of "gentian blue" gets its name – we had pointed out to us the two alpine species of gentian – the common trumpet shape, and a rarer, smaller one in the shape akin to a *Vittadinia* flower.

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The most brilliant colour was shown by the buttercup, or *Ranunculus* which grew in great profusion across the alpine grassland. And the odd thing was, the shape, size and varnish-like sheen of the flower looked identical to the examples of the native Australian plant *Ranunculus lappaceus* which is just coming into bloom in the Adelaide Hills.

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And yet the climates of the two sites are so utterly different!