



Friends of Lake Claremont



Claire Brittain enjoying Lake Claremont

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GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BRITTAIN RULES AGAIN

Claire Brittain, volunteer and FOLC grants officer, has worked her magic again winning two more grants for planting projects that will take place at Lake Claremont in 2016.

The first is a community grant of \$25,000 funded by the Western Australian Government's State Natural Resources Management (NRM) Program. This is for the "*Extension of Revegetation to the northern and eastern boundaries of Lake Claremont to restore Indigenous Woodland*". The WA Government received 225 applications from across the state. A total of 98 projects were recommended for full or partial funding valued at over \$7.8 million.

► *Story continued on following page.*



Australian Government
Department of the Environment

The second is for \$20,000 awarded by the Commonwealth Department of Environment under the 25th Anniversary Landcare Grants 2014-15 for “*The Lake Claremont Remnant Bushland Infill Project*”. The FOLC hope to further restore the understory and groundcover in the bushland which is still lacking in health.

Since 2009, the FOLC have won grants totaling \$471,650!

IN BLOOM THIS MONTH

Jointed Rush (*Baumea articulata*)

This flowering rush is so named because of its articulated or jointed stems. The rushes provide a good habitat for birds.



ANOTHER FAMILIAR FACE



Congratulations David

With great pleasure (and apologies to David for not including him last month) we advise that FOLC member David Free is also a Face of Claremont. He is recognised for his role in the quarterly bird population surveys of Lake Claremont (which he has been doing since 2001) and as a member of the Town’s Lake Claremont Committee.

David provides us with the bird photo and text for our newsletter each month and at the end of October last year led a guided bird walk around the lake.

Photos of FOLC David Free, Heidi Hardisty and Joan Tock now appear on the wall of the new Council building on Stirling Hwy.



OUR BIRDS

Buff-banded Rail (*Gallirallus philippensis*)

This beautifully marked bird is another Lake Claremont speciality. It is very secretive and prefers to stay in, or close to the margins of reed beds, so it is not easily seen. Following the removal of the bulrush it has taken up residence close to the eastern shore. It can sometimes be seen on the shoreline of the western island. Early in the day is the best time to find it, as it forages for delicacies. Apparently it enjoys our lake; we have breeding records for the past two seasons.

Buff-banded Rail. David Free

Interestingly, this normally very shy species has a bold group on Penguin Island, where they scavenge around the picnic ground!

Photo and text by David Free.

New Breeding Record at Lake Claremont - Spotless Crake

In early January a couple reported seeing juvenile Spotless Crakes at Lake Claremont. Soon after David Free took these photos of two juveniles and an adult carrying food for them. David reported that he sat quietly for over an hour to take these shots as the birds are shy and very fast; just as well because the ravens were keenly interested in the young!



MONTHLY BUSY BEES

December

Norma Hay led the troops clearing out Blackberry Nightshade and other weeds along the lake edge west of Cresswell Oval to the bird look out. She welcomed a group of year 12 students from Scotch College involved in the International Baccalaureate Diploma program. Thanks to Bailey Banfield who is coordinating his fellow school mates to attend the monthly Busy Bees. We're grateful for the extra help!

January

We had a productive start to the year with 13 people attending. We got the first coat of paint on 6 bat boxes that Scotch College had previously donated. The boxes will be installed in the parkland adding to the existing 13 boxes to encourage more micro-bats to nest. A single bat can eat up to 1000 mosquitoes a night.

We also did some weeding preparing the ground near the old shed for planting later this year. We found more than a dozen Caltrop just south of the shed, a nasty weed with very spiny fruits that can easily pierce bicycle tires. We then moved along and weeded the entire wetland buffer from the east side of the lake to the Stirling Road Park and back up to the remnant bushland along the south west bank of the lake. The number of weeds are very low this time of year in part due to the dry conditions but also because of the well-executed TOC weed management plan!



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH CLAIRE BRITTAIN

I am a great believer in Community Service and after resigning from the board of another Not for Profit Organisation I volunteered as a Community Representative on the Lake Claremont Committee (Town of Claremont). Here I met Heidi! At that time the organisation was informal and she had limited help apart from working bees. I didn't know much about Lake Claremont and I'm a poor gardener so I offered to do the administration. I have a Commerce Degree from UWA. The Friends of Lake Claremont had been meeting under the auspices of the Town of Claremont for many years and was an informal group.

In 2009 we formed a board of myself, Suzie Ascott and Heidi Hardisty and we decided that FOLC should be incorporated. By chance I met a man from another Council at a conference I attended and we talked over the pros and cons of Incorporation versus Company status during the lunch break. He suggested that becoming a Corporation Limited by Guarantee was the way to go. The main reasons being, corporate governance was greater and you could administer your own grants and not lose some of the grant money on administration by a sponsor. Fortunately the previous organisation, of which I was a board member, had gone down this path so I had experience to instigate this process. Friends of Lake Claremont Limited became a Company Limited by Guarantee. This means if the Company collapses each member is liable to the value of \$2.



Julie Bishop congratulates Claire Brittain on her grant wins

To do this meant we had to write a Constitution and the 'council man' sent me a copy of a constitution he had. The board tailored it to suit FOLC Limited. By Law we have to be diligent and report annually to ASIC. I set up the financial accounting system and bullied one of my friends into doing the financial statements free of charge in the form ASIC needed. He in turn bullied one of his friends into doing the Auditing Pro-Bono.

► *Story continued on following page.*

After setting this up, I also applied for Tax and GST exemption for the Company. These formalities meant we could apply for grants and more importantly administer them ourselves and not lose part of it paying a separate organisation for administration. Having GST Exemption also means we claim back most of our GST and can use the money we get back to do more at the Lake.

I then started applying for grants, and after some guidance from Andrew Head and a couple of false starts we struck success.

FOLC have won 5 Federal Caring for our Country Grants for the Buffer Zone, 2 State Environmental Community Grants for the Lake Bed, 5 State Natural Resource Management grants for the Woodland, 1 SALP grant from Alcoa and the Swan River Trust for the Buffer Zone and a Federal 20th Anniversary Landcare Grant to infill plant the Remnant Bushland. Added to these we have won 2 Federal GVESH0 grants for administration and have re-printed the Birds of Claremont Brochure, an Adopt a Spot Brochure and are in the process of making a bird identification sign at the Lake. We also gained a Volunteering WA grant to run the first Celebrate Lake Claremont event. These come to a total of \$471,650.

The grants have turned out to be fabulous for the Lake and the community and once we have them the work really ramps up. Apart from the work on the ground which people see, there is quite a lot of administrative work. The documentation is set up between the two parties once the grant is awarded and contracts are then signed. Each grant requires a quarterly progress report on a set template which includes activities and spending, regardless of whether we have started work or not. Separate financial accounts must be kept for each grant on top of our normal financial statements. Added to this the government departments require us to obtain as much publicity as possible. Finalising the grants requires the written report, audited financial statements, press clippings, before and after photographs and any other photos relevant to the site.

I have also applied for Deductible Gift Recipient Status for the organisation. This means Friends of Lake Claremont Limited had to form a Trust. This is called the Lake Claremont Environment Fund. All Tax Deductible Donations go into the Trust. We envisage that this will be an ongoing source of income for the organisation after we are not eligible for grants. So far we have not exploited this form of revenue for the organisation as much as we can. It will require quite a lot of effort and at this stage we are all busy acquitting the grant funds to the best of our ability.

The job of Company Secretary is quite extensive. Added to this I have taken on the positions of Minute Secretary for the Board meetings which occur monthly, purely because we don't have a volunteer for this. Through circumstances of illness I have also inherited the roll of our Membership Manager for 12 months, which hopefully is only temporary.

It is easy to overlook what happens behind the scenes in an organisation like ours as it is not visible. Last year I recorded just over 300 hours of volunteer work, this of course is only what I remembered to write down but is a good indication of the time required for the role of Company Secretary.

I am about to send out the Membership Renewal Forms for 2015. Please make our job easier by replying promptly.

TURTLE GAP YEAR



Scotch College groundskeepers happy with the new turtle gap

Have you noticed a change to the Scotch College fence line? FOLC, Scotch College and ToC have shared the cost (\$7600) to raise the bottom of the fence so that turtles can safely access their traditional nest sites. The fence was a barrier to the female Oblong Turtles (*Chelodina colliei*) who leave the lake during spring and summer storms to lay eggs in nests on the same ground where they and their ancestors hatched. The hope is that by raising the fence line the turtles will be less open to attack by ravens, dogs and foxes.

The Turtle Oblonga Rescue and Rehabilitation Network (TORRN) is a not-for-profit organisation based in Perth in Western Australia.

They rescue and rehabilitate sick or injured oblong turtles.

They also provide community information, training for wildlife rehabilitators and consultancy services for the community of Western Australia.

M 0414 476 867 North Metro

<http://www.turtleoblonganetwork.org.au/>



An injured turtle being rescued

TALKING ABOUT WEEDS

Heidi Hardisty, FOLC coordinator, attended the Environmental Weed Action Network (EWAN) annual weed conference in November: Environmental weeds: past, present and future.

Heidi noted "There was a general feeling that a lot more resources are needed to monitor and manage environmental weeds as well as raise awareness. Weeds are having a tremendous impact on biodiversity and food security."

Mary Gray, president of the Urban Bushland Council, emphasized that weeds are extremely threatening to Australia's unique biodiversity and highlighted some ways in which local governments should be leading the community to reduce weed problems:

Local governments should:

- Raise awareness in their communities using local native landscapes as showcases or demonstration gardens.
- Have weed education programs and spread the word using brochures, info sheets, news articles, seminars and their website.
- Increase their knowledge base and expertise. They must provide more contractor supervision and not rely too heavily on contractors.
- Control grassy weeds to reduce fire hazard
- Do careful planning and timing of weed control using expertise and research
- Engage and support friends of groups, sharing knowledge and respecting hand weeding work
- Increase their budget for weed education, management and control

Check out the List of Roadside Weeds (endorsed by the Minister for the Environment 2012) on the Urban Bushland Council website. The list helps people avoid planting invasive species.

<http://www.bushlandperth.org.au/bushland-issues/90-weed-invasion-in-bushland>

NOTICES MARCH 2015

Clean up Australia Day - March 8th

Join the annual Clean up Australia Day at Lake Claremont 8- 10am. We will pick up rubbish over the entire site plus clean out the duck boxes so the birds have a fresh start this season. Meet at 8am at the Strickland Street cul-de-sac Swanbourne. Stay for a free tea at the end of the session.

Adopt-a-Spot Continues

Join today! Contact Heidi 0416 614 696

Like us on facebook!

Had a great moment at Lake Claremont? Why not like us on facebook and post your picture and story?

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Lake-Claremont/159586380873009?ref=hl>

The Friends of Lake Claremont Ltd. (FOLC) is a community organization established and run by local residents all of whom are volunteers.

Our mission is to assist in the conservation and enhancement of Lake Claremont, a Conservation Category Wetland and Bush Forever Site

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