



MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

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MCCG NEWSLETTER: Summer 2018-19

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ABOVE: For more on the 2018 'Photo Comp'—including Rebecca Bain's story about her photo of this Yellow-footed Antechinus (*Antechinus flavipes flavipes*)—turn to pages 4&5.



ABOVE: Thanks again to Joanna Yesberg (AGM presentation picture by Geoff Lawrence). For more from the AGM, turn to the p. 2 Chairman's Report.



ABOVE:
Forest Red Gum
(*E. tereticornis*).
For Bryan Hacker's
seeds and weeds,
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ABOVE: *Gardening Australia* learning about Cat's Claw as an environmental weed. See p.8.



ABOVE: Welcome to our new committee members—Kathleen and Alan Walmsley (AGM picture credit: Geoff Lawrence). More on page 2.



RIGHT: Cottage Cane Toad Challenge briefing, turn to page 7 for more.

Chairman's Report

On the evening Monday 26th November, the Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) held its Annual General Meeting in Brookfield Hall. The meeting was attended by 50 members and guests, including Cr. Kate Richards (Pullenvale Ward). Besides the standard business of endorsing a new Committee for 2019, attendees were treated to an excellent presentation by Dr Ian Gynther a zoologist in the threatened species program of the Dept. of Environment and Science on attempts at conserving the Richmond Birdwing butterfly by means of a captive-breeding programme.

It was also an opportunity to review progress over the past year. Despite a few setbacks, I think we can all be very proud of what we have achieved. This has included over 80 bushcare working bees; over 13,000 visitors to the MCCG website; 520 Facebook followers; the supply of over 12,000 plants from our native plant nursery; public 'outreach' events such as Kid's Day at the Cottage and the MCCG Photographic Competition; our excellent quarterly newsletters; and in total around 4,500 volunteer hours. All of this hard work continues to have a very positive impact on the local environment, helping to protect native flora and fauna and increase biodiversity.

A number of key supporters have stood down this year, including our long-serving Treasurer, Joanna Yesberg; Photo Competition Chair, Geoff Lawrence; Grants Officer, Letitia Norton; and Secretary, Sanja Oldridge. We thank them all for their service, and welcome Kathleen Walmsley as the new Secretary, Alan Walmsley as our new Treasurer and Will Nicoll as Grants Officer. We are still seeking a volunteer to run the 2019 Photographic Competition, so any volunteers should contact me.

Finally, I would like to thank the rest of the Committee for their support during the year and wish you all a very pleasant Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Jim Pope

Editorial

*I heard a wry comment at the photography competition awards presentation (see pages 4 & 5 for more about the much-loved 'photo comp') that the newsletter is dominated by pieces from a small number of people. **Please be assured**, if you send me an article you have an excellent chance of seeing it in print. The absolute deadline for the next issue is 10 March 2019. So get writing **now**. I am sure EVERYONE has at least 100 words they could write... so [email me](mailto:mccgeditor@outlook.com.au) soon with those New Year revegetation resolutions and ideas.*

Cathi

Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) is a volunteer action group, aiming to conserve & improve the natural environment of our catchment on both private & public land.

Chairman: Jim Pope

Secretary: [Kathleen Walmsley](#)

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Articles of interest to Members are **always welcome.**

The Editor reserves the right not to publish any item submitted. Material will be edited for clarity, style and space. The decision of the Editor is final. **Please email your ideas direct to** mccgeditor@outlook.com.au.

Newsletter Editor: Dr Catherine A. Lawrence (Cathi)

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Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Welcome to Our New MCCG Committee Members: Alan Walmsley (Treasurer) and Kathleen Walmsley (Secretary).

Having moved to Australia from the UK with their four children in March 1998, Alan and Kathleen bought a home in Creekside Street, Kenmore Hills. They quickly became involved in the Huntington/Tuckett monthly working bees along the creek. For the last 20 years, Alan has continued to help out at the section whereas Kathleen found the insect bites too troublesome but helped out early on with the MCCG membership database. Having recently retired, Alan is willingly taking on the role of MCCG Treasurer. Kathleen, whilst continuing to run her home-based business, is supporting the group as MCCG Secretary. Kathleen and Alan are pictured on the front cover of this issue (picture credit: Geoff Lawrence).

Huntington/Tuckett Bushcare Group

Many Members and local volunteers not only work on their own gardens but also spend time as members of our popular bushcare groups. Jim Pope, a keen gardener himself, both volunteers his time as MCCG Chairman *and* participates in the work of the Huntington/Tuckett Bushcare Group. Jim shares information about this successful team, with a focus on their 2018 activity. Reports from all of our Bushcare Groups are very welcome for future issues of our newsletter.



Our section extends for approximately 1.6km along Moggill Creek through the parklands between Rafting Ground Rd. (Brookfield) and Tuckett St. (Kenmore Hills). It includes the riparian zones on both sides of the creek. In 2018 we received a Community Conservation Assistance (CCA) grant for \$18,000 from Brisbane City Council. The grant was for the removal of most of the remaining large Chinese Elms (*Celtis sinensis*) from the section, and for replanting of the cleared area (in Tuckett St. park) with natives.

This is an important initiative. Chinese Elms tend to outgrow native vegetation, and mature specimens produce copious quantities of seeds that are distributed by wind, water and birds. The trees have a very large canopy, producing intense shading of the undergrowth in summer, and suppressing the growth and regeneration of native groundcover, shrubs and trees, resulting in a dramatic reduction in biodiversity. Funds from CCA grants are not cash grants, as the funds remain under the control of the Council. Work by contractors to remove the identified trees commenced in March 2018. However it was stopped almost immediately, ostensibly due to objections from one or more residents to the cutting down of trees. It seems that more efforts need to be made to educate local people on the subjects of weed control and native bush regeneration. The matter was eventually

resolved positively, and the remaining trees were removed in November. Dealing with the issue cost us a lot of time and effort. This has set back the replanting by 12 months, as we now have to wait for suitable conditions during the early 2019 'wet season.' Our group did carry out significant new plantings both in Blackbutt Place Park and in the parklands adjacent to Kensington Circuit (*see photograph, left*). For the Blackbutt Pl. site we also installed (with assistance from Brisbane Catchments Network), a 'monitoring point.' Local residents can take photographs of the plantings and email them for uploading to a [website](#) where the growth (both of the natives and the inevitable weeds!) can be monitored over time. As usual, we also devoted many hours to essential weed removal and the control of exotic grasses.



Councillor Kate Richards (Pullenvale Ward) and Councillor Vicki Howard (Chairman of the Field Services Committee of Brisbane City Council) joined our October working bee morning tea. This meeting (*see picture, above*) was an excellent opportunity to show them some of the important work that we and other volunteer bushcare groups carry out, and to emphasise the benefits of our work: protecting and enhancing habitat for native species, and improving biodiversity. We also stressed the health benefits of a thriving natural environment.

Jim Pope

Cottage Talks

Why not come along to one of the regular Thursday **Cottage Talks**? Book your place now (email [Dale](#)).

Dale Borgelt

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MCCG Photography Competition

The MCCG Photography Competition (or 'photo comp' as it is affectionately known) is a highlight in the annual MCCG calendar. For most of the last decade, Geoff Lawrence has chaired the Photo Comp Committee. 2018 was his last year as Chair, although he's happy to be a committee member in order to support a smooth transition.

For a full list of the 2018 winners, and some more images, visit our website (it's a great resource).

When dropping off entries this year, each entrant was encouraged to share a little more about one or more of the images they had taken. Every article I received has been included in this special feature (thanks to Geoff, Robyn, Rebecca, and Ed).

Each entry submitted this year resulted from close observation of the local surrounds, and we heard many fascinating insights from the keen photographers as they handed over their entries. If anyone is reading this and wishes they'd remembered to submit their photograph and story, it's not too late! Email your picture (and 50-100 words) for publication in a future newsletter (mccgeditor@outlook.com.au).

Melbourne to Kenmore

My entry in the Photo Competition was a photo of a Blue-tongued Skink (*Tiliqua scinoides*) in our garden. Not a great photo, but important to me as a representation of what I love about living in Brisbane.



Picture: Blue-tongued Skink (*Tiliqua scinoides*). Picture credit: Robyn Frost.

My Melbourne friends had correctly told me that I would not miss Melbourne after my first Brisbane winter! What I had not anticipated was the experience of a new natural world: the python in our roof, the water dragon sunbathing beside our pool, the flying foxes feeding noisily in the fig tree outside our bedroom window, the scrub turkey rearranging our garden mulch, the fireflies blinking in the early

evening, the geckoes swooping on the moths beside the outside lights, and so on.

Such natural wonders are extraordinary. For them to continue to exist, the restoration work of groups such as the MCCG needs to be supported by all members of the community.

Robyn Frost

The Highlight of My Walk

I made a very exciting discovery in July, while walking the Araucaria track in the D'Aguilar National Park (formerly Brisbane Forest Park). This track winds along part of the Enoggera Reservoir, and is home to a large variety of birds.



Picture: Yellow-footed Antechinus (*Antechinus flavipes flavipes*). Picture credit: Rebecca Bain.

When I walked the track last year, with a friend, we were lucky enough to have a large Lace Monitor walk across the path in front of us and then climb a tree. So this time, once again armed with my camera, I was looking for any activity and keeping my ears pricked. When I heard lots of loud rustling among the leaf litter at the base of a large tree off the path. I thought I'd found a whipbird (they make so much noise as they fossick through the undergrowth). But I was wrong. I'd stumbled across a little rodent-like animal.

I quickly realised I wasn't looking at a rat or house mouse, but it was more likely to be one of our lesser known native carnivorous marsupials. The little fellow was very obliging in letting me get some decent shots that I hoped would allow me to identify him later.

After returning home and consulting my 'Wildlife of Greater Brisbane' reference book, and seeking confirmation from a friend who recently assisted in writing a field guide for native mammals (how handy for me!), I concluded I'd photographed a Yellow-footed Antechinus (*Antechinus flavipes flavipes*). It was the highlight of my walk ☺.

Rebecca Bain

Listening to the Judge

Photography has been a large part of my life since I was a 23-year-old reporter on the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin. I was allowed to take photos in an emergency, and outside the city. I learnt a lot, as I was under constant critical scrutiny of the two full time photographers. Now in my semi-retirement I take my camera with me for the first two hours of daylight, when I enjoy the wildlife on our Brookfield acreage.

Dale Borgelt exerted her considerable charm on me to enter in the MCCG Photo Competition a few years ago. With my first real effort I entered several technically good and pretty bird photographs...and achieved no prizes. Of course, it was the judge's fault (!), but I did score the People's Choice and the Chairman's prizes, which restored my ego. I studied the winning photos which, I deduced, contained birds *doing* something, rather than just pretty pictures.

Next year, I selected photos with some action. Sure enough, I took out the top prizes.

During the presentation, the judge mentioned that backlighting would bring some life into the photos of fungi. So, this year I remembered that. While I couldn't find any suitable fungi, because of the drought, I took a back lit photo of a Bottlebrush. The back lighting showed up the dew and gave another dimension to the photo, and I received first prize.

As my company sponsored the 2018 Bird section, I entered a different category (*Animals other than Birds*). This category was split out, as it is very difficult to get animated photos of insects and mammals that will compete with birds.



Picture: 2018 MCCG Photography Competition Supreme Exhibit prize-winning picture of a Water Dragon
(picture credit: Ed Frazer).

The photo that won Supreme Exhibit (and a First Prize) showed a Water Dragon as it stopped for a rest as it swam over Gold Creek (*see picture, below left*).

There were many high standard photos this year—including some amazing macro photos of spiders. But they lacked that extra "capture the moment." As one of the visitors to the display commented, there were a few entries that captured a moment that would probably never happen again.

We are exceedingly lucky to have a such an expert judge. I am listening carefully for Dr Joseph McDowell's next nugget of advice.

Ed Frazer

Behind the Scenes

The MCCG Photography Competition is a wonderful way of reminding local residents of the diversity of our local environment. Over the last ten years, the Photography Competition Committee has tried a number of a new initiatives. We now have a very popular People's Choice competition (thanks in particular to our long-standing supporters at The Pet Chalet), and ran a competition for local schools for a number of years (created with the support of Brisbane City Council and our former Councillor, Margaret De Wit OAM). We have also tested different categories—seeking more entries and in response to the number of entries each category (or 'section') attracts.

The number of sections also depends on the support of our sponsors. We could not organise a successful competition without the support of our sponsors and donors: this year, [Brookfield Produce](#), [Cr Kate Richards \(Councillor for Pullenvale Ward\)](#), [Creative Futures Photography](#), [Kenmore Bridge Club](#), [Kenmore Village](#), [Dr Christian Rowan MP \(Member for Moggill\)](#), [The Pet Chalet](#), and [Pisces Enterprises](#).

The committee now includes Robyn Frost (also a former chair of the committee), Bruce Siemon, Tony Watts, and Janine Nicklin. I am most grateful for their support, and also that of former members of the committee (and for the help of our information desk colleagues). A special thank-you also to our Judge, Dr Joseph McDowell. Joseph not only makes a significant amount of time available to us for the judging process (and I can assure everyone that he is meticulous), but he also attends our awards presentations, providing useful feedback to the audience (including making time to chat to photographers afterwards).

I look forward to continuing to support the competition (and to having time to enter next year).

Geoff Lawrence

Changes: Birds in Our Catchment

The evidence for climate change is overwhelming, but what it will do to our birds is only just starting to be understood—with even less knowledge as to how to help them to cope with this environmental change (see S. Garnett & D. Franklin, 2014, *Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Australian Birds*, CSIRO).

Since European settlement, habitat loss and the impact of invasive species have been the major drivers of birdlife decline and extinction. Previous strategies of protecting birdlife by selective management, and by saving the surviving habitat, will remain important. But, as climate changes impact habitats, we will need to devise additional plans to keep our birdlife alive.



Picture: The Pacific Baza has undergone significant southward range expansion (picture credit: Mike Ford).

In the northern hemisphere, clear trends in changing bird distributions have been identified. Increasing temperatures mean that many species are finding suitable climate space in new geographic locations (generally, shifting poleward north, or to higher altitudes). In Australia these same responses to higher temperatures are likely to ensue, but we anticipate more complex spatial responses to climate change. For example, changes in rainfall patterns may be as important as increased temperatures, which may mean that the bird distributions contract to the polar south and higher altitudes but also to the coastal east (as happens now in severe drought). The Catchment Bird List is likely to be subject to great change.

Not all birds are equally vulnerable to climate change. Many have evolved to cope with our diverse climate, so that only the extremes may affect them. Many of our birds are nomadic, which allows them to move to suitable habitat. But others are highly specialised residents, which means even small climate changes could push them to extinction. Research is needed to identify the most vulnerable birds under the climate change regime that is upon them. Resources will be

needed to provide an Adaptation Plan to combat the new climate threat.

What can we do? Collective ornithological knowledge is not adequate to plan explicitly to save the birds. We need to know which birds are being threatened and how to respond, which makes increased citizen science monitoring, particularly through the BirdLife Australia *Birddata Site* and *eBird*, so very important. We need to identify what is happening to the Catchment birdlife and help plan to preserve it as well as we can.

Jim Butler (MCCG Bird project 2012-18)

Bush Bites: After the Drought

Michelle Johnston's marvellous *Bush Bites* initiative continues to attract some wonderful stories to our website. If you have a story to share, do email the newsletter editor, or contact Michelle on (webedit2@moggillcreek.org.au). In the meantime, enjoy this short extract from Ed's 'After the Drought' piece (more, with pictures, online).

The long dry spell, which I hope is now passing, has mixed blessings for the local wildlife. From my observations, on our Brookfield property, numbers of some species of birds are well down. For example, numbers of Monarchs, Flycatchers, Whistlers, larger Honeyeaters, and even the Rosellas, King Parrots and Lorikeets seem to be in much smaller numbers.

There is a flipside. Once the rain arrives, and everything starts growing again, there will be plenty of food. Indeed, there is likely to be a surplus. As the low numbers will survive the drought, it is possible new birds will come in to fill the empty niches (perhaps even some new species).



The drought has also favoured some species. The last really big drought brought in the Plumed Whistling Ducks (see Ed's picture, above) for the first time. As we keep our dams full, the numbers of water birds has actually increased substantially. We have also had more Reed Warblers than I have ever seen here, and

even two Little Grassbirds (more associated with wetlands). Some of the more aggressive species also still seem to do well during dry periods. The Willie Wagtails are in their usual numbers—although they are later nesting than usual (and may only nest once this season). Scrub Turkeys seem to be thriving right through the drought, and increasing in numbers. Butcherbirds, Magpies and Crows always seem to do well in the open areas, probably at the expense of the more timid birds. Another species that is thriving is the Bell Miner, which has moved back on the west facing slopes again. Sadly, the Indian Myna is also doing well—probably moving in because their usual haunts have run out of food and water.

One bonus is that the Red-necked Wallabies are coming closer to our houses and dams, to find some green grass and their favourite Milk Thistle. Even the shy Swamp Wallaby is seen more often.

Now the rains have come, the breeding season will soon start. It is going to be interesting to see what new arrivals the season brings.

Ed Frazer

Seeds: Forest Red Gum (*E. tereticornis*)

Our list of species native to our catchment includes 14 species of *Eucalyptus* and 4 species of *Corymbia*, all commonly called gum trees, stringy barks, ironbarks or bloodwoods. We currently have small stocks of several of these species in our nursery, including *E. tereticornis*, the forest red gum, also known as the Queensland blue gum (see picture, front cover).

The forest red gum is a quick-growing species, and is ideally adapted to riparian situations in our district (and is also to be found on some upland areas). It can grow to a height of 45m, is smooth-barked but often rough-barked close to the base. The bark sheds in irregular patches. In contrast to *Angophora* spp., adult leaves are alternate (usually 24cm long, 3.5cm wide).



Unlike most other eucalypt species it has a long bud cap (picture, above). Forest red gum is an important source of pollen for bees, and nectar for birds. It is also

a koala food tree, and I have seen koalas locally in *E. tereticornis*. Large trees of this species can shed large branches, even in still conditions, which could be associated with 'gum veins' or 'kino ducts' (see MCCG Winter 2015 newsletter). So never plant forest red gums close to a house.

Bryan Hacker

Weeds: Cadaghi (*Corymbia torelliana*)

The 'seeds' article in this issue of the newsletter is about a gum tree, so it seemed a good idea to include our only 'gum tree weed' in this article. This is *Corymbia torelliana*, common name cadaghi or cadaga, previously known as *Eucalyptus torelliana*.



This is a native of North Queensland that has become a significant and easily recognised weed species in our catchment. It was purposefully introduced to southern Queensland as a garden plant, having a much denser canopy than other gum trees.

However, the leaves are often covered with an unattractive sooty mould. In addition, cadaghi can hybridise with other

species of *Corymbia*. There are also concerns regarding the effect of cadaghi resin on native stingless bees (see [link](#)).

Cadaghi can grow to a height of 30m, the upper trunk is smooth and green in colour, and the lower trunk is rough, scaly and black (see photo, above). Leaves are up to 20cm long, 11cm wide and young leaves distinctively reddish in colour and very hairy—a useful character when identifying seedlings when weeding. Flowering occurs in spring, followed by globular to urn-shaped fruit about 1–1.3cm dia. or more (see also autumn 2008 MCCG Newsletter).

Bryan Hacker

Froggin' Around: MCCG CTC

Twenty-four people attended the Cane Toad Challenge (CTC) workshop held at the cottage on 17th November (pictures over, and front cover). Andrew Wills (Acting Creek Catchment Officer) opened the meeting with a presentation about this important UQ initiative, led by Professor Rob Capon, which uses adult cane toads' toxins to attract and trap their tadpoles.

Andrew discussed the role of the Council, and demonstrated how to make and use the traps. Kits, including baits, were issued to a number of people on the day. As recording of the number of cane toad tadpoles caught is a requirement by the Council—to ensure that more baits will be available—I now have a list of the people who have the kits.



Reducing cane toads will alleviate the environmental impact of this toxic and invasive pest on native animal species. The impact of toads on native species may depend on the concentration of toads at the site, size of water body, and the pheromones and toxins in water. There is no real evidence that toad tadpoles eat native frog tadpoles or frogs. But toads do compete for space, and eat the food that native frogs require.

Removing the majority of the tadpoles can mean that the remaining ones mature more quickly (and are also larger, having less competition for food). So, even if a large native frog population is able to withstand the presence of cane toads, the population size can still be affected. The clutch size of frogs and breeding biology will be a factor in withstanding the impact.

What is the impact of cane toads on predators such as rats, lizards, birds, and quolls? In a recent ABC Rural News report (Courtney Fowler, 27 September 2018), it was noted that native animals on the remote Adolphus Island (off the Kimberley, WA) were surviving alongside cane toads off-shore. This is in contrast to toad-affected populations on the mainland. It is thought that the toad numbers fluctuate due to a lack of water on the island, ensuring that native populations have opportunities to survive without having constant exposure. Low numbers of toads also allow predatory wildlife to encounter the pest, but not to be affected straight away. Perhaps the CTC will result in a reduction of toads that might allow for some population increases and the development of 'avoiding' behaviour by predators.

Note: Cane toads lay their eggs in still water, so tadpole trapping is least effective in flowing water. Brisbane City

Council is working with the MCCG (& MCCG is a CTC affiliate). Updates on the MCCG Facebook page and at the [CTC website](#). *Phil Bird*

MCCG TV

Keep an eye out for the ABC's Gardening Australia program, as you may just see some of our members discussing the impact of Cat's Claw. Here's more from our busy Chairman.

Many landholders in the Moggill Creek catchment are already aware of the threats from Cat's Claw Creeper to remnant forests and riparian zones. It climbs into the tree canopy, smothering it and slowly killing the trees. It also smothers bushes and smaller native plants, and can create a thick carpet that covers the ground surface.

Some landholders have been battling this aggressive exotic vine from South America for several years, and have learned how difficult it is to remove or control.

Some months ago the ABC's *Gardening Australia* program extolled the virtues of Cat's Claw as a garden plant in the southern states, resulting in a negative reaction from many people in Queensland. In order to redress the situation, earlier this year we were contacted by *Gardening Australia* producers to assist them in creating a segment for their program on the damage done by Cat's Claw Creeper to the natural environment in SE Queensland.

In November, we were visited by their film crew, with presenter Jerry Coleby-Williams and producer Neil Proud (*see front cover picture*), to film the segment. We hope it will go to air sometime in early 2019.

Jim Pope

PS: Nursery Note...



Picture: Carpet python (credit Tracy Kiara)

We always welcome visitors at our Nursery. This 3m visitor stayed for nine days digesting her dinner in October!

Bryan Hacker