



MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

P.O. Box 657, Kenmore. 4069

MCCG NEWSLETTER Autumn 2023



'Bumpy' plans to visit the MCCG Kids' Day at the Cottage, on Sunday 11 June, 2023.
Will YOU be there? *Turn to page 3 for more*



ABOVE LEFT: A glorious image of a Rufous Fantail—a species affected by habitat loss (image: Ed Frazer). Turn to page 5 for Ed's latest Bush Bite

TOP RIGHT: Section 9 replanting (image: Robert James). See page 3 for more.

LEFT: For more about an international threatened species encounter, turn to page 6 (image: Dr Manda Page).

RIGHT: Ample stocks of celery wood seedlings at our Nursery. Turn to Bryan Hacker's regular *Seeds and Weeds* features for more.(page 8)



Your latest issue: *Bush Bite* (p5), *Froggin' Around* (p7), *Kids' Day at the Cottage* (p3), *Moggill Magic* (p9), *Old Gold Creek Sawmill Forest Walk Opening* (p2, 3-4), *Past Flood Marker?* (p5), *'Photo Comp'* (p4), *Report from the Chair* (p3), *Seeds & Weeds* (p8), *Section 9 Update* (p3), *Threatened Species* (p6), *Unassuming Ground Cover* (p6)

Report from the Chair

After all the excitement of 2022, here's hoping 2023 is a less interesting year. But it is back to the fray, with work plans to complete, plants to plant, weeds to remove, articles to write, and grants to prepare. And, of course, all of our new MCCG members to welcome! I'd also like to welcome the new committee members Anna Williamson and Simon English, into the MCCG management committee. Both of them have extensive experience in working with organisations such as ours and bring a new and fresh perspective to our group. Please make them feel welcome.



Picture (L to R): Sandy Pollock, Elizabeth Watson-Brown MP, & Gordon Grigg (Credit: Creative Futures Photography).

Our updated set of Rules for the Catchment Group has been drafted, and I invite all members to look at these, and actively engage with them. They are a result of the previous rules being some 25 years old and requiring updating for the modern Internet age. These rules are drafted entirely from the Model Rules available on the Office of Fair Trading's [website](#). I thank all those who contributed to their establishment, especially those who have spent time fixing errors and making suggestions for improvements. The rules will soon be available on our website.

Hopefully our long-running telecommunications issues at the Gold Creek Cottage, and the adjacent Nursery, are at an end, with purchase and setup of a Starlink system on the Cottage roof. This enables consistent and reliable phone access, by enabling Wi-Fi calls from mobile phones. This has been a much-vexed issue, so we hope this new technology, much used in remote areas of Australia, can work for us. Our group still requires more volunteers for some things, especially setup for major talks and events. We certainly welcome more active helpers as event participants. Assistance in writing up project proposals for grant activities would also be appreciated. Meanwhile, planning is underway for our old MCCG favourites, including the Kids' Day at the Cottage and

the MCCG photo-competition. To make these a success, what is needed is enthusiastic volunteers to assist in set-up and preparation of these events, as well as getting the word out to friends and family that these are all interesting, engaging, and worthwhile attending. Try and stay cool in the summer heat! Regards,
Sandy Pollock

Editorial

Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles to this issue (so much to include that **the print issue is again shorter than the Newsletter emailed to members**). In a recent email exchange with one fellow volunteer, we agreed that the contributions by the MCCG members and volunteers are priceless—and not just because we don't get paid. It is great to see that work celebrated with special occasions such as the recent 'Old Sawmill Walk' opening. Do tell me about anything MCCG-related that YOU feel we should celebrate, or be aware of or concerned about. **The absolute deadline for the next issue is 1 June 2023.** Start now! Don't wait until the deadline to [email me](#).
Cathí

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: Sandy Pollock

Secretary: Zoe Bishop-Kinlyside (Secretary) and Chris Bruton (Assistant Secretary)

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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, and no correspondence will be entered into. **Please email YOUR news direct to mccgeditor@outlook.com.au.**

Newsletter Editor: Dr Catherine A. Lawrence (Cathi)

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Bumpy Will Be There

Dale Borgelt, MCCG Kids' Day at the Cottage Organiser, has some exciting news...

Bumpy will be at 2023 Kids' Day at the Cottage. This little wombat is one of the stars of the popular *Geckoes Wildlife* show. On Sunday 11 June there will be two *Geckoes* sessions in the big tent, where Martin Fingland will give kids close-up contact with many leathery, furry, or feathery native creatures. And that's not all. In a number of individual marquees there will be fun art and craft activities to enjoy, while finding out more about the natural world. The Snail Whisperer will be there, as will experts on beetles, bugs, butterflies, native bees, and insects of all sorts.



ABOVE: Bumpy (image credit: Martin Fingland)

As always, there will be a number of activities creating things to take home, including potting up native seedlings *and*, in 2023, creating jewellery that features native seeds. It is always great to see kids carrying their potted seeds, and wearing their jewellery creations, as they leave for home.

There is so much for kids to make and do and enjoy, and it is **FREE**, thanks to our entirely volunteer-run Moggill Creek Catchment Group, proudly supported by the Lord Mayor's Community Fund and the Pullenvale Ward Councillor Greg Adermann, BCC Creek Catchment Program, and SEQWater. Mark your calendars now; we look forward to seeing you, your kids, and grandkids on Sunday 11 June, for the 2023 Kids' Day at the Cottage. **Dale Borgelt**

Date Claimers: MCCG Talks

[Dr Vanessa Gorecki](#), will be talking about '*The extraordinary fishing bat, the Large-footed Myotis (Myotis macropus) of the creeks of Brisbane's western suburbs,*' at the Kenmore Library on 28 March (6:30pm for 7- 9pm). This bat species is very closely tied to riparian environments, making it an important species for measures of creek health. Dr Gorecki is a respected microbat researcher and fauna surveyor.

On 27 June, Kristy Stevenson (UQ School of Agriculture and Food Science PhD candidate), will be

speaking about *Myrtle Rust (Austropuccinia psidii)*, a growing problem. This Kenmore Library talk is also not to be missed, given the very real prospect of extinction for some species of previously widespread Queensland rainforest plants. **Sandy Pollock**

Section 9 Update

It is always great to hear about the work of the various 'sections' across the Catchment, so thanks to Robert James for this Section 9 update. New Section volunteers are always welcome. For more information about each of the groups and working bees, [visit our website](#).

We revegetate and maintain Section 9 of the Gold Creek catchment. Working bees for section 9 are held on the third Sunday of the month, from 9-11am, followed by a morning tea at the MCCG Cottage.



New members are encouraged and are welcome to join the core group—no experience necessary. Wear appropriate clothing, with closed in shoes and a hat. We provide gloves and any tools required, but don't forget a water bottle. My photos (*above and front cover*) show replanting of Upper Gold Creek crossings that lost vegetation and many trees following the 2022 floods. For information on our next working bee, join our mailing list (just [email me](#)). **Robert James**

Opening: Old Sawmill Forest Walk

The official opening of the Old Gold Creek Sawmill Forest Walk took place on 4 March 2023, with speeches by Sandy Pollock, Gordon Grigg, and [Ms Elizabeth Watson-Brown MP](#).

Our MP thanked the MCCG—and in particular Sandy and Gordon—for 'your work, for your words, and for inviting me to this important event,' and then began by acknowledging that the event was 'taking place on the lands of the Jagera and Turrbal people...in the location of important pathways and meeting places,'

suggesting that the work of the MCCG 'in caring for country is [...] an act of practical reconciliation.' Ms Watson-Brown MP then touched briefly on some of the fascinating information about our local area. A short extract is included here—but do visit [the MCCG website](#) for the full speech text (and for more photographs):

Some of the history of the first people here, largely erased, is reflected in local place names. [...]

A distinguishing feature of the western suburbs [...] was its many ceremonial sites: over 14 boras (earthen rings used for initiation), dance circles and pullen-pullen (the tournament grounds, where initiates were tested). *Why so many?*

These western suburbs cover the hilly mid-section of the Brisbane River/Meanjin valley, well-watered by creeks, gullies, and waterholes. This region had many micro-environments and ecotones [...] a diversity [which] meant more, and greater variety, of animals and plants. The original people of this place considered this spiritually significant. They honoured such areas with ritual ceremonies, to celebrate, maintain and increase the natural abundance.

Before cutting the ribbon, to officially declare the Old Sawmill Walk open, Ms Watson-Brown MP concluded by observing that the work by Gordon and colleagues 'is inspiring and a great example for other groups. I am so very impressed and grateful. What you have achieved is momentous.'



Walking the Walk: Guests enjoying the official opening of the Old Sawmill Walk (picture: [Creative Futures Photography](#)). See also photograph on page 2.

Congratulations indeed to Gordon, and to everyone who helped establish this valuable new addition to the Cottage grounds.

Dragons and Fences

I recently found an Eastern Water Dragon caught in the base of a chain-wire fence at the northern end of the Kenmore State High School oval. I was onsite, as

part of our monthly working bee, and was easily able to help it to escape. I didn't expect any gratitude and, as it ran off in a great hurry, it appeared to be relatively unharmed by the experience.

I have never seen this before, nor any evidence of dragons caught in this situation in the 15+ years that such fencing has been in place. I have recorded this incident on the [iNaturalist website](#), and wonder if members have ever heard of such incidences?

It has led me to wonder if such fencing should ideally be installed with a small gap—of up to a few centimetres under it—to enable such wildlife to safely pass under it without the risk of being trapped? Of course, school locations have to be careful to ensure that tennis balls that students might be playing with, don't run under the fence. **Bruce Dymmock**

MCCG Photography Competition

The annual MCCG Photo Competition is back for its 25th year! We are looking forward to seeing YOUR entries; here's one of last years' entries (*below*). Trevor Heath called this lovely image (which won two awards) 'Feeding the Kid: Bee-eater style.'



Important 2023 dates are:

- **14 October:** Open Entry submissions accepted at The Brookfield Showgrounds (Saturday, 10am to 2pm only)
- **1-13 October:** Young Persons (prep to grade 6) entries can be submitted via email
- **16-21 October:** Photo display at Kenmore Village Shopping Centre
- **Saturday 21 October:** Kenmore Shopping Village prize ceremony, 2pm

We look forward to your support again this year—in submitting entries, visiting and volunteering at the display at Kenmore Village, and in helping to promote the photo competition to friends, family and the community. **Rebecca Bain**

A Marker of Past Floods?

Broad-leaved apple (*Angophora subvelutina*) is an uncommon tree in our catchment. It has a gnarled rough-barked trunk and upper branches, while the leaves are sessile (without a petiole), and opposite each other on the drooping stems and branchlets (see *Sandy's picture, below*).

The fruits are thin, brown, and papery, and are easily crushed between the fingers. These capsules are conspicuously ribbed and toothed at their rim. The genus name *Angophora* is from two Greek words, meaning 'vessel



or goblet' and 'to bear or carry,' referring to the goblet-like shape of the fruits. Unlike Eucalyptus, the flowers retain their small and free petals, and are not fused into the operculum or cap (which is shed before the stamens unfold).

Broad-leaved apple seems to occur on the margin of old flood zones in some parts of Moggill Creek, a reminder of previous flood events. It is often found with (Queensland blue gum) *Eucalyptus tereticornis*. Elsewhere in eastern Queensland, it frequently found on extensive alluvial flats and floodplains.

Sandy Pollock

Bush Bites: Where are all the Birds?

The MCCG Website has so many wonderful *Bush Bites*, including this latest article by Ed Frazer, illustrated with a beautiful picture of an endangered Rufous Fantail (see front cover).

After three years of drought during breeding seasons, we have had a year of excellent rains—producing a bountiful supply of fruit, insects, and nectar. So, *where have all the birds gone?*

Birders visiting our property, in Brookfield, usually get a total of 50 -60 bird species. But, this season, they are getting only half that number. What's going on? In spite of the abundance of food, why aren't the birds in bigger numbers? The answer is that we are far from self-sufficient in the Moggill Catchment. We rely on

bird species breeding in outer areas; the surplus then move into any suitable habitat in our area.

There are two main reasons why we are not breeding enough birds in the Catchment. Firstly, the habitat has largely been destroyed: first by the destruction of habitat by logging and clearing (for Dairy farming and fruit growing) and, more recently, by some residents clearing land to provide paddocks. This all means that we have a large amount of trees and pastures—all totally unsuitable for the many more timid species, such as Wrens, Finches, Flycatchers, and Monarchs (but that is well-suited to Crows, Butcherbirds and Noisy Miners). Practically the only habitat in the Catchment that is suitable for the attractive, smaller species is characterised by weeds such as Lantana, Privet and Brazilian Pepper.

The second problem is domestic cats (see also the [UK BBC report](#)). While there are a few truly feral cats, most of the cats doing the damage are either abandoned cats or pet cats that are allowed to roam at night. The numbers of native birds and small animals taken by these outdoor cats is enormous. I monitor a number of bird nests each year, and less than 30 per cent successfully rear their young; cats are responsible for most of these failures.

Twice each year we have periods when birds migrate and repopulate the area. In Autumn, we have a number of species that come towards the coast, from areas beyond the Great Divide, to winter in the warmer coastal areas. In Spring, a number of birds from North Queensland and PNG come to breed here in our Spring/Summer period. But these migrating birds will only stop off in our catchment if they have suitable habitat.

We can make our local area more appealing to these birds by not removing Lantana, and other exotic species, until we have replaced them with suitable native shrub species. Secondly, water is of fundamental importance. As much of the catchment has very little permanent water, any farm dams need suitable adjacent planting, to give the birds security when coming in for a drink.

Thirdly, keeping vegetation along creeks—rather than grassing to the water's edge—is very important (again, providing security). And leaving some areas of grass along boundaries to go to seed will help finches return to the catchment.

Cats should be controlled and not allowed to roam at any time (and definitely not following their instinct to hunt at night). Owners must be aware they are destroying the wildlife, as domestic cats will bring some of their catch home, but sadly most are left as a patch of feathers out in the bush.

Ed Frazer

An Unassuming Ground Cover

While some of the *Commelinaceae* are well-known as weeds in the Moggill Creek Catchment, native members of this plant family are attractive and useful plants for revegetation within the sometimes-difficult ground stratum of local plantings.

One such example is *Aneilema acuminatum* (Aneilema or Slug Herb). While uninspiring when infertile, *Aneilema* is surprisingly attractive when in flower, and even more so with raindrops glistening on its stems and pedunculate inflorescence (*as shown below*). *Aneilema* can be distinguished from some other *Commelinaceae* by the flowers not being enclosed in a spathe-like bract. The flowers are white, with a pale purple tinge.



Aneilema acuminatum (pictured above, credit Alexander Pollock) is a spreading ground-stratum plant frequently observed in vine forests, alluvial forests and wetter eucalypt open forest. Examples are present (but sometimes difficult to find) around the Gold Creek Cottage gardens, and also some parts of the Gold Creek Historic Sawmill walk. This plant has also been cultivated, and is rewarding when fully flowering, with trailing stems cascading over the sides of a hanging basket.

Sandy Pollock

QWildlife App: Koala Sightings

The Queensland Government's reporting platform for crocodile and koala sightings is a simple and easy way to report any sightings of these species in the wild. I am not aware of any wild crocodile sightings in our catchment (!), but if you observe Koalas in the catchment, perhaps have a look at (and download)

[QWildlife](#).

Sandy Pollock

Threatened Species: Abroad

It is great to welcome Dr Manda Page back from recent Churchill Fellowship travels. Here's just a little glimpse of Manda's adventures abroad..

I have recently returned from an amazing trip overseas where I studied successful threatened species projects, so I thought I would share one special experience. The trip was graciously supported by a Churchill Fellowship, which offers Australians the opportunity to travel overseas to explore international best practice and innovation that can be applied in Australia.

One of the programs I studied was the [Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund](#) in Rwanda, which is dedicated to the conservation, protection, and study of the critically endangered mountain gorillas. The charity was set up in 1978 by Dr Fossey, and is an excellent example of a long-standing threatened species research and conservation program.

I was able to visit the [Ellen DeGeneres Campus](#), to meet dedicated staff and researchers, and to spend time with the Head Warden of Volcanoes National Park. Memorably, I also did the exclusive gorilla trek, which was probably the most amazing wildlife interaction experience I have had; and I have been lucky enough to have quite a few.

Only very small groups (six people) trek into the mountains each day, to spend one hour with one of the 24 gorilla family groups that live in the area. Our gorilla family had more than a dozen members including a giant silverback and a newborn baby gorilla (*see front cover photo*). We observed them, while they observed and chose to interact with us. They went about their business of eating, resting and playing obviously knowing we were there but not at all bothered by our presence.

The demise of this species is heartbreaking, but their recovery is inspirational. There has been a steady increase in numbers, since 1989, to over 600 now residing in Rwanda—thanks to the work of both the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and of the Rwandan Government. But the recovery program is intense and costly, and I gained some valuable insights into how they have successfully sustained the recovery program.

Dr Manda Page

2022 AGM Report

The November 2022 AGM was well-attended, with many members and guests remaining to enjoy listening to our guest speaker, Dr Trevor Lambkin, talk about '*The Mistletoe butterflies of Brisbane: their beautiful and complex relationships*'

During the AGM, Reports to Members were well-received, and Committee Members standing for re-election were duly re-appointed. We are also delighted to welcome Anna Williamson and Simon English to the Committee. The full list of members of the Management Committee is on our [website](#).



ABOVE: A wonderful Moggill photograph, as used in the 2022 AGM slides (credit: Chris Bruton).

Please note that the Public Relations Officer role remains vacant. If YOU are able to support the PR and events program do contact Sandy, Tracey, Zoe or myself.

Chris Bruton

Froggin' Around: News

In a recent article in *The Local Bulletin* (March 2023), I described how we can all help our local frogs by working in habitat restoration in parks, or in riparian areas next to creeks. In urban areas you can also help by providing a frog friendly garden, including a frog pond (see the Queensland Frog Society [website](#)).

These can be very successful. For example, one of our locals had bleating frogs (*Litoria dentata*) breeding in



their water feature (see left, image credit Joanne Aitkens).

During the breeding event their calls drowned out sound from the TV, and resulted in hundreds of tadpoles. This is nature having many, hoping a few will develop into adults and continue to breed at that site.

As well as natural water features, a recent trend is to make a frog hotel. There have been a number of articles that have shared helpful advice as to how to do this, including Jodie Rowley's [Australian Geographic article](#), and Ashleigh Millar's *Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland* step-by-step [guide](#).

If you are thinking of having a go, apparently even Bunnings can supply advice and materials. However, I'm guessing that there are few frogs who have received the lavish surroundings and attention given to Frodrick—a lone frog on a fence who was given a [3D-printed home](#) and is now a [TikTok](#) sensation with 400,00 followers and a [video](#) watched 25 million times. So do let me know if *you* decide to try producing a 3D-printed frog hotel!

A good source of frog news is [The Conversation](#). Two recent articles, although not having a local link, may be of interest. The first is a story about [Chernobyl black frogs](#). Following the 1986 accident, the site of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant has become the largest nature reserve in Europe. Recently, normally normal bright green eastern tree frogs (*Hyla orientalis*) have been detected with an increasing black tint. Melanin protects against radiation, and the increasing radiation has resulted in a rapid evolutionary response—seen in the dominance of the Chernobyl black frogs. A second article suggests that [frogs lived alongside dinosaurs](#). In the Geiselal region in central Germany, hundreds of frog fossils were found in a mass grave in Geiselal's 45-million-year-old swampy coastlands—and it now appears that they died from exhaustion while mating. Sex can be a death trap for modern frog species, where individuals are regularly overcome by exhaustion and drown.

While this is extreme, a far more common cause of frog mortality is humans destroying habitat. Frogs have survived several climate changes and extinction events on earth. But several frog species are now extinct—and, with changing climate, frogs are being hit hard. Frogs can migrate short distances from drying ponds but will not survive due to loss of their habitat, becoming vulnerable to disease.

So perhaps it's time for us all to be building those frog hotels? And if you want to offer a bed & breakfast service, you might like to know that tadpoles can be fed with boiled lettuce leaves!

Phil Bird

Rain, Rain, Come Again

We have had a very dry summer, with recent plantings wilting under the sun. I find this rather strange; we were supposed to be getting towards the end of a La Nina weather event, so I thought that we may have received more rain than usual.

However, the early March Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) forecast advises that rainfall in much of Australia—including around Qld and in South-east Qld—will be drier than usual in this next three-month period. Following on from the last few months, of what has proven to be much drier than usual weather,

this does not bode well for our Catchment revegetation programs over this Autumn period. My review of [BoM data](#) reveals that in the Kenmore/Brookfield/Pullenvale/Upper Brookfield areas, rainfall for the period from January to 5 March was 174.2 mm; a serious shortfall when compared with average rainfall of 423.1 mm. This has been exacerbated by a slight increase in the average temperatures over this period (30.7°C versus 28.9°C, possibly due to a reduction in cloud cover, with the decrease in wet weather?). This is more than a little ironic considering that those of us revegetating creek-side areas were, back in early March a year ago, dealing with the devastation caused by the serious flooding at that time. We can only hope that the forecast low Autumn rainfall is pessimistic, and that rainfall will exceed predictions **Bruce Dymock**

Membership Reminder

MCCG thanks you for your support. If you are yet to renew your membership with us in 2023—or have yet to join—then it's a simple online process (just visit the [MCCG membership page](#)). Alternatively, visit our website to download the [membership form](#) (your completed forms can be submitted at MCCG events, or post to MCCG Secretary, PO Box 657, Kenmore QLD 4069).

Please direct any queries about new or existing MCCG Memberships to Suzy Philp, Membership Secretary, at: membership@moggillcreek.org.au (and note this new Membership email address for your records).

Your membership plays an important part in the ongoing conservation and improvement of our local environment. Thank you. **Chris Bruton**

e-newsletter? Just email the MCCG Secretary with 'email newsletter' in the subject line, and add your name and address in the message. Thank you.

Seeds: Celery Wood

We currently have good supplies of seedlings of celery wood, *Polyscias elegans*, at our Nursery (see front cover photo). Although this species is widespread in the Brisbane area, and not uncommon, we have very rarely had celery wood in stock in the past. Apparently the common name of celery wood is due to leaves smelling of celery when crushed. Celery wood is a sparingly branched tree to 25m in height, with usually twice-pinnate leaves up to 1m long. If you visit our Nursery, you may spot a nearby



celery wood tree (pictured left), near the track up to the dam wall. The small flowers are born in a terminal branched panicle. The small 2-seeded fruit are reported to be eaten by a wide range of birds. Celery wood occurs naturally in various rainforest

situations from north-eastern NSW to far north Queensland.

Bryan Hacker

Weeds: Morning Glory

Have you noticed large, trumpet-shaped blue flowers on a vine growing along Gold Creek Road over most of the summer? This is probably *Ipomoea indica* (blue morning glory—pictured below), although it might possibly be *I. purpurea* (common morning glory). The species largely differ on the length and pointedness of their sepals (structures outside the petals): long-pointed in *I. indica*, 14–22 mm long, not long-pointed and less than 15mm long in *I. purpurea* when in flower. Both species are listed as occurring on Mt Coot-tha in



Picture: *Ipomoea indica* (blue morning glory), image: Bryan Hacker.

the BCC Mt Coot-tha Forest Management Plan (2003) and listed as weeds, they are targets for removal.

Leaf blades of *I. indica* are heart-shaped or 3-lobed up to 17cm long and wide. Clusters of several flowers are born in leaf axils, the trumpet-shaped corolla (petals) bright blue, 5–8 cm long. It is listed as a weed in all states, except the NT and Tasmania, and is a significant environmental weed in Qld, NSW and Victoria.

Bryan Hacker

ABC Brisbane: Dr Karl

Anna Williamson submitted some MCCG questions, which were featured in Dr Karl's segment that went to air on 2 February, 2023. A fantastic way to raise the profile of the MCCG—and to resolve a few pressing science-related questions!

Moggill Magic: Froggin' Phil

Ed Frazer's popular Moggill Magic feature highlights the work of individuals who are making significant contributions to the catchment. When you have read Ed's latest Moggill Magic feature, don't forget to turn to page 7 for Phil's latest Froggin' news.

Phil Bird's interest in frogs got a start in unusual circumstances in the 1990's, when he phoned wildlife radio personality Ric Natrass about a 'frog' he had found. Ric said he would come out to see it, and quickly identified it as a juvenile Cane Toad. That didn't affect Phil's enthusiasm. The encounter resulted in Phil having a close friendship with Ric—and Ric suggested Phil join the newly formed Brisbane Frog Society (now the [Queensland Frog Society](#)).



The 1990's were busy times for frog enthusiasts, with community concerns about the loss of frogs. 'Orphan tadpoles' were collected from drying puddles, fed with boiled lettuce leaves, and held in containers such as broccoli boxes. Phil (pictured, above; image credit Ed Frazer) has some great stories of phone calls in the middle of the night, with enthusiasts rescuing frogs and tadpoles or reserving tadpoles for relocation. As the group's activities broadened to undertaking frog surveys, and also to lobbying Councils to retain ephemeral pools (rather than drain wet areas with concrete channels), so interest in frogs became more sophisticated. At this time, the fungus disease *Chytridiomycosis* was causing the die-off of frogs throughout the world. It was recognised that moving tadpoles around the city was probably contributing to the problem. The group then concentrated more on improving the natural habitat for frogs, and also on

improving awareness of the problems facing frogs (working with schools, and lobbying local and State Governments). Members concentrated on the retention of ephemeral areas—fencing off breeding sites, and stopping frog habitat drainage by replacing concrete drains with more natural waterways.

Ric Natrass, as part of the work of the Frog Society, produced a [frog poster](#) that was widely distributed around schools to help with identification. But frog surveys are now much easier with the development and use of the [Frog ID app](#) on mobile phones.

When asked about frogs in the Moggill Creek Catchment area, Phil said that we still have a *Chytridiomycosis* problem—noting that, during the recent wet weather, a number of frogs have been seen out during daytime, obviously affected by the fungus. But the recent wet weather has clearly been good for local frogs. 'During wet periods like we have just experienced, the frogs breed up in large numbers,' Phil said. 'Species we haven't heard for several years reappear, such as the Species we haven't heard for several years reappear, such as the great barred frog (*Mixophyes fasciolatus*).'

Phil said that no recent surveys have been conducted looking at frogs in the Catchment, noting 'We should do a base-line survey before we start on development projects in wetland areas so we can identify what works in creating good habitat for the frogs.'



ABOVE: A Frog Hotel (Image supplied by Phil Bird)

Phil is a strong advocate for people setting up frog ponds in suburban backyards—highlighting that 'water features are not only good for the frogs, as they also attract birds and snakes. And they are a great educational resource for kids.' Naturally, cane toads are still on Phil's sights; as he observes, 'the sheer numbers of cane toads puts pressure on the habitat and food sources for the native frogs.'

Phil's regular *Froggin' Around* feature is a popular column in the MCGG Newsletter. We are fortunate to benefit from Phil's expertise, and to learn from his many years of practical experience.

Ed Frazer