

Bridgetown-Greenbushes Community Landcare

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BRIDGETOWN-GREENBUSHES COMMUNITY LANDCARE OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

The Community Landcare Office provides opportunities to assist landholders in actively managing their land, through improving native vegetation, controlling weed and pest species, encouraging native wildlife and monitoring water sources, on their properties, through up-to-date resources and information. This interaction with the local community has aided the Community Landcare Officer (CLO) to deliver relevant workshops and provide on-site property visits and current information for best practice landcare in the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Shire. The CLO has engaged with a wide range of people in the community including town, semi-rural and rural residents, community groups, the Shire and related services, along with people planning on purchasing property in the region.

The Bridgetown-Greenbushes Shire continues to provide funding to the Blackwood Environment Society (BES), who manage and administer the landcare office and CLO position for two days a week at no cost to the Shire, ensuring that the maximum amount of funds provided by the Shire are directed to on-ground activities and outcomes. This funding enables more landcare services to be accessed by residents of the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes. The BES retain a 'Buy Local' policy to ensure that any funding received is spent supporting local businesses and contractors within the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, with the exception of where goods or equipment required are unavailable locally.

This report highlights the achievements of Bridgetown-Greenbushes Community Landcare in 2022 - 2023.



Helping Hands Bushcare volunteers enjoying morning tea after a big morning of work.

HELPING HANDS BUSHCARERS GROUP:

The Helping Hands Bushcarers are dedicated group of residents, community volunteers and people with disabilities, who give their time on a fortnightly basis, assisting the Community Landcare Officer to maintain several Bushland

Reserves within the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes. Over the 2022-23 financial year, the Helping Hands Bushcarers have contributed 448 volunteer hours, across 26 Helping Hands Bushcare events. This voluntary contribution is valued at approximately \$22,400, making the Helping Hands Bushcarers a major asset to the Shire and the Blackwood Environment Society's conservation and land management achievements. In addition, a further eighteen volunteers carried out over 62 hours of planting, weed removal and training valued at over \$3,100.

Volunteer activities over the past year have included the monitoring and control of environmental weeds, general and historic rubbish and glass collection and removal, site preparation works and revegetation planting, walk trail maintenance and native seed collection. Where possible recyclable rubbish collected, is taken to 'Containers for Change', with the funds raised returning extra financial support to the Helping Hands Bushcarers efforts. Approximately 154 hours of Community Landcare Officer time assisted these activities through on-ground support and the provision of all tools, equipment, administration, training, and refreshments.

Helping Hands volunteers have worked on the following Shire Reserves in 2022-23: Maslin Reserve, Layman St Reserve, Geegeelup Brook Parkland, Abbots Reserve, Fire Station Reserve, Dorothy Scott Bushland, Tweed Rd Flora Reserve, Greenbushes Pool and Schwenkes Dam, Somme Creek Parklands, Sunnyside Reserve, Allnut St Reserve, and the Bridgetown Sportsground Bushland.

This committed group of Shire residents will continue to volunteer with the Helping Hands Bushcarers for the coming year.

The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes Parks and Gardens Department and Talison Lithium Environment & Community Department staff kindly assisted with some of the HH activities.

**See Appendix 1 for a summary of HH activities.*



Helping Hands Bushcarers planting at Abbots Reserve for the 2022 National Tree Day event.



Helping Hands Bushcarers removing weeds at Sunnyside Reserve.



Rubbish removed from Dorothy Scott Reserve by the Helping Hands Bushcarers.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS:

Bridgetown-Greenbushes Community Landcare has delivered several workshops, and demonstrations in 2022-23, along with attending four regional agricultural shows and events-

- 2022 National Tree Day planting event in July was held at Abbots Reserve, on the Yornup Brook, with over 500 native seedlings planted. Further planting events were held at the Layman St Reserve, Geegeelup Brook Parklands, and Somme Creek Parklands, where several hundred more seedlings donated by the Blackwood Environment Society were planted to increase the habitat and biodiversity outcomes for these reserves.
- The CLO attended the 2022 Bridgetown Agricultural Show, 2023 Boyup Brook ‘Storm in a Teacup’, Ladies Day, Transitions Town Regenerative Festival 2023, and the 2023 Balingup Small Farm Field Day. These events were utilised to engage with the community and provide information of all aspects of land management.
- A community engagement event was held in February with Merryn Pryor from Birdlife Australia to promote and recruit volunteers for the 2023 Great Cocky Count. Merryn talked about the importance of the three Black Cockatoo species, touching on their breeding and habitat requirements.
- Simon Cherriman from The Re-Cyc-Ology Project facilitated a Nestbox Building workshop in February, funded by the BES. Simon gave an extremely interesting presentation, followed by assisting participants to construct four different styles of nest boxes to be installed in the local Shire reserves.



Simon Cherriman from The Re-Cyc-Ology Project teaching participants how to build nesting boxes.



Blackwood Environment Society stall at 2023 Balingup Small Farm Field Day.



Promotional posters for some of the Community Engagement activities.

BRIDGETOWN-GREENBUSHES SHIRE RESERVES:

The Community Landcare Officer has coordinated the events and supplied the tools, equipment and refreshments for the many activities undertaken by the Helping Hands Bushcare volunteers on Shire Bushland Reserves.

- **Maslin Reserve-**
 - Hand weeded area of Montpellier Broom, that germinated following the planned burn.
 - Weeded revegetation area.
- **Geegelup Brook Parkland-**
 - Weeded revegetation area beside the creek.
 - Cut and removed dead and broken vegetation.
 - Removed rubbish.
 - Planted around 50 mature Kangaroo Paws, plants donated from BES.
- **Fire Station Reserve (next to the Shire Depot)-**
 - Collected and removed historic rubbish and glass.
 - Cut and dabbed suckering weed wattles.
 - Dug out Watsonia.
- **Layman St Reserve-**
 - Weeded around the revegetation seedlings in the Hakea Seed Orchard, collected tree guards and stakes from previous years plantings.
 - Planted approx 300 local seedlings in and around the Hakea Seed Orchard.
 - Whipper snipped grasses and hand pulled/dug out other weeds in the Hakea Seed Orchard.
 - Sprayed grasses in Hakea Seed Orchard.
 - Watered seedlings.
- **Abbotts Reserve (next to Brockman Hwy)-**
 - Planted and guarded approx 500 seedlings from local plant species beside the creekline where extensive weed control has been voluntarily undertaken by Deon Abbott.
 - Follow up weed control of bulbs, thistles, bridal creeper and Dolichos Pea in revegetation area.

- Removal of previous years tree guards.
- **Tweed Rd Flora Reserve-**
 - Continued to monitor and remove more regrowth of the large patch of Aloes dug up and removed previously.
 - Collected historic rubbish after fire break recreation works.
- **Somme Creek Parklands-**
 - Cut, bagged, and removed weeds (Wild Celery, dock, thistles) growing in the creekline area.
 - Cut and piled dead vegetation and broken branches, reinstated the path to the public art works beside the ponds.
 - Rubbish collection and removal.
 - Planted around 50 Melaleuca seedlings, plants donated from BES.
- **Allnut St Reserve-**
 - Removed large infestation of Watsonia from around old building site pad.
- **Sunnyside Reserve-**
 - Collected and removed historic rubbish and broken glass.
 - Removed African Daisy, Bridal Creeper, Watsonia, Cleavers, Vetch, and Wild Roses.

- **Dorothy Scott Bushland-**
 - Collection of rubbish from tracks and bushland area. Removal of garden furniture used in cubbies made by local kids.
 - Collection of historic rubbish from control burnt area.
 - Removed weed patches of bulbs, Watsonia, Bridal Creeper and Lavender.

- **Greenbushes Pool & Schwenke's Dam-**
 - Pruned overhanging vegetation along the walk trails and boardwalk.
 - Weeded watsonia and weedy wattle around the pool area and walk trails.

- **Sportsground Bushland-**
 - Collected and removed rubbish, glass, and historic rubbish.
 - Removed broom and weed wattles.



Helping Hands volunteers removing dead and broken branches from Somme Creek Parkland.

WATER MONITORING:

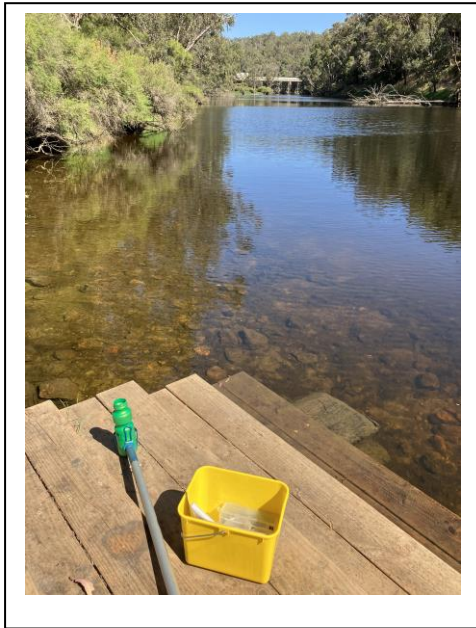
Water monitoring was carried out monthly on the Blackwood River just upstream of the River Park, Somme Creek near Barlee St, Geegeelup Brook behind the Fire & Rescue Station, and the Shire Dam upstream of the Cidery. Ec (electrical conductivity) is a measure of the salinity of the water and is measured in micro-siemens per centimetre ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$).

*Appendix 2 is a *Salinity Scale Reference Sheet* that will assist in interpreting these results.

The water monitoring results are reported to the Shire Council in the CLO Monthly Report to the Shire’s SAC and are sent to the Shire Waste and Environment Officer.

- **Community and landholders-**

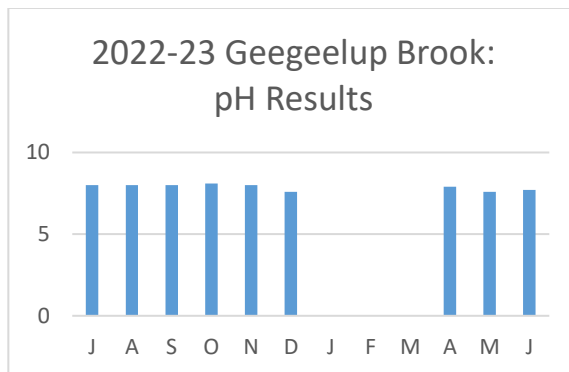
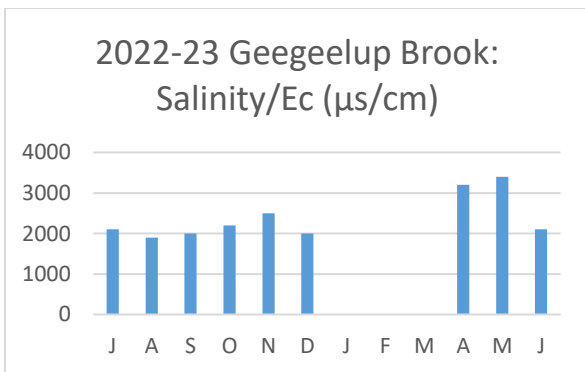
The Community Landcare Office provides a free water testing service for local landholders to monitor the seasonal changes in the water quality of their dams, creeks, springs, and bores, and for prospective property purchasers interested in the quality of the water on the property prior to finalising their purchase.



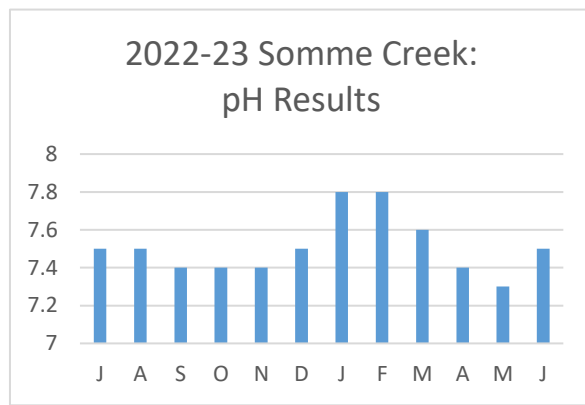
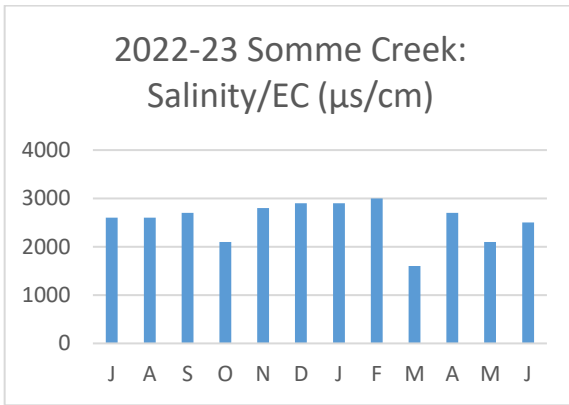
Monthly water quality monitoring site on the Blackwood River as the water rises.

Water monitoring results 2022-23

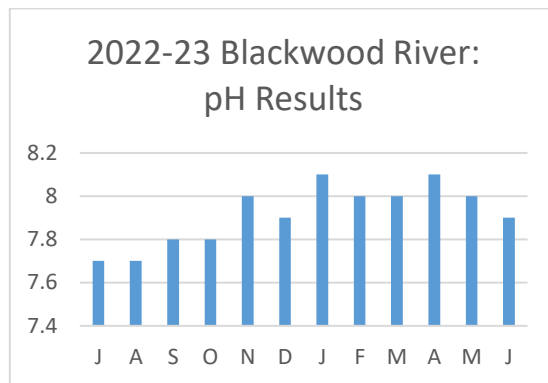
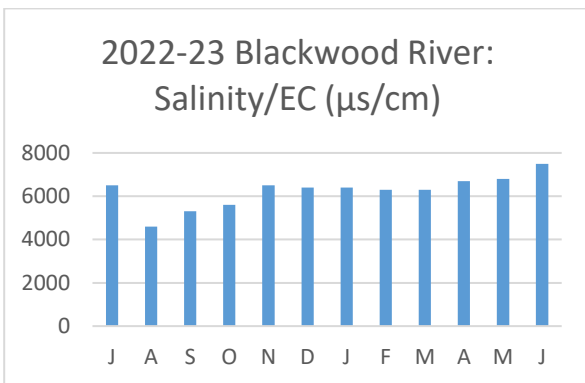
- **Geegeelup Brook-** *sampled in the Memorial Park behind the Fire & Rescue Station (Between Jan-March there was no water in Geegeelup Brook),*



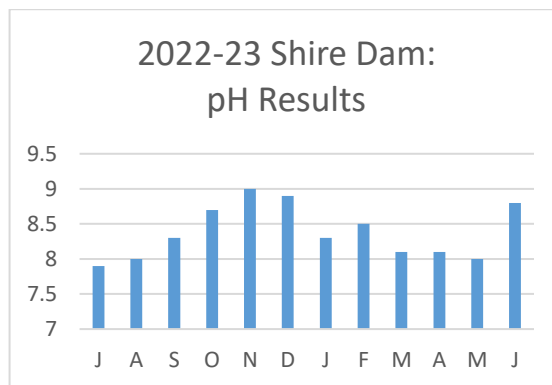
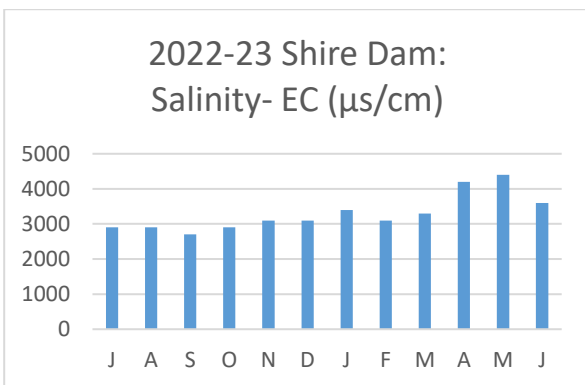
- **Somme Creek-** *sampled at the western side of the pond closest to Barlee Street.*



- **Blackwood River-** *sampled at the canoe ramp east of the Blackwood River Park.*



- **Shire Dam-** *sampled on the dam bank near Edward Rd, Bridgetown.*



COMMUNITY LANDCARE SUPPORT:

● **Shire Residents-**

The Community Landcare Officer has provided support to many Shire residents in town and on semi-rural and rural properties by-

- carrying out site visits and property tours with the landholders to identify native plants, weeds, water testing and any issues that may need prioritising.
- assisting landholders to develop and implement practical and achievable property weed and revegetation management plans.
- providing advice, information, and resources, including motion sensor cameras, to help landholders achieve the best outcomes for their properties.
- lending tools and equipment to landholders for their revegetation projects.

- delivering free workshops and educational events to the community.
 - providing free recycled tree guards and stakes to landholders and community groups for their own revegetation projects.
 - Providing assistance and technical support to landholders who are eligible for State and Federal Government grants with developing their grant applications,
 - Updating Community Landcare social media pages are regularly updated, and any upcoming events are promoted through these pages and the Bridgetown Community Facebook Page.
- **Local Schools-**
 - The CLO facilitated two work experience students for one week, in November, from Bridgetown District High School. The students were involved in activities at the BES Community Landcare Nursery, Helping Hands Bushcarers, property visits with the CLO, camera monitoring, construction of native bee hotels for the Bridgetown Agricultural Show, removal of weeds from shire reserves and general day-to-day CLO activities.
- **Shire staff and Councillors-**
 - Providing background information on a range of local environmental and natural resource management issues when requested by Shire Councillors and staff.
 - Liaising with the Shire management for assistance with some of the Helping Hands activities on Shire reserves (rubbish and weed pickup).

GRANTS AND FUNDING:

- **South West Catchments Council 'Pollinator Project'-**

This Australian Government funded project ran from 2018-2023, encouraging and assisting land managers to protect remnant vegetation and to revegetate areas of their properties with a wide variety of local native plant species to increase the number and range of pollinators and other beneficial insects for improved production, targeting avocado and fruit orchards in the Blackwood Valley and canola crops in Boscabel. These on-ground works, also aided resilience in their horticultural and agricultural operations in the event of European Honeybee population collapse from the introduction of one of the many diseases impacting overseas bee colonies. SWCC contracted the Blackwood Environment Society to deliver the Blackwood Valley on-ground works programs with the participating landholders. The Community Landcare Office delivered this project on behalf of the BES.



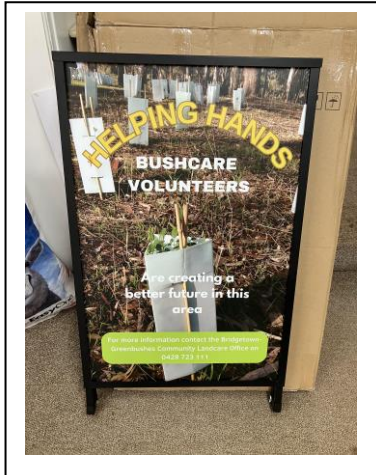
Revegetation area at Warrannini Farm 2023.

The project is now complete, finishing at the end of June 2023, with all three properties involved successfully undertaking a total of 2.45km of stock exclusion fencing and 7ha of revegetation with over 17,000 seedlings.

- **Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal ‘Strengthening Rural Communities’**

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) are a not-for-profit organisation, that connect common purposes and funding from government, business, and philanthropy with the genuine local needs of rural people and places.

The BES was awarded \$10,000 from FRRR “Strengthening Rural Communities’ program in December 2022, to provide support to the existing Helping Hands Bushcare volunteers through granting them with updated personal protective clothing, equipment, and training. The BES would also like to encourage new volunteers to join the group through displayed signage at volunteer activities and a volunteer appreciation event.



Helping Hands sign purchased with funding from FRRR grant.



Helping Hands hats purchased with funding from FRRR grant.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER GROUPS and ORGANISATIONS:

The Community Landcare Office continues to actively engage and work with other Natural Resource Management groups in Bridgetown and the south-west including the Ashbil Community Garden, Greenbushes Community Garden, Southern Forests Community Landcare, Blackwood Biosecurity Inc, Blackwood Valley Small Landholders, Blackwood Basin Group, Talison Lithium, Transition Towns Bridgetown, WA Landcare Network, WABSI and the South West NRM (former South West Catchment Council).

The CLO and Helping Hands Bushcarers assisted in the construction and installation of Artificial Floating Islands, undertaken with the Blackwood Basin Group at Schwenkes Dam in winter last year. The islands were constructed with funding from Talison Lithium and installed at the original Waterbird Project site adding to and enhancing the existing Floating Islands that were installed in 2014.



Floating Islands being towed into place by BBG at Schwenkes Dam.

Presented is a brief overview of the many and varied activities undertaken over the 2022 -23 financial year, should any councillors and/or Shire staff have any queries, or would like more information regarding any of the projects and activities in this annual report please contact me at the Community Landcare Office to arrange a meeting or to view some of the project areas that we are working in. Your interest is most welcome.

The Blackwood Environment Society would like to acknowledge and thank the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Shire Council for their continued support of the Community Landcare Officer position and the service that it provides to our community and to the management of our Shire Bushland Reserves.

Karrie Williamson

Bridgetown-Greenbushes Community Landcare Officer

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Work days: Tues-Thurs

Ngala kaaditj Noongar moort keyen kaadak nitja boodja.

We acknowledge the Noongar people as the traditional custodians of the land that we live and work on.

Appendix 1: Summary of Helping Hands activities 2021-22:

Maslin Reserve				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
23/06/22	9	23.5	23.5	6
19/01/23	10	25	48.5	6

Layman Street Reserve				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
04/08/22	11	29.5	29.5	6
17/11/22	6	14.5	44	6

Allnut Street Reserve				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
01/12/22	7	13	13	6

Abbotts Reserve				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
14/07/22	8	22.5	22.5	6
08/06/23	5	15	37.5	6

Fire Station Reserve				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
02/06/22	9	26.5	26.5	6

Dorothy Scott Bushland Reserve				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
20/10/22	6	12	12	6
03/11/22	6	17	29	6

Greenbushes Pool, Greenbushes Arboretum, Schwenkes Dam				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
18/08/22	6	18	18	6
02/03/23	7	19.5	37.5	6

Somme Creek Parkland				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
15/09/22	5	12	12	6
16/03/23	8	23.5	23.5	6
30/03/23	6	17.5	17.5	6
18/05/23	6	18	18	6
21/06/23	6	17.5	88.5	6

Tweed Rd Flora Reserve				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
20/04/23	5	14	14	6

Geegelup Brook				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
01/09/22	12	33	33	6
16/02/23	7	18.5	18.5	6
04/05/23	7	17.5	69	6

Sunnyside Reserve				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
06/10/22	5	16	16	6

Sportsground Bushland				
Date	Volunteers	Hours Worked	Total	CLO Support
02/02/23	9	24.5	24.5	6

Others				
Date	Volunteers	Activity	Location	Total Hours Worked
21/07/22	10	Tree Planting for Talison	Old Bowie Farm	37
8/09/22	1	Sprayed hakea seed orchard	Layman St Reserve	4
10/11/22	1	Whipper snip hakea seed orchard	Layman St Reserve	2
17/11/22	2	Weeding Broom	Bushland behind sports ground	3
02/03/23	2	Water seedlings	Layman St Reserve	4
08/06/23	2	First Aid Training	Bridgetown	12
TOTAL	18			62

Summary 2022-23:			
Total HH Bushcare Events-	No of Reserves	Total Volunteer Hours-	Total CLO Support-
26	12	500	156

Appendix 2: Water Monitoring Salinity Reference Sheet:

Salinity Scale Reference Sheet

