

CAMBRIDGE COASTCARE

www.cambridgecoastcare.com.au

WINTER 2017 NEWSLETTER



Arresting dune blow-outs at Floreat

Our 2017 Coastwest project is to arrest the easterly movement of sand dunes towards West Coast Highway in the Floreat dog-beach area. It is a joint project with Town of Cambridge with a budget of \$26,500 funded by the Town and Coastwest. A number of blow-outs are causing loss of vegetation and movement of sand over the crest of the dunes, letting them advance slowly towards infrastructure in City Beach.



The blow-outs are being accelerated by people walking in them and this is particularly an issue at the path 16 area – the bitumised car park there is popular with passers-by on the highway, dog-walkers and surfers, who find that the dunes provide an easier path back from the beach than the very steep path there – they also provide a good look-out.

Our fencing of the area is ineffective in limiting the human traffic because of the build-up of sand blown up the surface of the dunes there – the sand has been pushed back down the slope three times since we rebuilt the fencing there last winter but it builds up again quickly, indicating the extent of sand movement in the area.

So our project was to lay strips of coir matting on

the bare dunes and to plant the matting with hardy species (primarily spinifex) to create a cover of vegetation which is intended to catch the sand being blown over the dune and build up the western side of the dune. The matting was laid on 13 and 14 June – the blow-out north of path 13 was matted on 13 June by students from Leeming Senior High, and the blow-outs at path 16 were matted on 14 June by a CVA team.

We commenced planting on the northern side of path 16 on 18 June with a turn-out of 31 members and volunteers – the best turnout we have had for a long time. We planted over 700 plants in ideal conditions – the ground was still damp from the rain we had on 13 June, we had excellent weather from the perspective of human comfort, and subsequently we recorded 39mm of rainfall during the week, which the plants needed to allow them to establish in the barren dunes.



Planting continued in the area south of path 16 on 2 July with 22 members and volunteers. We planted over 500 plants again in reasonable but cold conditions, good going considering many of the spinifex needed to be planted as deep as a trowel could reach. Most recently we planted over 500 plants in the matted area north of path 13 on July 16 – this was achieved by just 13 members and volunteers.



We have about 400 plants to go in on 30 July as there are quite a few gaps in the plantings we have done to date. As the photos show, we already have a good level of plants and preliminary indications are that they are surviving well. We had regular rain since our plantings with indications of good rain to come. So perhaps all we need is more rain between now and the summer and to do what can be done to minimise the human traffic through the planted areas.

Baby bobtails about



Living in Perth it's hard not to be familiar with bobtail lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa rugosa*). Some of you with gardens may be lucky enough to have them resident, keeping slug, snail and strawberry numbers in check. They love the warmth, which means too many are killed by cars as they pause to enjoy the heat while crossing the road, particularly

from August onwards, when the adults emerge from hibernation. That's next month so keep an eye out for them.

Between March and April, the females give birth to between one and three live young. Unlike their mother, the young will not hibernate. They make a small indentation under leaves and detritus (as do the hibernating adults) but, whenever the sun's shining, the young will come out to bask in the heat, flattening their small bodies for maximum exposure. Their size and lack of adult armour make them particularly vulnerable to being taken by raptors, kookaburras, ravens etc and to dog attack. Humans stomping through the bush are also a hazard.

So please be aware, when moving through the bush or lifting heavy objects around the garden, that there may be a young bobtail basking or hiding. (thanks to Jean Beattie for this item – ed.)

Interested in Coastcare?

If you, your neighbours or friends are interested in more information about Cambridge Coastcare or our Adopt-a-Dune process, please look us up on Facebook or website (see below). If you would like to join Cambridge Coastcare, send us an email to cambridgecoastcare@gmail.com and we'll get in touch. Membership costs just \$30 pa for a family, \$20 single, and \$10 concession for students and pensioners. Membership benefits include prompt communication of planned activities with text reminders, and our annual Christmas party. Where else can you feed the family for such a reasonable subscription?