



## International Environmental Weed Foundation Annual Report – June 2014

*International Environmental Weed Foundation is pleased to present a report on our activities during the year from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014.*

### **International Environmental Weed Foundation (IEWF)**

#### **also known as Habitat Network and The Habitat**

IEWF continues to provide weed identification and weed management information and advice. Our website [www.iewf.org](http://www.iewf.org) is well used mostly by people looking for simple visual identification of common weeds and weed management information. We also respond to requests for plant identification, provide information related to ecological restoration and run ecological restoration projects. Projects such as **Habitat Network**, **The Habitat** community native plant nursery and food garden and the **Hunter's Hill small bird corridor** all continue to flourish please see below for more detail.

IEWF manages the following websites:

[www.iewf.org](http://www.iewf.org)

[www.habitatnetwork.org](http://www.habitatnetwork.org)

[www.rncalliance.org](http://www.rncalliance.org)

### **Habitat Network**

Under the Habitat Network banner we have run workshops about Creating Habitat for 2 combined schools environmental days, hosted stalls at 3 major local events, given talks to community groups and we run **The Habitat**. See below for more details.

### **The Habitat - community native plant nursery and community food garden**

The Habitat has now been in operation for 1½ years having officially opened November 2012.

The Habitat is being run as a partnership between IEWF (as part of our Habitat Network project) and City of Ryde. City of Ryde is providing the land and water. Our volunteers co-ordinate and run this facility on a day-to-day basis.



*Volunteers at The Habitat in the community food garden*

Everyone working at The Habitat is a volunteer. All funds earned are put through the books of IEWF and are allocated for The Habitat only to cover running expenses and to expand the facilities. The food garden is an open area (no fences), we invite the local community to help themselves to a little of the produce each day and to share with others.

The Habitat volunteers grow local provenance native plants, using seed and cuttings collected from local bushland, and food plants. They also run 2 worm farms, undertake composting and maintain both the nursery and food garden. Plants are provided at no cost to local restoration projects, undertaken by bushcare volunteers, under the supervision of local Council Bushcare Officers. Plants will be provided at no cost to at least 6 local schools to undertake a National Tree Day event with their students in July 2014. Plants and bottles of worm juice are also sold to the public to help fund the facility. We encourage the local community to visit, volunteer, share produce from the food garden and their knowledge, and importantly learn.

The Habitat provides opportunities for us to engage with a broad audience to share knowledge relating to plants, habitat, sustainable living, ecological restoration and more.

**The Habitat statistics for past 12 months:**

Total volunteer hours	2,921 hours
Total regular volunteers	34
Total casual volunteers	32
Recorded visitors	1,520



*Kel Lai received a Volunteer Recognition Award at the City of Ryde awards evening for his dedicated work at The Habitat. He was accompanied by The Habitat coordinators Pamela Ward (left) and Bev Debrincat (right).*

Total plants distributed to various locations was 3,813 (plus total in stock at end of June 2014 was 3,070) = total plant produced 6,883 for the 12 months ending June 30 2014.

1,237 of these plants were provided to bushcare sites, in Ryde and Hunter’s Hill Council areas. Bushcare being the volunteer bush regeneration movement which occurs around Sydney, similar to Landcare in rural areas. Plants are also utilised within the community food garden and in the demonstration habitat area, sensory garden and aboriginal medicine / food garden.

11 Workshops were run at The Habitat by City of Ryde and hosted by our volunteers. These covered worm farming, composting, food gardening, and LOMO (leftover makeover). The Habitat volunteers also organised and hosted a special aboriginal cultural day in November 2013. Our aboriginal partners (through The Habitat), from Blacks Palace near Barcaldine in Queensland and from Narromine in New South Wales, ran the workshop. It was attended by 80 people many of them between 8 and 14 years of age. Cultural practices were discussed and activities included totem carving, boomerang throwing and cultural games.

The Habitat hosted a corporate group's environmental day where they learnt about the nursery, undertook nursery activities and did some weed removal and planting along nearby Shrimpton's Creek. The Habitat volunteers have also undertaken planting and weed removal along Shrimpton's Creek and will continue to do this in the future with the aim of restoring small bird habitat.

Advice has been provided to other community groups and Council run Community Services in both Ryde and Hunter's Hill with regards to starting more community gardens.



#### **Native Bee Research Project**

University of Sydney undertook a research project studying how native bees utilise community gardens along a corridor from the City of Sydney to the Lane Cove River. The Habitat community garden was one of their study sites. Talks will be run at The Habitat later in 2014 to allow the researchers to present their results.

### **IEWF Activities**

#### **Support for Transition Epping and Permaculture North**

IEWF representatives continued to provide support for activities organised by Transition Epping. The Habitat provided plants to Transition Epping and Permaculture North as a promotion.

#### **Greenwood Park Bush Regeneration**

Johnson Controls donated funds to IEWF, as they have done for the previous 3 years, which were used to employ professional bush regeneration company National Trust to undertake invasive vine control at Greenwood Park. The staff from Johnson Controls also undertook some supervised primary weeding activities between Greenwood and ELS Hall Parks.

#### **Grants**

IEWF didn't apply for or win any grants this year, however we did support several applications by other organisations.

**St Ignatius College's** application for a NSW Environmental Grant was supported. No news on this one yet.

Support was given for the **Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre's** application for a Norman Wettenhall Small Environmental Grant for funding to develop an educational iBook - for which they were successful. This project involved research and data collection with regards to habitat as well as the production of an interactive book. Their iBook on Ringtail Possums was published in June 2014 and is great fun as well as educational.

Bird survey information from the Hunter's Hill small bird habitat corridor project was provided as baseline data for a **combined Parramatta River Councils** grant project called "Native habitat recovery in the Parramatta River catchment".

### **Greater Sydney Landcare Network**

IEWF is working with Local Land Services, other networks and groups to create a new umbrella network which aims to provide support, leverage funding and foster cross pollination of ideas, as well as forge closer links between professional and volunteer bush regenerators across the Greater Sydney area.

### **Bushland and Environment Advisory Committee**

With support from the bushcare groups of Ryde and Ryde-Hunter's Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society, IEWF under the umbrella of Volunteer Bush Regenerators' Network has been successful in lobbying for the formation of a Bushland and Environment Advisory Committee. This committee now has representatives from 9 groups including IEWF who will work with City of Ryde in an advisory capacity to develop a Biodiversity Plan for Ryde and also monitor and advise on relevant issues.

### **Environmental Lobbying**

Two activities have especially attracted our attention—Brush Farm Park Master Plan which proposed clearing a view corridor through the middle of the bushland and a Dosing Unit to be built by Sydney Water in Pembroke Park along Terry's Creek. IEWF has made submissions and attended consultation sessions. A submission was also made with regards to the NSW Natural Resources Commission's Weed Management Review.

### **Promotions, events and workshops**

The Habitat and Habitat Network were promoted at stalls that we ran at West Ryde Fair, Mocooboola Festival in Hunter's Hill, Field of Mars Discovery Day and Granny Smith Fair in Ryde.

Habitat workshops were run for Loreto Normanhurst Girls High School's Bushcare Day and Lane Cove River Catchment Day at St Ignatius College. Talks were also provided for other environmental groups such as Castlecrag Conservation Society which covered Restoring Natural Capital and Habitat corridors and connections.

One of our representatives also regularly attends the Ryde Environment Education Network (REEN) and Green Schools Network meetings.

### **Birdlife - Birds in Schools Program**

To assist this program IEWF introduced the Birdlife Australia project coordinator to our key contacts within several local schools and they have since undertaken activities for this project within the schools.

*Workshop at The Habitat*



## **Hunter's Hill Small Bird Corridor**

IEWF, as part of the Habitat Network project, continued working with Hunter's Hill Council on the Hunter's Hill small bird corridor project, which extends from the top of Tarban Creek and around the waterfront passing through Riverglade Reserve and Betts Park through to Gladesville Hospital.

Within the small bird corridor are a number of volunteers bushcare groups of which 2 are led by our volunteers in partnership with National Parks and Hunter's Hill Council. These 2 groups are known as Bedlam Bay Bushcare and Tarban Bridge Bushcare.

Activities this year have included weeding and in-fill planting to strengthen these areas.

We attempted to get an artwork created on a pylon under Tarban Creek Bridge in partnership with the combined high schools indigenous student program but due to the aboriginal artist becoming unavailable this didn't happen. We may try again.

## **Hunter's Hill Grant Project—Bird Surveys**

In December 2013 and March 2014 IEWF undertook bird surveys for Hunter's Hill Council as part of their NSW Environmental Trust grant project entitled "Restoring EECs along the Lane Cove River Estuary". With the help of a very knowledgeable local young man, Max, we surveyed 7 locations in Buffalo Creek, Boronia Park and Ferdinand Street Reserve. We will do similar surveys for the next 2 years to monitor changes resulting from bush regeneration works around these sites.

## **Online updates and promotions**

Three websites [www.iewf.org](http://www.iewf.org), [www.habitatnetwork.org](http://www.habitatnetwork.org) and [www.rncalliance.org](http://www.rncalliance.org) have continued to be maintained and enhanced by our volunteers. IEWF has also continued to expand the Habitat Network YouTube channel.

Please have a look at the Activities photos on [www.habitatnetwork.org](http://www.habitatnetwork.org) to view progress and the pictorial history of our various projects.

Google Adwords are very kindly sponsoring the promotion of all of 3 websites which helps to maintain and build on visitor numbers to these websites.

The [Habitat Network Facebook](#) page is still very popular as we engage followers with local native flora and fauna photos, from our seed and cutting collection outings for The Habitat twice a week, and other photos and snippets of information relating to habitat.

## **Education materials**

All IEWF brochures, posters and information sheets are available for use from: [www.habitatnetwork.org/resources.htm](http://www.habitatnetwork.org/resources.htm) and from <http://www.iewf.org/resources.htm>.

Brochures are regularly utilised by other environmental groups and Councils. Restoring Natural Capital presentations were distributed to a local pre-school and to TAFE in South Australia. Images were provided to the Habitat Stepping Stones project being coordinated by Macquarie University.

## Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife Private Land Conservation Grant

A grant for ecological restoration on the land owned by Bev & John Debrincat (both Directors of IEWF) has been running for 2 consecutive 3 year periods. The property is at Delicate Nobby, Crescent Head, NSW. The works have been completed and reports submitted. This was the final year of this grant. We thank the Foundation for its support over the past 6 years. Even though this was a private grant to the owners it has been promoted by IEWF due to the property being a strategic habitat link between Hat Head and Limeburner's Creek National Parks and also the newly recognised Goolawah National Park.



*Aboriginal partners Ricky Powell and Phil Thompson with Victor Dominello MP at The Habitat for the cultural workshop Nov 2013. They were interviewed and filmed for a segment on volunteering by Channel 9 news.*



*Volunteers from The Habitat planting along Shrimpton's Creek*