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# ***Biddip***



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Newsletter of the Toodyay Friends of the River

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*The Toodyay Friends of the River are grateful to the Wheatbelt NRM for their on-going support in producing the Biddip newsletter*



**wheatbelt**  
natural resource  
management

## *Presidents message from Dr. Robyn Taylor*

THIS has certainly been an eventful year and capped off with the Friends being one of three finalists in the 2021 WA Landcare Awards for Community Groups category. The event was held in Kalamunda's Community Centre on the 19<sup>th</sup> November with ten of our members attending. Hearty congratulations to the Katanning Landcare group who won the award. We will try again next year.

The past year included the successful completion of projects such as the Pelham Brook Outlet, and ongoing revegetation of areas along waterways including the Boyagerring Brook behind the school, and on the Mt Anderson side of the Brook. This is along the gravel section of Drummond Street West. About 900 seedlings were planted, grown by our Seed Group. The Shire funded the site preparation and the result was a 90% success rate.

As usual we started with a program of working bees that needed to be flexible as we can't predict the weather. This year it's been incredibly wet with summer bringing heavy rains and high-water levels causing much additional work along the Bilya Walk Track. Red Banks Pool in particular has been a challenge, not helped by the effects of the Main Roads Dept pumping excess water into the area causing seepage and severe bank erosion. This, coupled with the natural but severe scouring of the left bank, required the track to be realigned around the Pool. Project Officer Greg put in extraordinary hours of work to help redress the situation.

Bridget kindly worked out the following statistics for me:

30 members participated in at least some of our activities during the past year.

560 + volunteer hours were spent on practical work. This doesn't include the hours put into administrative work, attending management meetings, preparation and publishing of our newsletter *Biddip*, and researching and writing grant applications and making submissions, such as our recent submission on the government's Draft Native Vegetation Policy.

*According to the Volunteering WA calculation this equals \$45,000.*

Of the 560+ hours, 300 Hours were spent by the Seed Group.

An average of 13 people attended our working bees (Sundays & Mondays) with some members, Sarah and Greg, attending both days.

We ended the year in November with our celebration breakfast and AGM. The highlight was awarding Honorary Life Membership to our valued Patron Viv Read. Viv's wise counsel and experience can always be counted on.

I would like to give special thanks to Sarah Dudley who is leaving our district. Sarah has contributed in so many ways to TFOR including her superb educational writings for our monthly Toodyay Herald column. We extend our very best wishes to her and wish her well in her new life.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to two movements that are making significant changes to our way of looking at and engaging with our world both here in Australia and globally.

One is the process of Reconciliation that is now underway. It is important TFOR builds upon the good rapport that has been established with our local Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation and work with them on joint projects for our mutual benefit.

The other is the global uprising and justifiable anger of our young people calling for our leaders to take Climate Change seriously and put measures in place to protect this beautiful planet.

Let's try and think of ways to engage with our youth, and be part of their education towards understanding and working towards the preservation of our precious natural environment.

*Cover : TFOR Members at the WA Landcare Awards*

*Photo: Mal Gill of 'Farm Weekly' (2021-11-19)*

*L-R; Liz Kington, Viv Read (back), Vicki Warburton, Wayne Clarke, Sarah Dudley (back), Desraé Clarke, Greg Warburton (back), Gary Payne, Bridget Leggett, Robyn Taylor*

# *TFOR a finalist in the WA Landcare Awards for Community Groups by Dr. Bridget Leggett*

“I AM pleased to advise that you have been selected as a finalist in the 2021 WA Landcare Awards in the ACM Community Group Award category.”

What a thrill it was to read those words in late October and to learn that we were one of only three finalists in our category. Nine members represented TFOR at the awards celebrations and presentations, and what a joyous occasion it was.

The citation drew attention to our “*sustained and ongoing contribution to conservation and rehabilitation of the Avon River, its tributaries and its environs within the Shire of Toodyay.*”

This short statement encapsulates an immense amount of work spread across TFOR’s 24 years. Our submission focussed on current and longstanding achievements. The Pelham Brook Outlet Project, the Bilya Walk Track, and the ongoing work of the Seed Group were featured, as were our partnerships with local community groups and organisations.

Foundation member Wayne Clarke was able to compile a pictorial history highlighting a selection of activities and achievements. Looking through these photos it is interesting to note the recurring themes across this time.

The first working bee in 1998 was devoted to removing false bamboo from Duidgee Park, and over the years there have been a series of blitzes on weeds, including bridal creeper, castor oil and tamarix.

In 2000 a Commonwealth Conservation Grant supported a weed survey and the development of a weed management plan.



Above: Removing weeds by young and old

Photo: Wayne Clarke (1998-02-22)

(Continued on page 4)

## WA Landcare Awards for Community Groups (cont)



*Above: Tree planting at Harper Brook*

*Photo: Wayne Clarke (2011-06-19)*

Weed control remains an annual challenge and our September 2021 working bee members tackled the wild oats bordering the John Pyle Walk Track.

Erosion at the Pelham Brook outlet was recorded by the group in 2001. Ten years later the Shire commissioned plans to address this, but no further action was taken. In 2019, TFOR took on the project, and in 2021 the Pelham Brook Outlet Restoration Project was finally completed.

*Above: Bilya Walk Track and Fire Access Track cross-over of Pelham Brook*

*Photo: Wayne Clarke (2021-03-24)*



## WA Landcare Awards for Community Groups (cont)



Above: Seedlings ready for planting out

Photo: Bethan Lloyd (2018-05-10)

The Bilya Walk Track provides locals and visitors with access to the river and the opportunity to enjoy the natural environment. This track was an initiative of TFOR and the photographic record captures members making a start on the Bilya walk track in 2011. Working Bee members and the Reserves Manager have maintained and improved it for a decade. The Millards Pool picnic shelter was opened in 2012, and wheelchair access provided there in 2021.

Revegetation has been an annual activity, and over the years has focussed on tributaries such as Harper Brook and Boyagerring Brook, as well as on the main Avon River. TFOR's Seed Group grows thousands of seedlings each year for our own and others' use. Many are planted by a range of local community groups and landholders. The Seed Group also uses green waste from the Shire's operations to make its own compost.

The presenter of the Community Landcare Award for 2021 noted that there are over 700 community groups such as ours who are actively involved in landcare in WA. That is a lot of voluntary effort going into landcare, which is encouraging. The Friends group alone put in over 560 hours of practical work in 2021, with a notional value of \$45,000. It all mounts up.

The three finalists came from the wheatbelt. Katanning Landcare were the overall winners of our section, and they are an impressive group with a long history of involvement in activities such as salinity control, wetland restoration, threatened species recovery, revegetation, waste reduction and carbon farming.

### **PRINCIPLES OF RIVER MANAGEMENT**

*"You can compare a river with a human being. Alter one little bit, and it's like taking out the heart – you can expect to see some fundamental changes. No surgeon would contemplate doing this unless it was replaced with a structure that performed exactly the same hydraulic or filtering functions.*

*So the overriding principle of river management is to put it back together the same way that it was".*

*The late Jim Masters OA, farmer, and author of 'The Principles of River Management'*

## *Viv Read - Honorary Life Member*



*Above: Patron Viv Read (left) presented with Honorary Life Membership by President Dr Robyn Taylor. Seated behind are Treasurer Wayne Clarke (left) and Secretary Dr Bridget Leggett. Photo: Desraé Clarke*

AT the 2021 Annual General Meeting, Patron Viv Read was appointed an Honorary Life Member of the Toodyay Friends of the River (TFOR) Inc.

Viv's Citation reads:

*For his vision in suggesting the formation of a 'Friends' group in the early 1990s, when Regional Manager of the Waterways Commission.*

*For his mentoring of the group, particularly in its formative years, and for always being available when advice is needed.*

*For outstanding and ongoing service over a period of 24 years, since he first joined as a Foundation Member.*

*For his generous, and attentive support as Patron since 2002*

In his role as Regional Manager of the Waterways Commission Viv was responsible for setting up the various waterways management programs across the region. This included the foundation of the former Avon River Management Authority (ARMA) and the successful funding application to the National and State governments for the Swan-Avon Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Program..

As a private consultant he was the driving force behind the development of a number of 'River Recovery Plans' for the Avon River.

With his intricate knowledge of waterways and their processes, TFOR is privileged to have Viv as a patron and mentor. Congratulations Viv.

## *The Millennium Kids visits*



Above: Desrae and Gaven with the Millennium Kids (2010-02-28 - supplied Millennium Kids Inc.)



Above: The Millennium Kids collecting macroinvertebrates near Duidgee Park (Photo: Wayne Clarke 2012-08-05)

# *Images of a Wet Year*



*Above: Boyagerring Brook crossing over Murray Walk*

*Photo: Beth Frayne (2021-03-03)*



*Above: James' Cottage Lake*

*Photo: Greg Warburton (2021-03-12)*



*2017 was wet too!*



*Above: The power of the river. Where there were islands...*

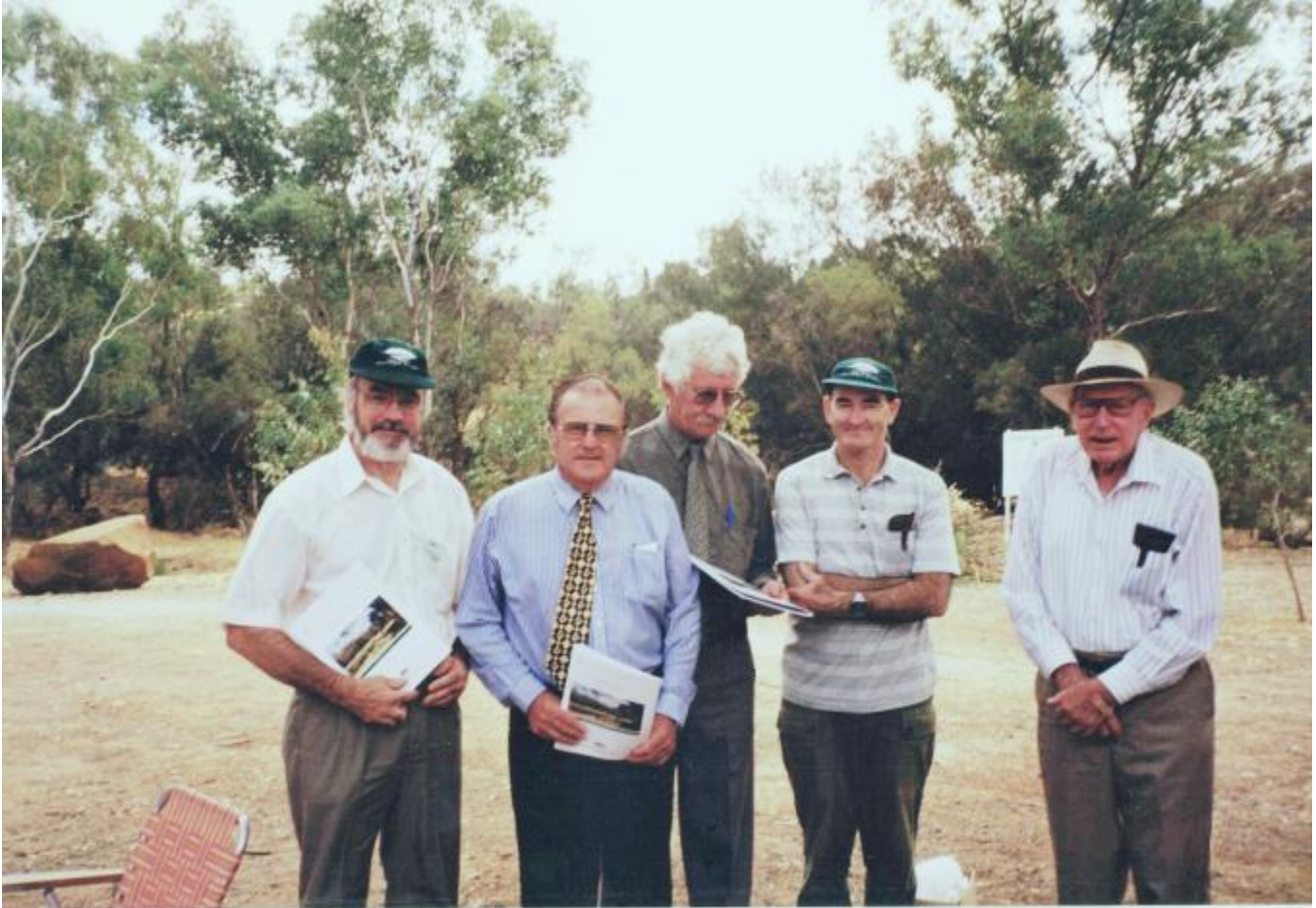
*Photo: Wayne Clarke (2017-07-13)*

*Below: How close was the John Masters Bird Hide:*

*Photo: Rebecca Meegan-Lowe (2017-02-10)*



## Our History



Above: Launch of the first River Recovery Plan (Section 3 - Toodyay) by Doug Morgan, Chair, Avon River Management Authority (ARMA.). Left to right: Martin Revall (Water & Rivers Commission), Doug Morgan; Adrian Bolton, (Shire of Toodyay President); Wayne Clarke (ARMA and TFOR) and Jim Masters (TFOR).

Photo Desraé Clarke (1992-02-21)

{ 'Restoring the Avon River' sign (see top photo Page 7) can be seen at the back between Wayne and Jim }

## A Drone ... then a groan

by Greg Warburton

*Permit me to share with you an unlikely story that played out only recently.*

*Forgive me - I have elected to convey it in verse.*

Technology a friend of mine likes to own,  
Among his collection is an expensive Drone,  
This year he decided to film the Avon Descent,  
Capturing spectacular footage as up river he went,  
He said, let me photograph your place from on high,  
Soon the Drone was nothing but a speck in the sky,  
The operator was swearing and greatly feared,  
For over the horizon like a bird it disappeared.

No response to the call to come on home,  
A fruitless search followed for this lost drone,  
The weeks rolled by and resigned was the owner,  
On E-Bay he even advertised the controller  
Then one morning a call came through,  
We found a drone and on it is a picture of you!  
This to me almost seemed too unlikely to be real,  
Only a metre had separated it from a tractor wheel,  
Beyond the forest and in a paddock it was found,  
The crop cushioning its meeting with the ground,  
The grateful owner didn't know what to say,  
My response to him, "only in Toodyay".

# Pelham Reserve Splendour



*Above: Some of the magnificent display of everlastings that can be found in Pelham Reserve (see back page).*

*Photo: Greg Warburton*



*Left: Pelham Reserve location.*

**Newsletter of the  
Toodyay Fiends of the River (Inc.)**

**WORKING FOR THE HEALTH OF THE  
AVON RIVER**

Post Office Box 1266  
Toodyay 6566  
Western Australia

President: Dr. Robyn Taylor (08) 9574 2578  
Secretary: Dr. Bridget Leggett (08) 9574 2198  
Treasurer: Wayne Clarke (08) 9574 5574  
Editor: Desraé Clarke (08) 9574 5574  
Editorial to : editor@toodyayfor.org.au

Contact us at: info@toodyayfor.org.au



Toodyay & Districts  
Community Bank Branch



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**Visit our website at  
[www.toodyayfor.org.au](http://www.toodyayfor.org.au)**

## The Back Page



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*Above: The splendour of Pelham Reserve Photo: Greg Warburton [2021-09-14]*

AS expected, after the wonderful season everlasting at Pelham are pumped. Its an easy walk from the Lookout or you can drive to Pelham Brook culvert.

The best way though is a walk along the south western trail or, better still, the complete circuit. Its world class!