

FRIENDS OF PERRY LAKES NEWSLETTER

April 2025



The beauty of Perry Lakes fauna stunningly captured by Friends of Perry Lakes member Harrison Osgarby.



[harrison_osgarby_wildlife](https://www.instagram.com/harrison_osgarby_wildlife)

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It is almost 4 years since Friends of Perry Lakes (FoPL) was established as an organisation of local community members wanting to enhance the natural environment of Perry Lakes Reserve by supporting Town of Cambridge (ToC) management and development plans. Ongoing activities have increased the amount and diversity of native vegetation, through planting of seedlings and control of weeds, and contributed to the monitoring of water levels in the lakes. Planned activities will assist with monitoring of water quality and remediation of unwanted changes. Wildlife monitoring and protection are also key activities.

To further these aims and consolidate the relationship between FoPL and ToC, Don, Brett and myself recently met with representatives of ToC on two occasions, with Gary Mack, the Mayor, participating in the second meeting. While one of our aims, to establish quarterly meetings between FoPL and ToC, was not achieved because of pressures on ToC staff levels, we were informed that the Mayor and CEO will meet with FoPL annually as part of a community contact program offered to all ToC groups.

We were also informed that procedures have been put in place to manage the pumping of water from Herdman Main Drain into West Lake more effectively and that an independent review of the operation of the pumping system will be commissioned. In addition, FoPL has received approval to use water quality monitoring equipment provided by ToC.

Finally, our arguments that the budget for Perry Lakes Reserve should be increased to support activities such as monitoring and maintenance of water pumps, control of invasive weeds (Typha, Azolla and woody weeds) and watering of native plant seedlings will be considered in current ToC budget negotiations.

Martyn French - chair@friendsofperrylakes.org



By Martyn French
Chair

STRATEGIC PLAN

As we enter our fourth year, we will continue benchmarking our performance working towards our 2030 Vision statement. To find out more, please visit our website [here](#).

GET IN TOUCH

As we build our social media presence we are asking for your help. If you haven't done so, please follow or join all our sites and like, comment and share our posts. As always your questions and comments on any post are welcome.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A TROVE OF INFORMATION

Our website is a valuable resource for information on events, membership, our vision, flora and fauna around the lakes as well as educational videos.

www.friendsofperrylakes.org



By Dr Don McFarlane



MESSAGE FROM THE EDUCATION OFFICER

Daily measurements of water level in both lakes have been taken by Rod Banyard, a FoPL Citizen Scientist. In recent months West Lake has varied between 3.0 and 3.3 m depending on pumping rates and on 16 mm of rainfall on 13th March. There remains enough water in the Herdsman Main Drain to maintain what looks to be the maximum pumping rate of about 2 million litres per day given the pump's configuration. There should be pump capacity to transfer 5 million litres a day but the reason for the lower maximum is unclear. The Town is to carry out an independent assessment of pump performance.

East Lake remained dry apart from a few days after the rain. Water levels in this lake represent groundwater levels which seem stable.

Leakage from West Lake appears to be maintaining groundwater levels in the vicinity but is unable to raise levels in East Lake via the aquifer. The pipe connecting the two lakes will only flow when levels of East Lake exceed about 3.85m.

We hope to take possession soon of a water quality instrument which will improve our understanding of nutrient enrichment and algal bloom risks. Previous measurements indicate that West Lake is most at risk. Oxidation of bottom sediments in dry parts of both lakes will be releasing inorganic nutrients. Some of these will be flushed into the aquifer on refilling of the lakes. FoPL has been discussing with the Town the removal of nutrients via harvesting Typha and Azolla. We are also concerned about the carp in West Lake starting to breed.

BECOME A CITIZEN SCIENTIST

As a volunteer with the Friends of Perry Lakes, making an impact in the community is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have. This year, we are going one step further, with our **Citizen Science Initiative**.

Joining the **CSI** offers members the chance to learn fundamental skills to enhance their understanding of our environment, how to collect survey data leading to improvements in our conservation and protection work.

More details will follow soon, but if you like the sound of becoming a Citizen Scientist, send an email to: promotions@friendsofperrylakes.org



MESSAGE FROM THE WORKS COORDINATOR

Through March plenty of weeding and some mulching continued. Our whole group Sunday Weeding session was well attended with 16 volunteers enjoying a weeding-workout then morning tea. With this, plus the weekly Weed Warriors efforts, over 50 volunteer-hrs were put in with improvement clearly seen. We keep on getting positive feedback from members, the public and the Council so a big thank you to all who are involved!

In late April, it is planned to plant more wetland species on the western fringe of West Lake. Just over a thousand reeds are on order, so if you feel like doing a bit for the environment at Perry Lakes Reserve please come along for planting, Sunday 27th April, starting 09.00hrs. We'll meet just below the car park off Perry Lakes Drive opposite the Tuart Carpark and please remember closed-in footwear, long sleeves and pants, hat and gloves.



By Tony Harding

JOIN US FOR THE FIRST PLANTING DAY OF 2025

Our most popular event returns for 2025. Join us on Sunday April 27 from 9am, as we plant a thousand native seedlings. This time we are focussing on wetland species. If you haven't had the chance to participate in one of these events, be warned, the members who have say it is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have as a volunteer.

To reward your effort, morning team will be served back at The Shed once the work is done.

It's a brilliant way to start an April Sunday. More details on this [link](#).



LOOK THE PART AND PROTECT YOURSELF



Perfect for any rugged outdoor activity, we have new stock of our high-quality and rather stylish work shirts, available in mens and womens sizes. Each shirt features a beautifully embroidered FoPL logo and plenty of zippered pockets.

Order via our website or the form on this [link](#).

CAN'T MAKE SUNDAYS? JOIN WEED WARRIORS

Weed Warriors plugs the gap between our monthly weeding sessions and is an ideal event if you can't join the Sunday crews. The group meets Tuesday mornings at The Shed starting at 8am.

After weeding, the group heads to Cup & Co. for a coffee catchup.

For more information contact Tony our works coordinator at works@friendsofperrylakes.org or visit our website here.



INSIDE THE WORKINGS OF YOUR FoPL COMMITTEE

The committee works diligently behind the scenes to support our members and organization. In addition to fulfilling the statutory roles outlined in the articles of association, several committee members oversee specific portfolios, including education, works, wildlife, and communications. The committee (see photos throughout newsletter) meets monthly to review ongoing activities and plan future initiatives, while also addressing critical issues on a more frequent basis. Above all, our primary objective is to conserve and enhance the natural environment of Perry Lakes, ensuring the protection and sustainability of its ecosystems.

Collectively, we focus on several key tasks: organizing regular weeding, planting, and educational events; researching critical environmental issues and sharing our findings with the Town of Cambridge (ToC); publishing important information and data across various platforms; developing work plans with the ToC to support weeding and planting efforts; and applying for grants to address specific issues when necessary.

This year presents particular challenges, especially due to the drying of the lakes and the failure of the Replenishment Project pumping system. The committee is not only investigating the reasons behind these issues but actively identifying potential threats and prevention strategies for excess nutrients and carp. All findings are presented to the ToC, and we engage in thorough discussions to propose actionable solutions. If you wish to become more involved with Friends of Perry Lakes, we encourage you to consider nominating at the upcoming AGM.



Nolan Penning,
Secretary



Andrew Burbidge,
Wildlife



Cathy Wallace,
Treasurer



Brett Heil,
Communications

BIRD SURVEILLANCE TRAINING

Last month, our first training session was held on bird surveying techniques. The fully subscribed event was presented by Viv Read and Dr Mark Henryon who did a great job, ably supported by our own Tony and Martyn. It didn't take long for our Citizen Scientists to learn the basic techniques and record it in the birdlife app. Feedback from the cohort was positive and they are now looking forward to completing their own surveys.



Surveying the number and type of birds in our lakes will provide valuable data to inform our future ecological and master planning reports. No date has been set for the next training session but you will be the first to find out when we announce via our website or social channels.

SUPPORT OUR WORK - BECOME A MEMBER

Our precious Perry Lakes is at risk, now more than ever and we need your help. As a volunteer group, we rely on annual memberships to fund our efforts in conserving Perry Lakes. By becoming a member, you will directly support that effort and enjoy other benefits such as access to free or subsidised educational events and social activities. Membership is from \$30.

2025 is our most important year yet, so please support us via [this link](#).

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. In fact, without our members contribution, we would not be able to achieve the impact we have made both within the reserve and with the Council. We encourage members to choose their level of FoPL engagement, whether it be just financial, or getting involved with one of the many events we run. On that note, we have some amazing statistics to share with you.

Volunteer Weeding & Planting Effort - 2022 to date



With an incredible 1,248 hours contributed since inception, what can we say but THANK YOU! Together, we have planted more than 10,000 native seedlings, removed countless bags of weeds and demolished cups of tea, coffee and fruit cakes. It is at times hot, cold, invigorating and energising work but our volunteers are the backbone of our organisation.

We're looking forward to seeing how these numbers grow in 2025, as we pass our next milestone of 150 members. Please share our information and encourage your friends to join. Again, thank you.

WE'RE ALL FRIENDS AND IN THIS TOGETHER

While our precious Perry Lakes is closest to our heart, it is but one of the many wetlands in close proximity. Others include Claremont, Jualbup, Galup/Monger and Herdsman. Not surprisingly, each lake faces similar challenges to those at Perry Lakes and, thanks to our wonderful community, "Friends" groups have formed. Each group is passionate about conserving and preserving their lake and rely on the contribution of members for their operations to continue.

So, we thought it about time to give them all a big shout out to show our support. We encourage FoPL members to check out their websites by clicking on their logos (right) and see if there is anything you can do to help. Many have been in operation much longer than FoPL but there is a tremendous opportunity for knowledge sharing developing across all wetlands in Perth.

