

FRIENDS OF MAYLANDS LAKES

MARCH 2020

As previously advised, this newsletter, which would normally reach you in December/ January was delayed awaiting the preliminary results of the dredging of Bungana Lake in late 2019.

As advised (in my August 2019 Newsletter), the dredging, which was scheduled to commence in early 2019, was delayed primarily due to the discovery that the sediment level in Bungana was lower than had previously been thought. This necessitated a revised approach to the dredging process. The commencement was further delayed due to initial equipment glitches. Moreover, once started, the work took longer than planned, due to unforeseen difficulties encountered by the contractor. It was finally completed in late 2019.

Despite the setbacks, indications at this stage, are that the sediment dredged from Bungana Lake is estimated to be 30% of the overall volume. However, as this comprises the finer particles with a nutrient concentration of 5-6 times that of the remaining heavier material, the effectiveness of the dredging in terms of tonnes of nutrients removed is yet to be calculated. It is noteworthy that under the terms of the contract, any shortfall in sediment removal, will be compensated for by a corresponding reduction in the cost.



The CoB has since re-installed the aerator (pictured) on Lake Bungana. It has also re-treated all three lakes with Phoslock, a unique water treatment product, developed by the CSIRO, that permanently binds phosphorus in water bodies such as lakes, dams and canals. Binding the dissolved phosphorus before it is used by blue-green algae (BGA), starves the algae of its food source and causes BGA death.

The decision as to whether the dredging of Lake Brearley is to proceed, will be based on the post dredging water quality of both lakes, as determined following the conclusion of the fourteen-month testing period in June this year. It is understood, the development of the nutrient and hydraulic model based on the analyses and interpretation of those results, will however take some time. Consequently, the outcome of the dredging will not be known immediately. Rest assured we will convey the information to you as soon as it becomes available.

Lakeside residents, particularly those bordering Lake Brearley have been plagued again this summer with an invasion of midges (Chironomid, non-biting type). This has severely curtailed our enjoyment of the warmer months, confining people to indoors, day and night. Apart from the confinement, those affected have spent countless hours cleaning dead midges and black midge poo grime from their outdoor areas. Many have also had to spray their external walls on several occasions with a residual insecticide. Those most affected, have at times, understandably become exasperated.

In response to the midge outbreak, the Manager Environmental Health and the Manager Sustainability and Environment from the CoB have jointly:

- Visited several residents to:
 - observe the problem and hear residents' concerns first-hand
 - explain the suspected cause of the problem and how best to counter it in the short term
 - advise how the City is addressing the issue in the short and long term
 - provide Coopex (a residual insecticide) to those requiring it
- Provided an information sheet (also published on the FOML website) regarding the problem and the measures being undertaken to address it.

The CoB has also been monitoring midge levels around the lakes and treating them with a mosquito larvicide, which reduces the midge population by interrupting the breeding cycle. The fortnightly application of the larvicide has proven very effective on Lake Bungana, where residents have reported they are generally midge free. Unfortunately, it has resulted in only short periods of respite for Lake Brearley residents. Consequently, the treatment frequency for Lake Brearley has recently been increased. It is currently being reviewed for both lakes.

As many of you may be aware, several sick and dead birds have been found in the vicinity of the Lakes this summer. The affected birds were taken to Native Animal Rescue, who provided them to the Department of Agriculture for testing. However, the results have been inconclusive, albeit Botulism is the suspected cause.

The CoB was inspecting the lake shores daily, until the end of February, but because no affected birds have been found since 29 January, inspections are now being carried out weekly.

If you do find a sick or dead bird, please report it to the CoB (Natural Area Management Officer).

On the brighter side, there has been speculation that Lake Bungana is less affected by midges this summer, because the dredging has removed nutrient rich sediment in which the midges breed.

Fingers crossed this is in fact the case and that Lake Brearley residents will enjoy the same relief if/when the dredging occurs later this year.

On a more positive note too, the FOML was successful in its recent application for a \$20,000 grant under the Communities Environment Program. The funds, to be matched by the CoB (in cash and/or kind) will enable further revegetation with native fauna on the perimeter of the lakes. Our sincere thanks to Patrick Gorman, who invited and backed our application. This is the third grant secured by the FOML to date.

Further planting days will likely take place around May this year (subject to potential COVID-19, safeguards) at which time we will contact FOML volunteers. These events have previously been well attended and we thank you in advance for your ongoing assistance.

The FOML is currently awaiting an updated revegetation plan from the CoB, which will be published on our website once received.

The installation of turtle grates on street drains in close proximity to the lakes, has finally been completed. These should greatly reduce the fatality rates of the oblonga turtles, many of which previously perished after falling into drains when endeavouring to return to the lakes, having laid their eggs onshore during the breeding season.

In closing, I take this opportunity to thank you for your involvement in the rehabilitation of the Maylands lakes, particularly your support of the FOML committee. While progress has been slower than we hoped, achievements to date should prove of long-term benefit to our lakes, their inhabitants and the local environment.

Geoff Trott
Chairman
Friends of Maylands Lakes

P.S. We encourage you to keep following our website at www.friendsofmaylandslakes.org for up-to-date information regarding the lakes, as well as their inhabitants and surrounds. You can also contact us via the website with any questions you may have, or information you wish to pass onto us.