

FRIENDS OF MAYLANDS LAKES

NOVEMBER 2020

At the time of my last newsletter our society was (and still is) coming to terms with the impact of the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic, which has irreversibly changed our society. At the height of precautionary social distancing measures, we witnessed unprecedented numbers of otherwise housebound walkers and cyclists enjoying the tranquillity of our beautiful Maylands lakes precinct and Swan River foreshore. It is pleasing to see that despite the easing of restrictions, some of the new faces maintained their ritual.

Fortunately, the City of Bayswater's positive response to the social distancing requirements saw their office and gym workers don hi-vis gear and undertake extensive pruning and other horticultural activities around the lakes, leaving them less bushfire prone for the summer season.

The long awaited results of the water quality monitoring program, conducted by GHD, were concluded in June this year. These along with short and longer-term recommendations for remediation of the lakes, were presented to a community meeting convened by the City of Bayswater, at the Maylands Sport and Recreation Centre on the 14th of October. While the entire report can be viewed via the FOML website, the specific objectives of the monitoring (which is to continue) are to:

- *Improve the understanding of the water and nutrient balance of the three-lake system by assessing lake water quality and water level variations both temporally and spatially*
- *Identify lake processes driving algal blooms and poor water quality*
- *Identify lake responses to current management methods*
- *Collect data to enable an informed assessment of management options.*

The findings of the 2016 *Stage 2 Management Report* and this GHD report are very similar. However, in the more extensive and detailed GHD report, there has been greater focus on the stratification of the deeper areas of Bungana and Brearley Lakes, which has been identified as the key driver of their high nutrient levels. Accordingly, mechanical destratification of those lakes ranks highly as a short-term priority, among GHD's recommendations for the remediation of those lakes.

Based on GHD findings, as well as considering factors outside the scope of that study (e.g. midge problem on Lake Brearley) the FOML and City worked in close collaboration to develop a comprehensive range of remediation measures, including those previously approved by Council. These were overwhelmingly endorsed by Maylands Lakes residents prior to being submitted as 'Officer Recommendations' to the 27th of October Ordinary Council Meeting, where they were unanimously adopted (without amendment). The recommendations can be found under 'Reports' on the FOML website.

Our sincere thanks to the Maylands Lakes community who supported the proposed initiatives, particularly those who wrote to Councillors and/or asked well considered questions during 'question time' at the Council meeting. **Your efforts were crucial to the outcome.** FOML will continue its best endeavours to ensure the work now proceeds with urgency.

Residents in close proximity to Lake Brearley have, for some months now, again been inundated with midges (Chironomid non-biting type). Unfortunately, they can expect little relief from these pests for the third consecutive summer, despite the best efforts of the City of Bayswater to control the plague.

Since the dredging of Lake Bungana, its residents have not had a problem with midges. Moreover, recent larvae samples from the shallow water sediment of both lakes, revealed high counts of larvae in Lake Brearley and virtually none in Lake Bungana. There were no larvae in samples taken from the deeper water in either lake. This is the primary reason why dredging of the perimeter of Lake Brearley is proposed. Unfortunately, the sloping edges of the Lake along with its larger size (than Bungana) and more extensive hard wall borders, add a level of complexity to dredging, which will likely preclude an immediate start on this initiative.

As previously advised, the FOML received a \$20,000 Communities Environment Program grant from the Federal Government for further revegetation of the Maylands Lakes foreshore. The project forms part of the soon to be updated, *2018 Maylands Lakes 5-10 year Revegetation Plan* (refer FOML website), wherein among other things, non-endemic flora will be replaced by a greater number and variety of species native to this area.



Non-native Casuarina trees which currently predominate, will eventually be eradicated as their invasive root system and the needles they drop prevent the growth of endemic flora, especially much needed understory. Their root system also continues to damage adjacent paths and they have formed an impenetrable barrier to the planting of sedges in the shallows of the Lakes. They multiply vigorously via suckers and have eliminated many other plant species around the lakes.

They have over time, come to dominate the lake edges, almost to the point of creating a monoculture.

The grant, which will be more than matched by the City of Bayswater, has been used to purchase plants for the recently commenced project on the shoreline of Lake Brearley, (between Sopwith Avenue and the Swan Bank Rd dual use path).

FOML is disappointed that despite its best efforts the project was delayed until this late in the season. However, we have been assured by City of Bayswater that it will be adequately watered during the summer months.

The site is currently being cleared and we hope to soon be calling for volunteers to assist in planting **800 native trees** and **over 10,000 native plants** including sedges and shrubs. These events have previously been well attended and we thank you in advance for your ongoing assistance.

Finally, as always, your ongoing support and patience are greatly appreciated, particularly throughout recent months when the going has been tough to say the least. We are optimistic the City of Bayswater now has greater appreciation of the enormity, importance, as well as urgency of the task ahead and will remain committed to resourcing the remediation and ongoing maintenance of our precious lakes.

Geoff Trott
Chairman
Friends of Maylands Lakes

P.S. We encourage you to continue following our website at www.friendsofmaylandslakes.org.au for up-to-date information regarding the Maylands Lakes. You are also welcome to contact us via the website with any questions you may have or information you wish to convey to FOML.

Please add these numbers to your contacts:
For injured water birds, ring W.A. Seabird Rescue on 6102 8464.
For Turtles ring Turtle Rescue Network on 0424 727 411 or
7-day Statewide Wildcare Helpline on 9474 9055.