

Malabar Headland Bush Regeneration 2005-06

It is now some years since the serious infestation of Bitou Bush was brought under control on the headland. Though it, and the other earlier main problems Pampas Grass and Lantana are still occasionally encountered, the ongoing work in the heritage bushland is now essentially of a maintenance character.

This activity is concentrated on the bushland's edges and along the now few tracks running through it. These areas are vulnerable to wind blown seed and to the droppings of horses who have over-night access to the range. A maintenance routine is neither exciting nor newsworthy but there is an extensive area to be covered if the now high quality heritage bushland is to be kept in the condition that it deserves..

In the Eastern section the occasional Bitou Bush, Pampas grass and Lantana continue to be encountered , especially Bitou because of the still extensive seed source on the rifle range, but introduced grasses and 'garden escapees' are now the major concern. Along tracks and in grass/sedge areas horses appear to be a major contributor to this problem.

In the West volunteer activity was largely confined to regular spot spraying weeds largely sourced from the fire-break that is its boundary with urban development. Random searches were made for assorted woody weeds which do not usually extend far into the bush. Above Pioneer Park the native species *Pittosporum undulatum*, which is an invasive seed setter, falls into this category. In some sections seedlings of the formerly present Western Australian *Acacia saligna* continue to re-appear.

Two of the species added to the Headland's list, a grass *Aristida vagans* and a shrub *Olearia viscidula*, were also newcomers to Randwick's list.

Most of the remaining time in the West was devoted to the ESBS recovery section behind Byrne Crescent. It mainly consisted of regular spot spraying the edges and hand weeding the good bush which continues to recover well. The first flowering of many species after the controlled burn was a welcome sight.

The Western section's extensive boundary with the rifle range and Pioneer Park was well maintained by the team from Toolijooa Environmental Restoration.

Total volunteer hours worked were 914, of which 797 were in the East and 117 in the West. The greater time spent in the East does not mean that it is in greater need of maintenance. It is about three times larger than the West and has had a more disturbed history. Brian Vazey (Eastern supervisor), Don Kerr, Philip Dunne and Clair Bettington each contributed more than 100 hours. Another 10 people participated.

Alan Hall, Supervisor
(a belated 31-10-06)