

BIG ISSUES IN BIODIVERSITY SCIENCE



Connecting people and landscapes

Building biodiversity in urban ecosystems

• **Tuesday 27th February 2024**

5.00pm – 7.30pm Science Theatre, Scitech Discovery Centre, Corner Railway Street & Sutherland Street, West Perth

Doors open at 5pm for a 5.30pm start.

THIS IS AN
IN-PERSON EVENT

Please join us for a panel discussion, refreshments and networking.

How can we best engage and equip local communities, urban planners, developers, local governments and policy makers to tackle our most pressing urban biodiversity challenges? Hear from ecologists, scientists, researchers and community about global and local initiatives that are helping Western Australians to care for our unique landscape.

Globally, urban development is causing major landscape changes and is frequently associated with loss of species richness and density, and increased homogenisation of ecological communities. Continuing development, especially at the fringes of cities, is often the main catalyst for fragmentation of the landscape and the loss of native flora, fauna and ecosystem functions.

As Western Australia's urban population density continues to rise, the environment faces greater climate risks, as do governments, industry and the wider community. There is further pressure from the impacts of climate change.

Building and maintaining biodiversity resilience in urban areas can be complex, with multiple factors at play. The challenge requires an integrated approach, with a clear focus on collaboration — for problem-solving and for sharing resources, knowledge and expertise to apply best practice management of our unique landscapes.

This event is hosted by The Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute, in partnership with Inspiring WA and Scitech.

Register here

Speakers

THE PANEL



FITZGERALD BIOSPHERE COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

The UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme defines a biosphere reserve as follows:

“Biosphere reserves are areas comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems. Each reserve promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use.”

The Fitzgerald Biosphere Community Collective is a non-profit community organisation that works with farmers, researchers, industry groups and federal and state agencies to address natural resource management issues to ensure the long-term sustainability of communities within the region. It comprises several organisations that either manage land within the Fitzgerald Biosphere or support those who do.

Biosphere reserves are nominated by national governments and remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located. Their status is internationally recognised.

Biosphere reserves are ‘Science for Sustainability support sites’ – special places for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention and management of biodiversity.

There are five biosphere reserves in Australia. The Fitzgerald Biosphere is the only one in Western Australia.

The Fitzgerald River National Park was first nominated under UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere Programme in 1978. The park is at the core of the Fitzgerald Biosphere. It is surrounded by a buffer of remnant bush. Beyond the Buffer Zone is the Transition Zone where communities live. The total area covered by the Fitzgerald Biosphere is 1.53 million hectares and encompasses the entire Shire of Jerramungup and most of the Shire of Ravensthorpe.



DR GREY COUPLAND

Ecologist and Urban Program Leader

Grey is passionate about environmental restoration and connecting science with the community. With extensive project management experience related to environmental issues, specifically in ecology, sustainability and environmental restoration, Grey works closely with State and Federal Government agencies, NGOs, schools and community stakeholders.

Grey leads a Miyawaki forest research and outreach program. The research is investigating the use of Miyawaki (or pocket) forests for urban greening, increasing urban biodiversity and improving urban liveability in the Australian context. The outreach program brings pocket forests into schools via a dedicated STEM program that empowers students, enabling them to take tangible environmental action, while also providing them with practical and theoretical STEM learnings.

Speakers

THE PANEL

MELANIE DAVIES

Urban Forest Facilitator, WA Local Government Association (WALGA)

Melanie has worked in the Environment Policy Team at WALGA for seven years, and has over 20 years' experience in sustainability and environmental management in local government, state government and the private sector.

Melanie is currently the Urban Forest Facilitator at WALGA, and is responsible for delivering projects and policy advice to support local governments to retain and increase their urban forest.



Melanie is passionate about conserving biodiversity at a local level and is an active member of three bushcare 'friends of' groups, including at her children's primary school.

DR EDDIE VAN ETTEN

Vegetation Ecologist, Edith Cowan University

Eddie is an Associate Professor in Ecology and Environmental Management at the School of Science at Edith Cowan University. His research interests span plant ecology, vegetation science, bushfire management, ecosystem restoration, invasive species and urban ecology.



He teaches bushland restoration, ecology, physical geography and waste management. Eddie is regularly called upon to provide scientific advice and expert reviews for government and industry, and sits on various committees and boards.

Speakers

FACILITATOR



PROFESSOR OWEN NEVIN

Chief Executive Officer, The Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute

Owen is an experienced conservation biologist and research leader and is the Chief Executive Officer of The Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI). Owen's research work has focused on advancing the conservation of threatened species and their habitats through developing better management and understanding of behaviour and ecosystem function, and human impacts including ecotourism and resource. Owen is a member of the Biosecurity Council of Western Australia. Previous positions include Head of the National School of Forestry (UK), Dean of Graduate Research and Associate Vice-Chancellor at CQUniversity Australia. Owen has served on the Society for Conservation Biology's European Board and on the Global Board of Governors. He was elected as a Fellow of the Zoological Society of London and appointed as Anniversary Visiting Professor of Conservation Biology at the University of Cumbria.

WABSI is a joint venture of four WA universities, five government agencies, the CSIRO and WA Museum. It an independent collaboration mechanism that facilitates priority research driven by end user needs.

WABSI's research program ***Building biodiversity for thriving urban ecosystems***, was developed through consultation with end users of biodiversity science. It identifies priority knowledge gaps along four key themes: Conserve – remnant vegetation, native fauna; Restore – habitat restoration, water for biodiversity; Design – best practice design, climate change resilience; and Equip – decision-making tools, value of ecosystem services.

For more information on WABSI's research program *Building biodiversity for thriving urban ecosystems*:

- https://wabsi.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Building-biodiversity-for-thriving-urban-ecosystems_WABSI.pdf
- www.wabsi.org.au

