



FRIENDS OF KELLY'S BUSH

Newsletter June 2018

Dear Friends

Welcome to our first email newsletter!

We were busy in the bush during May with our Bushwalk and Morning tea on the 10th and Working Bee on the 26th.

We had perfect weather for our bush walk and were delighted that Joan Croll, one of our famous 'Kelly's Bush Battlers' was able to join us. The morning started with a fascinating introduction by Leonie who had tales of her early bush care days and of Joan Bradley (one of the sisters who started the Bush Regeneration movement) and learning about their rigorous methods. Having recently discovered some of the writings of Joan Bradley, this little quotation caught my eye:

"Volunteers already interested in the bush take to the work like ducks to water and need only to be told which plants are weeds and when to stop!"

After years of trial and error, the Bradley sisters perfected their method and their three very important principles for working in Australian Bush are:

1. Work outwards from good bush areas towards areas of weed.
2. Make minimal disturbance in the environment.
3. Do not over clear.



Time for tea!

This is because they realized that the 'slash and burn' mindset does not apply when working with Australian natives, because the bush takes time to catch up and 'bare-earthing' only favours the weeds that love the open space and come back worse than before!

The Bradley method is much more subtle and long lasting and as Joan stated: *"Bringing back the bush is a gentle art, demanding a strong will and patience."*

Of course none of this would have been possible without the amazing dedication and commitment of the 13 local women from a variety of backgrounds who saved Kelly's Bush for us. They had one thing in common - outrage that 5 hectares

of waterfront and mainly bush open space, should be threatened.

They became the "Battlers for Kelly's Bush" and the area was the first of the Green Bans, which were to save so much of Sydney including The Rocks, Centennial Park and Woolloomooloo. With the help of the Labor Union and Jack Munday they prevailed - after 13 years of persistence!

Their incredible vision is beautifully summed up in the words below, spoken by one of their keen supporters, Kylie Tennant, resident of Hunters Hill, author, historian and social justice advocate. We're sure you'll agree this is a very powerful statement that sadly still rings true today.

"Kelly's Bush is a symbol of our lost land. Take away Kelly's Bush and you take away one more assurance that, in man, is left a possibility for the future. The unborn Australian will ask for his birthright and be handed a piece of concrete....."



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We had good weather for our Working Bee and concentrated our efforts on a patch of ochnas which were stubbornly re-growing in an area behind Connie's table.

We were lucky to score a couple of willing male volunteers on the day who got stuck in to sawing the larger branches and, with the rest of us cutting and poisoning dozens of new plants, we made good progress in clearing it as below.



If you ever wondered where your membership dues go - because of you - we were able to spend some money last year on employing a professional company to clear another huge area of ochnas which has made it so much easier to get ahead with eradicating these persistent weeds. So keep those dues coming in please and we will make sure we spend them wisely!

We're hoping to repeat our Working Bee in September when we can all concentrate on one area, which makes a huge difference to the outcome.

We're also excited to discover that we have another shrub that hadn't been documented as growing in Kelly's Bush - an *Acacia falcata* known as Sickie Wattle - so look forward to showing you in person when you next visit.



Looking out towards the River

As you can see above, we're now coming to a point in some parts of the bush where we can at last see the wood for the trees! Around the two green areas at Connie's table, which were originally completely overgrown with Lantana and Privet, we are seeing cleared regenerated areas with lots of new native growth, and even water views!

All of this has been made possible by the efforts of the whole bushcare team. We're so lucky that each of our dedicated bush carers has their own special skillset and expertise, whether it be in plant recognition and understanding growth patterns, weeding, cutting, drilling applying poison where necessary, sawing and clearing thickets of noxious weeds or knowing where and when to mulch and plant! We have the full range of expertise and are very grateful for it.

In addition we have our willing volunteers who diligently sweep the walking paths which are always getting buried in leaves - a very time-consuming job if we had to do

it, so it's a real help when it's done and makes the bush look well cared for.

As always if any of your friends or acquaintances would like a worthwhile and healthy pursuit, please encourage them to join us - we'd love to see them!

Until next time.....

Maureen



One of our welcome little visitors watching closely for titbits