

ACT Red Hill Regenerators – President’s Annual Report 2018

Red Hill Regenerators (RHR) had a major achievement with the recent announcement of ACT heritage registration of the two areas of callistemons and grevilleas planted on Red Hill by Walter Burley Griffin/George Weston. The history of these can found on the group’s web page. This listing came about through the efforts of our Treasurer, Paul Ratcliffe, with support from Roy McDowall and Dr Michael Mulvaney.

The dry winter and high population density of kangaroos on Red Hill Nature Reserve has led to the reduction of grasses and the potential for increased erosion and weed invasion. The over-grazing on the Reserve also led to many kangaroo deaths on the roads surrounding the Reserve. Over a 12-month period, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service removed 70 dead kangaroos from just one section of Hindmarsh Drive between the suburbs of Red Hill and Garran. Many others would have been injured and later died. In addition, there were many kangaroo deaths on Kent Street and other streets in the vicinity of the Reserve. However, these figures were for 2016, a “normal” rainfall year. With the dry winter this year, the figures would be much higher. The high density of kangaroos on Red Hill will need to be addressed at some time.

We undertook a range of activities this year including the removal of soft and woody weeds, watering of our previous plantings during a cold and dry winter plus our time spent addressing the proposed developments at the Federal Golf Course and Section 66, Deakin.

Highlights (mostly 2017/18 financial year)

- Our activity sessions involved removing Cootamundra wattle on the northern slopes of Red Hill, weeding around the heritage callistemon plantation, removing verbascum and woody weeds plus watering our plantings.
- Our 11 monthly Sunday work activities attracted between 8 and 24 people, providing a total of 454 hours. We held 9 weekday activities that added an additional 132 hours of work. The total number of RHR member hours including individuals working singly or in small groups together with RHR meetings was 1,042.
- Other activities last financial year:
 - Another butterfly walk was held this year, led by Dr Suzi Bond, an expert on ACT butterflies.
 - Dr Michael Mulvaney, our Conservation Officer and scientific expert on the ecology of Red Hill, led a nature walk in the Reserve last November and again this November, behind Garran. They attracted 40 and 20 people respectively and those who attended were entertained and informed about the significance of the Red Hill Nature Reserve and the details of its ecology.

Consideration by the ACT Government of the two major proposed building developments on Section 66, Deakin, and at the Federal Golf Course has been delayed because a motion passed in the Legislative Assembly requested the preparation of an integrated plan for the area around Red Hill Nature Reserve. It is hoped that this plan will allow the overall effect on the Reserve of individual developments to be considered

before any approvals for local developments are given. The integrated plan should also provide a set of standards protecting the reserve that any development will be required to meet. However, at Section 66, the developers, Hindmarsh, have proposed a self-storage facility that, they believe, doesn't require either community engagement or a change of lease purpose. Their plans include drainage work to be undertaken in the Reserve to protect their asset. RHR has a number of concerns over the proposed developments at Section 66 including the ecological survey that was submitted to the ACT government as part of the approval process. This survey and other aspects of the proposal had many shortcomings and so RHR have chosen to communicate directly with the ACT government to discuss our concerns.

I would like to thank Wayne Fletcher from the Garran and Hughes Residents Action Group and Jacky Fogarty from the Hughes Residents Association and other members from those groups for their expertise and time in working with us on these issues.

Thank you to individual members who work independently on the Reserve, including Colin Pilliner, Jacky Fogarty, Rob Walls, Michael Mulvaney, Sue Ross and Paul Ratcliffe plus Roy McDowall for his photography.

We also continue to be grateful for the work of our ranger partners from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS). A major task PCS completed was the road repairs stretching from near the Red Hill Café, south down the saddle and up to Davidson's Trig. This was greatly appreciated.

We currently have 73 financial members and 194 members and friends on our group email list.

Volunteer hours

Activity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of Sunday Activities (mid-week included up to 2016)	12	8	11	11
Average number of participants	11	15.5	14.1	14.1
Total number of volunteer hours*	521	967	906	1,011
Total hours including meetings, etc.			1,249	1,042

* These hours represent on-reserve work, education of members and the AGM for the financial year but not meetings, preparation of submissions, etc.

Many thanks to all members for your time and effort in helping us achieve a better nature reserve. Thanks particularly to committee members: Michael Mulvaney, Paul Ratcliffe, Sue Ross and Robyn Tulloh. The Committee's knowledge and commitment has ensured the Red Hill Regenerators continues to make a significant contribution to the long-term wellbeing of the Reserve. In particular, thanks to:

- Michael Mulvaney, the founder of RHR, for his deep ecological knowledge base and his continued, inspiring passion.

- Paul Ratcliffe for his work as Treasurer and for many other contributions including the RHR website and Twitter account.
- Sue Ross for her role as Secretary and supporting the group's work in so many ways.
- The Red Hill rangers, the Parks and Conservation Service, the Southern ACT Catchment Group and many in the ACT government who work with us to achieve our objectives.

Ross Kingsland
President, Red Hill Regenerators
1 December 2018