



<b>PATRON:</b> Dr Wayne Erskine PhD			
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## Presidents Message

First of all I would like to pass on my sincerest condolences to the family of Dr Wayne Erskine our patron for Bass Sydney. Please read the article about Wayne and his contribution to our native freshwater species.

Winter is almost over! I've spoken to a few members at the last club outings and most of us, including me look forward to the 1st of September. My goal this year is cracking the 400 (like last year, the year before and the one before that) I'm glad to report that Emu plains is coming along nicely, which is a credit to all those involved. Last Saturday we cleaned up weeds around the plants we planted last year. There are a few plant casualties, but overall it's looking great. Hope to see you out there on the next Bush regen. Final thing I would like to say, October is our Bass Catch again entering our 29th year! More info about this next month. Hope to catch up with you either on the water or at one of our bush regen sites. This edition of the Battler includes a eulogy and article about Wayne's contributions to our native fish species, I encourage you to read it.

~ Rico

### What's new:

- Bass Sydney Sponsor Dreamfish is offering club members a 20% discount through their online store. Just add "Bass Sydney 20" as the coupon code.
- Bass Sydney would like to acknowledge Alan Midgley's thesis on The Ecology of Australian Bass in Tributaries of the Hawkesbury Nepean River. The thesis is 407 pages and was written over six years. I'd encourage you to read it if you get a chance — an insightful and informative piece on the fish we all love.

## **VALE Wayne Erskine**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017, Bass Sydney lost its club Patron, Dr Wayne Erskine PHD. He was not quite 63 years of age. Wayne was one of those rare individuals who was able to mix a heady intellect with a down to earth and generous nature. Equally at home in the research lab or on the riverbank, he was happy to share what he knew about geomorphology or fishing. What he knew about geomorphology was a lot! Just 10 days before Wane passed away I was hiking with a group of people in the Northern Territory – Wayne's home turf for the past several years. On learning that one of the group was a former CSIRO soil scientist I remarked on coincidentally knowing a geomorphologist in the area. "Oh yes", he replied, "I know of Wayne's work" and proceeded to name some papers that Wayne had written. More recently, at a memorial service held in Wayne's honour, we heard tributes from fellow academics who praised Wayne's contribution to his field of science. We also met colleagues and students who had been mentored by Wayne. He has clearly left a lasting professional legacy. Importantly, Wayne was more than willing to deliver his knowledge in layman's terms and did so many times over the years for the benefit of Bass Sydney members.

What Wayne knew about fishing was also a lot! I clearly remember his descriptions of fishing in his youth along South Creek. He assured me that South Creek was Sydney's premier bass stream before land disturbance and land use increased the soil and nutrient loads. His stories of 500mm fish certainly had me wishing for the good old days and more motivated to get involved in Bass Sydney's conservation efforts.

I was also lucky to benefit from Wayne's knowledge of bass fishing by sharing a canoe with him at a number of Bass Sydney events in the '90's. I still carry those lessons with me. Features of Wayne's fishing style were persistence (read long hours!), a willingness to search for fish wherever they might be feeding (a memorable session on fish that were taking grasshoppers off an open grassy bank) and sheer weight of casting – Wayne didn't subscribe to the cast, pause, twitch method promoted by the gurus of the time. Get a cast in, reel it back quick and get another one in. His methods worked a treat! From what I hear, they've also been working on northern bass (aka barramundi) for the last many years.

Like many high achievers, Wayne appears to have devoted huge amounts of time and energy in equal measure to his professional life, to his undying love of fishing and to his extended family.

Wayne is survived by his Mum Judy, brother Peter, three children (Vanessa, Aaron and Jess) and nine grandchildren. Our hearts go out to them and as they put it, we pause to remember Wayne who has "gone fishing" for good.

**~ Alan Fowkes**



*Wayne at Bass Catch in Oct 93*

## **Dr Wayne Erskine PhD – Bass Sydney Patron**

Bass Sydney would like to extend it's deepest and sincerest condolences to the family of Dr Wayne Erskine. Wayne has been involved with Bass Sydney for many years and his significant contribution and commitment to the field of fish and aquaculture is outstanding. Through this passion Wayne completed significant projects and published many scientific papers which will prove valuable for generations to come. Wayne has over 150 publications in international and national journals, and in a range of other peer-reviewed outlets. He had considerable research experience on rivers, floodplains, wetlands and lakes in most areas of Australia. His interests included palaeoflood hydrology, climate change, floodplain development, limnological processes, sediment transport and contaminated sediment movement, soils and soil erosion, impacts of riparian vegetation on channel stability, restoration geomorphology and ecology, and fish movement, especially through engineering structures. He often worked in the seasonally wet tropics of northern Australia since 1998 and has a keen interest in sandstone landscapes and in seasonal and ephemeral rivers.



Wayne recently contacted us about a paper he had written on the taxonomy of Australian Bass. He planned to inform us that *Macquaria* is no longer the genus for Bass, that it had been placed back in the genus *Percalates* based on mtDNA. His friend Peter Unmack led the change and first told Wayne about it at a dinner in Davis, California back in 2000. The last Freshwater Fish book used *Percalates*, so he figured it was probably time to update Bass Sydney members. Wayne also informed us that there are now 7 species of freshwater Blackfish, 3 species and one subspecies of Macquarie Perch, 12 species of Mountain Galaxiids and at least 5 species of Tandan Catfish. His concluding comment was..

*“Finally Australia is getting the freshwater fish fauna it deserves.”*

He will be sadly missed by all who had a chance to meet him either personally or through his field.

**~ Bass Sydney Committee**

## Pears from the Patron

Not all of you will know our Club Patron Dr Wayne Erskine. Wayne is a long time member and Past President of Bass Sydney – a keen angler who just happens to hold a PhD and who works in the fields of soil research, geomorphology (look it up!) and fish. Those first two fields have a lot of relevance to the health of our fisheries. Over the coming months we'll be providing a layman's review of some of Wayne's recent published work and attempting to relate it to some of the issues that our native fish face. For the technically inclined the full reference to the published work will, of course, be provided.

For those of you who heard Daniel Williams from Greening Western Sydney speak at our last GM this first article will have particular relevance. It discusses issues of soil erosion in the South Creek catchment and consequent sediment & nutrient loads in the creek – something with a natural tie in to our planned re-vegetation work.

Onto the article:

“South Creek is the largest catchment in western Sydney and has experienced increasing urbanisation over the last 30 years. It drains a 620 km<sup>2</sup> shale catchment between Narellan and Windsor...” Prior to European occupation, the catchment was covered by eucalypt forest, grassy eucalypt woodland, and grassy areas lacking trees. Now, of course, things are significantly different and the changes in land use have led to increases in soil erosion. In fact, Wayne and his co-authors cited a number of earlier studies to conclude that South Creek has been a major contributor to suspended solids and turbidity in the Hawkesbury River for at least the last 20 years. This is a conclusion partly explained by the study under review. By sampling sediments from the bottom of farm dams and soil from their catchments, Erskine et al have estimated that sediment loads from upland sources are 4.4 times higher than that in 1788. What's more, further development is likely to see the catchment left with only 5% remnant woodland and this ratio move to 5.3 times higher. The primary sources for these increased sediment loads are soil disturbance resulting from cropping and urban construction. Not surprisingly, the study has also confirmed that these sediments are enriched with clay and phosphorous – hence our turbid creek with high nutrient loads. While dams, water pollution control ponds and constructed wetlands may serve to trap some of this sediment, the real key to improving the outcomes is to maintain ground cover of over 70%. Perhaps our re-vegetation efforts can make a small contribution to this aim.

Information taken from:

*Erskine WD, Mahmoudzadeh A, Browning CM, and Myers C, “Sediment yields and soil loss rates from different land uses on Triassic shales in western Sydney, NSW”, Australian Journal of Soil Research, 2003, 41, 127-140.*

## Bass Sydney Photo Competition

Hi members—after some nice pics circulating from recent fishing trips we've decided to run a monthly photo competition open to all members. You are encouraged to get involved and submit one photo per month. Photos can be of anything fishing related and do not need to include Bass so be as creative as you like. There are a few rules:

- Photos must be from the current season only (from April 2017 onwards)
- No Bass photos to be entered during closed season (May 1 to August 31)
- One photo per member per month

All entries to be emailed to Jason at [mmcmasterj@tradies.com.au](mailto:mmcmasterj@tradies.com.au) and the Committee will decide on one winner each month and will be published in the Battler. Each monthly winner will then be considered for the Photo of the Year to be voted on by all members before the 2018 AGM. The winner will receive a great prize (to be confirmed soon). We look forward to seeing some great pics!!

Cheers,  
~ Jason

## The Editors Message

Firstly, apologies for the late edition! Work has been a little crazy for the old Editor in Chief. I haven't done much fishing myself lately, not since my last fruitless Cod mission to Copeton Dam a couple of months ago. You can feel a glimpse of spring lately in Sydney with some random warm winter days that would almost have you fooled that it was October already! I'm off overseas in 3 weeks and when I return, Bass season will have kicked off again. Perhaps encouraging me to take to the water again! Just a quick note to all members — you do not need to write articles for submission to the Battler, even if you just have a quick blurb, or a bunch of pics you'd like to submit it would be most appreciated. Finding content for each edition is difficult without input from members, so please contribute whenever you can. Hope to see some of you soon.

Cheers,  
~ Pete

<b>BASS SYDNEY CALENDAR 2017</b>		
<i>Emu Plains Working Bees are normally the first Saturday of the month</i>		
<b>May</b>	20	<b>LCR– Wirrong Flat</b>
<b>June</b>	13	<b>General Meeting</b>
	18	Roseville Saltwater
<b>July</b>	23	Sydney Harbour Luderick
<b>August</b>	8	<b>GENERAL MEETING</b>
	13	Burns Bay Saltwater
<b>September</b>	16/17	Karuah River
<b>October</b>	10	<b>GENERAL MEETING</b>
	21/22	<b>H/NEPEAN BASS CATCH Yarra</b>
<b>November</b>	11	<b>LANE COVE RIVER Bass</b>
	18/19	Williams River Bass Catch
<b>December</b>	9	<b>CHRISTMAS Function</b>
<b>BASS SYDNEY CALENDAR 2018</b>		
<b>January</b>	20/21	<b>Colo River</b>
<b>February</b>	13	<b>GENERAL MEETING</b>
	17/18	<b>H/NEPEAN BASS CATCH Bents</b>
<b>March</b>	17/18	Williams River Bass Catch
	24	<b>Nepean Reach 5</b>
<b>April</b>	10	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b>
<b>* EVENTS IN BOLD ARE POINT SCORE EVENTS *</b>		

## Lane Cove National Park Event – August 12

Sydney really turned on the weather for our August club event. We did bush regeneration at Wirrong Flat in the Lane Cove National Park with Peter from LCNP and Jill from Friends of Lane Cove National Park. We had a pretty good turnout, watering trees that were planted recently by volunteers on National Tree Planting Day. We also did some lantana clearing, the boys really took it to heart and cleared about 100 square meters in a couple of hours. We had a BBQ at midday and then went for an afternoon fish. The upper river is a bit of a desert at the moment with Jeremy pulling the only fish, a nice sized flathead.

We also had a lucky door prize provided by Greg Seeto and Daiwa Australia. A lovely little Aird rod and assorted Daiwa products. A big thanks to them for supporting the club and other environmental efforts across Australia.

Thanks as always to the volunteers and to Milton for bringing all of the BBQ gear and cooking the BBQ.





## Blackfishing Evolution – HS Tham

As most Bass Sydney members know, I am a great fan of blackfishing when I'm not chasing bass, bream, etc. I have written in the past about this love for a simpler, back-to-basics style of fishing for a very hard-fighting, tasty and sustainable species. This time, I want to write about how my blackfishing has changed over the past few years and how I am continuing to learn.

Milton introduced me to blackfishing in the late 1990's by taking me to fish his favourite semi-ocean spot on the North Harbour rocks. Its almost full-blown ocean rock fishing with attendant need for awareness of swell conditions and good footwear. Bait (cabbage) was at your feet. I loved it. I have since introduced it to a number of BS members. I considered it a great activity for the bass off-season.

For the next several years, interrupted by long periods of not living in Sydney, I looked forward to my three or so months of blackfishing in the winter months. I only went to the one spot. After a while, and after a season of small fish, I decided I had to expand my blackfishing horizons. The North Harbour location was also a pain with traffic. I needed to find spots that were closer to home.

In the past three or so years, this has led to me forcing myself to explore many other areas including still water blackfishing. I've known since I was a schoolboy that blackfish can be found everywhere as in those days, every ferry wharf or public wharf throughout Sydney was populated by old men with bad hats wielding very long, soft rods with keeper nets bulging with blackfish. However, I was now faced with the question of bait. Off the rocks, bait was simple – bend down and pick some cabbage, put on hook – done! Away from the ocean rocks, bait had to be found and secured before you went fishing!

There was also the question of what type of weed can be found, where do you find it and will the stuff work on the fish? This was definitely challenging and annoying that (unproductive) time had to spend doing this. I still find it annoying, but have learned to accept it as part of the whole thing. Other than cabbage, there are many types of weed, which will work as blackfish bait and I was always a bit anxious if I had the right type. I have since become a bit more relaxed about the type of weed – most of them work most of the time!

Still or flat-water blackfishing was another step on my learning curve. There are many more still water spots and of course, they are safer than ocean rocks. Burley became more important and more time was added to the experience by having to make sand burley. Leaders became much finer – 6lb was standard and often, 4lb was necessary. This added to the enjoyment of the fight and bust offs, even in still water locations, became more common. A long handled landing net became necessary to land the fish from jetties, groynes and rocky shorelines as there was no assistance from surging waves. More equipment!

Fishing spots however, was my main concern. As mentioned, blackfish can be found everywhere, but they are not everywhere all the time. That would make it too easy! Locating them was a matter of trying different locations at different stages of the tide and adding this information to my ever-expanding blackfishing log. I've had this log for the past 8 or 9 years, which I started just to keep a record of swell conditions at the original North Harbour spot. From one worksheet on the spreadsheet, it now has seven, categorised into general locations and in each location, specific spots. I now fish the Eastern suburbs, Narrabeen, North Head, Botany Bay, Sydney Harbour and West of the Bridge.

My blackfish “season” has also expanded. From only 3 or 4 months of the year, I am blackfishing in the months I've never blackfished before. Only this year, I have caught my first ever blackfish in January, February and in March! Almost every week, I have discovered more spots.



There is no doubt in my mind that blackfish from the ocean rocks fight harder than those from still water and is still my first love, but I have found that the fish can be much larger from still waters — I don't know why. The other upside of the ocean rocks is the chance for drummer. Hooking them can be a relatively common occurrence, landing them is another matter! I've only landed three legal drummer on blackfish gear EVER! They are even better on the plate than blackfish. Looking at the bright side, blue surgeonfish are a possibility from the Harbour. They are supposed to fight much harder and I have seen them under an Eastern suburbs ferry wharf, but I am yet to land one.



*Parra River blackfish*



*Narrabeen channel blackfishing (the easiest & safest form of blackfishing ever!)*



*E suburbs ocean rock pool blackfishing (83yo local in pic)*





*BS boys blackfishing*



*My 1<sup>st</sup> bream on cabbage (winter 2016)*

Very recently, I was at Curl Curl gathering bait from the rock platform. I'd never been there before. The plan was to get bait then relocate to my favourite N Hbr spot to meet up with Doug. I got there early in the morning and it didn't take long to gather bait. I had a 9' casting rod with a 4500 size spin reel on hand to have a few casts for pelagics. I clipped on a 20g "Slow Blatt Oval" slow jig. Slow shore jigging has become quite trendy in the last few years and I bought this to use off some blackfish ledges. Before long, I landed my first ever bonito from the rocks. It wasn't big at around 44cm but I was stoked.



*Macman's rod bent double (busted off too!)*



*Double hookup (I was busted off!)*

The fishing that day at Nth Hbr was quite poor, but it was highlighted by a snack of bonito sashimi enjoyed by Doug and I on the rocks there. I bought some soy sauce & wasabi between locations. Bonito is one of my fave sashimi species and I would even go so far to say that I like it more than tuna! Mmmmm.



*Bonito bycatch*





Very recently, I even upgraded my PB with a 44cm blackfish from the Parramatta R. I was very happy, but Matt who had doubled my score actually comprehensively out fished me that session. He was fishing 4lb leader while I had 6lb. He had many more bites than me, but also got busted off two or three times. The evolution continues!

~ HS Tham

## **Sydney Harbour Bluenose Bruiser – Andre Dukino**

My session started out quite promising with Salmon busting the surface at launch but soon I was to realise my efforts were not received very well. Oh well I thought time to go catch some bream, started off hitting jetties and pontoons which I probably spend too much time doing 5 hours in total using everything from Z-Man Slim Swimz, blades and Cranka Crabs and all I had to show for it was a 45cm flathead. I decided to hit the bait schools and that's when my day got interesting! I rigged up a motor-oil Slim Swimz and BAM came up tight to a nice 45cm whiting! Soon after that, the wind really picked up and it was difficult to hold position so I moved into a more protected bay.

I started to notice a fair bit of bait on the sounder so I threw the Slim Swimz around again and caught a few small Tailor but not what I was after, luckily persistence paid off.. A short time later, I felt a whack on my line and bam I was on! This fish didn't muck around viciously pulling string straight away and wrapping me around an anchor buoy — but a quick peddle around on the Hobie and I had her free. She took some epic runs during the fight and my heart was in my throat the whole time, especially because I could feel her teeth on the leader. The water was very dirty so when I first saw the fish it was only a metre away and man I was shocked to see an absolute horse of a Bream! After a few more heavy runs I had her in the net — I just sat there for a minute or two just looking at the fish in the net which was still in the water letting my heart rate calm down a bit. I called my mate over to take some pictures and soon after she was released ready for another angler to catch and leave a lasting burning memory just like it did for me.





Tight lines,

~ Dre

## A cold Sunday morning – Rico van de Kerkhof

Doug and Jeremy couldn't get out of bed on a cold Sunday's morning. I launched at Glebe and soon found some activity on the sounder. No interest in the Zman lures, so I tied on a hurricane crab. It's the first time I've used them and it didn't take long to get a hit. After 3 min tussle and being dragged around a bit, I managed to get it to the surface — one big head shake and one crab less on the 4lb. Next pylon caught a just legal Bream. Well this was going to be the lure of the day (to lose so it turned out)! Two boat hulls further along and I hooked a good bream — it took some drag until I suddenly felt no weight anymore. Checked my loop knot which was still ok, but no more lure. I tied a new one on and this time closed the eye with my plyers, 2 casts later, same thing — no fish, no lure but still the loop knot intact....Grrrrr! Got a split ring from a cheap lure and tied the loop knot to that...success. Caught another Bream, and lost another on the oysters near the bridge! Just past the bridge I cast my trusted Zman Slim Swimz. The line didn't sink or moved at all — wound up the slack and felt some weight, after a short battle some guys along the boardwalk said it's a nice bream. Moments later, I saw it too and it was more than nice! A big fat 43cm bream! First time I've been applauded when landing a fish. On the way back the wind picked up and I decided to head in early. Cost me a few lures and learned a good lesson. However, the biggie made me forget all about it. Went home and had a big smile on my face for the rest of the day.

~ Rico





## **Report on interviews with Bass Sydney Fishing Club bush regeneration for evaluation of Greening Australia's Cumberland Stepping Stones project.**

*Margaret Somerville, Western Sydney University*

### **Introduction**

The evaluation of Greening Australia's community engagement in their 40 Million trees program, Cumberland Stepping Stones is being undertaken by Jen Dollin, Brittany Hardman and Margaret Somerville. On 14 June, 2017 Margaret interviewed five members of Bass Sydney Fishing Club who were present at the regular bush regeneration morning. Their responses are about their bush regeneration activities in general over the 6 years of their activities at the Emu Green site on the Nepean River. The following report is a de-identified summary of their responses to the eight questions asked in the interview.

### **Can you tell us about your involvement with Bush Care?**

All five interviewees became involved in the Bass Sydney Fishers bush regeneration activities since the Club became involved with the site at Russell St, Emu Plains on the Nepean River. The reason for the Club getting involved in bush care was to help the fish by improving the habitat. One member added that his wife is a keen gardener and they are involved in planting native plants in the park

behind where they live. Two of the members interviewed became involved because of their interest in bush regeneration as well as fishing. One, a keen landscape gardener, wanted to combine his love of fishing and giving 'something back to nature'. The other who had undertaken a course 'fishers for fish habitat rehabilitation' was specifically seeking involvement in bush care when he saw a presentation by Bass Sydney Fishers following the course. Three of the members are relatively recent migrants to Australia from Vietnam, Scotland, and the Netherlands. The bush regeneration activities offers them the additional bonus of learning more about Australia and social networks around activities they believe in.

### **Who participates in this program?**

The members of Bass Sydney Fishing Club, who come from all over Sydney, from north, south, east and west take part in the bush care activities, joined by two members of the local community. They reported that there are normally about 6 people who attend with more on planting days as it tends to be a bit more interesting than pulling weeds. The sense was that although they sometimes think of the numbers as being low, they're actually in line with most volunteer activities anywhere with the numbers of volunteers that consistently turn up usually dropping down to about 10%. With 30 members in the Club, a regular attendance of 20% 'should be applauded because people have life going on so to make those commitments and turn up regularly is no easy feat'.

Bass Sydney Fishing Club were the pioneers of bush regeneration and other clubs from all over the east coast have got involved as well.

### **How does this program enhance the natural environment?**

All interviewees agreed that the main way that their activities helped the natural environment was to remove noxious weeds such as lantana, privet and balloon vine that are 'choking the life out of our riparian growth' and replacing them with native plants. Removing the weeds also allows native plants to return by direct seeding. They understand the limitations of 'the little pocket that we're working' on but see this as taking one step at a time as 'it's taken us two hundred years to get into the problem we have. We're not going to fix it overnight, but you know, it's like every journey, it starts with the first step'. While improving fish habitat is their main aim, this in itself participates in 'a whole little cycle':

Forty percent of bass feed comes from insects falling into the water. So, with more native trees around, it attracts more insects, more birds, the birds attack the insects, they fall in the water, it's food for fish, so it's a win-win for us. It's a whole little cycle, eh? It is, yes, and it's not just for the bass, if we have more trees planted along the banks, it also helps the habitat for platypus.

One interviewee noted that the plants have to be maintained until they get established, 'by keeping weeds away and in dry times watering them and trying to protect them from vandalism, from other animals like rabbits eating them because we've got covers around the plants'. So 'the program enhances the natural environment because we're limiting the impact of invasive species, we're making

space for native species, and by coming along every month for the last four years we're able to get established native species and prevent them being recolonised by invasive species'.

### **How does this program help the local community?**

Although this was a difficult question for the interviewees because of the lack of interest of the local community, they all agreed that their bush care regeneration activities improved the environment for the local community who use the area for recreation such as walking their dogs or riding bikes.

If you're a botanist or you enjoy plants, you can now see native species. You can now see those little husks from the cicadas, lizards, little colourful tree birds fly through. The last time I was here at the water's edge there was kingfishers on my left, flying from a branch down into the water and ping-pong at fish and flying back up. Another thing I saw was a huge monitor lizard that had been drinking at the water and as I walked down it took off and climbed up a tree. The place is more open, you can feel the breeze, you can feel the wind.

They note that 'many of the people we've spoken to over the last six years have been quite enthusiastic', and remain 'hopeful that some of that enthusiasm will rub off on them and they might come and help'. They think 'it's really good for the children, just the younger folk to come and see what's happening and what we're trying to achieve'. They note with regret the hoons that drive their four-wheel drives through the plantings but hope that eventually the improved beauty of this site will engage more of the community positively.

Another interviewee referred to the local community of fishermen and the forces against them. He feels that 'doing these little things not only helps the environment, helps our fishery, but also it, I hope to increase our standing within the community'.

### **How does the program contribute to biodiversity conservation?**

The larger question of biodiversity conservation partially overlapped with the question about enhancing the natural environment with the impact on fish habitat and the increase in trees, insects and birds as part of the whole ecological cycle. As fishers, they noted the specifics of how fish respond to the presence or absence of shade for the fish:

They improve the habitat just by making shade, and you know, bugs and so on, in the spring, and when there's hot weather, in the trees that fall in the water and the fish benefit from that. When you're fishing for bass in the summer time and you're using surface lures, you always generally fish under the overhanging branches of trees. That's because during the day the bass don't like to be out in the sunny water, they always head for the shade, so that's why we do it, it definitely does improve the habitat.

Another explained in great detail the larger changes in biodiversity he had experienced as a result of their bush regeneration work:

I can still see a fantastic change. When balloon vine covers trees it blocks out the light and those lower branches get denied light, you don't get birds, you don't get so much insects, it's almost nearly eerily quiet and dead. When you just cut it all at head height and all that foliage dies away and dies down and then falls down over time and then we could see more light coming through. We could see smaller birds from forests permeating and we could hear more birds, we could see the shells of cicadas whenever they come out and crawl up the tree so we could actually see that there was more insect life. You could see lizards on the trees that weren't there before sunning themselves. We see more butterflies coming through.

They also believe that their work also contributes to larger biodiversity conservation by setting an example for other groups to follow, and by the flow on effect of native plantings along the waterways.

### **How do you feel about your participation in this particular program?**

Bass Sydney Fishing Club is proud of their achievements in taking the lead for fishing groups in bush regeneration. The Club won the Fish Habitat Network Club of the Year Participation award for what they have done at the Emu Green site, and personally they feel proud of their participation. They feel satisfied when they remove noxious weeds and see native plantings thrive, and enjoy the socialising it offers with a BBQ at the end of each bush regeneration day. They particularly noted the satisfaction of seeing plants grow over time with some trees in the planting now over 10 metres tall. For those members who live in the city it provides them with an opportunity to be in a natural environment, 'I'm from the Bankstown area I would love to live around here. We don't hear a thing, just a bit of the water at the background and the birds and the crickets and the cicadas and stuff like that. So, yeah, it's good to be out and be here'.

One interviewee mentioned the importance of acting on your beliefs and referred to the European Union laws saying that countries had to restore the rivers back to original function and health. The activity of bush regeneration provides an opportunity for 'just not wishing for things to get better or adhering to more say, healthier principles but actually out here implementing them in practice'.

### **Have you learnt anything from this program?**

The interviewees said they had learned a lot about the different weeds, and the different native plants and trees and how they function in particular environments. They noted the practicalities of how to plant the native plants for the best survival, 'I've learnt a few new things here that I didn't know, like how deep to plant them, and you plant them 50 mm below the surface, so there's a natural pool if there's rain and little things like that, I think which help, you know'. Some also commented that they had learned a lot more about the relationship between the planting and fish, the fact 'that 40% of what



the Bass eat and the fishes eat in the river comes from the trees that we planted along the river'. Another interviewee noted the motivation to learn more, 'the knowledge isn't that you've acquired absolute new knowledge, it's that you've acquired new knowledge that allows you to access more knowledge and appreciate it even if you don't fully understand it'.

**Is there anything that you would like to add about the program and how it's being conducted?**

The Bass Sydney Fishing Club noted that they appreciate the support for their bush regeneration activities, 'we got some trees and some help from a professional organisation, they helped put them in and look after them. So, that has been really good, and I think, hopefully it will continue or will go again, and I think more and more people, as I said, right across Australia, are getting involved, and it can only be a good thing'.

And, finally, one interviewee spoke about the significance of bringing his young daughter along and her early learning about fish habitat and bush regeneration:

I can bring the family and they can muck in and pull some weeds or do some watering and my daughter likes to do the watering with the watering can. I hold it and she just pours it or they can just come and do nothing and then – but they get to spend a wee bit of time and see something else that's not Sydney inner west, they get to see something that's a wee bit more country and hopefully they pick up on the enjoyment.

**~ Margaret**

## Monthly Fishing Cartoon



**Next Meeting is on Tuesday  
October 10  
7:30pm at  
Northmead Bowling Club**

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