



# Streamlines

Newsletter of the Pullen Pullen Catchments Group Inc.

**February 2019**

*Welcome to the first issue of Streamlines for 2019. I hope everyone had a very happy festive season and a chance to rest and recuperate for another busy year.*

*It seemed that a good place to start the year would be by refreshing our knowledge of our catchment area and what our objectives are so I have extracted some information from material published by Brisbane City Council for your attention.*

*The response to Lynn and Hugh Brown's article 'Bringing Back the Small Birds' in the last Streamlines about the revegetation work they are carrying out on their block was so good, that I invite other members to share their experiences. If you don't fancy writing about them yourselves, I'm more than happy to come and talk with you and write up your experiences for publication – after your approval, of course. Steve and Ali Petelski have already taken me up on this offer and their story starts on page 5. Thank you for a very informative and enjoyable morning and great photos!*

*Our Wildlife Officer, Irene Darlington, has prepared an article on making your yard wildlife, especially possum, friendly. She has drawn on many years of experience to come up with a series of very good points for us to consider.*

*This issue concludes with a remarkable image of a nesting falcon high up in a majestic gum tree.*

*All members are welcome to submit articles to Streamlines via [helian@pretirementresorts.com.au](mailto:helian@pretirementresorts.com.au). The deadline for the next issue is 15 **APRIL** 2019. Please note the earlier closing date due to my absence from Australia through May.*

*Enjoy!*

*Helen Ogle*

*Editor*

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# Pullen Pullen Catchments Group

## A Landcare Group

### Meetings

Meetings are held at 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre, 250 Grandview Road, Pullenvale.

### Website

[www.pullenpullencatchments.org.au](http://www.pullenpullencatchments.org.au)

### Working Bees

Anstead Bushland Reserve – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month, 8.30 - 11 am.  
Pullenvale Forest Park – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month, 8.30 – 11 am

Tools, gloves, etc are provided at Working Bees. Just wear sturdy boots, tough clothes and bring water and a hat!

### Committee Members 2017

<b>President:</b>	John Ness	3202 7556	<a href="mailto:john.ness@emsolutions.com.au">john.ness@emsolutions.com.au</a>
<b>Vice President:</b>	Richard Ponsonby	3202 9484	<a href="mailto:members@pullenpullencatchments.org.au">members@pullenpullencatchments.org.au</a>
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	Rob Preslmaier	0488 738 250	<i>Bushcare Coordinator, Anstead</i>
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### Membership Options

Membership fees are:

- Annual Membership – \$10 per person payable on March 1 each year
- Life Membership – \$100 per person

We are delighted to accept donations.

- Send a cheque payable to PPCG to PO Box 1390, Kenmore, 4069 or
- Transfer the funds electronically to BSB 064 152, Account No.10107038 Ref: your name.



*Dedicated to a better Brisbane*

“The PPCG acknowledges the support of the Lord Mayor’s Community Sustainability and Environmental Grants Programs for a grant to help with administrative, bushcare and educational costs”

# NEWS

**2018 Annual Report in Brief** President John Ness reported that PPCG had 36 Annual members and 135 Life members in December 2018 and that the Management Committee met 11 times during the year. At Anstead Bushland Reserve, Rob and Tracy Preslmaier have taken on the role of Bushcare Coordinators. One of their first and most challenging tasks was to get working bees changed to the first Sunday of the month! Eight working bees were held and the assistance of a local church group is acknowledged. Seedlings have been planted, watered and weeded and six members have been trained in brush cutting and weed spraying. At Pullenvale Forest Park, Lynn Brown continued as Coordinator and led eight working bees in a variety of tasks. At Airlie Road, another 100 trees have been planted in the riparian zone. Mowing, watering and weeding has continued. Irene Darlington and her wildlife carers have provided ongoing support, feeding and care for native animals. PPCG provided \$1900 to help set up the water supply for one release site. Nola Dean continues to expand the offerings on the website. Andrew Wills continues as our Catchment Coordinator. In summary, 'the PPCG remained financially viable with adequate funds to support all activities irrespective of grants'. Issues for 2019 include trials with people on Community Service Orders providing labour at working bees (more information on this after the March meeting) and vacation care students at Pullenvale State School helping with plantings at Airlie Road.

**Airlie Road Park** John Ness reported that 17 vacation care students from Pullenvale State School planted about 40 trees in early January. He commented that managing a planting project with volunteers (?) from this end of the age spectrum compared with the usual PPCG working bee demographics had its challenges but some of the children actually wanted to plant more trees, even those who started out complaining that it was delaying their splashing about in the creek! Subsequent watering has kept the survival rate over 90% despite this being the driest January on record for Brisbane. A Chinese elm on the slope in Airlie Road Park has gone brown. If it dies, that will be a minor win for the drought.

**Anstead Bushland Reserve** PPCG have been urging the Brisbane City Council to improve the track down to the Brisbane River for some time (Streamlines August 2018). We were told that this would be part of a much wider regional master plan for the area. However, we have just been advised by our Creek Catchment Officer 'that due to possible delays in delivery of master planning activities in and around Anstead Reserve, the regional staff have submitted a budget bid for funding to seal the access track down to the base of the quarry in Anstead Reserve. It should be noted that the bid may not be successful in which case the process will continue to move along slowly. However if the bid is supported it would pave the way to having the access fixed within this financial year.' Andrew will keep us advised as things develop. Andrew will also follow up on the replacement of weathered/damaged pamphlet boxes. Rob is pursuing the production of new signs advising the public of working bees (or is that community gatherings? Or habitat mornings? Hot topic for debate at the last Committee Meeting!). Small groups of volunteers have watered seedlings through January and February. **Habitat Mornings at Anstead will take place on March 3, April 7 and May 5.**

**Pullenvale Forest Park** Lynn reported that the Park has recently been the subject of a very comprehensive flora and fauna survey which is available on the PPCG website. The survey concluded that the current approach to rehabilitation should be continued, including maintenance weeding of rehabilitated areas. It also identified the presence of some weed trees and, because of the youth of many of the trees, a lack of tree hollows and hollow logs on the ground to act as refuges or nesting sites for a wide range of birds and other animals. We hope to address these issues this year. It is also anticipated that more fruit-bearing trees (in the ecological, not gastronomic sense) will be planted. So expect to see more native figs and plants like the diamond leaf pittosporum in the Park. **Habitat mornings at PFP will take place on March 10, April 14 and May 12.**

**Wildlife** Irene reported that carers have been as busy as usual at this time of year, especially looking after possums with burnt hands and feet from walking on hot roofs and wires. She intends to focus less on actual animal care and more on education, mentoring, running courses and updating the possum care training manual.

**Education** Ron circulated a list of possible leaders/speakers for community education days. Four were selected and it is hoped to run workshops on plants, animals in general, spiders and frogs throughout the year.

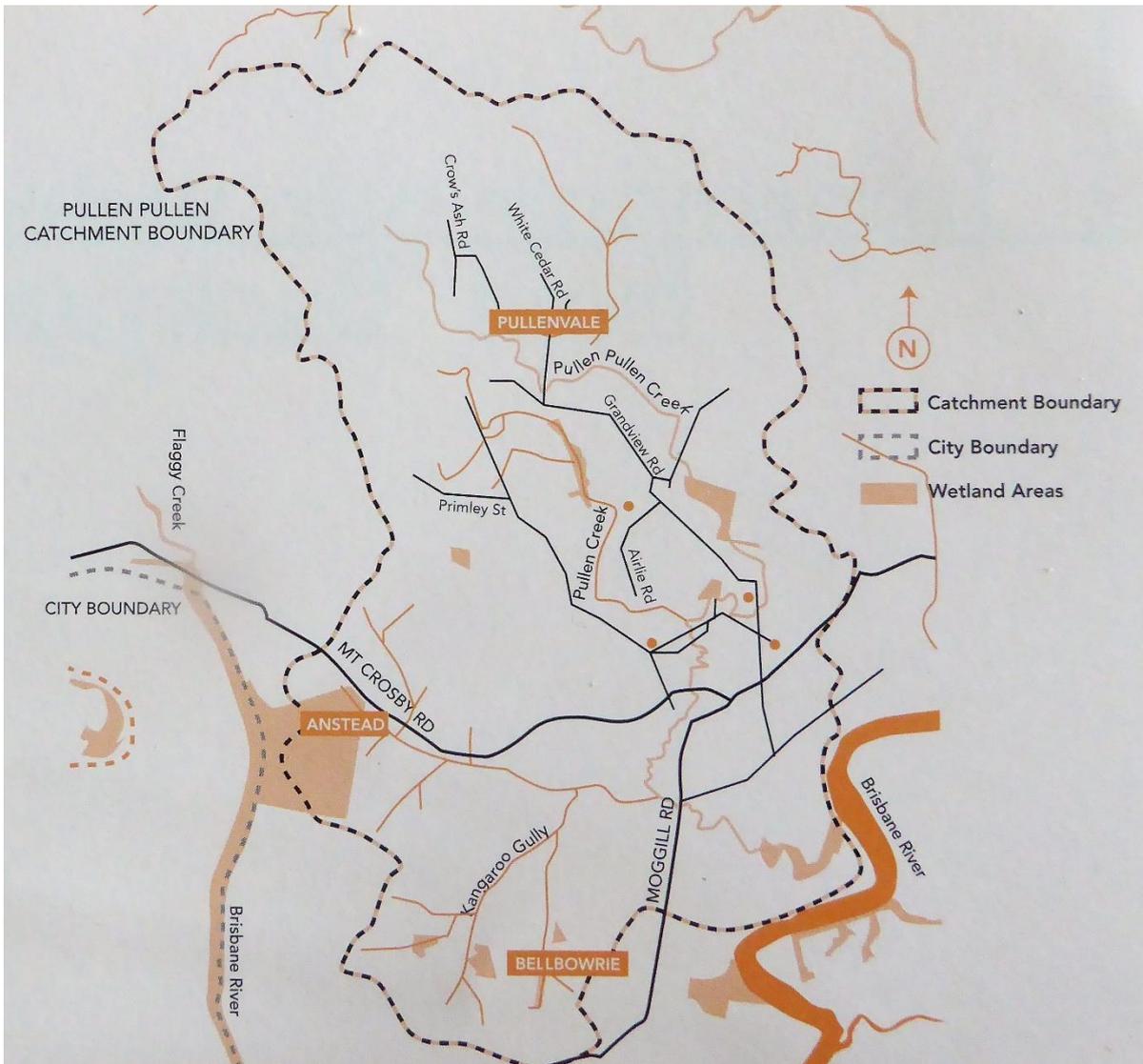
**Brisbane Diversity Seminar** Join guest speakers, Dr Chris Galbraith, from Three Mile Scrub who will talk about the history of this group and their restoration work dating from 1980s and Andrew Franks from the Queensland Herbarium who will talk about the assessment of urban forests and how to monitor them over time. Tuesday 12 March Kenmore Library 6.30-8.30 pm. Bookings essential through Eventbrite by Sunday March 10.

# Pullen and Pullen Pullen Creek Catchments

(Extracted from material published by Brisbane City Council)

A catchment is an area of land bounded by natural features, such as hills, from which all water flows to a common low point, such as a creek, lake, river or bay.

Pullen Pullen Creek catchment runs from bushland in the D'Aguiar Range to the west through Pullenvale to the Brisbane River at Lather Road, approximately 56 km upstream from Moreton Bay. The subcatchment of Pullen Creek drains from an area of State Forest in the southwest of the catchment and joins Pullen Pullen Creek downstream of Lancing Street. Kangaroo Gully is a tributary of Pullen Pullen Creek that drains the southern portion of the catchment and contains the only urban residential area (Bellbowrie) in the catchment. Kangaroo Gully joins Pullen Pullen Creek just upstream of Moggill Road. The combined catchments cover 31.9 sq km and include the suburbs of Pullenvale, Anstead, Pinjarra Hills and part of Bellbowrie. (See Brian Dean's article on Catchment v. Catchments, Streamlines May 2015)



The Pullen Pullen Creek Catchments

**Land use** Our catchment has one of the highest proportions of bushland in Brisbane. Significant areas of native vegetation remain, particularly in the upper catchment within State and Brisbane City Council reserves. The catchment has a history of logging for hoop pine, red cedar and eucalypt, small scale dairy and farming including cotton, pineapples, corn and fodder crops. Today the catchment is largely rural/residential with private land mostly in small to medium acreages and within the urban hub of Bellbowrie.

**Flora** Four main vegetation types occur within our catchments – open eucalypt forest, dry rainforest, riparian (waterside) vine forest and forested red gum open forest and woodland. The most common eucalypt species are grey gum (*Eucalyptus major*), spotted gum (*Corymbia citriodora*), forest red gum (*E. tereticornis*) and

ironbarks such as grey ironbark (*E. siderophloia*). The large-leafed spotted gum (*C. henryii*), the plunkett mallee (*E. curtisii*) and native jute (*Corchorus cunninghamii*) found in the Moggill and Anstead area are considered rare and threatened species within the Greater Brisbane Area.

**Fauna** Our catchments are areas of rich biodiversity. The variety of habitats supports a diversity of native mammal species including brush-tail and ring-tail possums, squirrel gliders, red-necked wallabies, bandicoots, antechinuses and koalas. The catchment has more than 200 species of birds including vulnerable species such as the powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*) and black-breasted button quail (*Turnix melanogaster*). The catchment hosts approximately 16 snake species, several lizards, skinks, freshwater turtles, about 20 species of native frog and a diversity of native fish populations.

**Restoring the Catchments** PPCG and Habitat Brisbane groups have worked in partnership with BCC in bushland and waterway rehabilitation and were instrumental in helping to protect 12.2 ha of parkland along Pullen Creek known today as Pullenvale Forest Park. PPCG carries out its objectives in the catchment by

- supporting the Habitat Brisbane bushcare groups,
- facilitating educational activities in local schools,
- raising environmental awareness in the community,
- rescuing and caring for native wildlife,
- hosting community events and
- applying for grants to assist landholders to rehabilitate their properties.

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## It's OK to be Mean to Protect the Green

**Steve and Ali Petelski  
(as told to Helen Ogle)**

Steve and Ali Petelski were visiting family in Brisbane in 2006 when they spotted a small advertisement in the paper for a block of land for sale in Pullenvale. It was the last block in a subdivision and had been on the market for some time. It was covered in natural dry rainforest and its topography would make building a home difficult. However, it immediately reminded Steve of his early years growing up in bushland at Jamboree Heights where he and friends and family could roam freely all day. So the block was purchased.

The 17 acre (approx. 7 ha) block is mostly long and quite narrow but fans out at the western end where it borders Moggill Conservation Park. It also borders Primley Street Park, a great source of weed seeds. It is 'mountain goat country' with steep rises and falls to intermittent waterways. It had been logged in the past and the presence of the remains of barbed-wire fences suggests some sort of farming may also have taken place. It is well-timbered but had an understorey of lantana and groves of ochna up to 3 m tall near the creeks when it was purchased.

After moving around the State, the family celebrated their first Christmas in their new home on the block in 2012. Over the last five years, Steve has weeded not only his own property but those of neighbours on both sides to provide weed-free buffers for his property. He very quickly learnt not to pull up mature lantana plants because they re-sprout readily from the roots. So he now cuts lantana off near the ground and sprays the stump with 50:50 glyphosate:water mix. Similarly, ochna is cut near the ground and glyphosate dribbled on the stump. The 'skeletons' of the plants are allowed to rot away naturally in situ.

To keep the property weed free, Steve walks through with secateurs and a spray bottle every 3-6 months, cutting and spraying newly sprouting lantana and pulling up lantana seedlings. Ochna can't be hand-pulled easily so it is allowed to grow until big enough to cut and spray. Lantana is usually eliminated after about three passes. Ochna may take more.

Steve prefers granular to liquid glyphosate because it is easier to handle, measure/weigh, mix and easier to clean up in case of a spill.

After five years intimate experience with lantana plants, Steve has concluded that the environment in and around them is practically sterile. Nothing grows, nothing lives, not even snakes. Even tree saplings are smothered. Once the lantana is removed, seedlings of a wide range of plants appear almost miraculously. In less than five years, many have grown to over 60 cm tall.

Following the plants, animal life returns. The number and variety of birds on the block has increased. Antechinuses, legless lizards, robust velvet geckoes and echidnas have been seen and a koala is currently in residence. Wallabies are present but can become pests, feeding on plants in dry periods. Deer are also present. They not only destroy trees but spread ticks and weeds along their trails. Steve has observed the 'chests' of deer covered in weed seeds and has often found quite 'foreign' weeds along their trails. While hares are present in the nearby horse paddocks, they are not a problem.

The main trees on the block are red ash (*Alphitonia excelsa*), white bean (*Ailanthus triphysa*), rusty gum (*Angophora leiocarpa*), tallowwood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*), spotted gum (*Eucalyptus maculata*), white cedar (*Melia azedarach*) and ironbarks (*Eucalyptus* spp.). Steve has planted many plants indigenous to the local area, making a small concession for a few non-indigenous native plants, such as grevilleas, and even a few non-native plants, such as bromeliads, close to the house.

Steve has had great success germinating grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea glauca*) seeds. *Xanthorrhoea glauca* occurs naturally in a large portion of the South East coast and extends inland. It thrives in well drained, aerated soils that have a low nutrient content so he has planted many in mulch overlying rock outcrops around the house. He also has a great liking for indigenous Barbed-wire grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*) with its soft, arching, blue-green leaves and interesting flower heads that resemble barbed wire. He strongly supports the rule that whatever you plant, the secret to success is mulch, mulch and more mulch – whatever is available.

While regenerating the vegetation on his block, Steve has formulated three philosophies for successful regeneration:-

**1. Absolutely no burn.** Firstly, the natural mulch layer is very shallow. Fire removes it leaving the ground virtually sterile and unsuitable for seed germination. Secondly, after saplings of trees such as Jagera (*Jagera pseudorhus*), red ash, white bean and tallowwood are burnt, they re-sprout from the base of the plant, eventually forming a canopy of plants of similar age, rather than populations of plants of various ages. In some cases, a particular plant, such as the silver wattle (*Acacia podalyrifolia*) may recover quickly after fire, out-competing other plants and leading to a monoculture of one species.

**2. Zero tolerance of all non-native, non-indigenous plants and animals in bushland areas.** This includes popular choices such as Cadaghi (*Corymbia torelliana*) and Umbrella tree (*Schefflera actinophylla*).

**3. Accelerated canopy promotion.** Ensure that young trees are not smothered or strangled by vines. Luckily, introduced weed vines such as Madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*) and Balloon vine (*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*) do not occur on the property, but indigenous barbed wire vine (*Smilax australis*) and Corky passion vine (*Passiflora suberosa*) may need to be managed by cutting the stem and treating the cut surface with glyphosate.

Steve acknowledges the advice and assistance he has received from Land for Wildlife personnel.



Lantana



Steep hillside and majestic bush



Deer damage

# Possum and Wildlife Friendly Yards

Irene Darlington

Stand quietly at sunset in my front or back yard in down town Bellbowrie, and just listen and watch the trees. The trees come alive with the nightly ritual of Brushtail and Ringtail possums waking from their lodgements where they have been asleep through the day. Brushies congregate from all corners of the yard. The garage. From neighbouring garages and garden sheds and from the many possum boxes built and attached to trees by me, some boxes still in place and in use now in their sixteenth year. Ringtails too emerging from the many woven nests or 'dreys' they have made in thick tree canopies throughout my yard.

My yard isn't so special with the **plants** conducive to possums living and feeding in my yard. In fact my yard has a number of shrubs and trees which are foreign to Australian bushland, but all too common in many Queensland house yards. The giant Leopard Trees, Peppercorn tree, Palms, Calliandras and Plumbago bushes just to name a few. These weed bushes and pest trees are still commonly planted in suburban yards as hedge plants or for decorative purposes. In truth, these introduced pest plants still provide shelter and food for possums in suburban yards. But natives are always preferred over introduced plants as they require so little water and provide far better a food source and shelter for possums and other wildlife.

I would never advocate purposely planting pest trees and shrubs in one's yard, but tolerating and keeping in check certain introduced vegetation which offers a home for the wildlife in our suburbs is a short term option. Nineteen years ago when I first purchased my home, introduced trees such as those named above were primarily all that was growing in my yard. Instead of removing every introduced plant and replanting natives, I took on this project gradually. I removed leopard trees over the years one by one and have now only two standing in my yard. Replacing the four cut ones, are many native Lillypillies, Grevilleas and bottlebrushes.



Lillypilly fruit and foliage



Grevillea flowers and foliage



Bottlebrush flowers and foliage

Over the years a few palms have been cut to make way for a variety of Eucalypts and Bottle Brushes. The Calliandras now interweave with the mature planted natives and provide a wonderful habitat for the wildlife in the yard. Ringtail possums need a thick, medium-sized tree and shrub canopy to provide the perfect habitat in which to build their nests. This thick canopy habitat has been allowed to thrive in the canopies of medium Lilly Pilly trees and bottlebrushes in my yard which have interlocked with the one feral Peppercorn shrub and the many Calliandras I have allowed to stay growing in my yard. The new leaf tips and blossoms of both the native and introduced plants providing a nourishing 'wild' meal for not only the possums but many birds frequenting the yard. The decorative Plumbago bush is not a feature in our native bushland, but kept in check through trimming this evergreen shrub's leaves and blossoms are also a meal for possums.

The trick is for you to take a good look at your garden and just decide which plants you will gradually replace with which nourishing, evergreen native trees and shrubs as the years go on. Create a habitat where the plants offer not only shelter but connectivity throughout the canopy. Remember, plant the native plants which are a source of food for the animals in addition to providing the green, private setting you want from your garden.

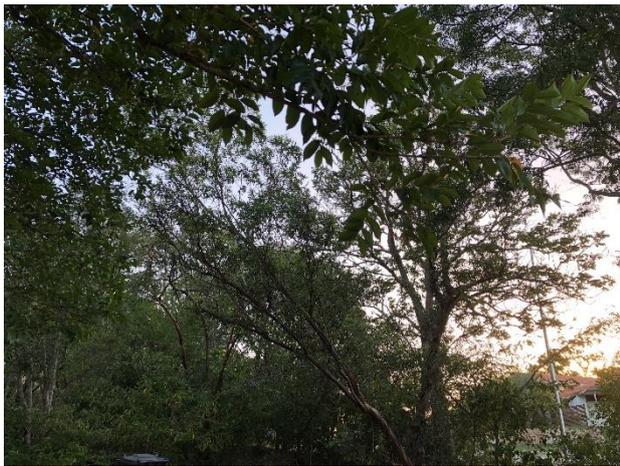
Assist possums by placing **possum boxes** into trees. A few different types of possum boxes are available on the market, but the most important feature I point out to people is to make certain there are at least two entry/exit holes in each box to provide an escape route for the possums when a python comes around for a meal. Having that second escape route from the box is an absolute necessity.

I also assist the animals in my yard by providing **connectivity** between the trees where Mother Nature hasn't provided it – yet! When native plants don't link up in their canopies, there is nothing wrong with your placing a

few branches or wooden planks or even thick ropes to provide the bridging between trees in your yard. The animals will use them. Possums are very vulnerable to attack if they go to ground so moving through your yard without having to go along the ground is very helpful to them. Providing **water sources** from hanging bird feeders in the trees or standing bird baths are also important features for possums all year around.

Lastly, and most importantly, is what **domestic pets** you allow to roam in your yard to be an ever present danger to the wildlife. I have written a few times in Streamlines about 'Responsible Pet Ownership' (May 2018) and keeping your cats and dogs away from backyard wildlife. Netted cat-runs are very important for cat owners. If your free-roaming dog attacks everything which moves in the yard, that is a problem. Don't put the water dishes for the wildlife on the ground where Fido will be quick to pounce. Hang the dishes or attach them up in trees where you can clean and replace the water easily and make sure connectivity through the canopy is available.

Just use common sense: if you love the wildlife in your yard then bring IN the vegetation they like to create habitat in which they can feed and build their homes. However, you must also remove or OUT the sources of danger from these gardens for your possums, birds and small reptiles etc.



Canopy connectivity for wildlife movement in Irene's yard



Nesting falcon