

Hancock Street Park Report 2023

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Hancock St Park received “ Land for Wildlife” status this year. This will enable the erection of “dogs on leash” signs to help protect our wildlife. Two birds that have returned to the forest are the pheasant coucal (*Centropus phasianinus*) and the golden whistler (*Pachycephala pectoralis*). This pleasing result is being enhanced by the establishment of the adjacent and fast-growing microforest which will help create a wild-life corridor, extending the park’s natural habitat.

Our biggest weed challenge in the park has been Green Panic *Megathyrsus maximus var. maximus*¹ and we have increased our efforts to remove it, especially because of the predicted threat of fire in the coming summer season. As it disappears, native/endemic plants pop up and the forest has become a lot denser especially with Trema (*Trema tomentosum*), encouraging increasing numbers of wild life. The other weed of some concern is Madeira vine² (*Anredera cordifolia*), but it is only in small patches.

1. Green panic is an environmental weed in Queensland, the Northern Territory and north-eastern New South Wales. It is a large, clumping, long-lived grass growing up to 3 m tall. Its large and much-branched seed-heads bear large numbers of small flower spikelets.
2. Madeira vine is a highly invasive weed capable of smothering and destroying native vegetation. Its climbing stems can totally envelop the canopy layer, while its trailing stems also smother the ground layer of invaded habitats. This reduces light penetration, eventually killing the plants underneath and preventing the germination and regeneration of native plants. The sheer weight of dense infestations can even bring down trees in the canopy layer, and in this way Madeira vine can change the structure of invaded communities, eventually destroying them. This species is currently regarded as one of the five most invasive plants in south-eastern Queensland.