

Panorama Crescent Park Report 2023

David and Anne-Marie Heckscher

History – Before 1990, the park was less than half of its current size at about 0.7 hectares. It seems to have been created about the 1960s when the area of Panorama Crescent was developed and functioned mainly as a site for the sewage pump station. About 1990, a little over a hectare was added to its area by park dedication, related to the subdivision of a 3.08 hectare parcel of land owned by the Baptist Church together with the adjoining youth camp. In 1990, David and Anne-Marie Heckscher commenced building their house on one of the lots created by that subdivision and in 1991, moved in.

Park Care Work – Staff of the youth camp did some maintenance and weeding of the area added to the park, both before and for a while after it became Crown land. The Council has done a few controlled burns over the years, most recently in 2020. Occasionally, the Council mows ‘The Meadow’.

From about the early 2000s, some adjoining neighbours have worked in the park to remove weed species. The Council initially provided native seedlings to plant in a small area at the head of the gully. FEP became involved in the early 2010s through Greg Lukes. David and Anne-Marie joined FEP about 2014, having worked in the park for some time before that. John and Kathy Gouldson acted as coordinators for several years before David took over as coordinator in 2017.

For work purposes, we have divided the park into sections – North includes the mown ‘meadow’ and native regeneration area, South is largely infested with weed species, Central is the gully area that has been transformed into a ‘garden’ area with plantings of both natives and exotics and is mowed, and South-West is also overgrown with weed species.

We have a current Annual Work Program, Bushcare Risk Assessment and Work Safe Statement.

Priorities – Bushfire management is a priority, given the proximity to houses and the dense vegetation. Fire track access is available and is mown by neighbours. The area adjoining houses is also mown. Weed management is a priority in ‘The Meadow’ and the native regeneration area. Woody weed species have been eliminated from those areas and the Central section, so ongoing weeding of smaller weeds is a focus there. Target

weeds include creeping lantana, asparagus fern, cobbler pegs, nightshade, green panic, thistles and in the 'meadow' kikuyu, paspalum and Rhodes grass.

Privet, Lantana and Celtis are the target woody weeds in those areas that remain infested. Green panic is also a problem. Care needs to be taken to not spread other weeds into those areas.

Successes – It is encouraging to see native species thrive when competition from weeds is removed. The regeneration area provides an example. 'The Meadow' is also returning to native grasses as invasive grasses are progressively removed. These areas also provide seed banks for the future.

The Council helps with bushfire management by occasionally mowing and through infrequent controlled burns. Neighbours also mow to maintain a fire break.

Threats – The threats posed by invasive weeds and by uncontrolled bushfire are obvious and common across most escarpment parks, although the weed threats may vary. Panorama Crescent Park is also at risk from an unclear future role. There are differing views among neighbours, FEP and Council about how much of the area should be cleared for fire breaks, whether it should be a focus of native regeneration or turned into an urban-parkland with garden areas.