

Beating 'round

the Bush

Happy 10th Birthday
IndigiScapes

Autumn issue 2010



What's in this issue:

- A brief history of IndigiScapes 2
- Bushcare – the old girl of IndigiScapes 3
- Always there to lend a hand 3
- Indigi staff – past and present 4
- From little things, big things grow!
– Habitat Protection Program 5
- World Environment Day Awards 5
- Let's party! 6
- Upcoming events 6

Receive our
newsletter via
email

All editions of this newsletter, including past ones, are available on the Indigiscapes website www.indigiscapes.com.au

Australians use more than 3.5 million tonnes of paper every year. We want to do our bit to reduce this consumption and try to be more sustainable. By having electronic newsletters we are reducing the amount of paper we use and our environmental impact.

Email Us @ IndigiScapes
See below for details...

If you would prefer to receive our newsletter electronically, email alice.gillespie@redland.qld.gov.au or phone 3824 8611.

Message from the editor

Melanie Rippon – Natural Resources Education Officer

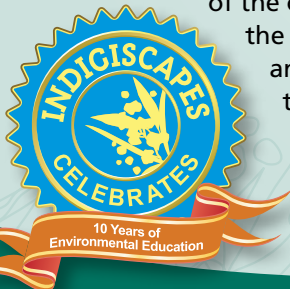
The atmosphere at IndigiScapes has officially shifted into party mode. This year IndigiScapes celebrates its 10th birthday and to mark the special occasion, the team have put together a cracking autumn edition of Beating 'round the Bush.

As one of the newest members of the Environmental Education team, it has been exciting for me to learn about the stories and achievements of the centre over the last 10 years, and a challenge to piece them together!

The feature article by Rosalie Eustace, our original service manager, reveals an interesting history of the centre. Our extension officers have been racking their memories to piece together the growth and major achievements of the extension programs over the years. We will look at staff, present and past, and also hear from one of our longest serving volunteers.

The team here at IndigiScapes hopes you enjoy a small yet entertaining snapshot of our major achievements over the last decade. Happy 10th birthday IndigiScapes!

Melanie Rippon



This publication is printed on ENVI™ 50/50 Recycled Carbon-Neutral Paper. ENVI™ 50/50 Recycled is manufactured in Australia by Australian Paper and is certified Greenhouse Friendly™ by the Australian Government under the Department of Climate Change Greenhouse Friendly™ Initiative. ENVI™ pulp fibre is sourced via a recognised chain-of-custody certified scheme.

HISTORICAL FILE

A brief history of *IndigiScapes*

Rosalie Eustace – The original IndigiScapes manager

The genesis of IndigiScapes was in 1995 when I started with Redland Shire Council as a Bushcare Extension officer.

One of my roles was to establish an environmental centre, which was the vision of Peter Berkeley, the then Manager of the Nature Conservation Unit. He, along with Councillor Toni Bowler, was very keen to have a Bushcare Program and environmental centre for the Redlands. John Valantine, who was the Director of Parks and Recreation at the time, was instrumental in selling the concept of IndigiScapes to Council. He must have been a persuasive man as the vote for the centre was unanimous! Originally called the Redlands Native Plant Arboretum, we soon realised this name was unsuitable as most people didn't know what an arboretum was, and it only refers to a collection of trees. Eventually, the name IndigiScapes, short for Native Plant Landscapes, was proposed by staff.



The concepts for the centre arose from quite a bit of brainstorming and consultation with community stakeholders. Based on the information gathered from the consultation, Hassell (Landscape Architects) produced the concept of demonstration gardens. It was well received and EDAW Australia (landscape architects) were successful in winning the contract to undertake the detailed design. The result was a unique building and landscape design that is functional and effective. The centre is not only a beautiful place to visit, but it is also one that has inspired residents to adopt gardening with locally native plants.

One of the key features of the centre was to provide draw cards, such as the café, nursery and shop. Once there, visitors were a captive audience, and as one of our volunteers once said, "People are being educated here without even realising it".

The community in particular needs to be acknowledged as the gardens were a result of volunteer labour. Volunteers collected the seed from all over Redlands, grew the plants and planted and cared for them until a groundsperson was employed. Volunteers also removed masses of lantana, groundsel and other weeds that covered the site early on. They established the nursery and in the early days conducted plant sales.



The Centre was opened on 24 February 2000, by Mayor Eddie Santaguiliana, with Ross McKinnon as guest speaker. Mayor Eddie planted a celery wood down by the first bridge across the creek to mark the occasion.



Even though Redlands IndigiScapes Centre was inspired and managed by the people acknowledged in this article, it is really a reflection of the environmentally conscious community of the Redlands, who have influenced Council direction and decision making. So, on the tenth anniversary of IndigiScapes, thank you Redlanders' for your drive and commitment to nature conservation.

Indigi fact

Since opening, IndigiScapes has had over a quarter of a million visitors through its doors. The biggest single day was on the Saturday of Indigi Day Out 2008, with 1,736 people rolling in.

The 'old girl' of IndigiScapes

Bushcare **Boyd Essex - Team Leader, Bushcare**

Cast your mind back to the year 1995. The hit movie *Babe* was released, Paul Keating was Prime Minister, Tina Arena and Silverchair cleaned up the ARIAs. This was also the year that Redland Shire (now City) Council established its **Community Bushcare Program – doesn't time fly.**

For 15 years Bushcare has been a great way for the community to positively improve their local bushland areas while learning about the plants and animals that call them home. Starting off with only a couple of groups, a handful of volunteers and one officer, the program has expanded considerably and is now an integral component of Council's environmental initiatives. Boasting more than 300 volunteers and over 40 groups, the program is a credit to everyone who has been involved over the years.

The aim of Bushcare has always been the same: to conserve biodiversity through community empowerment. Bushcare is still about caring for the local bushland, wildlife and waterways, community ownership and involvement, learning new skills, making friends and being active. Our volunteers continue to plant trees, wipe out weeds, collect seeds, monitor wildlife and attend social events.

Revegetation has always been a significant part of Bushcare. Through community plantings and Bushcare groups, the program has planted around 150,000 plants over 15 years, providing countless homes for wildlife.

Another core component of the program is the seed collection group, which have collected a phenomenal number of local seeds that have subsequently been propagated and grown by volunteers through the IndigiScapes nursery. Many of the plants have made their way back into the rich Redlands soil, where they are thriving.

Bushcare continues to flourish and support our volunteers in keeping Redlands green. Happy tenth birthday IndigiScapes! Bushcare is proud to call you home.



Always there to lend a hand

Frances Steiner shares her long history of conservation volunteering in the Redlands

My connection to the Redlands goes right back to 1972 when my husband and I bought our block of land opposite IndigiScapes.

The bushland that has been transformed into IndigiScapes was previously used as farming land. In around 1994, Council acquired the land and due to the sites suitability, an environmental education project was planned.

Immediately I was approached by Rosalie Eustace to head up the first IndigiScapes Bushcare group. I agreed. At that time I knew lots about volunteering, a bit about propagation and not a lot about the Redlands' native plants and habitat. Many phone calls and letterbox drops later, we had a small but willing team behind us to begin our revegetation projects at the centre.



In the early years, I continued to be intermittently involved in volunteering, often conducting tours of the gardens for visitors and assisting at open days and other special events. But it was the opening of the nursery that brought new opportunities for me.

For ten years now I have volunteered in the seed bank and propagation groups at the nursery. The propagation group meets on the first and third Tuesday of every month and the seed

bank group meets on the first and third Thursday of every month. It's hard to say how many plants I have propagated in that time, but I believe it to be in the thousands.

As I reflect on the last 15 years as an intermittent volunteer, I have nothing but sincere appreciation for having the opportunity to meet and work with such willing and interesting people. Volunteering keeps your mind and body strong, it facilitates human connection and provides opportunity for personal and community development.

The learning atmosphere at IndigiScapes continues to be positive, encouraging and effective. I admire the staff, past and present, for their excellent knowledge and ability to educate about the unique Redlands environment.

Indigi staff - past and present

Craig Doolan – Service Manager

You'd be forgiven for thinking that the same people who started working at IndigiScapes ten years ago would still be here - after all, where else would you want to work? However the three original staff members have all moved on and, including cafe staff, more than 50 people have shared our workplace over the past decade. For most of us location is a big part of the appeal, along with being able to split up time spent in front of the computer with a walk through the gardens or the welcome interruption of a visitor coming in to get a plant identified.

While different staff have had different roles, we all share a love of the place, the environment and a genuine commitment to making IndigiScapes the best it can be.

This feeling is regularly reinforced when visitors come to the centre and, overlooking the flaws of familiarity we see, remark with wonder about the centre, the cafe and the gardens. Over the years we have strengthened our identity, firstly as part of Redland City Council, and also in our own right as the moniker of IndigiScapes became better known throughout the community. This is felt in a degree of personal pride to be associated with the centre.

One of the most appealing aspects of working at IndigiScapes is the diversity of backgrounds our colleagues bring. This reflects the diversity of roles that operate from the centre, from administration, cafe, gardens and environmental extension services. IndigiScapes also serves as a place to start, or restart, a career through our traineeships. We have just welcomed our eighth administration trainee and, for the first time, also have hospitality and horticulture trainees. So next time you're in, say hello to one of our new faces, or the same old ones you've seen before, as we take IndigiScapes forward into its second decade.

Tea Garden cafe fact

6,939 pieces of IndigiCake, 16,823 coffees and 15,738 hot lunches have been served since 2000.



Staff update

There's been quite a bit of staff movement recently. The centre welcomes:

- **Stacey Edwards – Cafe Trainee**
- **Martin McVicar – Nursery Trainee**
- **Michelle McManus – Administration Trainee**
- **Melanie Rippon – Natural Resources Education Officer**
- **Mark Thomas – Habitat Protection Extension Officer**
- **Danielle Outram – Waterways Extension Officer**

Sadly, we farewell Andrew Rickert (Waterways Extension Officer) and Stacey Lingard (Administration Trainee).



From little things, big things grow!

Habitat Protection Program

**Gavin Hammermeister and Melanie Harrison
– Habitat Protection Extension Officers**

Those six words ring very true when considering the growth of the Habitat Protection Program over the last 12 years.

Many years ago it was recognised that assisting landholders through support and education could achieve better environmental outcomes in what is now a growing city. From "little things" grew the Land for Wildlife Program.

In its first year, 1998, Land for Wildlife welcomed ten participants, supported by one part-time officer. Our first registration was John and Doreen Payne at Thornlands. Not long after, Glenn Shailer registered, followed closely by Bob Douglas who still has a strong presence at IndigiScapes.

By 2004 the program had grown to 97 participants. In the same year, the Your Backyard Garden Program, a first for local government at the time, was developed to provide weed management and native plant advice to urban residents. By the end of 2009, 530 Redland residents had

participated in the program.

At this time Council introduced the Voluntary Conservation Agreement Program, and since then four residents have protected the environmental values of their properties

through a legal covenant. With the city's strong farming culture, the Rural Support Program was introduced in 2005 to specifically assist with weed management and vegetation enhancement. Currently, there are around 280 participants in our suite of Habitat Protection Programs.

Habitat Protection continued to evolve with community aspirations. Last year, the Koala Conservation Agreement Program (KCAP) began as an outcome of Council's Koala Strategy and Policy. KCAP offers landholders advice and financial assistance to protect and reinstate koala habitat on private property. In the short time the program has been offered, 32 property owners have already signed up.

From little things, big things grow. Around 835 residents have participated in six Habitat Protection Programs since 1998. Council has continually supported Habitat Protection which now has an impressive six programs on offer and three full time officers. We sincerely thank all participants whose commitment has greatly assisted in conserving the city's natural assets and amenity on private land.

Tea garden cafe fact

6,619 Sandwiches have been consumed over the years. The most popular is turkey, camembert, cranberry and mesculin.



The view was definitely worth it once we arrived at the top!

Nominate a local champion for a World Environment Day Award

Closing date: Friday 14 May 2010

Do you know someone who is a champion for our local environment? Show your support by nominating them for an award.

With categories for individuals, schools and businesses, this is a great way to recognise those people in our community and ensure their efforts do not go unnoticed. Check out our website and local papers for nomination details throughout April.



Habitat Protection will stop at nothing for our volunteers. Unfortunately a bit of damage was done to the rear of our bus climbing the steep driveway during a Land for Wildlife visit in the Gold Coast Hinterland in 2008.

Upcoming events

Workshops at IndigiScapes

All workshops cost \$5 per person plus \$25 deposit refundable on the day. This includes morning, afternoon tea or supper. Bookings are essential. Phone 3824 8611.

Workshop details can be found at www.indigiscapes.com.au/whats%20on/Pages/default.aspx.

Cultivating native bonsai

Saturday 8 May, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Start cultivating your own native bonsai. You will learn shaping, wiring and pruning techniques and view a show of native bonsai from the Redlands Bonsai Society. Trees, pots, wire and soil will be provided. Please bring a sharp pair of scissors (around 10 - 15cm long).

Introduction to Nature Photography

Saturday 22 May, 8.30am – 11.30am

Join professional photographer Michael Snedic for an introduction to the do's and don'ts of taking great nature photographs. We will look at light and composition with a particular focus on keeping it simple (whether you own a point-and-shoot or a digital SLR camera). The morning will incorporate a short classroom tuition (including an audio-visual presentation) and in-the-field tuition.

Our showcase event

Indigi Day Out

Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 June, 10am – 4pm

This is our biggest annual event with a great music, delicious food, environmental stalls and thousands of native plants for sale, all set in the beautiful botanic gardens of IndigiScapes. A great event for the whole family with face painting, games and animal displays for the kids – all free! Incorporates the Redlands Folk Music Festival.

Indigi Day Out BBQ

Saturday 5 June, from 4.30pm

Have you been a part of the IndigiScapes community over the past 10 years? If so, join us at our birthday barbeque at IndigiScapes (end of the gardens). For more details, phone 3824 8611.

Free entry!

Redlands IndigiScapes Centre

17 Runnymede Rd Capalaba Ph: 3824 8611
www.indigiscapes.com.au

Let's party!

Ruth Vickery – Extension Officer, Schools Programs

The Schools Program has grown a lot over the years and I am very fortunate to be in a job where, even after eight years, I still enjoy coming to work!

When I first started working with schools in the Redlands there was only one program and I was working three days a week. By the end of my first year I had done 42 visits and spoken with 1 476 students and teachers. Fast forward to 2009, during which I logged 92 visits, with almost 4 000 students and teachers being involved in the program.

The schools program covers an enormous variety of topics. Everything from plants, animals and waterways to bushfood and recycling. You name it, we've done it! Many students have made their mark by planting trees, surveying wildlife, conducting research and improving waterways. During the school holidays, we also run activities for kids and adults and these continue to grow in number and variety. It's always great fun to explore the creek with kids or wander through bushland at night with families searching for some of our nocturnal critters. The holiday programs also allow budding artists to show off their skills, whether it's making a pet lizard or glider or painting a dugong habitat collage.

I have worked with some awesome students who have made their school grounds much more environmentally friendly, taken messages home and educated their family and friends to make positive changes. The teachers especially deserve a big thanks - without them it would be much harder for the students to achieve such great things.

I would like to thank all those people, young and old, who inspire and support me in my job. Let's celebrate what we have achieved in the last ten years and let this inspire you to do more in your school and home. It's party time at IndigiScapes so come along and join us at the different events being held in 2010 to celebrate our tenth birthday!

