

Volunteering committee, 2022-07-19

Dr John Giacon Convenor - Emu Creek Landcare, General Member - GCG Executive Committee, General Member - Landcare ACT Members Council

My aim:

To support life, wildlife, by creating better habitat.

- By the work of the group and my own work.
- By changing government practice.

Gawari Ngilanmanyin describes what such habitat would be like, grasses, middle story, no mowing. It needs to be the guidebook for government, not just other landholders.

Area: suburban [not parklands/reserves]

Current situation:

Government practice [in older suburbs] has created areas]

- Fairways [heavily mown, sometimes with trees, spaced to allow mowing]
- Totally, or near totally, neglected, e.g north of Belconnen Way below.



Good work with government, and area for better work.

Emu Ck, .25 hectare, designated no-mow. Native grasses just grew, some weeding needed. Great habitat, money saved. However attempts to replicate that have been refused.



Photo on right.

Foreground: some self-sown trees marked, mowing has stopped.

Background: mowing continues, chopping down trees and bluetongue.

WSUD

There are many places on and near Emu Ck which could be wonderful ephemeral wetlands, for instance at the corner of Belconnen Way and Eastern Valley Way, below. However such action seems to be totally outside what will currently be approved.



Overall

Better urban habitat needs government to have a much more active role. Some examples **Actively working to improve habitat**

Including detailed planning, covering all [suburban] government areas.

Weeds

Signs

These are very important, to educate the public, especially those who don't see the importance of habitat.

Current process: Each group has to:

- Apply for grant
- Design sign
- Submit for approval
- Modify
- Print

Wouldn't it be a lot better and cheaper for government, working with LACT, to produce a range of signs: *grasslands, woodlands, why no mow, etc?*

Government structures/culture need to change:

- Less focus on risks [can't have a pond; some drunk walking home can drown in 5 cm of water]
- Look at things like a local liaison person
- Planned long-term action more than reaction: [rapid response team]

<https://www.facebook.com/ACTGov/posts/347691424209543>

ACT mowing includes:

- 1446 hectares of arterial roads
- 2685 hectares of open spaces
- 38 hectares of conservation (native grasslands)

So much potential habitat.