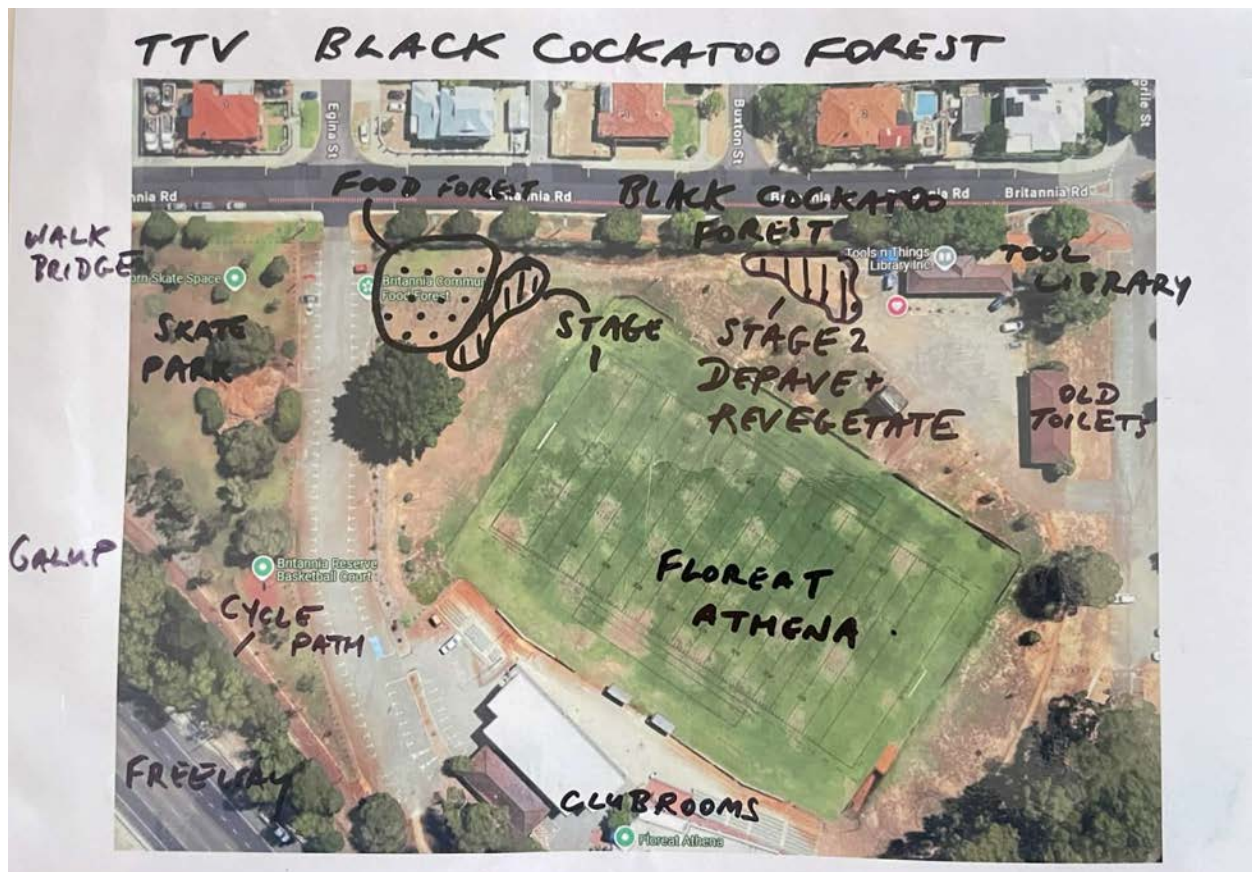


My Healthy Soils Project NEWSLETTER

31 October 2025

2, 4, 6, 8 - Let's Depave & Revegetate!

Stage 2 of the Black Cockatoo Forest has got the green light! The City of Vincent (TTV) use of approximately 600m² of existing bitumenised land which they (the Council) will depave for us. Community volunteers will then revegetate it with around 300m² of Black Cockatoo habitat in July 2026. We will do this using the Miyawaki pocket forest methodology and with guidance from Dr Grey Coupland of Murdoch University. This is an immense challenge but a fantastic opportunity both to demonstrate the depaving and also to develop the community's knowledge and skills in this area.





Visitors inspecting the area to be depaved

One of the key challenges will be to add soil carbon into the land. Current levels of soil carbon are estimated to be about 1% for the top 30cm. Compare this to somewhere like Kings Park where it is estimated to be about 3%. We will increase the soil carbon using compost and biochar (charcoal) which will be composted together in a process called co-composting. We are very fortunate that FASERA have donated more biochar for us to use and the team of volunteers is busily composting - usually on Wednesday and Saturday mornings - week to ensure we

have adequate supply.

On Saturday mornings throughout late November and early December TTV members will be on-site to discuss the project, conduct site tours and get comments from residents. The project will enable us to achieve a number of objectives including:

- ☐ Reduce paved areas which accentuate urban heating and increase flooding.
- ☐ Increase tree canopy and vegetation cover to reduce urban heating and increase infiltration of water.
- ☐ Provide food and habitat for the threatened and endangered Black Cockatoos.

Best of all it will enable people to reconnect to Country and to each other and provide a space to relax and meditate. To find out more or to volunteer on this groundbreaking project please contact us.

Breathing Life into Boodja

What an energising evening we had with Keith Bradby OAM CEO and founder of Gondwana Link who came along for Transition Town Vincent's showing of his powerful documentary Breathing life into Boodja and to give some insights into how we could upscale our own landscape scale change project, the Black Cockatoo forest. The afternoon started at 5pm with a tour of our first Black Cockatoo pocket forest attended by around 25 people and was followed by showing the Breathing life into Boodja, which was attended by over 50 people. It finished with an inspiring panel discussion with Keith, Steve McCabe (Rewild Perth), Catriona Ferrie (Rotary), Alex Castle (Deputy Mayor City of Vincent), Dr Grey Coupland (Murdoch University/ Pocket Forests WA).

The main question the panel was asked was why they want to do the Black Cockatoo Forest project. The answers ranged from improving habitat for these threatened and endangered birds and other



species by Steve McCabe but also to create a more liveable environment for ourselves and our children by Dr Coupland. Cat Ferrie from Rotary also highlighted that the Miyawaki pocket forest project and Black Cockatoo pocket forest project aligned to Rotary's [Protecting the Environment Policy](#). The other response was that we can't wait for the government or private sector to do it. We were also heartened to hear from Cr Alex Castle, Deputy Mayor the City of Vincent, that restoration of biodiversity was in the City's new [Enhanced Environment Strategy](#) and that the City wanted to be an enabler for groups such as ours and say Yes where we are

contributing to the Councils objectives.

Finally, Keith Bradby responded with the rhetorical question "How can I not?". Indeed!

Because of the success of this event we will be repeating it but this time showing the documentary Making a Mini-Forest as part of our Imagining the Black Cockatoo Forest event (below). This is the documentary we showed in July just before our planting in August and watching this is what prompted Cat Ferrie from Rotary to contact us about mobilising Rotary to help us scale up the project.



Imagining the Black Cockatoo Forest

Site Tour, Making a Mini-Forest Documentary and Panel Discussion 5-8.30pm Monday 24th November

Black Cockatoo's and their habitat is declining in Perth and the surrounding region. But what if we started to restore their habitat in Perth's inner city? Join us at 5pm for an informative short walking tour of our own demonstration Black Cockatoo pocket forest by Dr Grey Coupland and Steve McCabe which will then be followed by the inspiring documentary - [Making a Mini-Forest](#) - which depicts the quiet revolution of making Miyawaki pocket forests occurring in European cities.

We then finish with a discussion where our panelists reimagine what life would be like if the community restored the Black Cockatoo Forest to the inner city suburbs of Perth. 🌳🌲

Program*:

5-6pm Site walking tour and discussion with Dr Grey Coupland and Steve McCabe

6-6.30pm Break 6.30-7.50pm Movie - Making a Mini-forest

7.50-8pm Break

8- 8.30pm Panel discussion and close

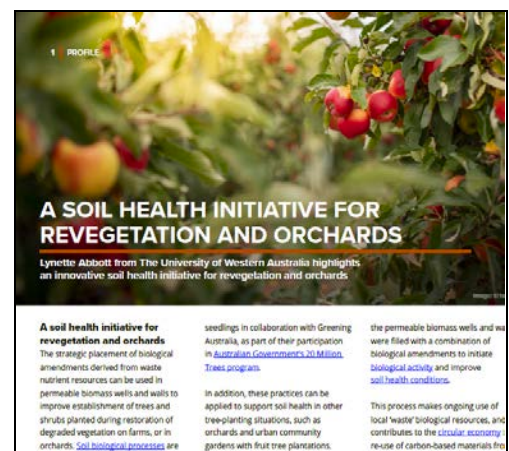
Panelists will include Dr Grey Coupland (Murdoch University), Steve McCabe (Rewild Perth), Cat Ferrie (Rotary), Paul Kotsoglo (Former President of Planning Institute of Australia (WA)) and Dr George Crisp (Doctors for the Environment).

Feel free to come for all or part of the event. [Register here](#)



In the news - Permeable reactive wells and trenches

Professor Lyn Abbott has been a huge support to our small but growing group and we have been very keen to benefit from her research and advice. One of the innovations developed by Lyn and others has been permeable biomass wells and walls which we have trialled in our food forest and home gardens. Recently Lyn referenced our use of this method in an article called [‘A](#)



[Soil Health Initiative for Revegetation and Orchards'](#). Since this time we have applied the method successfully to a number of other applications including:

- ☐ Redirecting stormwater runoff from soak wells to slotted drains surrounded by compost/biochar/rock aggregate and overplanted with native plants.
- ☐ Enhancing growth of existing native plants using permeable reactive wells.
- ☐ Urine wells in the garden.

[See this this page](#) for case studies of our use of this method.

Calling People who are rewilding with Black Cockatoo friendly trees



The first example of people in the inner city who are rewilding with Black Cockatoo friendly species is local Mount Hawthorn resident Gus. Gus and his parents have a majestic 25 year old Marri x Redgum (*Corymbia calophylla*) growing in their backyard providing habitat and food for Black Cockatoo's including Forest Red-tails and Carnaby's and shade for the backyard. They also get a variety of other birds in the 15-20 metre high tree including Boobook owls (listen for their tell tale call - "Mopoke"), various species of honey eaters and willy wagtails. Gus has also planted various species of Banksia in the back

People will more readily adopt something when they can observe it being done, in compatible situations and when they are aware of the advantages. We are teaming up with Rewild Perth and provide some examples of where local residents have Rewilded their yards, courtyards and verges with Black Cockatoo friendly plant species, especially those species native to this area. If you have an example, please let us know and post the information on the [Rewild Perth website](#)



yard and some other natives to accompany the Almond tree in the front. Gus is also growing some Jarrah trees from seed.

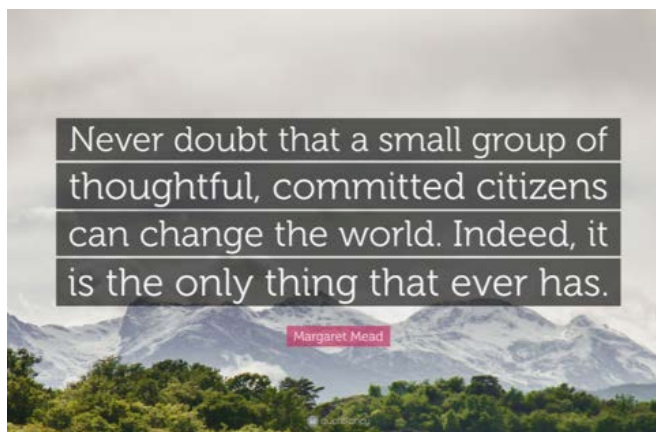
Our first resident donation towards the Black Cockatoo Forest

The other day I was approached by my neighbor Liz who I had helped this winter to establish native plants in a sandy section of her backyard. She was so impressed with the results that she had got some more plants and was keen for some more advice on planting them. Previous efforts to grow native plants had mostly met with failure so she was pretty chuffed that this time they had survived and thrived. Instead of spending time and resources driving around and getting commercial soil conditioner and biochar I suggested that I get her some co-composted biochar which our team of volunteers had been producing for the Black Cockatoo pocket forest and food forest and that she donate what she might have otherwise spent. Liz made a generous donation - our first - which will go towards the next Black Cockatoo pocket forest. The co-composted biochar I gave her was our mulch blend which was made by volunteers using a combination of FASERA biochar, mulch and coffee grounds. I gave it a sprinkle of some compost tea made from some bushland humus and demonstrated how it could be readily incorporated around the base of plants. If you are interested in accessing some co-composted biochar and making a donation to our project please email me or give me a call. Details below.



Other TTV events

Transition Town Vincent (TTV) Annual General Meeting - 6.30-8pm Tuesday 18th November 2025



Unbeknown to many, Transition Town Vincent (TTV) is the umbrella group which enables the My Healthy Soils, Black Cockatoo Forest project, movie nights and other projects to operate.

Transition Town Vincent (TTV) is a not-for-profit, non-political community group aligned with the world-wide Transition Town

movement, which assists communities to transition to a more sustainable and resilient way of life.

Membership of TTV is made up of a diverse group of community members who want to keep our community strong and connected to achieve our broad sustainability goals. Our vision is “Strengthening our local community connections and empowering people to tread lightly on the earth.” While we are based in the inner city municipality of the City of Vincent in Western Australia many of our members are from many adjoining areas.

Come along to our AGM on Tuesday 18th November to find out more and to connect with other like-minded people. [Please register](#) so we can cater appropriately.

Making a Black Cockatoo Pocket Forest Demystified - 2-5pm Thursday 4th December

This introductory workshop is aimed at local groups in the Perth inner city region who are interested in making a Black Cockatoo pocket forest. It will provide participants with an understanding of what is required to plan and make a Black Cockatoo pocket forest using the Miyawaki pocket forest methodology. Interactive presentations will be provided by Dr Grey Coupland of Murdoch University who has made around 20 Miyawaki pocket forests in south west Western Australia and Ian Kininmonth, project coordinator of Transition Town Vincent's (TTV) Black Cockatoo forest project. The short course will cover:

- Objectives for making pocket forests
- Resource requirements
- Community engagement and recruitment
- Choosing plant species
- Making soil amendments
- The planting
- Costs and funding
- Project management

It will feature a tour of Transition Town Vincent's demonstration Black Cockatoo pocket forest (stage 1) and stage 2 site. [Register here.](#)



Diary

When	What
Sunday 9th November 4-6pm Boulevard Centre, Floreat	Movie - Future Council - City Beach Food Forest Link here for details and registration
Monday 10th November 6.15-8.30pm Floreat Athena Clubrooms	TTV Movie Night - Electrify Everything Link here for details and registration
Tuesday 18th November 6.15-8.00pm Floreat Athena Clubrooms	TTV Annual General Meeting Link here for details and registration
Monday 24th November 5-8.30pm Floreat Athena Clubrooms	Imagining the Black Cockatoo Forest* Link here for details and registration
Thursday 4th December 2-5pm Floreat Athena Clubrooms	Making a Black Cockatoo Pocket Forest Demystified Link here for details and registration
Friday 5th December Floreat Athena Clubrooms	World Soils Day event - Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities TBC*
Thursday 11th December City of Vincent Library	Transforming Sand to Healthy Soil - A Regenerative Approach. Professor Lyn Abbott TBC

*Volunteers required to help with this event.

Out n About

Visit to the Bush Classroom in Padbury with Rotary and Dr Grey Coupland

In early October Dr Grey Coupland organised a visit of Rotarians to the Myawaki pocket forest which had been planted by Statewide Services staff at Padbury just 3 years ago in July 2022. Called a Bush Classroom it was a fantastic demonstration of a pocket forest, with many of the plants at around 3 metres after just three years. It also had a cool yarnning circle in the centre with logs to sit on. While the focus of the pocket forest was as a demonstration for schools it made me think “Why could not other organisations establish these on their properties?” In addition to introducing adults to the benefits of sustainability it could be a productive space for meetings as well as relaxation, reflection and

mediation. It seems we recognise the benefits of the pocket forests being established by children in schools but not so readily in other locations. I mean, why should kids have all the fun? Let's start leading by example.

Game, Set and Match at the Leederville Tennis Club



For a few months now we have had an arrangement with Ciaran the groundkeeper at the Leederville tennis club to get grass clippings for our compost system. The other day Ciaran was kind enough to drop off the big bin containing the grass clippings just as I was meeting with Professor Lyn Abbott who is an expert in soil biological fertility and who is a regular presenter at our events. Lyn was

enthralled to hear that Ciaran was using liquid kelp to fertilise the turf at the club and that he avoided using pesticides and herbicides. He reported that the turf was growing well (some players are saying it's the best they've seen), there were hardly any black beetles and that there were a stack of willy wagtails around to feast on any bugs. This basically replicates the experience of the Haggerty's, the regenerative farming family who in 2025 were recipients of the Australian of the Year award (WA) which I featured a couple of newsletters ago. The main difference is that the Haggerty's make a sort of compost tea with compost, worm juice and molasses and other additives which they then spread onto the soil and inject when planting grain such as wheat.



The other benefits are significant cost savings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) (Chemical fertilisers are known for having a huge carbon footprint). We are now talking about making some compost tea from our compost hub and using it at a section of turf at the club. Can you imagine the benefits if this approach was then extended to the rest of the turf areas across Vincent?

Book reviews

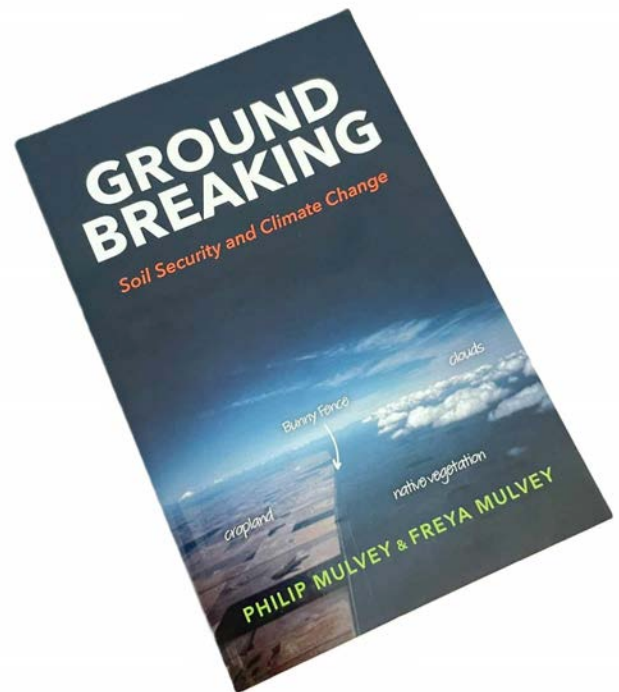
Groundbreaking

This is my second reading of this book which lives up to its title 'Groundbreaking' because its basic premise is this: that land use change from clearing of native vegetation is having just as an important if not greater impact on our climate as are emissions of greenhouse gases from burning of fossil fuels.

"What!!" you say. Yes the message is difficult to comprehend given what we are told to focus on. The other difficulty with the message is that the transition to renewable energy which also results in the clearing of large swathes of land.

While the Mulvey's focus primarily on agricultural land use they also touch on urban land use which is my main area of interest. Most of what they say though is relatable to the urban context and so I will attempt to translate some of what they are saying to that. Firstly they argue that it is the removal of vegetation and soil carbon which has impacted on the local climate by affecting the "small water cycle" which in turn affects the "large water cycle" which is the one we learn about at school. Clearing of vegetation and paving areas in the city also affects the carbon cycle and related nutrient cycles which most of us don't learn about but are just as critical. The impact of clearing is best illustrated by the cover of the book which shows the formation of rain bearing clouds on the eastern side of the rabbit proof fence in south western Western Australia whereas on the western side, which has been cleared and used for cropping, there are only clear skies. This effect has been scientifically evaluated and proven in what is called the Bunny Fence experiment. The phenomenon where rain clouds form over native vegetation is also well known to many farmers.

That the compounding effect of clearing trees and vegetation can have an impact regionally may be difficult to fathom but makes perfect sense when you consider the effects of clearing trees on the environment of your own back and front yards and neighbourhood for that matter. The effect is that



our yards and streets are getting hotter and this effect is something known as the urban heat island effect. While climate change is affecting urban temperatures and liveability the urban heat island effect is probably having a greater effect. The good thing is that there are many things in our control to reduce this heating effect.

In the first instance you are aware of the importance of shade from trees and tall shrubs in creating a cooler environment but also to protect the ground from the heat from the sun. You will also be aware of the importance of things like having a vegetated groundcover and a mulch and humus layer to protect underlying sand from the sun's rays because in Perth, the sand is devoid of organic matter and carbon so consequently it gets as hot as concrete or bitumen. This is particularly obvious when you go to the beach on a hot day and forget to take your thongs. You also know to run down to the damp or wet sand which is cool. This is why organic matter and carbon in soil is so important - because it enables water to infiltrate and be stored in between the sand particles which also helps cool the soil.

The effect of water on heating and cooling is explained in the book by laws of physics known as sensible heat and latent heat (which I won't go into). This brings me to the next message which is that growing trees for shade is not enough and that we also need to reduce paving generally and including around trees and return vegetation, organic matter and carbon to the soil. This starts with depaving and revegetating areas, a demonstration of which we will be providing with our Black Cockatoo pocket forest stage 2.

There is much more to the book which I won't go into but other key points are the lack of representation of soil health and its importance in policy from the National through to the local scale and the concept of externalisation of costs and internalisation of benefits (profits) which deserves its own book. What would be great also, would be a version of this book applying the principles espoused in this book to the urban context.

Volunteering

We are always looking for volunteers for a variety of roles. You name it, we need you. Contact details below.

Contact

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Back issues

All back issues of this newsletter can be obtained [from this page](#).

Social media

Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/blackcockatooforest/ and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/blackcockatooforest/>

Transition Town Vincent webpage <https://transitionaustralia.net/site/transition-town-vincent/>

Black Cockatoo Forest webpage <https://transitionaustralia.net/projects/black-cockatoo-pocket-forest/>

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