

# Letters to the POST about Lake Jualbup

## March 2010 through March 2011

**Main events** (1) March 2010, record hailstorm half-fills a bone-dry Lake Jualbup. (2) April-May, rotting weeds create a nauseating big stink. (3) September-January, lake has extra water (plus dependent wildlife) thanks to dewatering at QEII excavations. (4) February, City of Subiaco engage a consultant to determine community views about the lake's future. (5) May, cost will be \$130,952 plus \$203.05 per hour for any extra work. Ratepayers are outraged and deluge the POST with angry letters (not included below).

**Main letter topics** (1) The big stink. (2) Lake is not natural but man-made. (3) No, people are not unhappy with a full lake. (4) Permanent water is feasible without pumping groundwater. (5) Permanent water is better than a dry mudflat (only one dissenting voice, albeit much repeated). Total 48 letters, average length 250 words. We have added 24 photographs (of modest resolution to keep file size down) to illustrate topics.

Letters are in chronological order, earliest first.  
Headings imposed by the POST subeditor are:

### Mar-Dec 2010 – 21 letters

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*Subiaco council notice re dewatering*  
No frogs but thought was there  
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Christmas gift for lake birds

### Jan-Mar 2011 – 27 letters

Share your views on lake's future  
Hailstorm helped create lake stink  
Hailstorm irrelevant as the reason for lake stink  
The grouch is at it again  
Lake visitors are a happy bunch  
Lifeless eyesore is not wanted  
We don't want a wasteland again  
Why are they so upset by full lake?  
No one I know is unhappy, Daniel  
Lake has never looked lovelier  
Water all-year-round the answer  
Just leave the lake alone, Daniel  
Keeping lake full not a good idea  
Let's create a new wonderland  
Lovely to look at  
Jualbup experiment succeeded

Let our lake be  
Jualbup is not a natural wetland  
Majority in favour of water in lake permanently  
Lake wildlife is a drawcard  
Dean's lake scheme is a winner  
Lake was deep enough to drown  
Give me water in lake all the time  
Elder's lake view is wedge politics  
Aborigines don't have exclusivity  
More enquiry needed in Subi  
Solution to lake problem is quite simple  
Solution not so simple

13 Mar 2010 p.16

### Shenton's lake!

Frank Cherry, Elderberry Drive, Southlake

Re your report, "It's Lake Joolabun, not Jualbup" (POST, 6/3), having grown up in Shenton Park, the Shenton Park Lake will always be its name.

The lake is an icon, and Shenton Park would not be Shenton Park without it.



27 Mar 2010 p.3 *Lake Jualbup has been very dry for a long time, but all that changed dramatically on Monday afternoon with the big hailstorm and downpour. Shenton Park resident Dr Geoffrey Dean risked life and limb to capture this torrent of water flowing across the lawns into the lake. The cloud of mist in the distance is from water gushing from the road drain. In a couple of hours the lake went from dead dry to nearly full*



*Pictorial evidence of the lake's stink  
two weeks after the March hailstorm  
More pictures on pages 5 and 12*

10 Apr 2010 p.2  
**Weed build-up caused stench**  
 Mark Wilshusen, Evans Street, Shenton Park

I received a letter from Subiaco council recently, which attempted to explain the appalling smell coming from Lake Jualbup.

The letter claimed the stink arose from the force of the inflow of water from the recent storm releasing nutrients and heavy metals stored in the lake sediment.

However, what the letter failed to point out was that it was the council's own management plan that had allowed this to occur.

Firstly, the wetting and drying cycle that the council claims is natural and healthy is the very thing that allows the release of heavy metals in the first place.

With water in the lake, the heavy metals are safely contained within the mud. However, the constant drying out and cracking of the lake bed release these heavy metals.

Secondly, many of the nutrients come from rotting vegetation. A major contributor to this is the huge mass of exotic weeds the council allows to run rampant each year when the lake dries out.

Prior to the storm, the weeds in the lake would have been sufficient to feed a herd of cattle for a month!

These weeds break down and rot extremely quickly, robbing the water of oxygen, which leads to the death of fauna in the lake (including most of the last remaining turtles).

It also results in the stench being experienced by anyone within a kilometre radius of the lake. In this case, it seems the residents have reaped what the council has sown.

10 Apr 2010 p.2  
**Doing what comes naturally**  
 Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

At both Lake Jualbup and Mabel Talbot Reserve visitors are complaining about the putrid stomach-churning stink

How dare they! Don't they know that the administration of Subiaco council has deemed these to be natural wetlands?

And that natural wetlands dry up in summer and grow natural weeds?

And that natural weeds rot after inundation and release their natural sulphur content as natural hydrogen sulphide?

No matter that hydrogen sulphide stinks like rotten eggs, is toxic, and reduces land values downwind. What matters is that it is NATURAL

So congratulations to the administration for pumping water into the air to help release this wonderfully natural fragrance.

No doubt ungrateful ratepayers will point out that having water in the lake year round would prevent all this.

Again, how dare they! Don't they know it wouldn't be natural?



*A pump aerates water at Lake Jualbup. It may look good but treating the whole lake at 8 hours/day and 5 days/week would take at least three months.*

17 Apr 2010 p.34

**Join me in a lake friendship**

Daniel Boase-Jelinek, Derby Road, Shenton Park

I noticed last Sunday that Lake Jualbup was teeming with birds, so they are obviously enjoying the benefits of last month's storm flooding the grassy lake bed.

However, despite these signs of health, there appear to be some residents living around the lake who still want to revert this wetland back to being an English lake, and are lobbying Subiaco council to achieve this goal.

I am therefore proposing to set up a Friends of Lake Jualbup Wetlands group that represents the views of the wider community concerned about sound environmental management and respect for the Noongar community.

Please contact me on 0420 334 601 to register your interest in helping me set up this group so that we can present a more balanced point of view to both local and state governments.



*Jualbup cafeteria for ducks after the storm.*

24 Apr 2010 p.2

**No stink coming off his photo**

Bowen Llewellyn, Morgan Street, Shenton Park

In calling Lake Jualbup a "wetland" and "healthy", Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Join me in a lake friendship", POST letters, 17/4) is ignoring the true state of affairs.

Mr Boase-Jelinek wrote about the "signs of health" now appearing at the lake, but his photo omitted a most important health sign: that the water is now dangerous to humans and animals.

Also, the photo could not reveal the obnoxious smell from the lake. At times this stench is quite sickening and it has been with us now for a breathtaking four weeks.

During this time pumps with water cannon have been making a loud and continuous racket, all day every day, apparently in an effort to reduce the smell.

The exceptional stink is part of the price of the dry/wet cycle and so was not mentioned in Mr Boase-Jelinek's letter either.

Subiaco council has explained that the smell may be caused by heavy metals and rotting vegetation.

Another name for heavy metals is toxic metals. According to a quick web search, these toxic metals accumulate over time in the bodies of humans and animals and can cause serious illnesses like cancer, which may not be detected immediately.

Is the foul air we and our children are breathing also contaminated? And what of the birds which drink the lake water? Are they all at risk of serious illness and death from toxic metal poisoning?

Permanent water in Lake Jualbup would provide a summer sanctuary for all residents. Other nearby councils have shown us it can be done.

The current quasi "wetland" policy of neglect has failed. Permanent water is a reversible option and should be given an immediate opportunity.



*"HEALTH WARNING. This water may cause ill effects to humans and animals"*

24 Apr 2010 p.2

**Human input vital for lake**

Brenton Lewis, Evans Street, Shenton Park

I join Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Join me in a lake friendship", POST, 17/4) in delighting that bird life has returned to Lake Jualbup in Shenton Park.

However, I lament for those birds that did not survive the drying or have been harmed by the release of heavy metals and high nutrient levels caused by decaying weeds.

The wetland management plan, which Mr Boase-Jelinek is espousing, is the same as that implemented fully at Mabel Talbot and partially at Lake Jualbup, and its dismal failure is clear for all to see.

The water is polluted and there is a pungent smell – hardly "signs of health". The council warning signs around the lake say it all.

I also reject emphatically Mr Boase-Jelinek's assertion (that to argue the current wetland management has failed and that an urban lake be enhanced) is somehow disrespectful to the Noongar community.

In fact, it is quite the opposite. The fauna has a rich and potent place in the indigenous view of their land and anything that can be done to maintain and sustain the life of that fauna should, and I am sure would, be valued.

Given that urban development and the drying climate have degraded wetlands throughout Perth, with Lake Jualbup no exception, surely the time has come to admit failure and seek alternative ways to enhance the viability of those wetlands.

In the case of Lake Jualbup, maintaining water for as long as possible is such an alternative and one that has been demonstrated to be relatively easy to achieve by sealing the lake bed.

This is not some dreamy idea of "an English lake", it is to face the reality that what is needed is human intervention to ensure the health of the system and hence the health of the fauna.

Any individual or group that seeks this outcome can truly be counted as a Friend of Lake Jualbup.

24 Apr 2010 p.10

### Full-time water needed

Stephen Cringle, Herbert Road, Shenton Park

Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Join me in a lake friendship", POST, 17/4) writes of his pleasure at seeing a large number of ducks return to Lake Jualbup in Shenton Park.

I share in his pleasure, but I dispute that the presence of wildlife is in any way enhanced by allowing the lake to dry out in summer.

The attempt to establish a natural drying cycle as part of the lake management plan has failed miserably.

The current smell from the lake is distressing and has required artificial oxygenation of the water.

According to recently erected signage, the toxin levels are said to pose a threat to human health.

A dry weed-infested lake over the summer months is not what the local community wants.

Investigating a means of establishing permanent water in the lake should be a priority in order to restore what was once a beautiful amenity for the whole community.

24 Apr 2010 p.10

### Lake Jualbup not wetland

Stan Rudrum, Morgan Street, Shenton Park

Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Join me in a lake friendship", POST, 17/4) refers to Lake Jualbup as a wetland and wishes to set up a Friends of Lake Jualbup group. However, there are two completely opposing views on the lake and I believe his is the minority.

Lake Jualbup, with its walls, willows, water and birdlife, is as heritage to the residents of Shenton Park as the clock on Rokeby Road. The alternate view is that the lake is a natural wetland and an environmental issue.

The fact is the lake was dredged from a former landfill site and is not a wetland and therefore cannot be treated as such. Also the floor of the lake is man-made and therefore has no heritage significance whatsoever.

Residents in other areas of the city are endeavouring to protect their streetscapes. In the same way the residents around the lake are entitled to protect their streetscape, being the lake and surrounding park.

It therefore does not seem appropriate that the failed experiments at the eastern side of the lake and at Mabel Talbot should continue. The residents should not have to put up with the disgusting stench after the first winter rains and the poor water quality.

An island was dredged from the lake floor to provide a sanctuary for wildlife. How can it be a wildlife sanctuary without being surrounded by water? The turtles were unable to survive the poor water quality and died as a result.

Yes Lake Jualbup is teeming with black swans and ducks as they were born and bred at the lake. It is

their home. However, ducks and swans need water to survive.

The lake is enjoyed by thousands of residents, ratepayers and visitors, although as a result of the rotting weeds and the associated stench, numbers have certainly been down.

Those who wish to establish a weed-infested eyesore and deny our wildlife a secure home are no friends of Lake Jualbup or its visitors.



*The results of successful breeding – a family of 9 ducklings in October 2009. But without water the lake's breeding areas are open to predators.*

1 May 2010 p.12

### Noongar pact is as smelly as the lake

Mark Wilshusen, Evans Street, Shenton Park

Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Join me in a lake friendship", POST letters, 17/4) sounds to me like an ideological zealot desperately looking for another environmental crusade close to home.

However, he sees things in black and white, rather than dealing with the world as it is.

In his desire to find a crusade, he loses sight of the facts, or makes them suit his agenda.

This was demonstrated starkly in a number of letters to the POST last week pointing out the fallacy of his claims regarding the environmental advantages of the current management plan for Lake Jualbup and Mabel Talbot.

The same applies to his claim to be a champion of the Noongar cause.

Like certain individuals in Subiaco council's administration, Daniel has demonstrated that he is prepared to use a highly inappropriate and suspect agreement made with a small group of Noongar representatives to stifle debate and thwart the prospect of a more appropriate and conciliatory outcome for the lake. This suits his own purposes.

The reality is that in doing this, he effectively creates a "wedge" between local residents and the Noongar community – hardly the act of a champion.

Daniel is no friend of Lake Jualbup and no champion of the Noongars, in my opinion.

I say to him, stop tilting at windmills, or go and find a real environmental crusade.

1 May 2010 p.12

### The true meaning of balance

Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

Daniel Boase-Jelinek's plea for a more balanced view on Lake Jualbup ("Join me in a lake friendship", POST letters, 17/4) might be more persuasive if his own approach were not so blatantly unbalanced.

That he noticed the lake was teeming with ducks without also noticing the air was teeming with stink is an example of the blatant unbalance that hijacks debate about the lake's future.

Yes, Lake Jualbup's stink is not easy to show in pictures, but mine below should give you a few hints.



Balance means considering the pros and cons of each possible future.

It does not mean spouting mission statements, as Mr Boase-Jelinek does about "sound environmental management", as if mission statements alone were enough to gloss over the liabilities of particular futures.

Readers in search of balanced views can find them in my reports, "The Secret Life of Water in Lake Jualbup" and "One Controversy after Another. A Chronological History of Lake Jualbup".

The aim of these reports (which total 85 pages and nearly 200 illustrations) is to provide information, not to urge any particular view of the lake's future.

Both reports are available for reference at Subiaco Library under Local History Awards 2009.

1 May 2010 p.32

### What's so good about a weed-infested swamp?

Michelle Barrow, Redfern Street, Subiaco

Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Join me in a lake friendship", POST letters, 17/4) claims to represent the wider views of the community.

I do not live near Lake Jualbup, but he certainly

does not represent my views. Nor does he represent the many people whose letters appeared in last week's POST.

I am equally concerned about sound environmental management, but do not believe Daniel is offering solutions.

His views are ideological, extremist and do not contribute to rational debate, in my opinion.

As several individuals have pointed out, his desire to manage the lake as a "natural wetland" is naive and ill-founded.

The most important of these is the fact it is not a natural wetland; it is a water-compensating basin, subject to periodic and unpredictable filling.

Thus it can't be managed to a so-called "natural wetting and drying cycle".

Further, it is in the heart of a highly urban environment, surrounded by residential properties. Any management plan needs to take into account the whole environment in which the lake exists.

Daniel's idea of a "natural wetland" is as artificial as an English lake. A few non-indigenous natives around the edge and rampant weeds in the middle are no more natural than walls and willows.

Like all who play the "environmental" card in this debate, Daniel never provides credible reasons why he thinks a weed-infested swamp that dries out when the rains stop is environmentally friendly.

Most people can see the obvious. No water, no wildlife, no people.

When the water returns, so does the wildlife and the ratepaying residents who do not appreciate the stench of decaying plants and dying wildlife which occurs every time it dries out.

The "grassy lake bed" is simply a weedy precursor to the stench. When the lake floods, the weeds rot, they stink and they rob the water of oxygen and life.

I would love to be in a Friends of the Lake group. However, I don't think Daniel is the one to lead, it.

We should promote a lovely oasis of water, wildlife and family fun all year, rather than being reliant on unpredictable filling.

15 May 2010 p.2

### Lake friends get together

Daniel Boase-Jelinek, Derby Road, Shenton Park

The new Friends of the Jualbup Wetlands group has just met to begin planning ways to inform Subiaco

about the cultural, historical, social and environmental values of this wetland.

We are planning a series of public presentations in the lead-up to community consultation that is scheduled to happen this year.

We welcome new members – call Dani on 0420 334 601 for further information.

*Above, the new Friends of Jualbup Wetlands group subsequently met at the rotunda to discuss ways and means. A total of nine people were present.*

*Below, Stephanie Clegg's letter of 8 May 2010 was about allowing the council time to solve the problem of weeds and bad smells at Mabel Talbot Lake.*

15 May 2010 p.12

### Give nature a helping hand

Concerned, Violet Grove, Shenton Park (Name supplied)

Stephanie Clegg ("Patience needed for lake solution", POST letters, 8/5) gives up much too easily.

In a drying climate, there might come a point where there is no option but to let Mabel Talbot and Lake Jualbup dry out.

However, don't try and pretend that this is a better environmental outcome – it's not! .

The best environmental outcome is permanent water. Allowing the lakes to dry out in summer should be an outcome of last resort.

Evidence suggests human intervention has contributed to our drying climate. It seems only fair we should also intervene to help nature out if it can be done in a sustainable way.

I strongly suggest people read the report by Dr Geoffrey Dean (available at Subiaco library), which clearly indicates that simply reinstating the natural seal on the bottom of these lakes would result in permanent water in all but the very driest of summers. This is an easy and sustainable solution.

Over the past 10 years I've watched the lake deteriorate from an attractive urban oasis and wildlife haven, as it was when I moved here over 30 years ago, to a dried out ugly eyesore.

Let's not allow Subiaco council's administration another 10 years of mismanagement to find a solution by trial and error.

Local residents have had enough and want sensible action. I am now beginning to wonder whether this will take place in my lifetime.

15 May 2010 p.12

## Park need not be battleground

Leigh Alver, Waylen Road, Shenton Park

In her letter, "Patience needed for lake solution" (POST, 8/5), Stephanie Clegg, a member of the community advisory committee for the management of Jolimont's Mabel Talbot Park, rails for patience while council staff use "adaptive management" that has resulted in weeds and a bad smell after the March 22 storm.

And if that is what the residents, ratepayers and those who use Mabel Talbot Park are happy to live with, then their decision should be supported.

However, while "adaptive management" could be seen as a way of addressing changing situations, it could also be seen as ad hoc and more akin to an approach of "we got it wrong so now we need to try something else" or even, "we got it wrong because we really don't know what we are doing!"

Like Mabel Talbot Park, Lake Jualbup has also become overgrown with weeds that resulted in a bad smell when submerged and the majority of residents, ratepayers and visitors were not happy.

Many would like to see a management program that provides for a recreational park along with water in the lake for the waterbirds all-year-round, and if that is what they want, then their decision should also be supported.

But up to now that choice has been denied. Instead, adaptive management has turned a suburban park into a battleground for pseudo-green practices that don't work

Thankfully, Dr Geoffrey Dean has researched and shown that other options exist. His report is available from Subiaco Library.



July 2010. Present high water levels are making Lake Jualbup a delight for young and old

2 Oct 2010 p.36

## Lake 'conflict' is a Subi cover-up

Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

The report, "Umpire to rule on lake disputes" (POST, 18/9) implies that the community is a seething hotbed of opposing views on the future of Lake Jualbup, none of it the fault of Subiaco council.

In reality the supposed conflict is a council cover-up.

In 1999 a steering committee was formed to help draft a Lake Jualbup management plan. It received nearly 300 responses to a community survey.

This was before the eastern wall and eight mature trees were removed as part of the plan.

The plan adopted by the council claimed it had been "developed by the City of Subiaco and the community". In fact, the views of the steering committee, and of the community, had been largely ignored.

One member told the council to stop pretending the plan "was devised by a committee, including community reps", when instead it was an "emasculated version" of what the steering committee had devised.

More recently, at the council meeting of February 23 this year, this member again told councillors how the "management plan was drafted, accepted, then emasculated by the then new CEO and new parks and gardens manager".

Nevertheless the cover-up reappeared in the recent briefing document for community consultation on Lake Jualbup, which implies that resistance to the management plan was due to "divergent views and values within the community".

No mention that the resistance was largely due to the council ignoring its earlier community consultation. How ironic!

But we should not blame the present council for the sins of its predecessors. Indeed, the prospects for consensus may be better than the cover-up suggests.

During the three years I have been measuring Lake Jualbup's water level, my impression is that the supposed conflict of views largely disappears once people become informed about the lake's history and hydrology.

9 Oct 2010 p.34

## Let's bring back Costa's Subi vision

Daniel Boase-Jelinek, Derby Road, Shenton Park

Reading your report, "Umpire to rule on lake dispute" (POST, 18/9), my first thought was: pity the poor umpire!

Most umpires operate within a clear set of rules for how the game should be played. In this case we have no rules, or even an agreement on what game is being played.

It is clear that the first task of whoever is appointed to this role will be to seek some kind of consensus among the many parties to this dispute about a principled decisionmaking process.

It was therefore disappointing to read in the latest edition of the POST a letter from Geoffrey Dean claiming that this initiative from Subiaco council is a "cover-up" for some hidden agenda.

As a former member of the consultative committee that deliberated on the Lake Jualbup plans 10 years ago, I am appalled that the honest and hard-working staff at the council are being attacked in this way and given no opportunity to defend themselves.

Sadly, the members of the committee (including me) didn't insist on a Nyungah voice being present at those deliberations, so it is a great credit to then mayor Tony Costa that he signed an agreement with the Nyungah community on behalf of the council to ensure that their spiritual and traditional beliefs were respected.

If we had consulted with the Nyungah community right from the beginning, we would have come up with a different proposal.

It is clear therefore that there is no cover-up. This is a genuine attempt by the council to find a resolution to a contentious issue, and I support the staff who are trying hard to find ways of addressing the conflicting demands of the many parties to the dispute.

I believe that resolving this issue will require patience and a preparedness to explore what kind of city we want Subiaco to be now, and in the future.

One of the great contributions Mr Costa brought to Subiaco during his time as mayor was his vision for the city as "A Place for All People".

It is sad that the council appears to have lost that vision in recent years. The removal of the skateboard ramp is an example of Subiaco not being a place for young people in the eyes of councillors.

I therefore hope that when we sit down with the "umpire" in relation to the Jualbup wetland, we can reinstate Mr Costa's vision for Subiaco as an open-hearted and welcoming community, for all people

and all ages and spiritual beliefs and practices.

Indeed, I would like to expand that vision beyond welcoming people to also welcoming and making space for the natural world that we depend on for our beautiful environment, clean air, rainfall and birds and bees.

16 Oct 2010 p.44

### Lake sinking in confusion

Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Let's bring back Costa's Subi vision", POST letters, 9/10) deserves a medal for inciting confusion.

When I pointed out that resistance to the Lake Jualbup management plan was largely for reasons other than the official one (POST, 2/10), he wrongly sees this as attacking the coming community consultation.

He sees removal of the skateboard ramp as denying young people's rights. No mention that it was denying their right to be antisocial.

He says it was Tony Costa who invited the Aboriginal perspective on Lake Jualbup, not the steering committee. But according to a member of that committee, "it was not Mr Costa who invited the Aboriginal perspective, it was our committee" (council minutes 23/2/2010).

Mr Boase-Jelinek ends with a fog of mission statements like "making space for our natural world". Does he mean replacing houses and roads with native bush? Starting with his own perhaps?

To decide a sensible future for Lake Jualbup we have to do more than "pity the poor umpire" or embrace "patience and preparedness", as if such matters could be reduced to a team game.

We have to become informed about the lake's history and hydrology.

And about councillors like Rodney Wells, reported in the POST (20/2) as saying (with jeers from the crowd): "We are not going to solve this problem by catering to what people want."

Readers in search of balanced views can find them in my reports, "The Secret Life of Water in Lake Jualbup" and "One Controversy after Another: A Chronological History of Lake Jualbup".

The aim of these reports is to provide information, not to urge any particular view of the lake's future.

Both are available for reference at Subiaco Library under Local History Awards 2009. An update of the



water report will shortly be available under Local History Awards 2010.

30 Oct 2010

### Groundwater discharge into Jualbup

Subiaco council notice

The QEII Hospital redevelopment in Nedlands has commenced, which requires extraction, or 'dewatering' of groundwater during excavation works to allow building foundations and sub-surface infrastructure to be constructed. During the extraction process, overflow water is automatically pumped to Lake Jualbup, which is producing a higher water level.

The dewatering process is expected to operate until February 2011. The State Government's Department of Water ensures the water is of acceptable environmental quality. Daily readings of water quality parameters and weekly analysis of nutrients and heavy metals of the discharged groundwater are undertaken by a consultancy firm.

The city will continue its own monitoring of the water quality of Lake Jualbup, with sampling due in November 2010 and February 2011. For further information please contact the city on 9387 0900.

*[The actual period of dewatering was late August through mid February, mostly before Christmas]*

20 Nov 2010 p.16

### No frogs but thought was there

Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

Ecology PhD student Jen Francis was at Lake Jualbup last Sunday as part of the Frog March at Jualbup (POST, 30/10) to explain how to assess the lake's ecological merits.

Among the specimens retrieved were very tiny fish, boatmen, food wrappers and a thong, but no frogs (which are nocturnal).

The occasion proved how easy it is to make the most of Shenton Park's "jewel in the crown", and raised hopes that other features of the lake can be explored in a similar way in the future.



*In search of frogs at Lake Jualbup*

4 Dec 2010 pp.64,126

### Water all-year-round will bring back lake visitors

Hugh Richardson, Hilda Street, Shenton Park

Dyson Swamp, Shenton Park Swamp, Shenton Park dump, Shenton Park Lake, Lake Jualbup ... no matter what the name, this place has attracted visitors of all sorts over the years since European settlement.

Before that, the annual wading birds must have attracted the Noongar people for many more years.

Around the turn of the 20th century, a sporting ground to the north attracted players and barrackers. Those crowds would have deterred birdlife until flooding and building Subiaco Oval allowed the swamp to revert to, well, a swamp.

Sixty years ago my brother and I from the Hollywood precinct were two of many kids visiting to catch fish – for aquaria, not eating – until the swamp fell foul of a dose of gambusia fish. The gambusia reduced the mosquitoes, but also devastated the native fish.

Since then, a variety of development experiments, misguided and otherwise, changed the wetland and its attractiveness to visitors.

In its hey-day, dozens of swans raised families; in greater numbers, coots did the same and ducks, of course.

A thriving ecology of insects, fish, frogs and vegetation in the surrounds revived and supported bird life breeding. In turn those visitors, and the pleasant, calm environment, attracted people from all over Perth.

The water in the lake was the link attracting natural life and people. My children were lucky to have enjoyed that hey-day, but my grandchildren get to see little of it, recent dewatering of hospital developments excepted.

Successive community administrations appear to have embarked on "developments", which resulted in the near 2m high exotic weeds covering the lake bottom last summer. Visitors stayed away in droves.

Last year, I did not see a single cygnet, although this may have been because I have not visited the less attractive site so often.

Suggestions to bring the site back into balance with nature are struggling with "what is natural?" A stormwater drain becoming a swamp again is at odds with it being in the middle of suburbia.

However, very little modification could return much of the balance needed to re-attract visitors. Near-

permanent water is the core of maintaining that balance.

Historically, the swamp dried out only after extremes of low rainfall. In recent years, after dredging broke its water-retaining membrane-like natural seal – water now just leaks out to the water table – the lake became a prairie in summer.

The natural swamp was a wetland because it had a natural seal.

The bottom of the lake is above the water table, and before logging of the bush surrounding the area, trees would have kept the water table even lower than it is today.

Without its natural seal, the swamp could never have retained water as a wetland that the records show it was.

Subiaco council is considering further developments that will affect the appearance of Lake Jualbup. Those developments can make the area more attractive, or further degrade it so there will be fewer visitors.

I would like to see a sound, ecologically lively environment, as would many who live nearby.

"Do nothing" is a no-brainer as the damage prevails. We can help the lake recover simply by returning the bottom's natural seal to better retain the water it receives. With near-permanent water, the lake will attract visitors again.

I cannot wait for the council's consultant to engage the community in discussing a strategy for managing the lake ("12 tender for Lake Jualbup", POST, 27/11).

4 Dec 2010 p.66

### Nature isn't always right

Francine Grayson, Arthur Street, Shenton Park

A few years ago, Lake Jualbup in Shenton Park was a beautiful place, with its abundant characters, resident ducks and families of swans.

Now some people are telling us we should let it dry out seasonally and not interfere with nature.

They are also saying wildlife has to find another "natural" site that hasn't dried out, or the place must die, because it shouldn't be sustained by unnatural means.

This is all such a terrible shame. In fact, I find this return-to-the-natural-order-of-things mentality all so self-righteous.

Instead, we should be doing all we can to provide an environment where wildlife can survive and thrive, whether natural or not, because we sure do a lot of other things to make sure they don't.

If people want to contribute to the natural order of things, they should buy free-range eggs, refuse to wear fur, pay a little more for their meat to support humane farming, get a water tank, walk to work and so on.

Then they-can put their hands on their hearts and say they are doing their bit.

In the meantime let's keep the lake at full capacity so we can enjoy its beauty year-round. And maybe, just maybe, the wildlife will be thanking us.



Water birds are back (this is a white egret)

22 Dec 2010 p.8

### Christmas gift for lake birds

Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

After three months of poor rain, Lake Jualbup in Shenton Park would normally be dry and lifeless.

But generous pumpings of water from dewatering at QEII have made a rich Christmas playground for around 150 birds, including nesting swans, ducks, coots, and grebes.

There are unobstructed views from 500m of footpath next to the lake and from a viewing platform.

Best times are within an hour or two of sunrise or sunset. The effect is magical and should not be missed.

End of 21 letters for Mar-Dec 2010

27 letters for Jan-Mar 2011 begin on next page

## Letters to the POST about Lake Jualbup January–March 2011

*Of all the letters reproduced here, the next one had the biggest response (9 letters), all of them strongly disagreeing with the writer's view that no-one was particularly happy with the lake having water in it.*

22 Jan 2011 p.40

### Share your views on lake's future

Daniel Boase-Jelinek, Derby Road, Shenton Park

I think it is fair to say that no-one is particularly happy with the state of Lake Jualbup at present.

I also think it is fair to say that the "experiment" by the City of Subiaco that began in the 1930s to convert the existing wetland into an English lake was a failure.

A place that once teemed with wildlife was reduced to a sterile environment that could support ducks, swans and tortoises and little else.

Subiaco has been struggling for the past 10 years to find a way to resolve this failed experiment, but has been stuck between strongly competing points of view.

We have heard a great deal from certain people about what they think should happen with this area. I think it is time we heard from the wider community as well.

Some of the issues that need to be explored include:

- Nyungah links with the site: this site was a very important hunting ground for the local Nyungah community until they were displaced by European settlement in the 1800s and destruction of the wetland in the 1900s.

How can we best value and respect the ongoing Nyungah cultural associations with this site in our deliberations about the future?

- Natural environment: Perth is one of the "biodiversity hotspots" on this planet, and our wetlands are an important component of this biodiversity heritage.

These wetlands have been (and continue to be) destroyed as Perth's population grows.

This site presents us with an opportunity to restore some of the biodiversity that once existed here. How far do we wish to go in this process?

- Social and recreational environment: as our population grows, block sizes shrink, and houses grow, we need more and more public open space.

How can we balance our desire for attractive and safe recreational environments with the need to conserve and maintain natural environments?

These issues will not be resolved if we cannot find a space for all of them to be considered in a fair and open-minded spirit.

Please write to the POST to share your perspective so we can hear from a wider cross-section of the community than we have been hearing from in the past.

*The big response begins after the next two letters.*

22 Jan 2011 p.2

### Hailstorm helped create lake stink

Lee Hemsley, Subiaco councillor, Onslow Road Shenton Park

In the interests of informed discussion of the management of Lake Jualbup, I must challenge Geoffrey Dean's claim ("Slashing weeds will stop stink from Mabel Talbot", POST letters, 15/1) that the "stomach-churning stink" from the lake last April was a result of its seasonal drying out, and that such a stink will occur each year when the lake refills after drying out in summer.

Nowhere in his letter did Mr Dean mention the freak hailstorm that preceded the stink from Lake Jualbup in late March.

This omission, by a person who frequently reminds people of the importance of basing arguments on "the facts", is more than surprising. It requires an explanation.

Mr Dean would know as well as anyone that the hailstorm stripped extremely large quantities of leaves from trees in the Shenton Park area, and that the deluge that accompanied the storm washed much of this organic material into the drains or simply across the ground, and thence into Lake Jualbup, where it rotted and stank.

This process had nothing to do with the dry state of the lake before the storm. It is not expected to be an annual occurrence.

Mr Dean's commitment to "the facts" appears to have been compromised by his commitment to reducing the seasonal fluctuations in Jualbup's water level.

Lake Jualbup and its surrounding parkland is the natural centrepiece of the Shenton Park area. Its

accessibility, within 100m of the local shopping area, and central to the residential area of Shenton Park, makes it available to people of all ages and abilities.

While the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority and its sponsors are spending big money to establish a Naturescape Environmental Discovery and Learning Space in King's Park, Shenton Park residents have been blessed with a fascinating park and lake teeming with wildlife all through the year.

Ducks and swans are attracted to the lake when it is full, and smaller birds are attracted to the banks and island that are planted with local shrubs and trees.

Many of them are there to eat the bugs that thrive in the seasonally changing environment.

The City of Subiaco will soon be seeking suggestions from the public on the future of Lake Jualbup and its surrounds, and I urge all who enjoy the park and lake to take part. Details will be advertised in the POST.



*These photos (taken before, during, and after the March hailstorm) are part of the next letter.*

29 Jan 2011 p.42  
**Hailstorm irrelevant  
 as the reason for lake stink**  
 Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

Subiaco councillor Lee Hemsley ("Hailstorm helped create lake stink", POST letters, 22/1) claims the stink at Lake Jualbup had nothing to do with the dry state of the lake before the storm.

So my failure to mention the hailstorm ("Slashing weeds will stop stink at Mabel Talbot", POST letters, 15/1) requires an explanation, he says.

Here it is. Look at my photos.

- Top left shows eastern Lake Jualbup a few weeks before the hailstorm. Chest-high weeds cover nearly 10,000 sq.m (two acres).

Unless you count boys playing hide and seek Mr Hemsley's "teeming wildlife" is nowhere to be seen.

- Top right shows the western end after the storm. This part was the last to dry out and had no tall weeds.

Look closely at the hail-dislodged leaves and branches (not the grass) below the wall.

When totalled around the lake's perimeter they might make a chest-high pile covering 20sq.m. But be generous. Make that 200.

- Bottom left shows debris floating on the lake two weeks later. It is wonderfully fragrant.

Since 10,000 sq.m is a touch more than 200, the debris should be mostly chopped-up weed stems (looking like drinking straws) rather than chopped-up leaves and branches. And it is.

- Bottom right Yes, the soup was as black as it looks.

In other words the main source of stink was two acres of chest-high weeds (which Mr Hemsley apparently never noticed) growing on the dry lakebed.

Even without chopping up by the hailstorm, the weeds would have rotted and stunk once the water returned.

So the hailstorm was irrelevant. After all, there was no hailstorm the year before, and the lake still stank.

Currently Lake Jualbup has no weeds (at least not this species) because water is preventing germination.

But at the eastern end, on the newly dry bits, the first few shoots are already waist-high. You can almost smell the stink.

So if stink ain't your thing, pray the lake ain't gonna dry out.

Mr Hemsley claims I have a commitment to reducing the seasonal fluctuations in Jualbup's water level.

But my letters, such as "Lake sinking in confusion" (POST, 16/10), my statements to Subiaco council, and my reports which are available at Subiaco library, have never urged any particular view of the lake's future.

I hope participants in the forthcoming community consultation will be better informed than Mr Hemsley. It shouldn't be difficult.

29 Jan 2011 p.2

### The grouch is at it again

Bowen Llewellyn, Morgan Street, Shenton Park

Re the letter from Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Share your views on lake's future", POST, 22/1), the place has never looked better in mid-summer than it does right now.

I have spoken to many visitors and locals on my walks, and everyone without exception is enjoying the rare sight of summer water and the splendid appreciation of it by so many varied species of birds.

A pilot from South Africa was astonished beyond belief that there was a lobby for a "parched earth" policy.

Of course, I have heard absolutely no dissenting voices other than from that perennial grouch, Mr Boase-Jelinek.

No other voice than his would deny us our small man-made lake with water in summer.

It provides us with a cool "backyard" to be enjoyed by thousands of people living in Shenton Park and beyond – so different from the stench and cracked mud surface of previous years.

What a small mind it is that would deny this greatest of pleasures to the suburb, in the guise of bureaucratic botany.



January 2011. Coots, ducks, swan and cygnets enjoy the water pumped from QEII excavations

29 Jan 2011 p.2

### Lake visitors are a happy bunch

Stan Rudrum, Morgan Street, Shenton Park

Contrary to what Daniel Boase-Jelinek says ("Share your views on lake's future", POST letters, 22/1), visitors seem very happy with a lake that has water in it.

This time last year the lake was dry. No water, no wildlife.

But now it is teeming with wildlife. Most days I can see a dozen species of waterbirds, from black ducks to swans and ibises.

It seems that only Daniel is unhappy about this. What a miserable outlook on life!

Like my father, I was born a few hundred metres from the lake, and have spent more time there than any latecomer.

It was dredged from a former landfill site, so it cannot be a natural wetland, nor can a manmade lakebed have cultural significance.

But at least we can agree on the importance of collecting views about its future.

But, please, make them informed views, not the one-sided propaganda peddled by Daniel.

Visit the lake and talk to visitors. Find out what they really think. In summer do they prefer a lake with water or a dry weed-infested mudflat?

Then tell the POST. I know what the waterbirds would prefer.

29 Jan 2011 p.2

### Lifeless eyesore is not wanted

Mark Wilshusen, Evans Street, Shenton Park

I am wondering about the thought processes or motives of Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Share your views on lake's future", POST letters, 22/1).

He seems to think that if he repeats something often enough it will make it true. However, the truth is usually self-evident.

Daniel implies that people and wildlife prefer the dried out, weed-infested, lifeless eyesore that Lake Jualbup was for most of last summer.

Simple observation does not support this view. Far from being "a sterile environment", this summer the lake with water in it is providing a haven for many types of waterbirds – from ducks, swans and coots to at least four species of waders, not to mention a significant population of frogs and other aquatic creatures.

Everyone I speak to is happy to see the lake as it is and the wildlife that it supports.

We have been fortunate this summer to have water pumped into the lake from the nearby hospital construction work. However, pumping water into the lake each year is clearly not a sustainable option.

Fortunately, there is a simple and inexpensive solution – restore the natural seal on the lake bed. By reducing leakage, this will significantly extend the period that the lake retains water over summer.

In fact, in most years it will ensure that the lake retains water all year, thus providing a valuable summer habitat for wildlife and a pleasant environment for local residents to enjoy (not to mention suppressing the spread of aggressive, foreign weeds that are an eyesore in summer and rot and stink in winter).

29 Jan 2011 p.16

### We don't want a wasteland again

Brenton Lewis, Evans Street, Shenton Park

I think it is fair to say that despite the assertion by Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Share your views on lake's future", POST letters, 22/1) that no one is

particularly happy with the state of Lake Jualbup, most people are, in fact, happier this year than they have been in previous summers.

This is perhaps reflected in the number of visitors enjoying the lake and surrounds this year compared with past summers.

There can be no doubt the birdlife is enjoying the lake this year – they have their sanctuary, they have a chance at life.

Despite Mr Boase-Jelinek's claim that this is a sterile environment that supports ducks, swans, tortoises and little else, what we have had in previous years has been an arid wasteland that supported no life at all.

I agree with Mr Boase-Jelinek that issues need to be explored. The discussion must have as a major focus the welfare of those birds and animals that do seek sanctuary in the lake, not some revisionist agenda that sees the wildlife as expendable or collateral damage in an attempt to "maintain a natural environment".

The nexus between the sustainable welfare of the birdlife, the place these creatures have in Nyungah culture and the sense of wonder and enjoyment of the lake precinct by all the community must be the premise of deliberations into the future.

To do less than this would be to betray the environmental ideals that are being espoused and will return the lake to an arid, foul-smelling mudpit that respects neither the wildlife nor any group within the community

29 Jan 2011 p.16

### Why are they so upset by full lake?

Maria Oddy, Excelsior Street, Shenton Park

I find it extremely upsetting and infuriating that there are people like Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Share your views on lake's future", POST letters, 22/1) who find it offensive to have a lake full of water.

Lake Jualbup is man-made, having been a rubbish dump. When it is full of water and populated by wildlife, as it is now, it looks beautiful.

The people who keep on advocating for it to be turned into a swamp, under the guise of being "environmentally friendly", are very selfish, in my opinion.

To me, the benefits of having a lake filled with water far outweigh the disadvantages, and I find their attitude baffling.

29 Jan 2011 p.16

### No one I know is unhappy, Daniel

Alan Cormack, Roberts Road, Subiaco

Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Share your views on lake's future", POST letters, 22/1) is way off the mark when he says that no one is particularly happy with the state of Lake Jualbup.

From my observations the additional water that has been pumped in from the QEII dewatering has added life to the lake.

This time last year most of the wildlife had departed, but this year there is an abundant array of birds that can be seen there, including a pelican which seems to be enjoying its new surrounds.

We keep having community consultations when the only thing taking the shine off the lake and stopping it being a real jewel in the crown for Subiaco residents and everyone else is the council not spending the money already allocated to improving the walls and surrounds.

29 Jan 2011 p.24

### Lake has never looked lovelier

Michael Cullingford, Waylen Road, Shenton Park

In his letter, "Share your views on lake's future" (POST, 22/1), Daniel Boase-Jelinek claims "it is fair to say that no one is particularly happy with the state of Lake Jualbup at present".

Sorry, Daniel, but I disagree. In fact, I am thrilled to have the lake in its current state (even if it is only a shadow of what it once was when I was a child in the early 90s).

Friends and family (once Perth residents) who visited over Christmas from Sydney and the Gold Coast said that having water in the lake made all the difference. I agree.

Thanks to the water in the lake from the hospital dewatering, the wildlife has been gradually returning.

There are ducks and swans around every day, and anyone who has seen the abundance of ducklings over the past few months would surely agree that they are a joy to watch.

I doubt that many people would (as Daniel does) call this a "sterile environment".

Every time I visit the lake, there are people enjoying the wildlife and water – something that has certainly not been the case over the past few summers when the lake has been choked with weeds and devoid of wildlife.

Also, there seem to be fewer mosquitoes around because several small fish and frogs are once again present for the first summer in years.



*A full lake is a delight for young and old*

29 Jan 2011 p.24

### Water all-year-round the answer

Bruce Robinson, Evans Street, Shenton Park

While I understand and respect letters expressing concern for wetlands in WA, I suspect Lake Jualbup's history is being idealised – it was a rubbish dump and swamp.

Similarly, its future as a potential wetland is being idealised – allowing it to dry out in summer only produced huge, smelly, non-native weeds and the sad disappearance of all birdlife for four months.

Keeping it like it is now, with extra summer water, is the only way forward.

Indeed, right now the lake is wonderful – not only have the usual birds returned but word must have gotten around amongst them because we also now have pelicans, grey fantails and other species returning.

The lake looks and sounds like a piece of heaven. Please don't destroy that.

29 Jan 2011 p.24

### Just leave the lake alone, Daniel

Meredith Howell, Evans Street, Shenton Park

Could someone please tell Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Share your views on lake's future", POST letters, 22/1) to get a life.

Thanks to the water from the hospital, it's just wonderful to see the place teeming with wildlife. So, Daniel, leave the lake alone – we much prefer it as it is.



*Even pelicans are dropping in at Lake Jualbup now. This rare visitor shows its best side (but which is it?)*

5 Feb 2011 p.24

### Keeping lake full not a good idea

Daniel Boase-Jelinek, Derby Road, Shenton Park

Thank you to all the POST letter writers who responded to me in relation to the future of Lake Jualbup (29/5).

Some argued that keeping the lake full was good for the environment, or at least good for the birds.

I disagree. I have not heard any environmental scientists argue that keeping the lake full is a good thing for the environment.

In fact, the environmental reports about this lake have all suggested that a cyclic wetting and drying cycle will lead to a much healthier environmental outcome.

For example, I noted last Sunday that people are bringing food to the lake to keep the ducks and swans alive. This is not a sign of a healthy environment.

Allowing the lake to dry out in summer allows natural systems to replenish the food resources for winter. It also encourages a wider diversity of plant and bird life.

There are plenty of places along the river for the ducks and swans to go in summer.

Some people argued that the current temporary arrangement of pumping water from a building site at QEII is a good thing. I disagree.

I would not be surprised if people in Nedlands near the QEII site are finding that their bores are drying up.

We are living at a time when Perth's climate is drying. There is simply not enough water available to spend on keeping lakes artificially full.

The Water Corporation has made it quite clear to Subiaco council that there is not enough ground water available to keep the lake full. It is like pumping water into a sieve.

If the city proposes to continue pumping water into the lake, then it would have to compensate by not watering some parks and sporting ovals. I don't think many sporting groups would regard that as a good thing.

The alternative to keeping the lake full is to seal its bed and walls to stop water leaking out. This would make the lake even more biologically dead than it is at present, and would lead to increased a1gal problems in summer.

It would also involve violating the agreement the city has made with the Nyungah community which does not want the bottom of the lake disturbed and wants it restored to a more natural state.

I believe this agreement is a symbol of reconciliation with the Nyungah community and must be respected.

Some people have argued that the lake is unsightly and weed-infested when allowed to dry out. They also argued that it could not become a wetland because it had been disturbed.

This is not an argument against letting the lake dry out. Rather, it is an argument that this wetland, like all natural areas around Perth, needs a management strategy to control weeds and restore it to a more natural and beautiful place like it once was, and which it can be again if we allow it to.

Where to from here? I regard this situation as an opportunity to find an outcome that balances conservation with development.

My vision is for a place that makes space for both nature and humans to live side by side, that is healthy and self-sustaining, that is pleasant and safe to visit, and that respects past and present cultural values and needs.

To achieve such an outcome we need to be prepared to sit down together and talk to find an outcome that is acceptable to all.

5 Feb 2011 p.24

### Let's create a new wonderland

Eugenie Harris, Waverley Street, Shenton Park

Magnificent Lake Jualbup has a fascinating history, which includes a major flood event, use of the area as a wonderland for local kids and a rubbish dump



for the authorities, and the creation of a parkland complete with walls and willows.

It's now time to create a lake for this century – a wonderland for kids, families and residents alike.

We must work together to build this environmental hub for our community. Sniping at each other won't help. We have something unique which is the envy of other suburbs.

Late last year some 50 local residents gathered to work on a solution that will greatly enhance our quality of life.

We dreamed our dreams and then, more importantly, brainstormed about how to make them a reality. We look forward to working with Subiaco council.

I challenge people to join us in getting down to business – the business of bringing back the water and the wildlife and the thrill of being chased around the lake with breeding mothers nipping at your heels.

5 Feb 2011 p.24

### Lovely to look at

Christine Lawson-Smith, Shenton Park

My family, my friends and I have been delighted to see water in Lake Jualbup over the summer months and to note that many water birds and their young have also found it enjoyable.

The weed-infested, dried-up lake of previous years was an eyesore.

5 Feb 2011 p.26

### Jualbup experiment succeeded

Bill Mackenzie, Excelsior Street, Shenton Park

In his "Share your views on lake's future" (POST, 22/1) Daniel Boase-Jelinek urged people to outline their perspective on Lake Jualbup. So here goes.

Mr Boase-Jelinek says no one is particularly happy with the state of the lake at present.

However, in my opinion, it is in a far better state than it has been for several summers.

Perhaps having a lake with water in it is subliminally pleasing, but since beauty is in the eye of the beholder, I guess we will have to agree to disagree on this.

Mr Boase-Jelinek then opines that the "experiment" to convert a wetland to a lake was a failure.

Without knowing what the purpose of Subiaco council's experiment was, it's pretty hard to declare

success or failure, but it seems that from Mr Boase-Jelinek's perspective, the experiment failed because "a place that once teemed with wildlife was reduced to a sterile environment that could support ducks, swans and tortoises and little else".

I have a different perspective. In the past five years, I have photographed no fewer than 43 bird species in the Lake Jualbup reserve – not just ducks and swans, but rare migratory birds and even the endangered Carnaby's cockatoo foraging in the introduced pine trees.

Then there is the extraordinary variety of frog calls on some summer evenings, but I guess we will have to agree to disagree on this one too, although maybe Mr Boase-Jelinek was thinking about those times in late summer when the bone dry lake bed, infested with couch grass, really does seem to be a sterile wasteland.

He says it is time we heard from the wider community about issues like indigenous heritage, biodiversity and social matters. My view is this:

1. Indigenous heritage of the lake should continue to be acknowledged – as it already has through the name change in 1996 and its listing as a site of significance – but enhanced through signage, if appropriate.
2. The water cycle should be maintained as it has been this summer to avoid complete drying out.
3. The lake should be preserved in its current configuration with a mix of walk paths, shady picnic areas, grassy open space and intimate access to the water, but brought back to a reasonable state of repair with a modest capital works program to overcome years of neglect.

My perspective is that the principal purpose of the reserve should be to provide a community gathering place for residents of Shenton Park and surrounding suburbs.

If that was the council's objective back in the 1930s when it "experimented" with the conversion of a wetland to a lake, then it has been a resounding success.

5 Feb 2011 p.26

### Let our lake be

Frank Cherry, Elderberry Drive, Southlake

I have a message for anyone who may have a negative opinion of Lake Jualbup: Please leave it alone. Shenton Park would not be the same without it.



*February 2011. Water in Lake Jualbup makes a perfect setting for the Sunset at Subi concerts*

12 Feb 2011 p.16

### Jualbup is not a natural wetland

Mark Wilshusen, Evans Street, Shenton Park

Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Keeping lake full is not a good idea", POST letters, 5/2) continues to peddle his opinions as fact.

They are not. They are simply myths.

This reminds me of the mischief he caused in May 2008 by writing to the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) with a number of incorrect claims.

This led to the DIA wrongly threatening Subiaco councillors with \$50,000 penalties.

Daniel continues to claim that a drying cycle encourages a greater diversity of birdlife – hard to believe looking at the lake right now.

As for creating a greater diversity of plant life, he is right. Unfortunately, they are all non-native weeds.

Daniel's fundamental argument is flawed. Lake Jualbup is not a natural wetland and never can be while it is surrounded by suburbia. It is a water-compensating basin.

To suggest that it can be managed to some mythical "natural wetting and drying cycle" is mischievous nonsense.

As a compensating basin, the lake receives massive amounts of run-off whenever it rains. We have seen that a good summer thunderstorm can half fill the lake.

Not the council, Daniel, nor anyone else can make the lake dry out over summer if nature decides otherwise.

Let's stop pretending. This community asset needs to be managed for what it is, not to suit Daniel's romantic idea of what he would like it to be.

Daniel still seems to think that ignoring facts and perpetrating myths is the way to achieve "an

outcome that is acceptable to all". We should treat his letters with the contempt they deserve.

12 Feb 2011 p.44

### Majority in favour of water in lake permanently

Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

Letters to the POST since February last year for or against permanent water in Lake Jualbup [ignoring neutral letters] divide as follows:

**FOR:** 25 letters by 20 writers, of whom 40% live on roads facing the lake.

**AGAINST:** Four letters by Daniel Boase-Jelinek.

As usual, in his latest letter, "Keeping lake full not a good idea" (POST, 5/2), Daniel seems unable to get the facts right.

He says infusions of groundwater are needed to keep the lake full. There is no mention that it gets enough rainwater each year to fill it several times.

He says replacing the natural seal lost by dredging will violate the agreement not to disturb the lakebed.

But as discovered by 50 local residents ("Let's create a new wonderland", POST letters, 5/2), no disturbance is needed, therefore no violation.

Daniel says replacing the natural seal will make the lake "even more biologically dead". How does he think it managed before the white man came?

He says restoring the lake to a beautiful natural wetland needs only the right "management strategy", presumably the same strategy as at Mabel Talbot where Subiaco council pulled the walls down, planted vegetation, and did everything it wanted Big Brother style.

As a result, the lake dries up in summer and becomes choked with thick head-high weeds (see my photos, POST letters, 15/1 and 20/2/2010).

*[The first is reproduced on the next page]*

Without the council's emergency slashers and disturbers of the lakebed, ratepayers and the Nyungah community would be saying goodbye to their "natural wetland". Yet Daniel wants the same for Lake Jualbup.

No wonder the score is 20:1 against.

As for never having heard an environmental scientist argue in favour of a full lake, Daniel should talk (as I have) to people in Fisheries, CSIRO, and the Department of Water.

Or he could look at the 2003 Ecoscape report on Mabel Talbot that sets out the pros and cons as in the table below.

Notice that invasive headhigh weeds are not listed – Ecoscape's environmental experts missed that one.

Daniel sees Lake Jualbup as an environmental issue, but it is also a community issue.

Whatever outcome is chosen (lake or mudflat), it will be paid for by ratepayers. And whoever pays the piper should call the tune – provided, of course, that the call is made by informed ratepayers, not by those who seem incapable of getting the facts right.

### Pros and cons of drying out

<b>Lake dries out</b>	<b>Lake has permanent water</b>
Loss of fish	Maintains fish population
Lake quieter in summer	Sounds of waterbirds in summer
Declining tortoise numbers	Stable tortoise numbers
Less flora/fauna that need water	More flora/fauna that need water
Dry lake not visually attractive	Water visually attractive
Lower risk of summer botulism	Higher risk of summer botulism
Vandalism/fire threat to island	Island a refuge for wildlife
Easy access for maintenance	Less easy access for maintenance

*[A more detailed listing from the 2003 Ecoscape report is in the Appendix accessible via the present home page]*



**15 Jan 2011 p.16** *Mabel Talbot's weeds are impressively tall and thick when up close and personal*

19 Feb 2011 p.16

### Lake wildlife is a drawcard

Daniel Boase-Jelinek, Derby Road, Shenton Park

Thank you once again for the wonderful array of letters about the welfare of Lake Jualbup.

It has been a delight to read that so many people value the diversity of birdlife and other wildlife such as frogs that have been attracted to the lake in recent years.

I would particularly like to thank one of my neighbours, Bill McKenzie, who said he had documented the birds and frogs that visit the reserve.

Perhaps Bill would like to share more of his photos with readers.

I estimate that 90% of correspondents like to see the diverse wildlife visiting the reserve.

The main point of contention appears to be the science underlying the reasons why the reserve attracts all the birds and other animals.

Let me quote from page six of the 2006 ATA Environmental report on Jualbup:

"If unimpeded, this natural wetland cycle reduces the incidence of weed infestations, botulism, kills off any introduced exotic fish and increases diversity in desired fauna due to the variation in seasonal water levels."

I therefore encourage POST readers to get more information about the reasons why the natural wetting and drying cycle is so important for maintaining the health of the reserve and attracting the diverse birdlife and wildlife that so many people enjoy.

19 Feb 2011 p.16

### Dean's lake scheme is a winner

Hugh Richardson, Hilda Street, Shenton Park

Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Keeping lake full not a good idea", POST, 5/2) says most people would like to see a natural environment, one that is self-sustaining.

It is important, then, to establish what is natural. The land that is Lake Jualbup was a shallow wetland about the time of European settlement. It had a natural seal that retained winter rain.

Surrounding woodlands would have minimised evaporation, and the swamp is likely to have been a permanent water source to its soft-footed visitors – people, marsupials and birds.

These visitors could expect to find water – shallow, perhaps, but water – except in extreme drought

This is a fair estimate based on contour maps of the land, prepared by the Surveyor General's office in the early 1900s.

By the beginning of the 20th century, Dyson Swamp had already suffered its first battering: cattle and horses with their hard hooves broke the vegetative-seal that retained water in the basin.

As the water table fell each summer, much of the winter rainwater draining to the depression would have leaked into the aquifer via the breaks in the seal, allowing it to dry out, as Mr Boase-Jelinek suggests.

Drying out in this fashion would have been unusual (unnatural) to its former visitors.

Using Dyson Swamp as a cattle watering hole was the first of many affronts to the "natural" wetland. Recorded history of those changes tells us of damage followed by blundering attempts at repair.

Now, for the first time, there is an ecologically sensible proposal. The research by Geoffrey Dean ("Majority in favour of water in lake permanently", POST letters, 12/2) shows that harvesting and retaining even the minimum winter rain and stormwater can provide sufficient to keep water in the lake all year.

The greater park would still provide the necessary storm surgecompensating basin, while the deeper lake would provide an attractive water body for suburban recreation.

Mr Dean's research shows a passive, self-sustaining feature, which harvests and retains water that otherwise would flow into the aquifer and be lost to the ocean.

Without the need for artificial topping up, this proposal replicates the function of the natural wetland prior to damage by those horsey hooves.

The research meets the objections of the most ardent "do nothing" advocate, while accommodating the interests of those who have written to the POST in support of a permanent lake.

Mr Dean's research is extensive and rigorous. I was an initial sceptic that something successful could come out of the blunders, and I commend the proposal to anyone who has an interest in the wellbeing of Shenton Park's lake and surrounds.

26 Feb 2011 p.38

## Lake was deep enough to drown

Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

Hugh Richardson's letter, "Dean's lake scheme is a winner" (POST, 19/2), wrongly implies that I advocate permanent water for Lake Jualbup.

I have never urged any particular future for the lake, and my research results are available to anyone, regardless of their views.

Hugh's view that the original lake contained permanent water is confirmed by early newspaper reports. Even in summer, the lake was deep enough to drown in.

Thus two lads nearly drowned in January 1909, a man drowned in November 1916, and a man drowned in February 1931, which led the coroner to recommend a warning sign because "it is a dangerous pool".

In the 1920s (by which time it was Subiaco council's rubbish tip), the lake often reached from Derby Road to beyond Herbert Road, a huge body of water more than twice its present length.

But did it ever dry up? Not according to the Western Australian Times of March 30, 1905, where a surveyor told Subiaco council the lake "has always been considered as a permanent water basin".

The letter from Daniel Boase-Jelinek ("Lake wildlife is a drawcard", POST, 19/2) confirms Mark Wilshusen's view ("Jualbup is not a natural wetland", POST letters, 12/2) that Daniel "continues to peddle his opinions as fact".

Thus Daniel quotes an environmental report where letting the lake dry up "reduces the incidence of weed infestations", when last year the actual result was two acres of chest-high weeds that Daniel apparently never noticed.

One is reminded of weather forecasters who refuse to look out of the window. Daniel is correct to say that variations in seasonal water levels are beneficial. But permanent water would necessarily show such variations ("permanent" does not mean "unvarying").

The point repeatedly stressed by others is: no water, no wildlife.

Yet Daniel claims that only a dry lake will achieve "diversity in desired fauna". He should look out the window and follow his own advice ("get more information") before rushing into print.

26 Feb 2011 p.2

### Give me water in lake all the time

Derek Leeder Cuthbert Street, Shenton Park

Re your report, "Elder Remember lake is sacred" (POST, 19/2), about Lake Jualbup, an English-style landscaped lake is exactly what I would like.

I want to see water all-year-round (however it is achieved), the walls fixed and extended all the way around, and additional toilet facilities installed.

I would also like to see the name changed back to what it was – Shenton Park Lake.

Those people who prefer natural bush have a couple of easy options – take a walk across the railway to the bushland there or go for a stroll in King's Park.



*During recent summers the island in Lake Jualbup has been a wildlife sanctuary in name only*

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### Elder's lake view is wedge politics

Allan Stoney, Evans Street, Shenton Park

Iva Hayward Jackson ("Elder: Remember lake is sacred", POST, 19/2) attempts to present any desire to retain Lake Jualbup's present character as a denigration of Aboriginal people.

This is divisive and can only drive a wedge between the local community and Aboriginal people. It is also uninformed.

Had he contacted mayor Heather Henderson or Subiaco council before going into print, he would know that the "Aboriginal community and the Department of Indigenous Affairs" ARE included with other stakeholders who must be considered in the Lake Jualbup Community Engagement Process approved by the council this week.

That process will identify whether or not the park is a sacred burial site. (The only record of Aboriginal skeletal material being found was in the 1920s and in an area where houses have since been built.)

Had he contacted Dr Geoffrey Dean or read his research material in Subiaco library, he would know

that permanent water is possible without any form of pumping or supplementation.

Had he spoken to me or the other people who have been exploring ways to retain both the biodiversity and the lake's iconic status, he would have seen solutions which are practical, sustainable and affordable.

They address the problems created by urbanisation, changing climate and long-term lack of maintenance, and do not require excavation of the lake bottom.

The European-style landscaped garden Mr Hayward Jackson objects to was once described by a former mayor, Tony Costa, as Subiaco's "Jewel in the Crown".

It has existed in this form and been enjoyed by the community for 40 years.

In due course there will be a submission to the community engagement process seeking to restore "the Jewel" and create a secure permanent water habitat for wildlife.

26 Feb 2011 p.34

### Aborigines don't have exclusivity

Mark Wilshusen, Evans Street, Shenton Park

The report, "Elder: Remember lake is sacred" (POST, 19/2), implies that Lake Jualbup is a significant Aboriginal site and therefore only Aborigines should have a say on how it should look and be managed. I disagree

At no time during this long debate have those who wish to retain the current beauty of the lake and parkland ever questioned or sought to ignore Aboriginal heritage.

However, while it is important to acknowledge past history, it is equally important to recognise current reality.

Lake Jualbup exists within a highly urban environment. It is surrounded by residential properties and used as a major recreational facility by the broader community.

At various times, it has been a rubbish tip, an excavated stormwater basin and a walled lake.

It is debatable if the current lake is even in the same spot as the original water body.

The park is on the Department of Aboriginal Affairs Site Register, identified as Site 3794. It is classified as "Open Access" with "No Restrictions".

The site type is "Skeletal material/burial". The latter

is based on the fact that "Aboriginal skeletal material had been found near there (Shenton Park Lake) in the 1920s, in an area where houses have since been built".

I wonder if Mr Hayward Jackson saw the lake last summer. I don't believe that a dried-out eyesore, devoid of once prolific wildlife and infested with chest-high foreign weeds, is respectful of any culture.

Residents and ratepayers have an equal and legitimate interest in the outcomes for the lake and I hope that political correctness is not allowed to stifle rational, well informed debate.



*March 2011. Shenton Park's black hole. No water, no wildlife, and (in this picture) almost no people.*

26 Feb 2011 p.38

### More enquiry needed in Subi

Eugenie Harris, Waverley Street, Shenton Park

I am concerned that Subiaco council is out of step with the community, particularly South ward residents.

It is stunning that three big recommendations from staff were rejected by councillors after residents got active and expressed their views.

I refer to the Rosalie Park debacle (building a carpark), Lake Jualbup (delaying community consultation) and Matilda Bay kiosk (destroying Subiaco's iconic beach). Residents should not be treated in this manner.

The CEO and his team ought to have their finger on the community pulse.

They should know the character and nature of community that residents want. It's a pity they have to learn it through embarrassing rejections in the council chambers.

I urge the administration to spend a bit more time talking to South ward residents so they get recommendations right the first time round.

19 Mar 2011

### Solution to lake problem is quite simple

George Smith, Murchison Street, Shenton Park

Am I the only Subiaco ratepayer appalled at the council's decision to throwaway half a million dollars of our money so that a consultancy group can be blamed for decisions the council makes?

It is difficult to conceive of a more craven abrogation of responsibility, a profligacy more absurd or insulting, or a more stark admission that this council no longer functions as an effective local government.

Here is a plan for Lake Jualbup that has cost, in total, five minutes of my time:

1. Rip out the stupid walls at the edge;
2. At the same time, rip out a few of the willow trees closest to the water;
3. Scoop out the toxic sludge at the base of the lake and truck it away;
4. Line the lake with clay as any farmer would line his or her dam;
5. Grade sloping banks of native vegetation around the bulk of the lake;
6. Rip out some of the grass on the northern side and replace it with a natively vegetated catchment area;
7. Move the path farther away and/or put in a raised walkway along part of the perimeter if you like, and if funds allow; and
8. Sack the council

It's really not that hard.

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### Making plants grow in clay?

Geoffrey Dean, Cullen Street, Shenton Park

George Smith ("Solution to lake problem is quite simple", POST letters 19/3) suggests lining the lake with clay "as any farmer would line his or her dam". A pity his attention span of five minutes did not run to solving new problems.

Like making plants grow in clay. Or paying huge fines for digging up the lake bed. Or (since he lives a long way from the lake) how the stupid rest of us could escape winter flooding.