

8th May 2017

Media Release

Jan's ambition is to be a full time volunteer Tree Hugger.

Tree hugger is generally considered to be a rather derogatory term as if caring for trees is a fault and not to be encouraged. However **Gecko Environment Council's Guest Speaker for May, Jan Allen, Arborist and Horticulturalist** states this is her ambition in life. For 30 years she has worked to protect and preserve trees on the Gold Coast with particular attention to veteran trees. Jan's presentation at 7pm on Wednesday 24th May at Currumbin RSL is open to all tree lovers and is free of charge.

Trees bring different reactions from delight in their beauty to exasperation in their habit of shedding leaves on the driveway. However trees are essential to life on earth and they need our protection and preservation, the more trees we have the healthier is the planet and the human species. Trees are also crucial for their role in removing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Jan Allen currently works in her own business Terra Ark, a name which aptly describes her philosophy in her work and life. She is the founding member and director of the Veteran Tree Group Australia Ltd, a not for profit group interested in promotion and preservation of Australia's veteran, ancient and other significant trees.

As Jan says "Recent research has shown that hollow bearing trees and old growth forests are declining globally at an alarming rate. Without the habitat provided by veteran and ancient trees, many dependant species do not have the opportunity to complete their lifecycles. As we watch our urban landscape undergoing increasing densification and sprawl, there is an emerging awareness and interest in the role that big old trees play in providing crucial structural habitat for other species in our urban and peri-urban landscapes. In addition to the ecological values provided by old trees, there is an increasing appreciation of the cultural and heritage values that our older trees provide."

The presentation will describe the characteristics of veteran trees and discuss their ecological, historical and cultural importance, briefly touching on the threats and obstacles posed to their preservation in urban environments and specifically within the Gold Coast region. It will also raise some points for discussion about what we might be able to do to assist in raising their status and ensuring their protection.

The Gold Coast prides itself on having nearly 50% of the land area conserved with bushland, but it is evident that we must remain vigilant in protection those special trees which are older than most residents and provide not just beauty, but also habitat for our wild life. Too often we see new housing estates without a tree left after clearing despite the proven facts that trees increase the value of real estate as well as providing some climate control for the area.

A change in Council policy to encourage the retention of trees in new estates is an issue worth discussing.

Jan's presentation is open to all at Currumbin RSL at 7pm on Wednesday 24th May. Reservations can be made by phoning Gecko on 5534 1412 or just come along.

For more information contact:

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