connecting corridors

LOT 24 Anaconda Loop,
Melros Beach

Melros Urban Garden



2025 brought some big changes to the project. Drainage along the pathway was finally fixed, mulch was spread across key sections & a good number of the 120 plants (thanks to support from the City of Mandurah) pulled through the year. While the visible improvements mattered, plenty of work continued quietly behind the scenes, strengthening the foundation for what comes next. With the groundwork set and the momentum building, it's onwards into 2026 and the next stage of growth.

Actions & Support →

(council correspondance)

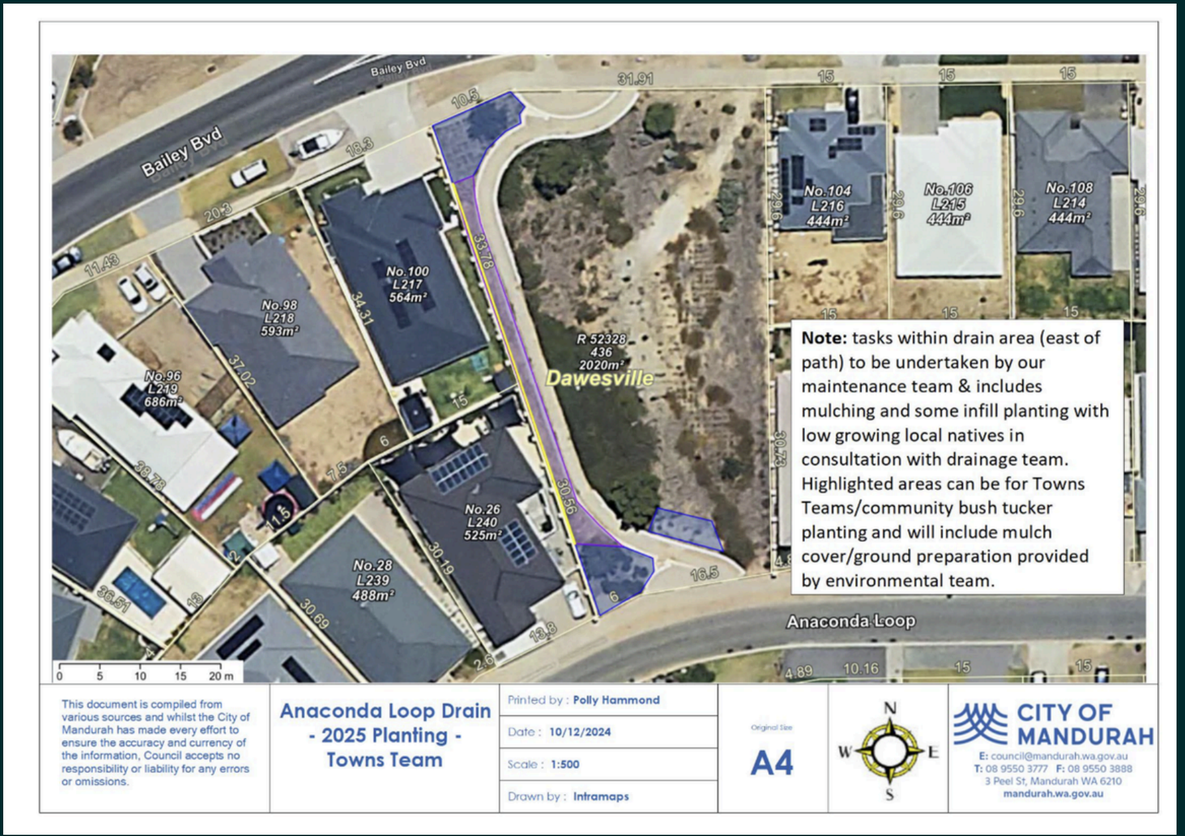
Success: The recent planting season improved sand stability & aesthetics, with some native and bushtucker plants thriving.

Outcomes: I was advised to keep monitoring how the seedlings cope through summer, as this will shape 2026's plan. The photos I've been sending & awareness of site constraints, especially drainage, are important.

Explore upgrades: I was told that ideas like seating, signage & decking could be pursued through capital works (with a 12-month wait) or through the CIIP, which may be quicker.

Show community support: I was reminded that demonstrating community backing is essential for any funding pathway.

Develop educational signage: I was encouraged to keep developing ideas for educational signage, and the council team said they're happy to help shape content that will have the most impact.



Improvements
Growth ↘

Over the past few years, the landscape around the drainage reserve has undergone a quiet but remarkable transformation. What was once a tired, weather-beaten space - regularly flooded, choked with sand & struggling under the pressure of drought and grazing - has slowly evolved into a healthier, more welcoming environment. The changes haven't happened overnight & they certainly haven't happened by accident. They're the result of thoughtful planning, targeted planting, improved drainage & a community willingness to invest time & care into a place that deserves better. Today, the area is not only functioning more effectively but is also becoming a genuinely pleasant spot to pause, walk or simply enjoy the natural surroundings. With seating still to come, the space is on the cusp of becoming something truly special.

The species planted previous to last year's planting day, have endured some of the toughest conditions imaginable. They were put into the ground during a period of extreme dryness, with little natural moisture to support their establishment, the occasional watering from residents, and last summer a water truck did the rounds. Yet despite the lack of water, they have survived, and in many cases, they have begun to thrive. Their resilience is a testament not only to the hardiness of the chosen species but also to the broader strategy behind the planting: selecting vegetation that can withstand drought & grazing pressure.



OPINION: We need lots of ground cover plants to keep moisture in, because we won't see much leaf litter for a while.

Kangaroos & Rabbits haven't eaten

These are the plants that kangaroos & rabbits rarely bother with, even when grazing pressure is high. While no species is ever completely "safe", these options tend to be less appealing, giving our garden a better chance to establish & thrive. By choosing plants with natural deterrents - whether texture, taste or scent - we can reduce browsing damage & create a more resilient landscape.



Lepidium didymum L.

Lesser swine-cress



Correa alba Andrews (?)

White correa



Pimelea ferruginea Labill.

Rosy riceflower

Providing food for wildlife & growing tough gardens with no water

With a drying climate & longer periods of heat stress now the norm, combined with no provision of water, leaves us relying on drought-resistant species. Hardy local natives or other Australian natives has become just as important as choosing plants unpalatable to wildlife. Combining both strategies gives your garden the best chance to establish, conserve water & stay productive despite increasing grazing pressure & a rapidly shifting climate.



Hardenbergia comptoniana

Native Wisteria



Eremophila glabra

Emu Bush



Citrus glauca

Desert Lime

Improvement Issues ↘

There are still structural issues on site that need attention. The overgrown hedge remains a priority for replacement, both for aesthetics and for long-term maintenance. The area cleared to increase drainage also requires a proper solution; at the moment it's functional but visually unfinished. Our recommendation is to install a small deck over this section, creating a practical and attractive feature that also stabilises the ground. We may have support from the local Men's Shed to construct it, which would keep the project community-driven and cost-effective.

Alongside the deck proposal, we'll be submitting requests this year for new seating & interpretive signage. (I have a lot of the artwork & research done.) These additions will help residents and visitors understand the purpose of the plantings, the challenges of the site, and the broader environmental pressures shaping our choices. Together, these improvements will create a more resilient, welcoming, and climate-smart space that reflects both community needs and the realities of a changing landscape.





Continually Eaten by Kangaroos & Rabbits

Kangaroos and rabbits are relentless grazers, and these are the plants they return to again & again. The plan is to include more resilient plantings, and this list highlights the species most frequently targeted here. By recognising what attracts them, we can make smarter choices about fencing, placement & alternative plant options.



Quandong *(Santalum acuminatum)*

While it continues to survive, the roos & rabbits have a field day with it. We need protectors.



Mulch or Groundcover

Not enough mulch spread, sand blows. I've thrown 1000's of seeds, but it's not viable soil.



All wall climbers & grasses died.

Roos & rabbits devoured most planted along here. Mulch has stopped the sand running onto pathway. This is where we would like seating on the limestone.



Drains

It needs some limestone rock to hold the sand down between the drains. On a windy day the sand blows. It will reduce the height of the drain & still allow flow. It will look better, be safer & prevent plant growth entering the system.

More Mulch More Plants

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Less Flooding & Sand

Still getting some runoff of water, however the mulch is holding the sand down, reducing the mud build up. More mulch & more plants,



Flooding Problem Fixed, But?

It's great not having a muddy pathway, but it looks like crap. A deck maybe? Popular seating spot in summer under trees.



East Wall

Polly was going to organise some planting on the east side & at both entrances to area.



Something to throw here?

Both sides of Anaconda end have a section of sand where the path goes through it. Sand gets onto the footpath making it slippery. They also produce a lot of sand runoff onto the road.

Fix Something Each Year

What was once a bare expanse of shifting sand has now begun to restore its natural function & ecological character. Through a coordinated effort between the City of Mandurah and Connecting Corridors, the area has been stabilised with targeted plantings, improved drainage & ongoing maintenance. Native rushes, shrubs & supporting vegetation are now establishing well, reducing erosion, improving habitat value & creating a more resilient landscape. While still a work in progress, the site demonstrates how collaborative, incremental action can successfully rehabilitate degraded coastal environments & deliver long-term community and environmental benefits.



Seating & Bin

You can see where most plants died. And the missing bin. I wanted to show where the seating is being requested, where the tree is shading the path. Has a nice sea breeze coming through there.



Drains

Not impressed with the safety of this drain design. Kids or animals can get caught in it, or under it. I don't usually see these so high above the ground. A couple of scoops of limestone around them will make them less accessible.



Anaconda Side

More ground cover plants +/or mulch. The Dianella plants only just survive. The soil is too hydrophobic. Beach sand combined with builders yellow sand, are not a winning growth medium.



Verge

Polly & I briefly discussed the verge on both sides, but nothing has been done there. The sand runs off in the winter, and people get bogged there the rest of the time. I am thinking mulch & a tree?

Climate Change

Drainage →

The drainage area has now reached its highest water level in recent memory, and the impact on surrounding vegetation is clear. In both the background and foreground, you can see the tree species we arranged for Mike Taylor from Harcourts to have planted. They've been struggling due to the lack of water, yet they're still hanging on - an encouraging sign in a season defined by heat stress and minimal rainfall. The rushes and other shrubs we introduced are performing particularly well, showing steady growth even under these challenging conditions.



OPINION: We need a second layer of rushes around the above water level. It gives it a border to keep kids away from the drains. It also needs some limestone rock there to hold the sand down between the drains, on a windy day it blows everywhere.

Climate Change →

As we continue restoring and strengthening this space, it's become obvious that choosing the right plants is only half the story. Kangaroos & rabbits remain constant grazers, returning repeatedly to certain species and placing pressure on anything soft, green, or newly established. To reduce losses and give the landscape a fighting chance, we're focusing on plants that these animals rarely touch. While no species is ever completely safe, selecting naturally unpalatable plants significantly reduces browsing damage.

But with climate change driving longer dry spells, hotter summers, and more unpredictable rainfall, wildlife resistance alone isn't enough. The most effective strategy now is to combine drought-resistant species (whether hardy local natives or tough exotics) with plants that kangaroos and rabbits find unappealing. This dual approach strengthens the landscape on two fronts: it conserves water and reduces grazing pressure. It also helps new plantings establish more reliably, even in exposed areas where moisture is scarce and wildlife activity is high.



OPINION: The mulch has definitely made a difference to what is surviving & what didn't. More mulch would be appreciated, as they only covered about half the area in quite a thin layer. (I've been spreading organic fertilizer & soil conditioner too)

Polly's Plant List

We didn't plant much of this

Anaconda Loop Drain - Bushtucker - volunteer budget				
Species	**common name**	**zone**	**Qty**	**Supplier**
Wahhlenbergia stricta	Australian Bluebell	retaining wall	10	seedling
Santalum acuminatum	Quandong	ends	10	seedling
Dianella revoluta	Blueberry Lily	retaining wall	10	seedling
Calothamnus sanguineus	Bottlebrush	ends	10	seedling
Hibbertia scandens	Climbing Guninea flower	fence	10	seedling
Eremophila glabra	Emu Bush	retaining wall	10	seedling
Haemodorum spicatum	Bloodroot	retaining wall	10	seedling
Carpobrotus glaucescens	Coastal pigface	ends/wall	10	seedling
Lepidosperma gladiatum	Coastal Sword Sedge	retaining wall	10	seedling
Hakea prostrata	Harsh Hakea	ends	10	seedling
Hardenbergia comptoniana	Native wisteria	fence	10	seedling
Kennedia prostrata (to climb)	Scarlet runner	fence	10	seedling
	Total		**120**	

Substitutes were added of unknown species

Planted

120 tubes

Survival Rate

30%

Days since Last Rain

21 days

Living With Wildlife →

Last year, Connecting Corridors published a community brochure focused on practical ways to live alongside nature while strengthening neighbourhood connections. The resource highlighted simple, evidence-based actions residents can take to support local wildlife, reduce environmental impacts & create safer, more cohesive public spaces. It also outlined how thoughtful planting, responsible land use & shared stewardship can improve biodiversity and community wellbeing at the same time. The brochure has since become a useful guide for residents and volunteers, reinforcing the value of collaborative approaches to environmental care & helping build a more resilient, nature-positive community across the region.







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