

Biodiversity potentials in the City of Sydney

by James Macnamara, Urban Ecology Coordinator, City of Sydney

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I would like to introduce myself. I am Dr James Macnamara, the City of Sydney's Urban Ecology Coordinator. In my role, I look after all things native animals and native plants, except for trees, and oversee projects to protect, conserve and enhance native biodiversity. I'm here today to support the Glebe Society in the delivery of the wildlife monitoring project, as backed by the City's Innovation and Ideas Grant.

The City of Sydney Council is actively working towards greening our City – with our aim to increase green cover to 40 per cent across the council, with a minimum of 27 per cent tree canopy by 2050. Within these green areas, we are recreating habitat for wildlife, we currently care for 14 ha of bush restoration across the City, much of which is present here in Glebe, along the foreshore, Johnstons Creek canal and Orphan School Creek. We seek to continue to grow these areas in terms of size and habitat complexity, to create meaningful spaces for community and local wildlife to live and move through.

I would like to also acknowledge the many hours of wonderful work performed by Glebe's bushcare volunteers. There are three such groups in Glebe that help care for Orphan School Creek, Palmerston Steps, John Street Reserve and Nurses Memorial Garden.

The City of Sydney is highly urbanised, and the ecology and ecosystems of the area have been severely modified by past and present land uses. In a moment, you will hear about the history of the Glebe's Hill, and how this has impacted the site we know today.

Despite our past damages, there are many opportunities to promote biodiversity in our local area. We are currently

- Planting locally endemic species, which favour our small birds and insects.
- Installing native beehives, which promotes local pollination
- Designing better parks to include features that provide habitat for our frogs and lizards.
- Installing nest boxes to emulate lost hollow habitat and provide sites for small birds, microbats and possums to breed.

But before we advance too far with these efforts, it is important to identify existing ecology of an area – to know what we have and what we are missing.

Projects like monitoring the Glebe's Hill are an important first step – providing a health check of our urban ecology, allowing us to build a better picture of what plants and animals call our City home.

The Glebe's Hill monitoring will capture important data, a snapshot of what we have so that we can better understand the wildlife of The Hill and surrounding Glebe area. And from there, we can carry out projects to better promote urban ecology, which is of great advantage for the urban wildlife but also of great benefit for the local community, including future caretakers of the site.