

# HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



## Australia's Arid Lands

Jill Dark will be the guest speaker at our June general meeting. Jill is a long-term member of the Society, an inveterate traveller, and a regular speaker at our meetings who always enthralled her listeners.

This time, Jill will be speaking about "Australia's Arid Lands — their flora and fauna". There will be slides and photos to show that it is not a desert out there; there are plants, lakes, trees, birds, insects, and after rain it is just bursting with life.

The meeting will be held on Friday 30 June at the Conservation Hut, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, commencing at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

## World Environment Day

Saturday, 10 June, 2000, 10 am to 4 pm, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson

You are invited to the World Environment Day festival at the Mid Mountains Community Centre, New Street, Lawson, on Saturday 10 June, 10am to 4pm. There will be information stalls and talks, entertainment, solar cooking competition, workshops on genetic engineering and on rare and endangered species, school poster competition display, and children's activities. (Organised by Blue Mountains City Council).

## Workshop on Community

### Environmental Education:

Thursday 15 June, 7.30 pm. Mid Mountains Community Centre Lawson.

Jasmine Payget, Council's Community Education Officer will be guest speaker at a workshop to discuss the role of environmental education.

A community awareness of the joys of nature and how to live in an environmentally friendly way so as to keep the ecosystems of flora and fauna healthy is a goal worth achieving. Through awareness, the opportunity is then created for personal and community responsibility to our beautiful Blue Mountains.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society, with its 750 members, has the ability to stimulate community interest in our natural environment.

The Society has donated many books to school and public

## Amendment 25 to LEP 91

This long promised amendment to LEP 91 came before Council on Tuesday 26 April. The first we knew that this was to happen was the arrival of the business papers on the preceding Saturday — the middle of the Easter/Anzac break. So the holiday period was spent diligently reading Council Business Papers, with phones running hot, discussing, networking and lobbying.

Council staff had recommended that Amendment 25 be approved for public re-exhibition. Whilst the proposed amendment was substantially the same as previous versions, there were some differences that had to be carefully researched and considered.

The society and RAID requested that some wording that had been in a previous version of the amendment be reinstated — to strengthen the definition of development excluded land by allowing for buffers, and by protecting land that contained rare species of flora.

Councillors were receptive, and agreed — though they did stipulate that they would get a legal opinion about the legality of the changes they were approving.

Amendment 25 is the best chance we have to protect marginal areas from the over-development of urban sprawl; areas such as Winnicoopa Road, Blaxland, and The Mall, Warrimoo. It is to be on exhibition for 28 days, from a yet-to-be announced date. Submissions in support of Amendment 25, or with any suggested changes, should be forwarded to council when the exhibition period commences.

libraries. In 1998, "Living in the Bush" was published. Last year Catriona Gillies visited local schools giving talks and distributing the booklet. Currently, Christine Davies has nature study bush walks, and guests on the walks and at our general meetings fill an educational role.

How to increase the level of community awareness in the year 2000 is the challenge for us? Do you have any ideas on how the Society can become more involved in community environmental education? Ideas so far are another booklet, visual displays for regular stalls at festivals, and discussion groups.

Please come along, have your say and contribute your ideas to the discussion.

For more information phone Meredith 4782.4823 after 5 pm.

## With this Newsletter

- Weed of the Month leaflet: The weed of the month is Bamboo. Further copies of the leaflet are available from Blue Mountains City Council.

- WIRES leaflet. Two leaflets have been produced using money donated by the Society; one about the Wildlife Information and Rescue Service, and one about living with snakes.

## The National Pass

At our General Meeting of Friday 28 April we received a presentation from Jane Murray and Rebecca Brand, students at UWS Hawkesbury.

These two delightful ladies have now completed a research project on the Society's behalf, and produced the document "Developing a Plan of Management for the 'National Pass' Walking Track".

As part of their research they walked the track countless times, shot a video, paced every metre of the track, and interviewed several local identities with relevant knowledge.

Their document includes recommendations on every track defect, right down to which treads need replacing on each set of steps! The completed document will be distributed to NPWS, Council and other stakeholders.

Thank you to Jane and Rebecca for an excellent document and a great presentation. *Ross Coster.*

"Hut News", the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

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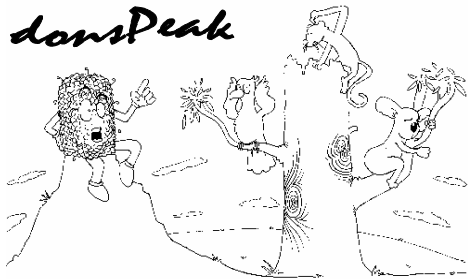
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THE DEADLINE  
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS  
FRIDAY 23 JUNE 2000



**Opportunity for "Real" Leaders**

ACF and the National Farmers' Federation have jointly advanced a \$6 billion per year proposal to address Australia's rural land and water degradation problems. A disparaging response from Environment Minister Senator Hill's office contained references to "real environmentalists" and "real farmers". It is to be hoped parties other than Senator Hill's Liberal Party will engage constructively with this proposal.

**The Parker Pays**

Proceeds of the car-space tax at several busy transport nodes in Sydney may be spent on improved public transport. Meanwhile, BMCC and NPWS should look at more locations for pay parking in the Mountains, now that the issue of ratepayers parking has been sorted out, partly thanks to the constructive input of Clr Hamilton. Pay parking is one of the greenest measures State Government or Council can adopt — those who keep complaining about it should reconsider.

**Dirty Linen in Public Transport?**

A NSW Health Spokesman has confirmed that the linen from some Sydney Hospitals is being trucked back and forth over the mountains to take advantage of cheap laundry prices near Orange. Of all the practices economic rationalism has given us, this must be one of the silliest. If you must, send the s...y sheets on the container train.

**You Silly McSausage, Ronald!**

Last month, SOCOG commanded communities holding Olympic Torch Relay 'Sausage Sizzles' not to serve alternatively produced food which resembles products of Olympic sponsor, McDonald's Family Restaurants. The Sydney media immediately contacted our mayor, Clr Jim Angel, who expects no snags. A free lunch with this columnist to the reader who creates the snack which least resembles a McDonalds product!

Don Morison.

**A Sustainable House**

Michael Mobbs, a Nature Conservation Council executive member and sustainable projects consultant, has converted his inner-city terrace in Chippendale into a sustainable house. Michael did this using technology and materials that are widely available in Australia. I have visited his house and done the tour which I found inspirational. Michael has a tour every week.

The tour is every Monday, starting 10.30 am, finish 11.30 am, no bookings, cameras welcome, \$15, \$12 for students, special rates for group tours of school-children and other students. The tour

shows the energy, water and waste water systems and people may buy Michael's book, Sustainable House, published by Choice, on the tour if they wish.

The sustainable house is located at 58 Myrtle Street, Chippendale. For further details you can contact Michael on 9310.2930, fax 9310.1893, or email mmobbs@ozemail.com.au

(Bridget Berry, NCC)

**Biodiversity Month**

**How can we get involved?**

*Earth Alive!* Biodiversity Month 2000 is on in September. Biodiversity Month provides a national focus to celebrate and promote our local biodiversity, get the media interested in a local event, and increase the community's understanding and involvement in biodiversity conservation.

This year five simple action themes are being encouraged:

- Create a habitat garden
- Help save fish habitat and when fishing take only what you need
- Save and create habitat for native birds
- Save and create habitat for frogs
- Care for your pets to conserve native animals

Actions to reduce the road kill of native animals will also be focussed upon.

Environmental groups and organisations from around Australia will be organising events aimed at educating and involving anyone willing to learn about our precious biodiversity. In 1999 *Earth Alive!* Biodiversity Month saw over 120 events in schools, botanical gardens, National Parks, local Councils, shopping centres, spring fairs and many, many more.

Phone Christine 4787.7246 (before 22 June) with your ideas.

**Smelter Update**

Environmentalists have had some minor achievements in regard to the proposed silicon smelter for Lithgow. Pine forests, not native forests, in the Lithgow and Bathurst areas are proposed for the furnace fluxwood. Goonoo and Pilliga Forests are to be protected from being incinerated as charcoal and Mr Debus has said he supports the use of rail.

However, the charcoal industry still requires 160,000 tonnes of native hardwoods each year. This timber is expected to come from the New England Tableland area further east of Gunnedah. According to National Parks Association there is still a risk that future governments could open up Pilliga and Goonoo for charcoal production.

There is also a possibility of landholders being asked to sell hardwood from their woodlands to the charcoal industry.

A letter from the Minister for Forestry states that the possibility of dedicated timber plantations is being discussed with Australian Silicon Ltd. This is good news for the future, but what will we have left

after 20 years of logging for the smelter while the plantations mature?

So far, Government has not indicated it intends to reduce the 615,000 tonnes per annum of greenhouse gases that will be produced. Nor has it indicated that it requires the proponents to have a greenhouse neutral smelting industry.

Given that the State Government is committed to the silicon smelter proceeding, the role the Society is taking is to lobby for Green, environmentally sustainable industry at the Minerals Processing Park in Lithgow.

Letters about the smelter to Mr Debus could ask for:

- An alternative source for charcoal to the unsustainable logging of native forests
- A neutral Greenhouse Gas requirement of the silicon smelter
- Pine plantations to be used for furnace fluxwood as a condition of development consent
- Timber plantations to act as carbon sinks for CO2 emissions
- Rail to be used for the cartage of raw materials in the central west and for the cartage of silicon through the mountains to Port Botany.

Please write to The Hon R Debus, Minister for Environment, level 19, 24 Campbell St, Sydney 2000.

**Cox's River Flows Again**

The Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus, has played a critical role in securing adequate environmental flows for the Cox's River announced on March 30. Last year Mr Debus undertook to secure a five fold increase flow arrangements for the Cox's River.

Delta Electricity's Lake Lyell and two other substantial dams had reduced the Cox's River to a trickle (usually just 2.6 megalitres a day). In fulfilment of the commitment by Mr Debus, flows will be increased to 13.5 megalitres a day as an environmental minimum under Delta Electricity's new water licence.

In addition, the first quarter of any flood flow will pass through the dam when there is over 50,000 megalitres of stored water, and a further 800 megalitres will be released each year to ensure a channel maintenance flow. (Colong Bulletin, May 2000)

**Welcome to New Members**

- Vanessa Luxton, Faulconbridge
- Angelique Henson, Winmalee
- Avis Hanning, Hazelbrook
- May Rigozzi, Woodford
- Barry Barnes, Medlow Bath
- Peter Markham, Wentworth Falls
- Tom Flannery, Katoomba
- Lynda Byrne, Blackheath
- Jenni Moore, Woodford
- Richard Fuller, Lithgow
- Sabina Domagawa, Katoomba
- Erst Carmichael, Lawson

**Membership Enquiries**

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## Water Nymph's Dell

The Conservation Society has a long history of involvement in protecting the rainforests of Water Nymph's Dell. This rainforest was one of the earliest tourist attractions of the Blue Mountains.

In the early 1980s the Society saw the need to protect the hanging swamps in the upper catchment of the Dell and Blue Mountain Creek. Many letters were written and meetings held to obtain land and have it gazetted in the "Reserve".

One of the driving forces behind this effort was Winsome Gregory who not only wrote letters but also pulled out weeds with the help of Greta Vanry and others. Another member Len Symes donated land.

Money was raised by the Society to purchase another block. Council subsequently added to the Reserve by resuming land obviously unsuitable for building (in one case after footings were excavated and permanently filled with water!).

In the mid 1990s Winsome Gregory reminded BMCS of the need to look after this Reserve. At the time it was beyond our resources to start another Bushcare Group, so we wrote proposing that it be considered for funding under the Urban Runoff Control Program.

Bush regeneration works began in February 1998 under the URCP and are continuing until 2003.

On 6 May, 15 enthusiastic local residents turned up to have a look at the Bush Regeneration works. They decided to form a Bushcare Group and carry on the job of looking after this wonderful reserve. Their first Bushcare afternoon will be Saturday, 4 June, starting at 2 pm. Contact Toula Anastas 4757.1671.

## July Workshop

### Demystifying EIS's and Submissions

Are you suspicious the consultants are trying to snow the local community in that report you are reading? Are you puzzling over issues to focus on in that

letter or submission you are writing?

Well, help is at hand. Some fascinating and helpful insights on EIS's (Environmental Impact Statements), Reports and Submissions will be shared by Robin Mitchell at a workshop in July, to be held in Springwood (details next month). Phone Meredith 4782.4823 after 5pm

## Great Unnatural Catastrophes

Natural catastrophes fall mainly into two classes: those caused by earthquakes and those weather related such as floods and storms. Both classes have shown a large increase during the last 50 years, although weather related catastrophes throughout the world were fairly stable until the 1970s. Since then they have increased threefold. Two reasons for this are the doubling of population and the rise in city population. Between 1950 and 1990 Tokyo population increased from 6.9 million to 25.1 million (what odds on another earthquake?), Mexico City rose from 2.9 m to 15.1 m, Sao Paula from 2.1m to 15m. In 1990 there were 28 cities with population exceeding 6m. Obviously a major catastrophe is not rated as such unless it affects a large number of people. Population increase is therefore one reason for the increase in catastrophes.

The special millenium issue of Topics 2000 from which these facts are taken, was produced by the 20 members of the geoscience group of the giant Munich Re reinsurance group. Topics 2000 states that: Large cities tend in themselves to intensify the hazards emanating from nature. During the summer the concrete expanses of large cities are heated up by the sun's radiation more than the surrounding areas so that heat waves from these are much more unpleasant and sometimes even catastrophic. An intensification of thunderstorms has been observed over heated cities leading to more torrential rain and more intensive hailstorms in the cities and in their leaside. (Colong Bulletin, May 2000)

## "Wamsley's War"

At the time of the Canyon Colliery debate a documentary about Earth Sanctuaries was being filmed by David Bradbury. The documentary, entitled "Wamsley's War" will be shown on ABC-TV at 9.30 pm on 22 June.

## Gordon Falls Bushcare Group

Gordon Falls Bushcare Group, Leura is led by Norm and Laurel Harris. This pair has been a real force behind the mountains Bushcare movement. Over the past eight years the group has been able to achieve large amounts of work on Council land that skirts Lone Pine Ave and Leura Oval.

A shining example of this quality work can be seen at the end of Gordon Road, where careful and persistent re-weeding has produced a site that has almost fully recovered to it's natural, non-weedy condition.

The group has also lobbied for

## Greenhouse Corner

### How Long Have We Known?

Many people believe that the Greenhouse Effect is a recent phenomenon that we have only just discovered. I once told a fellow conservationist that I first heard about Greenhouse in the 1970's, and she scoffed at me. Here are some interesting facts:

In 1896 the Swedish Chemist Svante Arrhenius first suggested that CO2 acted as a planetary temperature control. He said that the early Cenozoic, the warm era after the fall of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, would have had high CO2 levels in the air. He also pointed out that CO2 was accumulating in the atmosphere because of burning fossil fuels, and that it could trigger warming by trapping infra-red radiation close to the earth's surface.

In the mid 1950's, Charles David Keeling, a student at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in California, began painstaking measurements of CO2 concentrations in the atmosphere. Keeling has continued these measurements to the present day and has thoroughly documented rising CO2 levels.

Ice Drilling by the Soviet Union in Antarctica has shown a direct correlation between CO2 levels and ice ages.

CO2 is belched out during major volcanic eruptions, then absorbed by coral, forests, plankton and the like and trapped as limestone, coal and oil. We are cutting down the forests, killing the coral, digging up the limestone, coal and oil, and generally fiddling with the global thermostat.

The changes in the period 1950 to 2050 will be more profound than at any other time in history, way too fast for the earth to adapt, and will have catastrophic consequences.

The time to act was 1970, but if we act now we might be able to mitigate some of the destruction. Many National governments around the world are taking serious action, but not ours. We are amongst the worst Greenhouse producers per capita in the world, and we *must* do something about it. *Ross Coster.*



### MEDLOW BATH (Denis Rice)

Yes, I remember Medlow Bath —  
The name, because one clear, cold afternoon  
The express-train drew up there  
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared their throat.  
No one left and no one came  
On the bare platform. What I saw  
Was Medlow Bath — only the name

And pine trees, eucalypts and grass,  
And banksias, and tussocks dry,  
No whit less still and lonely fair  
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a currawong sang  
Close by, and round him, without fail,  
Farther and farther, all the currawongs  
From Wentworth Falls to Hartley Vale!

*(This poem is based on the poem "Adlestrop" by Edward Thomas (1915). Denis Rice is a member of the Society and is co-convenor of "Poetry at the Parakeet" held on the second Monday evening of each month at the Parakeet Cafe, Katoomba.*

## Come on a Bushwalk ...

Congratulations to Jim Wallace who through his energy and enthusiasm as Bushwalks Convener increased the Society's weekend bushwalks from one a month to one every weekend. Thanks to volunteer bushwalk leaders and the popularity and variety of walks, these are frequently attended by fifteen to twenty plus people.

The Monday morning leisure walks, which started seven years ago with the Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre, became part of the Society's walks program in 1996. These are very popular and social walks, often followed by a BBQ lunch or after-walk coffee.

As well as continuing the longer walks which are programmed either Saturday or Sunday — one every weekend, we plan to extend the walks program to include a Leisure Walk every Sunday morning. The first of these walks are listed for 25 June and 2 July.

The Thursday morning Interpretive Bushwalks led by Christine Davies are informative and enjoyable. The Winter series of these walks will start on 27 July.

Come along on a walk, and maybe you'd like to lead one! Contact Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.

## Changing of the Seasons

On the Thursday bushwalks it has been fascinating to watch the changing of the seasons, and the large and small events in Nature which mark them. Every week we discover something new, and find a new question to ask.

We have watched the leisurely formation and blooming of the Banksia flowers, and the migration of the honey-eaters. In mid April we saw the pretty flowers of a bladderwort at the top of a lovely little waterfall on Kings Tableland.

On 2 May we encountered a large number of Eastern Spinebills in a patch of lush vegetation above the Grose Valley (in summer they pair off in breeding territories — is this their winter quarters?)

On 9 May at Medlow Bath we saw Mayflies. A week later at Mount Victoria we discovered a patch of tiny orchids with lids covering them so that they resembled beetles (some orchids go to great lengths to attract pollinators — are these pollinated by some sort of ground-dwelling beetle?)

The Sunshine Wattle is coming into flower and promises to give a glorious display of gold through the bush this winter. One of the bushwalkers remembered this children's song:

### Winter Song

Lanterns on the Banksia tree  
Shining out so cheerfully  
Can you chase the dark away,  
Lovely winter flowers,  
Wattles with your tiny suns  
Underneath the scribbly gums  
Warm our hearts till springtime comes  
with its sunny hours!  
(Author unknown)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>JUNE</b>					<b>3 Bushwalk</b>	
<b>5 LeisWalk</b>					<b>10 World Environment Day</b>	
					<b>10 Kanangra to Katoomba</b>	
	<b>13 Bushcare</b>		<b>15 Workshop</b>		<b>17 Bushwalk</b>	
<b>19 LeisWalk</b>		<b>21 Bushcare</b>			<b>24 MCMMeet</b>	<b>25 LeisWalk</b>
<b>26 LeisWalk</b>				<b>30 GenMeet</b>		
<b>JULY</b>					<b>1 Bushwalk</b>	<b>2 LeisWalk</b>
<b>3 LeisWalk</b>						
<b>10 LeisWalk</b>	<b>11 Bushcare</b>					
<b>17 LeisWalk</b>		<b>19 Bushcare</b>			<b>22 MCMMeet</b>	
<b>24 LeisWalk</b>				<b>28 GenMeet</b>		

### JUNE

- 10 (Sat) **World Environment Day Festival**, 10 am to 4 pm, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson (see Page 1).
- 15 (Thur) **Workshop on Community Environmental Education**, 7.30 pm, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson (see Page 1).
- 24 (Sat) **Management Committee Meeting**, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
- 30 (Fri) **General Meeting**, 7.30 pm at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. Guest: **Jill Dark**, "Australia's arid lands" (see Page 1)

### JULY

- 22 (Sat) **Management Committee Meeting.**
- 28 (Fri) **General Meeting.** Kathy Ridge of Nature Conservation Council will speak about the reform of the Land and Environment Court

### QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 16 and under)

- June 25 (Sun) **Bushwalk to the Pool of Siloam**, with environmental games along the way. Meet at 2 pm, The Links Road, Leura.
- July 30 (Sun) **Explore Jamieson Creek where Darwin walked.** Meet 10 am, corner of Fletcher and Jamieson Streets, Wentworth Falls.  
*For more information contact Jessica on 4757.2783. For a copy of the Quoll Club Newsletter, phone Ross Coster 4759.1247.*

### BUSHCARE (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves.)

#### JUNE

- 13 (Tues) **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group.** Contact Jessica 4757.2783 for the meeting place. (following Tuesday if wet).
- 21 (Wed) **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group.** Meet 9 am at the Reserve (GWH, West of Sorenson Bridge). Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.

### BUSHWALKS: Carry drinking water (minimum 1 litre), bring morning tea,

*and lunch for day walks. Wear shoes with a good tread.*

#### Monday Leisure Walks: Usually half day walks, leisurely pace.

- June 05 **Gordon Falls to Gladstone Lookout.** Meet Leura Station carpark 9 am. Contact Christina Jones 4784.1101. **Half day, Easy.** BBQ afterwards.
- June 19 **Berghofers Pass.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 9 am. Contact Bill Graham 4759.1692. **Half day, Easy.** BBQ at Mt. York afterwards.
- June 26 **Hat Hill Road, Anvil Rock, Wind Eroded Cave.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9 am. **Easy.** Contact Norah Gaynor 4757.4058.
- July 03 **Terrace Falls.** Meet at Hazelbrook Station carpark at 9 am. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. BBQ afterwards. **Half day. Medium.**

#### Sunday Leisure Walks: Usually half day walks, leisurely pace.

- June 25 **Exploring "My Backyard".** Meet at Blackheath Commuter carpark (western side of station), at 9.30 am. Contact Christine Davies 787.7246. **Half Day, Medium.**
- July 02 **Minna Ha Ha Falls.** Meet at Gearins Hotel, Katoomba 9.30 am. Contact Bill Graham 4759.1692, BBQ afterwards. **Half day, Medium.**

#### Weekend Bushwalks: Walks of various grades, full or half day.

- June 03 (Sat) **Mystery Walk.** Meet Hazelbrook Station carpark (south side) 9.30 am. Contact Kate McManus 4758.7936. **Half day, Medium.**
- June 10/12 **Kanangra Walls to Katoomba.** Contact Warwick Mosman 4757.1354. **3 days, Hard**

- June 17 (Sat) **Lockley's Pylon.** Meet at Leura Station carpark, cnr Great Western Highway, 9 am. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. **Day, Medium.**
- July 01 (Sat) **Undercliff/Overcliff and Rocket Point.** Meet at Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls at 9.45am. If transport from station needed, call Les Coyne 4757.3327 prior to Saturday. **Half day, Easy.**

#### Thursday Morning Interpretive Bushwalks:

*Winter Bushwalks will commence on Thursday 27 July. There will be 8 walks with expert guests on some. Total cost will be \$20 per person. Numbers will be limited. For more information or to register, contact Christine Davies, 4787.7246.*

**Walks have been graded. Easy:** Mostly good surfaces, but some rough or steep sections. Suited to people of average fitness. **Medium:** Includes rough or steep sections, some of which may require clambering over natural obstacles. Discuss with leader if in doubt. **Hard** — Strenuous walks, suited to fit and experienced walkers. **If this is your first walk**, or you are in any doubt, contact the leader or Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.