

# HUT NEWS

*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"*



## NEW FACES ON THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Our newly-elected BMCS President, Tara Cameron

For the first time in six years we have a female President of the Society. Tara Cameron was elected unopposed and with acclamation at the Annual General Meeting on 28 March 2008.

Tara lives in Faulconbridge with husband, Don, and four-year-old daughter, Elata. She has a B.A.(Honours History) and a Diploma in Education with majors in Mathematics and Science and now teaches High School maths.

Tara joined the BMCS six years ago and worked with the Land Use Committee before coming onto the Management Committee last year as a Project Officer.

She began as an active environmentalist with the National Parks Association, including some time working in their office. While teaching at Kelso High School in Bathurst, she participated in the Western Woodlands Campaign, working with renowned environmentalist, Bev Smiles. That campaign led to the establishment of the Central West Environment Council.

She also became involved with environmental education at Kelso, promoting Streamwatch and tree planting with Landcare.

Tara grew up in the Mountains before going to Sydney University where she joined the Sydney University Bushwalking Club which seems to be the activity alma mater of so many in the Environmental Movement. Back in the Mountains she participated in the Stealth Campaign.

Tara is committed to preserving the remaining wilderness areas, giving priority to the Gardens of Stone and Newnes Plateau.

Among the other Committee members elected there are some new faces and the volunteer visages of some who are returning to duty after a period of rest and recreation:

Past President, Brian Marshall, who has done an excellent job for three years, has agreed to remain on Committee as National Parks Officer. Lis Bastian holds down the vital role of Climate Change and Sustainability Officer whilst Helen Deane has taken on the busy role of Land Use Officer. Liz van Reyswoud, after her stint as Membership Officer, returns as Walks Convenor. John Haydon, in addition to his role as World Heritage Officer, is now Second Vice President. Former Publications Officer, Ron Withington is, from next issue, Editor of Hut News.

Importantly, all positions on the Committee were filled, and there is a solid core of members who, remaining in their 2007 roles, will provide Tara and her Vice President, Heather Hull, with a necessary element of continuity.

David Hall and Ron Withington

**MONTHLY MEETING**  
**VISITORS WELCOME**

**7.30pm, FRIDAY 2 May, 2008 at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls.**

Please note the change of date to avoid a clash with Anzac Day ceremonies.

The guest speaker at our next monthly meeting is Ian Wright, a water scientist with a passion for the ecology of creeks and rivers. He is also interested in the interaction of ecosystems with humans, particularly where it involves water pollution. He has used freshwater macroinvertebrates as pollution indicators in research projects often involving the Blue Mountains and its spectrum of waterways, from the pristine to the polluted. The Grose River is, unfortunately one of the most polluted.

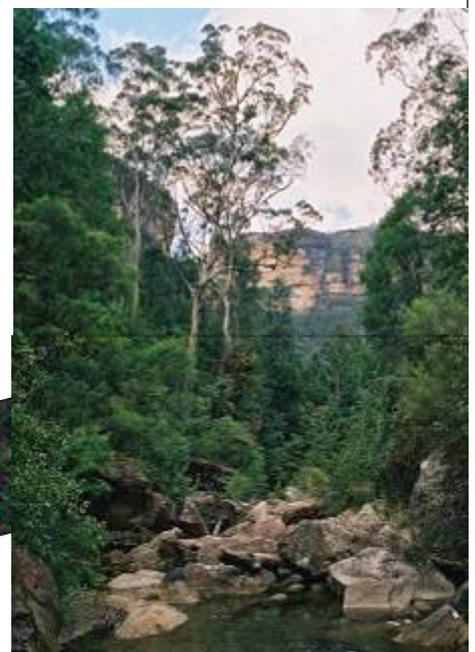
Ian's PhD research revealed that the Grose River suffered degradation from two sources of waste discharge; organic pollution from the Blackheath Sewerage Treatment Plant via Hat Hill Creek; and metal-rich pollution from the closed Canyon Coal Mine via Dalpura Creek. His research was helped by the Blue Mountains having a number of clear, pristine waterways which made it easier to detect impairment from some forms of human activity, such as sewerage effluent, mine drainage and urban runoff.

A major concern is that further human activity in the area, such as urban development, will worsen the quality of run-off going into Blue Mountains' World Heritage waterways.

Treated sewerage effluent has been progressively removed from the upper Blue Mountains waterways and the Blackheath Sewerage Treatment Plant will be closed this year. The response of Hat Hill Creek and the Upper Grose River to this closure will be crucial to their future viability.

## Recovering the Grose River

A major concern is that there are no similar plans to reduce the leakage of contamination from the Canyon Coal Mine. Without recognition and action to stem these destructive flows, the outlook for the Grose River remains very uncertain.



## HUT NEWS

"Hut News" is the newsletter of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.  
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**Editor of this newsletter: Juli Boddy**

*This is my last 'Hut News' - many thanks to Jacquie at Mountains Print, Diana Rich, Ross Coster and all the other people who have helped me through the ups and downs over the last two years. Juli*

## BMCS Bushcare

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare group works in the Blue Mountains National Park at Wentworth Falls on the 2nd Saturday of each month.

Tools are provided but bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water.

For more information, contact Karen on 4757 1929.



## Letter of the Month—April 2008 Tax Dollars Support Fossil Fuel

Australian Government investment funds are putting nearly 50 times more money into the fossil fuel and uranium industries than into renewable energy, the report *Responsible Public Investment in Australia*, commissioned by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), has revealed.

Large Government-owned investors, including the Federal Government's Future Fund and state bodies such as the Workcover Authority, are investing in direct conflict with their governments' plans to reduce greenhouse emissions.

A spokeswoman for climate sceptic NSW Treasurer, Michael Costa, justified the choice of investment, saying "*The primary objective for major government-run funds is to maximise returns from their investment portfolios*" (Sydney Morning Herald 18.3.08).

"*Government-controlled funds are still investing \$47 in fossil fuels and uranium for every dollar they invest in renewable energy*" said Don Henry, executive director of ACF (SMH 18.3.08).

In addition to this funding through investment, the fossil fuel industry receives taxpayer subsidies of \$9 billion annually. This is over \$800 per person and about 28 times the amount given in subsidies to the renewable industry. For example, \$308 million is given to coal companies as a rebate on their diesel fuel usage. Greenpeace are running an on-line petition to stop tax dollars being spent on fossil fuels at [www.stop-fueling-climate-change.org](http://www.stop-fueling-climate-change.org).

What will be the long-term environmental return from this massive investment of public money in the coal industry?

George Monbiot, noted British journalist on climate change, says that 'clean coal' (carbon capture and storage) will come too late to prevent runaway climate change. The idea of clean coal "*creates a marvellous amount of confusion in the public mind, which gives the government the chance to excuse the inexcusable*" (The Guardian 18.3.08).

**Send a short message to the Treasurer Wayne Swan, cc to the Minister for Climate Change Penny Wong, making some or all of the following points:**

Dear Mr Swan,

The report, *Responsible Public Investment in Australia*, commissioned by the Australian Conservation Foundation, states that many of Australia's large government-run funds are making investment decisions in direct conflict with your government's plans to reduce greenhouse emissions and tackle climate change.

How can your government expect to meet its emission reduction targets while investing 47 times more public money in fossil fuel and uranium industries than in companies developing renewable energy and energy efficiency?

What will be the long-term environmental return from this massive investment of public money in the coal industry?

It is particularly ironic that the biggest federal fund of all, the Future Fund, worth \$59.6 billion, has apparently not made any commitment to environmental and social principles in its investment decision-making.

Is it true that, in addition to this funding through investment, \$28 of taxpayers' money is spent on subsidies to fossil fuels, for every \$1 to renewable energy and energy efficiency?

Will your government conduct an inquiry into the tax subsidies given to the fossil fuel industry?

**Contact Details:** Post to Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600, or email:

**The Hon Wayne Swan MP:**

[Wayne.Swan.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Wayne.Swan.MP@aph.gov.au)

**Senator the Hon Penny Wong:**

[www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/homepages/contact.asp?id=00AOU](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/homepages/contact.asp?id=00AOU)

It would be good if you could also send the message to our State Premier, Morris Iemma: post to Parliament House, Macquarie St Sydney 2000, or email: [thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au](mailto:thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au)

**Rosemary Lathouris and Robin Mosman**

Visit the BMCS website at: [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)



# Best Practice Climate Law:

What would climate laws need to be effective at the international & domestic levels?

**Date:** 16 April 2008 at 6 p.m.  
**Venue:** University of Sydney Law School  
Cnr Phillip and King Streets, Sydney  
**Speakers:** Rachel Walmsley, EDO  
Richard Merzian, Australian Youth Climate Coalition

*Both Richard and Rachel will be drawing from their experiences as delegates at the Bali UN Climate Conference.*

Please RSVP to [edonsw@edo.org.au](mailto:edonsw@edo.org.au) by **Monday 14 April 2008**



## Climate Change | Social Change conference

*A conference to strengthen radical social action to stop climate change*

**April 11-13 at Sydney Girls High School** (nr corner Anzac Parade & Cleveland Street, Surry Hills)

Featuring international speakers:

**John Bellamy Foster** – author of *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*; editor of *Monthly Review*.  
**Patrick Bond** – director of the Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa; editor of *Climate Change, Carbon Trading and Civil Society*.  
**Roberto Perez** – Cuban permaculturalist (featured in *The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil*).

Speakers from Australia include:

**Stephanie Long** – Friends of the Earth Australia's international climate justice spokesperson; works on FoE International's climate change campaign  
**Mark Diesendorf** – Institute of Environmental Studies, University of NSW  
**Jim Green** – Friends of the Earth anti-nuclear campaigner  
**Dick Nichols** – author of *Environment, Capitalism and Socialism*  
**Cam Walker** – Friends of the Earth, Melbourne  
**John Rice** – Adelaide Ecosocialist Network  
**Adrian Rice** – Zero Emissions Network  
**Stuart Rosewarne** – co-editor of *Journal of Australian Political Economy*, and *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*

To register your interest in the conference, email [climateconf@greenleft.org.au](mailto:climateconf@greenleft.org.au).

To receive updates, send an email to [climatechange\\_socialchangeconf\\_announce-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:climatechange_socialchangeconf_announce-subscribe@yahoo.com).

## Our declining flora TACKLING THE THREATS

### Keynote speakers

**Prof. Lesley Hughes**  
(Macquarie University)  
Impacts of climate change on Australian biodiversity

**David Keith**  
(NSW DECC)  
Threatening processes and their role in biodiversity conservation

**Kevin Thiele**  
(WA DEC)  
Threats and responses at the ecological community scale

**David Coates**  
(WA DEC)  
Threats and responses at the species scale

### Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc

7th National Conference

**April 21-24 April 2008**

'Winbourne' Edmund Rice Retreat  
& Conference Centre,  
1315 Mulgoa Road, Mulgoa, NSW

This conference will examine threatening processes and their management at the species, plant community and landscape levels. Scientists, conservation managers, on-ground practitioners and community groups are coming together to focus on threatening processes and effective responses.

### More information:

<http://www.anpc.asn.au/conferences.html>

or contact the ANPC office:

[anpc@anpc.asn.au](mailto:anpc@anpc.asn.au); ph: 02-6250 9509).

*Supported by: Mount Annan Botanic Garden,  
The NSW Department of Environment & Climate Change,  
The Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority,  
The Norman Wettenhall Foundation, Wyndham Estate.*

## A few GARDEN WATER tips you may not have thought about!

- ◆ Use trigger nozzles for hoses that allow you to stop and start hand watering as you move around the garden.
- ◆ Avoid watering the leaves of plants - rather aim for the base and root zone, or use drip irrigation for large plants and trees.
  - ◆ Use swales and sand-lined contour channels to slow water runoff and to spread it horizontally across a slope, rather than allowing it to run straight off your land.
  - ◆ Less lawn. Did you know experiments show that in a semi-arid climatic biome of predominantly shrubs and grasses, a minimum of 830L of water is needed to keep 1sq.m of lawn green for 1 year? (ref: Kathryn Miller *Earth Light Magazine* #35, 1994)



What an amazing economic and environmental cost!!

**Susan Girard,  
Climate Change Subcommittee**

## POPULATE OR PERISH : A MESSAGE PAST ITS USE-BY DATE

**Sustainable Population Australia (SPA)** was formed in 1988 by people who felt that the issue of human population numbers was overlooked, or regarded as too contentious, by many of those striving to preserve Australia's ecological heritage.

It is an ecological group dedicated to preserving species' habitats globally and in Australia from the degradation caused by human population growth. SPA works on many fronts to encourage informed public debate about how Australia and the world can achieve an ecologically sustainable population. **The NSW President, Gordon Hocking, accompanied by Graeme Wood and Kris Spike, were our guest speakers at the Hut on Leap Year Day, 2008.**

So much has been written and 'internetted' about sustainability, population and greenhouse gas emission reduction that it almost seems foolhardy to attempt to encapsulate the presentation by SPA and the discussion that followed into a few paragraphs. But Gordon managed as a starting point to strip the issues down to an arithmetical dimension that most of us were able to comprehend. I may be able to re-assemble his argument in what follows.

Many of us have trouble with compound interest calculations so Gordon made it easy for us – no need to dabble in the actuary's world of that mystery irrational Euler Number,  $e = 2.718$ . If we want to calculate how long it will take for a population to double, simply divide the current annual rate of increase into the value 70 and the answer comes out in years. So that if in 2007 we have 20.7 million people in Australia, and the current growth rate is 1.5% p.a. then the population will be 41 million in 47 years, that is in 2054.

This simplified arithmetic, Gordon says, provides us with a startling way of looking at our greenhouse gas emission targets in the light of our population projections.

Sir Nicholas Stern insists Australia must cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2050. Professor Ross Garnaut says that this is not enough and insists on interim targets. The Minister for Climate Change and Water says that Stern's 60 percent remains Government policy. So let's stay with Senator Penny Wong and do the SPA sums.

A 60% reduction means that by, say, 2054 each one of us will have to adjust our lifestyles so that we individually produce just 40% of the emissions we are responsible for today. Doesn't it?

Well, not really, says Gordon.

He says we are going to have to cinch our belts much tighter. If our population grows from today's 20.7 million to 41 million by 2054 our individual emissions would have to reduce to just  $40 \times 20.7 / 41 = 20\%$  of our output today, not the 40%.

And can we as individuals imagine using just an incredible one fifth of the energy we use today? Heaters on twice a fortnight, showers once a week, less than two litres of petrol a day, and so on and on?

Thus there is zero hope of achieving any viable set target for emission reduction and thus sustainability, unless we cut the population growth rate.

And there's another stumbling block, says Gordon. Population growth mirrors economic growth. There is an expectation of continuous economic growth, and energy growth and economic growth are in lockstep. Most commentators expect energy output to increase and keep up with economic growth. They expect our future energy growth to be met by nuclear and clean-coal power stations, with a smaller contribution being made by renewable energy sources. Much of industry joins with government in seeking population growth – who could forget Peter Costello's call for Australians to have three children per family, which would match the Philippines?

Gordon, Graeme and Kris believe that there is one obvious solution to the problem: to wean ourselves off our addiction to the growth economy. A new system of organisation is needed for our society in the 21st century that respects the limits of our

resource base and the ability of our supporting ecosystems to nourish us. This is not a new idea, as much has been written about the way in which a steady-state economy could function.

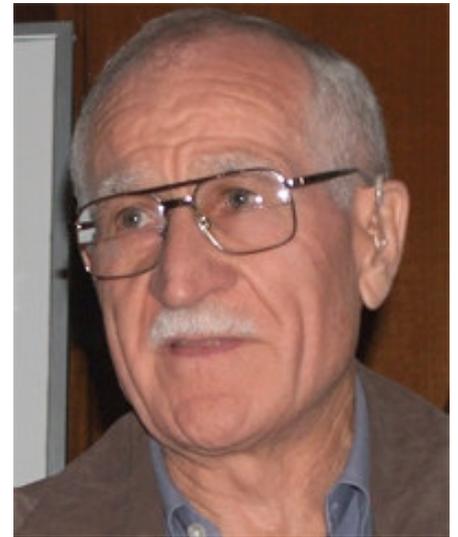
And central to the steady-state economy is a finitely small population growth rate.

**Realising the enormity of these challenges was worrying enough, but even more bewildering was the difficulty in posing practical courses of action on population control.**

The trio was adamant during question time that draconian measures for population stabilisation should not be applied: no forced contraception, no euthanasia consent, no maximum family size, no specific reduction in Government tax incentives or baby bonuses, no withdrawal of invitro-fertility technology, no incitement to wars, no neglect of pockets of disease or famine: no "taboos" at all. But naturally the SPA approach in a public meeting is to attempt to educate while steering clear of real contention.

The SPA answer, as expressed at the Hut, seemed to lie with the good sense of individuals and couples, based on the realities and calculations that SPA presented and supported by a sense of mission or example to the rest of the world. They seemed to opine that with this right attitude, our present birth rate of 1.8, and a pull back from technology and economic growth which will be the inevitable result of peak oil and peak coal, we might just make it. But as Ross Gittens has said, reaching the goal would be a marvel to be compared with all Seven Wonders of the World!

Kris wanted us to revisit the recent Wilberforce biopic, "Amazing Grace" and learn from it. The task, he said, was akin to that of working towards the abolition of slavery – the fight had to be mounted by committed people from all walks of life against vested interests all predicting economic disaster, and in the face of widespread public complacency. The same meetings, lobbying of politicians and pamphleteering were all required. However, in the days of Williams Pitt and Wilberforce, he said, fewer people were affected, the abuse was often far off, the media and society were not as organised around unending growth, and of course the change could become instantaneous and reversible. On the other hand the population / sustainability issue is not soluble overnight, while it is quite inevitable.



Gordon Hocking of SPA

This literary analysis gave me a ray of hope. And later, as Graeme suggested, I did have recourse to the SPA website ([www.population.com.au](http://www.population.com.au)) to look at the 29 SPA recommendations that the organization proposes for Federal Government action. These are much more forthright than our threesome of interlocutors was willing to be in our public meeting.

It was cold comfort to be told that our situation was better than the underdeveloped countries but on a par with the world as a whole. It seems that over the next seven decades even our very best efforts must inevitably lead us into embracing decentralisation and a significantly lower standard of energy-deprived existence. But the good news could be the salvation of our grandchildren, and ultimately the saving of the planet and all living things on it.

Ron Withington

## LIVING BESIDE THE NORTHERN HAIRY-NOSED WOMBAT

Ruth Park's Muddleheaded Wombat has for his friends a good-natured, practical female Mouse and a vain, neurotic male Tabby Cat. He has a bicycle with red wheels, of which he is intensely proud and which he anthropomorphises, e.g. complains that it bit him when he accidentally injured himself trying to repair it. He also has a speech impediment. If you don't believe that this is treally ruly so, then go ask Cindergorilla!

Virginia King has written several books for children on frogs, platypuses and camels. And now after spending just four weeks last September as caretaker in Epping National Park, some 250km northwest of Emerald, she is qualified to transport both littlies and grown-ups into the bunks and burrows of the **Northern Hairy-Nosed Wombat**.

But this creature, while not at all muddled, has no real friends among mice and men, and certainly no affinity with a feline, either tabby or feral! If he has a bicycle it is well buried and does him no favours. You see *Lasiorhinus krefftii*, (or 'Yaminon', the aboriginal name) a marsupial with a backward-facing pouch, is critically endangered.

No, he is not the same animal as your common and bushland wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*), he is as different as Pooh is from Eeyore. Of course he looks much the same, as a *Vombatus*, but has a short posterior protuberance, a flat face and tell-tale bristles around the nose.



between burrows, and after a lot of original experimentation Alan was able to obtain the necessary combination of field of vision, exposure and reaction time to obtain infrared images of passing animals. Virginia disguised the cameras to merge with familiar star pickets marking burrow alignments and soon the unsuspecting wombats were appearing under flash conditions in colour images. Even so it took a lot of patience to achieve full frontal or lateral images. Most shots showed the east end of a westbound Yaminon.

Alan explained that the research extended to an examination of the habits of other animals in the area in relation to the wombats. A 'water point', a bottomless closed wire cage was set up adjacent to the burrows and fitted with a wombat-sized 'cat-flap'. The area inside and around the cage was carefully swept. Food and water were placed inside and a camera recorded the nocturnal visits of intruders, while their footprints were indented in the sand. The habits of identified and named wombats were thus recorded, although wallabies, echidnas, rabbits and cats also turned up for the free repast.



**Left:** Alan Lane  
**Above:** A digital photo of a digital screen projection of an infra-red photo. This is tricky stuff!

The impression left by the photos shown by Virginia and Alan was of truckloads of excavated sand in two-metre-deep burrows, heavily networked. Hollow pipes (or portholes) driven into the ground, acting as inverted periscopes, were used to plot

directional changes in the burrows, some of which, Alan said, were decades old, and shared by the wombats with snakes, frogs, lizards, feral cats, wallabies and bettongs.

If the Northern Hairy-Nosed Wombat is to become decades older as a species, then Alan says that it needs to stave off any number of threats:

- climate change could upset the O<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> and humidity balance in the burrows;
- foxes may invade where there are none now at Epping;
- rampant ramboism of yobbos could be devastating;
- the burrows could be flooded by unusually high downpours;
- disease may strike. The mange which is spread by ticks and which is causing untold fatality among the common wombat groups across the country has not reached Epping. But it may!

There is good reason then why the caretaker program undertaken by Alan and Virginia needs wide support. In addition to the tasks reported in this article, Virginia said a one (or two) month stint as caretaker may involve slashing buffelgrass with a tractor, keeping solar generators operational, pumping water to the header tanks and signposting.

There is no experience necessary; however, a minimum of two people are needed for any one session, and one person needs to hold a current First Aid Certificate. The accommodation is bush hut style. The temperature may vary from 37 degrees to 8 degrees.

More information is available at:

[www.fourthcrossingwildlife.com/EppingCaretaker.htm](http://www.fourthcrossingwildlife.com/EppingCaretaker.htm) or you can email Alan Horsup at [alan.horsup@epa.qld.gov.au](mailto:alan.horsup@epa.qld.gov.au)

I trust that most of this article is crystal clear and that I have not badly wixed up my mombats.

**Won Rithington**

Virginia joined Alan Lane for four weeks in this 3000-hectare closed reserve in the task of observing, monitoring and protecting the remnant colony of some 100 wombats, with only 20 breeding females. The Park was formed in 1971 from two cattle properties, but grazing was not stopped until 1982 when there were only 35 wombats left. A succession of good seasons followed and numbers built up to around 100, before wild dogs attacked in 2001 and killed 10. The Park was only then fenced.

Some 18km of 3m-high fence now protects the colony which digs, dozes, eats roots and leaves among the soft sands of an ancient river bed. All of the animals reside in this one location of about 300 hectares. Elsewhere the heavy clays are not suitable for their burrowing fixation.

Alan and Virginia had the basic task of checking the fence regularly both against invasion by dingoes, and escape by the inmates which are the largest burrowing marsupials on the planet! And fiercely persistent. The task was also to record the tracks of other animals.

Dr Alan Horsup, of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, leads a team that is implementing the recovery plan for the Northern Hairy-Nosed Wombat. Alan and Virginia were fortunate that their period of stewardship coincided with his visit. As a result they found that their tasks focused very much on obtaining a photographic record of the nocturnal habits of an animal which is shy, very sensitive to vibrations and thus notoriously hard to find in the daylight. It burrows deep, and rests for fourteen hours, needing little water. Alan Horsup has said that they have the most incredible digestive system that retains all of the moisture. Their characteristic rhomboidal scat is four times drier than a camel's scat. They don't waste water!

Movement-sensitive cameras were focused on the 'runways'

Let's examine a few aspects of this question.

### *The OECD*

The thirty Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries include most western economies [USA, Canada, Mexico, European Union, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan] committed to the principles of representative democracy and a free market economy<sup>1</sup>. They aim for common environmental, social and economic policies consistent with sustainable development<sup>2</sup>. The OECD currently excludes significant economies such as China, India, Indonesia, Russia, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, South Africa, Israel and the middle-eastern oil-producing countries, although some of these belong to the group of regular 'observers' and hope to become full members<sup>1</sup>.

Despite high-sounding principles relating to representative democracy and sustainable development, economic self-interest was and still is the main driver. Indeed, self-interest focuses on ensuring first world countries' pre-eminence, whilst concurrently ensuring that rapidly expanding and aspirational economies become satellites and are embraced when deemed to 'share' OECD values. Or, less generously, when they are too much of a threat outside the OECD.

**The most disturbing aspect of all significant economies within and outside the OECD is that they are predicated upon economic growth; or sustainable growth if euphemisms appeal.**

### *Requirements for economic growth in a changing world*

Since at least the industrial revolution, growth or expansion of 'western-style' economies required a large body of consumers (internal and external to the country), a low-cost well-graded (in terms of skill-level) workforce, raw materials to 'feed the furnaces of industry', cheap energy resources (typically fossil fuels), and substantial food and water resources. But as labour-costs increased, further expansion came from exploiting colonial empires [cheap labour, cheap natural resources (including raw materials and some food-types), and an expanding body of external consumers] and then through mutually (but not always equally) beneficial agreements with Commonwealth countries in the case of the UK, and with residual empires and colonies for Germany, France, Spain and Portugal.

After World War II, the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (the forerunner to OECD) administered American and Canadian aid for reconstructing Europe<sup>3</sup>. Without belittling the importance of this to Europe, the North American economy was massively expanded through a captive demand for its products and much freer access to Africa, India and Oceania in terms of external consumers and natural resource inputs. Furthermore, the US' ongoing presence in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines and Korea ensured its beneficial expansion into East Asian economies<sup>4</sup>. War or so-called military intervention and peacekeeping activities 'in support of democracy', comprise economic and social colonisation that enhances external consumerism (particularly with respect to basic and more sophisticated weapons and weapons technology<sup>5</sup>) and gain access to natural resources<sup>4</sup>.

Over the past 10-20 years, growth of the Chinese, Indian and Southeast Asian economies has accompanied increasing emphasis on globalisation<sup>6</sup> and the economic, social and political roles of multinational/transnational corporations (M/TNCs)<sup>7,8,9</sup>. The latter have historically unprecedented power because some have budgets exceeding those of many countries<sup>6,8,10</sup>. Within this 'world economy', many countries or groups of countries have distinct roles<sup>10</sup>: Australia, South Africa, Canada, Brazil – exporters of finite natural resources<sup>11</sup> coupled with declining and/or locally oriented manufacturing industries; the 13 oil producing and exporting countries comprising OPEC<sup>12</sup>; China, India, Korea, Southeast Asia, Central America – the

world's current 'factories' based on exploiting large work-forces through long hours, low wages and poor social services; USA, EU, Japan – high-wage mixed economies with strong financial- and service-based sectors and static or declining manufacturing industries; sub-Saharan Africa – poor and becoming poorer!

Despite the theoretical benefits of globalisation, powerful states and M/TNCs, financial institutions and their investors have benefited, whereas the social needs of poorer countries and 'workers' have been treated as incidental or secondary<sup>6,13,14</sup>. The champagne glass effect<sup>15</sup> is alive and well; the richest 1% of adults owned 40% of global wealth, the richest 10% accounted for 85%, yet the poorest 50% owned barely 1%<sup>16</sup>.

**Although global economic growth continues and is accelerating<sup>17</sup>, benefits are inequitably distributed between rich and poor countries, and between rich and poor adults, and this disparity is apparently worsening. Yet within a global context, increasing market penetration (promoting consumerism), exploiting workforces and/or finite resources in suitably endowed countries, and maintaining food and water supplies remain paramount needs. In short, a free market will always have winners, losers and 'also rans'.**

### *Population growth, carrying capacity and ecological footprint*

In February 2008, the world's population reached 6.65 billion<sup>18</sup>. Despite growth rates peaking in 1962 and the annual change in total population peaking in 1988-9, a population of about 9.5 billion is predicted by 2050<sup>19</sup>.

Malthus<sup>20</sup> stated that population increased as a geometric function, whereas food increased at an arithmetic rate. Thus, in the absence of natural impediments and a range of behaviours including birth control, population must inevitably outstrip food supply and thereby exceed the world's carrying capacity<sup>21</sup>. He implied that overpopulation would be partly countered by agricultural improvements, but that population imbalance would lead to famine, war and enhanced social disadvantage.

Ehrlich<sup>22</sup> extended Malthus' thinking, but the magnitude of famine (as predicted in 1968) was not realised, partly due to contraceptive and agricultural advances, and possibly because the predictions caused the western world to wake up. Ehrlich said in 2004 "...starvation has been less extensive than I ... expected. But it's still horrific, with some 600 million people very hungry and billions under- or malnourished"<sup>23</sup>.

Trewavas<sup>24</sup>, although noting 800 million people were undernourished in 2002 and that by 2025 this should drop to about 600 million (mainly in sub-Saharan Africa), contends that population-increases drive agricultural improvements. He suggests that this will continue until the world's population **equally** enjoys an abundant food supply. Sounds like Utopia and implies a limitless carrying capacity!

**In reality, the first world squanders food and faces an obesity epidemic, whereas the third world suffers malnutrition and starvation. This is 'dying proof' of the first world rejecting the costs of transporting food to, and implementing agricultural research in, the needy third world.**

In its simplest form, carrying capacity is reached if humans neither gain nor lose weight and the quantity of food is constant<sup>21</sup>. However, neither the number of humans<sup>18,19</sup> nor their needs<sup>23,24</sup> are constant. China's economic growth is 10-12% per year<sup>17</sup>, its forecast population will exceed 1.5 billion by 2050, yet a 37% decline in its food production will eventuate, thereby straining the world's carrying capacity and inducing environmental impacts<sup>24</sup>.

Consideration of broader environmental impacts involves ecological footprint analysis, which attempts to compare humanity's consumption of natural resources with the Earth's capacity to sustain it<sup>25</sup>. In 2003, humanity's footprint overshoot the sustainable capacity by about 25% (effectively meaning that it takes one year and three months to produce what 'we' use in

one year), and by 2050 the forecast overshoot will be 100%<sup>26, 27</sup>.

**The bottom line: humanity is living unsustainably and inequitably, and the situation is worsening.**

### ***The impact of climate change***

Three comments place economic growth, developing- and third-world aspirations, and greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) in perspective.

'Right-thinking' economists refuse to countenance 'limits to growth'. They believe market forces and technological advancement will overcome limiting factors so that the world's population can pursue and achieve unending improvements in its standard of living<sup>17</sup>.

*"It is neither desirable nor remotely feasible to seek to remove environmental pressures through diminution of the aspirations of the world's people for higher material standards of living. The challenge is to end the linkage between economic growth and emissions of greenhouse gases"*<sup>28</sup>.

*"If the world can achieve such a feat it will rival the Seven Wonders of the World combined. If we can't, the globe will have hit its limits to growth"*<sup>17</sup>.

'Business as usual' (BAU) involves world economic growth of at least 3% per annum<sup>29</sup> through to 2050, heavy dependence on fossil fuels, and a population approaching 9.5 billion. Competition will increase for such things as oil, natural gas, coal, base metals, agricultural land, krill, fish and whale resources, and water. Biodiversity will inevitably decrease<sup>30</sup>. Escalating trade wars between T/MNCs and countries, as is currently happening between Rio Tinto, BHP and China over coal<sup>31</sup>, will enhance inflation and perpetuate inequity. Conflict over ownership of oil, gas and other resources in the Arctic already exists between Russia and Norway, and will inevitably draw in the US, Canada and Denmark (through Greenland and the Faeroe Islands)<sup>32</sup>. Overlapping territorial claims in Antarctica will similarly be a source of international conflict, drawing in the UK, Chile, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand<sup>33</sup>. These are just a few examples, but they are all symptomatic of the greed consuming 'civilized' nations in their rush to possess oil, power and territory in order to perpetuate an unsustainable lifestyle<sup>34</sup>.

If economic growth, market forces and technological advancement (i.e. BAU) are perpetuating inter- and intra-national inequity, inducing global conflict due to competition for natural resources, and causing losses of agricultural land and biodiversity, can and will anthropogenic climate change make things worse? The short answer is yes!

Under BAU, global emissions are predicted to accelerate from the present value of ~30 Gt CO<sub>2</sub> to at least 85 Gt by 2050<sup>28</sup>. The generally recognised target concentration of around 450 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>-e in the atmosphere, beyond which there is a high risk of dangerously irreversible climate change, has possibly been reached<sup>35</sup>. Rises in global mean surface temperature and sea level since 1990 are tracking or exceeding IPCC predictions, the CO<sub>2</sub>-absorptive capacities of oceans and biosphere are falling more rapidly than anticipated, and due to the lag between cause (emissions' increases) and effect (their consequences), the unexpectedly high emissions' levels since 2000 have yet to be felt<sup>28</sup>. By 2100, temperatures could be 3-6°C above 1990-2000 levels<sup>28, 35</sup>. The primary and secondary consequences of global warming are well documented (e.g.<sup>28, 36, 37</sup>) and will not be repeated here. However, their threat to the world's economy and current 'civilization' has spawned the Kyoto agreement, the IPCC reports, the UNCC Convention in Bali<sup>38</sup> and the Garnaut interim report<sup>28</sup>, all aimed at mitigating global warming and adapting to its effects<sup>39</sup>.

**Two considerations arise. First, is it too late for climate-change mitigation and, if not, do the long-term political wills and the altruistic capacities to forego national self-interest exist? Second, in focusing on mitigation and adaptation are we disregarding the preexisting and still worsening problems of the world's increasing economic growth and population explosion?**

These will be addressed in the next section.

### ***Can mitigation work?***

Despite atmospheric emissions already exceeding the threshold concentration of around 450 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>-e<sup>35</sup> (i.e. the level at which the risk of severe climate-change impacts radically increases<sup>28</sup>), and despite there being little likelihood of either stabilising emissions by 2015, or limiting the global mean temperature increase to 2°C above 1990-2000 levels<sup>40</sup>, it is not too late for globally orchestrated mitigation. This is because of uncertainties linked to climate modelling and the impacts of carbon cycle feedbacks<sup>40</sup>, and simply because mitigation provides the only chance of avoiding the effects of irreversible catastrophic climate change that cannot be modelled and are beyond human experience<sup>28</sup>.

**Mitigation must be the first and principal line of defence, while concurrent adaptation must be the second line of defence to compensate for 'too-little-too-late' mitigation**<sup>39</sup>.

Are politicians and nations sufficiently altruistic to agree on a global mitigation program? The history of climate negotiations does not inspire optimism.

In 1992, world leaders pledged to avoid dangerous climate change by signing the non-binding UN Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>40</sup>. Next came the legally binding Kyoto agreement that was opened for signature in 1998, did not come into force until 2005 and terminates in 2012. Many countries are failing to meet their relatively conservative obligations under the Kyoto agreement, while others are barely on track<sup>40</sup>. In the 16 years since the pledge to avoid dangerous climate change, global emissions have increased by around 22%, the highest levels of CO<sub>2</sub> since dinosaurs roamed the earth<sup>40</sup>. The 2007 Bali Convention claimed a major breakthrough because the US made concessions, but the 'road map' was more about the way forward in future meetings than about binding emissions-targets<sup>38</sup>. The agreement avoided hard issues such as global limits on emissions, interim emissions targets, emissions trading mechanisms, the budgetary contributions for mitigation from first-, developing- and third-world countries, and immediate action versus deferral to later talkfests. As in Garnaut<sup>28</sup>, countries emphasise cutting global emissions, but still focus on minimising impacts on their own economies and natural assets, inevitably to the detriment of others. Yet this is hardly surprising given the endemic materialism of 'throw away' societies, the 'I-want-I-vote' philosophy, the frequency of elections, and the unashamedly selfish stances adopted by Federal governments in the US and Australia<sup>41</sup>.

**In contemporary debate between those responsible for past emissions, those now causing emissions' escalation, and those with nothing but hope, neither politicians nor nations show a humanitarian commitment to global-warming mitigation.**

Could it be that the focus on global warming is blinding us to more fundamental problems? Sustainable Population Australia Inc. argues that emissions are in lockstep with growth in economic activity and population<sup>42</sup>. Gittins similarly states:<sup>17</sup> *"The three main drivers of global emissions are population growth, economic growth and technological change"*.

Some technological changes involve various forms of emissions' mitigation. They typically comprise reducing energy use and switching to cleaner energy sources. Examples include increasing the fuel efficiency of vehicles, individual-lifestyle changes, cleaner energy sources, emissions trading taxes and carbon sequestration<sup>43</sup>. Despite these mitigation aspects, technological change also includes the progressive spread of industrialisation (particularly to Japan, Korea, India and China) that has contributed enormously to emissions' growth in the late 20th and early 21st centuries<sup>17, 28</sup>. To date, emissions' growth substantially exceeds mitigation capacity. This implies that population reduction and changing the economic 'growth-is-good' paradigm are the principal options for global emissions' mitigation. But how may this be achieved?

To the extent that the total fertility rate increases exponentially as a function of decreasing GDP per capita<sup>44</sup>, a case exists for greatly increasing the GDP of third-world countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa. But this is

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7)

countermanded by the benefits of growth disproportionately flowing to first- and developing-world countries, and the increased global emissions due to perpetuation of the 'growth-is-good' paradigm.

**It follows that successful emissions' mitigation must concurrently involve shrinking the world's population to a realistic carrying capacity<sup>45</sup>, rejecting 'growth is good', and redistributing the world's wealth.**

Any of the three would be rejected by most governments and nations (with the possible exception of third-world countries in relation to wealth redistribution). Advocating the three together could spawn accusations of extreme idealism or even madness. Yet isn't it equally mad to pursue courses of action that compromise humanity's very existence?

### ***Is a sustainable future possible?***

The Stern<sup>46</sup> and the Garnaut<sup>28</sup> reports neither reject the economic 'growth-is-good' paradigm, nor take a stand on population growth. Instead, they rely on mitigation and adaptation within the framework of global and national emissions trading schemes subject to market forces within a 'free market'<sup>47</sup>. Perhaps because of their terms of reference, they effectively accept the inequitable distribution of global wealth and the adverse impacts that 'our' lifestyles (the ones to which the world's poor are aspiring) and populations are having on biodiversity. Instead, there is a focus on how to turn things to the particular country's advantage. Some will inevitably say that looking for advantage is human nature or Darwinism at work, but Darwinism is also about evolving to a higher level! Thus, according to Costanza<sup>48</sup>:

*"The most critical task facing humanity ... is the creation of a shared vision of a sustainable and desirable society; one that can provide permanent prosperity ... in a way that is fair and equitable to all of humanity, to other species, and to future generations."*

Most governments and nations pay lip service to Costanza's ideal, but it does not translate into practice. Governments are loath to face the issues despite warnings that: "...the long-term sustainability of civilization will require not just a levelling-off of human numbers as projected over the coming half-century, but a colossal reduction in both population and consumption."<sup>45</sup>, and that humanity's challenge involves "...the need to confront our continued irrational push for unending growth on a finite earth. The emphasis is on population growth and corporate economic growth as they interact with resource consumption rates and our reliance on fossil energy", thereby "pushing us toward global ecological collapse"<sup>45</sup>. Similarly, although recognising the urgent need to mitigate emissions, governments evince greed-based procrastination and fear of too adversely impacting their economies. The need for global acceptance of mitigation measures will mean that any agreed targets will involve lower level compromises and be too late.

The consequences will be rising emissions and worsening impacts of global warming, increases in population and consumption through failure to address the 'growth-is-good' paradigm, substantial decreases in biodiversity and, as competition for natural resources intensifies, exploitation and the inequitable distribution of wealth between and within countries will magnify. Toss in a few wars and disease and this could be the foreseeable future. A far cry from Costanza's notions of sustainability!

So is a sustainable future possible? Only if populations and global warming emissions are progressively reduced, economic growth and rampant consumerism are curtailed within a fully controlled market, global wealth is proactively reapportioned such that standards of living are averaged down with third-world countries gaining at the expense of the first- and developing-worlds, and democratic government is superseded (unless you believe in the innate capacity of humans to vote for the common good rather than personal advantage).

### **Oh! And it may help to believe in the tooth fairy!**

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OECD>  
2 <http://www.environment.gov.au/commitments/occd/index.html>  
3 <http://www.dfat.gov.au/occd/>  
4 The Iraq wars have similarly generated 'captive' markets with the US as the beneficiary; and then there is oil!  
5 Not just in the 'colonised' country but also in the broader region as power-balances are disturbed and 'pre-emptive strike' doctrines are deemed justifiable.  
6 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization> - see sections 2, 5, 6  
7 <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=1006012405962>  
8 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multinational\\_corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multinational_corporation)  
9 [www.alhr.asn.au/html/documents/OECD\\_ME\\_Guide\\_0403.html](http://www.alhr.asn.au/html/documents/OECD_ME_Guide_0403.html)  
10 These involve sweeping simplifications  
11 Metallic minerals, coal, gas  
12 Current members of OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) are Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela  
13 [http://jwsr.ucr.edu/archive/vol9/number\\_1/pdf/jwsr-v9n1-herkenborn.pdf](http://jwsr.ucr.edu/archive/vol9/number_1/pdf/jwsr-v9n1-herkenborn.pdf) - see p105  
14 Wade, Robert Hunter. 'The Rising Inequality of World Income Distribution', Finance & Development, Vol 38, No 4 December 2001  
15 Gorostiaga, Xabier. 'World has become a 'champagne glass' - globalization will fill it fuller for a wealthy few', National Catholic Reporter, Jan 27, 1995  
16 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2006/dec/06/business.internationalnews>  
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18 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\\_population](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population)  
19 <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/worldpopinfo.html>  
20 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Malthus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Malthus)  
21 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrying\\_capacity#Possible\\_expansion\\_of\\_carrying\\_capacity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrying_capacity#Possible_expansion_of_carrying_capacity)  
22 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul\\_R.\\_Ehrlich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_R._Ehrlich)  
23 <http://www.grist.org/comments/interactivist/2004/08/09/ehrllich/index1.html>  
24 <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v418/n6898/full/nature01013.html>  
25 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological\\_footprint#\\_note-17](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological_footprint#_note-17)  
26 [http://www.footprintnetwork.org/gfn\\_sub.php?content=footprint\\_overview](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/gfn_sub.php?content=footprint_overview)  
27 [http://www.footprintnetwork.org/newsletters/gfn\\_blast\\_0610.html](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/newsletters/gfn_blast_0610.html)

28 [http://www.garnautreview.org.au/CA25734E0016A131/WebObj/GarnautClimateChangeReviewInterimReport-Feb08/\\$File/Garnaut%20Climate%20Change%20Review%20Interim%20Report%20-%20Feb%202008.pdf](http://www.garnautreview.org.au/CA25734E0016A131/WebObj/GarnautClimateChangeReviewInterimReport-Feb08/$File/Garnaut%20Climate%20Change%20Review%20Interim%20Report%20-%20Feb%202008.pdf)  
29 But much higher growth rates of up to 12% (China) and 9% (India) per annum cited in Gittins17 after Garnaut28  
30 <http://www.greenfacts.org/en/global-biodiversity-outlook/#4>  
31 <http://business.smh.com.au/ore-dispute-rio-hostility-escalates-in-china/20080320-20r1.html>  
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35 <http://uk.reuters.com/article/oilRpt/idUKSYD29548220071009> - Michael Perry citing Tim Flannery (N.B. this article has been disputed & is, at the very least, controversial.)  
36 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effects\\_of\\_global\\_warming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effects_of_global_warming)  
37 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPCC\\_Fourth\\_Assessment\\_Report](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPCC_Fourth_Assessment_Report)  
38 [http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop\\_13/items/4049.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_13/items/4049.php)  
39 Mitigation reduces the amount of global warming through emissions reduction, whereas adaptation reduces vulnerability to the negative consequences and enhances positive aspects  
40 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7135836.stm> - December 10 2007  
41 At least until the 2007 Australian Federal election - whether the new government thinks globally or expediently remains to be seen. The US election is an unknown quantity.  
42 Sustainable Population Australia Inc. 'Greenhouse gas emissions grow in lockstep with growth in economic activity and population', Pamphlet DL11/2007, www.population.org.au  
43 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitigation\\_of\\_global\\_warming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitigation_of_global_warming)  
44 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Fertility\\_rate.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Fertility_rate.jpg)  
45 <http://growthmadness.org/2007/07/13/global-population-reduction-confronting-the-inevitable/>  
46 [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent\\_reviews/stern\\_review\\_economics\\_climate\\_change/stern\\_review\\_report.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/stern_review_report.cfm)  
47 'Free market' is commonly misused in that most countries have 'mixed markets' with varying degrees of government intervention - an emissions trading scheme with a set carbon price is clearly interventionist.  
48 Costanza, Robert - cited in <sup>42</sup>.

## Capertee Valley tree planting in 2008

This year's Capertee Valley tree planting weekends will be on 3-4 May and 16-17 August. Volunteers are needed to help us replace habitat for the endangered Regent Honeyeater and other woodland species. The May planting will be on a property on Crown Station Road which will link and expand nearby habitat (which is also a good site for Turquoise Parrots and a variety of honeyeaters). It's always a great weekend - the Saturday night dinner being a highlight and there's usually the opportunity to join others in a birdwatching session on the Sunday.

If interested, please register in advance so that you can be allocated accommodation and sent directions to the planting site. To register, contact Tiffany Mason on email [Tiffany.Mason@cma.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Tiffany.Mason@cma.nsw.gov.au) or phone 6350 3115.

Carol Proberts



**It's planting time!** *Autumn* is the best time to plant and our nurseries have good stocks of ground-covers, climbers, rockery plants, shrubs and trees to suit all areas and all situations.

So come along to Blackheath on Tuesday mornings, Lawson on Wednesday mornings, or the next Magpie Markets at Lawson Public School on Sunday 20th April. Remember, members pay only \$2 for tubestock, the lowest price in the Mountains!

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager  
4787 6436, [khsbell@pnc.com.au](mailto:khsbell@pnc.com.au)

## WILDLIFE PROTECTION

*Do you think that native wildlife needs more protection in the Blue Mountains?*

Here is your big chance to put your ideas forward and contribute to the regulation of companion animals that predate upon native fauna, especially when they become stray or feral animals.

**A draft Companion Animals Management Plan and a draft Local Orders Policy - Order 18 Keeping of Animals policy are now on public exhibition until 16<sup>th</sup> April.**

Copies can be obtained from the Council office or online at [www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au).

**Submissions will be accepted until 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008.**

The Companion Animals Plan and the Keeping of Animals Policy complement each other and will significantly improve animal management in the mountains. All kinds of animals are included such as sheep, goats, pet rabbits, etc.

Send a letter to Council and include any of these points:-

- ✎ Support for the principles of both documents.
- ✎ Support for the introduction of Wildlife Protection Areas (WPAs)- please suggest any bushland reserves or parks.
- ✎ A request that cats and dogs be prohibited in all WPAs.
- ✎ A request that stray animals in WPAs are trapped by Rangers and taken to the pound - other Councils do this.
- ✎ Suggest dog off-leash areas are in urban parks, not in bushland.
- ✎ A request for Council to record ALL complaints about cats, including unidentified cats or those observed killing wildlife, spraying, defecating, etc.
- ✎ Suggest incentives to encourage de-sexing of pets.
- ✎ Stress the importance of education to encourage responsible cat ownership. Council does not have any powers of enforcement under the *Companion Animal Act 1998*, so the voluntary co-operation of cat owners is necessary. If you want more information about this Act, it is accessible online, just select relevant sections.

Both documents refer to data about complaints and trend analysis of orders issued in regard to pets. This data is inaccurate because Council only records and acts upon complaints about identified cats (i.e. the identity of the owner is known) and cats that have been seen attacking or killing wildlife, defecating etc. A report to Council about animal complaints fails to specify the number of cat complaints (see Business Papers for 11/3/08) False conclusions can be drawn from this inaccurate data about pets.



Meredith Brownhill

## La Niña and her tears

On a cool day such as we had ad infinitum this summer, the Interpretive Walkers took a stroll down towards the edge of the Grose. The air felt cleansed. Okay, we were a little sick of the rain, but the plants weren't. Everything was flowering, including the *Xanthorrhoea* with their magnificent javelin-like spikes, which were covered in sticky light green flowers. There were several types of orchids, *Lobelia dentata* (which looks just like a fleur-de-lis, in bright purple with a white throat), lots of butterflies, a mysterious re-growing plant finally identified as geebung, *Goodenia* - and at the cliff edge, streams pouring out and down. This is a water-body at its most balletic - the Scottish term 'leap' to describe it, so resonant of the impulse. (Govett's Leap refers to that, not to a man jumping off a cliff).

All this life - but I was thinking about tragic death, when Jenny told us what the coroner's verdict in the U.S. was. I wrote this poem:

### VALE HEATH LEDGER

These are not  
six drugs:  
flowers, birds,  
grasses, understorey plants,  
ducklings...and the wind.

Diana Levy

## Great River Walk

An enjoyable walk along the Nepean River and a good one for birdwatchers, Stage 2 of the Penrith section of the Great River Walk was completed in February 2008. The Master Plan for the Penrith component of the Great River Walk stretches from the M4 Motorway Bridge to Penrith Lakes and over the next two years will become a continuous link for cyclists and pedestrians from Tench Reserve through to Cassola Place.

In keeping with a world wide trend for leisure trails, the Penrith section is part of a bigger plan inspired by the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Trust to raise awareness of the need to care for and suitably manage the region's most important natural resource. The Great River Walk is planned to extend 570 km along the length of the Hawkesbury Nepean River, from the estuary at Broken Bay to its source in the Southern Highlands and ultimately to Canberra, the national capital.

For more information on the Great River Walk, phone 1300 736 836. (Source: *Penrith City Community News*).

Christine Davies

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalkers' Guide, which explains the Grades (#), and the Spring Program can be found on the Society's website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) or will be posted on request. For further information contact Walks Convener, David Bowskill 4757 3416, email [bushwalks@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:bushwalks@bluemountains.org.au), or by mail at PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

**Before attending a bushwalk, please discuss the walk with the leader or group co-ordinator (listed below). This is essential if this is your first walk or you are unsure of the classification.**

**MONDAY LEISURE WALKS:** 'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours, for those of average fitness. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Co-ordinator: Norm Harris (4784 1554).

Apr-14	<b>Mt Piddington, Pulpit Rock, Mt Vic (2)</b> <i>Views over Kanimbla Valley.</i>	<b>Marie</b> 4787 1257	<b>Mt Victoria Station</b>	<b>9.00am</b>
Apr-21	<b>Florabella Pass, Blaxland (2)</b> <i>Old mountains track.</i>	<b>Heather</b> 4739 1493	<b>Warrimoo Station</b>	<b>9.15am</b>
Apr-28	<b>Bruce's Walk, Wentworth Falls (3)</b> <i>Old track between Wentworth Falls &amp; Lawson.</i>	<b>Ron</b> 4757 1526	<b>Stockyard Carpark, Went. Falls</b>	<b>8.45am</b>
May-5	<b>Roberts Pass to Wentworth Falls (3)</b> <i>Historic mountain track.</i>	<b>Phil</b> 4787 5560	<b>Stockyard Carpark, Went. Falls</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
May-12	<b>Bellbird Hill, Megalong (2)</b> <i>Classic mountain valleys.</i>	<b>Ron</b> 4757 1526	<b>Blackheath Station carpark</b>	<b>9.15am</b>
May-19	<b>BUS TRIP to Mt. Airlie (2)</b> <i>View over Capertee Valley. Leader: Heather. Fare \$12 when booking with Birgitta.</i>	<b>Birgitta</b> 4784 3191	<b>Bus Depot, South St., Katoomba</b>	<b>8.30am</b>

**THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS:** Walks conducted to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, lunch if noted & adequate water. Group Co-ordinator: Simone Bowskill (4757 3416, [simbow@tpg.com.au](mailto:simbow@tpg.com.au)).

Apr-17	<b>Florabella Pass (2)</b> <i>Walk to Glenbrook Creek. Some steps and steep in places</i>	<b>Maurice</b> 4739 4942	<b>Warrimoo Station (N side of GWH)</b>	<b>9.20am</b>
Apr 24	<b>Bus trip: West Head, Mackerel Beach (2)</b> <i>Cost \$12, for bookings, phone Phil.</i>	<b>Phil</b> 4787 5560	<b>Bus Depot, South St., Katoomba</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
May 1	<b>Witches Leap and Furber steps (2)</b> <i>Descend into rainforest, then follow the boardwalk and return via the</i>	<b>Joan c/o</b> 4782 5966	<b>Gearins Hotel, Katoomba</b>	<b>9.30am</b>
May 8	<b>Lyrebird Dell (2)</b> <i>Some steep descents and ascents on good tracks.</i>	<b>Joan c/o</b> 4782 5966	<b>Cnr. Leura Mall &amp; Megalong St.</b>	<b>9.45am</b>
May 15	<b>Tesselated Pavement, Mt Irvine (2)</b> <i>Extensive sandstone platforms with spectacular views.</i>	<b>John</b> 4757 1558	<b>Mt Vic Station (to carpool)</b>	<b>9.50am</b>

**WEEKEND WALKS:** Usually full day, longer walks at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Before attending, contact the leader or Group Co-ordinator, Jim Percy (4758 6009, [jp34@tpg.com.au](mailto:jp34@tpg.com.au)).

Apr-12	<b>Federal Pass (3)</b> (Local Saturday walk) <i>Completed in 1900 to connect Katoomba Falls to Leura Falls. (This walk does the Leura end of the walk and was cancelled Jan 20 last because of rain.)</i>	<b>Ron</b> 4757 1526	<b>Leura Station carpark</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
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**Apr-12-15 WEEKEND SPECIAL: Coolah Tops** **Meredith** 4782 4823 **Phone leader by April 1 to arrange transport**  
*Coolah Tops boasts a number of delightful camping areas with a number of walks available - mostly short and easy to quite spectacular lookouts and waterfalls and a more adventurous walk to the Basalt Caves (Grades 1, 2 and 3).*

Apr-19	<b>Gooches Crater (3)</b> <i>Spectacular natural formation in need of protection - just inside the National Park but threatened by close mining. 10km, all on track but some scrambling &amp; rough sections.</i>	<b>Bill</b> 4758 8545	<b>Mt Victoria Station carpark</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
Apr-26	<b>Turpentine Track, Woodford (3)</b> <i>Turpentine Track to Murphy's Glen and Bedford Creek. 10km, all on track but some scrambling &amp; rough sections.</i>	<b>Bob</b> 4757 2694	<b>Woodford Station carpark</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
May-3	<b>Wentworth Falls to Blackheath (4)</b> <i>Crossing of the Blue Mountains of NSW-Day 5: the continuation of Bruces Walk. Highlights include the Old Coach Rd, Pt Pilcher Lookout &amp; the Grand Canyon. 17km, all on track but some rough, overgrown sections &amp; creek crossings.</i>	<b>Jim</b> 4758 6009	<b>Wentworth Falls Station carpark</b>	<b>8.35am</b>
May-10	<b>Glenbrook Gorge (3)</b> <i>Tunnel View Lookout, Mt Portal, Euroka Clearing, Causeway. 12km, all on track, some scrambling &amp; rough sections.</i>	<b>Ros</b> 4733 3880	<b>Glenbrook Station carpark</b>	<b>8.30am</b>
May-17	<b>Sixfoot Track (3)</b> <i>Megalong Crossing to Coxs River and beyond. Approx. 12km, all on track, long climb back up.</i>	<b>Bill</b> 4758 8545	<b>Blackheath Station carpark</b>	<b>8.15am</b>

### Welcome to our new members...

Bob Foster & Denise Thorpe—Wentworth Falls  
 Peter & Kerry Herborn—Warrimoo  
 Frans Timmerman & Anitra Nelson—Katoomba  
 Warren & Susan Westcott—Blackheath  
 Peter & Dianne Johnston—Blackheath  
 Lois Miles—Katoomba  
 Dorothy Meldrum—Mt Victoria  
 Chris McGillion—Wentworth Falls  
 Maris Thomas—Faulconbridge

Caye Thomas—Wentworth Falls  
 Ms Winters—Wentworth Falls  
 Neil Greenaway—Lawson  
 Wendy Monaghan—Bullaburra  
 Helen Kinsella—Springwood

### MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

**Ilan Salbe** 4759 2372  
[membership@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)  
 PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782