



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Sunset Get-together

THURSDAY, 25th February, 7 pm
at the CONSERVATION HUT, Wentworth Falls



Have you joined the Society recently and would like to meet other members?

Are you a long-standing member who would like to get to know and exchange ideas with some of our newer recruits?

Are you thinking about joining the Society, but would like to know more about it?

Then this special evening is for you.

You are invited to join us over a cuppa and share one of the best sunset views to be had in our glorious Blue Mountains. (The views are fantastic, even without a sunset!)

Meet old and new friends ... meet some of the Society's management committee and find out what they have been doing over the past year; find out how you can get involved.

The Conservation Hut is in the Blue Mountains National Park at the end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls.

BLUE MOUNTAINS BAT NIGHT 2016



**FRIDAY, 11th MARCH
FROM 6.30 PM
NPWS Heritage Centre
Blackheath
FREE EVENT
ALL WELCOME**

Come and learn everything you wanted to know about these creatures of the night. There will be talks, walks and fun activities for adults and children of all ages; learn about flying foxes and our elusive microbats.

Discovery Rangers will help spot the microbats chasing their dinner. There'll be walks listening for bats and spotting other wildlife on the way. Bring a torch. There'll be a range of speakers including local ecologist Marg Turton, and Flying Fox Guru, Tim Pearson.

The Bat Cave will be running children's activities, craft, mask-making and temporary tattoos. There will be bat T-shirts for sale, and if you get hungry with all this activity, there will be a sausage sizzle provided by Blackheath/Mt Victoria RFS.

Come along any time between 6:30 – 9:00pm all weather, no booking is necessary. Bring the family; dress in costume. There's something for everyone on the night. This event is supported by Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Blue Mountains City Council, NSW National Parks, and the Australasian Bat Society. Enquiries NPWS (02) 4787 8877.

AGM

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut on **Thursday 31 March, 2016**, followed by a general meeting with a guest speaker. More information in March Hut News.

FEATURE DOCUMENTARY BLACK HOLE

**Transforming a Forest
into a Coal Mine**

BLACK HOLE is an intensely riveting exposé of the ongoing battle to save the last of an endangered woodland forest from being cleared to make way to one of the largest open cut coal mines in production in Australia.

The Leard State Forest has stunning old growth box-gum woodland and is considered a national biodiversity hotspot. In total the mines would turn 3500 hectares of forest into an open-cut mine pit.

The campaign to save it is a piece of Australian history, being spoken in the same breath as iconic environmental campaigns in Australian history, such as the Franklin River Blockade in Tasmania, and the Jabiluka Uranium Mine Blockade in the Northern Territory.

It has galvanised people from all spectrums of Australian society and further afield.

The documentary will be shown at **Mt Vic Flicks on Tuesday 16 February at 6.30 pm**. Tickets \$20 online at <https://tugg.com.au/black-hole/>

NSW container deposit scheme discussion paper

The NSW Government is inviting public comments on developing a container deposit scheme for NSW.

Container deposit schemes use rewards to encourage people to return their drink containers to a collection point. They reward environmentally responsible behaviour, reduce drink container pollution and increase recycling.

The Government has released a discussion paper that outlines the key elements of a scheme and presents two possible models.

Submissions are invited until **Friday 26 February**. Read more on page 10.

"Hut News", the newsletter of
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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
 ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
 20 FEBRUARY 2016**

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MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

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 or write to
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Nursery News

The nursery is open again after the Christmas break. All the plants are thriving with the wet summer we have had. Our stock has never looked better and we have plenty to choose from.

We have popular favourites like Waratahs and Mountain Devils (*Lambertia formosa*) and climbers such as Clematis and Hardenbergia. There is a range of different wattles including *Acacia fimbriata*, recently mentioned on 'Gardening Australia' as an ideal plant for hedging. A new release this month is the Native Frangipani (*Hymenosporum flavum*) with its attractive bell-shaped flowers and fragrant perfume. But you'll have to be quick!

Sue Nicol, Nursery Manager.
nursery@bluemountains.org.au



Hymenosporum flavum,
 P Vaughan,
<http://anpsa.org.au/h-fla.html>

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

Our nursery offers the home gardener, landscaper or large contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

Lawson Nursery, Wednesday and Saturday mornings, 9am to noon.

The nursery is located in the Lawson Industrial Area on the corner of Park and Cascade Streets - see map on our website
www.bluemountains.org.au).

Blackheath Community Market, 1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm.

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm.
 Tube stock \$3. Larger pots available.

Discounts for bulk orders and large contracts.

Enquiries Sue Nicol 4787 8887, nursery@bluemountains.org.au

Apprentice male Satin Bowerbirds Robin Murray

I have been lucky enough to have a mature male Satin Bowerbird establish a bower in my garden. The bower was built on 26 November 2014.

I noticed that there seemed to be two immature males at the bower and a mature male. The immature males were seen more frequently than the mature male although all three were seen at the bower at the same time on occasions. When I talked to two other people who have bowers in their garden we realised that we all had immature apprentice males working at the bowers in our gardens.

The immature males I saw were green with white bills and no sign of blue feathers as yet. By the end of May the immature apprentice males were not seen again at any of the three bowers and two out of three bowers were rebuilt in different positions in the same garden. My bower became an immaculate and impressive structure.

I believe that I once again have at least one apprentice working at the bower in my garden as it is not such an immaculate structure and an immature male has been seen at the bower.

If anyone with a bower in their garden has noticed this I would be keen to know if they also have apprentices at their bower.

(Please email Robin at rmurray47@bigpond.com, or write to Hut News, BMCS, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.)

Western Sydney Airport – Society EIS Submission

The No Western Sydney Airport Sub-Committee put together a comprehensive Submission on the WSA Environmental Impact Statement, a total of 79 pages. You can download it here: http://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/submissions/BMCS_WSA_Draft_EIS_Submission.pdf

So what did we find in the EIS? What errors did we find? What omissions did we find? ... How much space do I have in this newsletter? Here are a just few points:

Incorrect and contradictory emissions figures discovered and reported by our subcommittee were changed **while** the EIS was on public exhibition.

The airport is to have no curfew, no rail link, and no fuel pipeline. Aircraft take offs and landings will be over protected water catchment, Blue Mountains World Heritage national parks, or lower Blue Mountains townships. Noise impacts are dismissed. There will be significant light pollution, visible for many kilometres.

The EIS claims the Airport will produce 130,000 tonnes of CO2-e in the year 2030, but they arrived at this figure **by leaving out the Aircraft emissions!** The real figure is 2,634,000 tonnes, rising to 21 million tonnes by 2063.

The Airport site is surrounded by critical infrastructure that could be affected in the event of an Aircraft crash, including: Warragamba Dam and Lake Burragorang, Prospect reservoir and water filtration plant, water supply pipelines and canals, multiple electricity transmission lines, the western railway line, the M4 and M7 motorways, and many thousands of homes.

The EIS states that exposure to diesel during construction and nitrogen dioxide during operation will

kill some people over 30, between 6 every 10 years and 6 every 100 years.

Bird and Bat surveys at the site were done in just 2 days, with no nocturnal studies, no migratory bird studies, and no studies inside the nearby National Park. Vegetation studies missed the presence of known pockets of endangered species, as the survey was done **from a car**. Offsets to compensate for Cumberland Plain Woodland being destroyed are offered in **existing reserves!**

The airport risks release into our World Heritage National Parks of biosecurity pests, including diseases and several aggressive species of ants which have been accidentally released from other airports around the world.

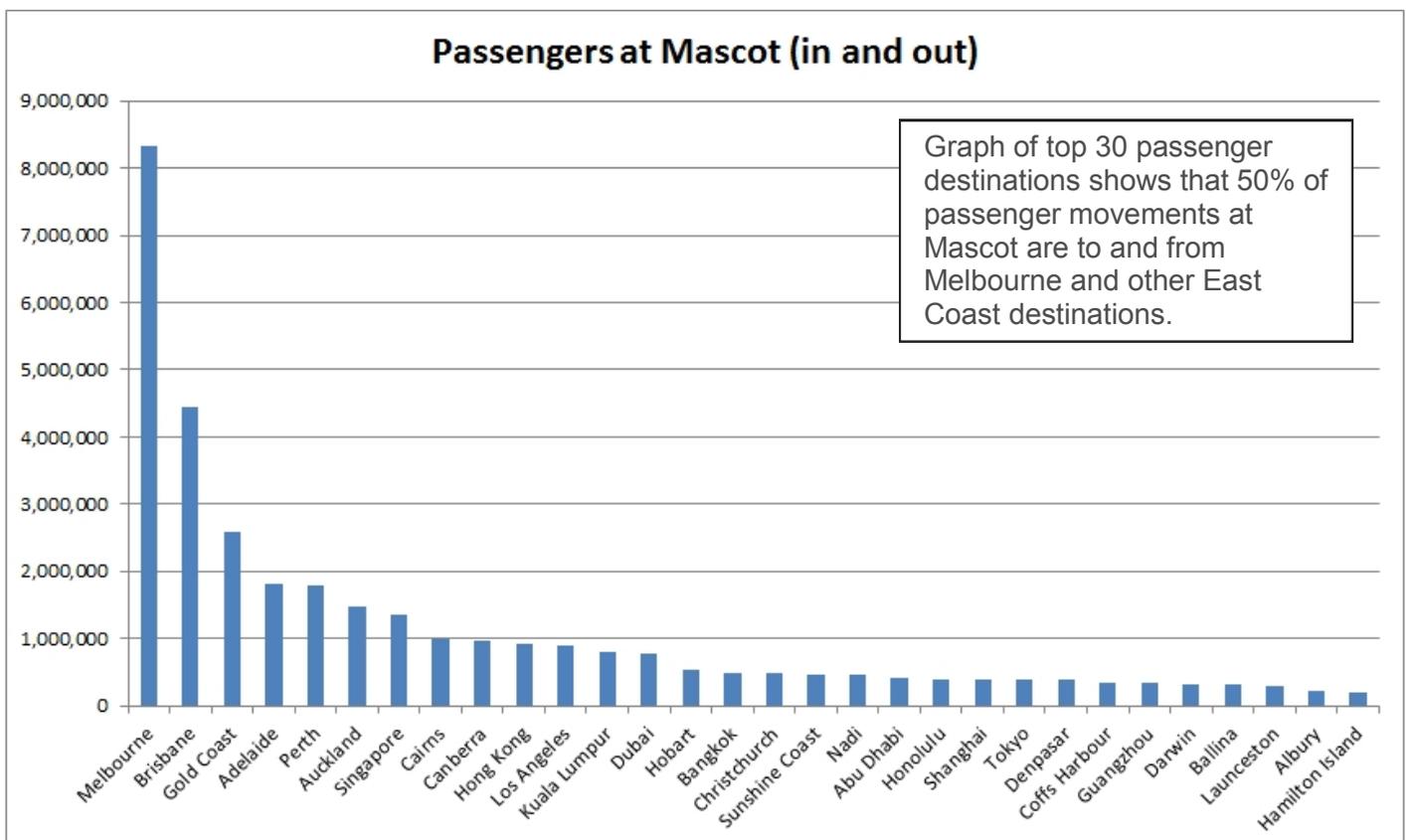
The EIS writes off High Speed Rail with the statement 'would not replace the need for the proposed Airport'. This despite 25% of all passengers through Mascot being to-and-from Melbourne, and 50% being to-and-from east coast destinations that would be covered by the High Speed Rail network.

I could go on all day. In short, the proposed Airport is a nightmare that we must stop!

The campaign does not end here with our EIS Submission, as we and other groups will be continuing to apply pressure to the Australian Government to abandon this project forever and get on with building the fully designed and costed East Coast High Speed Rail network.

If you want to help, contact me and join our Sub-Committee.

Ross Coster, nwsa@bluemountains.org.au





Protect the Gardens of Stone



Court Action to protect Coxs River and Sydney's drinking water supply

Conservation organisation, 4nature, is taking court action to enforce the environmental laws designed to protect Sydney's Water Catchment. This action relates to the mine water discharge from the Springvale Mine north of Lithgow.

Springvale's mine expansion, which was reviewed and approved by the NSW Planning Assessment Commission in September 2015, allows untreated waste water including metals, nutrients and 20 to 35 tonnes of salt a day to be discharged into the upper Coxs River. The Coxs River flows through the protected area for the Sydney Water Catchment and into Sydney's main drinking water supply at Lake Burragarang. The Coxs River contributes around 30 percent of the total inflow volume to the Warragamba Dam.

4nature claims that the State Environmental Planning Policy to protect Sydney's Drinking Water has not been followed correctly in that the PAC did not satisfy itself that the mine water discharge would have "a neutral or beneficial use" on water quality. They are seeking to have the environmental laws upheld.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society and other conservation organisations raised the significant impacts of the mine discharge water in its submissions to the PAC and at the two public hearings held for the Springvale mine expansion in 2014. The Society supports 4nature's challenge to the PAC's decision.

You can read more about 4nature's court action at: <https://www.facebook.com/stopspringvale/>

Muggii Murum-ban State Conservation Area – Draft plan of management

Thank you to members who put in submissions supporting the draft plan of Management for Muggii Murrumbidgee State Conservation area. It is very important for conservationists' views to be heard and reflected in the final plan.

Muggii SCA, near Capertee, is part of the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Reservation area. The draft plan contains some really good measures to make it accessible to low impact visits and protect its considerable biodiversity, striking cliffs and pagoda rock formations, historic mining ruins and views.

The next steps are that all the submissions are considered by the Blue Mountains Regional Advisory Committee and the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council. They advise the Minister for the Environment and the Minister decides on the final plan.

You can see more about the Gardens of Stone Reservation proposal at the Society's website and follow it on our Facebook where there are lots of great photos. <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/gos2.shtml>

You can see a great little video by *Our Land, Our Water, Our Future* on the Capertee Valley area and importance of Muggii SCA. It even includes a train trip on the Lithgow to Mudgee section of the railway line (only used regularly by coal trains) <https://www.facebook.com/landwaterfuture/videos/539121606243204/?theater>

Madi Maclean.

Bird Language Christine Davies.

I heard in the distance the call of a Wonga Pigeon, long before the other birds started their morning chorus. Its repetitive "woop, woop" can be heard 2 kilometres away. A couple of hours later he had moved closer and was in a tree only 100 metres away.

Were his calls answered? What if background noise prevents a female of the species hearing the distant calls of the lonesome male and coming to find him?

Would it be harder for the Wonga Pigeon and other bird species to find a mate?

A few years ago I heard a ruckus in the garden. Magpies and several other bird species were all calling out in alarm. A Wedge-tailed Eagle was cruising overhead. On this occasion, the male magpie flew behind the eagle and "chased" it away.

Recently I heard an interview with Dr Erick Greene, a professor of biology at the University of Montana, on Radio National. He spoke about the language of birds, in particular their alarm calls. He said that birds have different alarm calls for different predators, and they are understood by other bird species and even some mammals. Where background noise prevents a warnings being heard, predation is higher.

For the birds, an airport with noisy aircraft flying over National Parks, Wilderness and World Heritage areas could be devastating.

(You can read an article about Dr Greene's studies at <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/19/science/decoding-the-cacophony-of-birds-warning-calls.html>)



Wonga Pigeon at Blackheath

Blue Mountains achieves environmental milestone Land Use Subcommittee

The gazettal in December 2015 of the new Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2015 marks a major achievement for the local community in establishing a sustainable and environmentally responsible planning and development blueprint for the future.

The development of the LEP has been a long and hard fought process. The community was determined that the new LEP must protect and conserve our special environment, especially our World Heritage Area. The Society invested heavily in a campaign aimed at ensuring that the new LEP would be at least as good if not better than our previous LEPs, which were recognised as being best practice in terms of environmentally sound planning. This campaign culminated in the forming of a historic coalition of 39 community organisations and community leaders from across the Blue Mountains, representing environmental, heritage and business groups, who signed an Open Letter to the Minister for Planning, published in a major newspaper, urging him to support a LEP which was environmentally sound and protected the unique heritage of the Blue Mountains. The number of signatories to the Open Letter, and the diverse interests they represented, clearly demonstrated that the LEP was a significant issue for the community.

The Society would like to thank all the community members who made submissions, signed petitions, wrote letters, made phone calls, sent emails and attended rallies (in sunshine and snow!) in support of the LEP campaign, all Councillors especially the Mayor who consistently fought for environmental and heritage outcomes in the LEP, the commitment of Council staff during the long negotiation process with the Department of Planning, and our local member Trish Doyle, who supported the community in the fight for the LEP.

The State Government requirement to conform to a standard state-wide LEP format has meant that some provisions in the previous LEPs, aimed at protecting the environment and heritage, have not been included in LEP 2015. Some of these provisions have been moved to the new Blue Mountains Development Control Plan 2015, an advisory document which provides guidance on how new developments should be assessed and built, but which is not legally enforceable like a Local Environment Plan. However, the Blue Mountains has achieved in LEP 2015 the most environmentally tailored LEP across the state, with many specific provisions aimed at protecting the World Heritage Area and our unique heritage.

During the finalisation of the LEP, the Society raised with the Minister of Planning a number of key issues. In the finalised LEP 2015, these issues have been resolved as follows.

- Retention of the requirement that new developments “must comply” with the Aims of the Plan and Zone objectives has not been carried forward in the new LEP. Disappointingly, a lower threshold, that Council must have “regards to” the Aims of the Plan and Zone objectives, has been adopted. In response, Council negotiations strengthened the wording in terms of the assessment of environmental impacts, requiring Council “to be satisfied” in terms of a number of key factors (Clause 6.1).

- Impacts of stormwater, such as weeds and pollution, on the World Heritage Area was a key issue. The Society was keen to see retained the strict test that stormwater from new developments would not have any negative impact on the environment (as compared to the standard LEP stormwater clause which aims to merely minimise negative impacts). The stormwater clause in the new LEP (Clause 6.9) adopts a requirement that Council must be satisfied that stormwater from new developments must have a neutral or beneficial impact on the environment and water quality (ie must have no negative impacts). This is a great outcome.
- Another critical issue for the Society was the protection of significant and threatened vegetation communities, where the vegetation was not included on Council vegetation mapping and therefore not protected by specific clauses in the LEP. Unmapped significant vegetation has been protected by the inclusion of a schedule in the LEP describing regionally significant and threatened vegetation (Schedule 5), as well as unmapped vegetation being referenced in various clauses including Clause 6.6 and in the definition of “environmentally sensitive land”, a key term used throughout the LEP. This is another great outcome.
- The new residential zone developed specifically by Council in order to protect leafy residential streets in the Blue Mountains with heritage housing set within large traditional gardens, was not included in the new LEP. The good news is the old zoning under LEP 2005 for these areas has been retained in LEP 2015. The Department of Planning is still actively considering the addition of the new residential zone developed by Council in the state-wide standard template, and is undertaking further consultations. The Society looks forward to the new zone being added to LEP 2015 at a later date via an amendment.

Lastly, the Society has had a number of phone calls from concerned residents that LEP 2015 appears to allow new houses to be built on land zoned the E2 Environmental Conservation. The Society met with Council to specifically discuss this issue. Council reassured the Society that any housing development on E2 land was severely restricted through the operation of Clause 6.25, which allows residential development to encroach **only 10 metres** onto land zoned E2. Any residential development which proposes to encroach on E2 land must also comply with a number of other strict conditions. A similar provision, allowing a 20 metre encroachment by any development on land zoned E2, existed in LEP 2005 – the new LEP has wound this back to 10 metres and it now only applies to new residential dwellings. While the Society would prefer no development encroachment onto land zoned E2, it recognises that significant limitations apply and that the new LEP 2015 represents an improvement from the previous similar provision in LEP 2005.

Again congratulations to the community for an outstanding Blue Mountains LEP 2015.

Angela Langdon, Land Use Subcommittee.

Concerns over new residential subdivision in Springwood

At 8 December 2015 Council Meeting, Council granted approval for a new 37 lot residential subdivision on land which forms part of the St Columba Catholic School site on Hawkesbury Road, Springwood. Two local ward councillors, Clrs Fells and Myles voted against the development.

The development has been proposed for a number of years, after the land was re-zoned to allow residential development in 2005. The redevelopment has been controversial due to concerns about impacts on environmental and heritage values (both European and Aboriginal), the high bushfire risk and increased traffic on the already congested Hawkesbury Road.

The Society made a major submission to the development application and raised a number of concerns.

The flora and fauna assessment undertaken by the applicant concluded no threatened species or endangered ecological communities listed under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act* occurred within the development area. However, the Society disagreed with this assessment and in its submission raised concerns that the development would in fact have adverse impacts upon two threatened flora species *Leucopogon fletcheri* subsp. *Fletcheri* and *Pultenaea villifera*.

The Society also assessed that the vegetation that would be cleared for the development was in fact Critically Endangered Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest and the Threatened Shale Sandstone Transitional Forest, both listed under *Threatened Species Conservation Act*.

In response to the concerns raised in the public submission process, the number of lots proposed was

reduced from 43 to 37 and comprehensive conditions to manage the heritage values of the site have been included.

Council also required the applicant to undertake further flora and fauna studies. These additional studies did find five occurrences of *Leucopogon fletcheri* within the development footprint and some management actions have been included to minimise impacts. However, the additional assessment by the applicant reaffirmed its initial conclusion that Turpentine Ironbark Forest and Shale Sandstone Transitional Forest did not occur within the development area. Council then engaged an independent ecological consultant to undertake a site inspection and peer review the applicant's flora and fauna assessment, and this assessment supported the applicant's conclusions.

The Society is concerned that the independent review, which Council relied on to make its final determination to support the development, was not made publicly available at the time of Council's decision. Subsequent requests for access have been refused by Council. While the Society was pleased to see Council took into account and seriously considered the issues raised in the public submissions, including the Society's concerns in regard to threatened species and communities, the Society continues to have concerns that the development will have unacceptable impacts on the highly threatened Turpentine Ironbark Forest and Shale Sandstone Transitional Forest. The development also highlights that the importance of the public submission process in ensuring all impacts of a major development come to light and are properly assessed by Council.

Angela Langdon, Land Use Sub Committee.

The Hills of Megalong (an extract from "Over the Hills" by Bernard O'Reilly)

It was in 1911 that we left Long Swamp for good and settled temporarily in Megalong Valley until the day when we were to move on to our new home in Queensland.

Megalong was an enchanted land for young people – a lovely creek with many kinds of flowering bottlebrush, grevillea and wattle, low sandstone bluffs riddled with caves; one cave still bears my name, in charcoal, on its ceiling and a date in March, 1912. Above the bluffs were gardens of waratah, flannel flower, heath and boronia, with berries of wild currant and geebung for the inner boy. Higher up into the mountains were cool glens of treefern and sassafras, where the lyrebirds and bronze-wing pigeons lived out their lives, as in the days before Captain Cook.

Towering above this primitive Eden were the giant cliffs of the Blue Mountains, colourful, dramatic, different from the granite hills of my old home (*in the Kanimbla Valley*) as the mountains of the moon.

These great walls, a thousand feet of red and yellow sandstone, slashed out by the remorseless machete of

time, filled most of our skyline and our lives. The morning sun cut in gold searchlights through their battlements, the evening sun painted them with the glories of heaven.

With storm cloud, the mountains were black with frightening majesty; the booming from their cliffs shivered the cups on our dresser; then the storm would rumble off eastward and the sun break through to a miracle of wet gold cliffs and rising mists. For a brief and splendid hour, a hundred waterfalls would pour into the valley from the rock crowns which had a runoff as from a galvanized iron roof.

At one point where a small permanent creek found its way to the cliff edge, there was a waterfall which we called Smoking Fall. It fell a thousand feet from a beetling cornice of rock and, when the westerlies blew, as they did for nearly half the year, the uprush of wind against the cliff face lifted the waterfall in a cloud of fine smoky spray, hundreds of feet above the mountain, and blew it back to the source of the creek. Often it happened that the creek below the cliffs was reduced to a trickle, as the winds cut off its supply from above.

Administration Officer needed

At our Annual General Meeting on Thursday 31 March, our Administration Officer will not be renominating.

If you think you might be interested in nominating for this important role please contact Jeanette Robertson (sao@bluemountains.org.au) and arrange to have a look at the Hut Office and find out more about what is required.

It has been organised so that the bulk of the computer work can be done at home.

Here is a guide as to the duties and responsibilities.

Administration Officer (30 hpm)

- Receives and distributes incoming mail from post and email
- Prepares monthly schedules of correspondence – inwards and outwards
- Manages office, including files, archives, stationery supplies, computer and other office equipment
- Manages Hut foyer displays.

“Goodbye birdie” Noel May

While driving down a street, I noticed a dead Rainbow Lorikeet on the road. A number of other lorikeets were swooping down to the road and seemed likely to be hit, so I stopped my car and collected the dead bird, which I placed on the grass strip at the edge of the road.

Immediately after I returned to my car, the remaining eleven birds formed a neat circle around the dead one. There was a very clear order of seniority. (No doubts, two at once or such.) Each bird, in turn, walked to the centre of the circle, tapped the dead bird on the beak, three times with its beak, then flew up and sat on the wires above. When all the birds had “said goodbye”, the flock instantly left as a group.

It seems likely that this form of behaviour is common to similar flocks.

A Climate Change gathering in Springwood on 29 November 2015 was well attended.

The event was organised by a coalition of Transition Blue Mountains, Stop CSG and Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Speakers included Tara Cameron and Blue Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill who spoke against the airport.

The gathering was part of an international Day of Action against climate change by millions of people across the globe, to coincide with the meeting of world leaders in Paris for the United Nations Climate Summit.



Poets' Corner

JIM SAID...

I heard it said, some time ago,
By Jim, I'm fairly sure,
"To take your time when in the Bush -
You're bound to see much more."

Take time out, sit on a rock,
Contemplate Life's meaning -
That cockatoo could not care less
About the things you're dreaming!

He spins and dives and twists and turns,
Crying out for your attention,
But your mind is on that shopping list,
The Job, the Boss and politicians not to mention.

An hour gone, as on you trudge,
"Are we almost there?"
You haven't seen a bloody thing!
At least you've breathed the air!

Bushland, Nature's wonderland -
Wondrous sights, perfumes and sounds.
Life is short, so slow the pace -
Enjoy the moment - Look around!

Ross Bridle

P.S. The reference to "Jim" is to Jim Smith, historian, author, and member of the BMCS.

Readers of Hut News are invited to send a poem inspired by the Blue Mountains, maximum of 20 lines. Each month, one or two will be published in Poets' Corner. Poems can be emailed to brendan049@gmail.com or even posted to Poets' Corner at 5 Lurline Street, Wentworth Falls 2782. Brendan Doyle.

Remembering John Davis

by Jim Smith

John Davis (1943-2015).

I would like to write a few words about John Davis, who was briefly mentioned in the December Hut News article about the helicopter crash in which he died together with Richard and Carolyn Green. I first met him 50 years ago when I went on a Sydney Rockclimbing Club trip to Glenbrook Gorge. John was a major participant in the development of rock climbing in the Blue Mountains, with many first ascents to his credit. He was involved in the earliest days of the bushwalkers' 'Search and Rescue' group, including the dramatic rescue of Peter Dean at Kanangra Walls in December 1965. John played a key role when the stretcher containing the patient had to be guided up a 150 feet overhang. *Thutch* magazine reported: "Strapping the stretcher on his back, looking for all the world like Batman, John Davis piggy-backed Peter up." He was recommended for a Royal Humane Society award for this feat.

I lived with John for a few months in 1968 and was inspired by his creative energy. It was during that time that I decided to become a writer. I went on his February 1969 expedition to make the second ascent of Balls Pyramid. Just nineteen days before his death I visited John to show him the draft of my book on the history of that forbidding (and now forbidden) Pacific Island pinnacle.

John shared his passion for the environment with so many people through his 600 films, published photographs, articles and books, slideshows, science teaching in high school, involvement with youth groups such as Outward Bound and through the Internet.

Trained as a chemical engineer, he left this profession after about six years at CSR, but never lost his fascination with the chemistry of everyday life. In later years his interests turned toward the changes needed for the long-term survival of our planet. His website 'Energy without Carbon' includes hundreds of pages of chemical equations that demonstrate the practicability of a sustainable future.

John Davis's generosity of spirit was a gift he shared with me and many others. Jim Smith.



John Davis on the 1965 first ascent of Balls Pyramid.

Sublime Point Bushcare Group Celebrates its 20th Birthday



Photo (from left to right) Lyndal Sullivan, Ross Day, Jeremy Townend, Brian Marshall, Anna Marshall, Piercarlo Cuneo, Joan Gahl, Libby Gahl, Rae Druitt, Christine Cuneo.

The Sublime Point Bushcare Group (SPBG) in Leura celebrated its 20th Birthday on 11 January 2016.

Since 1996 the Group has transformed, with the aid of a number of small grants, a six hectare Reserve in south Leura that had previously been seriously degraded over a substantial fraction of the total area. That part of today's Reserve is now a flourishing native landscape. The whole Reserve is crisscrossed with walking tracks that have been engineered to reduce erosion.

Over the 20 years the Group has eradicated an impressive list of 33 weeds, including Buddleia, Tree Lucerne, Portuguese Heath, Holly, Privet, Monterey Pine, White Poplar, Lombardy Poplar, Pussy Willow, Chinese Elm, Watsonia and Yucca. But there is still difficulty with St John's Wort, Catsear, Blackberry and a host of imported grasses.

The Group has a vibrant core of half a dozen dedicated bushcarers, augmented from time to time with other local residents. Most of them appear in the accompanying photograph.

(Published in Gecko Bulletin, www.bushcarebluemountains.org.au/groups/sublime-point/)

Passion and determination at the Springwood Hub

Don Morison

The Extraordinary General Meeting of Blue Mountains City Council held at Springwood to consider the Badgerys airport proposal, in December, certainly lived up to its name.

About 450 people packed the main auditorium, with proceedings relayed to 100 further people in another room. Throughout the speeches and comments by Mayor Mark Greenhill and other councillors, as well as by very many of the public who queued to contribute, the opposition to the airport was intense and unanimous.

Now that the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal has declared Blue Mountains Council "fit for the future" (all be it from quite narrow and economically focussed terms of reference), attention is rightly turning to those issues that most significantly unite and galvanise the Blue Mountains community.

In December, the NSW Government conceded (at least through its rhetoric) that it could not impose a Local Environment Plan on the Blue Mountains that was identical to those of other Local Government Areas. The closure of submissions about the Badgerys airport environmental impact statement in the same month caused the community to concentrate on the airport threat.

Passion and determination aptly describe the mood of the very large crowd gathered at Springwood for the Extraordinary Meeting. As Mayor Greenhill introduced each new offering, he tailored his remarks very appropriately to the emotions and sense of common purpose clearly felt by those assembled.

Planes flying overhead 24 hours are the opposite of what those people feel that the Blue Mountains should be. In the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, through our subcommittee convened by Ross Coster and through substantial commitment of time and funds, we are striving to maintain that momentum.

Into the woods

Spending quiet time in wooded areas is viewed as good medicine in Japan, and now this practice - Shinrin-yoku, or "forest bathing" - is catching on with scientists and park-lovers alike. Mindfully soaking up a forest's stimuli (the aroma of damp wood, the sound of crunching leaves, the feeling of plush moss) has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and blood pressure. In fact, sitting in the woods for as little as 15 minutes was enough to noticeably ease anxiety and raise energy, found scientists at Chiba University in Japan. And breathing in phytoncides, compounds naturally released by trees, may ramp up your immune system's disease-fighting natural killer cells for more than a month, according to an Environmental Health and Preventative Medicine study

(Nancy Rones, September Yoga Journal).

BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly?
 Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?
 Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit www.bluemountains.org.au/prdk-welcome.shtml

You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

- **Post** this Application Form with your cheque or money order to: Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782, **OR**
- **Join online** at: www.bluemountains.org.au

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
 2.
 3.

Address:
PC

Phone(s)

Email

I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.
 2.
 3.

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$30 Concession (Senior/Student) \$20
 Household \$35 Household Concession \$25
 Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add
 \$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$

Send my copy of Hut News by
 Please tick box mail internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline):

Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

A BEQUEST: Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: "I bequeath the sum of \$... to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.

Along the track ...

Have you recently seen two lyrebirds together? I have—at Govetts Leap and near the Conservation Hut. I presumed they were mother and juvenile. This was confirmed by a friend who saw a pair of lyrebirds where one was feeding the other.

Lyrebirds breed in the winter, so the youngsters are now about six months old.

Christine.

Container Deposit Scheme for NSW is long overdue

There has been a long campaign by Total Environment Centre, supported by Nature Conservation Council of NSW and other environmental groups, for a deposit scheme to recycle drink containers.

The Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) for NSW, proposed by the NSW Government, is very welcome and long overdue. However, the Government's discussion paper contains two very different CDS proposals. One will deliver a refund CDS, similar to the 'South Australia' model which is proven to reduce litter and increase recycling. The other is a beverage industry proposal called 'Thirst for Good'.

Pollution from plastic and other drink containers causes significant damage to our terrestrial and marine environments, including harm to marine animals and birds.

The plastics industry is fossil-fuels intensive, so recycling is a significant component of reducing the rate of fossil-fuels consumption. This in turn contributes to any aspirational reduction of GGEs and is a component (worldwide) of dealing with global warming. The environmental aspects are complex [see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plastic_pollution#Decomposition_of_plastics], and anything which reduces plastics production and combats environmental degradation should be supported.

We need a huge number of public submissions demanding a real refund deposit scheme that:

- Includes a strong financial incentive and deposit refund (at least 10 cents per beverage container) to encourage people to return empty drink containers to collection sites.
- Has a genuine 'extended producer responsibility' approach with the onus on the beverage industry to fund the scheme.
- Has a variety of options to return empty drink containers, including reverse vending machines and collection depots.
- Includes containers up to three litres in most cases, with only evidence based exceptions to align with other CDSs around Australia.
- Is run and administered by a third party organisation with independence, openness and transparency, for example an independent group made up of stakeholders, and not the beverage industry.
- Covers all of New South Wales.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ...

Read the discussion paper: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/waste/container/150286-CDS-discussion-paper.pdf>

Make a submission:

- Online (www.epa.nsw.gov.au/waste/cds-consult.htm)
- By email: container.deposit@epa.nsw.gov.au
- By post: Container Deposit Implementation Team, Waste and Resource Recovery Branch, NSW EPA, PO Box A290, Sydney South, NSW 1232.

Submissions must be received by 26 February.

BLUE MOUNTAINS
CONSERVATION SOCIETY
www.bluemountains.org.au

'Like' us on Facebook:
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Follow us on Twitter: [bmcnsnw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)

JOIN Blue Mountains
Conservation Society,
or renew your membership
online.
www.bluemountains.org.au



A BLUE TRAIL: Natural and cultural experiences in the western Blue Mountains Don Morison.

11. Bird Rock Nature Reserve, Central Newnes Plateau.

An unsignposted side track from the Sunny Side Ridge trail leads you to one of the Greater Blue Mountains most spectacular lookouts. A trig and sandstone outcrops, showing some visitation by careless picnickers, rise to the north of the four-wheel-drive route.

On clear days, the Eucalypt forests can be seen sweeping sharply down towards the main valley of the Wolgan. Escarpment features like Cape Horn and the brow of Donkey Mountain punctuate the middle ground. You can see over much of the ridge west of the Wolgan to the crests of Pantoneys Crown, Mount Genowlan and Mount Tayan.

On the way there one passes areas of the plateau much affected by Angus Place and other collieries. It is to be hoped oases like the Bird Rock Reserve inspire the long-term preservation and, where necessary, revegetation of Newnes Plateau.

This "Blue Trail" is a collective description for sites in the western Blue Mountains that arouse natural or cultural interest or both. Most are only a short walk from roads or vehicular tracks. One day, a high quality walking path may link them.

12. Far from the familiar, Mount Armstrong district.

It's most inappropriate to nail notices to magnificent Eucalypts like this one. Even so, there is something poetic about this sign on a back road from Oberon to Taralga, deep in the south-western part of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society's Area of Interest. A little collection of farmlets, seemingly struggling wineries and a motor cycle park dot the sections of this road that are not lined by part of the Blue Mountains National Park.

Ironically, it is in such parts of the Southern Blue Mountains that humans may finally come to terms with that enigmatic character in Australian ecosystems, the Dingo. Some naturalists hypothesise that attacks on farm animals are perpetrated by rogue adolescent male dingoes. So the argument goes, if the dingo's social structure is left undisturbed to restore its role as apex predator of the bushland, a sustainable relationship with human land users will develop.

Photos: Visitors admire the Wolgan catchment from the outcrop at Bird Rock (Geoff Derney)

Far from the familiar, near Mount Armstrong (Christine Davies)

Restore the apex predator to his throne? (Nakia Belmer)



BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942, mobile 04024 02783, email mauricekerkham@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy—phone 4758 6009, email jp34@tpg.com.au Check www.bluemountains.org.au for updates.

Saturday Walks driver reimbursement: *In an effort to ensure that car drivers are adequately compensated for the use of their vehicles a driver reimbursement policy applies* (Check www.bluemountains.org.au Saturday Walks page for details)

- Feb 13 **Red Hand Cave and Crayfish Pool** - return via Camp Fire Creek. Total ascent 400m spread over several small ascents. Swimming opportunities. Leader **Bart** 4739 9947. Meet at Glenbrook Station Carpark 8.00am. 13Km. Gr3. Map **Penrith**.
- Feb 20 **Bonnie Doon Track, Nellies Glen and return via the Devils Hole.** Leader **Warren** 4767 5403. Meet at Katoomba Stn Carpark 8 am. 11Km. Gr 3. Map **Katoomba**.
- Feb 27 **The Barnacles** - a new walk to rugged pagoda country toward the Wollangambe River from Bell. Off Track. Leader **Harold** 0409010737. Meet at Blackheath Station carpark 8 am. 10Km. Gr 3-4. Map **Mt Wilson**.
- Mar 5 **Fern Tree Gully**- Deep Pass Area. Approx 75m descent /ascent. Contact leader for extra details of walk. Leader **Emanuel** 4757 1090 or 041977380. **Please contact leader.** 5Km. Gr 3. Map **Rock Hill**.
- Mar 12 **Evans Crown Nature Reserve** - A tour of the Granite Tors. Leader **Diana** 4751 3935. **Please contact leader.** Approx 6 Km. Maps **Oberon or Sketch Map**.

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, keithdor53@hotmail.com

- Feb 15 **Minnehaha Falls**, Katoomba. Bring swimmers for possible swim in waterfall pool. Meet Katoomba Station carpark 8.25 am. Car pool. Ros 4733 3880. Grade 2/3.
- Feb 22 **Faulconbridge to Springwood** – 11.5 km, 633m climb. Meet Faulconbridge Station car park (south side) 8.50 am. Mary Read 4739 0786. Grade 3.
- Feb 29 **Tessellated Rock, Mount Irvine.** Unusual rock formation. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.50 am. Car pool fare \$8. Marion 4759 2575. Grade 2.
- Mar 7 **Lapstone Zig Zag to Elizabeth Lookout.** Meet Glenbrook Station car park east 9.30 am. Maurice 0402 402 783. Grade 3.
- Mar 14 **Porter's Pass and Centennial Glen.** Historic track built in 1866. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45 am. Car pool. Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 3.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, denfenella@optusnet.com.au

- Feb 11 **Lyrebirds Dell, Leura.** Meet cnr The Mall and Megalong Street 9.30am. Leader Chris 4721 4309. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2.
- Feb 18 **Moya and Gladstone Lookouts, Leura.** Meet cnr The Mall and Megalong Street Leura 9.30am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2.
- Feb 25 **Darwin's Walk, Wentworth Falls.** Meet Stockyard Car Park, Wentworth Falls 9.30am. Leader Christine 4757 2864. Take lunch. Grade 2.
- Mar 3 **Barangaroo, Sydney.** Meet top of escalators, Central Station 9.30am. Leader Rose 9420 2103. Take lunch. Grade 1.
- Mar 10 **Lockyer's Line of Road, Mount Victoria.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.45am. Leader Bob 6355 2371. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 3
- Mar 17 **Bus trip, Sphinx Track to Bobbin Head.** Book and pay Chris 0413 107 912, \$12. Meet Springwood Car Park behind Westpac Bank 8.00am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2.

Read about our bushwalkers' exploits on Facebook—with lots of wonderful photos.
<https://www.facebook.com/BmcsBushwalking>
<https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks>

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am till noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.
New members are welcome.
Phone Karen 4757 1929.

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry.