



Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area – Assessment of additional national heritage values and areas

The Australian Heritage Council (AHC) invites you to comment on the assessment of additional national heritage values and areas for the Greater Blue Mountains Area.

Please support this important conservation initiative

Your feedback will help the AHC assess which heritage values and areas should become listed and understand why they are nationally important. More information is available on the Society's campaign website: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/gbmwha-extensions.shtml>

SUPPORT:

- The AHC's preliminary assessment of biodiversity, aesthetics, geological heritage, Indigenous heritage and historic heritage in the Greater Blue Mountains Area as described and mapped by the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.
- Over 200,000 hectares of additional areas have been compiled for assessment by the Australian Heritage Council including: Goulburn River and Capertee National Parks; the new Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, as well as Mugii Murum-ban, Parr, Nattai, Burragorang, Yerranderie and Bargo SCAs; Finchley Aboriginal Place; Wombeyan Karst Conservation Reserve and Hassans Walls Crown Reserve. Also recommended for assessment are: Nullo Mountain, Coricudgy, Comleroy State Forests and associated flora reserves; Crown lands between Medlow Bath to Hassans Walls (which are part of the Gardens of Stone stage 2 proposal); and private lands voluntarily acquired within the World Heritage Area since 2000 totalling over 40,000 hectares.
- Other high conservation forest areas adjoining the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area considered by the Society as suitable for listing include: Mares Forest National Park; the Wiaborough, Joadja and Wollondilly Nature Reserves; the Wollemi, Yango, Bargo River and Goulburn River SCAs; the Ngula Bulgarabang and Yerranderie Regional Parks; the Maiyngu Marragu Aboriginal Place and the Appletree Aboriginal Area; Putty and Jellore State Forests (and associated Flora Reserves); Koolewong Flora Reserve in McPherson State Forest; and Ben Bullen State Forest which remains threatened by open-cut coal mining, as well as Gaspers Mountain.
- The rapid inscription of over 40,000 hectares of reserve additions to the eight protected areas already inscribed on the World Heritage and National Heritage lists, as this can be done through a simple administrative process.
- World Heritage listing considerations be undertaken at the same time as the National Heritage listing process, as was done for the Opera House, otherwise these nomination processes could drag on for decades.

SUBMIT YOUR FEEDBACK to the Australian Heritage Council by 11:59pm AEDT 16 November 2022.

You can write to the Australian Heritage Council using the webform at <https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/gbma-values-areas> or email heritage@environment.gov.au

The map on page 4 of this newsletter shows the Greater Blue Mountains Heritage Area and the proposed National Heritage Area extensions.

**Blue Mountains
Conservation Society
NATIVE PLANT
NURSERY**

**We will be at the Blackheath
Growers Market on
SUNDAY 13 NOVEMBER
and on the
2nd Sunday of every month**

**For enquiries and to place an
order, please contact
Nursery Manager, Paul Irwin:
plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com**

Springtime in the Blue Mountains



***Grevillea sericea* (Proteaceae)** has delicate spidery flowers, autumn to spring, in various shades of pink. Attracts nectar-feeding birds and native bees. Photographed at Hazelbrook by Sue Nicol.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Darug and Gundungurra people, and pay respect to their elders past, present and emerging.

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Blue Mountains City Council and the Ready for Renewables Challenge

-- Clare Power

Earlier this year, I wrote to all BMCC councillors regarding the 'Ready for renewables Council Challenge' asking Council to make significant changes in their use of gas. BMCC provided quite a detailed response on behalf of the mayor and I have summarised this below for readers of Hut News.

1. Refuse new gas connections - request planning scheme amendments of the State planning minister.

The planning system does not currently restrict the connection of a development to particular utilities. This would be difficult to control through the planning system as there is nothing stopping a property owner connecting to gas in the future. The BASIX SEPP prevails over local controls related to environmental sustainability and energy efficiency. However, options include encouraging applicants to consider the environmental impacts of energy sources, and potentially discourage the use of gas.

2. Phase gas out of Council's buildings.

Council is taking steps to phase out reliance on fossil fuels. For example:

- Council's 2016 Carbon Abatement Action Plan (CAAP) **2016 has seen a 24% reduction in carbon emissions from operations to date.**
- **The CAAP is soon to be replaced with our pathway to net zero emissions as we have pledged to achieve net zero emissions from operations by the end of 2025.**
- **Council has developed** a set of Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Standards for all new Council Buildings and large renovations which includes the following mandatory standards:
 - ◇ *4.25 BMCC is moving towards 100% electric buildings and away from the use of natural gas. Gas fired heating and hot water solutions will be considered only where required due to operational constraints.*
 - ◇ *4.26 Preference heat pump technology for heating and cooling.*
 - ◇ *Heat pump technology for heating water is required instead of gas and specifies 'by end of life, all natural gas boilers are to be replaced with heat pumps.'*
- Glenbrook, Katoomba and Springwood pools currently have some solar water heating capacity supported by gas boilers. See dot point above.
- Council has secured a retail Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for renewable energy. Starting in 2023 power will be sourced from Iberdrola's renewable energy projects. This will achieve zero emissions electricity for large sites and streetlights from 2025. In addition to the wind farms, electricity will be sourced from new projects being developed in NSW, including large wind and solar farms and a 50MW battery.
- Council is Investigating purchasing four new electric vehicles for fleet; and
- After joining the Cities Race to Zero Council has resolved to develop a community net zero strategy in 2022/23.

3. Write to the State Energy Minister and urge for the State to plan a way out of gas use as a critical priority.

BMCC declared a climate emergency in 2019 and climate change is an issue we take very seriously. We are a member of the Cities Power Partnership run by the Climate Council which strongly advocates the transition away from gas.

**THE DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER
HUT NEWS IS 15 NOVEMBER**
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
Enquiries: Christine 4787 7246



WE GIVE A DAM! Rally and Protest March, Katoomba, June 2019
Image by Alan Page.

The latest on damming

As Hut News goes to press, the NSW Government proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall is the subject of a fluid discussion. The State Premier has said that the wall will be raised with or without Federal funding. The Sydney Morning Herald of 19/10/22 says that Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek will decide if the project proceeds “under Commonwealth law”. It also reports that Wilderness Australia’s Harry Burkitt stated that “It’s incumbent on Tanya Plibersek to abide by Australia’s World Heritage obligations and not raise Warragamba Dam wall”.

Each twist and turn of this saga produces new concerns. The condition of water stored by a larger dam and its possible rate of release raises questions over whether the water will be continually suitable for use as Sydney’s drinking water without boiling. A raised dam wall could require that the NSW parliament pass indemnity legislation to exempt Water NSW from legal claims over any alleged maloperation of the raised dam wall. Currently, neither major party has a majority in the NSW Upper House.

A rather wrinkly Conservation Society member was suddenly reminded of Prime Minister Bob Hawke’s victory speech on winning his first election in 1983. After assuring the public that the concerns of both Tasmanian voters and Australian voters in general would be heeded, Mr Hawke firmly said: “The dam will not go ahead.” A High Court case followed which found in favour of the Hawke Government and Tasmania’s Franklin River still flows freely today. It can be a long time between drinks but sometimes the wisdom of enlightened politicians prevails, even concerning dams. Let’s hope that’s the way the latest Warragamba saga ends.

-- The Hut News Team.

Springtime in the Blue Mountains

Woolisia pungens. Flowers are mostly white, but there are pink forms which seem to be common in the Blue Mountains. Sometimes, on a hot day, the Woollsias release a very strong, sweet perfume to attract pollinators.

This plant was photographed by Sue Nicol at Hazelbrook.



Two Elderly Greenies are having a break this month. What can WE do to help the natural environment?

From 1st November the NSW Government has extended a ban on single use plastic.



LET’S STOP IT AND SWAP IT! Go plastic free

Consumers do a very good job when it comes to sorting recyclable plastics from waste destined for landfill. Yet, despite these efforts, plastic packaging and so-called single-use plastic items still make up 60% of all litter in NSW. These items take thousands of years to decompose and, in the process, they are causing great harm to our natural environment and wildlife.

The NSW government has created legislation which banned businesses and community groups from supplying lightweight plastic bags from 1 June 2022. From 1st November 2022 the ban has been extended to include single-use plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery, bowls and plates as well as expanded polystyrene food service items like cups and hamburger containers, single-use plastic cotton buds, and rinse-off personal care products containing plastic microbeads.

Consumers are encouraged to **swap** single-use plastic items for reusable and sustainable alternatives to help reduce the amount of plastic waste that ends up in landfill or as litter or in our environment, like microplastics.

Most of us have already swapped plastic bags for reusable alternatives made of sustainable materials for our weekly grocery shop. That’s a great start. But think about how much plastic we could remove from circulation if we used these same bags when shopping for other essentials such as clothes, shoes or gifts.

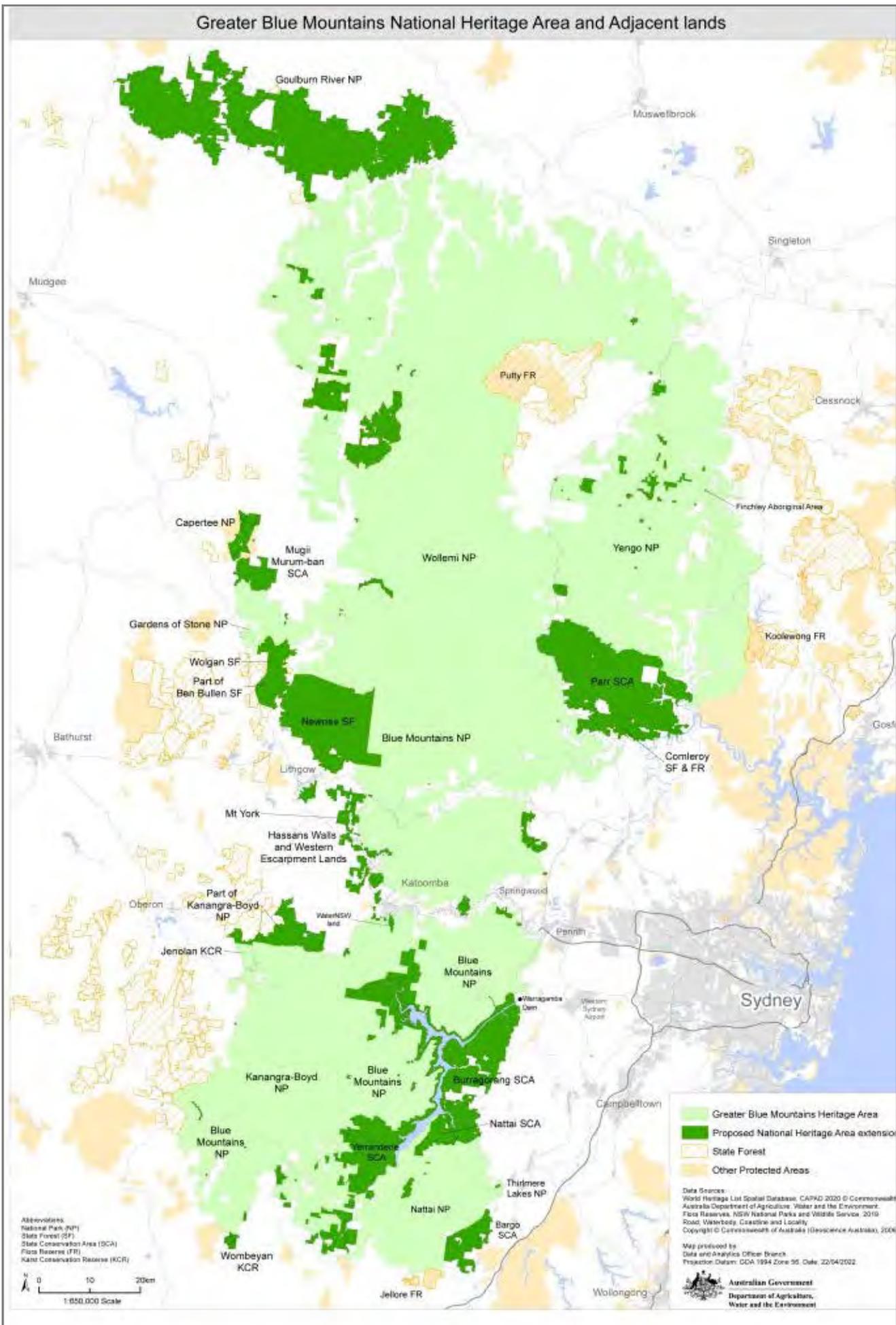
Instead of using plastic cutlery on your next family picnic, why not swap it for alternatives made from a sustainable material or bring a special picnic set from home?

Swap single-use disposable plastic plates at your school fundraiser for reusable dinnerware which can be put through a dishwasher and used time after time.

A little bit of thought goes a long way when it comes to reducing the amount of plastic waste we generate. By changing our behaviour and the choices we make, we can make a huge collective difference to our environment. We can encourage our family and friends to do the same.

Read more: <https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/environment-energy-and-science/plastics-action-plan/stop-it-swap-it>

Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area - assessment of additional national heritage values and areas. Refer to Page 1 of this newsletter for more information.



Audit of NSW Government's Biodiversity Offsets Scheme

-- Judy Smith, Threatened Species Officer

The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme, auspiced by the Department of Planning and Environment and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust, permits, regulates and manages the loss of biodiversity (including threatened species and ecological communities) due to clearing of native vegetation for development.

The scheme is market-based. It intends that the loss of biodiversity due to a development is quantified and costed, then "offset" by funding the protection and management of similar biodiversity in the same or other locations. Biodiversity "credits" are bought and sold to enable developers to destroy biodiversity and proceed with their projects. This scheme, which commenced in August 2017, replaces a string of earlier such schemes (BioBanking commenced 2008, Biodiversity Certification 2010, Biodiversity Offsets Policy for Major Projects 2014). It is hard to keep up.

The efficacy of such schemes has been questioned since their inception. With almost 1,000 animal and plant species at risk of extinction in NSW it is important to know if we can really destroy biodiversity **and** improve, or at least achieve no net loss of, biodiversity. Do the "offsets" compensate the losses?

The NSW Audit Office has undertaken a Performance Audit of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and released their report '*Effectiveness of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme*' (77 pp.) on 30 August 2022. The report details major concerns about most if not all aspects of the scheme including, but not limited to, the scheme's design, implementation, integrity, transparency, sustainability and the "risk that biodiversity gains made through the Scheme will not be sufficient to offset losses resulting from the impacts of development". In short, it is not known if the biodiversity gains required to offset biodiversity losses are being achieved (the audit suggests not).

The audit identifies many worrying short-comings of the scheme. Examples include shortfalls of suitable offset credits, increasing offset obligations from developers that have not been acquitted (instead, these obligations have been acquired by the



Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos (Christine Davies)

Biodiversity Conservation Trust for future acquittal if and when possible), lack of ecological monitoring of offsets, lack of information in regard to discretionary Ministerial (Planning Minister) discounting of offset requirements (why does this occur anyway?), possible conflicts of interest, ability of major mining companies to use proposed future mine-site rehabilitation as an offset, lack of required published complete register of credits and their transaction history, and many more.

The Audit Office's report makes 11 recommendations, three to be acquitted by December 2022, the remainder by July 2023. The Society needs to know if the NSW Government accepts these recommendations. If accepted, we need to know if all of the recommendations are implemented in a timely manner. We also need to know if any "new improved" scheme actually works. The Federal *2016-2021 State of the Environment (SoE) Report* confirmed that biodiversity in Australia is on a very slippery slope. It may well not be possible to keep wilfully destroying biodiversity and think that some "green Wall Street" scheme will make it OK.

Read the report: <https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/effectiveness-of-the-biodiversity-offsets-scheme>

EVENTS:

Lachlan's Legacy Memorial Gathering and Jamison Creek Catchment Event

Saturday, 12th November, from 10am, Wilson Park, Wentworth Falls, Enquiries Karen Hising - khising@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or 0420 502 763

Tourism development in protected areas: Are we on the right track?

Bushwalking NSW Inc. is hosting a symposium on this topic: **9:30am to 4:30pm, Saturday 19th November, NSW Teachers Federation Conference Centre, 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills, and via video conference.** Register at <https://www.bushwalkingnsw.org.au/tourism-development-in-protected-areas/>

Springtime in the Blue Mountains



This tiny ground orchid is a species of *Caladenia*. Flowers are white or various shades of pink. Photographed at Blackheath by Katriona Herbourn.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Planning & 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/pdrk-welcome.shtml

Book Review. Ghost Town of Newnes: Past and Present.

Three of the Greater Blue Mountains most prolific authors, Brian Fox, Yuri Bolotin and Michael Keats OAM, (aka Bush Explorers) have seized the opportunity offered by the recovery period from the 2019/2020 bushfires to conduct a major research and photography exercise in and around the village of Newnes. Just as more changes loom for this locality which is probably the most interesting access point to Wollemi National Park, they have released a coffee table-style book which could whet almost anyone's appetite for an extended visit to this part of the Wolgan Valley. The book would be an invaluable companion for a leisurely exploration of this precinct, accessible to people of virtually all walking ability levels.

This volume acknowledges the achievements of Thomas Ebersoll and Helen Druery who took over the unlicensed hotel building in 2001, created a series of accommodation cabins nearby and have made numerous contributions to the interpretation and restoration of the walking corridors on the fringe of Wollemi National Park. The recent bushfires exposed a great many previously unnoticed non-indigenous structures and artefacts. They have been painstakingly photographed and documented by the authors.

To tour Newnes is to experience a dizzy mixture of native flora and fauna, bits and pieces of human history and, of course, the flourishing of weeds in the climate change era. It is by studying the photographs in the three authors' new book that you can really get the feel of what you would be looking at on a walk around Newnes. The text in the book concentrates on a detailed assembly of facts and those are an inspiring stimulus for visualising the lives of thousands of people who have been residents or visitors of this area since it became a centre of non-indigenous population at the end of the 19th century.

There is always a sense of the ethereal to this other-age village. But, in studying this new book, I find that so many of the people and events who made this precinct the way it is become starkly real to me.

The book can be purchased from Bush Explorers website: <https://www.bushexplorers.com.au/catalog>

-- Reviewed by Don Morison



"This multi-stemmed Eucalypt was typical of older trees in the township area, where at one stage they have been cut down for firewood and later the cut stumps resprouted". (Keith Maxwell, 2020-21)



Newnes Public School is almost ready to be opened, in July 1910. (Leonie Knapman collection). The school closed in 1939.



Newnes Public School. Two intact chimneys and corner foundations remain today. (Brian Fox, 2020-21)

How to Join the Society

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is an incorporated voluntary organisation of more than 900 members. Our goal is to protect, conserve, and advocate for, the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

You can become a member of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Join online at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml> or phone 0490 419 779.

Membership includes our monthly newsletter, Hut News, by post or e-mail.

Springtime in the Blue Mountains

A dragonfly in the mist. Photographed by Sue Nicol at Blackheath.



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Crown Road reserve purchase threatens public access

In the lower Blue Mountains, at the end of Greens Road Warrimoo, there's a spectacular lookout that has panoramic views over Glenbrook Creek. It is accessed via a walk, mostly along a fire trail which follows a ridgetop, eventually bringing you to a rocky outcrop offering stunning views across different cliff-lined sections of the gorge. The walk is through biodiverse sclerophyllous bushland and ends in woodland and heath that have fabulous displays of spring wildflowers and a great diversity of bird life.

Like many walking tracks which access the Blue Mountains National Park, the Greens Roads track commences at the end of a residential street and is initially located on a Crown road reserve, which traverses a large private acreage. In 2020, the new owner of the acreage applied to close and purchase the Crown Road reserve, which would have blocked all future public access. The owner also submitted a development application to build a residential dwelling on the block. Crown Lands, the NSW Government agency responsible for Crown road reserves, sought public submissions before determining the future of the road reserve. The Society sent a submission opposing the purchase (which can be found on the Society's website).

<https://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/submissions/2021/bs210525-32-greens-road-warrimoo.pdf>

In our submission, the Society raised concerns that the closure would stop public access to a track well used by bushwalkers and local residents, which has been in existence for over 60 years. In addition, we

were keen to ensure ongoing access for utilities such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Rural Fire Service for public land management purposes. We argued that either the Crown road reserve should remain and not be sold or that, if it was sold, a legally enforceable easement over the access track be placed on the property title ensuring ongoing access for the public and land management agencies.

In recent conversations with Crown Lands, it appears that the option of selling the Crown road reserve, but with a legally enforceable easement being attached to the land title, is being pursued. The Society and others who made submissions have been consulted on the proposed easement conditions, along with NPWS and other land management agencies.

This is not the first time public access to an important bushwalking and recreational asset has been threatened. In 2015, a Crown road reserve which traversed a private property in Kent St Bullaburra, which gave access to "Bruce's Walk", was proposed to be purchased by the landowner. The Society advocated on behalf of the community and in that instance the public access continues via a legally enforceable easement.

The proposed closures of Crown road reserves are not well publicised by Crown Lands and public notification is inadequate, being limited to small ads in the public notices of local newspapers and listing of proposed closures on the Crown Land website. Crown Lands have no process of notifying interested community organisations. In both instances described, it was only through the vigilance of local residents that the Society become aware of the proposed road closures and could advocate on behalf of the community.

-- Land Use Subcommittee

TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE - Bees of Australia - Part 3 - Chris Whiteman

This series continues with discussion of a dangerous invasive species, the Asian Honey bee.

Asian Honey Bee (*Apis cerana*)

Asian honey bees are smaller, approximately 10 mm long, and less hairy with more yellow banding on their abdomen than European honey bees. They build hives and live in colonies of 5,000 to 20,000 bees. They fly faster and more erratically than European honey bees and can sting when threatened. As they frequently move to other areas to swarm they cannot be managed for honey production. They can spread unwanted mites and diseases.

Asian honey bees were detected in 2007 in the Cairns area of Queensland. Eradication was attempted but the bees became established and have since been found as far south as Innisfail. At present there appears to be no populations of Asian honey bee outside of this area, and all new detected incursions of Asian honey bee into Australia are being eliminated, but it remains likely that Asian honey bees will spread throughout tropical and sub tropical areas in Australia. The current population of Asian honey bee in mainland Australia does not carry any exotic bee parasites that are present in overseas populations.

Although islands in the Torres Strait, adjacent to Papua New Guinea, administered by Australia, have



Asian honey bee (*Apis cerana*)

Varroa jacobsoni-infested Asian honey bees, Australia remains free of this species of *Varroa*. *Varroa jacobsoni* were detected on exotic Asian honey bees in Townsville in 2016, 2019 and 2020. These were eradicated and proof of freedom from *V. jacobsoni* was declared in 2021.

References:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/bees/the-asian-honey-bee-in-australia>
https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/92903/AHB-fact-sheet.pdf



BOOK REVIEW: A Wide and Open Land – Walking the Last of Western Sydney's Woodlands, by Peter Ridgeway

Back in 2019, Peter Ridgeway undertook a long, and mostly solo bushwalk across the Cumberland Plain. He started at Cattai Creek and finished at Picton. Familiar country? Perhaps not. Many people cross the Cumberland Plain every day on their way to work or when escaping the city for refuge in the Blue Mountains. It is an area we should know well, but we don't.

In his book, Peter has documented his journey, but the book he has written is a lot more than that. In many ways it is a lament, a sad tale of an amazing natural environment that is being slowly degraded. Too much of what was once very special has been lost. The author describes the amazing chain of ponds that once formed many of the waterways and the open woodlands with their unique ecosystems. Both had been maintained by Aboriginal custodians but they now only survive in tiny remnants, if that.

Peter, on his journey, describes the landscape he travels through. He explains what is extraordinary, what has been lost and adds a plea for what we need to do. As well as describing the landscape and its plants and animals, he has thoroughly researched the history. As I read through the book, I wanted to get out and visit the places he describes. Some of these I have now been to – like “Mr Fat” a giant tree on the banks of the Nepean River at Menangle. It has somehow survived. And another remarkable place, Shanes Park at Shalvey. For many years it had been fenced off as a defence communications facility. It still remains as a haven for wild life. There are many more places I hope to visit.

I love the sandstone country of the Blue Mountains and the coastal cliffs of Sydney, but Peter's book has taught me to appreciate the remarkable Cumberland Plain. I only hope that the book does not become a document to something that was once great, but has since been lost beyond repair.

Available in good bookshops, like Megalong Books at Leura.

-- Review by David Noble

Images:

Intact Cumberland Plain Woodland at Shanes Park, soon to be conserved as a National Park. In 1877, Cumberland Plain Woodlands covered 107,000 hectares and filled around 30% of the Sydney Basin. Today only 6% remain uncleared.

The iconic 'Mr Fat' is one of a dozen giant trees which line the Nepean River near Camden; they reveal the majesty of the once extensive Cumberland Riverflat Forests.



The waratah on the left has two immature flower heads. The waratah on the right has had two of its four flower heads broken off and stolen.

Broken Waratahs

In early October, beside a very popular tourist walking track at Blackheath, we admired the large number of waratahs (*Telopea speciosissima*) which were flowering. The waratah is renowned for its striking large red flowerheads, each containing hundreds of individual flowers.

This area had been severely burned during the 2019/2020 “Grose Valley” fire. When the fire had passed, the waratahs had been burned to the ground, so how did they survive to flower this year?

We found the answer to this question at the Royal Botanic Gardens website:

Waratahs are a ‘resprouting’ species and the main method of regeneration in the wild is sprouting from a massive underground structure called a lignotuber. This structure is a modified stem and can be a metre or more in length and depth, and possibly weigh up to a quarter of a tonne. It’s a marvellous adaptation to fire.

In the wild a number of Waratah stems arise in a patch, which may look random. But it is actually in quite a pronounced radial pattern. These are the stems arising from the lignotuber. Not only will the fires stimulate new flowering stems, nutrients are released to the soil which sustain this new growth. So, they truly will be arising from the ashes. <https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/stories/2020/waratah-blooms-after-the-bushfires>

The waratahs in the bushland beside the walking track had sprouted new stems from lignotubers at the base of the old stems, and where before there may have been one stem, there were two, four, and up to six stems, and each stem had a flower.

The flowers were immature and their outer bracts had been damaged by too much rain this spring but they were still lovely. When the flowers mature, their nectar will provide food for birds such as honeyeaters, numerous insects and small mammals, such as the Eastern Pygmy Possum. And the seeds will provide food for others. Some of the seeds may grow into new waratahs.

We noticed that several of the waratah flower heads had been broken off. Waratahs, and other native plants,

are protected in our National Parks and public reserves. There were signs which warned people not to pick the wildflowers and a number to phone to report stolen flowers. By the end of the season all the easily accessible flowers may be gone, and the broken stems will not produce flowers next year.

In the Kuring-gai and Royal National Parks, rangers and volunteers have been spray-painting the underside of the flower stems with non-toxic blue paint to make them less attractive to thieves. Do we have to do that?

-- **TING (Thursday Interpretive Nature Group)**

Waratahs were once very common in and around the mountains towns, but the land was cleared and “the blossoms picked till the poor plant, which can only throw out new blooms through the heart of the old ones, gives up the hopeless struggle and dies.” Read more: <https://bmnature.info/stories-waratah.shtml>

Waratah, my Mountain Queen

Waratah, my Mountain Queen,
Grandest flower ever seen;
Glorious in shade or sun
Where our rocky gullies run,
There is nothing, near or far,
Like our Mountain Waratah.

-- **Henry Lawson** (October 1910)



Springtime in the Blue Mountains

Caladenia catenata
(Orchidacea)

The flowers of this ground orchid are white.

This flower was photographed by Sue Nicol at Darks Common, Glenbrook.



Walking westward on the Grand Clifftop Walk will offer unusual aspects on Blue Mountains scenery, such as the Three Sisters seen from the Leura reserve bearing the memorial to former Blue Mountains Conservation Society member and bushcare legend Grete Vanry.

(Image by Christine Davies)

Lookouts and escarpment walks, Part 3: Marketing a Mountains Icon - Grand opening for Grand Clifftop Walk in 2023? Opinion by Don Morison

The National Parks and Wildlife Service and Blue Mountains City Council have it firmly in mind to stage an opening event for the Grand Clifftop Walk that they have been revamping, sometime in 2023. The object of this would be to encourage considerably more walkers to do all or most of a spectacular route from Wentworth Falls Station to Scenic World Katoomba and to do it over at least two different days. Gordon Falls Reserve would be a major staging point.

The northern escarpment above the Kedumba River catchment has been the target of tourism marketing and visionary planning for more than a century. The Prince Henry Cliff Walk, completed in 1936, and the Cliff Drive motoring route, which began to be seriously integrated in about 1937, have both greatly added to opportunities for non-indigenous people to relate to this landscape. The former has been largely successfully absorbed into the reinvented Grand Clifftop Walk. However, the pandemic and the last three years of extreme weather have been a chance to take stock of the Cliff Drive. Its narrow carriageway, sharp curves and features that cannot cope with the modern climate and safety aspirations make it entirely unsuitable for two-way motor vehicle traffic. The section of Cliff Drive, Leura, where pedestrians and cyclists have an upgraded track network but motor vehicles are totally banned, works extremely well. The cost of safely maintaining two-way traffic in most parts of Cliff Drive would be exorbitant.

The practicalities of whether 2023 is too early for a Grand Clifftop Walk opening must also be faced. The responsible bodies have struggled valiantly to keep so much of this route in easily usable condition. But a 2023 opening would likely have to take place without the southern part of the damaged Charles Darwin Walk and, very probably, without much of the section between Gordon Falls Reserve and Tarpeian Rock at Leura. There needs to be a serious debate about the condition of the alternative routes and whether more of the complete bushland route needs to be fixed before there is a promotion on the scale contemplated.

It is also time to emphasise that Wentworth Falls Station and Scenic World should not be the permanent termini of this walking route. Earlier this year, a group of walkers decided to cover the section of the "Great West Walk", which apparently includes the Grand Clifftop Walk, from Katoomba to Penrith. But they started from the Carrington Hotel in Katoomba and visited the highly important indigenous interpretive site at The Gully, Katoomba. Connecting The Gully via a bushland route to the Katoomba end of the Clifftop Walk is a most worthwhile aspiration and the future development of the Katoomba Golf Course site and the state controlled Clairvaux site should take account of this. Additionally, there is great potential for quality links from the Clifftop Walk to the upgraded Wentworth Falls Lake track system and the currently damaged track from Gordon Falls to the Gallipoli Memorial Plantings at Lone Pine Avenue, Leura.

Springtime in the Blue Mountains



Leucopogon ericoides has white to pinkish, tube-shaped flowers and is commonly known as Pink Beard-heath. It is endemic to south-eastern Australia. Photographed by Sue Nicol at Hazelbrook.

© Sue Nicol



BUSHWALKING:

Enjoy the bush, learn about the Blue Mountains natural environment and find out why bushwalking has been a popular pastime in the Blue Mountains for more than 100 years. Our bushwalking convenor is Doug Nicholls dougnicholls@bigpond.com, phone 0455 850 735.

Walks are graded and generally suitable for walkers of average fitness but may vary in degree of difficulty. Participants need to be aware of their own capabilities and can discuss with the bushwalking convenor, group coordinator or leader.

Underneath is a brief summary of walks and leaders for this month. **Check our website <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/bushwalking.shtml> for a detailed walks program and program changes.**

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short day walks 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator: Keith Dorrian 04111 62345.

keithdor53@hotmail.com

Nov 7 **Michael Eades Reserve, North Katoomba.** Grade 2. Beth Rohrlach 0424 732 287

Nov 14 **Rocklily Ridge off Mt Hay Road, Leura,** 12km, 925m ascent to 690m decent. Maree 0427390 645

Nov 21 **Hargraves Lookout Blackheath,** 6km return with spectacular views at the end. Car Pool, Grade 2, Keith 0411 162 345

Nov 28 **Yellow Rock to Nepean River & Fitzgerald Creek.** Grade 2. Maurice 4739 4942

Dec 5 **Rigby Hill & Walls Lookout.** 4kms. Grade 2. Maurice 0402 402 783

TUESDAY FITNESS WALKS: Coordinator: Susan Nicholls (4754 1516 suerosn@bigpond.net.au).

Nov 8 **Shaws Ridge-Blue Gum Swamp (Winmalee)** G2/10K, Rob 0400672336. Nov 15 **Sun Valley to Fitzgerald Creek (Valley Heights)** G2/6K, Maurice 0402402783. Nov 29 **Dangar Island** G1/4K, Doug 0455850753. Dec 6 **Bellbird Point (Megalong Valley)** G3/6K, Robyn 0409127012. Dec 13 **Peggys Pool (Faulconbridge),** G2/4K, Ken 0417514534

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS are 2-3 hours and are conducted at a leisurely pace. Coordinator: Beverley Thompson (4757 2076 denfenella12@bigpond.com)

Nov 10 **Blue Gum Swamp, Winmalee,** 9kms on track with a few minor creek crossings. Angela 0427 133 327. Gr2

Nov 17 **Transit of Venus, Woodford.** Keith 0411 162 345. Gr2.

Nov 24 **Minnehaha Falls, North Katoomba.** Ros 0417 261 465. Grade 2

Dec 1 **Hyde Park, Hartley, with a swim in the River Lett.** Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 1

Dec 8 **Mount Blackheath.** Maurice 0402 402 783. Grade 1

Dec 15 **Christmas Party at park opposite Lawson Swimming Pool.** Meet 12 noon.

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Coordinator Harold Thompson 04090 10736, Harold.thompson@bigpond.com).

Nov 5 **Evans Crown.** 8km Map Tarana. Harold 0409010737. Gr3.

Nov 12 **Rigby Hill, Wongara Ridge, Walls Lookout.** Some off track. Alice 04257 38766. Gr3/8km/Mt Wilson map.

Nov 19 **Lockleys Pylon,** 9km. Map, Katoomba. Geoff 0497638033. Grade 3

Nov 26 **Rainbow Caves & Numantia Falls,** 10km. Map Springwood. Harold 0409010737. Grade 3.

Dec 3 **Watertrough Hill & Two Ridges.** 8km. Map Mt Wilson. Harold 0409010737. Grade 3

Visit the Saturday walks facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks?fref=nf>

Maps go missing?

Long-term bushwalkers in the Society will surely remember some interesting discussions between navigators with hard copy maps and navigators with programs on their hand-held phones or other electronic devices. For this reason alone, the disappearance of the last specialised map-selling shop in physical existence in New South Wales from its North Parramatta premises in October 2022 is an historic event.

For many older conservationists, the evolution from the hand-crafted works of early surveyors like Major Thomas Mitchell and explorers like Myles Dunphy through to the multi-coloured topographical maps and aerial photos that emerged in the late 20th century has been part of our own relationship with the natural environment. It is, indeed, difficult for some of us to believe that those who operate from the comparatively limited information shown on the screens of devices rise to the heights of spatial visualisation achieved by those of us inspired by hard-copy maps.

The control of information has, of course, often been a tool of social engineering. At one time it was suggested that one of the ways to stop people using a road or track was to wipe it off the map. That view is heresy to those of us who want all the information about the physical terrain that can be fitted onto a map right there at our disposal.

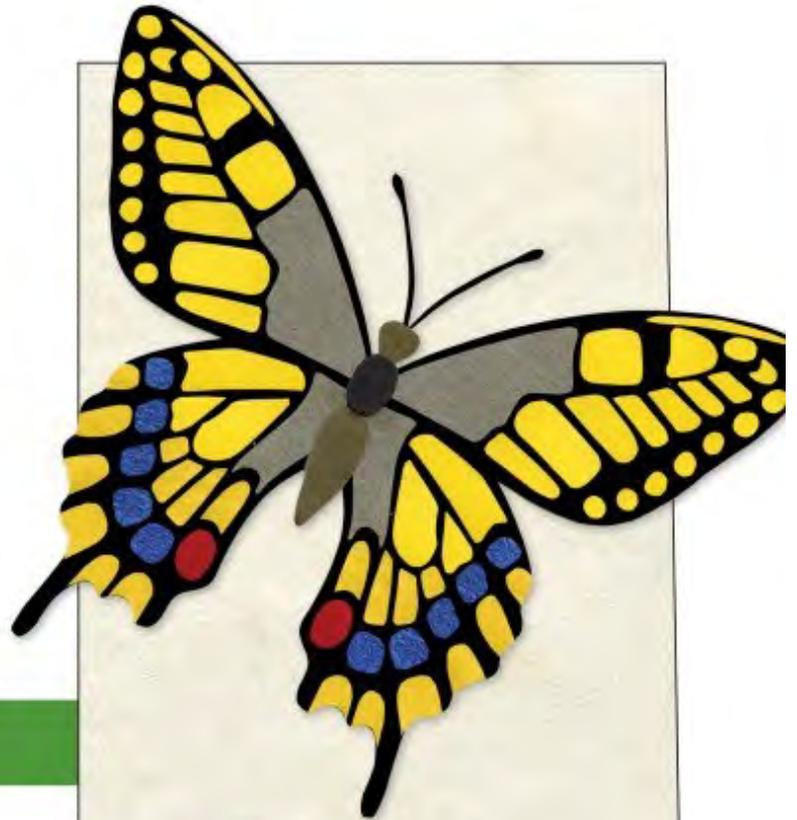
The map centre which operated from North Parramatta is going to continue with online sales and telephone orders. The age of appreciating the natural environment with hard-copy maps is not, and should not be, yet over.

Don't tell anybody we told you, but contact 02 9890 2080 or www.mapcentre.com.au if you want to get your hands on hard-copy maps.

-- The Hut News Team

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COLOR

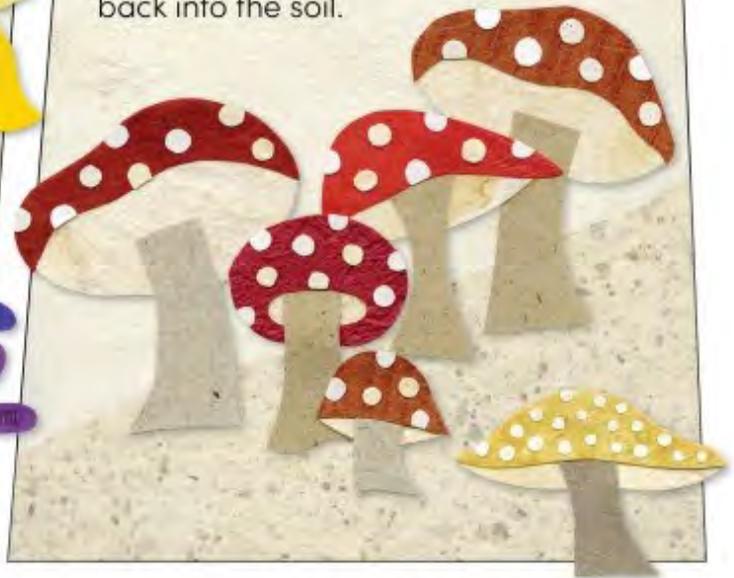


BUTTERFLIES help pollinate flowers. Did you know they taste with their feet?

Enjoy **WILDFLOWERS** by looking and smelling rather than picking.



MUSHROOMS are the recyclers of the forest. They break down organic matter into nutrients that get recycled back into the soil.



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