



HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Issue No. 438
August 2025

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

2025 marks the 25th anniversary of the inscription of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area on the UNESCO World Heritage List. As a testimony to the love and respect we have for this amazing and unique land, we will take the time to understand, connect with and seek to protect it.

Rise Against Coal: Sydney's Crisis - Blue Mountains Community Action

Underground coal mining is damaging groundwater, destroying endangered peat swamps and threatening nature.

We can't let this happen. We need a public independent inquiry now!

The Gardens of Stone Alliance, together with Young Nerve, is urgently convening a community meeting and protest concert to push back against coal pollution impacting Sydney's drinking water catchment and the sensitive Gardens of Stone region and the World Heritage area.

Saturday 9th August at Katoomba Community Centre, 81-83 Katoomba Street

- ♦ **Community Meeting: 10.30am-12pm. All welcome!**
- ♦ **Young Nerve Hardcore for a Cause - Protest Concert: 3pm to 8pm. Tickets \$25.**

You can register to attend the community meeting and buy tickets for Protest Concert here: <https://events.humanitix.com/rise-against-coal-sydney-s-crisis-blue-mountains-community-meeting>

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a member of Gardens of Stone Alliance.

You Are Invited to a FREE EVENT



Lithgow Environment Group presents a morning with Andrew Lothian, local fauna ecologist. "How is our natural area Gardens of Stone SCA travelling after 2019-2020 fire"

Saturday 16 August, 10.am - 12pm
Lithgow Library, 157 Main Street, Lithgow.

Celebrating National Science Week, 9-17 August 2025

"Decoding the Universe: Exploring the unknown with nature's hidden language".

Katoomba Library will be hosting a Science Fair (9-17 August). The fair will feature nature-based activities like water testing and a real water bugs display, and it will be held at Katoomba Library and the Cultural Centre. The event is open to kids of all ages and is a free community event.

Blackheath will learn all about native bees (14 August) ... have a picnic and join in The Bee-rilliant Bee Musical (16 August) ... See like a Bee in UV! (16 August). Details of this and more can be found on <https://bluemountainslocals.com.au/national-science-week-2025-blue-mountains-and-beyond/> Free events.

Join the Society

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is an incorporated voluntary group of over 800 members. Our mission is to help protect, conserve, and advocate for, the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains. Find out about our events, bushwalks, our native plant nursery, how you can volunteer to help preserve our beautiful World Heritage Area. www.bluemountains.org.au Our monthly newsletter is delivered by post and online.

Save the Sugarloaf home of this Peregrine Falcon, Platypus, the Vulnerable Silver-leaved Mountain Gum and layers of history and heritage, pages 8-9.

Image: Peregrine Falcon above Mount Blaxland and the Sugarloafs (Richard Delaney and Wyn Jones)



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Contact management committee members by phone: Please leave a message with your full contact details and reason for your call on 0490 419 779.

If you are a member of the Society and want to volunteer to help with the work of the Society, in any capacity:

email bmcs@bluemountains.org.au

or **phone** 0490 419 779 (leave a message).



From the President

What a busy time of year winter is! Catching up on cleaning up the yard, starting to get ready for the fire season that will be upon us all too soon and all the inside jobs that seem to be overlooked once the weather warms and we spend more time outdoors.

I arrived home to Australia at the end of June, from a humid and hot Toronto where I visited my daughter and her family, to cold and windy Blue Mountains! A bit of a shock to the system, especially when a rather tall *Angophora costata* that I had been watching regrow its leaf canopy as it recovered from very dry conditions a few years ago, fell across my car and driveway during the recent storms! I was more shocked by the loss of my dear tree than the crumples in my car's bonnet. I wondered what the cockatoos, kookaburras and magpies that used the tree as a stopover or lookout thought when they flew to find their branches now missing.

The tree – now just an overturned stump – is probably only 40 or so years old but had become a familiar feature as I looked out my kitchen window. This view is in constant change as the native plants we've been encouraging and planting down the side of our land grow taller and thicker, filling the mid-layer under the tree canopy and become habitat suitable for birds, lizards and insects. Not to mention the wallaby that comes in to chew his way through the garden!

When I checked the tree, it was evident that the roots were not sound, having a considerable amount of rot in them. Makes me wonder – is this the effect of changing patterns in the way increased storm water from the road runs across the ground here? Or a change in water pH resulting from the impact of concrete and other building materials? Or the impacts of alternating very dry years followed by very wet years? Or perhaps disease?

I don't know the answer to these questions but it does remind me that our natural world is always in flux. I notice that there are four or so young *Angophora costata* plants growing within a 30m radius of my lost tree and so in time, hopefully, they will provide valuable habitat.

Our job is not to prevent all changes to our natural environment but to manage these changes in a way that supports natural processes and minimises detrimental changes our own actions may impose.

Here's to my lost tree and those saplings who may replace it!

Pollinators

Whilst waiting in Vancouver airport for my flight home to Sydney, I spent a little time thinking about some observations I made whilst in Toronto over June. I am impressed with Toronto's Pollinator Protection Strategy which is very evident on the streets of the city, both in many retail/business areas and residential areas. There are messy gardens that at first glance, looked overgrown with weeds, full of flowering and seeding grasses, daisies, herbs and scruffy shrubs. But then I happened upon a sign on the edge of the sidewalk that made sense – "This area is a Pollinator Garden and is being left to provide habitat for our native pollinators." *What a grand idea!*

Toronto has recognised the importance of providing habitat to their 360 species of bees and over 100 species of butterflies all year round, to encourage and protect the native pollinators. This includes pollinator plants and some bare earth and dead wood which will give pollinators habitat in which to escape the freezing Toronto winters (on extreme cold days, it can drop to -30°C).

Grants are given to residents and community organisations to support the establishment and maintenance of pollinator gardens.

Surely this is something we could consider here in the Blue Mountains LGA.

Hoping to see you at some of our members' meetings and other outings from now until the end of the year!

—Annette Cam, President

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Walking World Heritage

Easy-access walks to celebrate the forthcoming 25th anniversary

Bushwalkers can appreciate the 1.03 million hectares of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area through the effort of visiting its most remote regions or by doing short “Grade 1” or “Grade 2” walks from major population centres such as some walks referenced in this series. Here are the first three items of a series of walk locations.

1. Lapstone Public School to Bluff Lookout. Walking near Glenbrook Gorge which girds Blue Mountains National Park truly makes you realise the GBMWA is at the doorstep of Australia’s most densely populated area. This photograph looks east along the rugged sandstone gorge towards the subdivisions in Glenmore Park on the Cumberland Plain. It is a great area for observing the biodiversity on the Hawkesbury sandstone soils. You don’t have to go far, just to the junction of the Euroka Road and Mount Portal Trail, to see a different ecosystem based on shale soils. From the east side of Lapstone School, you can walk south into Darks Common along the formation of an old construction tramway which was used between 1911 and 1913 to position the modern railway along the side of Glenbrook Gorge. Throughout the walk, you will see relics of human activity being swallowed by the return of the original Eucalypt forest.

2. Genevieve Road fire trail, South Bullaburra.

At the forefront of the World Heritage Listing in 2000 was the diversity of Myrtaceae family trees in which botanists now include the genera *Eucalyptus*, *Angophora* and *Corymbia*. On the walk from Genevieve Road to a natural lookout overlooking the intricate gullies of the “Blue Labyrinth”, a name for the combination of the Erskine-Bedford and Glenbrook Creek catchments, all three genera are visible. There are the graceful *Angophora costata*, the Bloodwoods of the *Corymbia* genus and numerous species of Eucalypts. The need to protect nearby homes from fire means the effects of deliberate and unintended burning are evident along various parts of the walk. This also leads to variations in the health and diversity of the prolific understorey plants and the multiple species of fungi.

3. Govetts Leap Lookout and the stub of Rodriguez Pass, Blackheath.

A short section of the walking track, built in the very early 20th century and championed by Blackheath Station Master, Thomas Rodriguez, is still open just below the lookout at Govetts Leap carpark. First Australians believe the river that carved this spectacular valley should now be known as Bulgamatta and, certainly, the name Grose (owed to an acting Governor of NSW), does no justice to it. The cliffline east of Blackheath is intriguing for its multiple layers of variously weathered Narrabeen sandstones, its slot canyons and its magnificent waterfalls. A short steep section below the main lookout gives you multiple perspectives on the Blackheath Bridal Veil Falls by which Braeside creek descends the escarpment. Here you can appreciate the detail of the wet cliff face ecosystems and possibly be sprayed a bit yourself. You are likely to come close to plants from the *Epacris* and *Drosera* genera and much other cliff dwelling flora.

—The Hut News Team, with the assistance of the Thursday Interpretive Nature Group and Peter Green.



Glenbrook Gorge, (Edwin Franks)



Angophora costata in Blue Mountains National Park at South Bullaburra (Christine Davies)



Braeside Creek falls into the Grose Valley (Christine Davies)

Western Sydney International Airport Master Plan

By 2nd September submissions from the community will close regarding the Western Sydney Airport Master Plan.

Every airport in Australia is legally required to write an Airport Master Plan and update it every five years. Western Sydney Airport has just published its first Master Plan and it is open for community scrutiny and comment.

It might seem that Blue Mountains residents would not have much to comment on with regard to the Airport, but it needs to be borne in mind that Western Sydney Airport sits just 8 kms from the World Heritage Area and as such is a near and present danger. The lack of community consultation in the Mountains with regard to the Master Plan indicates that Western Sydney Airport Corp. also thinks that the Airport itself will have minimal impact on the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, but expansion of the airport, as suggested in the Master Plan, will have massive impacts on the GBWHA.

The Master Plan is of course lots of froth and bubble and presumes that the airport is an endlessly expanding piece of infrastructure with a capacity trajectory that will

take it beyond one physical runway to two physical runways, multiple cargo and passenger airplane parking bays and projecting millions of passengers up to and beyond 2050. Of course, such careless expansion will mean the decimation of the World Heritage Area as we know it and bring about a total lifestyle change for the whole of the Western Sydney and Blue Mountains areas. This needs comment if nothing else.

The potentially careless and inconsiderate development of the airport in Western Sydney to a capacity undefined and that is certain to increase climate change; noise pollution and toxic emissions over communities and pristine bushland while negatively impacting the fauna and flora of the Blue Mountains is worthy of comment, especially as it is our tax payer dollars that is financing this environmental degradation.

Check out the Western Sydney International Airport Master Plan at: <https://wsaiairport.com.au/master-plan>

—Jo Carroll

Wildlife Real Estate - Follow up event

Saturday 23 August, Mount Tomah and Bilpin

As a follow up to the "Wildlife Real Estate" event held in March, we will be visiting the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mt Tomah where Ian Allan will give an update of their work with tree hollows. We will then go down the hill to Bilpin to see the work that Mountains for Wildlife are doing with tree hollows.

If you would like to attend this event please use this link: <https://events.humanitix.com/visit-to-the-blue-mountains-botanic-garden-mt-tomah-and-bilpin>

This should be a great day out so I hope you will venture over to "the other side" of the Mountains to see what goes on there. We will start at 10AM at Mt Tomah and should finish by 3PM at Bilpin. You could bring a picnic lunch to have in the beautiful garden or have lunch at the Bellbird Café. If you wish to partake of lunch at the café, which is within the gardens, you can book on 0468 458 525. We should be ready for lunch at about 12 noon.

Note Ian Allan will also tell us about the amazing research going on with Wollemi pines and their ancient connection to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area. You can't miss this event!

—Elizabeth Howard

Letter to the Editor

In June this year, we spotted what we thought might be Bandicoot diggings on our large bushland property - most of which is protected by a Conservation Agreement with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust. I set up one of our wildlife cameras to spot what may have been doing the digging!

After a few false readings - with sightings of wallabies and a dreaded fox - I relocated the camera to places where there were fresh holes dug and we captured a photo which, on close inspection, turned out to be a very small wallaby. But still no sign of what was digging the holes.

Now two weeks later, there are no fresh holes being dug, BUT a cat has been sighted three times. In one video it is pouncing on something. I have contacted my neighbours but none of them own it and indeed they do not own any cats. Sadly, no fresh holes dug may mean the digging creature has been attacked either by a cat or a fox. I do wish there were better and stronger controls on domestic cat containment.

-- Eva Johnstone, Blackheath

Planting Trees for Glossy Black-Cockatoos

Mid Lachlan Landcare, in conjunction with the Blue Mountains Planetary Health Initiative, ran an event on 7 June where Jayden Gunn from Birdlife Australia told us about Glossy Black-Cockatoos, a vulnerable species in NSW. This Landcare group is planting trees for the cockatoos mostly on farming land and working with other groups to extend the range of available food trees. They are hoping to connect up areas Glossies are known to inhabit. Habitat connectivity is essential if species are to adapt and overcome the challenges posed by our changing climate. We will learn how to identify the birds, what they like to eat, their interesting habits and some of the challenges of the work.

If you are interested in following the work of this Landcare group or would like to get involved, have a look at their website at <https://midlachlanlandcare.org/glossy-black-cockatoo-project/> Some Blue Mountains people were involved in the July planting days.

There is an excellent field guide available from Birdlife Australia that tells you everything you would ever want to know about these magnificent birds. You can find it at <https://birdlife.org.au/events/the-great-glossy-count/glossy-black-cockatoo-resources/> under "Glossy and she-oak identification".

Hut News Trivia Question 15

Female and juvenile Satin Bowerbirds are green and tend to flock together, often in family groups or small flocks of four to eight individuals, while mature males look very different and are typically solitary.

At what age do mature male Satin Bowerbirds get their adult plumage?

The answer can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

A Literature Review on the Impacts of Concrete on Sandstone Environments of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and the Larger Sydney Basin Bioregion

It is becoming better understood through research that concrete has a major impact on low nutrient environments. I hope to communicate the research to date on this topic in a way that is understandable.

—Liam Ramage, Threatened Species Officer (References are on page 10)

The Relationship Between the Geology and Flora of the Sydney Basin

The geology of the Sydney Basin is comprised of Permian and Triassic aged sedimentary strata made up of various units of coal, shales, claystones, siltstones and sandstones. The larger sandstone units include the Triassic Hawkesbury Sandstone and Narrabeen Group Sandstones. These sandstone units make up the prominent upland areas of the upper and lower Blue Mountains, the Wollemi region, Newnes Plateau, Hornsby Plateau, and Woronora Plateau, (MinView, 2025).

The sandstones of the Hawkesbury Sandstone and Narrabeen Group are quartz rich with minor clay and iron oxide components (MinView, 2025). The soils derived from these sandstone geologies are characteristically nutrient poor (infertile) and acidic (low pH). These specific conditions have led to the evolution of floral communities with high biodiversity and high endemism which are highly adapted to the acidic infertile soils. This high biodiversity is a significant part of the recognition of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area by UNESCO.

The Geochemical Impacts of Concrete on Sandstone Soils

Concrete is a soluble alkaline (high pH) artificial material. The dissolution of the carbonate component of concrete causes changes in water chemistry within its proximity and downstream of any runoff in contact with it. Concrete rapidly and significantly increases water pH as well as increasing concentrations of dissolved chemical constituents such as calcium, potassium and bicarbonate (Carroll et al., 2022) (Purdy and Wright, 2019). These changes in chemistry are transferred to soils in contact with the water runoff from concrete, which increase the soil pH and increase concentrations of elements in the soil.

The Ecological Impacts of Concrete

The geochemical changes in soil and water from concrete have several potential ecological impacts in acidic infertile sandstone environments. Most flora is sensitive to the pH of the soil and has a range at which major and minor nutrients are bioavailable. Native sandstone flora evolved to uptake the limited nutrients in the acidic environment. But the majority of the invasive weed flora of the region evolved in more alkaline soils where the major and minor nutrients are bioavailable. Invasive flora can become established in the more alkaline soils and, inversely, many species of native flora find the increase in alkalinity hostile. This may cause die back or stunted growth, decreasing native floral diversity and cover.

Other potential impacts from concrete infrastructure include soil erosion from increased runoff due to hard impermeable surfaces and decrease in natural vegetation cover. This reduces the integrity of the natural

area through erosion, sedimentation, modified hydrology and invasive flora. This has been specifically well documented in studies on wetlands of the Blue Mountains (Belmer et al., 2015) (Carroll et al., 2022) (Purdy and Wright, 2019) (Purdy et al., 2024).

Urban runoff is well known to cause weed infestation in natural areas of the Sydney sandstone region (Thomson and Leishman, 2004) and it is highly likely that concrete in the urban landscape is playing a major role in this process (Purdy and Wright, 2019). Other sources of nutrients such as phosphorus from urban contaminants also contribute. The installation of concrete infrastructure into natural and protected areas can expand impact from areas already affected by urban runoff into catchments that have remained pristine.

In Conclusion

Concrete infrastructure has a major impact on the soil and water chemistry in acidic nutrient poor sandstone derived environments. This causes invasive flora to become established, negatively impacts native flora, changes hydrology, damages natural soils and disturbs ecological functioning. These changes are detrimental to native flora and pose increased pressures on threatened species and threatened ecological communities, particularly those with limited ranges such as Blue Mountains hanging swamps.

These impacts are becoming well known and studies on the extent of the impacts should be used in conservation management in the protected areas of the sandstone environment within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and across the Sydney basin region.



Map showing the extent of the sandstone environment of the Sydney region. Sandstone in brown and NPWS land in Green. (Data from www.minview.geoscience.nsw.gov.au)



This restored Blackheath wetland is excellent wildlife habitat and promotes biodiversity (P Vale) The bird is a White-necked Heron, its prey a Blue Mountains crayfish.



Assessing natural regeneration by checking for seedling growth (P Ardill)



Soft coir logs minimise stormwater and weed seed flows into healthy bushland (P Ardill)



Sharing ecological knowledge promotes restoration project success (P Ardill)

Exploring conservation myths: is bushcare all about weeding?

Bushcare has now been operating in the Blue Mountains for approximately thirty-five years and, over this period, it has developed into a highly respected component of the regional environmental repair and conservation scene. But what happens at bushcare? Is bushcare all about weeding?

Certainly, weeding is an essential restoration technique on those degraded sites that significantly feature invasive plant species. However on many sites the presence of multiple degradation issues necessitates the application of a range of restoration techniques if substantial ecological functioning is to be recovered. This article explores several environmental degradation scenarios and how bushcarers might respond to them.

Where indigenous vegetation has been stripped from a site, *natural regeneration* is the preferred revegetation option. This commonly involves protecting the seedlings produced by germination of naturally distributed indigenous plant seed, for example with fencing. On sites that do not exhibit capacity for natural regeneration, bushcarers may opt to manually spread suitable plant seed.

Planting is another frequently utilised revegetation technique. The species selected must be appropriate for the site. For example, in a Mountains stream bank restoration project, indigenous vegetation tolerant of moist alluvial soils would most likely be used.

Stormwater-induced erosion is a degradation issue that bushcarers often encounter. To treat this problem, manufactured soft coir logs can be installed to control stormwater. Brush-matting, comprised of pruned indigenous vegetation and fallen timber, is another effective erosion response.

Finally, engagement with stakeholders is a frequently utilised bushcare management tool. Where bushcare projects challenge prevailing gardening and landscaping concepts, it is important that connections are established with curious, often puzzled local residents! Development of community ecological literacy is another vital engagement activity. Bushcare websites, articles, letter-boxing, information stalls, films and public workshops help to promote successful project outcomes.

Weeding, the practice of effectively removing invasive plant species and their seed, is a vital bushcare skill. But, for those sites that display multiple degradation features, a number of tried and tested restoration techniques will be utilised. That bushcare projects invariably feature a range of interesting environmental management challenges is definitely no myth!

— Peter Ardill, BMCS Bushcare Officer

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

Western Sydney Airport (WSI) Update

—Annette Cam, President

Chris Whiteman expressed concern about several issues relating to Western Sydney International airport in a Letter to the Editor (Concerns about biosecurity issues at Western Sydney airport, page 7, July 2025 Hut News) . It is good to see that people are still taking the time to express their concerns about the airport and its potential detrimental impacts.

I share Chris' concerns about the biosecurity risks which may arise from the closeness of this airport to the natural areas of Western Sydney and the Cumberland Plain, and the GBMWA. As do many in our community and the Society too!

The concentration on the noise issues in recent years is because the 2023 Environmental Impact Statement addressed only the draft flight paths out of WSI and their impacts. The Society assessed as the main impact of these flight paths, the adverse visual impact on scenic amenity, the sense of wilderness, and the noise impacts on wilderness and the wildlife. We also included in our submission, concerns about pollution from fuel burned or dumped by aircraft as they fly over Lake Burragorang, and over the World Heritage Area and other natural areas. These are the main areas addressed in our submission on the 2023 EIS on draft flight paths.

The release of the 2024 Senate Inquiry into the impacts of airports and flight paths on regional communities agreed with the Society that monitoring of noise impacts on natural areas and wildlife is important and it has now been written into the conditions which WSA must implement (see this link: <https://www.wsiflightpaths.gov.au/conditions/>). We are pleased about this, as this monitoring will now happen and we are working to ensure that the monitoring is independent, rigorous and scientific in design.

However, Chris' biosecurity concerns are relevant and important and we have not forgotten them. Now we have an airport closer to actually opening, it is time to raise this again with our government and insist on effective processes and procedures to protect our biodiversity.

Chris' letter raises many excellent points. I encourage you to share your concerns with your local member and Hon Judith Collins MP Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry Minister.Collins@aff.gov.au. Member for Macquarie is Susan Templeman, email susan.templeman.mp@aph.gov.au The Society will also write, on behalf of our members, to both these people with similar questions. We will publish on our website both our letter and the answer. You can reread Chris Whiteman's letter to Hut News on www.bluemountains.org.au – publications – Hut News archives – 2025.

Biosecurity concerns

A little beetle has devastated thousands of trees in Perth and could hitch a ride here. Perhaps on freight arriving at Western Sydney Airport. According to the Sydney Morning Herald (Angus Dalton, 8/7/25), the Western Australian Government admits that it has lost the fight to eradicate the shot-hole borer (SHB), a tiny beetle the size of a sesame seed which originated from SE Asia. SHB was first detected in Perth in 2021. It is thought that it may have arrived in imported wood and spread to Rottnest Island in infected mulch.

SHB carries *Fusarium ambrosium* fungus for its larvae to feed on. It's the fungus that kills the trees. "The fungus spreads into a tree's vascular system, blocking the water-carrying xylem and the nutrient-transporting phloem, which starves the tree of hydration and energy". Tiny holes in trees are a sign of infection.

If (or when) SHB reaches NSW, our street trees will be particularly vulnerable. Without our street trees, urban temperatures would rise. Trees grown for timber will be vulnerable. Native trees which will be vulnerable include the magnificent Sheoaks (Casuarinas) which shade many of our rivers. There are 101 species of Eucalypt in our Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area – how many of them will be susceptible?

—Christine Davies

Read: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/insect-pests-and-plant-diseases/polyphagous-shot-hole-borer> and <https://www.dpiird.wa.gov.au/siteassets/documents/biosecurity/incidents/pshb/pshb-wa-host-list.pdf>



Early morning on the Murrumbidgee River at Gundagai. Nuala Gattenhof photographs the reflections through an archway of Casuarinas. (Image by Christine Davies)

HUT NEWS TRIVIA Answer to Question 15

An adult male Satin Bower Bird has striking glossy blue-black plumage, a pale bluish white bill and a violet-blue iris. It looks very different to the younger males and females who are similar in colour to each other and collectively referred to as 'green' birds. Young males may begin to acquire their adult plumage in their fifth year and are not fully 'attired' until they are seven. Read more: <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/birds/satin-bowerbird/>

The Three Sugarloafs - A Reserve in the Making

Wyn Jones, Ecologist and Wild Guide ⁽¹⁾



Imagine a place with the rare Silver-leaved Mountain Gum, granite boulders and stark cliffs with Peregrine Falcons and Platypus playing in the river below. A place with remnant stands of native vegetation as it was when the three explorers crossed the Blue Mountains now situated like an island standing proud of the grazing cattle and sheep in the paddocks nearby. This is the place of the Three Sugarloafs just a few kilometres south of Lithgow not far from the Great Western Highway, next to Coxs Road.

THREE SUGARLOAFS - A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SEVEN VALLEYS HERITAGE AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE
IT IS NOT PROTECTED NOR HERITAGE LISTED

WHAT ARE THE THREE SUGARLOAFS - the map shows the combined area of the three land parcels is 160ha comprising:

1. THE 50ha MOUNT BLAXLAND CROWN RESERVE, MANAGED BY THE HVMBRLM (Hartley Vale Mount Blaxland Reserve Land Manager)
2. **Lot 14** 110ha WENTWORTH AND LAWSON SUGARLOAFS, PRIVATELY OWNED AND **FOR SALE**.

The sugarloafs have never been disturbed or mined, and are unsuitable for grazing or cropping.

The Conservation Value of The Three Sugarloafs

Why are they SO SPECIAL?

1. This is a special piece of country, a remnant, the easternmost example of granite outcrop sugarloafs. The rounded summit mounds are distinct from the giant boulder-strewn fields of Evans Crown and further west.
2. They are undisturbed - since the passing of the first colonists
3. The northernmost largest population, estimated 600 plants of *Eucalyptus pulverulenta*, Silver-leaved Mountain Gum, a rock mallee specialist
4. Resident population of Peregrine Falcon
5. Platypus in the Coxs River
6. Big part of our history - where the Three EXPLORERS TURNED AROUND
7. Part of the Coxs Road story - see Goldney, "Coxs Road Dreaming".
8. Part of a beautiful stretch of the Coxs River, Lyell Lake to Glenroy.

The Coxs River is familiar to all of us, notably named after the man who built the first western road in the wake of Blaxland Wentworth and Lawson. Sourced in the Great Dividing Range, it forms dammed lakes at Thompsons Creek, Lake Wallace and Lake Lyell in the granite country of the Bathurst Batholith. South of Lithgow the Coxs River passes between Mount Blaxland and the peaks of the Wentworth and Lawson Sugarloafs.

These three peaks form the **Three Sugarloafs, a potential conservation reserve**. Mount Blaxland is lower by six to eight metres than the others, but looms larger in the landscape as viewed from the east as it was by the three explorers. This may be the reason they climbed it at the end of their journey as they looked at the panorama around them. That view confirmed that they had indeed found excellent grazing land though they were at the easternmost edge of the granite country from Mount York on the western edge of the Blue Mountains Sandstone Curtain. At Mount Blaxland they saw this grazing country continue up to the Great Divide and made the reasonable assumption it would extend much further.

An Historical Perspective - Although Coxs Road, often called Bathurst Road, was used for a time, the arrival of surveyor Thomas Mitchell on the scene moved the road to the north under Hassans Walls, by-passing Mount Blaxland and the Three Sugarloafs. Mitchells Road became the present Great Western Highway, passing underneath the cliffs of Mount York and Hassans Walls, the sandstone escarpment dominating the view and the traveller's consciousness.

It seemed that Mount Blaxland and the original route were bypassed in the rush to the west, with everyday business of the pursuit of agricultural and mining endeavours. And along with this Mount Blaxland was largely forgotten and it became generally accepted that the original crossing by Blaxland Wentworth and Lawson ended at Mount York.

Nevertheless there was considerable visitation of Mount Blaxland during the first half of the 20th century period, but this all but disappeared in the years since the 1960s.

Meanwhile, in the 1960s, Gregory Blaxland's Great Grandson Keith had gathered a committee and garnered money to construct a highly visible Landmark, on the top of the mount which would be seen from the Sandstone Curtain and in particular Mount York. Keith Blaxland's Committee planned the erection of seven signs along roads and lookouts, though only three remain at Mount York, Hassans Walls and along the Jenolan Road.

If this Landmark made any difference to the public perception of Mount Blaxland is unknown. And strangely, what of the other two sugarloafs on the north side of the Coxs River, though prominent enough they do not rate a mention in 211 years except in 1813 when Surveyor Evans named them as he stood on Mount Blaxland.

(Continued on page 9)

The Three Sugarloafs - A Reserve in the Making

(Continued from page 8)

A Rare Moment in History - It is time now to give the Three Sugarloafs a joint prominence in our heritage. Together they are a rare conservation opportunity.

A Three Sugarloafs Reserve can contribute much to the Region

- a potential field studies centre
- excellent educational value
- light recreation
- complements and contrasts with Gardens of Stone National Park
- close to Lithgow and transport
- part of the Blue Mountains Experience
- an artist's paradise

You can HELP community and political awareness:

- Buy the land for sale and donate it to NPWS
- stop the sale until it is acquired as a reserve
- write to the premier and your local member



Eucalyptus pulverulenta, Silver-leaved Mountain Gum (Wyn Jones)

YOU CAN HELP !

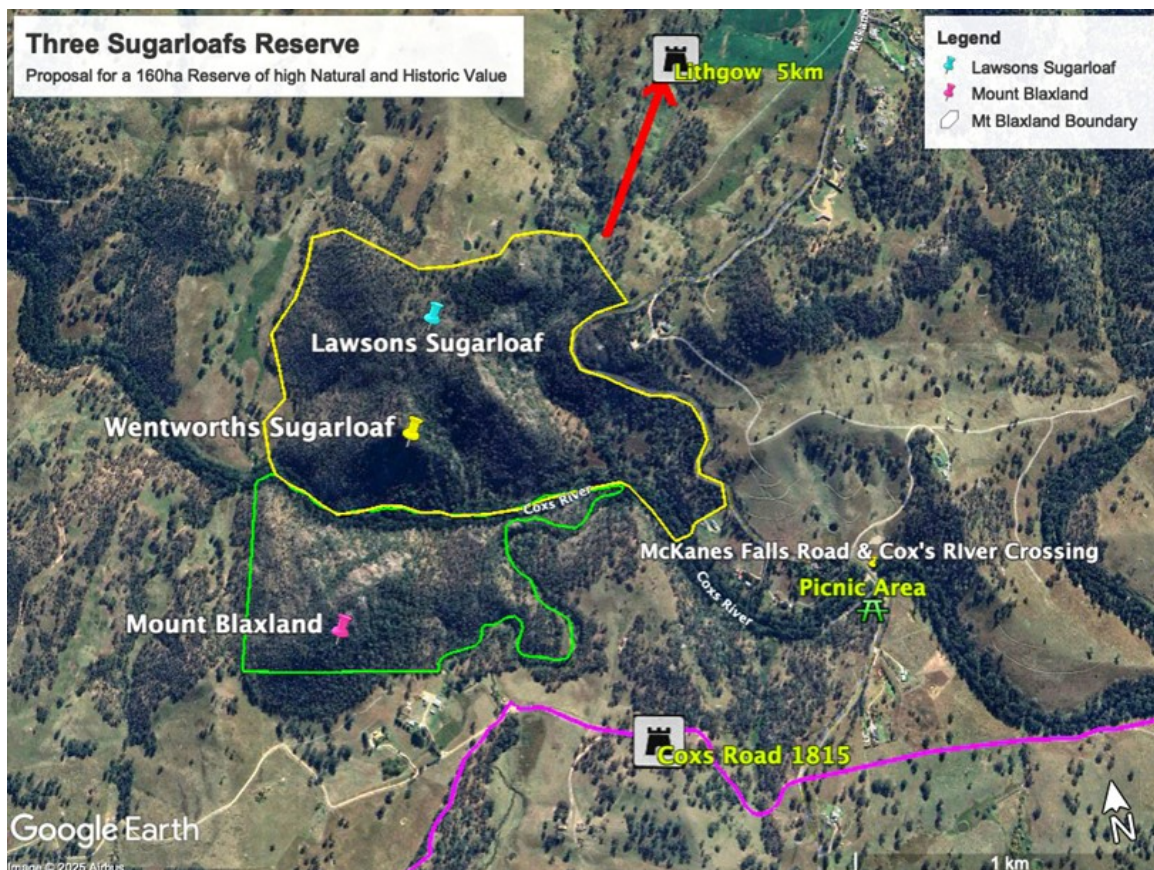
Support the acquisition of LOT 14 by the government

***** WRITE TO THE PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND REQUEST THE FORMATION OF THE THREE SUGARLOAFS CONSERVATION RESERVE**

CHRIS MINNS PREMIER NSW office@premier.nsw.gov.au

PENNY SHARPE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT office@sharpe.minister.nsw.gov.au

(1) Wyn Jones is a long term resident of the Blue Mountains, researched the fauna and flora as an ecologist, studied the Blue Gum Forest trees, wrote the Conservation Society's Submission to the LEP 1991 and Radiata Plateau acquisition amongst many things. He is currently the Chair of Hartley Vale Mount Blaxland Reserve Land Manager.



Map: Wyn Jones
from Google
Earth

Drawing on
page 8
by Wyn Jones

Environmental weeds and their impacts

Seaside Daisy (*Erigeron karvinskianus*), delicate but destructive!

Seaside Daisy is an attractive, spreading herb. Indigenous to Central America, it grows in many Blue Mountains gardens. Unfortunately though, the seed of this plant is widely distributed by wind and water and the daisy can often be found flourishing along streams and in swamps and other moist areas.

Why is this plant a problem? Seaside Daisy forms dense mats of vegetation that block sunlight. In the accompanying illustration, the daisy and its mat of leaves can be seen spreading through a Coral fern and sedge swamp located in north Wentworth Falls. In time, the ferns and sedges will be completely overwhelmed.

Please remove this plant if it is growing in your garden. Yes, the numerous pink and white flowers are attractive, but the daisy is a major destroyer of biodiversity. Seed from your garden specimen has potential to exacerbate the existing problem.

Dig out with a trowel or mattock. Alternatively, scrape stems with a sharp knife and use a dropper applicator to carefully apply undiluted Glyphosate to the exposed tissue. Follow-up work may be required, so be sure to check for regrowth. For more information, see https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/Weeds_Booklet_2020.pdf For assistance or advice, contact the Bushcare Officer at bushcare@bluemountains.org.au

— BMCS Bushcare Officer



Seaside Daisy overwhelming Coral fern and sedge swamp, Wentworth Falls (P Ardill 2025).



Detail of Seaside Daisy flowers (P Ardill 2025)

STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT AT 142-150 NARROWNECK RD KATOOMBA

This is the first proposal in the Blue Mountains to go through the Housing Delivery Authority (HDA) "streamlined approval process". The HDA is a new authority within the NSW Dept Planning, Housing and Infrastructure established to deliver the NSW Government's new housing targets.

The developer is applying for a deviation from the current "medium density housing" which would allow them to construct 9, 4-storey buildings comprising 214 apartments plus other commercial uses such as a restaurant. This development will cause significant impacts on the local environment.

The Society will be running a campaign about this development proposal. Limited information is available to the public and the current status of the project is that the developer is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which will be put on public exhibition. We will publish more information as we uncover it.

You can follow this proposal on the Major Projects portal of Dept Planning and register to be kept informed at www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/142-150-narrow-neck-road-katoomba

—Land Use Sub Committee

A Literature Review on the Impacts of Concrete ... (Continued from Page 5)

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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 850 753.

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.

Please check our website for detailed walks program and program changes. <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/bushwalking.shtml>

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short day walks 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator: Melanie Lawson 0431 214 687. melanielawson@outlook.com.au.

All walks are Grade 3 unless indicated otherwise.

Aug 11 **Bondi-Coojee coast walk** ~6km Wayne 0407 643 512

Aug 18 **Pierce's Pass** 6.2km, 425m ascent/descent. Lyn 0432 352 850

Aug 25 **Asgard swamp and Thor head** 9km, 403m ascent/descent. Lois 0427 184 165

Sep 1 **Faulconbridge to Springwood via Victory Track and Sassafras Gully** 6.1km, 260m descent, 195m ascent. Melanie 0431 214 687

Sep 8 **Bus trip – Fitzroy Falls East and West Rim Tracks** 9 km approx. Contact Paul to book and pay 0414 266 351. Leader Melanie 0431 214 687

TUESDAY FITNESS WALKS: 'Medium Day' walks suitable for walkers of average fitness, 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea/lunch/adequate water. Coordinator: Phill Cox (0415 449 174 mrpacox@hotmail.com)

Aug 12 **Gordon Falls to Echo Point**. 8km, Grade 2/3, some sections with steps. Paul Heslop 0414 266 351.

Aug 19 **Balmain Peninsula / Tom Uren Trail**. 5km, easy/medium, 50/100 incline. Roger Blane 0449 902 774, Lynne Blane 0407 498 397. Train and buses.

Aug 26 **Hyde Park, Mid Hartley**. Easy 6km. Maurice 0402 402 783.

Sep 2 **Sea Cliff Bridge, Coalcliff**. Grade 2 Easy 4km. Doug Nicholls 0455 850 753. Long day on the trains.

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

Aug 14 **Malabar to Maroubra 6ks**. Maurice 0402 402 783 Gr 2
Aug 21 **Fort Rock, Centennial Glen and Walls Ledge**. Ros 0417 261 465. Grade 2

Aug 28 **Wentworth Falls Lake**. Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 2
Sep 4 **Three Waterfalls Circuit, Lawson, 125m ascent/descent**. M Angela 0427 133 327. Grade 2

Sep 11 **Pool of Salome and Lyrebird Dell, Leura**. Ros 0417 261 465. Grade 2

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Coordinator Harold Thompson (0409 010 737, Harold.thompson@bigpond.com)

Aug 9 **Lost City West**. , Harold 0409 010 737. Grade 3-4, 7km. Map Lithgow.

Aug 16 **Victoria Brook**. Harold 0409 010 737. Grade 3, 7km. Map Mt Wilson

Aug 23 **Erskine Creek**. Harold 0409 010 737. Grade 3-4, 5km. Map Springwood

Aug 30 **Goochs Crater**. Harold 0409 010 737. Grade 3, 7km. Map Wollangambe.

NOTE TO ALL BUSHWALKERS: Meeting places and times are not given because sometimes there are changes to the program. Please check with the walks leader.

Visit the Saturday walks facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks?fref=nf>

Glossy Black-Cockatoo Event 13/6/25

—A report by Elizabeth Howard

On 13 June the NSW Government's Saving our Species program ran a workshop at Katoomba which aimed to engage the community in research and conservation efforts for the Glossy Black-Cockatoo, a threatened species.

Mike Barth, a longtime researcher of the species, spoke about his work on Kangaroo Island and in SE Qld. He told us many interesting details about Glossy behaviour, feeding, how to find nest sites, where to record sightings and the importance of large hollows for nesting. Did you know the birds can move great distances between feed tree locations in order to allow one location to recover for the next season!

Kate Lawrence advised they will be conducting a project in the Mountains. Nest-finding surveys will form part of the project – pending required approvals – as finding out more about nest success and threats will help inform further conservation actions.

If you know of or happen to observe what you think is breeding behaviour, or see a nest, please advise the Saving our Species team by emailing gs.ets@environment.nsw.gov.au.

These sightings can be recorded in the NatureMapr app - emailing just gives the team a quicker heads up and the info could give them a starting point for survey efforts.

You can find out about NatureMapr at <https://naturemapr.org/> and the app can be downloaded from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.

Recording a sighting requires a photo or sound recording to enable expert verification. Even feed trees can be recorded as Glossy Black-Cockatoo records – you will need photos of the chewed cones on the ground, cones on the tree, bark of the tree and foliage of the tree.

This is sensitive data so if you know of a nest it's essential you don't share the location of the nest with anyone as poaching is a threat to the species. It's also best to not visit the site unnecessarily to avoid disturbance to the nesting birds. And please don't put anything on social media!

It's vital we conduct research into our native species as we can't protect what we don't know about. Watch this space to get updates on how you can help Glossy Black-Cockatoo conservation and research.

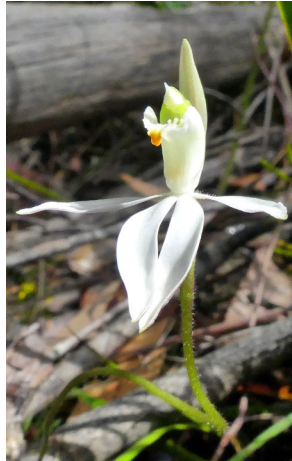
A page for keen nature observers of all ages ...
What to look for in August in the Blue Mountains



Kennedia rubicunda and
Hardenbergia violacea



Pterostylis sp.
(Greenhood orchid)



Caladenia catenata (orchid)



Woollsia pungens



Dampiera stricta



Acacia ulicifolia



Leucopogon ericoides and *Dillwynia* sp.



Boronia ledifolia

All of these plants can be found in the Blue Mountains.

What's in a name? Plant names sometimes describe the plant. For example, *Telopea* (Waratah) comes from a Greek word meaning "seen from afar", describing the conspicuous nature of the flowers. *Leucopogon*, also derived from Greek words, means "white beard". The common name is Beard Heath because the long tubular flowers are hairy inside, easily seen with a hand lens.

? What did you see in the Blue Mountains - in your garden or during your favourite bushwalk - during August? Was it something that wasn't there last month? Tell Hut News! Please send your stories, photos and drawings to Adelina hutnews@bluemountains.org.au or post to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

In the Upper Blue Mountains, August is one of the coldest months. **But Spring is coming.**

You may hear the territorial calls of breeding birds (e.g. Fantail Cuckoo, Grey Shrike Thrush) and night calls of the Boobook Owl, Tawny Frogmouth and Masked Lapwings.

There are young lyrebirds in nests. (Mother lyrebird is always too busy to dance!)

Migrant birds reappear – Noisy Friarbirds, Grey Fantails, Flame Robins.

Major honeyeater migration begins, back from the north.

Magpies begin nesting and bombing can begin.

(source: A Timeline for the Upper Blue Mountains - <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/timeline/timeline-winter.shtml>)

Spring comes earlier to the Lower Blue Mountains and coastal bushland. There are many wildflowers in August.

The August wildflowers on this page were photographed on the coast, between Royal NP and Wollongong, in previous years.

You might see some of these, or similar species, in the Lower Blue Mountains. Don't forget to write about them in your diary.

—*Adelina*

Geoff Dernee photographed the wildflowers. Sue Nicol helped to identify them. Thank you!