



HUT NEWS

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"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



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

In November 2025, we celebrated 25 years since the inscription of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Throughout the year Hut News has covered various aspects of the importance of the World Heritage Area.

You can find all the newsletters in Hut News archives on the Society's website <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/>

Great environmental work by Katoomba High School senior students!

Organised by Year 11 prefects Luke, Tani, Ruby, Ainsley and Anton, Katoomba High School conducted an Environment Event during 10-14 November 2025, to coincide with National Recycling Week.

Guest speakers addressed students throughout the week and the school assembly on 11 November featured an Environment Expo with Blue Mountains Conservation Society, WIRES, SES, Turtle Town and Blue Mountains City Council's Bushcare and Healthy Waterways teams presenting displays.

Undoubted stars of the Expo were the turtles of Turtle Town, a refuge for unwanted Australian native turtles. Hundreds of students patiently queued for a turtle encounter! Environmental weeds and the impacts of longwall mining were other issues that engaged students.

The BMCS expo stall was managed by Environmental Education Officer, Annette Sartor, and Bushcare Officer, Peter Ardill. It was a great pleasure to meet and chat with the students, many of whom were studying environmental science. Their informed comments and searching questions made for fruitful, enjoyable conversations.

Senior students also organised a Bake Sale, to raise money and develop initiatives to minimise the school's environmental footprint.

What a wonderful week of ideas and energy. Congratulations to the organisers and to all involved!

— BMCS Bushcare Officer



"Walnuts to World Heritage: how to grow a million hectares". At our Annual General Meeting, on 5 April 2025, Andy Macqueen told the story of the Blue Gum Forest campaign and other events that eventually gave rise to World Heritage recognition of the Greater Blue Mountains. During the celebrations of the 93rd anniversary of the saving of the Blue Gum Forest (28 September), this humble tent, made by Paddy Pallin, was erected on the banks of Bulgamatta (the Grose River). Photo by Richard Delaney.

Join Blue Mountains Conservation 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 how you can help preserve our beautiful World Heritage Area.
<https://www.bluemountains.org.au>

BMCS NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

Native plants will be on sale at the Blackheath Growers Market on **Sunday 14 December (8am to 12 noon)**. Gift certificates (\$10, \$20, \$50) are available at the market or by email. For enquiries and to place an order, please contact Nursery Manager, Bronwyn Murphy plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com

Hut News Trivia: Question 18

Did dinosaurs inhabit the Blue Mountains?
(You might find the answer on another page of this newsletter.)

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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

Wishing a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our members and supporters and their families and friends!

My resolution for 2026 is to get out and see some of the many exceptional sites in the GBMWH that I have not yet visited. Hope you plan to get out and about more as well!

Make sure you send photos and stories of your adventures to Hut News for us all to share!

Thank you for your ongoing support for the Society over the year. 2025 has been an exceptionally busy year, one where we have focused on the silver anniversary of our breathtakingly beautiful World Heritage Area, with all its unique biodiversity, geomorphology, Aboriginal and cultural history and place on the world stage. We have held one or more events each month this year to bring members and community together so we can all learn about this unique place – from history to biodiversity!

There have been important successes for the Society and the local environment this year, including the Government's agreement to convert four State Conservation Areas – Burratorang, Nattai, Yango and Yerranderrie in our area of interest to National Park or Nature Reserve.

Special thanks goes to our hardworking team of volunteers who made all this happen.

End of year challenges

But of course, it wouldn't be the end of the year without some challenges for conservation! Governments seem to enjoy pushing through major initiatives before end of year and 2025 is no exception.

- We have had the most extensive overhaul of changes to **NSW planning laws** pass through Parliament – the largest review since 1970s – with NO public consultation.
- **Expressions of interest in 16 NSW National Parks** made available to private companies to provide “supported camping” in National Parks, which you can read about in this issue of Hut News.
- The introduction of the new **Federal environment laws** into Parliament. While an overhaul of existing laws was sorely needed, these new laws if passed in their current form will again fail to provide sufficient protection for our unique environment. With a Senate Inquiry established to judge Australia's voice on these new laws and a closing date of 5 December, once more it is an end-of-year rush to make our voice heard.

Worryingly, many of us feel that our democracy is failing us, with Governments making decisions based on the lobbying of industry groups and failing to engage the general community. Politicians seem to have forgotten that it is the everyday person who lives with the outcomes from their decisions and so we should have a say! This is a core democratic value.

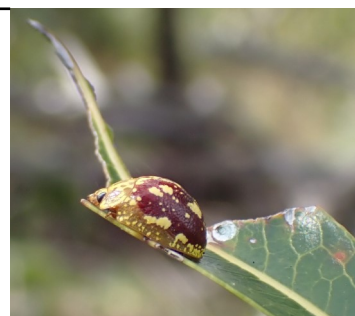
As always, the Society will advocate strongly for the protection of nature and for strong laws and processes that help to make that happen. This includes the opportunity for every community member to have a voice in decisions that affect them and the things they care about. Thank you for supporting us in this endeavour.

—Annette Cam president@bluemountains.org.au

OBSERVING NATURE

During a bushwalk at Lawson we found this little beetle, steadily chomping its way through a leaf. So much leaf for such a small beetle!

Christine Davies.



Vital environmental management: meet Blue Mountains City Council's Healthy Waterways Team!

Blue Mountains Conservation Society's Bushcare Officer, Peter Ardill, recently interviewed Will Goodwin, Aquatic Systems Officer. This is an edited version of Will's comments.

Will, tell us about the Team.

We're a tightknit team, comprised of seven staff. We have two Environmental Education and Engagement Officers. They work a lot with schools, organising brilliant field trips that connect kids to nature! This effectively achieves BMCC environmental sustainability goals.

I'm an Aquatic Systems Officer (ASO), mentored by fellow ASO, Amy St Lawrence. Amy has been a waterways carer for almost 20 years. We do a lot of aquatic monitoring: stream health checks, recreational water quality sampling, crayfish surveys etc. Plus, supporting local research projects (platypus, turtles, Dwarf Mountain pine etc), stormwater mitigation, weeding Glenbrook Lagoon, managing pollution events and promoting our work.

How did you get interested in stream health?

Growing up in the mountains, I've always been captivated by our waterways, and particularly mesmerised by our spiny crayfish – a feeling I still experience today, despite encountering hundreds of them at work! In high school, I studied a fish survey commissioned by the Healthy Waterways Team, with photos of fascinating creatures in Glenbrook Lagoon. I realised that my curiosity for life below the water could actually become a career.

I studied environmental science at Western Sydney University and, during my studies, I was very lucky to join the Team as a cadet. After three years of cadetship, I graduated and was thrilled to get a permanent position as an ASO with BMCC.

What do you enjoy? The challenges?

The biggest highlight of my job is the team. I'm fortunate to be surrounded by incredibly caring and intelligent people who are absolutely dedicated to protecting our waterways. I love the variety: I get to learn about plants, animals, micro-organisms, chemistry, physics, human-health, behaviour change.

Some days we're in beautiful places sampling water bugs, or out on a boat in Glenbrook lagoon. I might be pottering in the lab, then have to investigate a pollution incident. My job is never boring and I spend my time doing work that really matters.

Challenges? There's so much to do in the field of aquatic health, and it's easy to get overwhelmed. There's no shortage of long days, heavy gear, bitter cold, pouring rain, leeches, sewer overflows, dead animals, more leeches.

That being said, it's so much easier to face those challenges when you believe in why you're doing it, and you're supported by a fantastic team. I absolutely love this job and wouldn't trade it for anything.

What are the biggest threats to our waterways?

The biggest threat is imperviousness. In nature - our soils and porous sandstone act like a big sponge, absorbing rainfall events and holding that water until it evaporates, gets taken up by plants or seeps into the creeks. Hard surfaces used in urban areas stop rainfall from reaching the soil. Instead, the stormwater system funnels it straight to creeks, causing flash floods during heavy rainfall. The floods destroy fragile creek habitats

and transfer pollution and litter to the World Heritage Area.

Almost every urban waterway on the planet suffers from this phenomenon – known as Urban Stream Syndrome. Our local urban centres are located in the heart of the World Heritage Area, so we have a unique responsibility to do something about it.

Council has installed biofilters, pollutant traps and infiltration systems in the worst impacted catchments. These dramatically improve the quality of stormwater entering the creeks, but there's little we can do about the sheer quantity of water.

The best way to protect our waterways is to hold rainwater where it lands. To drastically reduce the water footprint of a property, install a rainwater tank and use the harvested water on site, for example, for irrigation or toilet flushing. If every property in a catchment did install a tank, we'd have a vastly healthier creek system. So we're looking at ways to encourage water stewardship at every point in the catchment.

What if it's not possible to install a rainwater tank on a property?

Permeable paving, turf or gravel are fantastic alternatives to hard surfaces. Consider draining hard surfaces towards lawns or garden beds, instead of straight into the gutter. Build a beautiful home raingarden to help filter runoff from your house. Check out two different styles of installed raingarden at Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre!

Will, thanks for your time.

The BMCC Healthy Waterways Team welcomes your enquiries: council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au



ASO Will Goodwin collecting macroinvertebrates at Katoomba Cascades (A St Lawrence)



Healthy Waterways Team Cadet, Sofia Joyner (left) and BMCC Connecting to Country Officer, Cathy Rendell assessing macro-invertebrate samples (BMCC).

Camping and Glamping in Blue Mountain national parks

Keith Muir, Hon Projects Officer, Wilderness Australia

Two proposals for commercial camping are currently being planned in Blue Mountains national parks:

- The commercial tender for supported camping (EOI# 24/483356); and
- The three glamping resorts under a private lease in the Gardens of Stone.

The **supported camping proposal** is a licensing arrangement that affects eight Blue Mountains campgrounds — Abercrombie Caves, Wombeyan Caves, Dunphys in the Megalong Valley, Euroka Clearing, Murphys Glen, Coorongooba in Wollemi, Ganguddy-Dunns Swamp and Wheeney Creek, as well as nearby Mill Creek in Dharug National Park.

Applications for commercial tenders to undertake supported camping in 16 national parks closed last month. The proposal went straight to tender without public exhibition and review, causing outrage over alleged campground privatisation.

The NPWS pleaded that the proposed private operations would be limited to licences issued for six years over selected sites. NPWS claimed the purpose of supported camping services is to enable families and people visiting from outside the region to camp in national parks, without first having to buy equipment.

The “evaluation criteria” for the tender applications throws little light on what could be proposed by tenders, as no site limits are specified and international visitors are to be attracted. Overnight Adventures and Blue Mountains Adventure Company already offer camping gear for hire, so what in addition can companies propose under the tender process?

The tender process *could* facilitate a national park grab that benefits those who couldn't be bothered setting up camp or cooking for themselves or it *could* enable families and tourists (who can't set up a tent themselves?) to try out camping. Commercial use of popular national park campgrounds *could* displace others from the best camp sites, especially during peak periods. It *could* erode egalitarian experience of campground holidays, one of the few left other than the beach.

We can't know what the impact of the successful commercial camping proposal will be, as tender processes are commercial in confidence. Generally, however, commercial tenders are granted to the highest bidders that have the forecast revenues and growth to match their bids and over time these drivers *could* push lower-income families out of campgrounds. So, given the lack of consultation, the public had every right to attack the NSW Government.

By contrast, the **Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area glamping resorts proposal is a clear-cut park grab**. Glamping is a style of tourism that combines the experience of camping with the comforts of a resort, with proper beds and chairs and restaurant-quality food. Three resorts are proposed, located on three intact pagoda landscapes, and will cost a thousand dollars per person to enjoy this walking experience.

Wild Bush Luxury (part of Experience Co) is seeking a lease associated with the Pagoda Walking Track which was built at taxpayer expense for \$10 million dollars. Each resort is proposed to contain six two-people luxury tents, a kitchen and communal facility and bathroom amenities with access roads to enable daily

servicing. These lease sites seek to pick the eyes out of the untouched scenery remaining in the park.

The private luxury accommodation associated with the Pagoda Walk secures a valuable lease over this State Conservation Area with high amenity and taxpayer-funded infrastructure. Leases can subsequently be sold for enormous profit. Buckley and Underdahl (2023) have described these transactions as land grabs.¹

The lease for the three proposed glamping resorts in the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area should be rejected as contrary to the sustainability assessment criteria for visitor use and tourism in NSW National Parks.²

The idea of national parks as permanent, protected and public is under attack! Please write to Environment Minister Penny Sharpe objecting to the proposed glamping lease and supported camping licences: The Hon. Penny Sharpe, MLC, Parliament House, Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000 or <https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-environment-heritage>

References:

¹Buckley, Ralf C, Underdahl, Sonya, 2023, Tourism and Environment: Ecology, Management, Economics, Climate, Health, and Politics, *Sustainability* 2023, 15, 15416. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su152115416>

²DECCW, 2011, *Sustainability assessment criteria for visitor use and tourism in New South Wales national parks*, Appendix C, new structures are required to avoid building on ridgelines. Unmodified and largely unmodified landscapes are not suitable for development with new structures, Table 1, page 12.



Spectacular pagodas, Gardens of Stone SCA (C Davies)

School Environmental Education Initiatives

This year we have continued to strengthen our relationships with local schools in support of our mission to advance environmental education. In 2025 - marking 25 years since the Greater Blue Mountains National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List - we deepened our support for school-based programs, beginning with our ongoing partnership with Kindiehill School through its **Bulgamatta: Connect to Protect** project.

Launched in 2024, Kindiehill's *Connect to Protect* celebrates Bulgamatta (the Grose River) and seeks to bring this place alive in the hearts and imaginations of the community, especially young people and families. One of the most powerful stories of this landscape is the long tradition of human connection and collective responsibility for Country from Dharug and Gundungurra custodians, to the activists who protected the Blue Gum Forest, to the founding of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. People power has always been central to caring for this wild and precious place and it will remain essential in the years ahead. Through this project, Kindiehill hopes to galvanise action on the ongoing pollution of Bulgamatta caused by wastewater discharges from the closed Canyon Colliery at the river's source.

In addition, BMCS has partnered with the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute to support the **2025 Re-Imagining Conservation Challenge – Imagine the Greater Blue Mountains in 2050** for Blue Mountains

schools. This initiative encourages students to explore innovative ideas and bold visions for the future of this iconic landscape, fostering creativity, environmental stewardship and a deepened sense of connection to our shared natural heritage. Using a medium of choice, students were invited to reflect on the following questions and contribute their unique perspectives to the broader conservation dialogue:

1. The future: What will the lands of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area look like in 25 years?

2. Finding a balance: How can we meet the demands of a growing population while preserving the Blue Mountains' ecosystems?

3. Connect to protect: How will the next generation continue to connect with and protect the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area?

The outcomes of the 2025 *Re-Imagining Conservation Challenge* will be shared with our readership in early 2026.

We remain committed to building strong partnerships with Greater Blue Mountains schools through a range of activities - for example, recently hosting a stall at Katoomba High School's Environmental Week.

If you have any questions, interests or suggestions, please contact **Annette Sartor (Environmental Education Officer and Vice President)** at education@bluemountains.org.au

Environmental weeds and their impacts

Ginger Lily (*Hedychium gardnerianum*): an invasive species of international disrepute

Ginger Lily is a perennial herb, indigenous to India. It is completely banned in many countries and, according to the Global Invasive Species Database, is ranked among the world's worst invasive species.

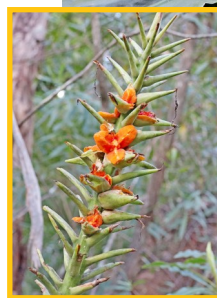
Frequently occurring as dense clumps approximately two metres high, Ginger Lily exhibits numerous ground-level bulbs, firm fleshy stems and large glossy, dark green leaves.

Why is Ginger Lily a problem? Birds distribute the seed and, as the lily thrives in damp soils, it regularly becomes established along stream banks. For example, extensive infestations have been found at Sassafras Creek, Springwood and Lawson Creek, Lawson. Ginger Lily shades out and inhibits establishment of riparian native species such as Sword Grass, Crimson Bottlebrush, Willow-leaved Hakea, Woolly Tea-tree and ferns and herbs, destroying natural beauty and indigenous wildlife habitat.

For domestic situations, best management treatment is to progressively dig out all bulbs and accompanying roots. Place all bulbs, roots, seeds and flower parts in a BMCC green bin. As per standard practice when treating any environmental weed, regularly check for regrowth and remove it.

For further information, see <https://weedsbluemountains.org.au/weeds/ginger-lily/>. Need some assistance? Contact the BMCS Bushcare Officer at bushcare@bluemountains.org.au or phone 0490 419 779.

— **BMCS Bushcare Officer**



Ginger Lily. Images show spent flowers and seed development, Lawson Creek. P Ardill 2025.

Hut News Trivia: Question 18

Did dinosaurs inhabit the Blue Mountains?

ANSWER?

Yes and No ... It is likely that dinosaurs lived where the Blue Mountains are now, but the Blue Mountains were not here.

Read "Did Dinosaurs inhabit the Blue Mountains" (Page 6)



OBSERVING NATURE

This is a species of *Diuris* orchid, photographed in the Blue Mountains. There are about 60 different species of *Diuris* in the *Orchidaceae* family. Their common name is Donkey Orchid. Can you see why?

Christine Davies

EON	ERA	PERIOD	EPOCH	Ma
Phanerozoic	Cenozoic	Quaternary	Holocene	0.011 –
			Pleistocene	0.8 –
		Tertiary	Late	2.4 –
			Early	3.6 –
			Pliocene	5.3 –
			Late	11.2 –
			Middle	16.4 –
			Early	23.0 –
		Paleogene	Oligocene	28.5 –
			Late	34.0 –
			Early	34.0 –
			Eocene	41.3 –
			Middle	49.0 –
			Early	55.8 –
		Paleocene	Late	61.0 –
			Early	65.5 –
	Mesozoic	Cretaceous	Late	99.6 –
			Early	145 –
		Jurassic	Late	161 –
			Middle	176 –
		Triassic	Early	200 –
			Late	228 –
	Paleozoic	Permian	Middle	245 –
			Early	251 –
			Late	260 –
			Early	271 –
		Pennsylvanian	Early	299 –
			Late	306 –
		Mississippian	Middle	311 –
			Early	318 –
		Devonian	Late	326 –
			Early	345 –
			Middle	359 –
			Early	385 –
		Silurian	Late	397 –
			Early	416 –
	Cambrian	Ordovician	Late	419 –
			Early	423 –
		Silurian	Middle	428 –
			Early	444 –
		Cambrian	Late	488 –
			Middle	501 –
		Cambrian	Early	513 –
			Early	542 –
Precambrian	Proterozoic	Late	Neoproterozoic (Z)	1000 –
		Middle	Mesoproterozoic (Y)	1600 –
		Early	Paleoproterozoic (X)	2500 –
	Archean	Late		3200 –
		Early		4000 –
	Haydean			

Did Dinosaurs inhabit the Blue Mountains?

- The Age of Dinosaurs was from about 245 to 66 million years ago (Mesozoic Era)
 - At 66 mya non-avian dinosaurs went extinct in a major event (asteroid impact), along with 3/4 of all species.
 - Dinosaurs roamed across eastern Australia (then part of Gondwana and much further south) during the Mesozoic, ie. up to about 66 mya.
 - The BMs arose from several uplift events, the most recent being about 10 million years ago, and going back to the formation of the Great Dividing Range about 100 mya (Hatherly/ (Hatherly/Brown book).
 - The uppermost rocks now in the higher BMs are sandstones of Triassic age, ie. 200-245 million years old.
- So it is likely that dinosaurs lived where the BMs are now, and walked on the Triassic sandstones (or higher rocks which have been eroded away), but the landscape would have looked nothing like today.

Source of Image: Geologic Time Scales / Geologic Overview of the Trenton Group <https://trenton.mcz.harvard.edu/geologic-time-scale>

Learn more about the geology of the Blue Mountains:
The Blue Mountains: exploring landscapes shaped by the underlying rocks, uplift and erosion. Co-authors Peter Hatherly and Ian Brown. <https://ianbrownphotography.com.au/publications/>

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

Governance: ensuring the Society is administratively healthy

What is “governance”? Governance refers to the set of legislation, conventions, rules and other administrative arrangements that regulate the functioning of an organisation. Two vital Society governance documents are its constitution, and the principal protocols developed by the Management Committee.

Recognising the need to keep the Society in tip top administrative shape, the Management Committee recently appointed a Governance sub-committee. Comprised of Peter Ardill (Bushcare Officer), Andrew Solomon (Membership Secretary) and Alan Crooks (Website Manager), the sub-committee exhibits a good range of qualifications, experience and skills in governance.

The Governance sub-committee has already updated the principal protocols of the Society, and at its November 2025 meeting the Management Committee approved the updated document. The sub-committee is now reviewing the Society’s constitution, to ensure that it is fit for purpose. The *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* (NSW) provides a set of Model Rules for incorporated associations, and it is essential that the Society’s constitution is consistent with the Rules and appropriately addresses all likely administrative scenarios.

Amendments to the constitution must be approved by the members of the Society, at an annual general meeting, or at a special meeting. Should amendments be recommended, details of the required meeting and any proposed amendments will be well promoted to members. Stay tuned!

— Peter Ardill, Governance sub-committee



Caleana major is otherwise known as Flying Duck orchid. See **Plant Study Group visit to Hassans Walls Reserve**, page 7.

Methane, A BIG DEAL

Methane (CH_4) is a powerful greenhouse gas and the second largest contributor to greenhouse gas in the world after Carbon Dioxide (CO_2). Methane has the power to either supercharge climate change or, if reduced quickly, help slow global warming. The Global Warming Potential (GWP) of methane is approximately 87x more powerful than CO_2 over a period of 20 years (20 year GWP) and 28x more over a period of 100 years (100 year GWP). The growth of methane emissions has outpaced CO_2 emissions. This is significant and a huge concern if we want to reach net zero by 2050.

Even though methane is extremely potent, it is also very short lived, with a life span of between 7-12 years before it breaks down in the atmosphere, compared to carbon dioxide which can stay for centuries. Once methane breaks down (by oxidation) it converts methane into carbon dioxide and water. This process greatly reduces its warming potential, however not entirely. In addition, the chemical composition of methane causes additional issues such as the creation of ground-level ozone, which is a dangerous air pollutant⁷. Methane also has the potential to create positive feedback loops through global warming, causing the release of methane through the thawing of permafrost and gas hydrates.⁵

During the last few hundred thousand years, methane concentrations fluctuated between 400-800 parts per billion (ppb). In 2025 there are over 1900 ppb, about 2.5x more than pre-industrial levels causing about 0.5°C of warming.¹ In comparison, CO_2 levels are now around 1.5x more than the pre-industrial levels of 277ppm (parts per million) to 425ppm in 2025, whereas 350ppm of CO_2 is considered safe and 450ppm considered high risk (equivalent to 2% of warming).^{4,6}

There are two types of methane: natural methane and anthropogenic (human-caused) methane. Natural methane accounts for 40% of all methane emissions, a product of biological decomposition of organic matter, especially in wetlands (~30%), and other natural phenomena.³

Anthropogenic Methane accounts for 60% of all methane emissions²:

- Agriculture (~25%) - livestock through digestive system; rice cultivation through anaerobic digestion
- Waste management & water treatment plants (~12%)
- Energy (~18%) – coal, gas and oil
- Other (~5%)

In total, Methane contributes around 30% of all greenhouse gases in the world.²

Because methane is so potent and short-lived, if there were a reduction in methane emissions, this would have a fast and significant positive effect on slowing down global warming.

Since COP26, in November 2021, 156 countries signed on to the voluntary **Global Methane Pledge (GMP)**, aiming at reducing worldwide methane emissions by 30% from a 2020 level by 2030. However, due to lack of strategies, oversight, financial support, reporting and monitoring, the GMP has so far failed to deliver and global methane emissions are still on the rise by around 1% to 1.5% per year.

Maybe one day, governments around the world will take climate action seriously and take meaningful steps to solve it. Wouldn't that be nice!

--Nathalie Verellen, Sustainability/Climate Change Officer, nathalieBMCS@gmail.com

¹ <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/long-run-methane-concentration>

² <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2022/methane-and-climate-change>

³ <https://www.energy.gov/arctic/articles/methane-emissions-wetlands-increase-significantly-over-high-latitudes>

⁴ <https://www.csiro.au/en/news/All/Articles/2025/May/Carbon-dioxide-growing-faster-as-emissions-level-off>

⁵ <https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/ocean-fact/hydrates/>

⁶ [CO2 – Why 450 ppm is Dangerous and 350 ppm is Safe | Sustainability Advantage](#)

⁷ [Cutting methane emissions key to fighting climate change and harmful ozone - The Joint Research Centre: EU Science Hub](#)

Plant Study Group visit to Hassans Walls Reserve

On a bright windy day, Plant Study Group members met with Julie Favell and Chris Jonkers from Lithgow Environment Group at Hassans Falls Reserve, now 770 hectares. As the highest scenic lookout over the Blue Mountains, there are views of Lithgow town to the north and Hartley Valley to the south. There are a couple of lookouts to visit and an interesting range of vegetation. The Wiradjuri name for the area is Gnallwarra. This reserve offers a range of vegetation communities. *Eucalyptus sieberi* dominates in one area, sheltering a pocket of the less common *Eucalyptus oreades*.

Julie and Chris, who have a great knowledge of the local plants and have been involved with the reserve since its creation, pointed out some very interesting orchids such as *Calochilus robertsonii* and *caleana major*. Julie and Chris were very generous with their time.

The Plant Study Group's 2025 programme is up on the website <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/psg/index.shtml>. If you are interested in learning about our Blue Mountains flora do contact Meredith at mountains@westnet.com.au

— Janice Hughes

Diuris sulphurea (Tiger Orchid)
Janice Hughes



A Poem for Heather Hull

Numbering many
Are things about you I've come to know
One stands out consistently
You always have a go.

If a track leads up or down
Or seems tied in a knot
You still patter on all day
And give it your best shot.

When a fierce committee
Needs one more volunteer
You do much more than your share
Through each drawn out year.

When a weird suggestion
Comes up for a trip
You're enthusiastic
You never jump ship.

Let the drama be dramatic
Let the trail dissolve to mud
If the files pile in the attic
If the tennis court's a dud ...

You still think you can do it
And you're seldom wrong
And you help your comrades through it
It's a thrill to tag along

from Don Morison,
TING bushwalkers.

Heather Hull, who has passed away at age 85, was inspiring as a bushwalking companion, a colleague on the Conservation Society's management committee and, of course, as a family member and friend to a wonderful collection of people who became close to her.

Heather displayed a contagious joyfulness at spending time close to Nature, enjoying and interpreting it. At the same time, she was impressively thorough and meticulous in her voluntary roles, including Blue Mountains Conservation Society's Senior Vice President (2002-2008) and Meetings Secretary (2012-2025).

At the Celebration of Heather's Life on 17 November 2025, Society President Annette Cam made a heartfelt tribute to Heather. The crowd responded to the family's plea to wear colourful clothing but hardly an outfit could surpass Heather's trademark broad-rimmed red hat.

Heather became a Life Member of the Society in 2018. Here is an extract from her nomination:

"Members like Heather Hull are the backbone of any voluntary organisation ... she is always willing to volunteer and help – manning our stalls and information tables at festivals and other events, representing the Society at meetings and protests, carrying our banner in the parade, organizing supper at Society meetings, carrying the message about our campaigns to others ... she never ceases to marvel at the impressiveness of the natural landscape and is always grateful to the track builders and others who help us to enjoy it."

Heather stood up for what was right and strived to protect the natural environment and ensure a better future for her children and grandchildren.

The Hut News Team.



West of the Walls – Privatisation Shadow over Blossoming Sustainable Tourism

Opinion by Don Morison

There has been a very positive response to the prospects of new sites for the enjoyment of nature and passive recreation, especially in the Lithgow Local Government Area and surrounds. Both family groups and adventurous bushwalkers are, in burgeoning numbers, enjoying the upgraded walking tracks, two-wheel drive access and facilities around Lost City, Broad Swamp and such areas in the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area (SCA). An exciting proposal for a new reserve known as the **Three Sugarloafs**, upstream on the Cocks River from McKanes Bridge on the Lithgow to Hampton Road, would greatly add to the appreciation of some of the best granite country in the Greater Blue Mountains. (Read about the Three Sugarloafs proposal in August 2025 Hut News).

Some areas, until very recent years, were provinces of irresponsible trail bike riders, four-wheel drive hooners, rubbish dumping and neglect. But now they have the prospect of being the pride of the National Parks and Wildlife Service estate.

It is, therefore, exquisitely bad timing that a privatisation scare, with licences and leases to commercialise camping areas a real threat, hangs over numerous sites in the Blue Mountains tourism region.

All conservationists should contact their political representatives and urge a moratorium on privatisation of land under control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Please read **"Camping and Glamping in Blue Mountains National Parks"** on page 4.

Salmon for dinner?

Bob Brown Foundation has captured video of five seals trapped inside a Tassal factory fish farm (BBF media release 21/11/25). The vision comes on the back of RTI documents revealing four dolphin deaths and a seal death in factory fish farms in recent months.

"It never ends with this destructive industry. In one part of the channel, 700 kg of controversial antibiotics are being dumped into the water. Further up the waterway, five native seals are trapped in a pen. Elsewhere in the same stretch of water, the rock lobster fishery is shut down due to concerns about antibiotic contamination. The salmon factory farms have completely taken over Tasmania's waters."

"The industrial salmon industry is a blight on Tasmania's reputation and has to go. It's time to get fish farms out of Tasmania's waters for good," said Alistair Allan, Antarctic and Marine Campaigner at Bob Brown Foundation. <https://bobbrown.org.au/>

Are you having salmon for dinner?
Where does your salmon come from?

—Christine Davies.

Western Sydney Airport and the recommendations of the Inquiry into the Impact and Mitigation of Aircraft Noise

Minister Catherine King finally responded to the 21 Recommendations of the Inquiry into the Impact and Mitigation of Aircraft Noise, after allowing it to sit on her desk for over six months and only after pressure from the Senate and the community.

The report and recommendations highlighted the limitations of the existing regulatory framework to effectively deal with aircraft noise, especially with regard to Air Services Australia and the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman.

Of the twenty one recommendations, the Australian Labor Government found they could only approve four.

The recommendations attempted to address some pressing concerns at individual airports including Western Sydney Airport (WSA). The below recommendations was one of them:

“The committee recommends that the conditions for approval of the Western Sydney Airport include a requirement for the Western Sydney Airport Corporation to study the impact of its flights on Australian native species.”

Bear in mind that WSACo considers itself responsible for operations and development of the airport precinct and not for airspace/flightpaths and aircraft in that airspace – this being the responsibility of Air Services Australia.

The Government response to this recommendation was: “The Government supports this recommendation. As a condition of the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government’s approval of the preliminary flight paths for Western Sydney International (Nancy Bird Walton) Airport, WSA Co Limited will undertake a comprehensive Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) to monitor impacts of the flight paths on environmental values including Australian native species.”

So, does this mean the draft preliminary flight paths are not approved? Remembering that the flight paths are not the responsibility of WSACo they are the preview of Air Services Australia. What role will ASA play in this monitoring?

Exactly which “environmental values” will they be measuring? Does this include noise, emissions, visual impacts, which areas will they be monitoring, types of native species, other? Considering the Draft Master Plan for WSA, which is currently awaiting approval by the Minister, has not incorporated the above recommendation into its five year Draft Master Plan and uses the following kind of vague language with regard to the Airport precinct use of land:



Will we hear the magpie’s song when the planes are operating?

“The primary objectives of the land use plan include supporting aviation growth, facilitating sustainable and well-planned developments, and ensuring good environmental management.” (P15 Draft MP)

The need to engage with WSACo about the details of the EMP monitoring that is to take place is crucial.

— Jo Carroll

<https://ano.gov.au/aircraft-noise-inquiry-report-released/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-28/independent-watchdog-needed-help-ease-impact-aircraft-noise/104658948>



Success for native gardening event

The inaugural ‘Gardening with Natives in the Blue Mountains’ event, held at Lawson in early November, received strong community support. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with one attendee ably summing it up as “the overall enthusiasm of people attending and lovely vibe of the day.”

Last minute changes to the speakers’ schedule meant a packed program of eight talks ranging across topics such as how to approach transitioning your garden to natives, bringing native birds into your backyard and collecting seed for propagation.

Attendees were delighted at the range of plants for sale from four local native plant nurseries, with many seen clutching their tube stock treasures. Nursery folk enjoyed a rare opportunity to catch up with one another and at least one discussion carried on into the evening at the pub. At the Nursery Manager’s Forum, we learnt about the high demand for native plants and the long lead times necessary for propagation to meet a particular or bulk order.

Our last speaker for the day, Paul Gadsby, rallied the remaining crowd, citing loss of biodiversity in urban areas and imploring us with “let’s not be Sydney, long term stewardship is the key”

— Margaret Sleath

The Cabbage Gums of Sun Valley

Living in the vicinity of Sun Valley for the past 45 years, the Fitzgerald Creek Catchment is a much-loved walking area for us. Upon reaching the valley, immediately noticeable are numbers of tall, slender, white and grey trunked Cabbage Gums, (*Eucalyptus amplifolia*, subspecies *amplifolia*,) so named for their broad leaves.¹

The volcanic soils of Sun Valley support a variety of ecosystems, creating a valued addition to our Blue Mountains plant communities. Among these complex associations is the Cabbage Gum forest ecosystem, a critically endangered ecological community. There are a large number of species in this community, including fauna, fungi, micro-organisms and plants associated with the Cabbage Gum. These may be affected in the future by the frequency of bushfires, the demands of land use and changes in rainfall patterns associated with climate change.

Within the diatrema, small acreage subdivision and logging activities of the past have meant that what is seen today is the regrowth of these picturesque Cabbage Gums on the broad valley floor, with a few older trees. Often the understory is now grassland, though there was once a more complex tall open forest. Amongst the remaining forest are Thin-leaved Stringy Bark (*Eucalyptus eugenoides*) and the magnificent *Eucalyptus deanei* in the wetter gullies.

In other smaller diatremes nearby and craters in the Glenbrook Section of the Blue Mountains National Park, also rich in volcanic soils, are populations of a different dominant plant species, such as ironbark (*Eucalyptus cerebra*) or turpentine trees (*Syncarpia glomulifera*), respectively.

The presence of large numbers of Cabbage Gums in Sun Valley itself is very special. The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water website states that this Cabbage Gum “community is not represented in any NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service conservation reserves.”²

—Christine Stickley.

¹ The fruit and buds of this subspecies has a distinct stalk, whereas another subspecies, *sessiliflora* do not. Snow Gums, *Eucalyptus pauciflora* can also be known by the common name of Cabbage Gum.

² State Government of New South Wales (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water), 30th November.



Cabbage Gums in Sun Valley, showing their broad leaves. Photo by Christine Stickley.

References:

Bruce Cameron, *Sun Valley and Long Angle Gully A History*, published by Bruce Cameron, 1998.

State Government of New South Wales (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water), 30th November 2001, <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/>, accessed 10 October 2025.

An Impactful Package of Laws

At time of writing, the Federal Labor Government was still considering whether it could strike a bargain with either the Coalition or the Greens to have a new package of environment laws approved in the Senate. Government politicians were being urged in various directions. One of the most passionate expressions of concern was an opinion piece from Australian Labor Party Elder, Carmen Lawrence, the first woman Premier of Western Australia, which appeared in *The Age* and *SMH*.

Ms Lawrence is extremely concerned that so many native creatures and much of the Great Barrier Reef are at risk as a consequence of Labor Government approved fossil fuel projects. Australian National University academic, Mark Kenny, speaking on the ABC Insiders program on 23/11/25, drew attention to what a voluminous and complex Act of Parliament is proposed.

One thing everyone debating this matter should understand is that should this package become law, with or without amendments, it will have a most significant impact on the power of the Australian Government to preserve all species native to the Australian continent and surrounding waters and, for that matter, including the human species.

The Hut News Team.

Players Take Their Positions

As in the past, protesters are taking their places around Australia's largest coal port near Newcastle at the mouth of the Hunter River. Meanwhile, Australia's Federal Energy and Climate Change Minister Chris Bowen has volunteered for a new position involved with organising the COP meetings on climate change in 2026, now scheduled for Istanbul in Türkiye.

The climate issue has attracted some of the most earnest and talented people to take a stand on it. They have to compete with the cacophony of sounds generated by the trivia, banality and raucousness of most modern discourse.

Surely there are things we can all do, even if we don't feel able to risk arrest, to help the sincere climate activists to make their point?

The Hut News Team.



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.

Dec 8 **Kanuka Brook & Crayfish Pool.** 6.4km. 108m ascent/descent. Bring swimmers. Lyn 0432 352 850.

Dec 15 **End of year walk around Wentworth Falls Lake** and lunch in picnic shelter. ~5km. Wayne/Mary 0407 643 512.

Jan 5 **Undercliff/Overcliff Track.** 4.7km. Ascent/descent 188m. Melanie 0431 214 687.

Jan 12 **Manly to Fairfax Point North Head.** 10km. Ascent 121m. Angela 0427 133 327.

Jan 19 **Butterbox Point and Mt Hay.** 6km. Ascent 290m. \$5 for carpool. Marian 0411 658 562.

Feb 2 **Mount York Lookout via Barden Lookout and historic wells.** 6km. Gr2. Melanie 0431 214 687.

Feb 9 **Empire Pass.** 7km. 271m ascent. Lyn 0432 352 850..

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)

Dec 9 **Popes Glen & Braeside Track.** Gr 3. 6.5km. Elevation 357m. Leaders Sharon 0404 622 515. Phil 0415 449 174.

Check the website for the rest of the summer program.

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

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

Dec 4 **Darwins Walk.** Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 2.

Dec 11 **Christmas Party at Wilson Park, Lawson.** Beverley 4757 2076.

Jan 8 **Birdwood Gully, Springwood.** 3k. Colin 0421 502 954. G2.

Jan 15 **Southside waterfalls, Lawson,** 125m ascent/descent. Angela 0427 133 327. Grade 2.

Jan 22 **Hornes Point & Boronia Point, Mt Victoria.** Grade 2. Ros 0417 261 465.

Jan 29 **Deanei Reserve, Springwood.** 3km. Grade 1. Maurice 0402 402 783.

Feb 5 **Hyde Park, Hartley.** Chance to swim in the River Lett. Tracey 0434 362 611. Gr 2.

Feb 12 **Birrabang Ridge.** 3km. Maurice 0402 402 783. Gr 1.

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. New coordinator to be advised. Contact Doug Nicholls (convenor) dougnicholls@bigpond.com

Dec 6 **Jinki Ridge Head.** Harold 0409 010 737. Gr3. 6km. Map Mount Wilson.

Dec 13 **Mount Banks.** Harold 0409 010 737. Gr3. Mt Wilson map.

Dec 20 **Christmas Lunch.** Contact Alice 0425 738 766. Lawson Hotel (The Henry).

Check the website for the rest of the summer program.

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.

Hello Adelina,

This is my first sighting of *Drysdalia coronoides* / White-lipped Snake in Mort Street, North Katoomba. It is a grey snake with white lips and pale pink underneath. It is a quiet and small snake, growing to about only 40cm in length. It feeds almost exclusively on lizards and is the most cold-tolerant snake in Australia. It is endemic to southern Australia, surviving at high altitudes and even lives in part of Mount Kosciuszko.

Kind regards, Meredith

Drysdalia coronoides is venomous but not thought to be highly dangerous to humans. However any snake bite must be treated with caution.

Why are some snakes venomous? Snakes use venoms for one main purpose. The venom helps the snake to overpower its prey before eating it, swallowing it whole. (This comes in handy for an animal without arms, legs, teeth or claws.)

It may strike at potential predators. Humans are not prey but, especially when trying to kill the snake, can be perceived as predators.



White-lipped Snake / *Drysdalia coronoides*.
November 2025. Meredith Brownhill.

The next edition of Hut News will be February 2026. Deadline for copy is 12 January 2026.
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

A page for keen nature observers of all ages ...

What to look for this Summer in the Blue Mountains

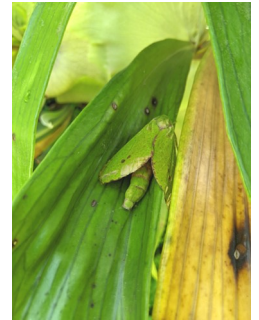


Hi Adelina, I took my 6-year-old grandson along part of Darwins Walk for the first time and we saw a Water Dragon.

My grandson was silent and fascinated. We just stood watching. I hope he doesn't expect amazing new creatures every time we walk in the bush.

—Juliet Richters

Eastern Water Dragon (Juliet Richters)



Dear Adelina, I went to get petrol at Wentworth Falls BP and found this Splendid Forest Ghost Moth at the entrance of the servo. Lucky I didn't step on it. Now it is safe from being squashed, in my Elkhorn, hidden from the birds. Best regards,

—Roberta Johnston



Blandifordia cunninghamii

The Mountain Christmas Bell is a rare plant which only grows in a few parts of the Upper Mountains and in a small population at Port Kembla.

What did you see in the Blue Mountains this summer - in your garden or during your favourite bushwalk? Was it something that is not there in other parts of the year? Please tell Hut News!

Please send your stories, photos & drawings to Adelina: hutnews@bluemountains.org.au or post to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.



Two photos of the Splendid Forest Ghost Moth. Can you spot it, hiding in the elkhorn?

—Adelina



Experts at Camouflage

The flower spider stays perfectly still, hidden in plain sight, on the Coreopsis flower. How long will it wait for a victim to arrive? Does it change colour to match the colour of the flower?

The Coreopsis is a weed in Australia. If you have Coreopsis growing near you, have a close look at the flowers on a warm day. How many different creatures can you find?