

HUT NEWS

Issue No. 304
June 2013



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Welcome to Faulconbridge?

The O'Farrell Government is set to change the face of the City of the Blue Mountains forever.

The draft "Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney" is on exhibition until 28 June. Read the story on page 5 and find out how to take action.

Our new Planning and Development Resource Kit is online

The Society's 'Planning & Development Resource Kit' is now on our website - you will find it in the 'Resources' menu.

The Kit has been developed in response to numerous enquiries about environmental and development issues in the Blue Mountains.

It is designed to help residents better understand environmental protection and planning laws, learn how development in the Blue Mountains is regulated, and take appropriate action on environment-related matters.

The Kit gives advice on what to do in a variety of situations - from how to report pollution and suspected non-compliant or illegal development, to how to use the Council's interactive maps, how to make a submission to a Development Application and more.

Please pass this message on to your friends. We welcome feedback on the Kit and suggestions for improvement.

BMCS GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 27 June, 7.30 pm
Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls

Darug bush tucker and medicinal plants

Presenter: **Bundeluk**

Ever wondered if you could start your very own bush tucker garden? Well-known Darug artist, tour guide and educator Bundeluk will show you how in a lively presentation which includes cuttings and pictures of plants used by his people for countless generations.

You may have seen Bundeluk selling his artworks in Leura or Springwood, or on TV or in newspapers. His name means "Crimson Rosella". Born at Hornsby, he is the son of Alan and Auntie Edna Mariong Watson. He has lived in the Blue Mountains since 1999, when he began work as an Aboriginal Discovery Ranger for NPWS. In the same year he designed the River Of Hands at Windsor.

He taught Darug culture and history for ten years at the Brewongle Environmental Education Centre. In 2000 his art was exhibited in Milan and Hong Kong. In 1994 he lodged the first Native Title claim to land in metropolitan Sydney, known as the M2 Land Claim. He has designed and consulted on bush tucker gardens at several public schools.

He will have bush tucker DVDs and art prints for sale at the talk.

The meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, starting at 7.30 pm.

Visitors are very welcome.

Nursery closed for winter

Our nursery volunteers are having a well-earned rest during June and July and the nursery is closed. Sales of native plants will resume in August.

Winter Magic Festival, Katoomba Saturday 22nd June

Blue Mountains Conservation Society's stall at this year's Winter Magic Festival will be in Main Street, Katoomba, opposite the railway station and near Summit Gear. Come along to help promote the Society and spread the word about our beautiful environment and the work we do.

Our stall will have information about our activities and current campaigns, including some petitions to be signed regarding Hands off our LEPs and Logging in National Parks. If you can help out for any length of time during the day, please contact Rob Baigent 4759 3104 rob.baigent@bigpond.com

We are also planning to participate in the parade so all welcome! Contact Tara Cameron 0419 824 974 taracameron4@gmail.com

BEAT THE TAX MAN

June—time to beat the tax man and make your tax-deductible donation to Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

Cheques please to The Treasurer, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 or go to www.bluemountains.org.au/donations.shtml

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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
23 JUNE, 2013**

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**"Hands off our LEPs!" - 100+
people at public meeting**

More than a hundred people attended the Society's public meeting at Lawson on 5 May to hear about progress on the draft Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP). The current LEPs 1991 and 2005 are being revised and consolidated to make them consistent with the NSW government mandated one-size-fits-all Standard LEP format.

The meeting gave almost unanimous support to three resolutions calling firstly on Blue Mountains City Council to improve communication to residents about the LEP review process, secondly, to ensure environmental provisions and development controls are at least equivalent to the existing LEPs and thirdly, to consult with the Commonwealth Environment Minister regarding a possible strategic assessment of impacts of the draft LEP on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA).

Speakers at the meeting included Mayor Daniel Myles, Council's Manager of City Planning, Mr Andy Turner, and the Executive Director of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, Dr John Merson. Dr Merson highlighted the importance of flexibility in the LEP provisions to allow for adaptive management of swamps in the face of climate change and urban development pressures. Society member Angela Langdon raised a number of concerns the Society has with the process of converting the existing LEPs into the Standard LEP format, as well as the lack of community consultation and input to date.

Since the meeting representatives of the Society met with Member for Macquarie, Louise Markus, MP on 7th May to outline our concerns and explain why the Commonwealth government should be involved in the development of the new LEP given their responsibilities in relation to the GBMWhA and the Commonwealth listed endangered ecological communities found in the Blue Mountains.



Hands off our LEPs!

What you can do:

1. Stay up to date. All documentation from the public meeting, including media releases, speaker presentations, a summary of participants' comments and questions, and the formal resolutions can be found on the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au. Under "Campaigns". Updates will be posted on the Society's website and Facebook page as the campaign progresses. Blue Mountains City Council has included information about the LEP review process and timetable on its website at <http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/sustainableliving/localenvironmentalplans/standardinstrumentlep>.

2. Write to our local state and federal MPs, the NSW Planning Minister and the Commonwealth Environment Minister expressing your concerns about the planning process and requesting they ensure that natural and cultural values of the Blue Mountains are adequately protected in the new LEP. Information sheets to help with letter writing can be downloaded from the Society's website.

3. Download a petition from the Society's website requesting that the Mayor and the NSW Planning Minister extend the public consultation period on the new draft LEP from 2 months to at least 3 months. Collect signatures and return the forms to any member of the Management Committee or post to the Society.

Please phone **Sue Morrison 'Hands Off our LEPs' community campaigner** on 0418 292 672 for further information, or if you don't have access to the internet or if you want to assist in the campaign.

Don't raise Warragamba Dam wall

Extract from an article by Keith Muir in Colong Bulletin May 2013.

The southern Blue Mountains should be the best protected wilderness in the world: it is part of a world heritage area, in a long-standing national park with declared wilderness areas and wild rivers. It is also part of the Warragamba Special Area. Anyone entering its inner catchment without permission risks a \$44,000 fine. So reviving plans to raise Warragamba Dam wall thereby inundating the heart of this wilderness should not be just abhorrent but virtually impossible both legally and politically, yet plans are afoot to do just that.

The case against flooding world heritage is overwhelming ... and raising the dam wall will not remove flood risk.

In response to this threat to world heritage listed wilderness, a website has been set up. Go to <http://dontraisethedam.com> to download Fact Sheets and to send a message to Barry O'Farrell.

Publicity Officer

Thank you to the Society for taking me on in the role of Publicity Officer.

The Blue Mountains is my place and my passion. I grew up in Faulconbridge, travelling to Sydney from there to high school and university. Although much of my adult life was spent in Sydney, I returned to live in the Upper Blue Mountains in 1997.

As a science teacher and then education and interpretation officer for National Parks and Wildlife Service I learned to interpret and promote our natural environment so that others could understand its value. I carried that skill into leading the community relations teams of the Australian Museum and then the Royal Botanic Gardens, where one of my most thrilling experiences was to be part of the development and opening of the Mt Tomah Botanic Garden in 1988. I went on to head up community relations for Sydney Water during which time I gained postgraduate qualifications in marketing. When I returned to the Mountains to live in Megalong Valley and then Wentworth Falls, I worked as Coordinator for the Coxs River Catchment Committee followed by the Department of Land and Water Conservation (as it was then known). During that time I worked on the Blue Mountains Stormwater Environment Improvement Program. Publicity, education and community involvement have been common threads in all of these more relevant aspects of my working life.

And now, retired, what better use for my time and background than to support the Blue Mountains Conservation Society? I look forward to getting to know everyone and to supporting the work of the Society.

Susan Crick, Publicity Officer

bmcs.publicity@gmail.com; 0409 829 635

Bad ideas for NSW infrastructure Don Morison

Will the change of leadership in our state's top infrastructure body be a chance to reverse bad policy decisions?

The plans for Sydney Metropolitan Transport and for the raising of Warragamba Dam's wall provide worrying examples.

As top infrastructure officials Paul Broad and Nick Greiner go off in search of new hats, they leave a series of environmentally threatening proposals on the drawing boards. Foremost is the idea of spending at least \$11 billion on inner urban motorway tunnels (the misleadingly named "West Connex").

There is currently a lot of "suppressed demand" for travel in metropolitan Sydney. "Suppressed demand" is when you don't apply for a job or enrol in a course or ask someone sexy for a date because getting there would be too costly or time-consuming. When more roads are built suppressed demand becomes less suppressed and fills up the new roads with a never-ending supply of slow-moving traffic.

This worsens the emission of greenhouse gases. It causes localised environmental hazards around the tunnel ventilation stacks and causes some reduction in inner suburban land usable for housing, open space and other purposes.

It also encourages the low-density urban sprawl that eats into Sydney's fringe greenbelt including the endangered Cumberland Plain woodland.

The inner Sydney problems that are so focussing NSW's leaders are only occurring because at least 20% of Australia's population still prefers living in Sydney to anywhere else! It is much larger than what sustainability experts would regard as the most efficient size for a city.

But – ironically – the West Connex proposal (and further expensive Sydney road schemes advocated by the NRMA and others) would chew up so much money we would be starved of funds for infrastructure projects which could make New South Wales' smaller cities more attractive. Only integrated public transport planning can offer real relief from Sydney's congestion.

Like the Inner Sydney Motorways, the higher Warragamba Dam wall would be a waste of public money and a scourge on the environment.

In an article in the Autumn 2013 issue of "Bushwalker", it is pointed out the object is largely to allow developers to make profits from previously flood-prone land on the Cumberland Plain. Thousands of hectares of National Park land including areas of the Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness would be newly inundated. Rare species such as the Camden White Gum would be sacrificed.

Residents who lived in the upper Blue Mountains from the 1930s to this century reported that the number of misty days each year increased after the initial filling of Warragamba Dam in the 1950s. This was presumably due to the large surface area of Lake Burragorang being available for evaporation.

A further massive increase in the surface area of the lake could drastically alter local micro-climates and damage ecological systems over a wide area of the mountains.

Let's have a drastic change in thinking on how NSW infrastructure funds are spent. Infrastructure NSW should cease being a servant of narrow corporate interests.

Don Morison, 8230 2116, 2vp@bluemountains.org.au

Carbon policies by Ross Coster

Current political debate about the “carbon tax” concentrates only on its short-term effect on the price of energy, usually exaggerated. What is the carbon tax, who pays, who benefits, why do we need to reduce carbon emissions?

If we accept (as I have done for 20+ years) that Global Warming is real, and it is caused by human activity, and it is dangerous, then we must do our best to prevent it.

The primary driver of Global Warming is the release of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as Carbon Dioxide. We release these gases when we burn coal, gas, petrol, diesel and even wood.

So what is the best way to reduce GHG emissions?

We can put a price on such ‘pollution’, such as a Carbon Tax or an Emissions Trading Scheme, and let the market decide the best way to reduce emissions.

This is what the Gillard Government has done, putting a fixed-price Tax on GHG emissions, with the intent to convert to an Emissions Trading Scheme in 2015.

I like this scheme as it allows emitters some choices: Reduce your emissions, or reduce someone else’s emissions, or pay for offsetting activities (tree planting), or pay the tax and pass on the cost.

Rather than tell an emitter what to do, we let them work out for themselves what is best for them, and at the lowest cost. This will allow the low-hanging fruit to be picked first, reducing emissions at lowest cost, and ramping up to higher-cost options over time.

This also leads to technology improvement, as emitters look for cheaper ways to reduce emissions or offset their emissions.

Emissions Trading Schemes already run in Australia, including a scheme in the Hunter Valley that targets salinity in the Hunter River.

The money raised by the Carbon Tax is being spent on tax cuts to compensate for the increase in cost-of-living that results, payments to emitters that compete with overseas businesses in countries with no such scheme, and a new fund to build renewable energy projects.

The Abbott Coalition opposition proposes to scrap the Carbon Tax and the Emissions Trading Scheme, and replace it with a Direct Action Plan. Under this scheme, emitters are free to continue with business as usual, but the Government will pay for offsets to achieve the emissions reduction targets.

As Malcolm Turnbull said, this has the sole advantage of being easier to scrap!

The money spent by the Government will come from the general revenue stream (ie: taxes) and is in effect a Carbon Tax! (But paid by the Australian taxpayer, not the polluters who will have no incentive to develop cleaner technology.)

So emissions from coal, gas and oil will continue to grow, and farmers will be paid to plant trees and maintain carbon in the soil by changed farming practices. This is an obvious plan to feed money to farmers (natural supporters of the Coalition), while achieving next-to-nothing for GHG emissions.

The Carbon Tax and emerging ETS are, in my opinion, absolutely the best way to reduce GHG emissions in the Australian economy and must be saved in the upcoming Federal election.

Ross Coster, email Ross@coster.com.au

“CONSERVATION HUNTERS” ’ TRAJECTORY: A RANDOM PATTERN OF BULLET POINTS

Recently:

- The Game Council NSW website boasted that now 20,000 NSW hunters are licenced to use firearms.
- “Volunteer” hunting was suspended in South Australian national parks after a volunteer’s bullet ended up in a colleague’s ankle.
- A farmer on a property near Orange NSW was bailed up at gunpoint by “Conservation Hunters” who are supposedly administered by the Game Council of NSW. The farmer had asked them to stop illegally shooting on his land after they failed to locate the nearby Canobolas State Forest where some shooting is allowed.
- In a mildly sensational article, the Sydney Daily Telegraph suggested guns are out of control in the state and provided a chronology of police actions. One of the items involved the seizure of firearms from a vehicle provided to the Game Council of NSW by the NSW Government.
- The Game Council NSW website announced they were funding their participation in a festival of like-minded enthusiasts on May 25/26 in Melbourne. They were apparently inviting people from other states to bring firearms into ours, using the slogan “There’s never been a better time to hunt NSW”.

WATCH THIS SPACE (from a safe distance).
Don Morison.

Sustainable Blue Mountains 2025

Carolyn Williams, Landuse Subcommittee

All councils in NSW are required to have a ten-year Community Strategic Plan which identifies the goals and objectives for the local government area. In the Blue Mountains, developing the strategic plan has involved extensive community consultation over several years. The current plan, *Sustainable Blue Mountains 2025 (2010)* is under review and was on public exhibition for four weeks over late April to late May.

Members of the Society attended the community workshop on the new plan held by Council in February this year and the Society made a submission to the draft new plan.

You can read the submission on our website: (www.bluemountains.org.au) archives/submissions.

**BLUE MOUNTAINS
CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc**
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Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Follow us on Twitter: [bmcnsnw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)

Lower Blue Mountains – NOT a suburb of Sydney

The draft *Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney* is the first Regional Growth Plan under the NSW Government's proposed new planning system legislation (the 'White Paper' currently on public exhibition). The new planning system for NSW is expected to come into force in early 2014. The fact that the draft Metropolitan Strategy is currently being exhibited at the same time as the draft new planning laws demonstrates the unseemly haste with which the NSW government is proceeding to implement its planning reforms, at the cost of local community input.

The Blue Mountains Local Government Area, along with Hawkesbury and Penrith, make up the West Subregion in the draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney. While much of the detail of what is in store for the Blue Mountains will be in the yet to be developed Subregional Delivery Plans, the general picture is clear from the documents currently on exhibition. The proposals in the draft Metropolitan Strategy have significant implications for the Lower Mountains, potentially irrevocably changing the bushland character of these areas:

- **The Metropolitan Strategy identifies 'Metropolitan Urban Areas' which are defined as urban or identified future urban areas, which will be "the focus of Sydney's growth over the next 20 years".**
- The lower Blue Mountains has been identified as a **Metropolitan Urban Area** under the draft Strategy. This includes areas such as Glenbrook, Blaxland, Warrimoo, Springwood, up to and including Falconbridge, and includes land north and south of the Great Western Highway. The designation covers private land, Crown land and even some sections of national park, and includes environmentally sensitive lands such as ridge tops, slopes, creek lines and areas mapped as having regional significant vegetation.
- The West Subregion, covering the Blue Mountains, Penrith and Hawkesbury, has been set a minimum target (more is encouraged) of 39,000 new dwellings within the next 20 years. The Strategy does not state what the Blue Mountains share of this new housing target will be but it is clear that future growth will not be evenly spread. Metropolitan Urban Areas have only been identified in Penrith and the Blue Mountains (Hawkesbury has no identified Metropolitan Urban Areas). Environmentally sensitive and currently protected lands under our existing Blue Mountains LEPs, such as the outlying ridges, steep slopes and waterways, will therefore bear the brunt of potential new residential land releases, as more suitable areas for development in the Blue Mountains have already been developed.
- **The draft Metropolitan Strategy identifies the western half of the Blue Mountains beyond Falconbridge as "Metropolitan Rural Areas".** Again this is a totally inappropriate designation since the majority of the Upper Mountains is not "rural" farmland, but is instead dominated by small villages and towns set in bushland environments surrounded by World Heritage national parks. Even Metropolitan



Rural Areas under the Strategy are vulnerable to future development and urban release as they will be "managed and monitored for possible future extension of the Metropolitan Urban Area".

In its submission, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society called on the NSW government to remove the draft Metropolitan Strategy from exhibition and go through the correct strategic plan order (first, legislation then regional growth plans), including the community participation requirements in accordance with the Government's own draft planning legislation and White Paper. We also requested that the Blue Mountains is not regarded as a 'high growth' area and an extension of Sydney's urban sprawl, and to remove the Blue Mountains from the Metropolitan Strategy. Instead, the Blue Mountains should be incorporated into a regional growth plan covering the Blue Mountains and westwards.

The Blue Mountains City Council also opposes the splitting of the Blue Mountains into a Metropolitan Urban Area (from Falconbridge down) and Metropolitan Rural Area (west of Falconbridge), citing the threat of intensified urban development to the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and Sydney's water supply, and the creation of a 'second class Lower Mountains' (*Blue Mountains Gazette*, 22 May, p.10).

What you can do

- Read the draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney and lodge a submission. The exhibition period ends on **June 28th**. Go to <http://strategies.planning.nsw.gov.au/MetropolitanStrategyforSydney.aspx>
- Read the Society's full submission - go to the website (www.bluemountains.org.au) and look under "Campaigns". You can use the Society's submission as a basis for your own submission.

The Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

\$7.50 plus \$1.50 postage.

Buy the map online

(www.bluemountains.org.au)

or write to BMCS, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls
2782 with your cheque or money order.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA)

The wheels turn slowly!

Brian Marshall, NP/WH Officer

Many will be aware that the GBMWA was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 because it satisfied two of the criteria for natural values of outstanding universal significance. The GBMWA has outstanding examples of: ongoing ecological and biological processes particularly in respect of eucalypt-dominated ecosystems; and significant natural habitats for the in situ conservation of biological diversity with respect to eucalypt species and eucalypt-dominated communities, and taxa having Gondwanan affinities.

Apart from the World Heritage Listing (WHL) values, the GBMWA has other important values such as geodiversity, biodiversity and indigenous and non-indigenous heritage. These were not listed at the time (in 2000), but it was recognised that some of them might, following more research and documentation, merit WHL.

Essentially reflecting the logic that National Heritage Listing (NHL) should be a prerequisite for WHL, the Colong Foundation submitted nomination documents prepared by Dr Geoff Mosley for NHL in 2005.

The following article from Geoff updates the progress (or 'slowgress') since 2005. He notes that the GBMWA Advisory Committee is effectively attempting to kick-start the NHL process by producing a series of supplementary reports which will be the basis of a final report to the Australian Heritage Council in early 2014.

Now read on ...

Blue Mountains National Heritage Assessment on track

Dr Geoff Mosley

The considerable amount of time taken by heritage assessment processes can easily lead to a matter of importance dropping out of view. A good case in point is what has happened to the Colong Foundation's nomination of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area for the National Heritage List. The nomination documents prepared by Geoff Mosley for the Foundation were submitted in June 2005. The initial deadline for the Australian Heritage Council assessment was 30th June, 2008 but it is now the 30th June, 2014. It would still be possible for an extension to be requested by the Council if it needs more time.

The Foundation was aware when the NHL nomination was made that the Government planned to transfer Australia's World Heritage sites onto the National Heritage List (which happened in May, 2007). These related to the area's biodiversity values. Therefore the NHL nomination was for the additional values of geodiversity, natural beauty and cultural significance (Aboriginal and European). The basic documents for this are: 1) The Colong Foundation's 'Blue Mountains for World Heritage' book of 1989, 2) the 1994 'An Assessment of the Blue Mountains and Surrounding Plateaux' report by the Royal Botanical Gardens and 3) the 1998 'Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Nomination'.

The GBMWA Advisory Committee (appointed in August, 2006) has a major role in the assessment and a 2009 workshop organised by the Committee endorsed additional areas that had been proposed for the assessment. These are: Dharug National Park, Parr SCA, Nattai, Bargo and Yerranderie SCAs, the Wombeyan Reserve, Joadja SCA and Finchley Aboriginal Area.

The Stage reached is that the Advisory Committee is preparing a research report addressing all the values for which the property is not listed. A draft of the report is expected to be completed by the Committee in November, 2013 with a finalised report provided to the Australian Heritage Council in early 2014.



Powerful Owl NestCAM

The Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) is the largest owl species in Australia and threatened in all states in which it occurs. They breed through the winter, laying eggs late-May/early-June and fledging chicks appear during August. Due to the difficulty in locating nesting hollows and the physical location of nesting hollows high up in trees it is not easy to see what is happening throughout the breeding season.

As part of the Powerful Owl Project, Birds in Backyards has a nest camera on a hollow this year (2013). This blog will post weekly videos of the most exciting things happening at the nest for the duration of the breeding season in the hollow (April to August).

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/Powerful-Owl-NestCAM>

(Photo: Juvenile Powerful Owl – Meredith Foley)

Winter Comforter

In winter the Grey Thrush comes to comfort me.

'Cheer up,' he calls.

It doesn't matter if the bleak winds blow,
It doesn't matter if it rain or snow,
Or if the temperature is two below,
He calls, 'Cheer up.'

I know in springtime he will sing a melody
So sweet and rare.

But now he hops around the garden quietly
With spritely air.

'Cheer up', cries he.

Graham Alcorn

"The Birds Baths of Umbigumbi".

Logging in National Parks: Insanity has no bounds! ¹ Brian Marshall

The focus of this article is on the insanity of logging in national parks (a state issue), but I will begin with two prize-winning pieces of insanity in the federal arena.

The reply to the Budget speech proudly stated that the 'carbon tax' will be removed. This is insane as the 'carbon tax' is working. Greenhouse gas emissions have moderated and renewable-energy use is growing. Stopping the 'carbon tax' through political pigheadedness would be an unmitigated disaster.

The Budget's reply-speech spruiked removing the 'failed mining tax', yet 'big miners' reap enormous profits which are barely disguised by their aptitude for creative accounting. This is equally insane. The answer must be to broaden the mining tax to cover other finite resources and modify aspects which facilitate tax avoidance. Government (of any persuasion) should not connive at 'big miners' raping Australia's finite resources.

And now to logging in national parks!

In Queensland, logging in national parks and in forests ear-marked for reservation was scheduled to start in April 2013. Redneck vandalism is alive and well under Premier Newman. In contrast, an historic agreement has been reached to progressively reserve 500,000 ha of Tasmanian native forest. Some 170,000 ha of this will cover the Styx, Weld and Upper Florentine Valleys which are scheduled to become a World Heritage Area in June 2013. Premier Giddings has clearly seen the environmental and economic benefits which flow from preserving native-forest assets.

NSW is a different story. Over the past few years, national parks in NSW have become exposed to increasing levels of mountain biking, horse riding (now being trialled in wilderness), and other high-impact activities. They remain potentially impacted by CSG exploration and exploitation despite the Premier's attempts to isolate more vocal centres of opposition. They would have already been exposed to oxymoronic 'conservation hunting', had some members of the Game Council behaved less stupidly; indeed, only a review of the Game Council's governance stands between tranquil parks and marauding hunters. Now we are threatened by the ultimate insanity of logging mature and 'old growth' forest in national parks.

The upper house's General Standing Committee No 5, on which the government has the numbers under the chairmanship of Robert Brown of the Shooters and Fishers Party, has recently handed down its controversial report. Of the 12 formal recommendations², only the last one dealing with the use of indigenous communities in the management of public lands is likely to receive general acceptance. A few of the others are at first glance relatively innocuous, but they complement the broader agenda comprising the conservational emasculation of national parks.

The principal polarising recommendations are that:

- there should be an 'independent' review into the management of all public lands and, for the duration of the review, a moratorium on creating new or extending existing national parks;

- prior to conversion of lands to the national park estate, there must be an impact statement in which **economic** (my emphasis) and social impacts are each accorded equal weight with conservation objectives;
- a large-scale 'thinning' trial of the river red gum forests should be expanded and conducted by commercial operators³; and
- **appropriate areas of parks should be urgently released for logging to sustain the timber industry, and particularly (but not only) in the Pilliga district this could be facilitated by a 'tenure swap' between national parks and State forests⁴.**

Premier O'Farrell and Minister Parker have both stated that the government does not support commercial logging in national parks and has 'no plans' to allow it⁵. But should this be taken at face value or are they just weasel words? The Premier back-flipped over his pre-election statement that there would be no hunting in national parks; 'no plans' does not preclude developing plans the next day or when needed as a *quid pro quo* with the Shooters and Fishers Party; a portion of a park could be reclassified as state forest; and finally, it is unclear whether 'commercial logging' precludes extensive 'thinning', or any other process of large-scale 'non-commercial' exploitation.

What can I do?

You can read more at: <http://www.npansw.org.au/index.php/component/content/article/127-park-management/797-logging-threatens-nsw-national-parks.html>, and use the list of talking points to email the Premier at office@premier.nsw.gov.au

If you are concerned about weasel words and political expediency, it will take only a couple minutes to sign the on-line petition of the Nature Conservation Council available at: http://nccnsw.org.au/take-action/forests?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=%2524671+a+hectare&utm_source=YMLP&utm_term=tell+Premier+Barry+O%2526rsquo%253B...

Or should you prefer it, send the Premier a postcard at Parliament House 6 Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, just stating that you oppose logging in national parks and will hold him to account should he in any way allow it.

Dr Brian Marshall, NP/WH Officer

¹ This only has essential endnotes – a version with all the endnotes may be obtained from the Hut News Editor.

² [http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlament/committee.nsf/0/74da1cd968beb279ca257b6c00012c86/\\$FILE/Summary%20of%20key%20issues%20and%20recommendations.pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlament/committee.nsf/0/74da1cd968beb279ca257b6c00012c86/$FILE/Summary%20of%20key%20issues%20and%20recommendations.pdf)

³ This could be classed as akin to Japan's scientific whaling research or smacks of Dracula being in charge of the blood bank.

⁴ This is astounding – I'll swap you the logged low-conservational barren land for your high-conservation 'old growth' forest – and would you like to buy the Harbour Bridge?!

⁵ <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/logging-looms-in-national-parks-20130512-2jg90.html>

Ode to the Angophora, the 'Apple tree' or the Red Gum of Bullaburra

Angos meaning a vessel,
Phoro meaning to bear
Refers in Greek to your goblet shaped fruit.

Apple tree the name given by early settlers
Who, in their longing to find similarities
In the alien landscape
Thought you resembled some of the species
Of their far away orchards.

Red Gum for the bark changing from salmon pink
To deeper red and blood like resin
Staining your smooth trunk.

Your long lance-like opposite leaves
With a thick strong vein
Your creamy white flowers
And open broad growth
Between the railway lines
And the highway
Announced

"This is the limit of my range
Don't look for me higher up the mountains".

Once thirty years ago
I saw a white cross marked
Crucifix-style
On your hard but vulnerable trunk
I asked the purpose of such a sign:
The reply
"She's dangerous love, in the way of the traffic".

This time they were in earnest
No mark warned of your downfall.
Now you lie in large ignominious slabs
Surrounded by a temporary fence.

Now the traveller will no longer
Know the native mark of season's changes;
Sweet scented clusters of summer flowers
Shiny tips of bright red growth
Or subtle pinks and reds of your great trunk
On the Bullabulla border.

Cathy Cavanagh, 14/4/2013.

BUSHCARE GROUP

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

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

The Greening Power Of One

A man in India has grown a 1,360 acre forest from scratch on his own – and there are some lessons in his efforts for all of us.

I've been following the story of Jadav Payeng for a couple of years now as it's a remarkable achievement. Over the last 34 years, he's transformed a barren sandbar into a lush jungle and he's about to do the same on another sandbar. His efforts have been repaid by being able to eke a living from the forest he planted.

Obviously he's put a lot of time and effort into this, but one of the comments following the TreeHugger story points out something very important – revegetation doesn't have to be an all-consuming task; if you use local resources and learn a little about recognising local plants to avoid treating them as weeds.

In the case of Jadav Payeng, he started by growing bamboo – a hardy, fast growing family of plants native to the area. I'm assuming animals then also assisted with plant diversification; e.g. seeds from other areas were deposited in bird poop.

Back in the early 00's, I propagated 300 native trees from seed and planted them on a property I had at the time. Every stage was very time intensive; from caring for the seedlings to carting a 25 litre barrel around the block in a wheelbarrow to give the planted seedlings a small drink every week.

Last year I moved into a house on a largish block where the previous owners had put in substantial effort in planting. Unfortunately, some of the species were not native. The hedge out front isn't particularly heat, drought, wind or frost tolerant and those plants take up 90% of my maintenance time. If it wasn't for their importance, I'd just let them die and may still do so in the future as water is gold out here. The front also has ...brrrr... grass; but that's another story for another time.

There are quite a few barren patches in the backyard; but thankfully there are also native plants about the place. These are shrubs and trees that require next to no maintenance. So all I've done is collect seeds from these – which are produced in abundance – and spread them around the bare spots; gently stepping on them to push them into the ground a little.

It's a "survival of the fittest" approach utilising nature's abundance – which is probably the best strategy for this area.

That is slowly starting to prove fruitful and I expect within the next couple of years the back yard will start looking more like the bushland once so common in the area. Some of the plants will be food sources for birds, bees and various critters, others will provide shelter.

Very lazy, yet productive – the perfect gardening method.

We might not have the time or money to revegetate hundreds or thousands of acres, but we can do our bit to help the patch we are responsible for without it being too taxing.

Michael Bloch, *Green Living Tips.com*.

Green Living Tips is an online resource powered by renewable energy offering a wide variety of earth friendly tips, green guides, advice and environment related news to help consumers and business reduce costs, consumption and environmental impact. (<http://www.greenlivingtips.com/>)

Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

A flock of Budgerigars alights on a dead tree and it turns green as if suddenly alive. The sociable little budgie is the world's most popular cage bird, yet relatively few people have seen them flying free in the wild. They are one of Australia's iconic birds - a boom-and-bust nomad of the inland. And occasionally, flocks of wild budgies can be found surprisingly close to home.

When the outback is subject to one of its spectacular rainfall events, the rivers start flowing, the floods come and the land is covered in a flush of new growth. Waterbirds fly in from thousands of kilometres away to breed. The abundant grass produces seed and the granivorous birds start nesting, sometimes several times in quick succession to take advantage of conditions while they last. It's then that the huge flocks of Budgerigars, Zebra Finches and native pigeons can be seen. Following the explosion of small birds, mammals and other fauna, raptors multiply or move into the region. The whole area is buzzing with life!

In 2009, amazing flocks of Budgerigars found their way around the world via photos and videos filmed in south-west Queensland. Tens of thousands of them in one flock, moving like a swarm of insects and darkening the sky. And this was only the first of three very good years. Even in 2012, the wildlife boom continued in parts of central Australia.

This year, things have changed. Drought has again crept over the land. As the inland dries and the lakes and rivers contract many birds will perish. The more nomadic species, however, are pushed towards the coast into regions where they're not usually seen. It's why years such as this create a bonanza of interesting sightings for coastal birdwatchers, though the farmers aren't so lucky.

In recent weeks, Budgerigars have been reported in many locations on and east of the Great Dividing Range, including a flock of 50 in the Hunter Valley and 40 in the Capertee Valley. It's not the first time they've been seen in the Capertee, with a population of 50 along the river, evidently breeding, during the drought years 2002 to 2005, but not seen since.

Other typically inland species turning up on and east of the divide right now include Black Kite, Spotted Harrier, Black Falcon, Pink-eared Ducks and the rare Freckled Duck, to name a few. But most unusual of all is the Singing Honeyeater in Jo Barrett's garden at Glenbrook. Jo showed me photos of this bird, which is normally a resident of much more arid parts of Australia (and despite the name, not much of a singer!). The only previous record I can find for the Blue Mountains is a group of 6 reported in 1964 at Everglades gardens, Leura.

So do keep an eye out for wayward nomads from the inland, and if you happen to see a flock of green Budgerigars, they might not have come out of an aviary!

Carol Proberts

origma@westnet.com.au

Twitter: @carolproberts

Budgerigars in flight
Photo by Trevor Qusted



Membership Application Form

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address:
.....PC

Phone(s)

Email

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$30 Concession (Senior/Student)\$20
Household \$35 Concession (Senior/Student)\$25
Corporate (open to negotiation) \$100

Bushwalkers only:
(\$20 per walker per annum) \$.....

Donation (tax-deductible) \$.....

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

TOTAL AMOUNT INCLUDED \$.....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline): Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Web or database management; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Society administration.

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

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.
2.
3.

ENQUIRIES: Phone (02 4757 1872
Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

Please cut out and forward this form
with your cheque or money order to:

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls NSW 2782
or pay online at www.bluemountains.org.au

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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

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

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

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

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

Welcome to new members

Andrew Pye, Faulconbridge
Eunice Goodberg, Katoomba
Beth Rohriach, Glenbrook
Michael Ord, Springwood
Diane Aspinall, Springwood
Kerry Suhrbier, Lawson

The Greater Blue Mountains
World Heritage Experience
www.worldheritage.org.au

Down the Wallaby Track: a backward glance, with John Low THE WILD BOYS

It's the latter part of the 19th century and, while the shopkeepers and wealthy tourists stride the sunny uplands, the "shadies" toil below, their humpy villages growing like lichen in the damp and mist-filled recesses of the valley. In Mark O'Flynn's haunting new novel *Forgotten World*, set during Katoomba's coal and shale mining era, two sons of an Irish miner explore their world at will, every track as familiar to these "wild boys of the valley" as an old map. Reading this I was reminded of another youngster, historical but also from a marginal Katoomba community and equally at home on the bush tracks of escarpment and valley.

Though born in Sydney at Little Bay, Walter John ('Jackie') Brooks possessed a genuine Mountains heritage through his mother Rosie, the daughter of Gundungurra elders William and Fanny Lynch. From childhood he lived with his mother and other family members in the valley of the Katoomba Falls Creek, in the place known as 'The Gully', and roamed the bush with the same freedom his wild fictional counterparts had done a couple of decades earlier.

Such freedom, however, was not without its dangers and in November 1912 he and two mates from the town were returning from a jaunt into the Megalong Valley. They chose to ascend Narrow Neck via Dickson's (aka Dixon's) Ladder, "a weird wire rope hanging from an iron peg fully 70 feet over a sheer precipice", an access originally provided for the Megalong shale miners.

Jackie, the *Blue Mountain Echo* later reported, "was out in front barefooted, and, as he had often taken the short-cut visiting a relative in the Valley, he hung on well. The other lads were handicapped with boots, and on the upward climb slipped slightly on several occasions. When nearing the top of the last incline, young Annesley ... lost his hold and, with a cry of terror, slipped away and went headlong down over the awful precipice. Young Martin, horrified at the fall of his companion, also slipped away and followed Annesley over the side...."

Establishing that his mates were alive, Jackie continued his climb and "made all haste to town, where breathless ... he broke the news". His actions and courage in returning with the rescue party saw him hailed as "a little hero ... deserving of every recognition". He was presented with "a handsome medal" and a small trust fund was established.

In the years following WW1 the strength and agility he developed as a 'wild' bush child earned Jackie fame on the local sporting fields as the 'Wonder Boy' of Blue Mountains rugby league. A popular figure in Katoomba, he played the organ in the Valley church, was a good singer, a fine dancer and skilled on both the gum leaf and the spoons. Sadly, when the Gully community was dispersed in the mid 1950s, Jackie Brooks vanished from the area. His place in our region's story is acknowledged in the new Cultural Centre's interpretive exhibition.

John Low (grizzlybear3au@yahoo.com)

Katoomba
Federals
rugby
league
team
Ca 1922



Carolyn O'Neill
3.4.1943 - 9.5.2013

Carolyn O'Neill may have first appeared both quiet and reserved but when you got to know her better it was her intelligence and dry wit that impressed you. As anyone who has been with the Monday Walkers knows, we do as much talking as walking and Carolyn was good at both! She joined the group in the late 1990's when she moved to the Mountains. Friends and acquaintances who knew her since then, agreed that once she got started, she could talk on a whole range of subjects, was always interesting and never boring. Many remember her as a bit of a stoic but there was also a steely determination to finish something she had started whether it was a particularly hard walk or the David Astle Friday Crossword.

To some of us she was a good friend and travelling companion; someone you could have a good moan or laugh with. She had a fear of heights and was reluctant to use the chair lift at Mt Kosciusko and Taronga Zoo; eventually she would climb on and ask to be told when she was there so she could open her eyes again. During her working life, she had been both a high school teacher and librarian. She had travelled extensively, lived in Prague, could speak French fluently and loved Paris where she immersed herself in the culture, art, wine and food. She had spent time in Ireland as she traced back her Irish heritage. In her younger days she had been a keen tennis player and horsewoman. She loved reading, opera and classical music but was also entertained by the antics of her grandchildren and 'Shawn the Sheep'.

Carolyn O'Neill you are going to be missed but I'm glad we knew you. Judith Dyer.

Nest box plans

Did you know it takes over 100 years for a tree to form natural hollows? In suburbia, by the time a tree gets old and large enough for this to happen, they are removed as they can be dangerous. Natural hollows are used by many different types of birds like parrots, kookaburras and pardalotes. Nest boxes may be a viable alternative to these hollows and are a great way to observe birds in all their life stages in your garden.

Birds in Backyards has developed a series of nest box plans for a range of Australian birds. There are nest boxes for 13 different birds, so we have made sure there is a nest box suitable for wherever you live. Some birds, like Rainbow Lorikeets and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, are breeding fine in our parks, remnants and gardens, so we have targeted some less common and less well known birds in our plans.

And remember nest boxes are only part of the solution – we need to make sure our birds have suitable habitat in our suburbs as well, so don't forget to keep planting in your garden – see our section on backyard habitat planting.

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/Nest-Box-Plans>

Some millipede neighbours

Millipedes aren't as familiar to most people as insects, but just like insects they're classified into Orders. The most diverse, widespread and abundant Order of millipedes is *Polydesmida*, with 1000+ species in Australia and at least 20 in the Blue Mountains area. For more (lots more) information about *Polydesmida*, visit <http://www.polydesmida.info/polydesmida>



Hoplatessara luxuriosa
(Scale Bar is 10mm)

One of the local genera of *Polydesmida*, *Hoplatessara*, is strikingly banded (see illustration). There are several described species in NSW, and last month my wife and I found a new one south of Ilford, on the Lithgow-Mudgee road.

Like many genera of *Polydesmida*, *Hoplatessara* forms a species mosaic on the map. Each species has a well-defined geographic range, and overlaps very little with its neighbouring *Hoplatessara* species. The first *Hoplatessara* to be described, *H. luxuriosa*, lives west and south of Lithgow. It's common in grassy eucalypt forest around Sunny Corner (see illustration).

Hoplatessara species and most other native millipedes are very tough and can cope with fire and a fair amount of habitat disturbance, including conversion of native forest to pine plantation. Another *Hoplatessara* species, *H. nigrocingulata*, is persisting in the much-logged and burned bush on the Newnes Plateau.

Native millipedes are eliminated, however, by conversion of native vegetation habitat to farmland or suburbs. This means Australia's most at-risk native millipedes are in long-cleared landscapes with only small, scattered bush remnants. They were unlucky: their piece of the mosaic didn't get included in a national park...

Bob Mesibov
Penguin, Tasmania
mesibov@southcom.com.au



Photo: *Hoplatessara luxuriosa* habitat.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

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

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending ring the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Emanuel Conomos phone 4757 1090, mobile 041 977 3906, email emanuelanddi@yahoo.com.au Check www.bluemountains.org.au for updates.

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

- Jun 15- **Ridges to the West of Carne Creek** (offtrack) Party Limit of 8 - get in early-Leader **Hugh** 0423309854 (if unanswered,leave textmsg)-Contact Leader for place and times or email: hue.s@optusnet.com.au-Gr3/4-Map **Cullen Bullen**
- Jun 22- **Golden Stairs Mt Solitary Chinamans Cave** and Return - Great views climbing Solitary-Leader **Warren** 4787 5403 or 0428 962 460-Meet at Katoomba Stn CarPark-8.15am-14Km-3-Maps **Katoomba Jamison**
- Jun 29- **Carlton Creek to Breakfast Creek to Coxs River** and return **Classic walk in Wild Dogs country**-Leader **Warwick** 4757 1354-Meet at Blackheath Stn C/P-8.15am-14Km-3-Map**Jenolan**
- Jul 6- **Sunnyside Ridge Firetrail No6** Some off track 4WDs Required - Spectacular pagodas and gullies and cliffines **get in quick-Bob** 4757 2694-Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockade Carpark -8.00am-6Km-Gr3-Map **Cullen Bullen**
- Jul 13- **A Crossing of the Blue Mountains of NSW 2013 Day 2** Blaxland to Woodford via St Helena Crater and Western Ck (if possible)-Leader **Jim** 4758 6009-Meetat Blaxland Shops at bottom of steps from station-08.40-16Km-Gr3/4-Maps **Springwood/ Penrith/ Katoomba**

Saturday walkers Crossing of the Blue Mountains of NSW 2013 – For the full program, click on the following link if reading Hut News on line. Or copy <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/bm-crossing-2013.pdf> into your browser

FORWARD NOTICE: **Proposed Program for Week (Monday to Friday) at Wombeyan Caves in September**

Monday – after arrival and lunch – walk around the area at your own pace Grade 2. **Tuesday** – am Self guided cave inspection Cost? - Grade 2/3 - pm walk in the area **Wednesday** – am guided cave inspection Cost? Grade 2/3 - pm walk in the area. **Thursday** - am guided cave inspection Cost? Grade 2/3 - pm walk in the area **Friday** – 10.00am departure – drive home **Cave Inspections** probably cost around \$10 but they did have a three for the price of two deal some years ago.

From the Wombeyan Accommodation information

Camping - Camping kitchen and hot shower amenities - appears to be free but will check (bring your own firewood)
Dormitory - \$50 – each dorm holds 8 in 4 double bunks per dorm
House - \$85 (to 100) Old Post Office – Self contained , 3 bedrooms, will check configuration (I think 2 double 2 single)
Cabins – \$68 (to 90) again self contained – configurations are 2 double 1 single, 1 double 4 single, 1double 3 single.

Please let me have expressions of interest by end of July so that I can make further enquiries regarding accommodation and costs. Please let me know – a) preferred dates in September – b) Number in your party and c) preferred accommodation - As the accommodation types are spread out over a quite large area it may be preferable to all be in the one type of accommodation although the camping area is near to the cabins, I believe. - Jim.

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Maurice Kerkham, 4739 4942, mauricekerkham@hotmail.com

- Jun 17 **Ruined Castle, Jamison Valley.** Majestic rock formation, different view of Solitary. Meet Katoomba rail carpark 8.45. Car pool. Fare \$5. Phil 4787 5560 grade 3.
- Jun 24 **BUS TRIP to Rylstone.** Book and pay Keith 47361010. Fare \$12. Town and river walk. Council depot, south Street, North Katoomba 8am sharp. Contact Ros 4733 3880. Grade 1.
- Jul 1 **Bridge to Bridge, Nepean River.** Walk both banks of Nepean. Lunch at O'Donahue's Pub. Meet Emu Plains Station 8-45am. Keith 47363610. Grade 1
- Jul 8 **Boronia Park to North Ryde.** New walk, part of Great North Walk. Meet top of escalators Central Station 9-30am. Judith 4758 6310. Grade 2.
- Jul 15 **Glastonbell, Bell.** Long walk includes The Cathedral & Split Rock. Some scrambling. Meet Mt.Victoria Rail Station 9-45am. Car pool; Fare \$5.00 Phil 4787 5560. Grade 3.
- Jul 22 **Christmas in July Lunch.** Katoomba RSL, Lurline Street. 12 noon for 12-30 start. Cost \$22-00 includes entertainment. Orders & payment to Judith (4758 6310 or 0419 780 640) no later than Monday 8th. July.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, roybev12@bigpond.net.au

- Jun 13 **Water Nymph's Dell Wentworth Falls.** Delightful walk into rainforest. Some scrambling. Steps to climb out. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Stockyard Car Park Wentworth Falls Station 9.30am Leader Beverley 4757 2076 Grade 2
- June 20 **Fairfax Track Blackheath.** Easy level walk on bitumen. Car pool. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am Leader Jill 4751 6926 Grade 1
- June 27 **National Pass Wentworth Falls.** Longer walk than usual with steep descent and ascent on recently upgraded track. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Stockyard Car Park Wentworth Falls Station 9.30am Leader Beverley 4757 2076 Grade 3
- July 4 **Cockatoo Island Sydney Harbour.** Sydney's largest island. Explore this world heritage-listed site of convict history with harbour views. Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Narelle 4751 2467 Grade 1
- July 11 **Rigby Hill and Walls Lookout.** Views of Grose Valley. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Meet Mt Victoria Station 9.50am Leader Barrie 4782 9235 Grade 2
- July 18 **Christmas in July Comet Inn Hartley Vale \$35.** Contact Beverley 4757 2076.