



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



GOOD NEWS FOR THE GARDENS OF STONE! Coalpac withdraws mining application by Tara Cameron

The proposal by Coalpac Pty Ltd to excavate a massive pit and destroy 800 hectares of Ben Bullen State Forest was withdrawn on 24 October 2013. This follows a Department of Planning recommendation that the mine be refused because it was "incompatible with the natural setting which includes unique rock formations and sensitive and important biodiversity areas". A Planning and Assessment Commission review had previously rejected the mine on health and environmental grounds in December 2012.

This withdrawal is a significant moment in the long campaign to protect the gateway to the Gardens of Stone, a unique complex of escarpments, rock arches and pagodas that provides habitat for many plants and wildlife.

Had the company not withdrawn its application, it would have had one more chance to gain approval at a second Planning Assessment Commission hearing.

Now this process has ended and any new mining proposal would require a whole new development application.

We would like to thank all of our members and supporters for helping us in our work to stop this open cut coal mine!

The Society is part of the Gardens of Stone Alliance, working to permanently remove the threat of open cut mining by making Ben Bullen State Forest a State Conservation Area as part of the Gardens of Stone stage 2 proposal. (See page 5, Protect the Gardens forever.)

Public exhibition of LEP deferred? Sue Morrison

The Blue Mountains Draft Local Environment Plan 2013 was due to go on public exhibition at the end of October. The Society's most recent advice was that Blue Mountains City Council and the NSW Planning department were still negotiating final details of the plan. Because of Council staff involvement in bushfire recovery operations the Mayor has now asked the Minister for Planning to defer the exhibition period.

At the time of going to print we had no information about when the LEP public exhibition is likely to go ahead. The Society agrees that the LEP exhibition should be deferred until next year to allow sufficient time for the Blue Mountains community to recover from the recent bushfires and to avoid the busy Christmas/New Year period.

What you can do:

Phone or email Member for Blue Mountains, Roza Sage 4751 3298
bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au and/or the Minister for Planning & Infrastructure 9228 5258 office@hazard.minister.nsw.gov.au

Request that public exhibition be deferred until the new year. At the same time you could ask that the exhibition period be extended to 3 months to allow sufficient time for analysis and comment on the LEP.

For more information contact Sue Morrison on 0418 292 672. Check the Society's website or Facebook pages for updated information as it becomes

National Day of Climate Action Sunday 17 November 2013

It's time to come together, turn up the heat and launch a summer of climate action!

On 17 November tens of thousands of Australians will turn out across the country to mass climate rallies in capital cities as well as local Climate CatchUps in regional towns to show their support for stronger climate action. Wear hot summer colours with heatwave-themed paraphernalia (hats, sunglasses, zinc cream, beach umbrella, etc).

There will be a rally at Sydney's Prince Alfred Park, starting at 11 am, and a number of Blue Mountains events are being planned.

These will include:

- Climate Action Blue Mountains will have a stall at the Lawson Magpie Markets in conjunction with this year's Love Lawson Festival, with a group photo to be taken at 11am. Contact Sue 0418 292 672 email wollemi@exemail.com.au for details. (Check the Facebook page for the latest updates: www.facebook.com/ClimateActionBM)
- BYO picnic at Glenbrook Park from 11am
- BYO picnic at Summerhayes Park, Winmalee from noon
- A gathering at The Chalet Guesthouse & Studio, 46-50 Portland Rd, Medlow Bath from 11.30am. Bring a plate to share.

Check GetUp's website closer to the time for up-to-date details of all events or to RSVP: www.getup.org.au/get_togethers/climate-catchup

"Hut News", the newsletter of
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782
Phone 4757 1872

Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au
Web page: www.bluemountains.org.au

President:: Peter Ridgeway: 0401 481 037
president@bluemountains.org.au

Senior Vice President: Tara Cameron
0419 824 974 taracameron4@gmail.com

Second Vice President:: Don Morison
8230 2116 2vp@bluemountains.org.au

Treasurer: Bart Beech 4739 9947
bart.beech@invensys.com

Administration Officer: Wes Maley 4757
3942 admin@bluemountains.org.au

Bushcare Officer: VACANT

Environmental Education Officer:

Gary Humble 4784 1648 0427 841 078
gaz.humble@gmail.com

Landuse Officer: Angela Langdon
0417 004 722

angela.langdon@bigpond.com

Meetings Secretary: Heather Hull
4739 1493 hhull001@bigpond.net.au

Membership Secretary: Lachlan Garland:
0415 317 078

lachlan.a.garland@bigpond.com

General Meetings Convenor:

Brendan Doyle 4757 2197
brendan049@gmail.com

National Parks/World Heritage Officer:

Brian Marshall 4784.1148
briannamar@bigpond.com

Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies

044 8055 294 (message)
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Plant Nursery Manager: Kevin Bell

ph/fax 4787.6436 kevinbell@eftel.net.au

Publicity Officer: Susan Crick

bmcs.publicity@gmail.com;
0409 829 635

Sustainable Population and Climate

Change Officer: Peter Green 4751 9474
peter@pwgreen.id.au

Threatened Species Officer: Nakia Belmer

0414 344 741 bayern11@tpg.com.au

Website Officer: Alan Page 4784 1704

webmaster@bluemountains.org.au

Walks Convenor: Maurice Kerkham

4739 4942
mauricekerkham@hotmail.com

Project Officer-Events: Rob Baigent

4759 3104 rob.baigent@bigpond.com

Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson

4751.2303, mob 0427 512 303
fmatter@bigpond.net.au

Nursery News—Featuring Ferns

Ferns are much tougher than normally imagined and will grow in a variety of situations so, although most prefer a sheltered, preferably damp situation, whether that is under large trees, the shady side of a house or under an open veranda, there are species which will tolerate harsher conditions. Ferns are generally associated with tranquil, peaceful places and I remember studying for end-of-year summer exams in my maternal grandparents' fernery which was always cooler than anywhere else and made concentration a lot easier.

We now offer a variety of ferns in either 70mm pots for just \$2.50 or advanced specimens in 140mm pots for \$5. Let's start with the biggest ones, aptly named "Tree-ferns".

The largest and most common tree-fern in south-eastern Australia is *Cyathea australis* (Rough Tree-fern). This is a hardy species extending in range from the coast to inland and to an altitude of 1200m. Its habitats range from deep, shady gullies to dry forest fringes and creek banks and it will tolerate a degree of sun provided its roots are kept damp. Specimens with a trunk diameter at the base of 1.5m are known and it can reach a height of 12m with fronds extending to 4.5m. Much smaller than *C. australis* is *Cyathea cooperi*, with a slimmer trunk (30cm in diameter) and up to 12m tall. With some of these larger ferns in place they provide nice situations for smaller ferns underneath.

One of the most well-known ferns is the Common Maidenhair *Adiantum aethiopicum*. It has wiry, much-branched erect or semi-erect fronds to about 35cm long and grows in a variety of situations, usually favouring moist, open, rocky sites where it may grow into large colonies by suckering. It resents heavy shade which is why many plants kept inside in baskets suffer. Another in this genus is *A. hispidulum*, the Rough Maidenhair, a very attractive species with wiry fronds up to 35cm long which are a delicate pink when new. It is widespread and grows in situations from shaded rainforest to open rocky situations where it tolerates hot summers by curling the fronds.

One of the hardiest genera of ferns is *Doodia* which is found in a variety of situations ranging from rainforest to arid sites in sclerophyll forest and cliff faces. *D. aspera* (Prickly Rasp Fern) has fronds to 30-40cm which are an attractive bright pink when developing. Slightly smaller is *D. caudata* (Small Rasp Fern) with variable fronds to 30cm. Both these are ideal for rockeries and are easily grown in sites from shade to those with considerable sun.

The most common fern in our area is probably *Blechnum nudum* (Fishbone Water fern) where the common name nicely describes its appearance and favoured habitat along creek banks where it can form dense colonies. It has erect dark green fronds to 1.2m tall although usually much less than this in the Blue Mountains. It spreads by suckering and is good for filling in spaces under other plants. In the same genus is *B. cartilagineum* (Gristle Fern), a much larger species with erect or semi-erect fronds to 1.5m tall which are often pink when young and pale green when mature. It is a hardy fern typically found in open gullies or hillsides and tolerates dry conditions.

Polystichum proliferum (Mother Shield fern) prefers cool mountainous areas such as we have in the Upper Blue Mountains especially around Mt. Wilson. Young fronds are a light-green becoming darker on maturity and can reach 1m long and 30cm wide. It is very hardy and tolerates a lot of sun. And finally, one of the most common sights in the Blue Mountains are our hanging swamps which are often covered with tangled, often impenetrable thickets of Coral or Tangle Fern (*Gleichenia dicarpa*). This attractive fern needs a damp situation and will not tolerate its roots drying out. The health of a hanging swamp can be gauged by the health of the Coral ferns in it.

Our range of ferns will cover almost every situation and will lend a freshness to your garden. We have stocks of all the above just waiting for you. Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager (kevinbell@eftel.net.au 4787 6436)

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS 23 NOVEMBER 2013

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782
044 8055 294 (message)

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Lachlan Garland 0415 317 078
membership@bluemountains.org.au
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

The Gardens of Stone—a photographic journey with Hugh Speirs



'...Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs -
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings....'
(Gerard Manley Hopkins, from: *God's Grandeur*)

Don't mention the war! Christine Davies

Our thoughts go out to Society members and others who have lost their homes in the bushfires. What an awful week it was for us all, and at the time of writing our national parks are still burning.

The October fires in the Blue Mountains destroyed over 200 homes and burnt through over 67,000 hectares of bushland. Many more homes were saved by the tireless effort of hundreds of fire fighters from all over Australia and from as far away as New Zealand.

As the bushfires raged we were told it was insensitive to talk about global warming, but it was hard not to make the connection.

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, said there was a clear link between climate change and bushfires such as those raging in NSW and described the NSW fires as an example of what we may be looking at unless we take actually vigorous action. (SMH, 22/10/13)

Former US vice-president and environmentalist Al Gore said there is a proven link between climate change and

bushfires. He told the ABC's 7.30 report (23/10/13) that climate change will bring about more extreme weather. "Bushfires can occur naturally, and do, but the science shows clearly that when the temperature goes up, and when the vegetation and soils dry out, then wildfires become more pervasive and more dangerous".

Professor Steffen of the Climate Council (formerly the Climate Commission) said climate change is increasing the probability of extreme fire weather days and is lengthening the fire season. "Hotter, drier weather increases the risks of fires ... There is more heat in the atmosphere because of the additional greenhouse gases that humans have put into the atmosphere. So that sort of link is really straightforward to make." (ABC The World Today 25/10/13)

These fires were ignited through human activity and fanned by extreme winds into extremely dry vegetation. And the summer of 2013 is still a month away. If this is a sign of things to come, what will remain of the biodiversity of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area?

BUSHFIRE

At the Society's October Management Meeting our Bushfire Representative Hugh Paterson, a member of the Rural Fire Service, told us of the bravery of National Parks and Wildlife Service remote area fire fighters during the recent fires. Not only did they help to save the Blue Mountains towns but saved most of the Grose Valley which has been too frequently burnt in recent years.

As Hugh said, we all know of the wonderful work done by volunteers of the Rural Fire Service and the tremendous time and effort they have put into fighting for our Blue Mountains homes, but little is heard of the role of the Parks people. The story is retold from Blue Mountains Gazette, 30 October 2013.

Crew halts fire's deadly path. Jennie Curtin
They were just a small team but together they clambered into bush near the Blue Gum Forest in the dead of night to save the Mountains.

Carrying chainsaws, rake hoes and brush cutters, they negotiated their way down almost vertical drops into some of the most inhospitable terrain to ensure that fire in the upper Grose Valley could not spread to vulnerable villages lower down the hill.

By the time they were airlifted out at 10am on Tuesday morning, many of them had been on duty for 28 straight hours.

The drama began at lunchtime on Monday, October 21, after the State Mine fire crossed the Darling Causeway and it became apparent that desperate efforts to keep it out of the Grose Valley were proving fruitless.

Kim de Govrik, deputy operations manager overseeing the National Parks crews on the fire ground, decided his men should pull out and other options be considered.

"We didn't think we could rein it in... We wanted to see if we could keep it west of Victoria Creek but it had an active edge of about 12 kilometres."

Mr de Govrik told the Gazette previous experience showed the importance of keeping the fire under control.

"Historically, if you get ignitions in the upper Grose, they tend to head from west to east with the potential to move right down the Grose Valley and impact on villages down the Mountains," he said.

By late afternoon — less than 36 hours before the Wednesday that RFS commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons had warned would be "as bad as it gets" — authorities gave the go-ahead to start a backburn behind the villages of Blackheath and Mt Victoria.

"The RFS was burning on top of the cliff edge on fire trails from Perrys [Lookdown] up Hat Hill [Road] to Mt Victoria," said Mr de Govrik. "But this was the missing link." It was a two-kilometre stretch from Perrys Lookdown, around the Blue Gum Forest to Frank Hurley Head. The only way to tackle it was on foot. And it had to be done that night.

Mr de Govrik asked for volunteers "because it was quite a risky night operation". He put a piece of paper on the table and 20 men wrote their names down. One left his baby daughter's birthday party to join in. Another had finished his shift "but he knew what we were up to, he got a whiff and said I want to be a part of it," Mr de Govrik

said. "As you can appreciate, those people have families and basically they were given an hour or two to make up their minds. They obviously were torn between their own safety and the safety of the Blue Mountains, particularly the villages, and the national park.

"We had a really good range of experienced people and less experienced ones. They are all arduous level of fitness, which means they have to have a fitness test each year. They also had a range of qualifications, like senior first aid or chainsaw skills."

They were to be joined by 19 men from the RFS's Remote Area Firefighting Team.

With little time to spare, it was fairly hectic at the NPWS office at Blackheath, Mr de Govrik said. "All sorts of things had to be organised quickly to insert that many men into the Grose Valley." Backpacks, food, water, chainsaws, hoes, rakes, fire lighting gear and hoses were assembled. Some equipment was airlifted in to a helipad at Acacia Flat, south of the Blue Gum; other stuff was carried on the men's backs.

Mr de Govrik insisted on having an air ambulance nearby in case anyone was injured and had to be evacuated. A chopper was duly dispatched and the pilot and three paramedic crews waited that night at the NPWS helipad. In the event smoke or weather conditions grounded the chopper, two remote area paramedics who could walk in to difficult areas were also on standby.

The men needed water in case the wind took the fire over their heads and behind their line so a kilometre of hose was trailed from Perrys Lookdown into the valley, with an RFS tanker up the top pumping water into it all night.

At the other end of the operation, pumps which had been dropped down by chopper were sucking water from Govetts Creek to supply those on the western edge.

Mr de Govrik spent the night between the NPWS at Blackheath and the top of Perrys Lookdown. As his team worked from the top of the ridge down into the valley, he sat and watched the fire line travel. "It looked like a big, fiery red snake, just slowly making its way down. It was quite amazing to see."

Scott Colefax, one of the ground support crew, asked the team before they left how they felt. "They said, 'well, not great, but we need to do it.'"

By morning, after all of the men had been airlifted out, they wound down with some liquid refreshments at the NPWS workshop in Blackheath.

Mick English, who was in charge of the Hurley sector, said the Perrys Lookdown trek had been "particularly dangerous but our side was relatively straightforward. And if you've got experienced people, you're OK."

Mr de Govrik said: "When the bosses rang that morning saying 'how did it go, how did it go', I said, considering the short time frame to get that operation going, it was pretty much a text-book exercise." He continued: "There is a camaraderie in the Blue Mountains National Park, that we are a can-do region and we felt it was important in the big picture to do that to protect the townships of the Mountains. We all live up here, we know fire but we know the issues, we know people and we felt it was a response that we were happy to commit to."

Protect the Gardens forever Tara Cameron

Coalpac has withdrawn its application for an open cut mine in Ben Bullen State Forest. While this is very exciting news, it does not remove the threat of open cut mining in the Gardens of Stone. Another mine, the 'Pinedale extension' is proposed for a different 200 hectares of Ben Bullen State Forest.

Therefore we have joined with the Colong Foundation and the Lithgow Environment Group, to form the Gardens of Stone Alliance. With the support of organisations such as the National Parks Association and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the Alliance is working to permanently remove the threat of open cut mining by making Ben Bullen State Forest a State Conservation Area. This is an integral part of the Gardens of Stone stage 2 proposal.

Ben Bullen State Forest combines amazing pagoda formations and remarkable biodiversity with gentle topography and easy access. Reservation would protect at least 135 species of vertebrate wildlife, more than 20 threatened species, three Endangered Ecological Communities, superb forest and woodlands and masses of wondrously scenic pagodas. It would also provide sustainable and valuable benefits to public recreation and the local economy for centuries. State Conservation Areas allow underground mining but protect the surface. The reserve would be an investment in the future of New South Wales.

On the 1st June 2012, the Office of Environment and Heritage wrote that Ben Bullen State Forest "*has long been identified by OEH as being of suitably high conservation value for future reservation under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.*" (OEH Submission, Coalpac Consolidation Project). **It is now time for the NSW Government to protect the Gardens of Stone.**

PLEASE TAKE ACTION:

Send an email message to the Premier: www.nccnsw.org.au/content/protect-gardens-stone

Write to the Premier: The Hon Barry O'Farrell, MP, GPO Box 5341 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Points to mention

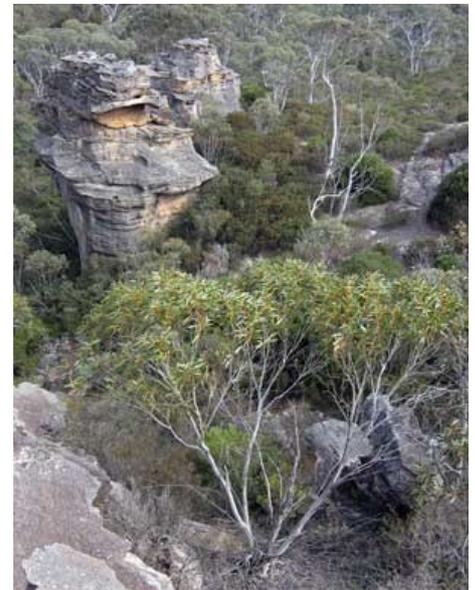
- I would like the NSW Government to declare the Ben Bullen State Forest, NSW a State Conservation Area as a matter of priority.
- This should stop open cut coal mining and open up opportunities for recreational tourism in an easily accessible area of NSW.
- The Ben Bullen State Forest is home to literally hundreds of native plants and animals, some of which are threatened to extinction. Examples include lyrebirds, squirrel gliders, spotted quolls and powerful owls.
- The unique habitat contains internationally significant pagodas which the Planning and Assessment Commission stated were "worthy of total protection".
- On the 1st June 2012, the Office of Environment and Heritage wrote in its submission on the Coalpac Consolidation Project that Ben Bullen State Forest "has long been identified by OEH as being of suitably high conservation value for future reservation under the National Parks and Wildlife Act."

"Useless" feral controls in NSW Don Morison.

The NSW Government has named 12 National Parks and Conservation Areas for occasional supervised amateur shooting and begun re-gazetting State Forests for unsupervised amateur shooting. This is despite the risk assessments being incomplete.

A spokesman for the National Parks Association, Kevin Evans, has expressed doubt that many amateur hunters will favour the new sites. Conservationists must be concerned that the hunting lobby will use this as the thin end of the wedge to gain access to public lands convenient to where most of their constituents reside. The 12 sites are located along a semi-circle roughly defined by Holbrook, Balranald and Bourke.

The strained relationship between the O'Farrell Government and the micro party claiming to represent Shooters and Fishers is a very dangerous distraction from the funding of worthwhile programs to control feral animals by employing professionals.



Wolgan Snow Gum: Andrew Valja



Pagoda Daisy: Andrew Valja

HELPING WILDLIFE AFTER FIRES

It is important for people who live in areas where fires have been to think about leaving out **shallow** bowls of water for animals escaping the fires and keeping cats and dogs inside and under control wherever possible.

You can also keep a cardboard box and towel in the boot of your car in case you find an injured animal. If you do rescue an animal that has been burnt, wrap it loosely, place it in a cardboard box, keep it in a dark, quiet and warm place and do not try to feed the animal, however you can offer water.

Call NSW Wildlife Information Rescue and Information Service (WIRES) 1300 094 737 or Blue Mountains branch 02 4754 2946. as soon as possible for advice and assistance.

The Road to Sustainability, with Ross Coster

WASTE MANAGEMENT

We *must* reduce to *near zero* the material that we bury in landfill. Everything that goes to landfill is lost forever.

Our current Blue Mountains Waste Management Strategy consists of:

- Ask people to compost kitchen and garden waste at home
- Ask people to sort out dry recyclables into a 'yellow-top' bin
- Ask people to put all other waste in a 'red-top' bin
- Bury everything that goes in the 'red-top' bin at Blaxland Tip

This is definitely unsustainable, as Blaxland Tip will be full in 2030, after which our 'red-top' waste will have to go to a landfill outside the Mountains, at great expense.

You notice I said 'ask people' several times above? That is because this system does not really work reliably. Most people do not compost, they just toss kitchen and garden waste in the 'red-top' bin. About 15% of the material in the 'red-top' bin is dry recyclables, that is material that could be recycled, but is not. About 5% of the material in the 'yellow-top' bin is *not* dry recyclables, but is contamination with non-recyclable materials.

Blue Mountains City Council is currently mulling whether to introduce 'green-top' bins for kitchen and garden waste. This system is in place in Penrith, and the experience there is very instructive. This seems at first glance to be a good idea - kitchen and garden waste gets collected, carted away, composted, sold into compost markets. About 23,000 tonnes of this stuff (48% of all 'red-top' waste) is currently buried per annum at Blaxland, and it is the really stinky stuff that causes odour problems, and releases greenhouse gases as it decomposes.

My problem with this is that not everybody will use the system correctly, there will be contamination in the 'green-top' bin, which will make composting difficult and expensive and yield poor quality compost (broken glass in your compost anyone?).

There will still be dry recyclables and kitchen and garden waste in the 'red-top' bin going to landfill. Greenhouse gases will still be produced, waste will still decompose and stink, the landfill will still be full one day. So is there a better way?

How about this system:

All waste goes into the one huge (200 litre) bin, gets picked up by one truck, gets transported to a local sorting facility and spread along a conveyor belt. Dry recyclables are picked by hand, achieving the maximum recycling rate. The rest goes into a Dano Drum (<http://www.directindustry.com/prod/keppel-seghers/mixed-waste-sorting-units-36126-763109.html>) or similar, where rotation, grinding, friction and heat smash it all up into three output streams:

- Tiny stuff, mostly organics, that go to Pyrolysis
- Intermediate stuff, mostly metals, that go for further sorting by magnetic techniques
- Larger stuff, mostly plastics, that go to another thermal technology for energy extraction

A system like this would reduce waste to landfill to 10% of the total incoming tonnage. The recycling rate would be higher. The energy generated would be partially 'green' energy that earns carbon credits, and partially 'brown' energy that does not. We can argue about whether extracting energy from non-renewable plastics is good or bad, but surely it is better than just burying it?

The key technology here is known generally as 'thermal processing', but my favourite variant of this is Pyrolysis. Pyrolysis is defined by Wikipedia as 'thermochemical decomposition of organic material at elevated temperatures in the absence of oxygen'. <http://pacificpyrolysis.com/technology.html>

What this means is that we put organics, in a kiln, exclude oxygen, heat it to 500+ degrees, and magic happens. Gases come off the material, mostly hydrogen and carbon monoxide, some of which is burned to generate the process heat, and the rest is burned in a gas engine to generate electricity. Once all the 'volatiles' (gases) have been removed by heat, the material left is called char or biochar.

Biochar is an amazing product, consisting of carbon and some complex nutrients locked up into a tiny granule. It can be used as an excellent soil improver, reducing use of fertilisers and water, and the embedded carbon stays locked up in it for centuries. Soil is improved, fertiliser is saved, water is saved, carbon is sequestered, landfill is reduced, 'green' power is generated, jobs are created, win-win-win.

Contaminants in the 'green' waste such as glass and metals pass through unmodified as the process is not hot enough to melt them, and they can be extracted from the char using magnetic and ballistic techniques. Plastic contaminants disappear in the Pyrolysis kiln, cracked into volatile gases and burned with the other gases.

Along with other pyrolysis 'fans' I have had several conversations with BMCC about this, and we had the Mayor and Deputy Mayor pretty excited. The Council staff however are far more conservative, and wrote off Pyrolysis as a technology option because it is not 'commercially proven'. Interesting Catch 22 – no Council will implement new technology until some other Council does it first!

Happily, Ballina Shire and the ACT Government are leading the way here, with plans in place to implement green-waste-only Pyrolysis (Ballina) and comprehensive sorting and thermal processing (ACT). Once one of these projects is up-and-running (hopefully the ACT project as it is just incredible on paper), we will see a revolution in waste management, long overdue!

Ross Coster (Ross@coster.com.au)

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

Coalpac sent packing! Dr Brian Marshall

In the Gardens of Stone article on page 1 you will see that the Director-General (D-G), Department of Planning & Infrastructure, has recommended that the Coalpac Consolidation Project not be approved in its current form.

The official 'Project Refusal' as formulated in the D-G's report for the Planning Assessment Commission's guidance stated¹: *"The Commission's reasons for refusing the project application are: the project would result in unacceptable and irreversible impacts on biodiversity; the project would result in unacceptable and irreversible impacts on natural features of special significance; the site is not suitable for the project; and the project is not in the public interest."*

To paraphrase Premier O'Farrell when in opposition: no ifs, no buts, so on your bike!

Until recently (24/10), the rider has been that the D-G's report would go to the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC2) for the final decision. **This no longer applies.** After three years of reports and counter-submissions, several public meetings, a review by the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC1), various modifications to the original proposal, and most recently the D-G's assessment, **Coalpac has formally withdrawn its Consolidation Proposal**².

This could mean that Coalpac has finally recognised the outrageous nature of its proposal and avoided the ignominy of a rejection by PAC2. Or there could be other reasons, as embodied in the appointment of administrators to Coalpac³ and the possibility that the original leases might become available to another organisation for little more than 'a song'.

The highly successful outcome (a euphemism for victory!) of this protracted campaign against the Coalpac Consolidation Project saves a unique landscape in the southwest portion of Ben Bullen State Forest from total



desecration. It removes the threat to the health and general amenity of the residents (including the schoolchildren) of Cullen Bullen, and it concurrently preserves the region's scenic values for tourism and various forms of low-impact recreation.

Perhaps most importantly, the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) has previously advised the Society that reservation of the Ben Bullen State Forest (BBSF) as a State Conservation Area (SCA) was 'on hold' pending the Coalpac decision. This has now been made, so the obstacle to OEH acting is removed. The Society will formally be making this point to government and asking it to proceed with the reservation within the context of the Society's Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal⁴.

But you can act now by contacting Minister Robyn Parker [ph (02) 9228 5253, email office@parker.minister.nsw.gov.au] and making the simple request that she 'kick starts' the SCA reservation process for Ben Bullen State Forest. The time is right!

¹ https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com/public/d7e314bb0ff89fa39af37623be35d527/5.%20Coalpac%20Consolidation%20Project_%20Director-General%27s%20Report_%20Instrument%20of%20Refusal.pdf

² <https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com/public/8e3b180d5b150d258b119adfb17edbd6/Withdrawal%20of%20Application.pdf>

³ <https://insolvencynotices.asic.gov.au/browsesearch-notices/notice-details/CET-Resources-Pty-Ltd-119909214/ed5072c3-77fe-4456-aba2-6e3045590cf6?appointment=All¬icepurpose=All¬icestate=All&companyname=coalpac>

⁴ <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/gos2.shtml>

Feral Horses in Newnes State Forest and Wollemi Wilderness

Peter Ridgeway

Earlier this year the Colong Foundation for Wilderness raised the alarm that feral horses were being released into Newnes State Forest, west of the Blue Mountains.

A confidential source confirmed that over 60 feral horses have been released in the Newnes and Lidsdale State Forests since March this year. The horses allegedly originate from a controversial rehabilitation scheme in Kosciuszko National Park. Under this scheme feral horses are captured and provided to public interest groups for rehabilitation. It appears that a local group is breaking in the best of these relocated horses and releasing the less desirable horses into State Forests on a large scale.

To date illegal release sites have included the track to Mt Budgary, Waratah Fire Road to Mt Cameron, Glowworm Tunnel Road, and above the State Mine, and Lidsdale State Forest. Bush walkers and canyoners have photographed horses near these locations. Worse still, in October the Blue Mountains Conservation Society confirmed feral horses browsing in hanging swamps some three kilometres east of Waratah Ridge in the Wollemi Wilderness and World Heritage Area. The establishment of these feral horses into Wilderness and sensitive ecosystems is extremely concerning.

Illegal release on such a large scale poses a serious risk to the environment of the Wollemi and Gardens of Stone regions. Unless urgent action is taken to stop the responsible persons and remove the existing horses we are likely to see the establishment of a permanent feral population. In addition to the environmental catastrophe this poses, the abandonment of these 'rehabilitation' horses into the wilderness shows a total disregard for their welfare.

The Office of Environment & Heritage and the RSPCA have been contacted and we await a response.

BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly?

Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?

Find out what **YOU** can do!

Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit

www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml

AT THE MOVEMENT POLICIES

with Don Morison and Margaret Pomegranate

TRAM-FLIT: An epic tragedy for environmentally friendly transport in multiple acts.

HABBOTT, PRINCE OF THE SEMINARY (Rowen Atkinson). Early in life, Habbott used to pray with his fellow seminarians for governments to spend a decent amount on trains and buses. After the prayers had repeatedly failed, Habbott dropped out of the seminary and fell in love – with the private car. He wrote a philosophical manifesto called “Ticket Queues” (later renamed “Cattle Lines”). While constantly promoting car use, Habbott often arranges to be photographed on a pushbike (ever since lycra became more fashionable than budgie smugglers).

COLLINSRANTS (Anthony Hopkins). After time with the London Tube, Collinsrants runs Sydney Trains (if anyone does). With a sister organisation, “Train Shrink” (or similar name), this Hopkins character cannibalises the 9.10 am from Blackheath and generally frustrates train passengers heading for anywhere but the Sydney CBD. In earlier versions of this story, he was always with a mate called “Slash’n’burn” but the new train timetable threatens to leave him without any mates.

LADRUERY (John Travolta). While Habbott needs endurance spectators, Ladruery is a genuine endurance cyclist. In his role as a consultant, Ladruery organised micro-party preference deals to make the new Senate poison-tipped. Now he is helping activist Omar Khalifa establish the “Australian Cyclist’s Party”. One challenge is that no one will cycle in Greater Western Sydney due to widespread motorist road rage. As Ladruery is also close to the Shooters and Fishers Party, perhaps the answer lies with armed cyclists. I hope they’ll realise not all motorists are to blame.

IFEELFURYA (Rachel Griffiths). Ifeelfurya is a transport expert and academic. She knows that Habbott has ended federal subsidies for public transport and favours wasting \$12 billion on Sydney’s urban motorways. This is sad for Habbott because Ifeelfurya enjoys rapport with voters he hopes to seduce. At first I feared Ifeelfurya would board a ferry and throw herself into Sydney Harbour. Then I realised she couldn’t afford the high priced ferry tickets and Opal Cards being dished out by the NSW Government.

THE GHOST (voice of Humphrey Bogart through a medium). It could be the ghost of the 9.10 am from Blackheath or the missing Central timetable boards, but it’s most probably the ghost of The Tram. When The Tram first flitted, the NSW Government was very coy about what we did know we didn’t know about it (and what we didn’t know we didn’t know). Thus when the ghost of The Tram appeared, I thought Donald Rumsfeld was driving it.

There is no grand death scene for Habbott in this version of the story. Habbott stays centre-stage. The 9.10 am from Blackheath and The Tram give up the ghost. I give “Tram-Flit” half a mark out of five ...
Margaret ?

Planning Bill before NSW Parliament

The O’Farrell Government’s Planning Bill 2013 has been introduced to the NSW Parliament. There have been a number of concessions in response to widespread community concern about the draft planning laws.

But the revised legislation still falls far short – it remains unbalanced and unfair, placing the interests of developers and industry ahead of the local communities and the environment.

Go to NSW Nature Conservation Council website for more information and to send a letter to Minister Hazzard and key parliamentarians. <http://nccnsw.org.au/take-action/betterplanning>

Mine issues dummy spit by Don Morison

Sections of the tabloid media have made a series of unsubstantiated allegations about various economic and political matters leading to the Coalpac application for Ben Bullen State Forest being withdrawn. Other media outlets have shown virtually no interest in these allegations. In particular, some commentators seem to be suggesting that Premier O’Farrell and Planning Minister Brad Hazzard should be strongly in favour of open-cut mining in this area.

One stridently anti-conservation journalist has accused Premier O’Farrell of becoming similar to Bob Carr. Since Mr Carr expanded the national park and reserve system as Premier, this could be good news.

“Sydney Rock: on the ways to the West”

This book has very informative chapters with photographs, about the geology, history and flora of the Sydney Rock area at Lawson. Copies are available direct from the publisher, Blue Mountains Education and Research Trust 4759 1034 or email olon@tpg.com.au at \$15 a copy plus postage and handling, or buy online <http://www.catholica.com.au/marketplace/bmert/>

“Sydney Rock loomed large across the highway from my childhood home. In the 1940’s we kids clambered over the Rock, imagining ourselves as early explorers who first crossed the Blue Mountains. Parties often enjoyed picnics on the Rock, savouring the far distant views and mountain breezes. During World War II one watched the search lights waving across the Sydney horizon and the fireworks at the War’s end. In those years petrol rationing severely limited traffic on the highway, but since then increasingly heavy traffic has virtually closed access to the Rock and tree growth has hidden it from the view of passing motorists. Now, with the completion of the roadworks in 2012, Sydney Rock can be restored to public enjoyment, while the old railway cutting left partly unfilled allows inspection of the sandstone stratigraphy and of the pickmarks of the rock cutters (1867 and 1902).” **Eugene Stockton.**

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.

Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

We all know it's a tough time for many birds and other fauna at the moment. More than 70,000 hectares of bushland have been burnt in the Blue Mountains since 16th October. We've heard heart-warming stories of injured and stressed wildlife rescued and cared for by volunteers, but many more have been displaced with their habitat now blackened. Providing shallow, clean water is one small thing we can all do to help birds stressed by fire or heat.

In the past there have been accounts of lyrebirds sheltering in wombat burrows, old mine shafts or moving several kilometres to a river during bushfires. But how can a tiny foliage bird like a thornbill survive a fire? Somehow, at least some of them can. After the 1994 fire in Blue Gum Swamp, once the vegetation had started regrowing, thornbills previously tagged with metal leg bands were seen in the same area they had lived before the fire.

It's likely that birds in unburnt areas may also be affected by an influx of displaced birds and as a result there will be increased competition for resources. As the burnt areas regenerate, different species will move in as different resources become more prolific. Keep an eye out especially for the Flame and Scarlet Robins, which have an affinity for recently burnt bush. It will be interesting to note the changes in birdlife in and near the bushfire affected areas over the coming months and years.

No-one in the Blue Mountains would have failed to notice the abundance of cicadas this season. Greengrocers, Yellow Mondays and the orange and black Masked Devils are different colour forms of the same species *Cyclochila australasiae*. Their loud singing makes birdwatching very difficult, and no doubt makes communication difficult for the birds themselves.

Plenty of birds eat cicadas, including currawongs, ravens, kookaburras, cuckoo-shrikes, orioles, kestrels and kites, and even the Cicadabird (so named because of its pulsating cicada-like call). The other day I watched a Noisy Friarbird feed a big cicada to its chick in the nest. Yet the abundance of easy pickings hasn't resulted in a massive increase of cicada-eating birds in our area. Perhaps massed cicada events are normally too ephemeral for large-scale movement of birds to have evolved in response.

What a memorable season the spring of 2013 is turning out to be, in more ways than one. My thoughts go out to those who lost homes.

Carol Proberts

Email: origma@westnet.com.au Twitter: @carolproberts



Printed on Australian-made 100% Recycled Paper

Membership Application Form

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address:
.....PC

Phone(s)

Email

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

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.
2
3

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$30 Concession (Senior/Student)\$20

Household \$35 Household Concession \$25

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add

\$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$.....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box mail internet only

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

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

The Olive-backed Oriole is one of many species that feed on cicadas.

Photo by Carol Proberts.

Welcome to new members

Peter Dupen, Leura
Gillian Dupen, Leura
Prunella Booth, Spit Junction
Ian Booth, Spit Junction
John Turner, Dargan
Nicolas Kearns, Blaxland
Jennifer Hall, Hazelbrook
Joshua Grant, Hawkesbury Heights
Jane Laws, Hazelbrook
Bernard Power, Blaxland
Katie Sutherland, Katoomba

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.

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

Lawson Nursery –Wednesdays and Saturdays, 9am to noon. The nursery is located in the Lawson Industrial Area on the corner of Park and Cascade Streets, opposite Federation Building Materials (see map on our website www.bluemountains.org.au).

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

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of the month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm.

Tube stock \$2.50. Larger pots available.

Enquiries Kevin Bell 4787 6436,
kevinbell@eftel.net.au

Down the Wallaby Track: a backward glance, with John Low
will return in 2014

Koalas are still counting on you

Gary Humble, Environmental Education Officer

The recent fires haven't just been disastrous for the people of the Mountains. Koalas are just one of the species of our wildlife that have also perished or lost their homes in the flames. Reports have



come in about distressed thirsty koalas turning up in Winmalee.

The national Great Koala Count is planned as an annual event. By registering at www.koalacount.org.au you can record sightings of any koalas you might see (or where you didn't see them). The BioTag app, which can be downloaded, will allow walkers to photograph any koalas spotted and record their location and various other info, even if your phone is out of range. The app isn't obligatory though; you can just make your report manually too.

Members on Society walks (or their own) are encouraged to

support this great project. Koalas are threatened by so many human impacts and climate change is adding to the stresses on their future. By just keeping your eyes open and reporting what you see, you can help add to knowledge about these lovely animals. Sightings recorded during the Count's official recording period (Nov 7th to 17th) will contribute to its statistics. People will be able to continue contributing their reports throughout the year however, adding to the database of knowledge for research.



Careful eyes are needed to spot the creatures. Their patchy grey backsides, usually resting in a comfortable fork, blend in well amongst the dappled light filtering through a gumtree. The sets of deep diagonal scratches from their powerful claws up the trunks of favoured trees plus scatterings of eucalyptus-scented poo around the base are the best indication they might be around.

Photos:

Claw marks can be quite deep – these have been coloured to emphasise them (photo: A. Roberts)

As you'd expect, koala scats smell of eucalyptus oil. If they're fresh Blinky Bill may be munching leaves just above. (photo: B. Triggs)

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.

**Society recognised at the
NSW Environment Awards 2013
Tara Cameron**

Each year, the NSW Nature Conservation Council presents a number of awards to individuals and groups for their environmental efforts. This year, we are proud to announce that the Society won two awards!

Brian Marshall – Winner of the Dunphy Award

The Dunphy award recognises “*the most outstanding environmental effort of an individual*” and their “commitment and success in the conservation of the NSW Environment”. It honours the work of Myles and Milo Dunphy who campaigned for national parks and wilderness in NSW.

It is very exciting that Brian Marshall was chosen as the winner for this year, along with Corinne Fisher from the Better Planning Network.

Brian joined the BMCS Management Committee in 2004 and served as President from April 2005 to March 2008. He subsequently remained on Management Committee as National Parks Officer and now has responsibility for National Parks and World Heritage issues, as well as convening subcommittees associated with water issues, GSG Mining, reservation of the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 region.

For the last 11 years, Dr Marshall has worked to protect the scenic values and biodiversity of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and the catchment for Sydney's water supply. Brian has challenged Non Government decision makers such as Delta Electricity, Centennial Coal and Coalpac over pollution and inappropriate development. He has also challenged Government decision makers regarding management policies in national parks, development proposals, environment protection licensing, coal mining and water regulation.

Dr Marshall's scientific approach, analytical and report writing skills have formed the basis from which arguments against inappropriate development can occur. Put simply, his work is the 'intellectual grunt' that underpins the more visible campaign slogans, media releases and social media communications of the Society.

Specific examples of his work include: the recent success we have had in respect to the open cut coal mine in the Gardens of Stone, our case against Delta Electricity for pollution of the Cocks River, numerous submissions related to the underground coal mining and the impacts on swamps, submissions to the Sydney Metropolitan Water plan and groundwater management plans for the Blue Mountains, obtaining an embargo over the sinking of new bores in the BMCC local government area and the production of a booklet entitled *Groundwater, lifeblood of the environment*.

Lithgow Environment Group, Blue Mountains Conservation Society and the Colong Foundation – Winners of the Community Action Award

The Community Action Award is given for the most inspiring community action initiative. This year it was awarded to the three groups listed above for the Gardens of Stone campaign.



Special event: Coexisting with dingoes and wolves: Strategies for conservation and livestock production

Environmentally sustainable dingo and livestock management is essential for future management of wild and domestic species. The Defenders of Wildlife (DoW), USA, Wood River Proactive Wolf Project has shown wolves and livestock can coexist, with benefits to biodiversity and livestock producers.

Suzanne Stone oversees DoW programs for non-lethal wolf management in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. She has managed large carnivores since 1988, including serving as a member of the Yellowstone wolf reintroduction team. Suzanne Stone facilitates wildlife conflict resolution and nonlethal management techniques.

Come and hear Suzanne and local dingo expert **Brad Purcell** talk about methods to stop livestock predation and simultaneously work toward biodiversity conservation. This tour has been funded using generous donations from Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority, the Humane Society International, NGO's, and from individuals.

Brad Purcell has worked with Suzanne on his Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travel Fellowship, awarded for his research on dingoes that started in the Burratorang Valley in 2004.

Date: Wednesday 13 November 2013

Time: 7:30pm, supper provided.

Venue: The Conservation Hut, western end of Fletcher St, Wentworth Falls.

Public seminar hosted by Blue Mountains Conservation Society. More info: <http://www.bmwhi.org.au/wp/?p=1390#more-1390>

In 2011, Coalpac Pty Ltd proposed to destroy over 800ha of Ben Bullen State Forest and turn it in to an open cut coal mine. This threatened a pagoda landscape and bush wonderland of dramatic coloured escarpments, home to hundreds of native plant, bird and animal species; some of which are threatened to extinction.

This award recognises the combined efforts of three groups and the work of our volunteers and members who: attended the banner drop, came to rallies, wrote letters and signed petitions.

Congratulations and thanks to you all! Let's keep up the good work for the Gardens of Stone.

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

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 contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy—phone 4758 6009, email jp34@tpg.com.au Check www.bluemountains.org.au for updates.

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

Because of the current bushfire emergency many of the bushwalks below may not proceed. Check with the leader during the week before the programmed walk

- Nov 16 **Wolgan Valley Walls.** From the Wolgan Gap north. Spectacular Cliff top views over the valley. Off track. Limited numbers—Leader Emanuel 47571090 ring after 7pm—Ring leader for information—6Km—Gr3—Map Cullen Bullen
- Nov 23 **Ingar Pool Mt Bedford Firetrail to Murphys Glen & maybe Bedford Creek – Leader Diana - 4751 3935--** Check with leader for details -Map -Jamison
- Nov 30 **Eastern Cliffs of Carne Creek.** Amazing rock formations and views into Carne Creek. Some exposure. Off track. Limited numbers—Leader Emanuel 47571090 ring after 7pm—Ring leader for information—5Km—Gr 3/4—Map Cullen Bullen
- Dec 7 **Substitute walk. Gardens of Stone Xmas outing.** Off-track - party limit 8. Book in early with leader Hugh 0423 309 854, after 8, for details Contact Leader, 6Km, Gr 3/4. Map Mt Wilson/Hartley
- Dec 7 **Alternate Walk – walk postponed from Oct 26 –2 Caves 3 Creeks and Pisgah Rock** (Walk may be changed from description) Attic Cave to Monkey Ropes Creek to Lincoln Creek to Erskine Creek upstream to Dadder Cave and return to Pisgah Rock and Track out - Some rough track, possible scrambling and creek crossings. Leader Karen 4751 9695 Details Contact Leader- Map Penrith
- Dec 14 **Bonnie Doon Track.** Leader –Warren 4787 5403 0428 962 460. Check with leader for details Map Katoomba.
- Dec 21 **Xmas Dinner at the Wentworth Falls Country Club popular buffet style cost \$35 - book with Bob 4757 2694.**
A deposit is required
(Check with the leader first, then the BMCS website (www.bluemountains.org.au) for updates)
The Saturday Walkers Crossing of the Blue Mountains of NSW 2013 Day 6 and 7 will be rescheduled to the new year

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

- Nov 18 **BUS TRIP. Kanangra Walls.** “Waterfall & Ridgetop Walk”. Fare \$12. Book & pay Tony 9625 3985. Meet rear Westpac Springwood 8am. Pick ups along the way. Maurice 0402 402 783. Grade 2.
- Nov 25 **Six Foot Track.** “From Cemetery to Swing Bridge & return” Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9am. Car Pool. Fare \$5. Christine 4784 2385. Grade 3.
- Dec 2 **Victory Track & Numantia Falls** “Rainforest & waterfall walk” Meet Faulconbridge Rail Station south side 9-15am. Kate 4759 1943. Grade 2/3
- Dec 9 **Christmas Party.** “The Postman’s Run on the Hawkesbury” Judith 4758 6310

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

- Nov 14 **River Cat from Parramatta to Quay, ferry to Neutral Bay and May Gibbs House.** Bring lunch or fish and chips at Quay. Meet Parramatta Station north side 9.00am. Narelle 47512467. Grade 1
- Nov 21 **Berghoffers Pass, Mount Victoria.** Explore early Blue Mountains' Road. Take lunch. Car pool. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Barrie 4782 9235 Grade 2
- Nov 28 **Grand Canyon, Blackheath.** Five kilometre circuit with birds, rainforest, views and waterfalls. Take lunch. Car pool. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Rosemary 6355 2292 Grade 3
- Dec 5 **Mermaids Cave and Coachwood Glen, Megalong Valley.** Cool walk, maybe followed by swim in Megalong Creek. Bring a plate to share for picnic lunch. Car pool. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Barrie 4782 9235 Grade 2
- Dec 12 **Christmas Party at Lindsay's House.** Lindsay 4751 6640
No further walks until January.

Walking in burnt bushland. Where National Parks and reserves have **burnt areas** due to hazard reduction burning or wildfires, it is very important that members of the public stay out of burnt bushland areas for the following reasons:

- **for safety reasons** – only trees directly adjacent to the tracks/trails have been assessed for dangerous tree limbs. Trees inside the burnt areas, however, have been damaged by fire and branches/trees could fall down and injure someone.
- **to help the bushland regenerate** – by keeping off the newly burnt ground it will protect and enable new growth to form
- **to prevent unauthorised tracks forming** throughout the bushland.

(<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks>)

Bushwalking during fire season

Check park closures just before leaving for your walk. Assume walks are closed on a Total Fire Ban day unless the park manager says otherwise. (NPA)

Check these websites for park closures:

- <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/FireClosure.aspx>
- <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>

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