

HIGHWAY DITCHED

A planned new highway between Mt Victoria and Lithgow across the Newnes Plateau has been rejected. According to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, the decision will “protect a natural wonderland”. The RTA says the Newnes Plateau option was not feasible because it would pass through the Marrangaroo Army Base containing unexploded bombs. The Central West Regional Organisation of Councils which includes Lithgow but not the Blue Mountains, says it’s



disappointed the route was ruled out and that the decision could jeopardise the future of a Bells Line Expressway. We say, before this happens, why not reduce the need for all the B-doubles across the mountains by building a more effective rail route to the west with transport interchanges at important

junctions? This was an idea was put at last year’s Blue Mountains Environment Summit, the report of which Strobos has just received. Colong director Keith Muir says “there are still concerns about the other options through the Hartley Valley” since “they all impact on the World Heritage Area and the Grose Wilderness” and wants “further consideration of a tunnel option beneath Mt Victoria”. I have discovered that the Newnes Plateau is the habitat a number of rare plants such as the *Boronia deanei*, a nationally significant threatened species with



a vulnerable classification flowers around the swamps. The beautiful *Banksia pencilata* (pictured) is also found in only a few other places. Two alpine plants, the Snow Daisy and Snow Gum grow around Murray’s Swamp, the northern extreme of their range. Fiona

DEVELOPMENT THREAT

Blue Mountains councillors have expressed “serious concern” about proposed changes to State legislation that could allow development within national parks. Councillor Mays said the changes would “threaten not only the environment but also the Blue Mountains tourism industry” and could jeopardise our World Heritage Area status. This decision follows a joint statement last month by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and the Katoomba Chamber of Commerce and Community about the impact this could have on the environment. Blue Mountains Tourism has also made a submission to call for better signage and improved campsites instead. Photo Blue Mountains Conservation Society president Tara Cameron with Clrs McCallum & Mays (Gazette) Jackson



FREE TRANSPORT?

A member of the State Parliament for the nearby electorate of Blacktown, Paul Gibson has repeated a call to offer free public transport to ease congestion on roads and reduce emissions from cars. This idea was one repeatedly put at last year’s Blue Mountains Environment Summit, the report of which Strobos has just received. Over the next few months we will examine more of these. Although the proposal is estimated to cost about \$1 billion a year, maybe the Blue Mountains could lead the way with free travel between Lapstone and Lithgow. We wouldn’t be the first. Last year, Victoria started offering train commuters free travel before 7am on weekdays. A faster train to Sydney would be good. Over two hours to go 100 km is a snail by world standards. No wonder people prefer to drive. We are not promoting car travel but why does the F4 freeway stop 20 km from Sydney? After travelling down Parramatta Road



the other day with dad (track works!), the wasted fuel from buses and cars idling in traffic jams or at traffic lights must be huge. At least do what I saw in Brisbane on a recent visit where they provide bus only express ways that cars can't use throughout the city Alastair

GOLDEN GUMTREE

Blue Mountains schools are invited to join in the Bush Room Diary and Golden Gumtree Postal Run to celebrate the 50th Blue Mountains National Park and 10th World Heritage Area anniversaries. The Bush Room Diary Students will monitor the daily weather and keep a diary on the natural events happening in the bushland nearby. These diaries will provide stories, information on plants and animals and artistic works as a basis for the postcards prepared for the Golden Gumtree Postal Run. Starting in Term 2 through to September, schools need a weather monitoring station. Australian Geographic Penrith are offering a 10% discount to all schools participating. The Postal Run will be done by a group of bushwalkers, supported by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society will visit schools from Penrith to Lithgow to collect and deliver postcards and stories from the students for exchange at the next school. There will be a traditional campfire during the visit for the postal exchange.



The diary reports, stories and artwork from the Bush Room Diaries will go on the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute and Conservation Society websites. The postcards created by the students will contain a 'stamp emblem' of a gum tree with selected postcards to form an art display for a celebratory conclusion to the walk.

To get your school involved, contact Bronwen Maxwell, Community Engagement Coordinator - Information and Education, The Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, Tel: 4782 4557 Email: b.maxwell@bmwhi.org.au. Robbie

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

To encourage residents to live more sustainably the Conservation Society and local business are offering a substantial prize to the Blue Mountains household that can make the greatest per person reduction in energy and water consumption over a 12-month period. There are many ways to reduce energy and water consumption, and many of them will cost you nothing or even save money. To obtain an entry form and more information contact BMCS by phone on 4757 1872 or email bmcs@bluemountains.org.au. Information is also available on our website ENTRIES CLOSE 30 JUNE 2009

Ways to Reduce Consumption and save money. Turn off lights when not needed. Turn off appliances at the socket to stop the 'standby' power consumption. Reduce shower times. Use a bucket to collect the initial cold water from the hot tap for use on garden or elsewhere. Don't boil excess water when making hot drinks. Reduce winter indoor temps (18-19 degrees is adequate) – put on more clothes if necessary. Tolerate a higher summer indoor temp (27-28 is comfortable) – use ceiling fans. Keep windows, doors and curtains closed during the day in summer and open them at night. Use cold water for clothes washing (use biodegradable detergent). Only wash full loads of clothes or dishes. Don't flush the toilet every time.

These may cost upfront but save in the long run. Replace incandescent light globes with compact fluorescent lights. Seal around doors and windows to stop drafts. Install adequate insulation in the ceiling. Install WELS rated taps & showerheads. Install low-flush toilets. Replace electric hot water with solar or heat-pump systems. Install a rainwater tanks system. Install a solar power system. Government rebates are available for all these. We liked this "Eco doll house one of our editor's little sisters received for Christmas. It comes equipped with solar roof panels, a wind turbine, recycling bins, a bicycle (there is no car) and a rain tank. May as well start young! Rob & Chris



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