

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"

Badgerys Creek Airport Proposal: Flaws, Fiddles and Falsehoods

The guest speaker at our general meeting on Friday 25 August will be Noel Child. Noel is a successful and well-recognised environmental scientist and engineer with over 30 years experience in a variety of senior level appointments and assignments within both the corporate and private sectors. He has been involved in the Sydney second airport issue for almost a decade, having provided technical advice to the former Federal Airports Corporation, the NSW Government, and more recently the Western Sydney Alliance.

Debate about the need for a second major Sydney airport, and the location of any such facility, has proceeded for some fifty years. During the past twenty years, successive politically driven site selection and assessment processes have promoted Badgerys Creek in Western Sydney as the preferred second airport site.

These processes have proceeded to a very large extent in the manner of a self-fulfilling political prophecy. The need for, and siting, of a major second airport has not been established on the basis of any objective analysis of underlying strategic factors, but rather on the basis of perceived bureaucratic and political need.

At the meeting Noel will discuss the many deficiencies of political, decision making, and assessment processes to date, and explore the prospects for a sustainable, responsible and functional future transport strategy.

The meeting at the Conservation Hut, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, will start at 7.30 pm. Visitors are welcome.

September Workshop

The Impact of Fire on Biodiversity

The loss of biodiversity of species is one of the most serious environmental issues in Australia today. Can bushfire hazard reduction be justified if species are being lost?

The impact of fire on biodiversity will be discussed at a special meeting. A panel of speakers who have expertise in fire ecology, including a speaker who will address the need to keep the community safe from fire, will address the meeting. There will be an open discussion with an opportunity for questions.

This event will take place along with other public events as part of Earth Alive — Biodiversity Month in September. The date is Friday 8 September at 7.30 pm at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. For more information phone

THE DEADLINE

**FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
FRIDAY 18 AUGUST 2000**

HOW MANY MORE HANGING SWAMPS MUST WE LOSE BEFORE THEY WILL BE PROTECTED?

Thank you to those members who provided information on hanging swamps they know of which have been totally or partially damaged.

Blue Mountains Swamps look as if they will get no legal protection. The NSW Scientific Committee has been assessing our nomination to have this community listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act.

The Scientific Committee "recognises the conservation significance of Swamps" but did not believe that there is a risk of extinction. It implied that this community was "vulnerable" and stated that there is no provision for vulnerable ecological communities under the Act.

It does not make sense to wait until the swamps are irretrievably degraded before they are given some legal protection. If this community could satisfy the criteria of being under threat of risk of extinction, it would be too late and too expensive to restore.

The Management Committee is approaching Bob Debus as our local member as well as the Minister for the Environment to change the Act to give hanging swamps some legal protection. We would like to see a new category which allowed for the listing of "vulnerable ecological communities" just as individual plant species can be listed as either "vulnerable" or "endangered".

It would strengthen our case considerably if there was proof of a high level of community support to make this change to protect our swamps. You can help by writing a simple letter to Hon Bob Debus, Member for Blue Mountains, 3/107-109 Macquarie Road, Springwood 2777.

Hanging swamps are a very complex community and vital to the functioning of our Upper Mountains creeks and waterfalls. There is a need for protection now, before they become degraded and just an item of scientific interest. If you want further information contact Lyndal Sullivan 4782.1635 (ah).

Meredith 4782.4823.

Attack Gorse AGAIN!

The next Great Grose Gorse Walk is 19 August to 3 September. BMCS is organising an activity day on Sunday 3 September. The site is at Blackheath, corner of Cross and Cleopatra Streets. We will be meeting at 9am. It is to be a

2 Sept., 9.30 to 1 pm.

Wentworth Falls, former STP, bush regeneration bush edges of weed plume. Tues 5 Sept., 9.30.

Contact Cath Ireland (NPWS) 4787.8877 (a.h. 4787.8061) for details of other events and to register.

**"Hut News", the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
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weed control (gorse) and possible planting on private land as well as in the National Park. Please bring water, morning tea, lunch and wear warm clothing, long sleeves and wet weather gear if necessary. The activity usually lasts 3-4 hours.

The area will benefit from the more the merrier — lots of hands will be a great help. We can attack this noxious weed if we can get adequate numbers to assist in this worthwhile activity. Join in, feel the pleasure from really making a difference! For more information ring Laura Hays, Bushcare Officer on 4782 7692 or email casahays@pnc.com.au

... More Activities

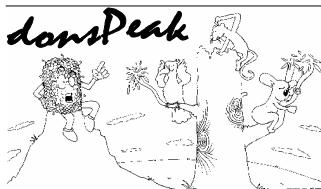
Some other Highlights of the Great Grose Gorse Walk are: **Blackheath Golf Club**, new activity, controlling noxious nasties. 9.30, Mon 28 Aug. **Weedbusterlympics!**

Braeside area, Blackheath. Come and see who can remove a square metre of Montbretia, bag it and carry it to scales the quickest! Sat

2 Sept., 9.30 to 1 pm.

Wentworth Falls, former STP, bush regeneration bush edges of weed plume. Tues 5 Sept., 9.30.

Contact Cath Ireland (NPWS) 4787.8877 (a.h. 4787.8061) for details of other events and to register.



Don Morison's
column will
return next
month.

Land Use Report

If you want further information or can help with any of the following items, phone or fax Lyndal Sullivan 4782.1635 (ah).

Threat of Hanging Swamp to be sold for Housing Development in Leura

State Government has plans to sell off 12 housing lots behind Leura Primary School for residential development. Most of this land is covered by a hanging swamp. Over half of the area is steep and zoned "environmental protection".

Immediately behind the school are five very weed infested lots which need some attention. The Crown Land starts just north of where Churchill Street intersects with Mount Hay Road.

If this land is to be developed, the community will end up bearing many long term costs. The cost of connecting the sewer by repairing the damage caused by the connection in the buffer area, the damage to the swamp from the housing development, the additional urban impacts on Govetts Creek and the cost to NPWS to clear up this creek in the Park.

The Dept Land and Water Conservation are currently undertaking an assessment of this land before any decision is made (we hope) about whether Landcom can sell it. It is expected that a draft report will be available for public comment during August or maybe September. Comments from concerned residents can help protect this land.

Either watch out for the details of the exhibition in the Gazette or ring Lyndal and register your interest in this matter, so you can be notified.

Sale of Public Lands

There is concern across NSW about public land being sold off. The Nature Conservation Council, of which we are a member, wants detailed information so that they can take some action on this. We need help from members to let us know of any land you know which has been "sold off".

We are particularly concerned about bushland, but want to know about it all. Obviously there is the Queen Victoria Hospital site at Wentworth Falls, but what about sites sold off for housing? or sites owned by the Education Department etc etc. We need details on location, and if you know anything about its size, which government department and what condition the land was.

Should Garden Sheds be Permitted Just Anywhere?

How many gazebos does it take to kill a heath? How many cubby houses does it take to destroy a swamp? We should soon know the answer to these questions if the Council continues to allow "minor" developments to occur in environmentally sensitive areas.

Currently "minor" developments like

bird aviaries, barbecues and clothes lines are permitted without Council approval. This occurs under a policy called the "Local Approvals Policy". There is currently a review of this policy. You can collect copies at Council offices and make your comments by 4 September.

This draft policy has some changes from the existing policy. Many requirements have been added like ensuring that water tanks are "colour matched to background". Unfortunately there are no requirements to safeguard the homes of our native friends. This policy does not clearly exclude these "minor" developments from environmentally sensitive lands.

Some, but not all, privately owned environmentally sensitive lands are zoned Environmental Protection. In theory developments are not permitted on EP lands (but this is not reinforced in this policy). Other sensitive lands have been identified as "environmental constraint areas" and others have not been identified at all. This policy will continue the "death by a thousand cuts" regime for these areas.

The help of members is needed in speaking to Councillors about this. If possible put your pen to paper and write to the General Manager, BMCC.

Developments in "Bushland Conservation" and Rural Areas

Over the last few years there has been much controversy about holiday cabin developments and those claiming to be "educational facilities". Council is seeking comment on a proposed change to developments permitted in bushland areas (zoned Bushland Conservation) and rural areas like the Megalong Valley and Sun Valley (zoned Rural Bushland Conservation).

These proposals are contained in Amendment 30 and are on display for comments until 21 August. This amendment also includes a proposed change in the wording of the definitions of three of the "sensitive vegetation units" identified for protection in LEP91. This is for legal reasons to better withstand challenges by developers.

Upper Mountains Sewerage

Keith Muir is director of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness and a Member of BMCS. He disagrees with the Society position on the Upper Blue Mountains Sewerage Augmentation Scheme (see article in July Hut News). In the interests of democracy and fairness, his reply to my earlier article follows.

Note that I have received no other negative feedback from members, and have already started lobbying politicians to proceed with the preferred scheme. Ross Coster, Water Cycle Sub-Committee

Grose Pollution

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society members have fought for decades to defeat over-development and pollution of the Upper Mountains. So why should we reject connection of the Upper Blue Mountains towns to the Winmalee sewage scheme which avoids pollution of the

Grose River with sewage effluent?

A sewage pipeline from Blackheath to the sewage tunnel at North Katoomba would close yet another major point source of pollution in the head-waters of the Blue Mountains National Park, bringing to nine the total of decommissioned sewage treatment plants. The transfer scheme has already ensured that the Kedumba River is clean enough for swimming once more and many other areas have benefited.

On the other hand if the local Blackheath plant is to be supported, the question that we in BMCS should address is will the effluent be highly treated so it can be reused or just discharged to the Grose River? The only realistic reuse option is for drinking water, as duplication of the water lines would be enormously expensive and no areas of suitable farm land exist nearby needing irrigation. It follows that Sydney Water and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society must convert Blue Mountains' residents to drinking a shandy of treated clean and reused water. And will Sydney Water carry through its commitments to develop water reuse anyway? Its track record says no.

The current proposal for a Blackheath sewage plant will not meet the given pollution standards for discharges entering a national park. The plant's design "targets" (note that word) are not adequate and unlikely to become realities given past experience with sewage plants. The promise is for phosphorous loads to decrease to less than 20 per cent of current levels (p. 5-40 of the EIS). As these current levels are 30 times the upper ANZECC (1992) guideline (p. 5-14), the new plant's effluent will be six times above this phosphorous guideline. And there will be a lot more effluent, up to 3.5 million litres per day. However, while this is a lot of effluent, it comes from less than 5 per cent of the catchment of the Grose River. So with water coming from the other 95 per cent of the catchment the Grose will not be starved of water if the effluent goes to Winmalee for treatment and discharge to the Nepean.

As for the claims that an upgraded plant will limit urban expansion, the reverse may be true. Water reuse would create a massive increase in water availability that could easily pave the way for unlimited urban expansion, whereas drinking water will be more scarce if the sewage is transferred to Winmalee.

The Blackheath sewage upgrade option risks turning the river bed of the Grose into a weed filled ditch. This disaster has happened to many urban streams. Suddenly a critical level of gross pollution (excuse the pun) is reached and, almost overnight, the stream bed becomes full of weeds. Once this happens, there is no going back. Will it stand up to twenty years of sewage pollution?

The Blue Mountains sewage transfer scheme will protect the Grose. What a shame to leave it fatally flawed by allowing sewage pollution from Blackheath to continue. Keith Muir. BMCS member.

Nursery Notes

Nursery Contract

The BMCS team of Nursery volunteers is pleased to announce that we have a contract with the RTA for the supply of 25,000 native plants of local provenance in tubes for revegetation of Shell Corner when the road straightening and widening has been completed.

The work will extend from Mort Street in Katoomba, west over a new bridge across the railway line and thence to Rowan lane, adjoining Bonnie Doon. The new roadway will be four lanes wide and 1.2 km long. We expect to supply the 25,000 plants in batches over the next two years or so. There will be a good proportion of Eucalyptus oreades, the Blue Mountains Ash, a species which is such a feature of Shell Corner.

Nursery Truck

At its June meeting, the BMCS Management Committee approved purchase of a brand new Toyota Hilux Workmate truck with a flat tray 1.8 x 2.4 metres. The truck will be used for nursery work and a host of other activities.

Ross Coster arranged sign-writing, and the truck now looks very smart, especially with the Society's black cockatoos on both doors. Ross has already used the truck to carry some large BMCS signs from Lawson to the Digger Cooper Reserve bushcare site.

Gift Vouchers

Another brilliant idea, this time from Joan Gahl, gives you the opportunity to send a friend a BMCS gift voucher for that special occasion. Laura Hays used her skills to design and produce these vouchers, which are for native plant purchases from the BMCS Blackheath Nursery.

There are three denominations, \$20, \$50 and \$100. Why not send one for that birthday or wedding anniversary, or for

Christmas, or for Mothers' Day, or as a rather special "Thank You"? Ask any Nursery volunteer, or phone me direct. Plant prices at the Nursery are only \$2 (small) or \$4 (large), so you get a lot for your money!

Lawson Nursery Extensions

Our Nursery business is expanding: over the last six years turnover has increased by over 20 per cent each year. The Lawson Nursery, which we built with a capacity of 10,000 plants 18 months ago, is already becoming too small.

So, we have decided to spend the remainder of the sum allocated in 1998 by the Management Committee for the Lawson Nursery to increase the capacity to 30,000 plants. This new phase of our activities comes about because the BMCS Nursery has established itself as a reliable supplier of native plants of proven provenance and quality, plants grown for Blue Mountains conditions, and delivered on time and at the right price.

The Lawson Nursery is principally for contract work: we do not conduct retail sales there.

Retail Native Plant Sales

You can come to the BMCS Blackheath Nursery any Tuesday morning, 9 am through 12 noon, browse through our stock, and make your \$2 and \$4 purchases to ensure a brilliant display of native plants in your own garden. Turn east at the Blackheath traffic lights, 2.5 km down Govetts Leap Road, and at the roundabout turn left down Lyndsay Lane for 200 metres. The nursery is in the workshop compound of the NPWS. *David Coleby, Nursery Manager, Phone and Fax 4784-1395*

Organic Materials Trials

Blue Mountains City Council has completed the first of two Organic Materials Trials, aimed to reduce the amount of organic material in the domestic waste stream. The project was trialled in two areas of the City to ensure

that the demographic differences between

Upper and Lower Mountains were taken into account and aims to encourage residents to compost their organic materials, with kerbside chipping of bulky woody materials that are not easily composted whole. The material was mulched in commercial chippers and returned to the kerb for the householder to reuse as compost or mulch. Information packages distributed to households within the trial area included simple 'how-to' guides for composting, worm farming and low waste gardening, with more comprehensive booklets available on request.

Community feedback has been positive, with approximately 15% of households within the trial

Greenhouse Corner

Reforestation---A Personal Challenge

We know that the growing amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere contributes to the greenhouse effect causing global warming. The time has passed when mankind can stop the doubling of CO₂ by 2030, so what we do from now on may help to stop the tripling of CO₂, and consequent climate changes.



Most people feel somewhat helpless when faced by global scale changes. Restating the challenge in more person-oriented terms may be useful. The plan is based on the observation that people generally feel more guilty about driving a car with only a single occupant than most other energy-consuming activities. The question posed is "How many growing trees must any one of us cultivate to 'mop-up' the CO₂ we produce by driving about 20,000 km a year in a car?" A rough answer can be obtained as follows; assuming that the car travels 20 km on each litre of petrol and burning each litre of petrol liberates about 2.4 kg of CO₂ to the atmosphere the car produces annually somewhat over 2000 kg of CO₂. One hectare of young and vigorous trees takes up 7500 kg of CO₂ each year. Thus we must cultivate about a quarter of a hectare of trees, an area two to three times larger than most house plots in Australian suburbs. Thus we need young saplings planted over all our gardens and parks just to reduce our car-driving CO₂ contribution to zero.

Remember too that once mature, these trees must be felled and the timber used in long-lived projects such as building construction so that the CO₂ we've removed cannot be liberated back to the atmosphere. The mature forests around us are not absorbing as much CO₂ as new plantings. Can we all find a spare, bare quarter of an hectare to plant? My own contribution presently, is to run my car on LPG, which is less damaging than petrol. *Bill Graham*

Snippets from a "Haiku Journey"

Murphy's Track with Jim Smith

A tiny village
brown fungi rooves breaking through the leaf litter.
Below the cliffs
nearly buried
a dry-stone wall.

To Castle Head

They roar back
at the chopper's motor
these cut buff cliffs.

(Looking over the Kedumba valley, we looked towards King's Tableland, where there's a sacred site.)

"Black boy"
living dangerously
right on the edge.

("Black boy" is one name given to Xanthorrhoea,
also known as grass tree)

Transit of Venus at Woodford with Jill Dark

The birds squittering
and chucking wheelies-
drunk on nectar?

Out of the valley
we part swiftly -
a snow-blowing wind.

(Diana Levy, 2000)

area participating. In the kerbside trial, over 95 cubic metres of branches and prunings were chipped. The trial will be run again in September to ensure that peak garden growth periods are targeted.

Throughout the year Council is also running, in partnership with Intelife, the EPA's "Earth Works: Living with Less Waste" course, which teaches participants about organic material management and other waste reduction methods. (A copy of Council's leaflet, "Why Waste It", is enclosed with this newsletter).

Membership Enquiries

Contact Ross Coster
(Phone - Work) 02 4759.1247
(Phone - Home) 02 4759.1837
(Fax) 02 4759.1095
(Email) haytech@pnc.com.au
(Post) PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Environmental TAFE Courses

There are still places in a range of courses offered by the Environmental Studies section at Blue Mountains College of TAFE.

We are running Bushland Regeneration (full-time day), Interpretive Guiding modules (day), Natural Resource Management (part-time, evenings and weekends). If people only want to do a handful of modules or even a single module then they may select from modules like: Plant I.D., Geology, Ecological Techniques, Environmental Law or Wildfire Behaviour. Contact Ben Correy 4753 2152 or Sasa Kennedy 4753 2080 for further information.

Toddlers' Bushwalks

Toddlers' bushwalks have resumed on the first Wednesday of the month. Walks are of one hour duration, meeting at 10.30 am, different locations. Get them young! Bring your child or grandchild on an easy and safe bushwalk. I would also be grateful to hear from anybody who has ideas for suitable walks. Contact Megan Llewellyn 4759.2734.

Don't Burn Western Woodlands

Woodlands on the central tablelands are being decimated this winter as the Blue Mountains warms itself by the glow of the fireplace. The Ironbark communities around Mudgee and Capertee and the Yellow Box and White Box communities west of Orange are the primary sources of firewood for commercial operators. Habitat is being lost and biodiversity is suffering. These species are not being replanted and thus firewood harvesting can be compared to open cut mining. There has to be a better way!

Victorian National Parks Association recently released a business plan titled "The Business of Growing Firewood for Profit in Victoria". My research indicates that plantation firewood, while often a feature of permaculture farm plans, is not widespread on farms. The idea of plantation firewood has just caught on in Victoria, but to my knowledge is not occurring in New South Wales. It is about time that it did. The resources to make this a reality — land, labour, technical knowledge, treestock and water — may already be available to members of BMCS. We could share our resources to make it happen. I would like to hear from anyone interested in this concept. Contact Ian Lett on 4759.3171, email iglett@hermes.net.au.

Friends of Durras

(You may all remember a leaflet distributed with Hut News some months ago asking for support for the 'Friends of Durras' in their campaign to extend Murramarang N.P. Well it worked!)

Thank You!!! On Friday, April 14, 2000 Bob Carr announced that his government would create a huge network of 324,000 hectares of national parks on the south coast. The Sydney Morning Herald front page story on Saturday was

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Aug 19 (Sat)	Management Committee Meeting. 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
Aug 25 (Fri)	General Meeting, 7.30 pm, Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. Guest speaker will be Noel Child: "Badgery's Creek Airport Proposal: Flaws, Fiddles and Falsehoods". (See Page 1)
Sept 8	Workshop: The Impact of Fire on Biodiversity. (See page 1)
	QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 16 and under)
Aug 11 (Fri)	Spotlighting and Didgeridoo Playing. Meet 7 pm, Katoomba Falls Kiosk, Cliff Drive.
Sept 13 (Wed)	Exploring our Wonderful Biodiversity. Meet 10 am at Intelife, corner of Blaxland and Cook Roads, Wentworth Falls. Drive down the long drive to the carpark and then walk to the office.

For more information contact Jessica on 4757.2783. For a copy of the Quoll Club Newsletter, phone Ross Coster 4759.1247.

BUSHCARE (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves.)

Aug 08 (Tues)	Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group. Contact Jessica 4757.2783 for the meeting place. (following Tuesday if wet).
Aug 13 (Sun)	Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group. Meet 9 am at the Reserve (GWH, West of Sorenson Bridge). Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.
Sept 3	Great Grose Gorse Walk activity (see page 1).

BUSHWALKS: *Carry drinking water (minimum 1 litre), bring morning tea, and lunch for day walks. Wear shoes with a good tread.*

Monday Leisure Walks: *Usually half day walks, leisurely pace.*

Aug 07	Bruce's Walk, Bullaburra end. Ideal medium walk for winter. Meet Bullaburra Station carpark 9 am. Contact June Tobin 4759.1280. Half day, Medium..BBQ afterwards.
Aug 14	Birdwood Gully Circuit. Meet Springwood Station carpark 9 am. Contact Allan Macaulay 4739.2767. Heritage tree! Half day. Easy.
Aug 21	John's Seat. Meet Woodford Station carpark (south side) 9 am. Contact Jock McKechnie 4758.6346. Half day.
Aug 28	Murphy's Glen Turpentine Walk. Meet Woodford Station carpark 9 am. Contact Jock McKechnie 4758.6346. Half day. Easy.
Sept 04	Glenbrook Crown Land Circuit. Meet Glenbrook Station carpark 9 am. Contact Allan Macaulay 4739.2767. Wildflower walk. BBQ after.

Weekend Bushwalks: *Walks of various grades, full or half day.*

Aug 05 (Sat)	South Woodford Waterfalls. Meet Hazelbrook Station carpark 9.30am. Contact Kate McManus 4758.7936. Half day, Easy.
Sept 02 (Sat)	Engineer's Track to Grose River. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9 am. Contact Jock McKechnie 4758.6346. Day, Medium.

Leaders are needed to fill in the gaps for September. Phone Bill Graham 4759.1692 to nominate a walk which you would like to lead.

Walks have been graded. **Easy:** Mostly good surfaces, but some rough or steep sections. Suited to people of average fitness. **Medium:** Includes rough or steep sections, some of which may require clambering over natural obstacles. Discuss with leader if in doubt. **Hard:** Strenuous walks, suited to fit and experienced walkers. **If this is your first walk**, or you are in any doubt, contact the leader or Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.

'Dawn of 100 new national parks' with a large colour picture of one of the members of Friends of Durras in his kayak on Durras Lake. The article read "One of the most popular and beautiful parks, Murramarang, is to have its area increased fivefold (from around 2,000 hectares to 11,500 hectares) and will now take in the catchment of Durras Lake — forest previously managed for timber harvesting by State Forests. The executive director of the Total Environment Centre, Mr Jeff Angel, said: 'Murramarang, in particular fulfils the dreams of two generations of conservationists.'

It is indeed a dream come true for the small communities of the Murramarang area. We have been campaigning for the expansion of Murramarang National Park since 1985. Finally we have a government which has listened to the desires of a small community willing to work towards protecting its local environment.

We owe a great deal to many individuals and organisations who have helped us both financially and with support to politicians, with letters to the

media and in countless other ways. We would like to thank the Blue Mountains Conservation Society for their support. Without widespread community support our campaign would not have been successful.

We hope you will be able to visit this special area soon to enjoy what we knew was worth fighting for. We are planning a celebration for the long weekend in October. When details finalise I will let you know and hope you will be able to attend. Thank you again. Regards, Geoffrey Bartram, Friends of Durras

Welcome to New Members

Bill Boldiston, Leura
Vince Di Battista, Leura
Allan and Roslyn Wells, Blackheath
Peter and Umi Freeman, Paddington
Bernadette Hodgson, Bullaburra
Deidre Lassau, Leura
Robert Paton, Blackheath
Angelo Bavaro, Blackheath
Gwyneth Trysant, Katoomba
Mrs M Clarke, Blackheath
Emily & Victor Turner, Hazelbrook
(Quoll Club)