

# HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



## A Sustainable Financial Future for the Society

The Management Committee have invested our reserve funds in three Managed Ethical Funds. These funds are expected, over time, to give a better return than was being received from Bank Term Deposits.

Because these funds have been invested with long term growth in mind, the Committee felt that we should change our Constitution to provide for an Investments Committee, comprising three members, appointed for rolling three year terms, to manage these funds.

Our constitution can only be changed at a Special General Meeting, so we will have one of these at 7.30 pm on Friday 23 February, 2001, immediately prior to our regular monthly meeting.

The proposed Constitution changes are detailed on Page 3.

## The Hawkesbury-Nepean

"A healthy, productive and diverse catchment and river system where the waters are suitable for people to use and enjoy, diverse natural plants and animals live and evolve, the beauty and natural processes of the catchment are protected while providing for social and economic needs, and everyone is working together - individuals, community groups, business and government - to keep it so." This is a future envisaged for the Hawkesbury-Nepean by the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Trust.

At our general meeting on Friday 23 February, the Trust's North West Catchment Support Committee Chair, Max Hatherly, and Regional Project Officer Michael Druce will be talking on the development of the Strategic Plan for the Management of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment and River System.

The Strategic Plan seeks to achieve a more sustainable future for the waters, lands and biodiversity of the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment and river system. It is the first Plan that takes a 'systems view' of the Hawkesbury-Nepean recognising the need for more informed, sustained and cooperative action across a range of inter-related priorities.

The Draft Plan will be going on exhibition in late February seeking Community comments and input.

The meeting at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, starts at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

THE DEADLINE  
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS  
FRIDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2001

## CALLING ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS

It's time for us all to start thinking about our next Management Committee. Our AGM is on 30 March 2001, not very far away.

Serving on the Management Committee can be immensely rewarding. No prior experience is needed, just a commitment to serve the environment, and a determination to "make a difference".

Our Society is probably the largest regional environmental group in the State, possibly the largest in the country. It enjoys respect from the community and from the agencies with which it deals. We now have over 850 members. This year, we will celebrate 40 years of unbroken service to the Blue Mountains environment.

There is a leaflet in this issue of Hut News with details of all Management Committee positions. You can obtain more information from members of this year's committee (see the panel on the front page), or you can come along as an observer to one or both of the remaining committee meetings (on 17 February and 24 March at 9 a.m. at Mid-Mountains Community Centre, Lawson).

The committee tries to spend minimal time on administrative matters. Meeting agendas are structured so that highest priority is given to conservation issues. The Society is in a strong financial position, so the committee does not have to be involved in fund-raising. Your time on the committee will be very focussed on helping the environment.

Please give consideration to nominating for a position. Whilst our constitution allows for nominations to be received on the night of the AGM, we really need to be organised beforehand to ensure that there will be at least one nomination for each position. To be nominated, all you need to do is leave a message on the office phone for our secretary, or contact any of the Management Committee.

## Turning Caring into Action

An Environmental Education Forum will be held on Friday 2 March at 7.30pm at the Conservation Hut.

Members and the general public are invited to come and listen to our two guest speakers, Professor Stuart Hill and Martin Mulligan from the Faculty of Social Enquiry, UWS Richmond. There will be an opportunity to participate in open conversation about Environmental Education (EE).

this opportunity to openly discuss and consider how to turn 'caring into action'. Any queries, please ring Bob Seaborne on 4751.6100.

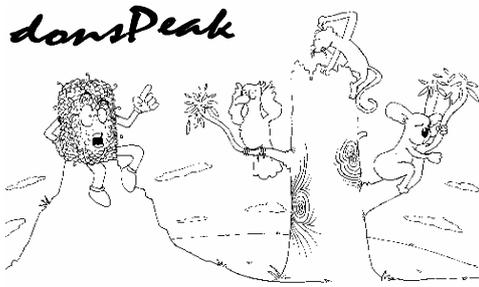
## Clean Up Australia Day

Sunday, 4 March, 2001

Site locations will be publicised in the Blue Mountains Gazette on 28 February. The Society will be organising two sites. Contacts are: Lower Mountains, Heather Hull 4739.1493; Upper Mountains, Vera Costello 4782-5375.

"Hut News", the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.  
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## donPeak



### Indigenous Input

This month expressions of interest close in the Gandangara Aboriginal Land Claim for public lands in the Southern Blue Mountains. The case may result in a definition of the modern boundaries between the Gandangara and Dharawal people's areas.

However, it is more important to put resources into establishing a structure that allows the knowledge of these and other indigenous groups to be pooled for the management of the World Heritage Area.

### Heritage Critics Assess the 'Three Sisters Fountain'

Sun-Herald columnist Sue Williams celebrated the World Heritage declaration by taking some friends to Scenicworld, Katoomba.

Ms Williams liked aspects of Scenicworld including the new 'Scenisender' ride, but was distracted by the 'Three Sisters Fountain' next to the main building. This sculpture features three female figures and a male "1950s-news-reel style" voice reciting what the fountains' instigators believe is a local legend.

For those of us with dozens of favourite places in the Mountains, it is easy to forget how certain aspects of our 'icon' attractions can colour the impressions of visitors. *Don Morison*

### 2BLU Enviro Program

Community radio 2BLU has invited the Society to participate in a regular time slot on an environmental program.

Is there a member who would like to do the talking and/or coordinate other Society members to talk on their specialist projects and issues? Are there any media or communication students who would like to do this?

This project does need a coordinator. It wouldn't take a lot of time and would be interesting, worthwhile, and probably fun too. Please ring Meredith on 4782.4823 for details.

### Western NSW Woodlands

A new campaign may be started to protect the Pilliga Forest. The NSW Government is backing off on its conservation commitments to create Reserves and to meet the needs of the timber industry.

Would a member like to take on this issue? It's not a big job as The Colong Foundation is playing an important role. There will be an important meeting at

Gulgong in February to discuss the matter. Contact Meredith 4782.4823.

### Clearing of Native Vegetation

For some time, we have been concerned about loss of native vegetation in sensitive areas — particularly near watercourses and hanging swamps. This is especially a problem on private land where new houses are being built.

A particularly blatant land clearing in Katoomba recently brought matters to a head, resulting in vigorous protest from the Society, the local Landcare Group and residents. Council had approved the construction of a house on a block which contained a hanging swamp and stipulated that this portion of the block remain undisturbed. The owner proceeded to systematically remove 99% of the native vegetation, including 600 sq metres of hanging swamp.

We believe that Council's actions to protect this sensitive area have been inadequate.

The Mayor, Jim Angel, took the initiative to call a meeting between the Society and Council to look at ways of improving native vegetation protection in the future. Four members from the Society and the Landcare Group met with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Ward 1 Councillors and senior Council staff on January 17.

Commitments were made by Council to pursue a number of the ideas. A Vegetation Protection Order is to be developed, which would protect all vegetation not just trees. The creation of a position for an environmental scientist who would review development applications and ways to provide better information to landowners are being considered.

While these steps will help avoid these disasters in future, we believe they won't work on their own. Council must be more vigorous in enforcing its environmental standards.

Also, Council's effectiveness in protecting threatened species and watercourses was of real concern. We are taking these matters up with the relevant Government Departments, to seek their views on whether Council has fulfilled its legal obligations.

The meeting was very constructive with a number of ideas which the Society has been pursuing for many years being discussed seriously. The Mayor agreed that the meeting reconvene before end April, so that we could be brought up to date with Council's actions.

### Great Gorse Gorse Walk 2001 February 3 to March 25

Our wonderful volunteers have been battling the Gorse and other noxious nasties for seven years now. We are thereby protecting 50 kilometres of the Gorse, the now declared Wilderness and World Heritage areas, as well as trying to control infestations in the upper catchments — a tall order!

We are starting to have a great impact now and can be very proud but cannot be complacent — we still need

help with this extremely challenging long term problem. As we progress beyond primary knockdown, there is follow up work, with over 10,000 Gorse seeds per square metre stored in the soil.

We have already much exceeded expectations and we need your help to continue the work. We need groups and individuals to "adopt" an area and to come each year to continue the rehabilitation and to have the very great feeling of achievement of watching a weed infested area turn back into a sustainable beautiful bushland area again.

We are organising a wide range of activities in Blackheath and Katoomba during February and March. Activities vary from half to full days, to overnight walks, with a variety of magnificent scenery and great company. Please come along and take part — all most welcome. Call into Heritage Centre, Govetts Leap Rd, Blackheath for a program and registration form, or contact me by phoning evenings 4787.8061 or leave a message on 4787.8877. *Cath Ireland, NPWS.*

### Valley of the Waters

#### Busheare Group:

#### Contact Person needed

If you love the bush, loath weeds, know a little about both, but not necessarily much, have a regular morning free one day a month (weekday or weekend), enjoy contact with people and can bake a fine cake, then this could be the job for you!

Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group in Wentworth Falls needs a new contact person. The position could be all yours or you could choose to share it with Jessica or anyone else interested.

The position mainly involves organising the monthly workdays and liaising occasionally with National Parks. Cake baking is actually optional.

This is a great way to help the bush, to meet other members and to be involved with the Conservation Society. For more information please call Jessica Yuille on 4757 2783.

### Welcome to New Members

Fran & Richard Michell, Medlow Bath  
Nelda King, Hazelbrook  
Patricia Harlen, Winnmalee  
Springwood Bushwalking Club  
Susan & Nigel Bell, Katoomba  
Ariel Elliott, Lithgow  
Kathryn Davy, Hazelbrook  
Jeff & Denise McIntyre, Wentworth Falls  
Bart & Michelle Beech, Glenbrook  
Samantha Stevens & Andrew Denovan, Wentworth Falls  
Marion Beckman, Lawson  
Kay Powell, Blaxland  
Lilian Paige Barlow, Wentworth Falls  
Andrew McColl & Tracy Mastel, Mt Riverview  
Gary Humble & Annette Mylrea, Leura

#### 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

## Coachwood trees impressive

The coachwood is one of the commonest trees in our rain forest gullies.

In the Upper Mountains at present they are flowering profusely.

Because coachwoods are fairly tall trees and grow in dense rain forest, the flowers are seldom seen to advantage.

But, in Katoomba Falls Reserve, on the short path from behind the Kiosk to Reid's Plateau, an observer is approximately level with the tops of the trees growing in the steep gully below.

It is well worth a visit, in the next week or so to see the masses of soft pink flowers, in shades varying subtly from tree to tree.

The coachwood is closely related to the Christmas bush and the flowers are similar, although not so red.

In both species it is not the true flowers which are attractive, but the calyx lobes, which enlarge after flowering and turn bright red or pink.

The botanical name of the coachwood is *Ceratopetalum apetalum* — presumably "serated petals without petals". Christmas bush is *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* — "serated petals, gummy"! (Graham Alcorn, *Blue Mountains Gazette* 8/2/1978)

## Timeline Project for the Blue Mountains

At the November BMCS meeting where Jim Smith compared Blue Mountains and Solomon Islands world heritage campaigns, Jim outlined the seasonal calendar of natural events in the Western Solomons. He offered to coordinate an effort to compile a timeline of seasonal events in the upper Blue Mountains (Wentworth Falls to Mount Victoria). Jim will be combining his own observations over the last 25 years with those obtained from interviews with observant naturalists in the area — particularly those that have kept diaries.

He has also requested that society members send him their own observations of the times of climate events, insect and reptile activity, flowering time, arrival of migrant birds,

bush colours, sounds and smells.

Please post your observations to Jim at 65 Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Ken Schaefer of Mount Riverview School has begun collecting observations for a lower Blue Mountains calendar. The Timelines project is coordinated by the Gould League. A newsletter is put out by Alan Reid (240 Burns Road, Glenburn Vic 3717). Jim has offered to present the results at our November general meeting.

## Nursery News

As the Society's financial year draws to a close it is pleasant to report still greater growth in our nursery business. It is also timely to recognise the great efforts of BMCS volunteers who have brought this about.

In the middle of 2000 we gained a contract for the supply of 25,000 native plants of local provenance to the RTA, so that when the road straightening at Shell Corner in Katoomba has been completed, the affected areas may be revegetated. Other contracts of a similar nature may emerge as 2001 progresses.

We are due to supply the Shell Corner plants over a roughly 18-24 month period, but the start has been delayed by the RTA as their work program has been rescheduled to allow other work (at Soldiers Pinch between Mount Boyce and Mount Victoria, and at Medlow Bath) to be brought forward.

All this has been brought about by some very special Members of the Society. In particular we should thank the dedicated team which has built the Lawson Nursery to its present capacity of 30,000 plants: Peter Hodgkinson, Peter Bonney, Rae Druitt, Rolf and Gertrud Pohl, Judy Lake, and of course Ross Coster, who made it all possible by making his back garden available to us. Members of this team, now augmented by Astrid Evans, are now using these new nursery facilities to raise thousands of native plants.

Of course we continue to operate our Blackheath Nursery, and retail sales on Tuesday mornings continue to be a mainstay of income for the Society. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the stalwart and regular volunteers like Joan and Imre Gahl, Kevin Bell, Rae Druitt, Mary Jane

## Greenhouse Corner

### Solar Hot Water

If you have a standard off-peak electric water heater, and most of us do, then its producing over four tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. You can reduce this to under one tonne per year by replacing it with a gas-boosted solar water heater. This is an equivalent saving to taking a car off the road permanently!

All you need is a north-facing sloping roof, and about \$2,500.

It does not make sense to junk your existing water heater if it is relatively new, but if it is 10 years old or older then it will fail soon anyway. A new solar hot water heater will pay for itself in 7-10 years, but it will last 15 or more years due to the superior material used in solar hot water systems. In its lifetime, the new solar hot water system will save over 45 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Some other tips for improving the performance of your existing or new hot water system include:

- Set your hot water system thermostat for 60-65 degrees celsius
- Lower thermostat settings result in lower energy use.
- Use cold water for washing clothes rather than warm or hot
- Fit AAA rated showerheads to reduce water usage

For more information about solar hot water, ask Integral Energy for their brochure on the subject. Visit the SEDA Web Site at [www.seda.nsw.gov.au](http://www.seda.nsw.gov.au) for more energy saving tips.

Ross Coster



Shaw and Naomi Estell. Dianne Johnson (who helped build the nursery ten years ago) made a brief return in 2000. Gail Blamey was also a regular until other commitments forced her retirement. Brad Huggins put in a few appearances until paid work emerged elsewhere, Andrew Moody popped in once, and just lately we have welcomed Karen Reid to our midst.

Nursery activities are a practical way of putting into practice some of the Aims and Objectives of the Society. Nursery volunteers are always welcome, so if you would like to take part on a regular basis, phone me. *David Coleby, Nursery Manager, Ph/Fax 4784.1395.*

## PROPOSED CHANGES TO BMCS CONSTITUTION:

To be put to a Special Meeting on Friday 23 February 2001 (See page 1)

The proposed changes are as follows: EXISTING CLAUSE 14.3 ("FUNDS - OTHER") BECOMES CLAUSE 14.4 NEW CLAUSE 14.3 ("INVESTMENTS FUND") is as follows:

- (a) Funds not needed for the day-to-day operation of the Society are to be invested with Fund Managers approved by the Management Committee.
- (b) The detailed management of the Investments Fund is to be the responsibility of the Investments Committee. NEW CLAUSE 23 ("INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE") is as follows:

(a) This three person committee will be appointed by the Management Committee.

(b) Each member of the Investments Committee shall be appointed for three years. At the time the Investments Committee is first appointed, one member shall be appointed for one year, a second for two years and a third for three years.

(c) The Management Committee may terminate any appointment to the Investments Committee at any time, without giving any reason. There shall be no appeal against any termination decision by the Management Committee.

(d) Casual vacancies on the Investments Committee shall be filled by the Management Committee, with the newly

appointed person serving the remainder of the term of the person who is being replaced.

(e) Members of the Investments Committee will transact business on the Society's behalf with the approved Fund Managers. The three members of the Investments Committee shall be the authorised signatories for each of the Society's investments, with all transactions requiring two of the three members to sign.

The Society's constitution is a closely typed eight page document. Please ring Les Coyne (4757-3327) if you would like a copy sent to you. Copies will be available at the meeting for any who require them.

## Camp at Dunn's Swamp 10-11 March, 2001

Members and friends of the Society are invited to the Third Annual Blue Mountains Conservation Society Camp at Dunn's Swamp, on 10-11 March 2001. We plan to arrive at Dunn's Swamp for lunch on Saturday, camp overnight, and leave after lunch on Sunday. Bring food for a Saturday night barbecue and a plate of food or nibbles to share around the camp-fire.

Dunn's Swamp is on the Cudgegong River, on the north-western side of the Wollemi National Park. It was dammed to supply water for the Kandos cement works, making a beautiful lake, with reeds along its sides giving refuge to a great variety of water birds and platypus.

Those who braved the rain for last year's camp were rewarded by a clearing sky on Saturday afternoon. During the weekend we swam in the clear water of the lake, walked, climbed pagodas, saw kangaroos and a variety of birdlife, enjoyed the reflections, and had a friendly evening around a cosy campfire in the shelter of a sandstone cave. This year we are hoping for better weather.

Phone Mary 4757.4133 or Christine 4787.7246 for more information.

## Twitchathon 2000

"What's a Twitchathon?" I'd like a dollar for every time I heard that! Well, a twitchathon is a birdwatcher's equivalent of a walkathon — we form ourselves into teams and try and identify as many birds as we can in a 24-hour period. Sponsors are sought and the money goes to Birds Australia. This year it is earmarked for Newhaven Station in Central Australia, the fabulous new bird reserve.

Carol Proberts and I joined David Geering (of regent honeyeater fame and a veteran of many twitchathons) and formed a team called The Whacked-out Woodswallows, which rather describes how we felt at the end of the weekend!

However, back to the start. At 4 pm Saturday we were ready — surrounded by tall reed-beds and patches of open water. Some great birds were here, Australian bittern, glossy ibis, white-fronted chat, little grassbird, and as we drove along we soon picked up mulga parrot, cockatiel, blue bonnet, and lots of suicidal crested pigeons, which we somehow managed to avoid running over. This was fun — black-faced and white-breasted woodswallows, ground cuckoo-shrike and southern whiteface were soon added to the growing list. A couple of state forests were visited and red-capped robin, western gerygone and other bush birds seen. We felt we were going very well.

But ... Now we had problems! David's car started to lose power — the automatic transmission refused to change gear and we got slower and slower. Eventually we went back to Dubbo and changed to Carol's car, grabbed a quick take-away and left Dubbo at 10.30 that evening. We still had a long way to go — too late to make a proper camp so we

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Feb 17 (Sat)** **Management Meeting**, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
- Feb 23 (Fri)** **Australia Day General Meeting**, at the Conservation Hut, 7.30 pm. Guest speaker will be David Geering, National co-ordinator of the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program. (see page 1)
- Mch 04 (Sun)** **Clean Up Australia Day.**
- Mch 10-11** **Dunn's Swamp Weekend Camp.** (Details on page 4)
- QUOLL CLUB** (Activities for 12 and under)  
*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.)
- Feb 13 (Tue)** **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group.** (2nd Tuesday of every month) Contact Jessica 4757.2783 for the meeting place. (following Tuesday if wet).
- Feb 11 (Sun)** **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group.** (2nd Sunday of every month) Meet 9 am at the Reserve (GWH, West of Sorenson Bridge). Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.
- 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, easy/medium, leisurely pace.**
- Feb 05** **Tessellated Pavements at Mount Irvine.** Meet Mt Vic Station 9 am. Contact Jock McKecknie 4758.6346. Long walk, easy. BBQ after. Last year's top popular walk.
- Feb 12** **McMahon's Point.** Car pool. Meet at Wentworth Falls carpark 9 am. Contact Jock McKecknie 4758.6346. Easy. BBQ lunch.
- Feb 19** **Kanangra Walls Bus Trip.** Meet Katoomba 8.30 am. Contact Jock McKecknie 4758.6346. Easy. Take lunch. **Reserve seats with Bill Graham 4759.1692.**
- Feb 26** **Terrace Falls and Victor Falls.** Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. Meet Hazelbrook station carpark 9 am. Medium. BBQ lunch.
- Mch 05** **Point Pilcher.** Meet at Medlow Bath Station 9 am. Contact Jock McKecknie 4758.6346. Medium. BBQ lunch.
- Bushwalks: Walks of various grades, full or half day.**
- Feb 03 (Sat)** **Junction Rock.** Meet commuter carpark, Blackheath Station 9.30. Contact Meredith Brownhill 4782.4823. Medium/Day. Steep climb.
- Feb 10 (Sat)** **Porter's Pass.** Meet Blackheath Station commuter carpark 9 am. Contact June Baxter 4787.7312. Medium/Day. Briung lunch.
- Feb 17 (Sat)** **Mystery Walk with Olive Noble.** Meet at Mount Victoria Station 9.30 am. Medium/Day. Contact Bill Graham to register.
- Feb 25 (Sun)** **Inspiration Point to The Hut.** Meet Wentworth Falls Station 9.30. Contact Terry and Mary Flynn 4787.6918. Easy/Day.
- Mch 03 (Sat)** **Fairy Bower to Pulpit Rock.** Meet Blackheath Station commuter carpark 9.30. Contact Judy Dervin 4787.1191. Easy/Day.

**Walks are generally Easy to Medium Grade, unless otherwise noted. 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. **If this is your first walk,** or you are in any doubt, contact the leader or Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.

ended up on the floor of a shelter shed at a sports ground. I didn't even hear the coal trucks roaring past after the first few minutes.

Next morning we were up before daylight, adding the "dawn chorus" birds — koel, white-throated gerygone, noisy friarbird, etc. Onwards, through the Watagans, where our best "bird" was a brushtailed rock-wallaby. We had really wanted a rock-warbler! At every stop we picked up more birds and the tally was growing. By the time we got to Newcastle time was precious and we rushed around chasing waders, water birds and cursing the Sunday drivers clogging up the roads. We realised that somehow we had missed some very common birds — red wattlebird, crimson rosella and rainbow lorikeet were unaccountably absent. Well, it was too late now. Shortlands Wetland Centre was the finishing point at 4 pm and a last minute buff-banded rail made our final total 191 species, which was good

enough to put us in equal second place.

Now we are planning our route for next year, and this time, aiming to win!

Jill Dark.

## Sydney Catchment Authority Grant

Our education sub-committee has been awarded a grant for raising community awareness about living in a water catchment. The funds will be used to create an inspiring display which will travel to shopping centres, libraries, hospitals and reside at The Hut otherwise. Also, a package of practical advice on 'ecologically sustainable living' will be put onto a website, to compliment the Living Near the Bush booklet. Members' input and ideas are most desirable — we need lots of fresh angles to inspire shifts in behaviour. Contact the Education officer (Bob Seaborne 4751.6100, email: malpabob@bigpond.com.au) about the monthly meetings.