



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

THREATENED SPECIES MONTH

September is Threatened Species Month and Threatened Species Day on 7th September commemorates the anniversary of the death of the last remaining Tasmanian Tiger (Thylacine) at Hobart Zoo in 1936.

The Spotted-tailed Quoll, photographed below by Peter Smith, is one of 28 mammal species recorded in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area since European settlement now considered to be threatened.



Blue Mountains Conservation Society is holding an event on **Saturday 8 September at the Wentworth Falls School of Arts** with a range of speakers. The aim of the day is to increase community knowledge of our threatened species and to raise awareness of their value and their management needs. If you have not already booked, you will find further information on our website: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/tsd-2018.shtml>

Also on **Saturday 8th September, Blue Mountains Cultural Centre is hosting Bushcare Conversations**, featuring a free community environment market, Eco Cinema and panel discussions. You will find details of this event and of current exhibitions at <http://bluemountainculturalcentre.com.au/>

Draft Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Blue Mountains waterways are some of the most beautiful, iconic and highly valued in Australia. They are also under pressure – with 39% of our waterways rated in poor or fair health in 2017.

This new **Draft Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan** aims to set the future direction of how Council manages our city's waterways and water resources.

View the draft strategy online at www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/water-sensitive-strategic-plan Hard copies also available at Council and libraries. Submissions close on 10 September.

2018 Waterway Health Snapshot

Blue Mountains City Council has released the 2018 Waterway Health Snapshot.

See it at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/1809-hutnews-bmcc-waterways.pdf> or obtain a hard copy from Council.

Blue Mountains Botanica

A Blue Mountains City Art Gallery exhibition
On exhibition from 25 August - 14 October
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, Katoomba

For more than two centuries the unique vegetation of the Blue Mountains region has provided a rich treasure trove for some of Australia's most notable botanists and botanical illustrators. By naming and documenting a myriad of plant species they paved the way for today's conservation and research efforts. Developed in partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, *Blue Mountains Botanica* delves into the history of botanical exploration of the Blue Mountains and features historical botanical illustrations, plant specimens and archival material drawn from the National Herbarium of NSW, the Daniel Solander Library and the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah.

The exhibition also features a selection of works by contemporary Sydney and Blue Mountains artists who incorporate botanical elements in their works through a range of media such as drawing, photography and installations. Exhibiting artists are James Blackwell, Tania Bowers, Ona Janzen, Jennifer Leahy, Angela Lober, Julie Nettleton, Edith Pass, Edith Rewa and Jacqueline Spedding.

<http://bluemountainculturalcentre.com.au/>

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

We offer the home gardener, landscaper or contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

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

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

Tube stock \$3. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries: Hugh Brougham 0407 955 028 or Sue Nicol 0457 140 905

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of HUT NEWS is
18 SEPTEMBER 2018
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Printed on Australian-made 100% Recycled Paper

ANTI PARIS, PRO COAL REJECTORS OF REALITY By Don Morison

"The National Energy Guarantee is pig on a lipstick", said Federal National MP George Christensen (or words to that effect). Apparently not the usual metaphor of lipstick on a pig. Possibly something to do with Dutton dressed up as ham?

On a more serious note, the Canberra shenanigans and ascension of Scott Morrison (no relation to the writer) offers no relief from the tedious self-righteousness of those wanting socialist intervention to protect the Australian coal industry from the free market's judgement against it. In recent weeks, a number of people from the Blue Mountains have made visits to the area around the Galilee Basin in central Queensland. They have reported back their grave fears for the Barrier Reef and the terrestrial environment if Adani and other proposals make this one of the world's most intensively coal-mined regions.

Australia's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement is now a central demand of the pro-coal ideologues, including Tony Abbott who signed up to it on behalf of Australia a few Prime Ministerships ago. Within hours of the right wing favourite, Peter Dutton, failing to become Prime Minister, the pro-coal rights' media cheer squad were trumpeting that they had got it right all along and remained the only true voice of ordinary Australian people. Among them was the shock-jock who has been trying for over a year to overthrow the democratically elected Blue Mountains Council.

The backers of coal appear to take advantage of all the mod cons delivered by science to a 21st century consumerist existence. But when science delivers a negative message for their self-indulgence, they ignore it. What hypocrites!

'Unprecedented' weather events Clare Power

The word 'unprecedented' continues to characterise reporting on floods, fires and soaring temperatures. It's distressing how many examples can be found just in the last six weeks: 'Swelling Northern Hemisphere heatwaves bring unprecedented fires' (ABC 19/8/2018); 'Unprecedented flood havoc: South Asia monsoon devastates parts of southern India' (Washington Post 16/8/2018); 'Unprecedented Japan heatwave kills 65 people in a week' (The Guardian, 24/7, 2018); 'At least 64 killed in Japan after unprecedented rain, dozens missing' (Reuters, 8/7/2018-over 200 people died). Records keep tumbling: the city of Ouargla in Algeria experienced a scorching 51.3 degrees; California experienced the world's hottest rain ever recorded and is in the grip of the largest and most expensive wildfire the state has ever seen; much of Queensland experienced the hottest July on record; and, although not yet record breaking, NSW is suffering crippling drought conditions.

Of course, there are some good news stories about climate action such as the Irish government divesting from fossil fuels in July. The Victorian government has announced a program where they will pay \$4,550 upfront to install the rooftop panels on houses, and households would then be required to repay half the cost over a four-year period, and regenerative farming is gaining more traction. And of course, a multiplicity of individuals, community groups, organisations and NGOs are ceaselessly and innovatively working for a sustainable and renewables based world.

Meanwhile, our federal government lacks political will to commit to a national policy on climate change or transitioning beyond coal and gas to a post fossil fuel world. Not only this, but Australia's emissions have grown for the third year in a row. With NSW state elections and federal elections to be held in 2019, we have the opportunity to contribute to debate on these issues.

One such issue is the Adani coal mine which continues to limp ahead despite ongoing opposition. (Update on page 7)

Feral horse protest walk from Sydney to Kosciuszko

In June, the NSW Parliament passed the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018, which sets a disturbing precedent by giving an introduced species greater protection than native animals in Kosciuszko National Park. A number of members of bushwalking clubs and the NPA have responded to this by setting up a new organization, **Save Kosci Inc**, to run a protest walk from Sydney to the summit of Kosciuszko. The walk is supported by NPA (ACT and NSW branches) and Bushwalking NSW.

The walk will take about 35 days, including rest days, from early November to mid-December 2018. The main group of walkers will follow a mixture of major and secondary roads, via Mittagong, Goulburn, Canberra, Jindabyne and Charlotte Pass. The exact route will be chosen for the walkability of the road verges and the availability of budget accommodation or camping en route.

In addition to getting the Act repealed, the aims of the walk are to

- Support a range of methods to control feral horses in NSW national parks, including ground-based lethal culling under ranger supervision and according to RSPCA guidelines
- Implement the NPWS Draft Wild Horse Management Plan of 2016
- Protect the habitat of the native broad-toothed mouse, corroboree frog and other native species affected by trampling and grazing in Kosciuszko National Park.

Members of Blue Mountains Conservation Society are invited to help by participating in the walk or helping as non-walking supporters. We need these kinds of helpers:

- End-to-end walkers
- Section walkers – from a couple of hours to a couple of weeks



Early signs of feral horse damage near Bill Jones Hut, Cooleman Plain, March 2014



The same spot, May 2018

- Leaders of club-based walks
- Support vehicle drivers and other non-walking helpers – from a day or two upwards; retirees with campervans, here is your chance to do a road trip for a Good Cause!
- Desk-based researchers and writers
- People to sew banners
- Bushwalking photographers, with the patience to get close-ups of feral horses eating, drinking, trampling etc in KNP

Register for the walk: It's time to stop talking and start walking! Register now as a walker or non-walking supporter <https://savekosci.org/>

Kosciuszko – keep it as a Park, not a Paddock!



An, as yet undamaged, alpine tarn in the Jagungal Wilderness area of the Kosciuszko National Park.

Speaking For The Environment by Alan Page

The Whanganui River

In March 2017, New Zealand's Whanganui River was granted the same legal rights as a human being.¹

The new status of the river means if someone abuses or harms it, the law now sees no difference between harming the Whanganui iwi (tribe) or harming the river because they are one and the same.

Two guardians will be appointed to act on behalf of the Whanganui River, one from the crown and one from the Whanganui iwi.

Gerrard Albert, the lead negotiator for the Whanganui iwi, said all Maori tribes regarded themselves as part of the universe, at one with and equal to the mountains, the rivers and the seas.

The Ganges

In India, the Ganges and its main tributary, the Yamuna, have been accorded the status of living human entities.

*"The decision, which was welcomed by environmentalists, means that polluting or damaging the rivers will be legally equivalent to harming a person."*²

Bobby Kennedy

In a speech³ in March 1968, Senator Robert Kennedy, spoke about his country being judged by its Gross National Product - .

"that Gross National Product counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for the people who break them. It counts the destruction of the redwood and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl. It counts napalm and counts nuclear warheads and armoured cars for the police to fight the riots in our cities. It counts Whitman's rifle and Speck's knife, and the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children.

Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it can tell us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans."

Australia's environmental guardians

Let's take Bobby Kennedy's notion a step further and ask **why aren't we measuring** the health of our rivers, lakes and oceans; the number of threatened species; the amount of wilderness, national parks and reforested land; the knowledge our children have of Australian flora and fauna.

Now that would be a measurement that would, in my opinion, assess our guardianship role of our natural environment.

Who Speaks for the Environment in NSW?

How is our environment faring, and what are our elected parliamentarians doing to ensure its health?

Unfortunately the answers are often "not well" and "not enough".

Blue Mountains Conservation Society and other key environment groups have a long history of speaking for the environment in NSW. On page 5 you will find reference to our campaign to stop pollutants being discharged into the Cocks River.

On 23rd March 2019, the people of NSW will be voting at a state election. In the past, environmental groups have been able to focus the election on the environment and represent its health and threats. Public meetings to "Meet the Candidates" have been organised. "Score cards" have been published. Questions have been asked of the various candidates as to their environmental record and views on environmental matters and the voting public informed of their answers.

However, there's a new act of parliament which applies from 1st October 2018 to both state and council elections, the **Electoral Funding Act 2018**. It dictates that it is unlawful for any person or organisation (unless a candidate or party) to incur electoral expenditure of more than \$2,000 unless registered as a "Third-party Campaigner".

Election expenditure is expenditure for "*promoting or opposing, directly or indirectly, a party or the election of a candidate or candidates for the purpose of influencing, directly or indirectly, the voting at an election*".

Registration, accounting and reporting procedures are onerous. The responsibilities and liabilities of being a Third-party Campaigner are daunting. This is compounded by the fact that it will be the first time the new law has been applied and there are areas that are currently unclear and complicated. There are penalties for contravention of the Act.

Will this new act silence environmental groups? Further advice is being sought.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/16/new-zealand-river-granted-same-legal-rights-as-human-being>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/21/ganges-and-yamuna-rivers-granted-same-legal-rights-as-human-beings>

³ <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/Ready-Reference/RFK-Speeches/Remarks-of-Robert-F-Kennedy-at-the-University-of-Kansas-March-18-1968.aspx>

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am - noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.



Speaking For The Environment

(refer to article by Alan Page on page 4)

In 2009, the Society spoke for the Cocks River in a court case against Delta Electricity discharging pollutants into the Cocks River. After two years of litigation, Delta Electricity admitted that it had discharged waste waters containing pollutants.

Read the full story - <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/delta.html>.

Image: Upper Cocks River (Dave Noble)

THREATENED PLANTS OF THE GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS

Downy Wattle *Acacia pubescens*

Judy Smith

Wattle Day, on September 1, coincides with the flowering of Golden Wattle *Acacia pycnantha*, Australia's national floral emblem, and also of Downy Wattle *A. pubescens*.

Named for its extremely hairy 'downy' stems, Downy Wattle bears masses of spectacular bright yellow globular flowers amongst its delicate bipinnate leaves. Downy Wattle produces scant seed but suckers prolifically. Genetic studies have shown that what appears to be hundreds of plants may be a single individual genetically. A clone may cover up to 1.2 hectares.

Downy Wattle is threatened at national and state level. It is largely restricted to the clay soils of the Cumberland Plain, particularly around Bankstown, Canterbury and Liverpool. Rookwood Cemetery has been a stronghold for the species and the adjacent unformed Weeroona Road reserve was once covered by Downy Wattle. There are a few outlying populations, including at Menai-Bangor, Mountain Lagoon (outside Wollemi National Park) and Pitt Town. In the Blue Mountains, a small population grows on the northern side of Woodford, near to the heritage listed 'Weeroona' estate whose gardens were created in the early twentieth century. This is the only known Downy Wattle site on the main Blue Mountains ridgeline. The population at Woodford is "dubiously recorded" (*Flora of New South Wales*), meaning it possibly arises from a planting. Maybe the Weeroonas in Woodford and Rookwood are connected in some way?

Much of this wattle's original habitat has been cleared for urban development or, at Rookwood, to accommodate burials. Downy Wattle is currently known from about 150 sites in total. Many sites contain fewer than 20 "plants" and may be only a single individual genetically.

In 2017, road widening associated with the West Connex project resulted in eight Downy Wattle plants being

removed. In keeping with current government policy, biodiversity offsets were calculated to offset this loss. At this time, no *Acacia pubescens* credits were available for purchase. This was simply solved by implementing a 'supplementary measure': a payment of \$25,000 to the Council of the same local government area (City of Canterbury-Bankstown) to undertake works at another Downy Wattle site. As Downy Wattle was already growing and under management at this other site, the "offset" works agreed to related mainly to amenity-enhancement activities. The gains for the species are unclear.

While we don't know just where the Woodford population came from (genetic studies would be most interesting) it seems a good idea to conserve all remaining genetic diversity.



Downy Wattle, *Acacia pubescens*
Photo by Peter Smith.

Current Mining in the unprotected Gardens of Stone area Madi Maclean

The Gardens of Stone proposal

The spectacular Gardens of Stone landscape occupies the **western plateau and escarpment of the Blue Mountains**, north and south of Lithgow. It is a remarkable combination of dramatic sandstone landforms, featuring rock pagodas and a multitude of threatened plants and animals.

The Gardens of Stone stage 2 (GOS2) proposal would protect 39,000 hectares of largely natural public land, mainly as State Conservation Areas. It includes Newnes, Ben Bullen and Wolgan State Forests. See the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 map at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/gardensofstone/where.htm>

Current coal mining in the unprotected Gardens of Stone area (GOS2)

Newnes State Forest is a 21,000 hectares plateau north of Lithgow with windswept montane heathlands, nationally endangered upland swamps, unique snowgum-snowgrass woodlands and 67 listed rare plant and animal species. Yet it is unprotected because of coal mining.

While the whole western Coalfields area has been undermined for many years, three current mining leases held by Centennial Coal alone, or in joint venture with overseas companies, together cover almost half of Newnes Plateau. Two of these underground coal mines are currently mining under the Gardens of Stone unprotected area, namely:

Springvale, off the Castlereagh Highway north west of Lithgow and

Clarence, whose mining lease is in the south east of Newnes Plateau east of Lithgow, above Bells Line of Road.

Springvale currently is the sole supplier of coal to Mount Piper Power station while Clarence exports the majority of the coal and supplies Shoalhaven Starches in Nowra. Springvale uses the longwall mining process which is more damaging of the land above.

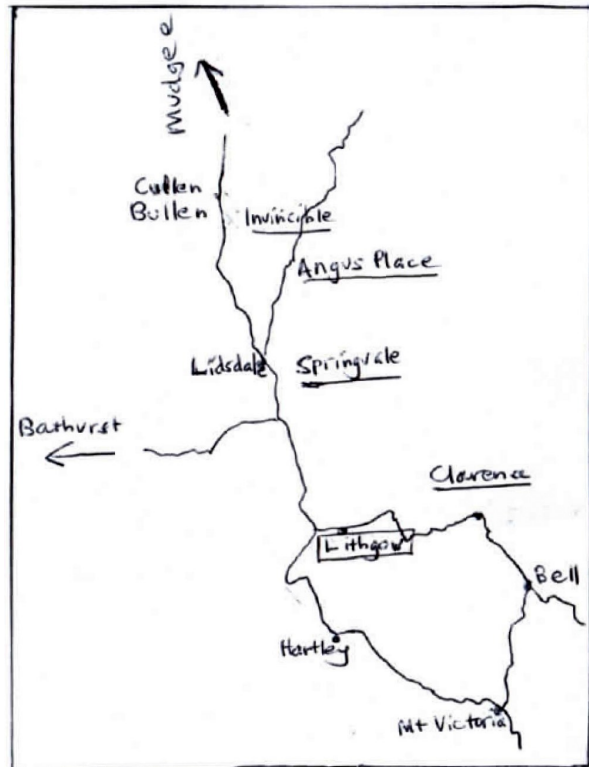
The third lease, **Angus Place mine**, is currently in care and maintenance but has an extension project part way through assessment. Its mining lease is in the north west part of Newnes Plateau. It is expected to restart underground mining after Springvale finishes in 2024.

In Ben Bullen State Forest, a different part of the Gardens of Stone unprotected area, **Invincible Mine** is expected to restart destructive open-cut mining along the Castlereagh Highway south east of Cullen Bullen soon. Invincible, formerly a Coalpac mine but now owned by the Manildra Group, received approval in February 2018.

More on the current mining operations

Springvale mine

The findings of the Independent Monitoring Panel established in 2015 have confirmed swamps in the Lithgow coalfields can be damaged from longwall mining from further away than was originally claimed. Because of the seriousness of these far field impacts, Centennial has shortened some longwalls in its mining plan and have moved mining further south sooner than originally planned.



However, swamps in the area continue to be damaged as mining progresses, losing water and drying out. As the swamps cannot be offset by similar land, the Government now holds several million dollars from Centennial in bonds. The Gardens of Stone Alliance groups (Colong Foundation, Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Lithgow Environment Group) continue to raise the impacts on the swamps and the gross inadequacy of the offsets process.

As well, Centennial (with Energy Australia) are building a water treatment plant which will stop the need to discharge mine water to the Cocks River and Sydney's drinking water catchment. It is due to be operational in July 2019. It will remove salt from mine water using the reverse osmosis process then send it to Mount Piper Power Station for reuse. Environmental groups have been calling for reverse osmosis treatment for years in the Western Coalfields but coal companies in the past have rejected this as uneconomic. The Gardens of Stone Alliance organisations have helped achieve this change along with 4nature's successful court challenge to Springvale's Extension project in May 2016.

Angus Place mine

Although currently in care and maintenance, Angus Place Centennial has sought approval to increase the mine water it discharges to the Cocks River system. They say they need to pump out underground mine water stored at Angus Place in case nearby Springvale mine needs to store more waste water from its new mining area.

Centennial propose to reduce the very high salt levels in this mine water using a temporary desalination plant! Once the Springvale water treatment plant is operating, Angus Place's discharge will be treated there and discharges to the Cocks River will cease. Although it is good that they are now prepared to treat their mine water,

(Continued on page 7)

Helium-filled balloons

Have you ever watched a helium-filled balloon floating off into the distance and wondered where it goes? Eventually it comes to earth, often far, far away.

Andy Macqueen sent me photos taken in the southern Wollemi Wilderness of some of the balloons they have found there in recent years. One of the balloons was found floating in the Colo River, another on the sand at the Wollemi Creek junction. A deflated blue balloon with string attached was found beside a Satin Bowerbird's bower.

Andy said "In view of the prevailing winds, and assuming most of these originate from Sydney suburbs, for every one of these in the Wollemi there are probably many more falling into the sea."



Current Mining in the unprotected Gardens of Stone area

(continued from page 6)

there are other issues with this proposal. (See our Angus Place Mod 5 Submission at www.bluemountains.org.au/).

Clarence mine

The Environment Protection Authority is still working on stopping polluted mine water from the Clarence Colliery being sent down the Wollangambe River which runs into the Greater Blue Mountains World heritage Area. This is a long process going back to a review of their licence in late 2014.

As the water quality has not achieved a satisfactory level, the option of stopping the discharge altogether has gained support more recently. Lithgow Council has agreed in principle to investigate taking all the mine water into their water treatment system. There is also the option of a new gold mine project taking it.

For more on the Gardens of Stone go to our website at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/gardensofstone/>

Adani UpDate by Clare Power

While aiming to put an end to the future of the coal mine, there are other aspects to the Stop Adani campaign. One of these is to pressure the Queensland government to prosecute Adani for polluting the Great Barrier Reef.

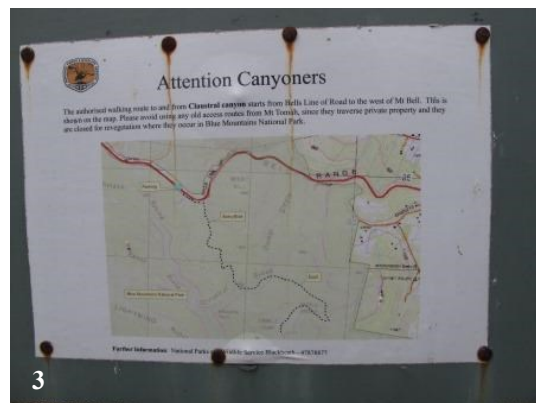
It's been revealed through documents obtained under freedom of information law that both Adani and the Queensland Government knew it was likely that Adani would breach its 'special pollution licence'. After cyclone Debbie in 2017, Adani admitted to breaching its Temporary Emissions Licence (TEL) by more than 800% and polluting the Great Barrier Reef and Caley Valley wetlands with toxic coal sludge from its Abbott Point Coal Port. At the time Queensland's Environment Department said that Adani could face a fine of up to \$3.8 million and, yet to date, Adani has been handed a minor \$12,190 fine which it yet has to pay and there has been no move from the government to further prosecute Adani.

Another aspect of the campaign is a call for the Federal government to ensure that a full environmental impact assessment be conducted on Adani's plans to extract billions of litres of water from the Suttor River and send it through a new, 61km pipeline to the Carmichael coal mine. These proposed actions threaten to dry up the Doongmabulla Springs Complex, a one-square-kilometre expanse of nationally important wetlands. Adani's demand for water would continue to increase as their intention is to use the pipeline infrastructure to supply other proposed Galilee Basin coal mines. About 250 litres of fresh water are required per tonne of coal produced.

An important thrust of the Stop Adani campaign is to 'shift the politics' and, given the federal election next year, to emphatically convey opposition to the mine to local Labor MPs and target electorates. The following sites provide more information about the dynamic status of the Adani campaign and how to take action including signing a petition, writing an email, making a phone call or organising a meeting with your local member: https://www.stopadani.com/build_the_movement; <http://wanganjagalingou.com.au/our-fight/>; <http://act.350.org/signup/stop-adani/>; <https://www.getup.org.au/>; <https://www.facebook.com/stopadanibluemountains/>

ACCESS DENIED? Walking and vehicular track closures reduce visitors' opportunities to spread out.

Opinion piece by Don Morison



Through climate events, economic undulations and the growth of “virtual travel”, the number of visitors to our Blue Mountains World Heritage Area appears to have grown steadily. For many, relating to the natural environment is their primary focus. Those participating in large, organised, walking and jogging events have also swelled in number.

Managing visitor safety, offering high quality visitor experiences and protecting resident amenity presents intensifying challenges. At the root of the worst problems resulting is many years of too little public money invested in the walking track system and associated infrastructure.

Examples of areas currently “off limits”:

Wentworth Falls – Ingar and Kings Tableland Indigenous site:

These are closed indefinitely due to building works on private land across which access was previously gained. (Picture 1)

Wentworth Falls – Slack Stairs and Wentworth Pass: This route has been closed in conjunction with the National Pass and Roberts Pass which was closed following the rock fall that caused the tragic death of local track contractor David Gliddon. Walking track expert Jim Smith has suggested that the Slack Stairs – Wentworth Pass route could be reopened without reopening the remainder of this network.

Katoomba – Minnehaha Falls: Unlike the others on this list, this is a Blue Mountains Council track. Its indefinite closure due to geo-technical issues commenced more than 12 months ago. (Picture 2)

Mount Tomah – Caley's Station Rock: This historic location became inaccessible several years ago when the approach route to Claustal Canyon was relocated owing to a private landholder withdrawing access consent. (Picture 3)

Bilpin – Waratah Picnic Ground and The Gorge: This is subject to an indefinite closure due to geotechnical issues. (Picture 4)

Nobody expects miracles to be worked with the more difficult of these sites. It is a serious matter when the gradual reduction of the available track network places more pressure on entry points that remain open. Resident resentment of visitors being concentrated into their neighbourhoods is a real threat to the relationship between ecologically oriented tourism and natural area management.

Examples of access points still open:

Bullaburra – Booth Road access to Bruces Walk: There was a concerted campaign to close this access point at the time of a State Government-inspired selloff of many parcels of public land. Objections by Blue Mountains Conservation Society and others have so far kept it open.

Woodford and Linden – various access points to Woodford Dam:

There is local concern about lack of parking at popular access points for tracks to this dam.

The NSW Government needs to coordinate the channelling of public money into keeping a substantial track network open in the Blue Mountains, as they have done with the Coast Walk in the Royal National Park. There may be entirely valid reasons why some of the aforementioned tracks have to be off-limits for substantial further periods, but what is lacking is any concerted effort to provide new alternative access points in the same localities.

Projects that concentrate intensive funding into small areas such as Cahills Lookout, Katoomba, and Wentworth Falls Lake may be entirely justified but they do not meet the growing demand for longer tracks. The identified problems will not be solved without a large funding boost.

Observe a Gum Tree

Christine Davies

Eucalyptus, Corymbia and Angophora are three genera within the Myrtaceae family that are commonly known as “gum trees” because of the gooey sap they exude. They are native to Australia and support a whole lot of insects and other arthropods, some of which have evolved with the trees and rely on them for food and shelter.

If you look closely at a rhododendron or camellia you will find that most of the leaves are unblemished. The sweetness of the flowers might be of short-term interest to bees, but these plants are of very little use to the native creatures living in our gardens.

But, observe the leaves of a gum tree. You will notice that nearly every older leaf has some blemish. It has been burrowed into, chewed and sucked from without and within. You will find variously shaped and sized galls housing sap sucking insects, crawling and flying creatures which feed on the leaves, predatory creatures which feed on the grazing creatures, and birds which feed on all of them.

A fascinating world!



You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

- **Post** this Application Form with your cheque or money order to: Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782, **OR**
- **Join online** at: www.bluemountains.org.au

(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 \$35 Concession (Senior/Student)\$25

Household \$40 Household Concession \$30

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add
\$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$.....

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; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

BMCS Planning & 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

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.

A BEQUEST: Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: "I bequeath the sum of \$..... to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

NIGHT HERONS

It was after a day's rain;
the street facing the west
was lit with growing yellow;
the black road gleamed.

First one child looked and saw
and told another.
Face after face, the windows
flowered with eyes.

It was like a long fuse lighted,
the news travelling.
No one called out loudly;
everyone said "Hush".

The light deepened; the wet road
answered in daffodil colours,
and down its centre
walked the two tall herons.

Stranger than wild birds, even,
what happened on those faces;
suddenly believing in something,
they smiled and opened.

Children thought of fountains,
circuses, swans feeding;
women remembered words
spoken when they were young.

Everyone said "Hush";
no one spoke loudly;
but suddenly the herons
rose and were gone. The light faded.

Judith Wright

BLUEGUM AND BEYOND

Our days run by in leaps and bounds,
"Time is of the essence".
But there is a place where time stands still,
Time and motion have no presence.

The forest has no care of time,
There is no pain or sorrow.
It has no plans this day or year,
No concerns about tomorrow.

It stands in blissful silence,
That breeze not felt or heard.
Each life it spans some hundred years,
No rules to heed, no cause to serve.

But, eternally evolving,
By incremental change.
The continuum of the universe,
Millennia... not moments.
To us so strange.

Ross Bridle. 2018.

52. GOVETTS LEAP, Blackheath

One of the most beautiful places in Blue Mountains (or Australia, for that matter) is the subject of a lame pun concerning its naming. Blackheath was named after a district in London by Governor Lachlan Macquarie during the return leg of his coach journey from Sydney Town to the Bathurst Plains in 1815. It wasn't until 1831 that Surveyor William Romaine Govett reported his visit to the vantage point over the great Narrabeen sandstone valley and high waterfalls that now bears his name.

But beside the route Macquarie took stands a statue of the horse-riding Govett, whose copyright is ascribed to the Blackheath Rhododendron Festival Committee. It's about 200 metres south of the Blackheath railway level crossing. The Blackheath Rhododendron Festival Review, an event arising out of the Festival, is well known for examining some of the more light-hearted aspects of the town. That is also what this statue does because it depicts the surveyor and his steed in an attitude of being about to "leap". But "leap", of course, is a Scottish word for waterfall and both Govetts Leap and Witches Leap, near Reids Plateau Katoomba, are waterfall-related locations.

Waterfalls and puns aside, Govetts Leap is one of the favourite Blue Mountains locations for a visit, especially for those able to choose early morning, twilight or any other time without crowds. Even on misty days, moving windows open in the gloom, allowing you to see the stunning sandstone cliffs and multiple greens of the plant communities in the valley and on the "wet cliff-faces". The intriguing rock column of "the sandman" can be seen below Lockleys Pylon on clear days.

Occasional delights for me have included a mother lyrebird supervising her son's early attempts at mimicry and the sight of the full moon reflecting off the waters of Govetts Creek with the appearance of a silver ribbon far down in the valley.



Images (clockwise from top):

- Horse and rider depicts the Govetts Leap legend
- The plaque on the obelisk at Govetts Leap Lookout is dedicated to William Romaine Govett, Assistant Surveyor, who "first came upon the spot in June 1831".
- Govetts Leap, the waterfall. In late August and in September, wattle flowers dominate the foreground.

Photographs by Christine Davies

Sections of the Blue Trail featuring the western Blue Mountains can be found in past issues of Hut News: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/hutnews.shtml>
The full Blue Trail is being added at <http://www.simplyaustralia.com.au/category/blue-trail/>



This "Blue Trail" is a collective description for sites in the western Blue Mountains that arouse natural or cultural interest or both. Most are only a short walk from roads or vehicular tracks. One day, a high quality walking path may link them.

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, mobile 04024 02783, 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 Harold Thompson harold.thompson@bigpond.com 6355 1762 or mobile 0409 010 737

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)

Sept 15 Govett's Leap up Perry's Lookdown via Acacia Flat, Blue Gum Forest. Leader Alice 47393086. Steep descent and later ascent so several rests. Meet Blackheath Stn. Car Park, 8.00am, Car shuffle organised 10km, Gr4, Map, Katoomba+Mt Wilson

Sept 22 Gardens of Stone. A Social reunion with a short Gr1, leisurely walk to spectacular scenery. 4km, with an optional Gr3 extension for youngsters. Map Cullen Bullen. **Contact Hugh 0423 309 854**

Sept 29 Glow worm Tunnel Circuit. Leader, Mike 47573660. Meet at Wentworth Falls & Mt Vic. WF 8.00 Mt Vic 8.30, 10km, GR2, Map, Ben Bullen.

Oct 6 Odin Head and a little more. Leader Emanuel 0419773906, 10km, GR,3/4, Map Mt Wilson. Contact leader to book.

Oct 13 Bungleboori. Crosscut Ridge and the delightful Midsummer Night's Grotto. Some off-track. 7km. Gr3. Map Wallangambe. **Contact Hugh 0423 309 854.**

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, 04111 62345, keithdor53@hotmail.com

Sept 10 Down Nellies Glen and then climb up Devil's Hole Katoomba. Katoomba Station Car Park 8-30am. Wayne and Mary Read Ph 0429 021 296. Grade 3.

Sept 17 Evans Crown Tarana; Explore granite rocks & views on the ridge. Steps up then off track. 6km. Bring Lunch. Map Tarana. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.45 am. Car pool, fare \$7. Meredith 4782 4723. Grade 3.

Sept 24 Lockleys Pylon, Leura. Best Grose Valley views. Meet Leura Station car park 8.50 am. Car pool, \$5. Mave Roberts 4784 2691. Grade 3.

Oct 1 Panthers Track to Hassans Walls, Lithgow. Approx 10 km. Meet train arriving Lithgow at 9.10 am. Judith 0419 780640 or 4758 6310. Grade 2/3

Oct 8 Bowtells Bridge. 15 km on fire trail and bush track. Approx 400m ascent overall. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.40 am. Chris Smith 4787 6979. Grade 3.

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, denfenella12@bigpond.com

Sept 13 Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens. Meet Mount Victoria Station, 9.50am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 1

Sept 20 Bus trip to Bowral Tulip Festival. Small entrance fee to gardens. Book and pay Tracy \$12. 0434 362 611. Meet Springwood Car Park behind Westpac Bank 7.45am sharp. Pub lunch or bring your own. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 1

Sept 27 Elphinstone Plateau, Katoomba. Walk on fire trails with cliff edge views. Meet Katoomba Station 9.30am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Oct 4 Birrabang Ridge, Bells Line of Road. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2

Oct 11 Mermaids Cave and Coachwood Glen, Megalong Valley. Cool walk in rainforest. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Oct 18 Bents Basin. Meet Springwood Station behind Westpac Bank 8.30am. Leaders Jeanette and Alan 0414 956 060. Car pool \$5. **Bookings essential.** Take lunch. Grade 2

Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

The Visitors Map is full of suggested walks and trips. It is in full colour, 60 by 85 cm in size, and covers the entire Gardens of Stone region at a 1:100,000 scale, making it ideal for planning your next trip to the area. You can buy a map on the society's website at www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS_VisitorsMap.htm

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY www.bluemountains.org.au

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Blue Mountains Conservation Society

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Society bushwalks on facebook: Visit

<https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks/>

Plant Study Group

Thursday Interpretive Nature Group

For information, go to our website www.bluemountains.org.au and click on "Activities"