



## ***"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"***

### **Limiting global warming to 1.5°C**

In a special report released in early October, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said global greenhouse gas emissions must reach zero by about 2050 in order to stop global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The authors warned that if warming was allowed to reach 2 degrees the world would risk hitting "tipping points", setting a course towards uncontrollable temperatures. They said the use of coal for electricity generation would have to drop to between 0 and 2 per cent of current usage. (ABC 9/10/18)

### **Emissions data withheld**

Documents released under Freedom of Information show the latest quarterly update of Australian emissions data which revealed our climate pollution rose 1.3 per cent in the year to March 2018 – has been ready for release since August 17.

But the report was made public late on Friday September 28 and came just hours after the interim findings of the Banking Royal Commission, as some states were in the middle or about to start a long weekend, and on the eve of the grand finals for the two major football codes.

ACF Chief Executive Officer, Kelly O'Shanassy, said this was not the first time there had been evidence of political interference in the release of Australian emissions data to try to limit the attention it receives. "Climate damage is hurting Australian communities right now. Mass bleaching is weakening our Great Barrier Reef. Worsening droughts are hurting our farmers and longer fire seasons threaten our communities. We will only stop climate damage getting significantly worse with concerted global action to cut pollution through the Paris Agreement, and with Australia doing its fair share. But Australia's pollution is rising, and our government is trying to hide it."

The responsibility for the preparation and release of Australia's emissions data should be given to one of our well-equipped independent bodies working on climate change, like the Clean Energy Regulator or the Climate Change Authority.

Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)

<https://www.acf.org.au/>

**release of pollution data must be made independent after persistent interference**

### ***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](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS_VisitorsMap.htm)

### **The fish we choose today affects the oceans of tomorrow**

#### ***Australia's Sustainable Seafood Online Guide***

is an independent tool for choosing seafood wisely. It is Australia's original online resource for consumers seeking to make responsible seafood choices and was developed in response to growing public concern about overfishing, farming practices and their impact on our oceans and wildlife.

We're at a point in time where there simply aren't plenty more fish in the sea. With over three-quarters of our global fish stocks either over-exploited or fished right up to their limit, there are only a few fisheries that will be able to serve up the planet's increasing demand for seafood.

Aquaculture, or farming seafood, is often held up as the solution to the global fishing crisis and the aquaculture sector is rapidly expanding globally. Between 1980 and 2010 world aquaculture fish production expanded by almost 12 times.

However, with a continued requirement for wild caught fish to feed fish grown in captivity, there is still a cap on how much farmed produce can provide.

We can lessen our impact on our oceans by choosing our seafood wisely. The fish you choose directly affects the health of our oceans.

<https://www.sustainableseafood.org.au/>

### **Mick Dark Talk for the Future**

**Thursday 8 November, 7pm to 9pm  
Wentworth Falls School of Arts**

**It's time to wake up: Can regenerative farming save both the planet and human health?**

Farmer, academic and writer, Charles Massy, talks about how the growing movement of regenerative agriculture and a healthy food culture could help address climate change and human health.

Tickets for the talk can be obtained at <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/2018-mick-dark-talk-for-the-future-charles-massy-its-time-to-wake-up-tickets-50385602694>

*This annual talk honours the contribution of Dr Mick Dark and is jointly organised by Varuna and Blue Mountains Conservation Society.*

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## Gardens of Stone gets a mention... but no protection yet! Madi Maclean

The issue of protecting the Gardens of Stone has been highlighted in State Parliament recently. In late September the NSW Government introduced legislation to add 4,500 ha of 'unproductive' state forests to the national parks estate mostly for koala protection.

During the debate in Parliament, the Greens moved a series of amendments to increase the area added to the national park estate to 200,000 ha and to protect a number of other areas including Gardens of Stone. This bill sought to transfer Ben Bullen, Newnes and Wolgan State Forests to NPWS management as a state conservation area. These three state forests make up the bulk of the Gardens of Stone conservation proposal.

Despite a lot of debate about the values of the Gardens of Stone area, these amendments did not succeed in gaining enough support to pass into law. You can read the Hansard record of this debate on 17 October at the NSW parliament's website. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bills/Pages/bill-details.aspx?pk=3560>

For more on the Gardens of Stone Conservation proposal, see: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/gos2/proposal.shtml>

Meanwhile, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a story on what has been going on behind the scenes in the NSW Government in relation to getting the Gardens of Stone area protected. In 2017 a government proposal to add some small but valuable parts of the Gardens of Stone proposal got close to being considered but was stymied by the Shooters' Party surprise win in the Orange by-election. <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/plan-to-increase-nsw-national-parks-scuttled-by-berejiklian-government-20181015-p509qz.html>

It is frustrating but the campaign to protect this spectacular area continues. <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/gos2/what.shtml>

## Bylong Mine: Make a Submission

On the very day that international scientists warned the world about the incredibly short time we have to act on climate change, the NSW Government Department of Planning recommended that the Bylong mine near Mudgee should go ahead. This is hard to believe!

As scientists highlighted how quickly we need to move away from fossil fuels, NSW was rushing headlong to open up a greenfields thermal coal mine in the magnificent Bylong Valley.

The department recommended the mine proceed despite new research showing the Bylong Valley has remarkable State Heritage significance. This mine mustn't proceed in any form - it will still destroy rich farmland, threaten the Bylong River and destroy a state significant scenic landscape.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society member, Yuri Bolotin, has written: The Bylong Valley is on the threshold of the Bylong Labyrinth in the Wollemi National Park - the area that has some of the most incredible landscapes found in this country. I know, because we crossed it during our recent East to West Wollemi traverse, and had walked there on many occasions previously. (Yuri is a wilderness explorer, author and environmentalist)

Go to [https://lockthegate.good.do/bylong/email\\_ipc/](https://lockthegate.good.do/bylong/email_ipc/) and email the Independent Planning Commission, the final decision-maker, and ask them to reject the Bylong coal mine—

Lock the Gate Alliance is holding a public meeting at Mudgee on 7<sup>th</sup> November - members have been notified by email.

# Climate Change Is Real – Our Challenge Is To Limit It

By Christine Davies and Alan Page

In early October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.

**Limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society, the IPCC said in its new assessment.**

With more than 6,000 scientific references cited and the dedicated contribution of thousands of expert and government reviewers worldwide, this important report testifies to the breadth and policy relevance of the IPCC. Ninety-one authors and review editors from 40 countries prepared the report.

One of the key messages that comes out very strongly from this report is that we are already seeing the consequences of 1°C of global warming through more extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, among other changes.

The report highlights a number of climate change impacts that could be avoided by limiting global warming to 1.5°C compared to 2°C, or more. Every extra bit of warming matters, especially since warming of 1.5°C or higher increases the risk associated with long-lasting or irreversible changes, such as the loss of some ecosystems, like the Great Barrier Reef.

Allowing the global temperature to temporarily exceed or 'overshoot' 1.5°C would mean a greater reliance on techniques that remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the air. The effectiveness of such techniques is unproven on a large scale.

The report states that actions that can reduce emissions include: phasing out coal in the energy sector; increasing the amount of energy produced from renewable sources; electrifying transport; and reducing the 'carbon footprint' of the food we consume.

The Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C will be a key scientific input into the Katowice Climate Change Conference in Poland in December, when governments review the Paris Agreement to tackle climate change. Read the report: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>

## The world burns while emperors fiddle

How will world leaders react to this wake-up call? Let us hope that the responses from Australia's political leaders are not typical.

**Prime Minister Scott Morrison** exempts Australia from the recommendations—his government's focus is to ensure electricity prices are lower.<sup>1</sup> **Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack** supports coal and said policy will not change based on 'some sort of report'<sup>2</sup>

**Opposition Leader Bill Shorten** wants a greater proportion of renewables but won't exclude fossil fuel as part of our future energy mix.<sup>2</sup>

**Federal Environment Minister Melissa Price** said some of the world's leading climate scientists are "drawing a long bow" in calling for an end to coal power.<sup>3</sup>



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**NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian's** government, perhaps coincidentally, on the day of the report's release recommended approval of the Bylong Coal Mine.<sup>4</sup>

Australia's emissions have increased in the past year<sup>5</sup>. Big polluting projects have the support of governments. The Adani coal mine is supported by Federal Coalition and not opposed by Federal Labor. The Western Sydney Airport is supported by both major parties, Federal and State. Unsustainable population growth and the lack of a population policy are also key factors.

## Australians want climate action

Our Government is not listening to the people. A majority of Australians want climate action. Leaders of industry want climate action. Farmers want climate action.<sup>6</sup> Health professionals want climate action<sup>7</sup>. Australia's biggest mining company BHP suggests a price on carbon.<sup>8</sup> Shareholders action groups want climate action.<sup>9</sup>

Individually, we can make changes to our lifestyle to lessen our contribution to global warming, but that will not be enough. We need leaders in government who will take action on climate change.

Australia hasn't had an effective climate policy since 2015 when Abbott unwound the Gillard Government's climate initiatives and repealed the "carbon tax". An emissions trading scheme should be considered.<sup>10</sup>

## What can we do?

Become informed and join the discussion. Talk to your friends, relatives and neighbours. Talk to your local member and candidates in the coming state and federal elections. It is only four months until the NSW state election and possibly six months to the federal election. Vote for the environment!

Endnotes on page 4.

**Read also:** We have so many ways to pursue a healthy climate – it's insane to wait any longer. The Conversation <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/conversation-181025.pdf>



## The Cave by Jim Low

The large rocks look like they straggled slowly up the ridge, countless years ago. Some of them apparently stopped to rest forever along the way. Some arrived pocked with caves and inaccessible crevices; some continue performing incredible balancing acts, as if defying gravity. I crouch at the rear of one of these large caves and regard the valley, crudely framed by this cave.

My valley view is serenely smothered in greens. Scattered, black toothpicks of trees protrude from the fresh greens, their crusty, black coats a testament to the intensity of previous bushfire battles. Many are dead, cruelly transformed into their own monuments. They await the strength of the late winter/early spring wind gusts to see if they can last another year upright. Yellow flashes of 'egg-and-bacon' plants and the orange glow from intricate shaped banksias are splattered about the ridge.

The cave floor is steep and uneven, dusted with sand from the stone that forms it. Part of the floor is stained with cement grey seepage, long dry. Other parts are variegated shades of browns and yellows. Directly above me is the cave's rough, coral textured, rust coloured ceiling. A closer inspection reveals the small, scattered, crystal pieces which softly reflect, like fragments of a shattered, dirty mirror. From my raised vantage, the cave has the feel of being in the 'gods' at a theatre. Its stage is a stone platform resting askew at the centre and its backdrop is the bushland, plummeting to the valley floor and up the other side.

On some days, like today, the cave traps the exhilarating, subtle smell of the bushland, a mixture of eucalypt and wild flowers. You could almost bottle this essence. I am reminded of the elevated Queensland country city of Toowoomba, first visited many years ago as a youth. At the information centre, I purchased 'a tin of Toowoomba fresh air' and sent it to my family back in Sydney. I guess they saw me coming!

Here in the cave, the powerful, deafening, jet engines of an aeroplane, distantly high in another world, are just a gentle rumble. A more audible impact comes from another source, a natural one. The sudden, jarring shrieks from a white cockatoo cascade from above, their echoes resounding raucously through the valley.

This is definitely another world here. I sing some words of a song and they surround me, resonating with intensity. Here no one can hear you. I could deliver a passionate address, expounding upon my inner most beliefs and no one would be any the wiser.

Photos by Jim Low.



### Climate Change Is Real ... (continued from page 3)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/mining-sector-morrison-government-on-the-defensive-over-ipcc-report-20181008-p508ee.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/oct/09/australian-government-backs-coal-defiance-ipcc-climate-warning>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-09/environment-minister-says-calls-to-end-coal-drawing-long-bow/10354604>

<sup>4</sup> Bylong Mine: Make a Submission (Page 9)

<sup>5</sup> Release of pollution data must be made independent (page 1)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.farmersforclimateaction.org.au/new\\_report\\_highlights\\_climate\\_change\\_challenge\\_calls\\_for\\_government\\_plan\\_for\\_the\\_bush](https://www.farmersforclimateaction.org.au/new_report_highlights_climate_change_challenge_calls_for_government_plan_for_the_bush)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.scimex.org/newsfeed/climate-change-and-health-eminant-australians-slam-government-in-stinging-lancet-statement>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/rallying-cry-mining-giant-bhp-renews-calls-for-carbon-price-20181022-p50b5e.html>

<sup>9</sup> Shareholders <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/lobby-groups-in-spotlight-as-shareholder-campaign-targets-westpac-20181011-p5096n.html>

<sup>10</sup> Carbon tax <https://theconversation.com/the-too-hard-basket-a-short-history-of-australias-aborted-climate-policies-101812>

## What are Biodiversity Offsets?

You want to build a development, say an airport, and the site has threatened species or threatened ecological communities on it (the Western Sydney Airport site has both) – you obviously need to destroy these items to make room for your project.

But destroying threatened species would increase the threat to them, so the project can't happen. Or can it?

In an era when 'jobs and growth' is of primary importance, the NSW and Federal Governments have found a way around this annoyance with a system called "Biodiversity Offsets".

For the airport this basically works like this: You want to destroy 359 hectares of endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland (CPW). You must find a larger area of CPW somewhere else and protect and restore it. This leads to a net loss of CPW to create the offset, but it sounds good so you get approval.

If you can't find enough CPW to create the offset, you can do some other environmental works, or contribute to a Biodiversity Fund so the Government can do it for you. There is still a loss of CPW, but it sounds good so you get approval.

## What is proposed at Western Sydney Airport?

The Biodiversity Offset Delivery Plan (BODP) outlines the following activities: Restoration and management of at least 900 hectares of native vegetation, including Cumberland Plain Woodland, at the Defence Establishment Orchard Hills. Acquisition of suitable parcels of land to be managed by local conservation groups. A contribution to the Greening Australia Cumberland Seed Hub program to develop a reliable source of native seed. Purchase of BioBanking (Stewardship) credits through the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme. A range of other compensatory measures. The full document is here: [http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/files/2126204-REP-2\\_BODP.pdf](http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/files/2126204-REP-2_BODP.pdf)

## What is the Scandal?

The Federal Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development (responsible for Western Sydney Airport) and the Federal Department of Environment & Energy signed off a proposal for biodiversity 'offsets' for the proposed Airport.

Instead of protecting land for wildlife in new reserves or private land 'BioBanks' the primary 'offset' is a cross-subsidy payment between Federal Government departments, mostly for works Department of Defence is *already obliged to do* at the Defence Establishment Orchard Hills, just south of Penrith.

The payment under negotiation is believed to be around \$70 Million.

The deal will see Department of Defence continue existing land management and potentially undertake minor additional works for a period of 20 years under a Memorandum of Understanding. At conclusion of this period there will be no legal impediment to stop Defence developing the bushland for housing.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

A number of activities, while phrased as biodiversity management, appear to relate to long-standing site management proposals of the Department of Defence, including repair of bridges, installation of security fencing, remediation of contaminated land and *kangaroo culling*.

The Department of Environment and Energy has calculated this cost-shifting as a biodiversity 'gain' using assumptions which are patently false, failing to acknowledge existing obligations for management and the natural improvement currently occurring as seedlings grow into trees. This is an alarming precedent for biodiversity offsetting across NSW.

This is a massive cost-shifting exercise at the expense of Western Sydney's environment and community. Funds of this scale could provide substantial new reserves for native wildlife & public recreation, or direct much-needed funding to local farmers through biodiversity banking on their farms. Instead the bulk of funds are being used for cost-shifting between two government departments.

## What Can Be Done?

We all need to write urgently to our elected representatives.

Destroying 359 hectares of a Threatened Ecological Community, and 'offsetting' it with land that is *already* under Federal Government ownership is a scandal.

Using funds to pay the Department of Defence to do works they should *already be doing* is a scandal.

Repairing bridges and putting up security fencing is *not* species remediation, this is a scandal.

Given that the offset land is inside a Defence establishment, none of us will ever be able to either visit and admire, or check on progress of, the works being done.

In 20 years Defence could move the base elsewhere and sell the land for housing development. Offsets should be protected forever, not just for 20 years. This is a scandal.

Write to your State and Federal Members, tell them you reject this approach to 'offsetting' the destruction of Threatened Species and Threatened Ecological Communities at the Western Sydney Airport site.

Ross Coster

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## Horses in National Parks – emotions running high Christine Davies

An article in the Blue Mountains Gazette about the Save Kosci walk evoked some unfavourable responses, suggesting the horses be left where they are.

Should feral species be left to run wild in Australia, irrespective of environmental damage they may cause? Should governments take responsibility, listen to advice of their experts, and make sensible laws on our behalf? With the passing of the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Bill the NSW Coalition Government has not done this.

Some feral species, like the cane toads, have received a lot of bad press and don't have many friends. Few can appreciate the positive attributes of feral pigs and introduced rats. But most people find the horse aesthetically pleasing and emotions can run high. Banjo Paterson romanticised the horse with a story in a poem which would draw the attention of animal welfare groups if it were a true event today.

The NSW Government has given the Kosciuszko horses a high conservation status as "heritage". Horses were taken to the Snowy Mountains in the early 1800s with perhaps a few running wild soon afterwards. On nature's timescale, that's not a long time.

Before European settlement, the pristine alpine regions of the Snowy Mountains, like the rest of Australia, had never been trodden by a hard-hoofed animal or any hoofed animal at all. Today, endemic flora and fauna species which evolved over millions of years are being threatened by the presence of a growing number of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park.

Wild horses suffer in winter in a landscape to which they are not adapted, with many dying of starvation. Above the snow line, they do not know how to dig for food.

Below the snowline, in the drought, they have bared the soil and there is no feed left for horses or any native animal that relies on it.

Following the recent release of images of dead and starving horses in a remote area of Kosciuszko NP, NSW Greens are introducing a bill to try and overturn the Wild Horse Heritage Act and allow culling. (The Guardian 26/10/18 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/26/images-of-dead-and-starving-brumbies-prompt-fresh-calls-for-nsw-cull>)

A number of plants and animals of Kosciuszko National Park are recognised by NSW and/or Commonwealth governments as under threat from the trampling of wild horses on their habitat. These include the Southern Corroboree Frog and the Broad-toothed Mouse.

The Southern Corroboree Frog is one of Australia's most endangered species and is just 2.5 to 3 cm long. It is listed as *critically endangered*. Southern Corroboree Frogs are found only in the Snowy Mountains region of Kosciuszko National Park.

The Broad-toothed mouse is restricted to limited areas in South-eastern Australia, including Kosciuszko, and is listed as Vulnerable. It builds a complex of runways through dense vegetation in summer and, in winter, stays active by keeping warm in runways under the snow.

Do the Southern Corroboree Frog and the Broad-toothed Mouse and the unique ecosystems they rely on matter? Do they have a right to exist? Do we care if they are gone forever?

Read More: <https://savekosci.org/>

## Colong Campaigner wins Environmental Awards

The Bob Brown Foundation 7<sup>th</sup> annual Environment Awards, presented in Hobart, honour environmentalists from across the world and around Australia. The awards were established in 2012 to acknowledge environmentalists campaigning to protect the natural world, with a particular focus on activism and a preparedness to confront environmental destruction head on.

**Congratulations to Harry Burkitt who was presented with the Young Environmentalist of the Year award.**

20 year-old Harry Burkitt is the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Campaign Manager, campaigning against the proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam wall which would flood and permanently destroy extensive areas of the World Heritage Listed Blue Mountains National Park.

Harry has also won NCC's Marie Byles Award for most inspiring community action initiative.

Photo: Bob Brown and Harry Burkitt.



### BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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### 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.

## Time to shrink the elephant    Clare Power

The recent IPCC report has intensified the alarm many of us already feel in relation to the climate change crisis that is both ecological and ideological. It also deepens my disquiet with the term “sustainability” which at its root means ‘the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level’. The point that the IPCC climate scientists have been making since the release of the first IPCC report in 1990 is that we cannot continue with ‘business as usual’ without placing our planet and all life on it in jeopardy. My disquiet is also exacerbated by articles such as ‘Now wealthy and lucky country’ (SMH, 21-22 Oct, 2018) reporting that “the typical Australian is richer than the typical person in any other country in the world” (p.6). While we claim unbridled prosperity as our national right and our national character, the NSW Government can have the temerity to announce a new coal mine on the same day that the IPCC report is released.

The national narrative is dominated by economic growth and the imperative for cheaper electricity bills at any cost. A number of climate scientists concerned about the future of the planet highlight the incompatibility of the current neoliberal, economic growth driven paradigm with addressing climate change meaningfully. For example, Anderson and Bows from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research suggest that the primacy of economic growth is the ‘elephant in the room’ and argue it raises ‘profound issues about the structures, values and framing of contemporary society’. Anderson questions the ‘repeated and high-level claims that in transitioning to a low-carbon energy system global economic growth would not be strongly affected’. (<http://kevinanderson.info/blog/category/papers-reports/>)

In writing about the 2018 IPCC report, Richard Heinberg of the Post Carbon Institute titled his article ‘The new IPCC report offers climate solutions that depend on magic’ with the byline ‘To solve the crisis, we’d have to

slow growth. And no one wants to admit that’ (<https://psmag.com/environment/2018-ipcc-report-includes-magical-thinking>). He argues that current proposed approaches, such as carbon capture and storage, designed to keep emissions within 1.5 degrees are magical rather than real world solutions. Just focussing on energy generation alone as an emissions problem and the possibility of switching to mostly renewables based systems would require transformative changes to perceptions of economic growth. However, as Heinberg points out, arguing against economic growth is fraught because for policy makers and those enjoying its benefits it is a threat to the status quo. The irony of course is that climate change poses calamitous changes that will devastate the current situation.

Returning to the word ‘sustainability’, I prefer its use as an adjective within the concept of ‘sustainable de-growth’. This is an approach which focuses on living within our ecological means so that conviviality and frugality replace the drive for material accumulation. Essentially the de-growth movement proposes an ecologically sustainable way of living that involves a transformative realignment of economic and democratic systems (<https://degrowth.org/definition-2/>). De-growth is a problematic term in English as it tends to provoke negative reactions and a sense of termination of all that makes for a comfortable existence. However in Latin languages where it is expressed as “la décroissance” in French or “la decrescita” in Italian it refers to a river going back to its normal flow after a disastrous flood. The editors of a De-growth’ information site explain that despite the connotations of ‘de-growth’ they continue to use the term because it ‘creates disruption. Disruption in a world where the critique of economic growth is a radical position’ <https://www.degrowth.info/en/what-is-degrowth/>

## A sensitive watershed—Lithgow switches mayors    by Don Morison

At least three of Lithgow City’s councillors apparently had the enthusiasm to contend for the job of being Lithgow’s mayor for the next two years. Councillor Ray Thompson was the successful candidate.

The outgoing mayor, Councillor Stephen Lesslie, had become mayor in 2016 by “a draw from a hat” which is a time-honoured and perfectly legitimate way of resolving tied votes in local government bodies in NSW. Since then, Councillor Lesslie has earnestly addressed himself to building a long-term future for the Lithgow local government area in an era of intensifying debate about falling employment in coal mining and the growing importance of tourism in many parts of Australia.

Attendees at the regional conference which the Nature Conservation Council of NSW organised at the Hoskins Church centre in Lithgow were impressed by Councillor Lesslie’s attendance and the speech that he delivered. Councillor Lesslie has shown a realisation that flexibility is the key if as many regional areas of Australia as possible are to benefit in a time when vital decisions on energy, the environment and our economy are flowing from market forces and the political process.

There are some sections of the Lithgow community reluctant to acknowledge the inevitable pace of social and political change. Throughout recent history, the experienced activists of the Lithgow Environment Group, the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, and other groups which sensibly take an interest in this part of our World Heritage Area, have been patiently campaigning.

The challenge for Lithgow’s new mayor is to maintain and build on the momentum created during the mayoralty of Councillor Lesslie.

### 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**, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm

**Magpie Market**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm

Tube stock \$3. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries: Hugh Brougham 0407 955 028

[nursery@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:nursery@bluemountains.org.au)

## ***EPA requires big salt reduction from Clarence Mine's discharge to the Wollangambe River***     **Madi Maclean**

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has given Clarence Mine a legal deadline to drastically reduce the salinity of its mine waste into the Wollangambe River. The Wollangambe starts out as a near pristine river which flows through the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Centennial Coal (the owner of Clarence Colliery) must cease discharges into the Wollangambe River catchment by 31 July 2021 "...unless the discharge is able to meet a conductivity (EC) limit of 100 microsiemens per centimetre (us/cm)." <sup>1</sup> This low water quality target was foreshadowed over a year ago. Options to divert the waste to other mining operations in the Central West are being pursued.

A brief history of efforts to clean up this discharge over the last four years shows it has progressed slowly:

- In August 2014, Dr Ian Wright from University of Western Sydney talked about the alarming findings of his *State of the Health of the Wollangambe River* report at a Blue Mountains Conservation Society meeting in Wentworth Falls
- Submissions on the EPA's review of Clarence Mine's licence closed in November 2014
- In July 2015, while the EPA was working on finalising the licence review, many tonnes of coal fines stored just above the world heritage area flowed out of Clarence's mine site and into the Wollangambe River.
- Unfortunately for the river, EPA investigations into the mine waste collapse and the year-long EPA-directed clean-up of the river, diverted EPA staff from completing the licence review
- In March 2017 the revised licence was released. The EPA also announced it would add a pollution reduction program requiring the salinity levels to be reduced to below 100 EC (a measure of salinity levels.)
- Also in March 2017, Dr Wright published his latest research into the pollution levels in the Wollangambe River above and below the Clarence colliery's discharge point. He found a huge difference in the water quality and aquatic life above and below the discharge point.
- In June 2017 stronger limits were in force on the 13 toxic metals being discharged and a limit on nickel was added. The discharge limits used the ANZECC/ARMCANZ (2000) water quality guidelines as a benchmark
- In July 2017 the Land and Environment Court fined Centennial Coal \$1.05M plus costs for the mine waste spill. This was the highest penalty for a Tier One pollution offence, the most serious type of offence, in NSW.

So last month, the EPA added the legal deadline for reducing the salinity in Clarence's discharge. Three weeks later Centennial Coal notified the EPA that it would appeal this change to Clarence's environmental protection licence.

Another twist in achieving protection for the Wollangambe River! We will keep you informed.

<sup>1</sup> Clarence Colliery Environment Protection Licence 726, clauses U2.1 and U2.2.

## **What bird is that?**

## **What flower is that?**

If you come on a leisurely stroll on a Thursday morning with the Interpretive Nature Group, you may find out. We all gain knowledge along the way. If we are not sure, one of the experts will know where to get information to identify whatever it is by which we are puzzled.

I have bushwalked in NSW regularly since I came to Australia in 1971, with the Sydney Bushwalkers and the Outdoor club before I moved to the Blue Mountains in 1979, when I joined the Conservation Society

I have walked with all three of the Conservation Society's walking groups, and when I was younger and fitter got quite a buzz from fast walks, which are great for exercise but after a while one begins to feel that something is missing. When the walks become familiar, it is possible to go on the same walk again and again and still see something new. Different times of the year, or even times of the day.

After rain, I've admired the wonderful cobwebs and other light effects. I remember a Grand Canyon walk like that (the Grand Canyon near Blackheath).

When I lived in Sydney I went on many fine walks with great companions, and had the pleasure of going on weekend trips, and camping at night. Lovely Saturday nights discussing everything sitting around a campfire. Comfort is a bit more important now.

The Interpretive Nature Group, since I have been with them, have managed two trips a year to places of natural beauty, usually to stay in self catering cabins or similar. The last two trips have been to Merimbula and the most recent to South Durras, both down the south coast. Beautiful beaches. The self catering is great fun, and so far we have never been underfed.

Something we usually do after a Thursday morning walk is to have lunch in some convenient eatery, of which there are many in the Blue Mountains.

It is true that there are many bushwalkers who like to set a good pace, and often do not schedule to allow time to stop and observe. That is fine, but I have often felt a desire to learn a bit more than just routes through the bush. I have often wondered about the geology and the make up of the soil and rocks as well as the plants I do not know. One can find out some things afterwards, but as regards birds and plants, on the spot information is much better, and you know then that your curiosity is shared.

Since I have joined this group I feel almost that I have gained a family. We have had a lot of fun, particularly on the trips away. They have always been well organised and enjoyable

For anyone who is curious about the group, please talk to Christine Davies.

**Rosemary Butler.**



## OCTOBER CREEK WALK Christine Davies

Recently I led my first bushwalk in many months, to October Creek at Mount Wilson. I first went there with Jim Smith and Wilf Hilder and students of the Outdoor Guides Course in 1992. At Mount Wilson, Jim introduced us to Tom Kirk (77 years old at that time) who told us about some of the history of Mount Wilson and places we could go, including October Creek.

Tom and his brother Peter had been world champion wood choppers and had lived in Mount Wilson all their lives. The Kirk family came to settle in Mount Wilson in 1870 to cut sleepers for the railway being built to the west. Tom's grandfather built the road into Mount Wilson.

We asked Tom why it was called October Creek and he said "because it is pretty in October". I have been to October Creek many times since, nearly always in October though occasionally in early November, and have been able to agree with Tom. It is very pretty in October (and early November) when the spring wildflowers are blooming.

There was lots of evidence of wombats along the track and we marvelled at the wombat's skill in balancing his scats on top of little rocks or pieces of branch. It would probably be more difficult if the scats were not square.

The walk is mostly downhill until you cross the little creek. The creek was mostly dry, with some deep holes with some water in them. Tom had called these "bogey holes", where as a youngster he had played and swam with the Aboriginal children. I have seen these waterholes full of clear water which, I'm told, is very cold at this time of the year.

It is nice to sit in the clearing for morning tea. It is a place which tempts you to sit and talk softly and soak up the atmosphere. There is a small overhang on the edge of the clearing, and flakes of chert can always be found along the drip line. Above the overhang the vegetation is low growing heath, again with pretty wildflowers. Some of my companions saw a large snake which might have been a Red-bellied Black.

We recrossed the creek and soon found that the walk is mostly uphill. A small flock of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos was nearby as we left the creek. Having seen us to the top, they flew past us as we reached the gate on the Mount Wilson road. There were six of them, flying in pairs: I thought that was nice.



Photo by Marilyn Kraus

### 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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".

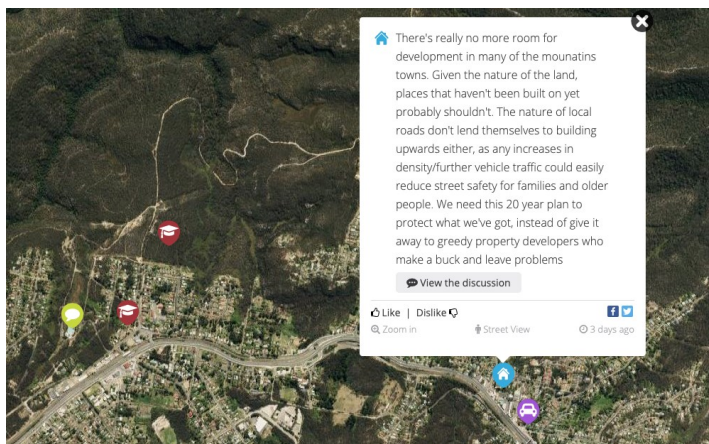
## Tell Council why your local environment is special

Blue Mountains City Council is preparing yet another strategic planning document - a Local Planning Statement for the Blue Mountains. The Local Planning Statement is a new document that all councils in NSW are now required by the State Government to prepare.

The Local Planning Statement will capture the community's vision for future land use in the Blue Mountains. Council is developing the Statement over the next 12-18 months. Community consultation will be conducted throughout the process – starting now.

The first opportunity to be involved is via an online mapping tool available on the Council website at <https://www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/localplanningstatement>.

You locate a site or area on the map and provide a comment such as why you value that area; how you would like to see it improved or changed; or what development you do or don't want to see. The process is easy and doesn't take long. This is what it looks like.



Community members will be able to make comments via the mapping tool throughout October and November. The comments will be used by Council to develop the community's vision and priorities for the local area. A second round of consultations will be conducted early next year, including more in depth engagement through targeted workshops.

### What you can do

It is vitally important that community members provide comment during the current phase of the consultations using the online mapping tool. You should comment on what aspects of the local environment are important to you, what development you do and don't want to see in the future and what environment protection measures you want to see put in place.

Land Use sub-Committee

### Welcome to new members

Eva Johnstone  
Bill Johnstone  
Cale Brown  
Amy Davis  
Susan Lammiman  
Peter Lammiman  
Jenni Kennedy  
Robin Shannon  
Jennifer Moore  
John Davies  
Kim Grieves  
Dr Robert Hamilton

### For information about Plant Study Group and Thursday Interpretive Nature Group

Go to our website  
[www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)  
and click on "Activities"



### **53. SHOOTERS HILL CEMETERY.**

Even where most evidence of human settlement is solitary brick chimneys deserted by the timber and iron homesteads that once surrounded them, you can still find bush cemeteries. Along the western fringes of Blue Mountains national parks, it is possible to spend some contemplative moments in graveyards like this one.

Religious denominational differences that now seem to belong to past eras are delineated by weathered signboards. Generations of the same family are interred together, often sharing gravestones and farewelled in dignified inscriptions or verse. Native trees and exotic plantings jostle for space within the fenced boundaries of the rows of graves and around the perimeter.

In some seasons, the grassed verges of the roads to Shooters Hill cemetery are dotted with hundreds of Crimson Rosellas. Sadly those verges also seem to be the final resting place of numerous wombats and kangaroos during times of drought.

The vast majority of modern city and town dwellers will be bade goodbye without anybody finding space for a gravestone. So, wandering through the countryside and stopping by a place like this one is a step back in history.



Shooters Hill cemetery, September 2018. Photo 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.

### **Book review: The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wohlleben**

Peter Wohlleben was formerly a forester and his appreciation of trees was limited to the value of their wood. But in an ancient forest in the Eifel Mountains in Germany, Peter Wohlleben’s childhood love of nature was reignited. In this book he records what the trees have taught him.

Tim Flannery wrote the foreword. It begins: “We read in fairy tales of trees with human faces, trees that can talk, and sometimes walk. This enchanted forest is the kind of place, I feel sure, that Peter Wohlleben inhabits. His deep understanding of the lives of trees, reached through decades of careful observation and study, reveals a world so astonishing that if you read his book, I believe that forests will become magical places for you, too.”

I have enjoyed reading this book. The trees are not the trees of our forests but, if we learn to stop and observe, we may find our own magic.

Christine Davies

### **November in Blackheath**

Blackheath holds onto the cold like a terrier,  
shaking tired rhododendrons  
with mean squalls from the Grose Valley.

Summer? What summer?  
It’s 48 fahrenheit on the old wooden thermometer  
and that’s in the bedroom.

Sleeting rain outside now  
and we’re watching Japanese samurai movies  
on a laptop, both heaters blazing.

“Biggest dump of snow ever was a 22<sup>nd</sup> November”,  
says the newsagent, a native.  
“We’ve had snow on Christmas Day”, he adds with a wink.

Brendan Doyle



## 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) Saturday Walks page for details)

- Nov 10 **Kamarah Head.** Leader Bob 0408947325 Meet at Wentworth Falls stn CP 8.30am. 7km. Gr3. Map Mt Wilson.  
Nov 17 **Victory Track.** Leader Eddie. 47842691. Meet at Falconbridge Stn CP North Side. 9.00am, 11km, Gr3, Map Springwood  
Nov 24 **Mt Solitary return, Mike 47573660.** Meet at Wentworth Falls Stn. CP. 8.30am 12km, GR3, Map, Katoomba.  
Dec 1 **Zig Zag Railway, Clarence.** Leader Emanuel 0419773906, contact Leader to book in. 10km. GR3. Map Mt Lithgow.  
Dec 8 **Mount Victoria Tracks.** Leader Alice 47393086 Meet at Wentworth Falls stn. CP 8.00am. or ring Alice. 10km. Gr3. Map Mt Wilson & Hartley.  
Dec 15 **Saturday walkers Christmas Party...** Contact Bob 0408947325 or Emanuel 0419773906 for more details.

**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](mailto:keithdor53@hotmail.com)

- Nov 12 **Ikara Head and Girraween Cave Mt Victoria.** Following the ridgeline to Ikara Head visiting Girraween Cave along the way. About 6Km Mt Victoria Station 8-50 am Car pool Freda email [firedanarr@outlook.com](mailto:firedanarr@outlook.com) Grade 2.  
Nov 19 **Hazelbrook to Lawson** via Cataract and Adelina Falls. 9kms. Steps. Grade 2. Meet Lawson Station car park 8.45 am. Car shuttle. Chris Smith 4787 6979. Grade 2.  
Nov 26 **The Grand Canyon, Blackheath.** Magnificent canyon walk. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45 am. Car pool. Pat Whitehead 0429 003 639. Grade 3.  
Dec 3 **Water Nymph Dell and Wentworth Falls Lake Wentworth Falls.** Rainforest and lake walk. Approx. 7Km Meet Wentworth Falls Station Stockyard carpark 8.45 am. Ros King 0417 261 465 or 4733 3880. Grade 2-3  
Dec 10 **Valley of the waters and Inspiration Point Wentworth Falls.** Very pretty walk with waterfalls Steep steps in and out of valley. Meet Wentworth Falls Station car park 8.45 am. Car pool. Meredith 4782 4823. 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](mailto:denfenella12@bigpond.com)

- Nov 15 **Rigby Hill and Wall's Lookout.** Views of Grose Valley towards Hanging Rock. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2  
Nov 22 **Bus trip to Dunn's Swamp.** Book and pay Tracy \$12 0434 362 611. Meet Springwood Car Park behind Westpac Bank 8.00am sharp. Pick up along highway. Leader Barrie 0407 300 525. Take lunch. Grade 2  
Nov 29 **Lyrebird Dell, Leura.** Some steep ascents and descents on good track. Meet corner Megalong St and Leura Mall 9.30am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Take lunch. Grade 2  
Dec 6 **Cathedral of Ferns and Wynne's Lookout, Mount Wilson.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 1  
Dec 13 **Christmas Party in Doreen's Studio.** Ring Doreen on 6355 2371 for details. Please bring either a salad or dessert, whatever you wish to drink and a wrapped gift to the value of \$10 for Naughty Santa. Phone Beverley on 4757 2076 if you need a lift from Mount Victoria Station. Dec 20 and 27 **No walk.**

Society bushwalks on facebook: Visit <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks/>

### NAMES ON MOUNT SOLITARY

The centrepiece of the magnificent view from Katoomba's Echo Point is Mount Solitary. In the 1930s many bushwalkers made the traverse over this mountain from Narrow Neck Peninsula to Kings Tableland; they found it a delightful place with a compact geography of its own. The area was indicated by an inadequate squiggle on the Blue Mountains map. There were no features shown and of course none named. Naturally enough, walkers who used the area began to name features on this interesting mountain. Two women, Ray Page and Frances Ramsay, led a party of the Sydney Bushwalkers Club over the mountain and camped in a gully on the eastern end. They enjoyed a particularly good campfire singsong and so decided to call their little camping valley Singa-jinga-well (Sing a jingle well) Gully, and a small adjacent creek Rayfrandell. These rather euphonious names caught on and were eventually adopted by the map makers.

Ninian Melville, a qualified surveyor, decided to make an adequate map of the area and so with a fellow member of the

Coast and Mountain Walkers Club, Reg Greenfield, spent a cold Queen's Birthday weekend doing the job. A strong south-west wind was blowing. It came in fierce gusts up Katoomba Creek, roaring up the mountain with explosive force. It not only blew their fire away, but threatened to lift the very billies off the fire and scattered items of camp gear lying around.

To prevent this they found it necessary to bend down, as each gust was heralded, to try and secure any loose articles lest they be blown clean away. As they remembered it later, the typical posture of the weekend was heads down and bottoms up, so when it came to allotting names to various features Reg facetiously suggested the use of the name of that well-known Chinaman, Ah Sup! And that was how Chinamans Gully got its name. Greenfields Lookover and Melvilles Lookdown still commemorate the map makers.

From: Paddy Pallin, "Never Truly Lost".

*The Gundungurra name for what we now call Mt Solitary, was recorded by Govett (1833) as 'Munmie'.*