



Restoration of Blue Mountains Walking Tracks

This artistic track restoration near the base of Leura Falls helped make it possible for many visitors to safely see the majestic rush of water in the earlier part of the rain event of March 2022. This construction style appears to minimise the erosion of soil from water runoff.

Congratulations to NPWS and Blue Mountains City Council for their progress with environmentally friendly and visually pleasing track restoration throughout the Mountains.

(Image by Alethea Morison)



At our AGM ...

Members, friends and visitors braved the Blue Mountains weather on Wednesday 30th March to gather at the Wentworth Falls School of Arts to elect a new management committee for the Society and hear an excellent talk from guest speakers Peter Hatherly and Ian Brown about their new book "The Blue Mountains: Exploring landscapes shaped by the underlying rocks, uplift and erosion". (Review on PAGE 9)

A motion was carried, unanimously, to grant TARA CAMERON a life membership of the Society. Congratulations Tara, and thank you for all the work you have done for the Society and the environment over many years.

Welcome to new and returning members of the Management Committee. Contact details are listed on PAGE 2.

2022 Federal Election - Saturday 21 May Make Your Vote Count

At the 2019 Federal Election over 1.3 million Senate ballot papers and over 835,000 House of Representative ballot papers didn't count¹.

Voting isn't complicated, you just need to take your time and read the instructions on each ballot paper. If you make a mistake, ask for a fresh ballot paper. Or if you need help, ask one of the returning officers.

The Federal Election uses both optional and non-optional preferential voting systems.

In the House of Representatives (lower house) you need to number every box for your vote to count.

In the Senate (upper house) you have the choice of voting above or below the line:

* If you vote above the line you need to number at least 6 boxes.

* If you vote below the line you need to number at least 12 boxes.

The main issue of optional preferential voting is that your vote may be "exhausted²" (excluded from the count) before counting ends. So to make sure your vote counts, number as many boxes as you can.

For further information and to practice voting go to - https://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/How_to_vote/practice/

¹In the Senate 580,000 were informal and 726,000 votes were exhausted. In the House of Representatives 835,000 ballot papers were informal.

²Exhausted vote. A ballot paper which shows no further valid preference for any candidate and must be set aside from the count.

READ: Vote for the Environment (Page 3)

READ: A clarion call on climate (Page 6)

Authorised by Madi Maclean, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, 92 Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls 2782

BMCS Management Committee update

It is with much regret that the Management Committee of Blue Mountains Conservation Society advises members that Susan Crick has resigned as President for health reasons.

In accordance with the Society's constitution, the Management Committee meeting on 23 April appointed Madi Maclean as President and Tara Cameron as Senior Vice President to serve until the next AGM.

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Susan for her generous service to the Society over the past two years. We hope we can take forward her desire to grow the Society membership and encourage many more, younger adults to join in our conservation work.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Darug and Gundungurra people, and pay respect to their elders past, present and emerging.

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THE DEADLINE FOR JUNE HUT NEWS IS 18TH MAY

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Enquire: **Christine 4787 7246**

Blue Mountains Conservation Society has a new phone number: **0490 419 779**. Messages are checked once a day by our Administration Officer, who will return your call.

A drawing to colour on page 12

The colouring activity of Blue Mountains birds and plants on the back pages of May and June Hut News were specially designed for the Blue Mountains Conservation Society to promote awareness of our unique plants and animals and the importance of everyone becoming familiar with them. A bilingual environmental poem in English and Chinese accompanies the illustrations.

The beautiful calligraphy was provided by widely recognised local artist Xueyi and it acknowledges the many visitors to the Mountains who speak Chinese. Xueyi hopes children will trace over and copy the calligraphy to appreciate the fine work of these word pictures.

The illustrations of birds and plants were created by local artist Kara Cooper from MOUNT VIC AND ME. Many of you will be familiar with Kara's work of wildlife and the Blue Mountains reproduced on cards.

Most of us will know the colours of the Waratah and the Blue Wren, in this month's Hut News, but you can use your own colours if you prefer. Next month you can research the colours of the threatened and endangered *Zieria covenyi* (Narrow Neck Star) and the increasingly rare Gang-gang Cockatoo or you can again choose your own colours!

The activity was originally produced for the Society in 2019 for distribution in schools, libraries, tourist venues such as coffee shops and tourist information centres. Unfortunately its distribution was interrupted by fires, floods and COVID-19.

We publish it here again for everyone to enjoy. Feel free to copy and use the images.

—Cathy Cavanagh

Proposed Waste Incinerators at Wallerawang and Portland

The NSW State Government is considering legislation to allow installation of new incinerators at Wallerawang and Mount Piper to burn Sydney's waste. Waste would apparently be transported by both train and truck through the Blue Mountains on a permanent basis.

In Lithgow, a protest group has gained incorporation and a petition by Change.org strongly opposes this scheme. However, a majority in Lithgow's council has voted to support the legislation – a rescission motion was to be moved after Hut News deadline.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society has recently rejoiced at the creation of the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, after a 20-year campaign. This has the potential to help Lithgow transition from coal mining to tourism. But any incinerators will threaten this opportunity.

Does the Blue Mountains want most problematic Sydney waste to be trucked and trained through the Blue Mountains on a permanent basis?

WHAT YOU CAN DO ...

Put your name on the petition <https://www.change.org/p/lithgow-city-council-stop-the-burning-of-sydney-s-waste-in-lithgow> to strongly oppose this scheme and help get the community protest into the news.

“Koalas Uplisted to Endangered” (11 March 2022)

Deborah Tabart (head of Australian Koala Foundation for 33 years) said in an interview with Philip Adams on ABC Radio National: ***“If you cannot save the Koala, you cannot save anything”***

Recent data from the Australian Koala Foundation revealed the koala population of NSW had plummeted in the past three years by 41 per cent to fewer than 10,000 animals.

A member of our Society has brought our attention to the plight of koalas in the Campbelltown area where a two-stage 1700 home development, known as Figtree Hill and Mount Gilead, was approved in 2019. This approval was despite the challenge by Save Sydney's Koalas to stop this development and the clearing of a land corridor deemed to be a major access point for koalas moving between the Georges and Nepean Rivers.

Saul Deane from the Total Environment Centre (TEC) said housing at Figtree Hill will fracture koala habitat and have a devastating impact on efforts to reverse the decline of the New South Wales koala population. “This is now the only recovering koala colony that we see in NSW,” Mr Deane said. “If you were orchestrating a deliberate war on koalas, this would be the mopping-up process to make sure they do go extinct.”

By December 2021, 80 mature healthy habitat trees, including two over 300 years old had been felled. The development is pushing ahead and a new planning proposal ignores conditions imposed to protect the koalas.

The Total Environment Centre has launched an online action letter to the Minister for the Environment. “We have one last chance to save the key wildlife corridor and endangered species.”

Read: https://www.tec.org.au/last_chance_for_gilead_koala_corridor

Meanwhile the Blue Mountains Koala Project has discovered that the Blue Mountains is a critically important area for koalas. The huge network of protected areas is a potential refuge for koalas, as habitats to the east are under increasing human population threat. We also contain the most genetically diverse koalas in the country, making them



important for conservation of the species. Contact www.scienceforwildlife.org to help with this work.

ACTION FOR MEMBERS:

Write to Minister for Planning Anthony Roberts and Minister for Environment James Griffith.

Go to the TEC website: www.tec.org.au/last_chance_for_gilead_koala_corridor, or write a personal letter (www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers) or post to Parliament House, Sydney 2000

Join and/or donate to the Citizen Science Project www.scienceforwildlife.org/iconic-koalas-blue-mountains-project/

Speak out for the koalas who cannot speak for themselves.

—Liz van Reyswoud (Photo by Ian Brown)

2022 Federal Election - Saturday 21 May

— vote for the environment —

Go to the Society's federal election website:
<https://www.bluemountains.org.au/elections/fe22/>

The Society has prepared a comprehensive set of questions about issues that the next Australian Government can, and should, address. Some questions primarily concern the Macquarie Electorate* while others are national if not global in scope.

We do this to assist you in making an informed decision on who to vote for. A decision that is divorced from the hyperbole, sensationalism and shallowness of much of the current election advertising and reporting.

We have asked the candidates for their stance on such issues as climate change, political integrity, flight paths for the Western Sydney Airport, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and its wilderness areas, and raising the Warragamba Dam wall. We've also asked about the candidates' personal conservation goals.

An additional feature of this federal election questionnaire is the financial impact of each of our questions.

Responses to our questionnaire are presented unabridged, and include a review of the responses. Please share this with family, friends and colleagues.

Macquarie is the most marginal electorate in the country – so make sure you have your say and **‘vote for the environment’**.

The Society neither supports nor recommends candidates or political parties.

* If you live in either the Blue Mountains City Council or Hawkesbury City Council area, then you are in the Federal Electorate of Macquarie.

Where the Water Starts - Kosciuszko National Park



This is a photo taken by John Ford of the Narjong water healing ceremony - Narjong meaning fresh water - held on Long Plain in Kosciuszko National Park in 2019 and a significant event within the documentary.

The Mount Vic Flicks cinema on 5th April was packed when two films were shown by the Reclaim Kosci movement as part of a national tour. A short film, *The Ambassador*, set the tone, illustrating a 95 year old man with a history of living in Australian natural environments writing to the federal Minister for Environment.

The main feature, a documentary called “Where the Water Starts” went to the heart of a central issue for Australian environmentalists – the integrity of lands protected under state and territory National Park status when threatened by anti-conservation agendas. Australia’s most high profile national park, Kosciuszko, is under siege from more than 14,000 feral horses, championed by self-styled cultural warriors, and from the controversial Snowy Hydro 2 proposal.

A number of Blue Mountains identities were present at the screening. Aunty Carol Cooper welcomed us to country and made further comments at the end. She styled the main issue of the feature film as a question of “horses versus country”. That set the scene for an absorbing journey through the recent history of the Kosciuszko National Park brumby issue which included the NSW parliament’s “Brumby Protection Bill”, the public demonstrations for and against it, the impact of the 2019 and 2020 bushfires, which hurt the high country’s endangered species more than they hurt the brumbies, and the fact that there was still minimal protection for native species in late 2021 when the documentary was completed.

Blue Mountains MP, Trish Doyle, spoke, acknowledging that she had presented a 12,000 signature petition in favour of repeal of the Feral Horse Protection Law to parliament in September 2019. She pointed out also that she had refused to vote with her party in favour of a law curbing protest rights in 2022. She gave a rallying cry to contact through all means and platforms anybody who might urge the responsible Ministers and Shadow Ministers in NSW to address the ongoing plight of Kosciuszko National Park’s native flora and fauna.

Richard Swane, a river tour guide with indigenous heritage, who was a central character in the film, was present and spoke on a panel at the end of the screening. He reinforced the themes of indigenous custodianship tradition which run strongly through the film. He gave everybody food for thought, suggesting that being “cheap and flashy” were dominant characteristics of modern non-indigenous Australians, leading to the kind of problems documented in “Where the Water Starts”.

The whole experience of watching the documentary was very challenging, especially the scenes of wild horses starving and dying, to rot in the once wild rivers - an outcome which the misguided self-appointed guardians of what they bizarrely believe to be Australian culture fail to do anything to prevent. One scene that resonated was the party of walkers using the stepping stones across the upper Snowy River along the track from Charlottes Pass to the Blue Lake under that huge Snowy Mountains sky. Those that love Australia’s wild places and visit Australia’s highest wild country can only feel inspired to keep fighting for it.

— The Hut News Editorial Team

WHAT YOU CAN DO ...

Sign the petition at reclaimkosci.org.au/sign-the-petition/ and enter your email address so that Reclaim Kosci can keep in touch. There will be more specific calls to action as progress, or lack of progress, becomes apparent in implementing the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan which was finalised in late 2021.

Sign up at reclaimkosci.org.au/volunteer/ as a Reclaim Kosci volunteer. Volunteers are needed:

- (a) as occasional back-up Facebook monitors
- (b) if you have stunning photos of Kosciuszko National Park native animals, plants or scenery
- (c) helpers at occasional events in the Blue Mountains area e.g. at a presentation or petition-signing table.



Annual General Meeting, 30 March 2022, at the Wentworth Falls School of Arts.

- ◇ Members, friends and visitors
- ◇ A new life member -Tara Cameron
- ◇ Guest speakers Peter Hatherly and Ian Brown present a preview of their book.

HELP WANTED FOR HUT NEWS

Proof reading - sub-editing - researching and writing on requested topics - collecting fillers - illustrations - and anything else I haven't thought of yet. We are building a team of people to help whenever they can. Contact Christine Davies 4787 7246 hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

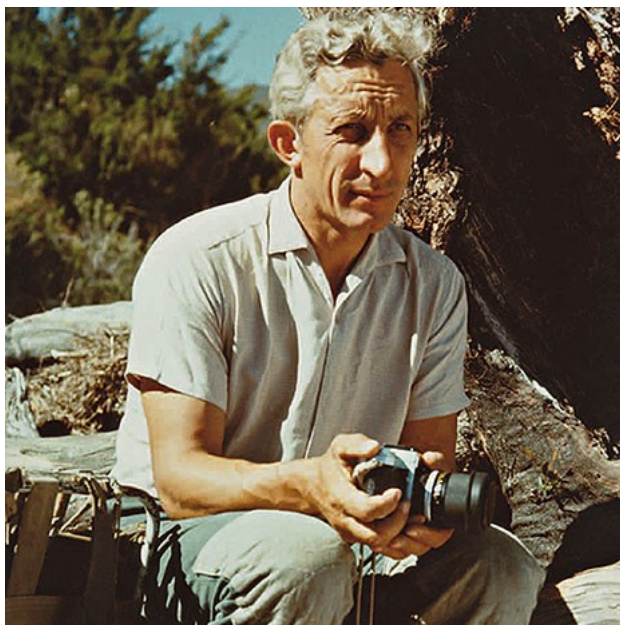
Looking back ...

On 27th April 1979, Tasmania's \$185 million Gordon River hydro-electric system was officially opened. The dams hold more than 30 times the volume of water in Sydney Harbour. The event was hailed by members of Government and the Hydro-Electric Commission, but to conservationists it was a black day. They mourned the passing of the scenic Lake Pedder and numerous species of flora and fauna consumed when four dams were made to hold back three rivers, back-filling into twin lakes, the Gordon and the renamed Pedder, the mighty rivers being reduced to trickling streams. The Tasmanian Wilderness Society urged Tasmanians to make a final stand to save Tasmania's last major wild river, the Franklin.

Never to be forgotten

"This vanishing world is beautiful beyond our dreams and contains in itself rewards and gratifications never found in an artificial landscape or man-made objects."

This is a quote from wilderness photographer, Olegas Truchanas. Truchanas remains one of the great heroes of the environment movement. He undertook a number of difficult solo journeys into parts of Tasmania's South-West previously not visited by Europeans. The stories and photographs from his forays helped



the successful campaign to stop the Gordon-below-Franklin Dam in the 1980s. He was born in Lithuania in 1923 and died the same year that Lake Pedder was destroyed, in 1972, when his canoe overturned on Tasmania's Gordon River - 50 years ago.

Olegas Truchanas c 1960.
From *Pedder Dreaming:*
Olegas Truchanas and a Lost
Tasmanian Wilderness.
Photographer unknown



Veil of Diamonds

Showers of diamonds cascade from above,
Dancing on zephyrs, buoyed from below.
Diamonds in millions. Spirits of lore, of light,
From the rock rim, a rush -
Out and down to a green void unknown,
Not knowing or caring or reasoning why,
Without fear or question or doubt,
Without dread of height or flight,
No concern of what life may be about.
But in this one special moment, present.
A joy in tumbling, falling, cascading,
In soaring upwards, outwards, around.
Cascades of diamonds dancing in golden light.
In this moment each diamond a lifetime -
Totally brilliant, all too totally brief.

By Ross Bridle.

Photo: Wentworth Falls
from Fletchers Lookout

A clarion call on climate Clare Power

Remember the Kevin 07 election when many of us thought our hopes for meaningful and effective climate policy were going to be realised, and then again in subsequent elections. Yet, 15 years later, the Australian government remains a shameful laggard on climate action and policy.

I did a quick internet search to see if this election is being treated as a climate election in the media. A Daily Telegraph headline claimed: 'Aussie voters want climate action: What could decide key seats'. A recent Sydney Morning Herald article is titled 'Last meaningful opportunity': Federal election firing up young climate activists' but overall, there were not many articles to be found.

There were a few examples outside Australia's mainstream media; 'One issue matters more to top economists than any other this election: climate change' (The Conversation); 'This Is Australia's Climate Change Election' (The Diplomat); 'Election 2022: Stakes for climate and energy policy have never been higher' (RenewEconomy). However, Mike Foley's prediction in the SMH in January 2022 seems to be accurate: 'Climate wars to die down in federal election as major parties dodge risks'.

And yet, this election is occurring with the backdrop of two recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports which use the strongest language yet to signal the urgency of the climate crisis.

Surely the words of the United Nations Secretary General Antony Guterres are a clarion call to our leaders and the electorate. He described the latest report as 'a litany of broken climate promises' and in words that could speak directly to our current government he stated:

'Climate scientists warn that we are already perilously close to tipping points that could lead to cascading and irreversible climate impacts, but high-emitting Governments and corporations are not just turning a blind eye, they are adding fuel to the flames. They are choking our planet, based on their vested interests and historic investments in fossil fuels, when cheaper, renewable solutions provide green jobs, energy security and greater price stability'.

So what can we do? We can make sure this is a climate election. We can courageously bring this issue into our conversations with family, friends and acquaintances. We can volunteer with Macquarie Alliance (door knocking) or GetUp (phone calls) to discuss climate change beyond our usual circles. We can stay informed, write letters to politicians, use social media and draw on our limitless creativity.

We are in the most marginal seat in Australia; our votes count. We have to make this the climate election of our lives, as our lives depend on it.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

For enquiries or to place an order, contact the
Nursery Manager, Paul Irwin, email
plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com

Browse and buy at our market stall—Blackheath
Growers Market, 2nd Sunday of the month, cnr.
GWH and Gardiners Crescent, Blackheath,
8am to 12 noon.

(No stall in June or July)

OPINION by Don Morison

Leura Falls Creek - a catchment deserving to be valued by future generations

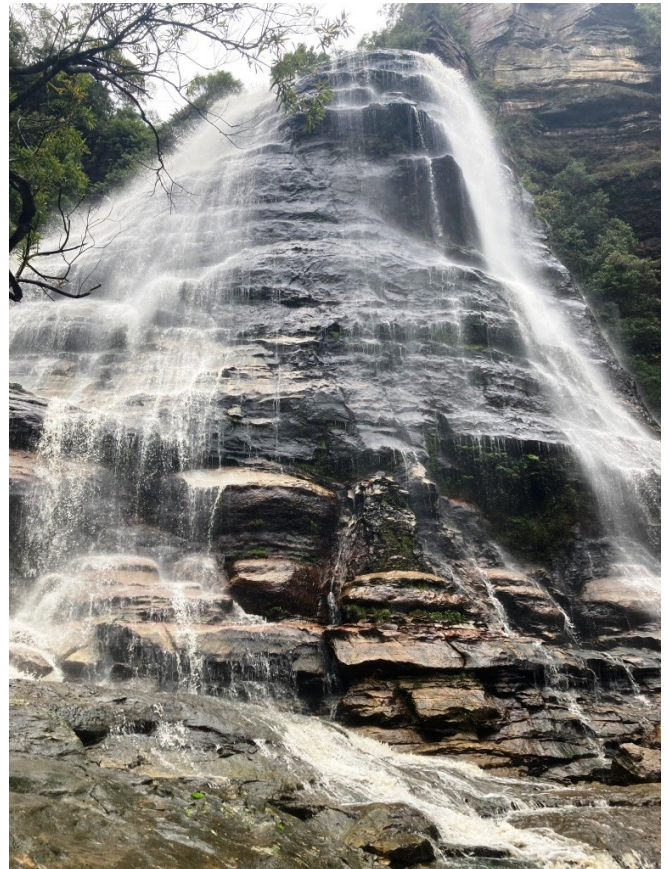
Of all the microenvironments that non-indigenous people have come across in the Blue Mountains, few have struggled so valiantly against despoliation or offered such inspiration as Leura Falls Creek.

The upper Leura Falls or "Bridal Veil" is the subject of the Harry Phillips photograph taken in the early 20th century which is the basis for the mural on the external wall of the Commonwealth bank in Katoomba – a classic Blue Mountains scene.

Various 20th century local sewerage schemes culminated in a treatment plant located in the Kedumba Valley just south of the lower Leura Falls. This was serviced by a cargo flying fox, with a winding engine whose head works stood near the cliff edge south-east of Leura Cascades and a long unsealed road for sludge tankers from the Queen Victoria hospital site along the Kedumba River to the plant. A series of pipes took the untreated sewage down both drops of the falls. To worsen matters, car thieves gained access to the cliff edge near the winding station and pushed at least four stripped car bodies to where they acted as planter boxes for native vegetation in the valley for some decades.

At the turn of the 21st century, Katoomba and Leura were connected by a long underground tunnel to the Winmalee sewage treatment plant. Using numerous workers and helicopters, National Parks and Wildlife Service eventually removed close to all trace of the flying fox, piping and car bodies from the falls catchment. Regeneration of the valley treatment plant and the sludge tanker road commenced. The natural area experience of this catchment has been further enhanced since 2021 by the tasteful and highly effective restoration of the Clifftop Walk and adjoining walking tracks.

Blue Mountains Council also manages much of the catchment and the next question is whether the flood damaged Cliff Drive through this catchment should be repaired. Nearly all of the visitation and appreciation of this catchment that predated the pandemic could return at a fraction of the cost that would be required to fully restore the roadway for through motor traffic. Since the 1930s and 1940s when the name Cliff Drive was attached to various stretches of roadway in the two



towns, the road width and need to service various residential and business properties has differed considerably from one part of the Drive to another.

One of the greatest challenges for the Southern Scenic Escarpment policy the council is formulating is to avoid concentrating excessive numbers of vehicles and naïve visitors along sections of what is a frontier between an urban area and a near wilderness area. It's time to consider carefully whether the pedestrian/cycle network already established around the escarpment section of the Leura Falls Creek catchment achieves the best balance without reintroducing motor vehicles.

Image: Bridal Veil - upper Leura Falls, March 2022
Photographer: Alethea Morison

Nursery News

The wet summer has produced abundant growth in our nursery stock and it is busting to get planted out. Planting in the ground now will get plants established and ready to burst into new growth come spring.

At our next market (Sunday 8th May) look out for *Lomatia silaifolia* which has attractive foliage and Grevillea-like creamy flowers. We will have Red Anther Wallaby Grass, a useful fill-in plant with graceful seed heads, and a pretty groundcover with yellow flowers, *Hibbertia diffusa*.

The May Blackheath Growers Market will be your last chance to buy from our stall before we take a two-month winter break. We'll be back in August.

Lomatia silaifolia

Common names: Crinkle Bush, Fern-leaved Lomatia, Parsley Bush Photo of flower - David Noble. Sketch of leaf: NSW Flora Online - Plantnet..



Autumn in the Blue Mountains



Omphalotus nidiformis, or ghost fungus, is most notable for its bioluminescent properties. This one was found on the Prince Henry Cliff Walk at Katoomba.

Autumn is a good time to see fungi. What we see is the fruiting body - the threads of the fungus can spread over a large distance in decaying vegetation.

This one with the red cap and yellow pores underneath is called the Rhubarb Boletes, *Boletellus obscurecoccineus*. It was found in the bush not far off Evans Lookout Road on 2nd April.



Photographer: Sue Nicol

Subsidies to the Fossil Fuel Industry: The Cost to the Taxpayer

Just how much does it cost Australian taxpayers to subsidise the fossil fuel industry?

Politicians are far from clear in providing answers to this question. For instance, Keith Pitt, the Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia in the Morrison Government, recently granted \$19 million to Empire Energy to assist its exploration for gas in the Beetaloo Basin in the NT. Yet only a year or two earlier his National Party colleague, Senator Matt Canavan claimed in a debate on the ABC's Q&A that "there is no subsidisation of Australia's fossil fuel industries". Definitions of what should be counted as a subsidy can vary but any analysis makes it very hard to disagree with the ABC's Fact Checkers that Senator Canavan was "drawing a long bow." (1)

For instance, the International Monetary Fund estimated Australia's subsidies to fossil fuels to be \$29 billion in 2017. This was calculated by taking Australia's actual fuel consumption and multiplying it by the gap between the existing and "efficient" prices paid for the fuel. By taking into account social and environmental factors in this way, the price paid for coal was typically underpriced, at half its true cost. (2)

Market Forces, an Australian shareholder activist group, used a different formula that combined the raw figures for tax based subsidies with direct handouts and government loans. Though not even including state based subsidies and grants, this formula calculated that the fossil fuel industry receives at least \$12 billion a year

(3) --- an amount greater than the budget of the Australian Army. In addition \$8.3 billion in long term funding has been allocated to subsidising gas extraction, building infrastructure and research into Carbon Capture and Storage (4).

The Australia Institute also recently completed an assessment of subsidies awarded to the fossil fuel industry based around fuel tax rebates. According to their research into the data for the FY 2020-2021 government subsidies amounted to \$10.3 billion. This included fuel tax rebates allocated to the users of fossil fuels and the coal, oil and gas companies amounting to \$7.8 billion.

Rod Campbell, Research Director at the Australia Institute notes that "the coal, oil and gas companies in Australia give the impression that they are major contributors to the Australian economy but our research shows they are major recipients of government funds. From a climate perspective this is inexcusable and from an economic perspective it is irresponsible

Despite variations in the way subsidies are assessed one thing is clear. The fossil fuel industry in Australia receives many billions of dollars in subsidies via the taxpayer. Given that the world is experiencing a climate emergency, created in the main by the fossil fuel industry, this needs to be addressed by all political parties.

—Anne Ammann.

Extra Reading and References: (1) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2027-07-29/fact-check-matt-canavan-fossil-fuel-industry-subsidies/12496310> (2)- <https://reneweconomy.com.au/global-fossil-fuel-subsidies-reach-5-2-trillion-and-29-billion-in-australia-91592/> - <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/WP/2019/WPIEA2019089.ashx> (3) <https://www.marketforces.org.au/campaigns/ffs/> (4) <https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/fossil-fuel-subsidies-in-australia/>

How did the dramatic scenery of the Blue Mountains come about?



Any of the subjects of Geology, Aboriginal Studies, History, Physical Geography and Bushland Navigation can lead us into the subject matter we might affectionately call Blue Mountains Studies.

Peter Hatherly and Ian Brown's new book, **The Blue Mountains: Exploring landscapes shaped by the underlying rocks, uplift and erosion**, will take its place among the favourite texts which have helped us explore all these topics over recent years. It tells the story with text, tables, maps and photographs, enticing people to learn about the Blue Mountains

Foreword writer, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer Hugh Durrant-Whyte, justifiably describes **The Blue Mountains** as "a new way of participating in the history of this beautiful landscape"

In June Hut News we plan to identify some of the most absorbing passages in Hatherly and Brown's new book.

—Hut News Editorial Team

The Blue Mountains: Exploring landscapes shaped by the underlying rocks, uplift and erosion, by Peter Hatherly and Ian Brown, will be available from about the end of May, from all good Blue Mountains bookshops as well as online. More information: <https://ianbrownphotography.com.au/publications/>

...After Rain

The rain-cloud slowly parted;
The sky was brilliant blue.
The shadowed days were gone
And the Sun came shining through.
It shone upon the tree-tops,
Beyond the window-pane.
The bush is so beautiful after rain.

The heath and grasses glistened
In the slanting yellow rays,
Reminding me of other times
And other glorious days.
The spider's webs, with diamonds
hung,
They sparkle yet again.
The bush is so beautiful after rain.

With all the sorrows of our lives
May clouds all part once more.
Remember only happy times
And hopes we have in store.
Let's walk among the happy times,
Remembering life's gains.
The bush is so beautiful after rain.

Noel May (June 1997)

A poem inspired by a walk description in a recent Hut News. "I was reminded of some beautiful rainy walks".

*This poem was published in
June 1997 Hut News.*

Colong Foundation's name change

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness has changed its name to the Australian Foundation for Wilderness. The purpose of this change is to allow the organisation and its membership to respond more powerfully to the worsening situation of the environment across Australia, particularly in areas surrounding intact natural areas.

Wilderness Australia Chair and former NSW Environment Minister, Bob Debus, said the change marked an important time to reflect on the long and illustrious history of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness since it was established in 1968.

"The Colong Foundation for Wilderness has been a pioneer in conservation campaigns since it formed in 1968 as Australia's first wilderness conservation organisation. It was the Colong Foundation who ran the first ever corporate campaign in Australia when it successfully stopped the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers from destroying Colong Caves to mine its limestone. It was the Colong Foundation who was instrumental in enacting the Wilderness Act which now protects over 2 million hectares of country in NSW.

Wilderness Australia General Manager, Harry Burkitt, said the priorities and mission of Wilderness Australia were urgent.

"Wilderness Australia remains committed to our long-standing campaign to oppose the plan to raise the wall of the Warragamba Dam, a project that would vandalise the World Heritage-listed Greater Blue Mountains National Park and set a dangerous global precedent.

"But we're also taking action to oppose an emerging industry in Australia that seeks to burn our forest timber in power stations in the name of renewable energy. The biomass burning industry is active in many parts of the world, and we intend to prevent it from taking hold here and to dramatically increase the protection of forests in eastern Australia."

www.wildernessaustralia.org.au

Plant Study Group

The Plant Study Group met in April at Woodford after COVID and wet weather interrupted the program earlier. Outings are planned for the second Sunday of the month in varied locations up and down the mountains, with extra trips often arranged to areas further afield. Our next outing is to Agnes Banks Nature Reserve.

We are keen to welcome new members and share our knowledge of and enthusiasm for fascinating native plants. If you have expertise we'd love you to come and share it with us. If you are a complete beginner, please come and experience the bush with us—all you need is your interest and eagerness to learn.

Contact Plant Group Coordinator Helen Yoxall 0400 192 856.

Illustration: One of the special finds at Woodford was this Greenhood Orchid, *Pterostylis acuminata*.



Orchid Booby Traps

Recently I came across some Greenhood Orchids during a bushwalk and I remembered reading something about how they are pollinated. So, as one does, I consulted Mr Google and came across a blog <https://www.indefenseofplants.com/blog/2020/9/15/orchid-booby-traps>

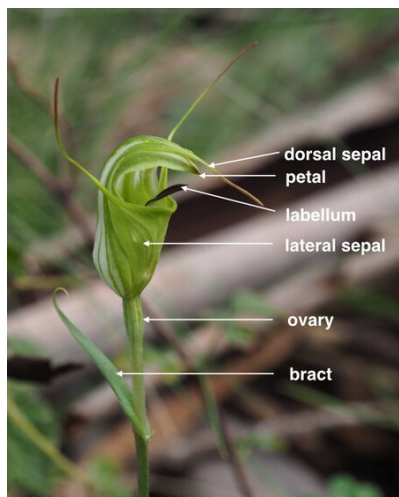
The following information might be of interest to some Hut News readers. "Native throughout Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, New Caledonia, and Indonesia, greenhood orchids number around 300 species, all of which are terrestrial. As more attention is paid to their ecology, we are also discovering that many of those 300 species utilize seriously complex trickery to increase their chances of being pollinated.

"Greenhood orchid flowers are true marvels of evolution. Not only are they structurally complex, they are also painted in various shades of greens, whites, reds and browns. Of course, all of this intricate beauty serves a single function for these orchids, sex.

"Essentially, greenhood orchid flowers are pollinator booby traps. Lured in by scents that precisely mimic the pheromones of receptive female insects, the males (mostly small flies like fungus gnats and mosquitoes) land on the flower and begin searching for a mate. They inevitably begin exploring the labellum, which leads them down into the floral tube. At a certain point in their journey, the male insect will reach a tipping point on the labellum. Like an unbalanced seesaw, the labellum snaps backwards as the insect's weight shifts, slamming the visitor into the column where it comes into contact with the reproductive organs.

"The male insect will struggle quite a bit before it finds a single escape route provided by the floral anatomy that ensures both pollen acquisition and deposition. Experiments have shown that this lever mechanism can be repeated upwards of three times."

—Christine Davies



Nattai National Park – threatened by dam raising

(A short synopsis of "Spotlight on the Nattai", www.wildernessaustralia.org.au/spotlight_on_the_nattai)

Massive sandstone escarpments make the Nattai one of NSW's most romantic, wild landscapes.

Nattai National Park is the traditional territory of the Dharawal and Gundungurra Aboriginal peoples, with the Wollondilly and Burratorang valleys historically forming a transition zone between the two groups.

According to the Gundungurra people, the area was created during the Dreamtime when a colossal battle erupted between an eel called Gurangatch - an iteration of the rainbow serpent - and a large native cat or quoll, Mirrang. The struggle between two ancestral spirits shaped the earth in this place and formed the river systems of the Cox and Wollondilly Rivers.

The efforts of visionary conservationists like Myles and Milo Dunphy, and behind the scenes stalwarts like Alex Colley, led to the protection of the Nattai. Reserved in 1991, it was the fourth and last division of Myles Dunphy's Greater Blue Mountains National Park to be protected and is now enshrined in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Today, Nattai is threatened by flood inundation by the NSW Government's proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall by 17 meters, a plan originally rejected over twenty years ago but has now been revived.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ...

Go to <https://www.giveadam.org.au/> for the latest campaign news.



BUSHWALKING:

Enjoy the bush, learn about the Blue Mountains natural environment and find out why bushwalking has been a popular pastime in the Blue Mountains for more than 100 years. Our bushwalking convenor is Doug Nicholls dougnicholls@bigpond.com, phone 0455 850 735.

Walks are graded and generally suitable for walkers of average fitness but may vary in degree of difficulty. Participants need to be aware of their own capabilities and can discuss with the bushwalking convenor, group coordinator or leader.

Underneath is a brief summary of walks and leaders for this month.. **Check our website <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/bushwalking.shtml> for a detailed walks program and program changes.**

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short day walks. The group coordinator is Keith Dorrian 0411 162 445, keithdor53@hotmail.com

May9 **Blue Gum Swamp and Bees Nest Hill** (Springwood 8am/Winmalee) Angela Berry 0427133327.

May16 **Megalong Cemetery via Six Foot Track to Bowtells Swing Bridge** (Blackheath 8.40/Megalong) Gr3 Lyn Bevington 0432352850.

May23 **Victoria Falls** (Mt Victoria 8.50) Gr3 Tracy 0434362611. May 30 **Valhalla Head** (Mt Victoria 9.50) Gr2 Tracy 0434362611

TUESDAY FITNESS WALKS: Group Coordinator: Susan Nicholls (4754 1516 suerosn@bigpond.net.au).

May10 **Vale Lookout Walks** (Grose Wold) G2-3/4K, Ken 0417514534..

May17 **Centennial Park Circuit** (Sydney) G1/5K, Marilyn 0409924663.

May24 **Murphy's Glen** (Woodford) G2/10K, Doug 0455850753.

May 31 **Hen & Chicken Bay** (Sydney) G1/9K, Judith 0419780640.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS are 2-3 hours and are conducted at a leisurely pace. Coordinator: Beverley Thompson (4757 2076 denfenella12@bigpond.com)

May12 **Transit of Venus** (Woodford), Gr2, Tracy 0434362611.

May19 **South Lawson Waterfalls**, Gr2, Keith 0411162345.

May26 **Valhalla Head** (Mount Victoria) Gr2. Tracy 0434362611.

Jun2 **Glenbrook Lookouts and Lennox Bridge**, Gr2, Ros 0417261465.

Jun9 **Ngula Bulgarabang Regional Park** (Katoomba), Gr2, Tracy 0434362611.

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Coordinator Harold Thompson (0409 010 736, Harold.thompson@bigpond.com).

May14 **Bell to December Creek**, Gr3/9km Harold 0409010737.

May21 **Red Hands Cave/Kanooka Brk/Campfire Ck**, Gr3/12km. Geoff 0497638033.

May28 **Springwood to Sharkshead Cave, Lost world & Martins LO**, Gr3/12km, Harold 0409010737.

Jun4 **Old Megalong Cemetery to Swing Bridge**, Gr3/15km, Alice 0425738766.

Visit the Saturday walks facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks?fref=nf>



Walk to Fairy Dell, Cox's Cave and the "Grotto", led by Pat Whitehead on Monday, 21st March. Photographer Bob van Reyswoud.

Ready for Renewables Council Challenge

Join us in calling on Blue Mountains City Council to take up the challenge by

- Transitioning all gas appliances in Council facilities at the end of their useful life (or sooner) with renewable powered electric appliances
- Drafting a planning scheme amendment to ban new gas connections across the local council area
- Writing to the State Energy Minister requesting a rapid transition from gas statewide

Email templates available at:

https://www.lockthefgate.org.au/council_challenge

LOCK THE GATE

BECOME A MEMBER ...

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is an incorporated voluntary organisation of more than 900 members. Our goal is to protect, conserve, and advocate for, the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Join online at www.bluemountains.org.au or enquire at 0490 419 779.

