



Where is the 2021 National State of the Environment Report?

— Judy Smith, Threatened Species Officer

Every five years the Australian Government must undertake a comprehensive review of the state of the Australian environment. The findings of such reviews are made publicly available in a State of the Environment Report (SoE Report). The reviews are undertaken by teams of eminent independent scientists. All are leaders in their fields and the SoE reports summarise years of work.

The most recent required review was undertaken last year and spans the period 2017-2021. It covers 12 themes: Air quality, Biodiversity, Climate, Coasts, Extreme events, Heritage, Indigenous, Inland water, Land, Marine, Urban, and Antarctic. The Biodiversity theme details trends and pressures relating to threatened species and ecological communities; ecosystems and habitats; and flora and fauna. This is the first time that a category "extreme events" (such as mega fires as we experienced in the Greater Blue Mountains) has been included.

The SoE 2021 Report, in essence a report card on the last five years, will provide invaluable information about environmental and heritage conditions, trends and pressures. Given recent events (droughts, mega fires, floods, rising temperatures, on-going land clearing etc), it is likely that the report contains some bleak findings, maybe some glimmers of hope also.

The final SoE Report 2021 was provided to the Federal Environment Minister, Sussan Ley, in December 2021. So where is SoE Report 2021 now?

The Federal Government decided not to release the report before the election, which suggests some REALLY bad news coming. Waiting so long before releasing the report reflects poorly on the Federal Environment Minister.

Be sure to have a close read when the SoE 2021 Report is finally revealed.

Image: Bell, post 2019-20 Greater Blue Mountains wildfires. Peter Smith.

Gardens of Stone Challenge—World Class Reserve or Theme Park?

The Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area draft Plan of Management and draft Master Plan are on public exhibition until 5th July 2022.

Have your say in the future management of the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area.

Read more on Page 3.

Letters to the Editor

We would love to get some feedback. Write a letter to the editor.

Keep it short. Maximum length 150 words. Shorter letters preferred. **Keep it simple and relevant.** Try to make one or two clear points. **Send it early—**don't wait for Hut News deadline. **Identify yourself.** Give your full name and suburb (and phone number, not for publication). hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Childrens' activities for Hut News

The Hut News Editorial Team is looking for a volunteer who can help prepare a page of environmental education activities for children for Hut News (a regular page 12 feature). If you have any ideas can you please contact the team at hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

New book available

The Blue Mountains: exploring landscapes shaped by the underlying rocks, uplift and erosion – Peter Hatherly and Ian Brown (previewed at the Society's AGM in March 2022) is available now. You can buy the book from all good bookshops in the Blue Mountains or online at <https://ianbrownphotography.com.au/publications/>

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 JULY HUT NEWS IS 18 JUNE

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.

Another drawing to colour on page 12

This 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 use your own colours!

This project was designed to promote awareness of our unique plants and animals. A bilingual environmental poem in English and Chinese accompanies the illustrations. Calligraphy is by local artist Xueyi and illustrations of birds and plants were created by local artist Kara Cooper from MOUNT VIC AND ME.

Feel free to copy and use the images. —Cathy Cavanagh.

In the universe are billions of galaxies,
In our galaxy are billions of planets,
But there is Only One Earth.

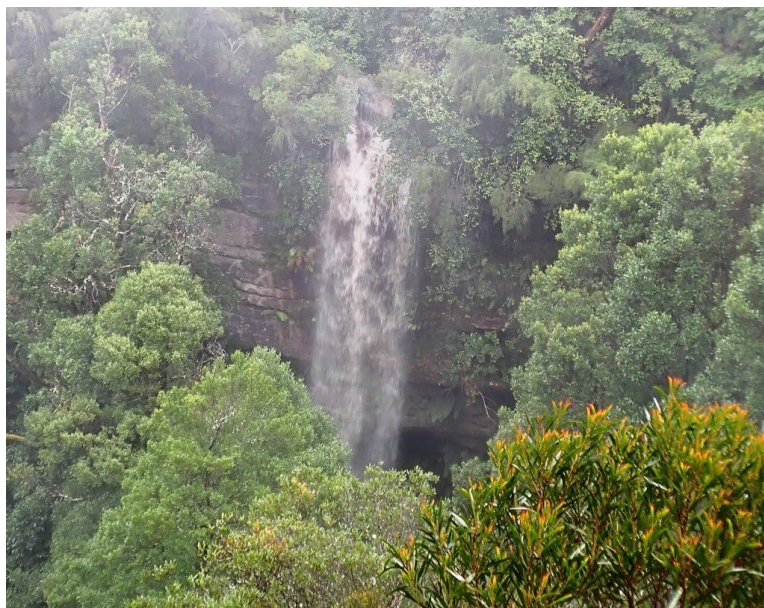
World Environment Day 5 June 2022

2022 is a historic milestone for the global environmental community. It marks 50 years since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, widely seen as the first international meeting on the environment.

The 1972 Stockholm Conference spurred the formation of environment ministries and agencies around the world and kickstarted a host of new global agreements to collectively protect the environment. It was also where the goals of poverty alleviation and environmental protection became linked, paving the way for the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the Stockholm Conference the idea of World Environment Day was formalized, with the first one being celebrated in 1974.

What personal actions can we, as individuals, take to mark World Environment Day?



Small catchment, heavy runoff — Witch's Leap Falls, Katoomba, 23 May 2022. Image: Christine Davies.

Gardens of Stone Challenge—World Class Reserve or Theme Park?



HAVE YOUR SAY in the future management of the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area.

Email your submission on Gardens of Stone management to the NPWS at npws.parkplanning@environment.nsw.gov.au; or mail it to Manager, NPWS Planning and Assessment, Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124 or complete the [online survey](#).

Do say that you're delighted that the NSW Government has protected the Gardens of Stone but that now it's time to fix reserve management.

Support:

- A revised, re-published and re-exhibited draft plan of management that defines the location and extent of proposed visitor facilities and access, with criteria set out that ensure this work is done in a sustainable manner
- Nature-focused basic facilities like campgrounds, walking tracks, carparks and lookouts built on already disturbed land and serviced by good 2WD roads that everyone can use
- Pine forest restoration with endemic native species
- Restriction of all vehicles to approved park roads
- Walking tracks with overnight camps set out to help inexperienced walkers improve their bush skills

Oppose:

- A framework of strategic intentions and details across two documents that amount to a plan for a plan
- Processes that permit additional approved access routes for vehicles, horse and bike riders through private consultations with the groups who want it
- Tourism growth as a reserve management objective, as management that restores, protects and presents the reserve's outstanding heritage values will deliver better outcomes
- The proposed ziplines and via ferrata facilities that blight views of the iconic Lost City and the four accommodation hubs
- Carbon storage "investments" that are not a by-product of restoring natural woodlands

A more detailed submission guide will be posted on www.gardensofstone.org.au shortly.

The Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area draft Plan of Management and draft Master Plan are on public exhibition until 5th July 2022. <https://bit.ly/GOSdraft> Members of the community are invited to make a submission and have a say in the future management of the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area.

The draft plan of management for the reserve is vague and the accompanying draft Masterplan for visitor management creates a parallel process. Except for pest management strategies, the draft plan of management has few details on nature conservation action. There are no restoration management actions, apart from studies, to spend the very large biodiversity offset fund available for this work.

The draft plan does specify a Lost City adventure activity precinct and four accommodation nodes. What is to be built at these accommodation nodes will be determined through commercial in confidence lease negotiations.

The visitor management details found in the Master Plan document have no legal force. The Master Plan's list of intentions is much longer than the reserve's visitor management budget, so it provides no clarity on the actual park facilities that will be built.

Inevitably, these potential conflicts between the interests of conservation and the demands of tourism will see the management of this reserve become political and controversial.

— Keith Muir.

Image: The Lost City, Henry Gold

Leura Village Traffic Plan — Trees near streets proposed for removal

Exhibition closes 27th June, 2022.

Go to BMCC website.

<https://yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/Leura-LATM>

Introducing Annette Cam, National Parks and World Heritage Officer



I am excited to have been appointed to the BMCS position of National Parks and World Heritage Officer. I have lived with my husband in Lawson in the Blue Mountains since 1989 where we raised two children, strongly connecting to the community and the local environment. My career has been in public secondary schools in NSW and SA; I retired in 2020 from the Department of

Education after 42 years teaching, the last ten years as Principal, firstly at Windsor High School and then three years and six months as Executive Principal at Wilcannia Central School.

Having been a member of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society for some time, I took an interest in working with the Management Committee to further the aims of the Society and its members.

Apart from teaching, I have a background in biology and ornithology, am a licenced bird-bander with the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (Environment Australia and previously through CSIRO) for 50 years. Currently I work with my husband, Graham, in a voluntary capacity doing bird surveys in both the Wollemi NP and far-western NSW. Our survey area is on the border area of the Wollemi NP and the Gardens of Stone NP. We are particularly interested in the impact of springs on birds' use of various areas of the park. The far-west survey sites sit within the Bush Heritage

property at Naree (120 km north-west of Bourke), Narriearra Caryapundy Swamp National Park (near Tibooburra), Mutawintji NP and Paroo-Darling NP (near White Cliffs). As with the Blue Mountains, these areas comprise precious and poorly understood habitats which need careful management and protection.

My focus as National Parks and World Heritage Officer encompasses the stated areas of BMCS priorities, including impacts associated with the proposal to raise the wall of Warragamba Dam, the securing of additional land for the Blue Mountains NP and World Heritage Areas, and the management of national parks and reserves for effective conservation of habitats for flora and fauna. I see this as the priority for National Parks – they are there first and foremost for conservation and to educate and enhance people's love and understanding of wild places. It will be important for me to work closely with the other Management Committee members as part of a cohesive team to ensure we do our best to represent our members. Currently, I am assisting with the society's comments on the plan of management for the new Gardens of Stone Conservation Area.

I have a deep love and respect for Aboriginal peoples and their connection to land. I am planning to seek input from the local Aboriginal elders and others in relation to National Parks and Heritage issues.

As I develop a deeper understanding of my role and the interests of members, I will propose further directions for the society in relation to National Parks and World Heritage areas. I would love to hear from you with your thoughts and ideas about issues relating to National Parks and World Heritage. Feel free to contact me at heritage@bluemountains.org.au

Feral fish introduced to Wentworth Falls Lake

-- Land Use Subcommittee

Were you shocked to learn that in January this year the NSW Department of Primary Industries released feral brown trout into Wentworth Falls Lake for recreational fishing purposes?¹

Wentworth Falls Lake is at the headwaters of Jamison Creek. The creek flows from the lake through the township of Wentworth Falls, enters the national park, and flows over the famous waterfall (Wentworth Falls) on the southern escarpment. The release of exotic fish into this waterway that leads directly into the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is alarming.

In 2002 the Society first raised concerns with the relevant state government Department about releasing trout into Wentworth Falls Lake and the impacts the trout could be having in the lake itself and also downstream. At that time there was ample scientific evidence of the detrimental impacts of trout², including predation on native fauna and spread of disease from hatchery raised trout.

Since then, further scientific studies have been undertaken about the range of negative impacts, such as the role of trout in contributing to the extinction of native fish³. NSW Department of Planning, Industry



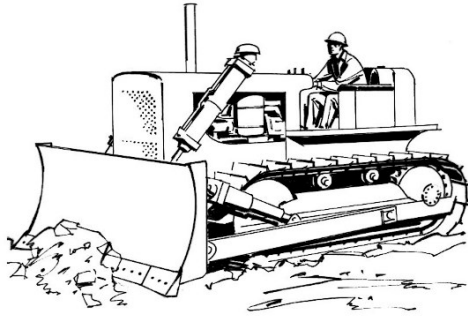
Great Egret at Wentworth Falls Lake Image: Christine Davies and Environment has identified predation by trout as a threat to frogs, including endangered species. It is therefore of great concern that Society members have observed adult trout just below the dam wall and also at the base of Wentworth Falls itself.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? Read more on page 5.

Can we change this pattern of bulldozing?

An environmentalist reacts to the 2022 Federal election result

For an environmentalist, the word “bulldozing” conjures images of Australian habitat being crushed to make way for coal and gas projects ... wrecking of native forests ... politicians wearing hard hats to announce infrastructure that only made sense 50 years ago.



It also symbolises the overbearing manner that has been applied by politicians and other participants to much public discussion in Australia, including discussion of climate change and many environmental issues vital to our future.

The outgoing Prime Minister acknowledged that Australians were tired of these kinds of bulldozing. His party will have a period in opposition to reflect on that.

The rhetoric of incoming Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, so far conveys the need to be much more inclusive and to flesh out policies addressing environmental issues in a considered and cautious manner.

Some parliamentarians, who have been good at expressing their views on Blue Mountains matters, can expect an expanding role in the new federal political scene. These include Labor's Susan Templeman, Federal Member for Macquarie, and the likely Greens senator for NSW, David Shoebridge.

Political engagement with environmental challenges needs to sharply accelerate during the life of the new parliament. Environmentalists around Australia should encourage the whole of the parliament to work together. Green and “Teal” sectors will no longer be represented by just a lone advocate each in the federal parliament's lower house.

Rigid party discipline that has inhibited new opinions and initiatives should take a back seat. Blue Mountains representatives at all levels of Government have long set an example of taking up ideas from their constituents and not letting their parties prevent them from expressing themselves in public.

Nevertheless, it is inevitable that parliamentarians beholden to sectional interests will, at times, try to shout down pro-environment discussion. Both for environmental and economic reasons, there

needs to be more objective scrutiny of mega issues like dam wall raising, new highway tunnels and air traffic management. The partisan obstructing of any state representatives, local representatives or any community groups with genuine interest in these issues must end.

Patterns of everyday living, working and population growth have panned out differently to what was going on prior to the pandemic. Pre-pandemic ideas used to justify the pace of developing dam infrastructure, highway deviations, residential subdivisions and the new airport must be thoroughly re-examined. The continuing need to make environmental sacrifices for any of these must be questioned afresh

The attempted slick management of the 24 hour news cycle has meant ruling out, smothering or distracting from good ideas. That's one of the main types of bulldozing that needs to end.

Renewed energy and vigilance by environmentalists can help ensure that the best suggestions from all political quarters are circulated, praised and built upon. The climate for environmentalism remains very interesting and challenging following the 2022 election.

— Don Morison

Feral fish introduced to Wentworth Falls Lake

(continued from page 4)

The Society has written to our state member, Trish Doyle MP, asking her to make representations to the Minister for Primary Industries on this matter. We requested that she ask the following questions:

- Does the Department have any evidence that these introduced fish do not travel beyond the dam wall?
- Does the Minister have any evidence that the trout do not have a negative impact on native aquatic life (fauna & flora) in the lake itself?
- Has a risk assessment been undertaken of the release encompassing both the lake itself and the waterways downstream?
- What is being done to eradicate both the introduced red fins and brown trout, which are predatory fish in the World Heritage Area?

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Letters from individual members would assist to demonstrate the level of concern in the community. Write to Member for Blue Mountains, Trish Doyle MP, 5 Raymond Rd, Springwood NSW 2777 or email bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

HISTORY: If you are wondering what the background is to this practice, it dates back to the colonial era in Australia. Acclimatisation societies were established in Australia during the 19th century to encourage the introduction of non-native species. The appeal of acclimatisation societies in the colonies of Australia and New Zealand,⁴ was the belief that the local fauna was in some way deficient or impoverished. The introduction of rabbits to Australia was part of this movement, and the dire consequences were rapidly felt.

¹ *Blue Mountains Gazette* 19th January 2022, p.6.

² Australian Nature Conservation Agency 1996 “Impacts of introduced salmonids on Australian native fauna”

³ Lintermans, M., et al 2020. *Big trouble for little fish: Identifying Australian freshwater fishes in imminent risk of extinction*. *Pacific Conservation Biology*. <https://doi.org/10.1071/PC19053>.

⁴ A. H. McLintock (1966). “*Acclimatisation Societies and their Activities*”. *The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*.

The highest mountain?

— Andy Macqueen

The freshly declared Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area has a particular distinction: it features the highest point in the Blue Mountains. Unofficially named Mount Ben, it's an obscure rise just off the State Mine Gully Road, with an altitude of 1187.9m. It's marked on the Gardens of Stone map published by the Gardens of Stone Alliance. (The height has been determined by Alex Allchin using Lidar data.) Back in 2011 it was determined to be 1.5 metres higher than that by Richard Delaney, using a differential GPS. Longwall mining in the intervening period may have lowered the area.)

But wait! you say. Isn't the highest mountain One Tree Hill? Or something else mentioned by Google?

The trouble is that the Blue Mountains area is very rubbery. I wrote a paper about that back in 2012. Here are some key points:

The name "Blue Mountains" was introduced by Governor Phillip in 1789. It may have been prompted by familiarity with the sight of the Blue Mountains of Jamaica, which were known to Phillip and other naval officers in the colony. In any case, the name then referred to all the extensive ranges that bounded the colony. When the explorer John Wilson walked almost to Goulburn in 1798, he crossed the Blue Mountains as they were then vaguely understood.

Through the nineteenth century it was widely considered that the Blue Mountains extended from near Goulburn in the south to the Hunter in the north, and included all the Great Dividing Range along that stretch. However, over the years the coverage shrank considerably in the public mind. In my paper I identified several reasons for this, ranging from cultural to geological.

The Blue Mountains came to be associated with the part which Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth crossed, with its familiar sandstone plateau. Indeed, in 1969 when the Geographical Names Board decided to formally define the boundary, it ignored the shambolic advice of its argumentative panel of expert councillors



Image: Richard Delaney surveying Mount Ben in 2011

and adopted a relatively localised area. They deliberately set the western boundary so as to prove once and for all that Blaxland Wentworth and Lawson crossed the Blue Mountains. Talk about setting the goalposts after the event! The boundary was set on the Coxs River instead of the other major contender, the Great Dividing Range watershed. (The Board's other boundaries go along the Wolgan and Colo Rivers and the Hawkesbury/Nepean Rivers.)

The trouble is, there are several other defined Blue Mountains areas. While Mount Ben is indeed the highest within the Board's definition, it lies outside the Blue Mountains Local Government Area and the Blue Mountains state electorate. On the other hand there are higher mountains in the extensive Blue Mountains National Park and Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. We end up with quite different "highest mountains" depending on which area we have in mind—as shown in the table on page 7.

To read my paper "The Blue Mountains: where are they?" go to http://bluemountainsheritage.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/BMHJI3p_1.pdf

Letters to the editor:

Remembering Olegas and Melva Truchanas

As a former Tasmanian, I was delighted to read your reference to and photo of Olegas Truchanas. I did not know him, but I knew Melva Truchanas, his widow, quite well. She has recently died at the age of 92. She was a terrific person and advocate for the natural environment.

Olegas was on the Gordon River taking photos, as most of his earlier ones were destroyed in the disastrous fires of 1967. Olegas was also a mentor to Peter Dombrovski for his photography. Peter and my late husband were in the group which searched for and found Olegas.

I also remember that the scouts in my boyfriend's troop made canoes under the instruction of Olegas. This would have been about 1965.

—Liz Field

A link to a number of obituaries for Melva Truchanas was included with this letter. This one is from Christine Milne, former Senator and leader of the Australian Greens: "Melva was a much-admired, feisty woman who loved Tasmania's wild places and campaigned to protect them throughout her long life. She encouraged and supported young people to get involved and to get out and enjoy nature especially the south west wilderness."

Editors Note:

Hut News received an email from Merle Thompson who was a friend of Melva Truchanas. Merle writes: "There is a wonderful film about Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovski".

I have discovered that the film, "Wildness", is a 55 minute documentary made by Film Australia.

"It brings over 300 Truchanas and Dombrovski's photographs together with archival film and stunning contemporary footage, in an epic story of two men whose passion for nature became a crusade to save an environment under threat."

The film is available from:
<https://shop.nfsa.gov.au/wildness>

Highest mountains in “Blue Mountains” areas

Highest mountain ...	Identity	Height (m) ¹	Surface geology
In the expansive concept of the Blue Mountains (ie between Goulburn and the Hunter)	Mt Bindo (Hampton State Forest)	1363	Devonian metamorphics
In the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (and in Kanangra-Boyd National Park)	Mt Emperor (off the Kanangra Walls Road)	1336	Igneous
In Blue Mountains National Park	Mt Werong (off Oberon Stock Route)	1215	Igneous
In the Geographical Names Board’s Blue Mountains (and in the Gardens of Stone SCA, and in Sydney Basin geology)	Mt Ben (beside State Mine Gully Road, NE of Lithgow)	1188	Triassic sandstone
In the Blue Mountains Local Government Area and in the Blue Mountains state electorate	One Tree Hill (at Mount Victoria)	1111	Triassic sandstone

Other highest mountains within the region

On the Great Dividing Range watershed	Shooters Hill	1353	Devonian metamorphics
In Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness	Mt Guouogang	1289	Devonian metamorphics
In Coricudgy State Forest	Mt Coricudgy	1257	Igneous
In Wollemi National Park and Wilderness	Mt Coriaday	1231	Igneous
In Gardens of Stone National Park	Hill 850m NE of Mt Davidson ²	1057	Triassic sandstone
In Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area	Genowlan Trig	1038	Igneous
In Nattai National Park	Mt Jellore	835	Igneous
In Yengo National Park	Mt Yengo	668	Igneous

¹ Ground level heights derived from Lidar data. Note that trig heights on maps are generally above ground level.

² The upper slopes of Mt Davidson are within the Park and are higher, but the top (1081m) falls within Gardens of Stone SCA.

Could we learn to love slugs and snails in our gardens?

Before you squash or poison the next slug or snail you see in your garden, you might want to read this article at **The Conversation**: “Could we learn to love slugs and snails in our gardens?”

The article reports that The British Royal Horticultural Society no longer classifies these gastropods as pests. However, Australia is not Britain and the article goes on to explore how relevant the Horticultural Society's decision is to the Australian situation.

It's true that slugs and snails can play a key role in healthy ecosystems, acting to break down organic material as well as providing a source of food for blue-tongued lizards, frogs and kookaburras. This doesn't have to mean letting them destroy your lettuces. Nature can help. Enticing lizards, frogs and birds to your garden can help control slugs and snails and boost biodiversity.

Australia has a huge diversity of land snails, with many species yet to be described. Many species are in decline due to introduced predators and loss of habitat, and now require conservation efforts. However, these snails are not what you will mostly find in your garden!

The common garden snail, which hails from the Mediterranean, has now spread to every state and territory. But other species are still spreading, such as the Asian tramp snail on the east coast or the green snail, which is currently limited to Western Australia. So if we accept the existence of all kinds of snails and slugs in the garden, we could be undermining efforts to detect and control some of these species.

While slugs and snails don't usually seriously threaten our home gardens, some species are known agricultural pests. The damage they can do means farmers and their peak bodies would feel uneasy about changing how we think of these land molluscs. The article concludes:

“The world's ongoing loss of biodiversity and the steadily changing climate must inform how we relate to and care for the nonhuman life – from mycelium in the soil to gastropods – that enliven our gardens.

“By understanding gardens as interconnected natural and cultural spaces, we can work to limit our resident slug and snail population and promote biodiversity. A perfect way to start is to design a lizard, frog and bird friendly site.”

To read the article in full just Google “Could we learn to love slugs and snails in our gardens?” and it should pop up. **Authors:** Bethany Turner, Associate Professor, University of Canberra. Valerie Caron, Research Scientist, CSIRO

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 phone 0490 419 779.

Join the 'Ready for Renewables Council Challenge'

-- Clare Power, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

This month I am outlining Blue Mountains Conservation Society's 'Ready for Renewables Council Challenge'. According to **Lock the Gate**, gas exploration licences cover close to one third of the Australian continent and the gas industry receives billions of dollars in the form of tax-based subsidies, direct government contributions and public finance.

The Blue Mountains City Council has declared a climate emergency and is currently targeting net zero emissions from operations by the end of 2025. This can't be achieved with gas as an energy source. **Gas is a fossil fuel**, and a key driver of climate change. Gas is mostly made up of methane which is the second-most important greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide. Gas for energy creates greenhouse gas pollution. Renewables provided five times more power into Australia's largest grid than gas in 2021, according to the Climate Council. **Lock the Gate** has initiated this campaign.

So join us in calling on Blue Mountains City Council to take up the challenge. Email BMCC councillors and ask them to take up the challenge and commit to taking the following three steps. Find an email template, which you can use or adapt, and councillors' email addresses at www.bluemountains.org.au/climate-change.shtml#campaigns

1. Refuse new gas connections - request planning scheme amendments of the State planning minister
2. Phase gas out of Council's buildings and urgently replace all gas use with renewable electric appliances, particularly heavy users like heating water for swimming pools.
3. Write to the State Energy Minister and urge for the State to plan a way out of gas use as a critical priority.

A feather-tailed fly!



May is the month when you might spot this little creature flying around. The Bird of Paradise fly or *Calipappus australis* takes to the wing having spent its larval stage feeding on the roots of plants. I was able to photograph it when it landed momentarily on the gravel road, not far from Hargraves Lookout.

But what is this other tiny creature we found lurking in a corner of the photo? It appears to have 10 legs.

Sue Nicol.



Action is already being taken by a number of councils across Australia. In NSW we want Councils to pressure the State Energy Minister to fast track a path out of gas. Some councils are already refurbishing their aquatic centres with heat pumps which operate at 1/3 cost of burning gas and are particularly effective when paired with solar panels. Waverley Council and Canada Bay Councils have committed to removing gas from Council Buildings. Moreland City council in Victoria has identified 200 Council sites for gas free operation.

Also tell Council to increase focus and innovations in supporting the community to transition to energy efficient homes and businesses. A fair and just transition would ensure the more vulnerable and/or less resourced members of our community are always considered.

Nationally, Origin Energy has plans to open up massive new oil and gas basins in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. For more information go to: <https://www.lockthegate.org.au/>

For any questions, comments or feedback about the **Ready for Renewables Council Challenge** please email Clare, at sustain@bluemountains.org.au

Keeping Cats Safe at Home

RSPCA NSW has launched a new project 'Keeping Cats Safe at Home'. This project will receive a \$2.5 million funding grant from the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.

The project aims to improve care for pet cats through responsible cat ownership and to protect wildlife from cat predation.

We hope to keep cats safe from harm, especially from car accidents, disease, and attacks from other animals as well as to prevent predation of native wildlife, by encouraging pet owners to keep cats within the boundaries of their property.

This is an exciting 4-year behaviour change project. We will work closely with 10 local councils across NSW and are currently consulting local stakeholders including veterinarians, wildlife organisations, animals' welfare organisations and the general community.

Community members, including people living outside of the participating councils, are encouraged to submit their views to our survey about cats and how they are managed.

The findings of the consultation will inform the design and implementation of the project. The consultation is already underway, and we would love to hear from you.

The participating councils include Blue Mountains City Council, Byron Shire Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Parramatta Council, Hornsby Shire Council, Northern Beaches Council, Shoalhaven City Council, Tweed Shire and Kyogle Councils, Walgett Shire Council and Weddin Shire Council.

If you would like more information, please contact **Dr Gemma Ma**, Project Manager, gma@rspcansw.org.au 0490 431 554 or **Silvina Tolli**, Project Officer, stolli@rspcansw.org.au 0477 415 462. You can also visit the new website <https://safeandhappycats.com.au/> to find out how it can be done.

What Did You Do in the War, Daddy? Climate Change and the Environment: Just who is responsible?

— Paddy Cavanagh

"What did you do in the war, Daddy?" Each generation asks the question as the young attempt to comprehend their inheritance. Let's now rephrase it: ***"What did you do about climate change, Mummy and Daddy?"***

My generation—the ones almost dropping from the perch—grasp the meaning of Pontius Pilate washing his hands to absolve himself of responsibility. The premise that individuals must accept personal responsibility for their actions and cannot pass the buck further along the chain of authority was upheld by the Nuremberg Trials after World War Two.

Applying it to our own lives is often problematic. This was brought home to me recently in two conversations—one with a friend, the other with an agitated stranger.

My friend complained of a mutual friend who seemingly contradicted her strongly held environmental principles, flying to London to see her son and his family. Then an agitated stranger upbraided me for continuing to wear a face mask while publicly supporting the Greens. *Don't you know, she demanded, how much pollution all this PPE is causing in the environment !!!*

I defended our mutual friend by arguing that some air travel could be justified for family reunions, particularly after the increased angst of separation during the pandemic. To the agitated stranger I tried to expound an argument about the greater good. When this had little effect I suggested that we all needed careful personal choices—using reusable masks whenever possible and thoughtfully disposing of all PPE. I am not confident that I convinced my interrogator in either case.

The two interactions reminded me that the baseball bat can be held in reserve and we need to be subtle in promoting the environment and action on climate change with our friends.

A recent TV advertisement is encouraging. Promoting a new brand of clothes washing detergent, the ad begins by explaining the environmental damage caused by our over investment in clothing. A particular detergent can be gentler on our clothes, thus reducing the need to keep buying new outfits. *Wow! What is going on here, I thought. A commercial TV ad challenging the ethos of consumption! Good!*

And this is where I recommend resort to those baseball bats. Sadly, with the election gone, there will be little dramatic change in policies or practice towards the environment. Both major parties are still in thrall to the destructive principles of Neoliberalism that have accelerated climate change and environmental degradation over the past 40 years.

We are all responsible. This requires both individual and collective action. We must regulate our own habits in things like air travel, over consumption and waste. We must change our exploitative, capitalist economic systems and the ethos of consumerism. We must have collective political change.

So get out those baseball bats and keep at work (metaphorically, of course) on our Federal, State and Local politicians - no matter the time to the next election.

Nature: gaze in wonder and wonder why ...

Corymbia maculata (Spotted Gum)
Murramarang National Park:



During our recent trip to South Durras, the TING bushwalkers found some unusual trees in Murramarang National Park. They had multiple trunks in a circle, probably around what had been an old trunk. The tree in the photograph held a bowl of water in its centre, reflecting the branches of the tree and the sky. We saw tadpoles in the water. This tree and all the other Spotted Gums (*Corymbia maculata*) were flowering – beautiful white blossoms attracting thousands of birds during the daytime and bats at night.

We wondered why these trees were like this. We guessed that there had been a wildfire which burned the trees so badly that the plants above the ground had died. Many eucalypts survive fire by sending up shoots from the underground lignotuber and the plant begins growing again from the ground up.

The leg in the photo belongs to John, getting on for 70 years old. An expert might hazard a guess as to the age of the tree. Compared to humans, trees live in the slow lane and it is difficult for us to comprehend the life span of a tree – 70 years in the life of a tree is not much.

The tree had had many years to regrow since the wildfire. It might have been very old when the wildfire came. How many times can a tree like this regenerate?

We will never know, but we enjoyed gazing in wonder at the tree and wondering why.

— Christine Davies.

To find out more about TING

(Thursday Interpretive Nature Group) and our leisurely bushwalks which are held on Thursday mornings, go to www.bluemountains.org.au/wild-ting.shtml or phone Christine Davies 4787 7246.

To get to know us better, have a look at the Wild TING Virtual Bushwalk, with photos and descriptions we shared during COVID lockdown in 2021, published online at <https://nealemorison.com/tingvib/>

Plant Study Group

At our recent BMCS Plant Study Group outing to Agnes Banks Nature Reserve we were lucky to catch the last of the flowering *Trachymene incisa*, or 'native parsnip'. The species is common over the nutrient-depleted sandy soils of the reserve and recognisable by its deeply dissected basal leaves in rosettes. In the same plant order as edible carrot, celery and parsnip, *Trachymene incisa* produces an edible tuberous taproot. Bisexual flowers grow on long stalks in umbels (umbrellas or pom-poms) of about 72 tiny white flowers. The flowers are self-compatible but male and female phases are separated (boys first!) within single flowers and umbels. Its nectar attracts a range of bees, butterflies and bugs.



Flower and leaves of
Trachymene incisa

Reference: Davila and Wardle (2002) Reproductive ecology of the Australian herb *Trachymene incisa* subsp. *incisa* (Apiaceae) *Australian Journal of Botany* **50**, 619-626.

We are keen to welcome new members and share our knowledge of and enthusiasm for fascinating native plants. Contact Plant Group Coordinator Helen Yoxall 0400 192 856.

MOSS'S GENTLE FINGERS

—Words and Music by Denis Kevans

Where the moss's gentle fingers paint the sleeping boulders green,
I'll walk, in all my wisdom, where no mortal's ever been,
And where immortal trees stretch up their fingers to the sky,
The moss will cool the water for the lyre-bird and I,
the lyre-bird and I.

Sing out happy lyre-bird, your song for everyone,
The parrot in the treetop, the quail that likes to run,
The whistler in the canopy, the honey-eater's call,
Sing out, happy lyre-bird, beside the waterfall,
beside the waterfall.

Like octopus's tentacles, the roots of trees have grown,
With steel embrace, they vainly try to crush the hearts of stone,
And stone from stone, and tree from stone, or is it stone from tree?
They wrestle, in the half-light, for the lyre-bird and me,
the lyre-bird and me.

I see the pythons writhing, and the Titans fighting, too,
And a sudden shaft of sunlight trying Cinderella's shoe,
And, where the half-light weakens, and the roots are tangled wild,
I seem to see a carving of Madonna and her child,
Madonna and her child.

But the lyre-bird has found me, and he's trying out my air,
He sends his voice out mocking me, from here, and over there,
So I'll bluey up my blankets, where no mortal's ever been,
And the moss's gentle fingers paint the sleeping boulders green,
the sleeping boulders green.



The lovely pattern of
mosses and lichens on
rocks on a rainy day.
Image: Christine Davies.

Remembering Denis Kevans

Some time ago, a colleague and I were driving along Valley Road, Wentworth Falls and she said to me - "I think they should scrap that worthless park and build some villas there - there is enough bush around"...

"Who is Denis Kevans anyway ??"

Oh, oh, oh. We were privileged to go on bushwalks with Denis and at the end of each, or, at the drinks stop, he would compose a song about the walk ... totally off the cuff. I love his poems, they are so evocative. I am asking Christine to publish one occasionally in Hut News, to give new members and others an opportunity to know or remember them.

I couldn't believe there are still some people around who would like to remove all remnants of bushland, and replace them with hard surfaces and more people, and then they wonder why the climate is becoming so volatile.

Beats me.

—**Liz van Reyssoud**

DEEP IN THE HEART

— Denis Kevans

Deep in the heart, there is a yearning,
For what is unknown, not understood,
Deep in the heart, there is a burning,
To do what we should.



ToonClips.com #5840 service@toonclips.com

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

Jun6 **Lost World** (Springwood 9am) Gr 3, Lyn Bevington 0432 352 850.

Jun13 **Lockley's Pylon** (Leura School 8.40) Gr2, Mave Roberts 4784 2691 (carpool \$5).

Jun20 **South Lawson Waterfalls** (top Honour Ave 8.35), Gr2 Keith 0411 162 345.

Jun27 **Evans Crown Tarana** (Mt Vic Station 8.50), Gr3, Melanie Lawson 0431 214 687 (carpool \$7)

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

Jun7 **Red Hands Cave Circuit** (Glenbrook) G3/9K, Roger 0449902774.

Jun14 **Rose Bay to Watsons Bay** G1/8K, Marek 0412347478.

Jun21 **Bridge to Bridge** (Penrith) G1/8K, Rob 0400672336.

Jun28 **Blue Gum Walk** (Hornsby) G3/7K, Maurice 0402402783.

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

Jun16 **Valley Heights Fire Trail Circuit.** (Valley Heights Station 9.15) Gr2. Ros 0417 261 465. Carpool/take lunch

Jun23 **Hat Hill Road Walk, Blackheath** (Neighbourhood Centre 9.45) Gr2. Tracy 0434 362 611. Carpool/take lunch.

Jun30 **Point Pilcher, Medlow Bath** (Medlow Bath Stn north 9.35) Gr2. Tracy 0434 362 611. Carpool/take lunch.

Jul7 **Moya Point, Leura.** (cnr The Mall/Megalong St, Leura 9.30) Gr2 Beverley 4757 2076. Carpool.

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

Jun11 **Mount Wilson Circuit** (Mt Vic Station 8.30) Gr3/10km MtWilson/Wollangambe maps. Diana 47513935.

Jun18 **Dalpura Head to Jinki Ridge** (MtVicStation 8.30)

Gr3/8km MtWilson map. Harold 0409010737

Jun25 **Mt Hay to Venustor** (Mt Hay Rd/Leura PS 8.30)

Gr3/9km MtWilson map. . Harold 0409010737

Jul3 **2nd Mt Banks** (Mt Vic Stn 8.30) Gr3/10km. MtWilson map. Harold 0409010737

Visit the Saturday walks facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks?fref=nf>

Megalong Valley to Coxs River —Mave Roberts, Monday Leisure Walks

On 16th May 2022, Lyn Bevington led the Monday Walkers to Bowtell's Bridge on the Cox's River. The group set off at a nice pace from the historic Megalong Cemetery, along the Six Foot Track and enjoyed lovely open views all around including lines of vines stretching over the low hills.

The sun became warm enough for the group to seek shade in the bush-land for a morning tea stop before walking on to a pretty glade with a babbling brook over which we stepped quite easily before making our way up hill, gaining ground for another hour before our track led us downwards, closer to the roaring river.

The river was flowing powerfully on its course, swirling around and over massive boulders, an impressive sight and sound. We'd walked past such boulders on the track, huge granite, weather-worn natural rock sculptures, some on the shaded side covered in lichen and vivid green moss.

We had the pleasure to see a hive of wild bees suspended under a boulder, a perfect site as it was flat, shaded and sheltered from any bad weather conditions. A red-bellied black snake was seen as was a long-necked turtle, its head withdrawn at our approach. It was thought to be female as they come up from the river looking for dry land in which to lay their eggs.

It was decided to have lunch on the flattish boulders by the swing-bridge where one or two members

of the group climbed up onto the strong but narrow suspension bridge. We encountered two groups of young people engaged in a trek as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award challenges and had to admire them carrying full back-packs all day.

On our return walk we were entertained by a very vocal lyre-bird and saw other birds including a flock of red-browed finches. We admired the rolling farmland, sweeping views and the golden light of the afternoon sun high on the escarpments above Megalong Valley.

An excellent walk of 13kms led by our very capable leader Lyn, much enjoyed especially as we were lucky enough to have perfect conditions for a splendid bush-walk.



