



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Andrew Cox to speak after AGM

BOOK REVIEW:

Bees & other beneficial insects: a pocket-book guide. Dr Megan Halcroft, 2021

I ordered a copy of this guide book just before Christmas and it arrived in less than a week. I think it's a great purchase for anybody who wants to learn more about our native bees and other beneficial insects.

I've learned that Australia is home to over 2,000 species and 60 genera of native bees. Section 1 describes some of the most common native bees you may encounter in your garden.

Section 2 has some other common beneficial insects – Dragonflies, Damselflies, Lacewings, Assassin Bugs, Beetles, Flies and Wasps. Did you know that there are about 28,200 species of beetle in Australia and 7,780 species of fly?

The explanations are easy to read. There are over 100 beautiful images. (The Teddy bear bee, which is found along the east coast of Australia, looks like a teddy bear!)

The book is printed in Lithgow.

You can buy it at <https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/981287672/bees-other-beneficial-insects-a-pocket> Cost is \$16.50 plus \$5 postage.

-- Christine Davies

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Annual General Meeting

7pm Friday 31 March 2023

**Wentworth Falls School of Arts
Cnr GWH & Adele Ave, Wentworth Falls**

Business will include receipt of reports, adoption of annual accounts, determination of structure of the Management Committee, election of President, Management Committee members and other office holders, and appointment of auditor.

For further details – www.bluemountains.org.au/

Guest Speaker: Andrew Cox Invasive species: the biggest threat to Australia's biodiversity and the Blue Mountains?

After the close of business at the AGM, there will be a short break and then we will hear from our guest speaker, Andrew Cox.

Andrew Cox is CEO of the Invasive Species Council, an independent, donor-funded organisation at the forefront of efforts to strengthen biosecurity in Australia to better safeguard our land and seas from invasive species.

Not only is he a proud Blue Mountains resident, Andrew is also a member of the Blue Mountains feral deer working group, the national Environmental Biosecurity Advisory Group, chair of the Decade of Biosecurity Steering Group and co-founder of the Australian Biosecurity Symposium.

Visitors will be very welcome

To help with catering, please book with Eventbrite if you can
- <https://bit.ly/BMCSAGM2023> - this is a free event.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

**We will be at the Blackheath Growers Market on
SUNDAY 12 MARCH**

AND on the 2nd Sunday of every month until the winter break.

For enquiries and to place an order, please contact Nursery Manager, Paul Irwin:

plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com



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How you can help protect the Blue Mountains natural environment

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is an incorporated voluntary group. Our mission is to help protect, conserve, and advocate for, the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

We are governed by a management committee with much of our conservation work and campaigns being undertaken by subcommittees. We also have a Native Plant Nursery, several Bushwalking Groups and a Bushcare Group.

Helping in a subcommittee is a good way to get involved in the work of the Society. These include National Parks, Land Use, and the Hut News Team. There are lots of other activities where you can volunteer to help occasionally - helping at events, writing submissions, etc – you can do as much or as little as you are able!

If you want to nominate for a position on Management Committee, there is a list of roles, with their duties and responsibilities, enclosed with this newsletter - or if you are reading online, follow the link. At the AGM, all positions fall vacant. Some office holders intend to renominate. There are others where the incumbent is not renominating. These include Threatened Species Officer, Publicity Officer and Bushcare Officer.

If you are interested in volunteering with the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, please contact Ross Coster 0418 462576 membership@bluemountains.org.au or Angela Langdon 0417 004722 angela.langdon@bigpond.com to find out more.

National Parks and World Heritage Subcommittee

Your National Parks and World Heritage Subcommittee this month has been working on the following areas:

Great Western Highway Blackheath to Little Hartley Tunnel EIS

- The Great Western Highway Blackheath to Little Hartley Tunnel EIS has been released and was on public display for comment until 1 March 2023.
- Members of the subcommittee met with Transport NSW personnel for a briefing early in February.
- The Conservation Society's main concerns remain for the health of the aquifers and surface water, in particular Greaves Creek which could be damaged by the tunneling processes.
- The Conservation Society's submission will be on the website <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/index.shtml>

Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area

The NP Subcommittee is concerned about the plans for commercial tourism and the extent and location of mountain bike trails (100 km of trails) planned for the GOS SCA. See The Gardens of Stone website (<https://www.gardensofstone.org.au>) for further information. We are concerned that the proposed commercial developments will lead to degradation of the very values the SCA was declared to protect, the lack of specific detail in the plans made available to the public, and the lack of transparency in the negotiations with commercial operators and with various interest groups.

To learn more, check out "Current campaigns" on Blue Mountains Conservation Society website www.bluemountains.org.au

-- **Annette Cam, National Parks & World Heritage Officer**

THE DEADLINE FOR APRIL HUT NEWS IS 15 MARCH

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
Enquiries: Christine 4787 7246

Future directions - Part-time Paid Coordinator

At the February 2023 meeting, the Management Committee (MC) passed a resolution to support in principle the engagement of a part-time paid coordinator for a 2-year period. Also, the formation of a subcommittee to finalise a position description, terms of employment and the recruitment strategy, noting that this will come back to the MC for approval before recruitment commences. This report is designed to 'flag' to members the intended direction, dependent upon confirmation by the new MC after the AGM.

Given that this is a significant decision, the committee felt it important for members to know why this has been proposed and enable feedback through email or discussion on the evening of the AGM or at other times/meetings.

To provide some background, this proposal comes from a commitment to actively address the Society's mission, being *'Our mission is to help protect, conserve, and advocate for, the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains'*. First and foremost, it is about our desire to 'get stuff done' for nature. At present the core work of the Society is done by volunteers and by paid contractors when engaged. The Society's work will remain largely done by volunteers, but this is a way to help achieve our goals through a paid coordinator working with the MC to help 'drive' our work, engage members, and find and support volunteers to help us get there. It's about helping us implement ideas and turn

them into action.

This decision also comes from the increasing difficulty in filling key Society positions on the MC such as President which demand a significant time commitment on a daily basis. This does not mean that people do not care about the environment or are unwilling to help. On the contrary! Rather, it is that they have less time to give. More people are involved in full-time paid work than in the past and many 'retired' people are caring for grandchildren or others in need. Understandably, many members wish to assist with a specific task/rally/submission/letter, but not to ongoing coordination and organisation. Regular assistance with the organisational aspects of the Society will free up volunteer positions to do the jobs they wish to do.

The option of a paid part-time coordinator has become possible through the receipt of two very generous bequests, of which we are most appreciative. This will enable us to trial the process while remaining in a secure financial position. Part of the role will be seeking grants to assist us increase our work in the future.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns, please contact us bmcs@bluemountains.org.au or talk to us at one of our upcoming meetings e.g. AGM. This is very welcome.

--Tara Cameron, Senior Vice President

THE CONCRETE CONTINENT

Hidden on the northern side of Lawson in what was once part of a marshy gully known as 'Frog Hollow', resumed and transformed in the early 1930s into the small oasis of Wilson Park, is a curious and unusual relic – a large concrete relief map of Australia. Now something of an oddity to those who stumble upon it and largely neglected in the tourist literature, it once drew visitors in considerable numbers.

Such was the case at the time of its unveiling on Friday 12 May 1932 when, in the presence of local dignitaries and over a hundred school children, the Shire President, Percy Wilson, declared the occasion "a children's day". The concrete continent was, reported the *Katoomba Daily*, "on a scale of 75 miles to 1 foot" and "shows all mountains, ranges, rivers, and capital cities and is coloured to correspond with the regulation colours of school atlases".

Located in a creek sourced from a small waterfall at the edge of the park, the map was surrounded by "clear running water" in which children were invited, like Matthew Flinders, "to sail boats around Australia". In the ensuing years the map excited considerable interest and became a Lawson landmark. For many, both local and visiting, it is still a fondly recalled childhood memory.

Read more: "Blue Mountains Byways" by John Low. Published 2021.

Image: 2022 - The Thursday Interpretive Nature Group contemplates the transformation of the sculpture, possibly from a focus of national pride to a historical curiosity. The beautiful bushland upstream from the Empire Pass gives the impression of serenely embracing this process.



On 12 May 1932, in the presence of local dignitaries and over a hundred school children, the Shire President, Percy Wilson, declared the occasion a children's day. Photo source: Blue Mountains City Library Local History collection.



Feral deer threats to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

-- Mary Marlow



Feral deer are entering the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. They have been spotted in numerous places such as Megalong Valley, Jenolan Caves, Kanangra Tops to name just a few. They will damage the park by:

- Destroying native vegetation by trampling, grazing, and ring-barking young trees
- Fouling waterholes, eroding watercourses and causing soil erosion by forming wallows
- Spreading weeds and potentially pathogens such as *Phytophthora cinnamomi*
- Competing with native grazers such as wallabies, kangaroos, and wombats.
- Reducing post-fire resilience of regenerating vegetation.

At present there is no comprehensive management plan for feral deer in the Greater Blue Mountains and without urgent action the window of opportunity to prevent their spread across the whole GBMWhA will close. The draft National Feral Deer Action Plan has found that left uncontrolled in good conditions, feral deer populations can increase by 34–50% every year.

The Invasive Species Council is working with the community to pressure the NSW and Federal governments to:

- **Comprehensively survey the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area** and its adjoining boundary areas to assess the existing numbers and location of feral deer.
- **Develop a comprehensive and well-resourced management plan** to stop further spread of feral deer in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, protect sensitive environmental areas and eradicate isolated populations.

Commit to ensuring the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is deer-free by 2040. Record your sightings of deer through:

Either: The iNaturalist app: To make an observation, either just upload your photo or make an entry via the inaturalist website, or download the inaturalist app onto your phone and record the sighting.

Or: the specially designed ISC Form:  [Deer in the Blue Mountains](#)

If you would like to help by joining the Feral Deer Working Group, please write to: bmdeer@invasives.org.au
(Image: Sambar deer stag covered in mud in Manningham, Victoria - Invasive Species Council)

Scribblygum Moth (*Ogmograptis scribula*) By Graham Alcorn

Ogmograptis scribula,
The bush graffiti artist
Of the order Lepidoptera,
Family Yponomeutidae,
Long ago has found a way
To avoid the strife
Of graffitists' life,
For it lives in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree.

It is easy to see where Ogmo went,
Chewing and chomping and scribbling away,
Long after Ogmo's days are spent,
Off to the left for a week or two,
Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do,
Gormandising along the line,
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree.

Eucalyptus sclerophylla,
Racemosa, rossii,
Haemastoma and signata,
Pauciflora, dendromorpha
And dalrympleana –
Here come the Ogmos, doing fine
Chewing the left right, right left line,
Delicate calligraphy,
Ogmograptis graffiti,
On all of these species of gum tree.

Some chew up and some chew down,
This the philosophers might explain,
But the thing that causes me to frown,
The thing that I'd dearly love to learn
Is what makes every Ogmo turn?
Off to the left, then to the right,
Another about turn, very tight,
Chomping a track,
Forward and back,
On various species of gum tree.

Very young Ogmos tend to wander,
Skittish, no doubt, as young folks are,
Filled with the spirit of adventure.
Suddenly they get much fatter.
Adventurings no longer matter.
But what I yearn and yearn to learn
Is how they now know just when to turn,
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree?

(continued on page 10)

Privatisation of our National parks

-- Keith Muir

New South Wales national parks make a critical contribution to the Government's conservation efforts, covering almost 9.5 per cent of NSW, providing habitat corridors and home to about 85 per cent of the State's threatened and endangered species. (Source: NSW Government)

Over the last decade, the nature conservation purpose of national parks has been eroded by the NSW Government through its push for commercial development inside national parks:

- On the south coast near Eden, in Beowa National Park, two beach-front resorts are proposed at Mowarry Point and Hegartys Bay, associated with the Light to Light Walk.
- The "resort tail wags the iconic walk dog" also for the Snowies Alpine Walk (enabling four-season operation for permanent resort towns in KNP) and Murrumbidgee Coast Walk (resort cabins at Peppy Beach, Depot Beach and Pretty Beach in the national park).
- Near Walcha, in the Green Gully Wilderness, the NPWS already operates fancy cabins where tent camping is prohibited, inverting its own self-reliant camping policy.
- Facilities are being developed for high impact uses such as 72km of mountain bike track proposed at Mt Canobolas State Conservation Area and another 51km of mountain bike trails approved in the rainforests of the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area.

Now the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area is under threat, with:

- Up to four accommodation nodes proposed, allegedly for walker accommodation but located only four kilometres apart on yet another iconic walk.
- Exclusive access for the developer, Experience Co, to its Lost City adventure fun park (imagine exclusive access to a Three Sisters adventure park at Echo Point?).



- Millions in funding has been allocated for 100km of mountain bike track planned by World Trail and 150km of 4WD roads are approved under a vehicle access strategy.

And this vision of the Gardens of Stone as a playground was mostly developed in secret outside the plan of management. If approved, there'll be large impacts on the natural and cultural heritage.

Built accommodation and intrusive recreation are undermining the nature conservation purpose of New South Wales national parks.

Editor's note: This article was updated on 7 April 2023 in light of additional information provided by NPWS.

The Society's questionnaire to candidates in the coming NSW State Election asks questions on commercial activity in the national parks estate. Their responses will be on the Society's State Election webpage: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/elections/se23/>



Vale Professor Will Steffen

Climate Councillor Professor Will Steffen was a brilliant scientist, gifted communicator and a gentle soul. *His accomplishments in Earth system science pushed boundaries and built on our knowledge by advancing concepts such as the anthropocene, planetary boundaries and climate tipping points. He was a leader of major international science programs, a highly-respected colleague and an inspiration to so many.*

Will's legacy is profound. Before founding the Climate Council, Will was a Commissioner for the Climate Commission until it was dissolved by the then Coalition Government in 2013. He was the executive director of the Australian National University Climate Change Institute, on the panel of experts supporting the Multi-Party Climate Change Committee, has served as the Science Adviser to the Australian Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, and was chair of the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee.

A proud Canberran, he was passionate about the climate example the city could set for Australia and the world. He was a founding member of the ACT Climate Change Council and helped to transform the city into a leader on climate action.

-- Amanda McKenzie and Tim Flannery - Climate Council

Sun and Sea as elegy -- Diana Levy



One of the delights of summer (when we are not on fire and constantly vigilant) is the Sydney Festival. This year I was given tickets to the opera performance of *Sun and Sea*. It had a small season run at Sydney Town Hall, presumably because of the inconvenience of the ground floor being filled with sand, rather than because of the quality of the show. This performance conveyed the tragedy of the changes to climate

that are upon us, more than anything I've ever seen.

We the audience, on the first floor, looked down upon a typical beach scene where children played ball and people read, sunbathed, chatted, or picnicked. But some of them sang. A bass voice drifted up - was it the Workaholic's Song? Amazingly, he sang it from a deckchair and, fittingly, his refrain repeated, *Exhaustion, exhaustion, exhaustion* ... Every so often the whole troupe sang a chorus, such as *My eyelids are heavy, my head is dizzy* ... Wealthy Mommy sang about all the seas her small son had visited, and ... *What a relief that the Great Barrier Reef has a restaurant and hotel* ... She may have been one of the Lithuanian principals, and sang from a prone position on her towel. Unlike the traditional staging of opera, it was often quite hard to spot who the singer was.

There was a languorous feel to the scene and it reminded me of the old adage about climate change: that we humans are like frogs who relish the warmth of the pot as it slowly heats up, right up to death in boiling water. My companion felt the sadness implicit in the production: some of the songs were elegies to the natural world. I have no idea what is going on in Lithuania to inspire the creators of this production, but they have received many plaudits already.

Robert's Ranges

For more than three decades, Thirlmere resident Robert Sloss has taken a very active interest in bush-walking in and around the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Although now an octogenarian, Robert continues to put a great deal of his voluntary time into maintaining and promoting bush-walking tracks. Thirlmere Lakes National Park and Nattai National Park have historically been among Robert's favourites but he also takes a great interest in good quality areas of natural bushland that might not have high levels of statutory protection, even if they deserve it.

He has prepared a series of high quality map and track note pamphlets which he still sells over the internet.

Commencing in this issue of Hut News, we present a series of photographs of some of the walk locations promoted by Robert under the banner "Robert's Ranges".

--The Hut News Team



Robert's Ranges TAHMOOR GORGE

Anne Dernee baths in the Little Mermaid Pool, 2023.
Photo: Geoff Dernee

Feral Decision Making – A Chronology of Events Leading to a Showdown between Conservation and Pests

-- The Hut News Team

1890: Banjo Paterson writes "The Man from Snowy River" poem. He was believed to be a guest at Adjungbilly Station at the time. This was to the north of the modern-day Kosciuszko National Park and Brindabella National Park. Since then, massive *Pinus radiata* forests have been planted on hill country where feral horses used to run and National Parks now provide the most appealing conditions for a population explosion of this and other pest species.

1902: The same poet writes "The Last Parade", a poem about how totally expendable Australians found the horses who had allowed Australian cavalry to conduct their widely praised overseas campaigns. Oddly, this excellent poem has received only a fraction of the attention given to "The Man from Snowy River".

1982: "The Man from Snowy River" is released as a movie.

1998: Peter Cochrane, a National Party MP for the high country NSW electorate of Monaro, retires and thereafter devotes a great deal of attention to conducting commercial "brumby spotting" tours in the NSW Snowy Mountains.

2011: John Barilaro is elected National Party MP for Monaro. Later he becomes Deputy Premier.

2014: "The Man from Cox's River" movie is released. This depicts the attempted capture and rehoming of feral horses that are damaging the Burratorang drinking water catchment in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The incredible suffering of horses captured and dragged by ropes many kilometres to horse floats is shown graphically on-camera. The narrator mentions that this exercise cost the taxpayer over \$20,000 for each animal trapped.

2018: The NSW Parliament passes a law, The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018, otherwise known as "The Brumby Bill", tabled by John Barilaro, which bestows a degree of heritage status on feral horses within parts of Kosciuszko National Park.

2018: The "Save Kosci" movement organises a relay walk from Sydney to the summit of Kosciuszko to protest the heritage status of the ferals. Multiple Blue Mountains Conservation Society members participate.

2019: Blue Mountains MP, Trish Doyle, agrees to present a petition with more than 12,000 signatures to



the Lower House of Parliament, protesting against the feral horses. Society members take part in a protest nearby and then sit in the public gallery. The Coalition-controlled House votes "not to take note of the petition", whatever that may mean.

2022: Following newspaper photographs of 11 horses which had been shot and intervention by radio personality Ray Hadley, the belated ground-culling of the pest horses is suspended. Society members visiting the Snowy Mountains Highway observe multiple notices warning that your car may collide with a horse. The NPWS completes counts establishing that there may be up to 24,000 feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park alone at year's end.

2023: La Nina conditions have caused an Eastern Australia feral horse boom. More feral horses in the Fraser Coast region of Queensland have led to major warnings about motorists potentially colliding with horses. The Invasive Species Council of NSW prepares election advice for citizens to email parliamentarians calling for action on pest species and starts a new petition calling for action on pest species - <https://invasives.org.au/how-to-help/take-action/sign-the-petition-horses/>.

Andrew Cox, CEO of the Invasive Species Council is to address the Annual General Meeting of Blue Mountains Conservation Society at the Wentworth Falls School of Arts on 31st March.



Robert's Ranges THIRLMERE LAKES

Members of the Thursday Interpretive Nature Group (TING) visited an almost dry lakebed in 2018. Groundwater loss caused by a nearby coal mine is suspected to have contributed to the partial draining of some of the Thirlmere Lakes.

(Photo: Geoff Dernee)

COMMENT: *Not In My Backyard* --Tanya Plibersek, the NSW South Coast, and Leura Cascades -- Paddy Cavanagh

In July last year Tanya Plibersek, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water, released the 2021 State of the Environment Report at the National Press Club in Canberra.

It was a report that can only be described as depressing and confronting. The Minister herself bluntly admitted this, telling the assembled journalists *that if we continue on the trajectory we are on, the precious places, landscapes, animals and plants that we think of when we think of home, may not be here for our kids and grandkids.*

Plibersek then summarised most of the causes of the rapidly accelerating rate of environment and habitat destruction: climate change contributing to drought and marine heatwaves; land-clearing for agricultural expansion leading to deforestation and soil erosion; a plague of marine plastics; and of course the inappropriate policies and lack of action of the previous government.

Nevertheless she also exuded some optimism --- confident that the new government, with its *wellbeing budgeting*, could develop new laws, regulations and structures to overcome these challenges, albeit slowly. And hinting too at new funding and, *with industry and philanthropic partners*, new initiatives like blue carbon projects; the promotion of Indigenous Protection Areas and more Indigenous Rangers; proposals to make the Pacific plastics free; and plans for better recycling and waste-management programs.

It would be wrong to cast doubt on Plibersek's genuine intentions. After all she describes herself beguilingly as *your standard keen bushwalker*. And, being the Minister for just a few weeks, she can hardly be blamed for not foreseeing the collapse of Australia's soft plastic recycling program just a few months after her release of the State of the Environment Report.

But is it too much to expect our politicians to have a better understanding of the underlying causes of the climatic and environmental problems we face --- to see that the real causes are over-population, over-development and over-consumption and a lack of control of damaging industries like mass tourism..

The absence of any attention to such issues was certainly a glaring omission from Plibersek's address last July. Instead, she repeatedly attempted to reassure that the new government could guarantee protection of the environmental and wildlife habitat with laws that would *smooth the way for sensible development - certainty and efficiency that (will) allow us to speed up most processes so we can build new housing, construct renewable energy projects, and lay the roads that connect our communities.*

Do others reading such words feel a sense of déjà vu? Am I not the only one more than a little apprehensive that the new government has not escaped the neoliberal economic parameters within which governments have operated over the past 40 years and still prioritises economic development (whatever that is) well ahead of the environment?

Many of us, I'm sure, will have been horrified by recent reports of large scale developments on the South Coast at Callala Bay and Culburra that are threatening wildlife habitat, particularly for the endangered greater

glider. Yet the justifications being put forward for these developments may well be compliant with the Plibersek notion of *sensible development*.

They argue, for instance, that they will provide much needed *affordable housing close to transport and health infrastructure*. They even include philanthropic promises that some of the profits will be channeled into charitable trusts and distributed to unspecified beneficiaries. Even the greater gliders will be catered for, we are assured, by *relocating* them to other areas --- the developer establishing four biobanking sites to compensate for the habitat that will be destroyed.

But if they could talk, would the greater gliders describe this as a form of *ethnic cleansing*?



Despite my cynicism there was one small line in Plibersek's speech last year that we should all take hold of and shout from the rooftops. This was her point that much of what has happened to degrade the environment and destroy habitat *occurred in small increments. More than 90 per cent of it was never assessed under our environmental laws.*

Here in the Mountains we need to be particularly aware of this incremental degradation of the environment which can sometimes occur, despite professed good intentions, in Council proposals.

One such proposal currently being considered is for major developments around the Leura Cascades precinct. As always various arguments are put forward to justify this project --- some even with some validity.

Thus we hear of the need to reopen the Cliff Drive link from Katoomba to Leura; the need for more parking, toilets and disabled access in the Cascades; the need for more viewing platforms; the need to promote the tourist industry that is so important to the local economy; the need to reduce the pressures on Echo Point and, at the same time, the burgeoning population of Western Sydney to have access to the beautiful environment up here and so on.

Moreover, there are hints that those who oppose such developments are little more than selfish NIMBYs -- the usual Not In My Backyard brigade that oppose all developments.

This distracts attention from some very real issues about habitat destruction - proposed road works immediately threatening a well-known feeding site, just

(Continued on Page 9)

Not in my Backyard (continued from page 8)

above the Cascades, for endangered Glossy Black Cockatoos; the quite absurd proposal to reinstall 1950s night lighting in the Cascades likely to have a profoundly disturbing impact on all sorts of wildlife; the proposal to encourage more buses to the area and create a major bus turning bay inevitably increasing both noise and carbon pollution with negative impacts on all the animals in the area – including the human animals.

Are these the selfish suggestions of NIMBYs? I am quite sure if those cockatoos had a human voice they would be shouting loud and clear ---- **Not In My Backyard Mister!**

Are proposals like this an example of the incremental degradations of the environment that Plibersek mentioned, but did not go on to develop in her address to the Press Club last July?

Too damned right they are - and we need to stop them!

SOURCES

Tanya Plibersek, Minister for the Environment and Water, National Press Club address, Canberra, 19/7/22, <https://minister.dcceew.gov.au/plibersek/speeches/national-press-club-address>

Catherine Naylor. *Endangered Species. Land clearing threatens wildlife.* Sydney Morning Herald, 6/2/23.

Glossy Black-Cockatoos and Fire

Source of this information is an article by Dr Leo Joseph. Dr Joseph is Director of CSIRO's Australian National Wildlife Collection and, with friends and colleagues, initiated study of Kangaroo Island's Glossy Black-Cockatoos after severe fires in 1979-80. <https://ecos.csiro.au/glossy-black-cockatoos/>

Glossy Black Cockatoos are almost completely confined to south-eastern Australia. Glossies need tall eucalypts with suitably sized nest-hollows for breeding.

Like all black-cockatoos, the birds take several years to reach sexual maturity. They raise single nestlings. This means that intense bushfires can have far more devastating effects on Glossies than we may at first think. This is due to the cascade of disrupted ecological interactions that severe bushfires can cause.

Glossies are among the most diet-specialised birds in the world. They feed almost solely on the seeds of casuarina trees in the genus *Allocasuarina*.

Allocasuarina trees are dioecious, meaning that male and female trees are separate individual trees. The seeds that Glossies eat are produced only by female trees. The birds spend hours every day extracting the seeds from the closed valves of these cones. *Allocasuarina* trees have probably not taken this kind of predation without an evolutionary fight. It's not surprising that suitable female food trees are always patchily distributed.

Allocasuarina trees take ten years or more to produce cones and even longer to have branches thick enough to support the weight of a Glossy trying to feed. Intense bushfires can wipe out feeding habitat rather than leaving a mosaic of burned and unburned areas. This can have a truly devastating effect on the food supply of Glossies, both immediately and for years afterwards.

Dr Joseph speculated of the Kangaroo Island Glossies: "If bushfires had always been as intense as the current ones, we probably would not have Glossy Black-Cockatoos as we know them." How did populations in eastern Australia fare in the 2019/20 fires?



Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Blaxland. (Peter Smith)

Glossy Black-Cockatoos at Evans Lookout

The NPWS have been busy over the last couple of years, making repairs and modifications to several of our more popular lookouts and walks.

The Evans Lookout visitor precinct is now complete. The old track has been closed and is being revegetated. Some of us recently saw Glossy Black-Cockatoos feeding in a stand of *Allocasuarinas* at the lookout.

Other modifications include redesign and resurface of the carpark to include disability parking spots, as there is now wheelchair access to the main lookout. Handrails have been replaced and the works area revegetated. The signage has also been upgraded.

It is certainly a lovely place to bring visitors to the mountains and allows those with limited physical abilities to look at the wonderful sweeping views of the Grose Valley and the sandstone cliff-faces.

-- The Hut News Team

How to Join the Society

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. Join online at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml> or phone 0490 419 779. Membership includes our monthly newsletter, Hut News, by post or e-mail (or both).

Lookouts and escarpment walks Part 6: Ganguddy (Dunns Swamp)

-- Opinion by Don Morison

Ganguddy, near Rylestone, is one of the most unusual locations in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. It is a wetland that has become enlarged by an old weir across the Cungegong River. Motor vessels are prohibited but the hire of kayaks and swimming are both allowed.

It is fast returning to its pre-pandemic popularity. There are beautiful sandstone pagodas and bushland scattered with native cypress, *Callitris species*.

Over recent years, the substantial camping area has been reorganised by NPWS, a new one way system installed and pedestrian areas enlarged. It is in one of the key areas that will allow tourism to become more significant than coal mining along the western flank of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.



A reed-studded waterway; overhangs; pagodas; mini pagodas; recreation on and in the water ... the ambience of Ganguddy (Dunns Swamp)
- Photos by Christine Davies



Scribblygum Moth (*Ogmograptis scribula*) By Graham Alcorn

Ogmograptis scribula,
The bush graffiti artist
Of the order Lepidoptera,
Family Yponomeutidae,
Long ago has found a way
To avoid the strife
Of graffitiists' life,
For it lives in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree.

It is easy to see where Ogmo went,
Chewing and chomping and scribbling away,
Long after Ogmo's days are spent,
Off to the left for a week or two,
Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do,
Gormandising along the line,
There in the dark

A collective poem! A number of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society members contributed to 'The Scribblygum Moth' composed over several weekly bush outings. David Thomas the amusing scientific name, Jill Dark the scientific names of Scribbly gum, Carol Proberts, Deirdre Morton, Mick Dark and Shirley Brown gave unflagging encouragement. Graham Alcorn wrote it down.

(First published in an Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society newsletter)



Image: Ogmograptis bush graffiti
Blackheath, 2023 (Christine Davies)



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 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator: Keith Dorrian 04111 62345. keithdor53@hotmail.com

Mar 6 **Lockleys Pylon, Leura.** Mary Fell 0410 691 396

Mar 13 **Grand Canyon, Blackheath.** Pat Whitehead 0429 003 639

Mar 20 **Terrace Falls, Hazelbrook.** Keith 0411 162 345

Mar 27 **Walls Cave, Blackheath.** Pat Whitehead 0429 003 639

Apr 3 **Bald Head, Blackheath.** Barbara Creighton 0428 962 460

Apr 10 No walk

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

7 Mar **Rileys Mountain (Mulgoa) G2/Med 5K,** Roger 0449902774.

14 Mar **Deidres Walk (Bullaburra) G1/Easy 5K,** Maurice 0402402783.

21 Mar **Lennox Bridge, Marge & Elizabeth LOs (Glenbrook) G2/Easy 8K,** Marek 0412347478.

28 Mar **Hen & Chicken Bay (City) G2/ Medium 9K,** Robyn 0409127012

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

Mar 9 **Darks Common to Bluff and return.** Ros 0417 261 465. Grade 2.

Mar 16 **Moya Point, Leura.** Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 2.

Mar 23 **Yellow Rock to Singles Ridge Lookout,** 6kms. Maurice 0402 402 783. Grade 2

Mar 30 **Mount Victoria Museum and Sunset Rock, Mount Victoria.** Entry to museum \$5. Please let Beverley know by 23rd March if you are coming. Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 1

Apr 6 **Undercliff-Overcliff Pass, Wentworth Falls.** Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 2

Apr 11 **Walls Cave, Blackheath with morning tea at Tracy's.** Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Coordinator Harold Thompson 04090 10736, Harold.thompson@bigpond.com).

Mar 11 **Narrow Neck to Tracey Taylor Round bench.** Harold 0409010737 Grade 3, 18km. Map Katoomba/Jamison

Mar 18 **Mount Banks traverse.** Harold 0409010737. Grade 3, 10km. Map Mt Wilson.

Mar 25 **The Dry Canyon.** Harold 0409010737. Grade 3, 7km. Map Ben Bullen/Cullen Bullen.

Apr 1 **Ruined Castle.** Geoff, 04257 38766. Grade 3, 11km. Map Katoomba/Jamison.

Visit the Saturday walks facebook -

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

How do they feather their nests?

Where do birds find the feathers to line their nests? There is plenty of spider web, grass, bark, lichen and moss around, but you don't see piles of feathers lying about in the bush.

Recently a pair of Eastern Spinebills built their small cup shaped nest in a stiff-leaved *Callistemon* bush in my garden. It was extremely well hidden, and nestling down in the thick feather lining when I found it were two small young.

Alas, late one evening about a week later I found three feathers on the ground. Feeling in the nest, it was empty. Next morning, the ground was covered with feathers. The predator, probably a Pied Currawong, had apparently returned and pulled out the lining looking for further morsels.

We gathered the feathers from the ground and those remaining in the nest and counted them - 70 in all, in a nest the size of a small coffee cup!.

-- **Graham Alcorn**, Newsletter No 63, March 1986.

Source: *Sipping the Nectar*, the 'Bird Notes' of Graham Alcorn (Notes from Blue Mountains Conservation Society newsletters)

Is deer the next rabbit?

The federal government has released a National Feral Deer Action Plan, and public submissions for the plan are now open until 20 March. Go to: <https://bit.ly/Feral-Deer>

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Planning and 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

What's in a name?

In amongst the Tall Open forests, during October and November last year, we glimpsed many a beautiful Waratah. A bit of investigation resulted in the interesting meanings of its botanical name.

'Telopea' comes from the Greek work 'telopus' meaning 'seen from afar' and the specific name 'speciosissima' is the superlative of the Latin adjective 'speciosus', meaning beautiful or handsome. How appropriate. The common name of Waratah is apparently the European interpretation of the local Aboriginal word for the plant.

It is a member of the Proteaceae family.



FISH play an important part in the food chain of the Greater Blue Mountains Area. Common fish include galaxia, trout, and eel.

FOXES are not native to Australia yet are present in the parks. Foxes have whiskers on their legs as well as their faces that help them find their way.



The **ECHIDNA** is an unusual creature. It has spines like a porcupine, a pouch like a kangaroo, and has a beak and lays eggs like a bird.



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Ingrid Hess is a cut-paper artist. Download Ingrid's finished artwork (published in the online version of Hut News) and one to colour (published in the printed version of Hut News).

Collect the pages as they appear in Hut News.

<https://bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/archive/wild-image-LETTER-F.pdf>