

# HUT NEWS



Issue No. 271  
June 2010

**"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"**

## From the President

It has been an eventful month for conservation. Most pressing has been the NSW Government's plan to allow more development for tourism in National Parks. We have been actively making the case for accommodation and other types of development in our local towns instead of in the National Park.

**We really need members to get involved** (see page 3 for the full story).

On a more positive note, our nursery volunteers have been very active in growing plants for residents of the Blue Mountains. The Blue Mountains City Council's Carbon Offset programme has involved the issuing of vouchers which people have used to buy native trees. This has kept everyone very busy. Thanks to those who have made this possible.

Unfortunately, I have no news to report on our case against Delta Electricity in respect to alleged pollution of the upper Coxs River (high levels of salts and metals). The Society was successful in being granted a Protective Costs Order' to limit the costs of running the case in the Land and Environment Court. Delta has appealed this decision but no decision has been made yet.

I hope to see many of you at our next monthly meeting or our Winter Magic Stall.

**Tara Cameron**

Email: [domtara@bigpond.com](mailto:domtara@bigpond.com)  
Mobile: 0419 824 974.

## BEAT THE TAX MAN

June—time to beat the tax man and make your \$2 plus tax deductible donation to Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Cheques please to The Treasurer, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 or go to [www.bluemountains.org.au/About/donation.html](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/About/donation.html)

## MONTHLY MEETING: Friday, 25 June, 2010

### What Sort of Future is a Shoulder-to-Shoulder World?

Our country and planet face a host of environmental problems, all of which are impossible to solve unless population is limited to a level that the environment can sustain. The impact can be quantified by the formula  $I = P * A * T$ , ie impact is a function of population, affluence and technology. And as our cities sprawl, covering high quality farmland with suburbia, quality of life is lost as well. Yet every discussion on the supposedly obvious benefits of endless growth is invariably based on economics, with environmental aspects ignored. Also ignored is that a healthy economy relies on a healthy environment, an environment already displaying abundant signs of stress.

Fortunately, we can now discuss population without being vilified. Much of this is due to Sustainable Population Australia (SPA), whose educated and articulate members have tirelessly, and for many years, sought to educate Australians about the deleterious effects of endless population growth on the environment and our lifestyles.

At our monthly meeting on Friday 25th June, Kris Spike, NSW State President of SPA, will speak about sustainable population.

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society Monthly Meeting  
7.30 pm, Friday 25 June 2010**

**The Conservation Hut, far western end of  
Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls**

**Visitors are very welcome.**

## Winter Magic Festival Saturday 19 June 2010

The Society will have a stall at the Winter Magic Festival at Katoomba. You will find it in Katoomba Street not far from the Carrington.

If you can stop and help for a while, please phone Liz, NOW (4757.2694 or 0418 206 899).

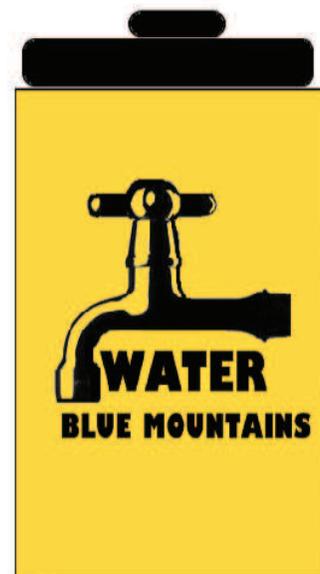
## Drink Tap Water Campaign

At the festival, Katoomba High students will launch our new plastic water bottle, designed by Marc Berry and chosen by his fellow students. It is bright yellow, with black writing, and made in Australia.

The message (on the other side) is

**By Drinking Tap Water you, Preserve swamps,  
Save money and Reduce pollution.**

**DO NOT DISPOSE -- RE-USE!**



**"Hut News", the newsletter of  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.  
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782  
Phone 4757 1872**

**Email: [bmcs@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:bmcs@bluemountains.org.au)**

**Web page: [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)**

**President:: Tara Cameron**

4751 1130 domtara@bigpond.com

**Senior Vice President: Liz van Reyswoud**

4757.2694, 0418206899

[mcreysw@bigpond.net.au](mailto:mcreysw@bigpond.net.au)

**Second Vice President:: John Haydon**

0403 797 585

[jhaydonmc@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jhaydonmc@optusnet.com.au)

**Treasurer: Bart Beech (h)4739 9947**

(f)9688 1440 (w)9896 9512

[bart.beech@invensys.com](mailto:bart.beech@invensys.com)

**Administration Officer: Rob Baigent**

4759 3104 [robbaigent@iprimus.com.au](mailto:robbaigent@iprimus.com.au)

**CC/Sustainability Officer: Lis Bastion**

4787 7533 [ebastion@stoplaughing.com.au](mailto:ebastion@stoplaughing.com.au)

**Environmental Education Officer:**

**Chris Yates 4784 3407**

[christopher.yates@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:christopher.yates@det.nsw.edu.au)

**Lithgow Regional Subcommittee Coordinator:**

**Chris Jonkers 6355 1179**

[chrisandjulie@active8.net.au](mailto:chrisandjulie@active8.net.au)

**Meetings Secretary: Michael Maack**

4751 3623 [maaack@ozemail.com.au](mailto:maaack@ozemail.com.au)

**Membership Secretary: Lachlan Garland**

4757 1929 [lachlan.a.garland@bigpond.com](mailto:lachlan.a.garland@bigpond.com)

**Monthly Meeting Convenor: VACANT**

**National Parks Officer: Brian Marshall**

4784.1148, [briannamar@bigpond.com](mailto:briannamar@bigpond.com)

**Plant Nursery Manager: Kevin Bell**

ph/fax 4787.6436 [kevinbell@eftel.net.au](mailto:kevinbell@eftel.net.au)

**Publicity Officer: Peter Green**

4751 9474 [peter@pwgreen.id.au](mailto:peter@pwgreen.id.au)

**Website Officer: David Bowskill 4757 3416**

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

**Bushcare/Threatened Species Officer:**

**Clive Heywood Barker 0413 577 160**

[ozubundu@hotmail.com](mailto:ozubundu@hotmail.com)

**Project Officer-Gardens of Stone:**

**Karen McLaughlin 6355 2835**

[karen.mclaughlin@aussiebroadband.com.au](mailto:karen.mclaughlin@aussiebroadband.com.au)

**Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson**

4751.2303, mob 0427 512 303

[goodbush@pnc.com.au](mailto:goodbush@pnc.com.au)

**Walks Convenor: Maurice Kerkham**

4739 4942

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

**Landuse Officer: Ann Cantwell**

4751 3215, [cantwell@eftel.net.au](mailto:cantwell@eftel.net.au)

**Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies**

4787 7246 [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)

#### HUT NEWS EDITORIALS

The deadline for the next issue of Hut News is **22 June 2010**

#### MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Lachlan Garland 4757 1929  
[membership@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)  
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

#### BUSHCARE GROUP

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

New members are always welcome. Phone Karen on 4757 1929.

## A MAJOR VICTORY: Protection of River Red Gums in NSW

Brendan Doyle

The conservation movement had something to celebrate at last when, on 19 May, in a dramatic end to an epic and exhausting struggle, the NSW Upper House passed a Bill that immediately protects the entire Millewa forest on the NSW side of the Murray.

Eleven environment groups issued a joint statement to express their delight. Carmel Flint of the NPA said, "The announcement means that the NSW Government will fully deliver on the scientific advice it received and immediately create 107,000 hectares of new protected areas in the Riverina".

"The decision has global significance because it fully protects the largest Red Gum forest left in the world, a Ramsar-listed wetland, and the heart of the Murray Darling – the Barmah-Millewa forest" said Felicity Wade of The Wilderness Society Sydney. "Barmah-Millewa is now a world class, cross-border National Park that permanently protects more than 70,000 hectares of Red Gum".

"Today will see the start of a process to completely hand back large State Forest areas to two Traditional Owner groups as Indigenous Protected Areas. This is a momentous decision that is a first for any Government in NSW" said Jonathan La Nauze, spokesperson for Friends of the Earth Melbourne.

"It will also involve the development of a joint management agreement over the Millewa forest with the Yorta Yorta nation – putting them back in charge of their Country and providing rewarding jobs for their young people" he said.

**The new national parks and other conservation reserves will come into full effect on 1 July 2010.**

Key elements of the revised NSW Government decision include:

- There will be no 5-year transitional logging.
- All of the iconic Millewa forest will be protected immediately in a 42,000 ha National Park, protecting the largest red gum forest in Australia in a cross-border 70,000 ha Barmah-Millewa national park.
- Two large areas have been earmarked for direct transfer to Traditional Owners as Indigenous Protected Areas and these areas will be protected from logging pending their transfer to Traditional Owners.
- A joint management agreement will be developed with the Yorta Yorta Traditional Owners over the Millewa forest.

The victory has been achieved through the hard work of numerous people over many years. The Wilderness Society NSW and the National Parks Association played a major campaigning role. But so did all those individuals who signed petitions, lobbied politicians, demonstrated, and never gave up.

River Red Gum in the Moira Flora Reserve, photo from National Parks Assn of NSW website, <http://www.npansw.org.au>



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## NPWS Claims on Tourism Debunked by Top Barrister

By Tara Cameron and Andrew Cox

**Should you trust the NPWS to protect our parks from tourism development? We are starting to wonder as the campaign against opening up national parks to tourism heats up.**

Head of NPWS, Sally Barnes, hailed the benefits of a new tourism Bill released in May by saying that it will strengthen national parks legislation. Her claim was that private leases for new commercial resorts and hotels at present could be freely issued in national parks. She argues that under the Bill they will now be restricted through an improved approval process and new leasing regime designed by NPWS.

This opinion was provided as part of a presentation made by Minister for the Environment, Frank Sartor, about the new tourism Bill to environment groups and tourism stakeholders, including the Society, in early May. Minister Sartor also described the Bill as strengthening the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Yet these claims were demolished by legal advice provided to Colong Foundation for Wilderness by highly regarded barrister, Tim Robertson SC. The legal advice stated that the Bill:

**"...provides the legal authority for the privatisation of National Parks by enabling exclusive possession rights to be given for commercial purposes to private interests under the broad rubric of sustainable tourism. Under this rubric, National Parks will be able to be used for general tourist purposes, such as tourist resorts, convention centres, shopping centres, fast food outlets, sporting activities and fun parks, at the discretion of the Minister, even where those uses do not promote the conservation of the Parks."**

The legal advice received widespread media coverage.

It confirmed fears held by environmental groups that a proposal by the 2008 Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks adding 'tourism' as a purpose of national parks would severely weaken national park protection. The new Bill pushed by NPWS and Minister Sartor goes much further and replaces a binding requirement that all

leases must be consistent with the purpose of a national park to one that is based on Ministerial opinion. Public interest Court cases would suddenly become much harder. The Bill also allows leases to be issued for an almost unlimited range of purposes.

To his credit, Minister Sartor engaged with the arguments presented against the Bill by environment groups. In response to concerns raised by Society President, Tara Cameron, Minister Sartor agreed that there is little need for new accommodation and major tourism infrastructure in the Blue Mountains. He even conceded that more tourist leases in national parks is unlikely to result in greater revenue.

This debunks the main argument provided by the tourist lobby group and taken up by NPWS that private accommodation and retail developments in national parks are needed to generate revenue for park management.

The Society and other environmental groups are strongly opposed to the Bill, called the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Sustainable Tourism) Bill. Minister Sartor has agreed to take on-board some of the concerns and we are waiting for his response.

Following approaches by the Society to local Greens councillors, Blue Mountains City Council unanimously passed an urgency motion expressing concerns about the new Bill and instead sought funding increases for more rangers, improved park promotion and basic park infrastructure such as walking tracks and picnic areas. The Council agreed to make representations to the Premier and Environment Minister and to seek support from the Local Government Association.

The NSW Opposition has reaffirmed their support for our campaign. In a Nov 2009 letter to NCC, Opposition environment spokesperson, Catherine Cusack, and tourism spokesperson, Don Page said they "do not support private accommodation facilities inside National Parks."

**Please join the chorus of opposition against attempts to open up national parks to private accommodation and other commercial developments. Write now to Frank Sartor, Minister for the Environment, Lvl 35, GMT, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney 2000.**

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### Nursery News

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager.

Winter is not a good time for planting especially with the danger of frosts in the Blue Mountains which badly affect small seedlings. Thus, the Lawson nursery will close over June and July and will re-open for sales on Wednesday 4th August. We will be at the June (Sunday 6th) Blackheath Community Markets in the Blackheath school grounds and then again in September (Sunday 5th). Our next appearance at the Lawson Magpie Markets will be on Sunday 15th August and thereafter every third Sunday of the month.

Meanwhile, the thousands of seeds we have been busily sowing will germinate and grow on the heated beds in our glasshouse in Blackheath ready for potting when the volunteers return in August. They will then be hardened at Lawson and Blackheath and ready for sale to you or supplied for contracts soon after. (Photo: Eastern Spinebill on *Banksia serrata*, one of the bird attracting trees and shrubs which are available from our nursery.)





This is Chris Yates, holding the banner.

### Farewell Chris Yates – Education Officer

I am sad to report that Chris Yates, our Education Officer and teacher at Katoomba High School, is leaving the Blue Mountains for a new job at Asquith Boys High School. While we wish him the very best, we are extremely sad to lose Chris from our Management Committee.

Chris has actively got students involved in environmental issues through the production of *Strobos* and the Drink Tap Water Campaign. His enthusiasm will be hard to replace. We are very pleased that Laurie Sharman (year 11 student) will be taking over as the *Strobos* editor.

Thanks for the hard work Chris! Tara Cameron

### Highway Water Issues Working Group

Blue Mountains City Council has initiated the formation of a new group called the Highway Water Issues Working Group, comprising State Agencies and community members. The group has been formed to facilitate local people with local knowledge to become involved in the process of minimising adverse impacts on the waterways and catchment areas in the Blue Mountains, affected by highway upgrades.

The community members volunteered in response to the Blue Mountains City Council advertisements. The Group will act as a central point of communication between Blue Mountains City Council, key agencies and the Blue Mountains community with respect to protection of natural water systems. You are invited to contact Councillor McCallum regarding issues of relevance at:

Clr Howard McCallum – email: [hmccallum@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:hmccallum@bmcc.nsw.gov.au)

or the community members of the Group who are:

Paul Richardson – email: [PaulR@lmc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:PaulR@lmc.nsw.gov.au)

Cesidio Parissi – tel: 4759 2058; email: [C.Parissi@uws.edu.au](mailto:C.Parissi@uws.edu.au)

Robert Cantwell – tel: 4751 3215; email: [cantwell@eftel.net.au](mailto:cantwell@eftel.net.au)

### LYREBIRD SURVEY

Scenic World is looking for a qualified person, who can do a survey on the Lyrebird population of the area of the Jamison Valley in and around Scenic World. The survey will enable Scenic World to provide accurate information to visitors about population, territories, lifespan, feeding/nesting habits and feral animal threats to adult and chicks. Scenic World is willing to pay for the person's services.

Contact Philip Hammon, phone 4780 0200, email [philip.hammon@scenicworld.com.au](mailto:philip.hammon@scenicworld.com.au)

### PLANT PEST ALERT: Myrtle Rust

The fungus *Uredo rangelii* (Myrtle rust) has been detected on a commercial property on the New South Wales central coast. Myrtle rust is considered to be part of a group of rust fungi collectively known as eucalyptus/guava rust.

Early identification of this rust is vital to eradication efforts.

It attacks plants in the Myrtaceae family, and has recently been detected on *Agonis* (willow myrtle), *Syncarpia* (turpentine) and *Callistemon* (bottlebrush) species.

#### Identification:

Myrtle rust produces lesions on young, actively growing leaves and shoots, as well as on fruits and sepals. Leaves may become buckled or twisted as a result of infection. On turpentine and callistemon rust lesions are purple in colour, with masses of bright yellow or orange-yellow spores. Occasionally, they may have dark brown spores. Severe rust disease in young trees may kill shoot tips, causing loss of leaders and a bushy habit.

Bushwalkers! Any rust on myrtaceae should be reported.

More info: [www.ngia.com.au](http://www.ngia.com.au)

### Welcome to new members

Selena Williams, Blaxland  
Desmond Shoesmith, Blaxland  
Noeline Nagle, Katoomba  
Paul Nagle, Katoomba  
Greg Birtles, Hazelbrook  
Jonathan Bligh, Paddington

## New website for climate action

Katoomba Area Climate Action Now has launched its new website [www.katoombacan.org](http://www.katoombacan.org). It contains a wealth of information about climate science and solutions as well as suggestions for what you can do.

Please encourage your family and friends to have a look. Any feedback on the website would be welcome. Comments can be sent to [info@katoombacan.org](mailto:info@katoombacan.org)

**Sue Morrison, President,  
Katoomba Area Climate  
Action Now**

## School and National Tree Days

Planet Ark would like to invite you to register a National Tree Day site in 2010. Each year thousands of schools and community groups around Australia participate in Schools Tree Day & National Tree Day. These activities all contribute to a magnificent national effort of tree planting and landcare activities.

Proudly sponsored by Toyota, Schools Tree Day will be held this year on Friday July 30 2010 with National Tree Day on Sunday August 1 2010.

More information  
<http://treeday.planetarc.org>



*Sue and Clare at Mount Victoria.*

## Turon Gates and Airly/Genowlan 26/28 May, 2010

The Interpretive Bushwalkers spent two nights at Turon Gates. It was raining when we left Mount Victoria but the rain eased at Capertee and stopped the following morning. The accommodation is excellent. 14 of us shared three riverside cabins, lit (dimly) by solar power. There is gas hot water heating and stove and a slow combustion wood heater in the middle of each cabin. Catering among the group was up to its usual high standard and walks were not strenuous enough to counteract all the extra calories.

The Turon River flows on to Sofala (about 24 km away), takes a turn towards Bathurst and continues on to Hill End. The river is well renowned because it was the site of one of Australia's first alluvial gold rushes. During the gold rush Chinese migrant workers built a Water Race to bring water to mining operations along sections of the Turon River. Parts of the Race can still be seen at Turon Gates.

There were many birds. Treecreepers, Thornbills, Firetail Finches and Crimson Rosellas were plentiful. Notable sightings: Scarlet Robins; Superb Fairy Wrens, males in dashing blue and black regalia; a close-up view of a Fantail Cuckoo.

We saw Eastern Grey Kangaroos and unidentified Wallabies. There were feral goats and friendly horses.

Lovely old River Oaks (Casuarinas) line the banks of the Turon, along with some weed willows which added a splash of colour to the reflections with their autumn foliage.

We were looking for Platypus, but instead saw a Water Rat, swimming and diving along the river.

The Water Rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) is one of Australia's largest rodents and one of Australia's only two amphibious mammals (the platypus is the other). It has a thick waterproof coat, a long tail with a white tip, and webbed hind feet.

And it is a great swimmer. It came up with what looked like a yabbie which it took to the far bank and held in its paws to eat. We followed it along the river until it disappeared into some reeds on the bank and didn't come out again.

This one looked to be the size of a small cat. Sue saw a smaller Water Rat later.

Leaving Turon Gates on Friday morning, we drove to the Mount Airly camping area. The Society and other environmental groups campaigned to stop the present coal mining. It is a desecration of a very special and beautiful area.

You will have had to have been there yourself to be able to imagine the magnificent cliffs and pagodas of Mount Genowlan, especially when shining golden in the late afternoon sunlight.

Shale miners at the turn of the century built their homes beneath huge boulders, sometimes closed in with stones.

Not even a three hour journey through Mount Victoria could put much of a damper on our trip. Finally we crawled past a large shipping container which had been dropped in one lane by a truck, in the 60 km zone near the toll house. And no, we don't need a new road. Why wasn't the container on a train?

Christine Davies.

**COMMENT - by Brian Marshall**  
**Part 1 From coal to nuclear 'nirvana':**  
**Or a passport to oblivion?<sup>1</sup>**

**"Humankind has only a 50% chance of surviving the next century."<sup>2</sup>**

**We humans must not "...destroy the book of life before we have read it."<sup>2</sup>**

Global warming and the nuclear solution are not the only factors behind Martin Rees' statements: other human-made catastrophes such as bio-engineered viruses and over-population, and natural events such as comet impacts and super magmatic eruptions contribute to the assessment. Rees believes that over the 45 million centuries of Earth's history, the present century is the first in which a single species has the capacity to destroy the planet as we currently conceive it. Natural events are beyond our control, but climate change, over-population, nuclear destruction and bio-engineering must be addressed if humankind is to survive. To deal with anthropogenic factors, governments and citizens must "...think globally and think on the right time scale...which is long-term by the normal standards of political decisions."<sup>2</sup>

The above is not to depress you, although what happened at Copenhagen and the political opportunism in Australia (including another three years of procrastination) do not engender confidence. Rather, the aim is to set the scene for some of the components of this article. And to recognise that, whereas we expect politicians to resolve global problems, voters value their immediate future more than the long-term future so political expediency invariably trumps major issues. This is another way of saying that politics is the art of retaining power in the face of fickle self-interested voters and 'big business' lobbying.

Let's acknowledge that coal-fired power stations are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions (GGE), and that Australia and the World need to combat global warming by radically cutting GGE and confronting over-population. Despite this, the NSW Government has approved concept plans for potentially coal-fired power stations at Mount Piper and Bayswater, coal-fired power expansion is rampant in India and China, Australia's population is growing too rapidly, Australia is back on the economic-growth treadmill, and Australia is falling even further behind many 'first world' countries in mitigating GGE.

**Is there an answer to this irrational behaviour?**

The Federal Government's carbon pollution reduction

scheme (CPRS) is/was<sup>3</sup> a conceptual (though inadequate) move in the right direction, because it aimed to place a price on carbon production. The Australian Coal Association (ACA) responded with 'doom and gloom' public advertising and direct lobbying of the Government and Opposition. Based partly on fugitive GGE from coal mines, ACA concluded that the CPRS impact would be inadequately covered by the Government's compensation package, such that 9000 direct and indirect jobs would be lost and at least 16 mines would close. Few outside the coal industry and coal-dependent communities accepted this. For example, the Citigroup concluded "...we do not see CPRS as a major negative investment factor for the coal sector at current share prices."<sup>4</sup> In reality, assistance offered by Government more than compensated 'gassy' mines, coal seam gas (methane) is now deemed an asset, and underground coal gasification (UCG) is gaining importance.

A CPRS and/or a carbon tax, preferably without the enormous concessions to big polluters, could be a **partial** answer were the Government able to get it through the Senate. But it can't! And so Australia is currently in limbo.

**Are there other partial answers?**

Almost irrespective of the CPRS and the Greens' interim carbon tax<sup>5</sup>, the Government believes that by 2050 a third of Australia's GGE reduction will be from coal-fired power coupled with carbon capture and storage (CCS). They are in a minority! Many find a 'nuclear' solution attractive despite its disadvantages, some believe the answer lies in 'renewables', while others see salvation in 'oilfield' natural gas, coal seam gas and underground coal gasification. There is no doubt that each of these will play a part, depending upon a country's needs, climate and geology. But questions remain about the size of the part, the costs and consequences of implementation, the time-frames for pilot-plant to commercial development and construction, and the role of government in promoting various options through funding research and development and adopting such things as emissions reduction schemes linked to meaningful GGE targets.

In commenting on the viability of some of these 'solutions', I will mainly focus on Australia.

**Carbon capture and storage (CCS)**

For coal-fired power generation, this is a three-stage process: capturing the carbon emissions at the power plant, transferring them to an appropriate sedimentary basin for storage, and emplacing them 'permanently' at a suitable stratigraphical level within the basin (i.e. geo-sequestration). All three involve significant costs such

<sup>1</sup> Only essential references provided – the fully referenced article is available on request from the author or Hut News Editor.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Rees of Ludlow, President of the Royal Society, Astronomer Royal and astrophysicist, cited in Paola Totaro, Creation and destruction, *SMH March* 20-21 2010 News Review p3.

<sup>3</sup> It seems to be politically dead. The Opposition is spear-heading a resurgence of irresponsibility, discussions with the Greens over a 'transitional' plan seem to have faltered, the Government is afraid (with some justification) to use the CPRS bill as a double dissolution trigger, and has now deferred action on any CPRS for at least 3 years.

<sup>4</sup> Paddy Manning, *Coal lobby is not being fair dinkum on carbon reductions scheme*, *SMH* November 14-15 2009 p6.

<sup>5</sup> <http://greensmps.org.au/content/media-release/greens-propose-garnauts-interim-solution-break-cprs-deadlock>.

that a high carbon price is needed to make coal-fired power plus CCS competitive with other energy sources<sup>6</sup>. This would not be a problem were Australia to have an emissions trading scheme compatible with attaining its emissions reduction target, and were CCS for coal-fired power stations a commercial reality. Neither is the case. Of the 213 active **or planned** projects involving coal, oil, or natural gas worldwide, only 61 deal with all three stages, only 7 are currently operating and none of these capture carbon from coal<sup>7</sup>. Yet, in the absence of significant difficulties (flying pigs!), Australia believes that CCS will be commercially installed and start significantly reducing coal-fired electricity emissions by 2033.

Let's place CCS in perspective for Australia. The Carbon Storage Taskforce report<sup>8</sup> lists projects qualifying for the Government's \$2.4 billion flagship program. Each project receives \$120 million in **pre-feasibility** funding to identify technical and economic constraints; there are clearly unresolved difficulties! The report impressively notes that the eastern states have 'geologically suitable' storage capacity for coal-fired power and natural gas emissions to last for 70-450 years depending upon storage efficiency. However, it also notes the high costs of transfer in NSW and SE Queensland of \$10-60 per tonne and infrastructure requirements in terms of 5000 km of pipeline in the period 2020-2035. With costs-escalation characterising most Australian projects, coal-fired power plus CCS becomes a very expensive 'solution'; indeed, hefty subsidies are essential if CCS is to be economic.

Unsurprisingly, many believe investment in 'clean coal' should be deferred or even abandoned, while others want much more investment from the developed world to hasten clean coal's commercial development. Yet only \$36.4 million of the Australian Coal Association's (ACA) much vaunted \$1 billion Coal21 Fund has been spent since its launch in 2006. The ACA seemingly relies on the taxpayers' \$2.5 billion to solve its GGE problems, but the levels of investment are insufficient and momentum is being lost. Even Ian Macfarlane (Opposition spokesman on resources) acknowledges that CCS will play little part in Australia's energy production because, by the time it is ready (around 2030), more cost-effective options such as a natural gas transition to nuclear power and/or 'renewables' will have supplanted it.

### **Liquefied petroleum gas, coal seam gas and underground coal gasification (LPG, CSG, UCG)**

All are finite resources – the more we use them the more rapidly they run out! Natural gas from oilfields is the conventional feedstock for LPG plants. LPG is an established commercially viable industry with substantial

export markets, whereas CSG as a feedstock to liquefied natural gas plants has yet to justify the CSG-hype created in Queensland. This is because CSG has a lower calorific value than LPG, lacks traces of oil and condensate, and can't be turned on-and-off<sup>9</sup>.

Global and Australian reserves of LNG<sup>10</sup> have surged mainly due to technological advancements and to rapidly expanding attempts to mitigate GGE. LNG is the cleanest burning fossil fuel in that its production and use create less than half the GGE of currently available coal technology. In Queensland, more than half the electricity is generated from natural gas and more than half of that from CSG, whereas in Australia overall, 80% of electricity comes from brown and black coals. When/if Australia develops a meaningful emissions trading scheme, many power stations are likely to convert to CSG because of environmental and cost factors. And if plans in Queensland reach fruition, large amounts of CSG will be liquefied for export.

UCG has yet to be properly commercialised, but because a cubic metre of coal yields 20 times more energy through UCG than through CSG technology, it has major implications for the future of Australian coal fields<sup>11</sup>. The gaseous product, which can be used variously for fuel, chemical feedstock, or power generation, differs from CSG in that converting it to export-oriented LNG is not practicable. Many believe that UCG will be a major contributor to the domestic power market, but despite well understood technology and imminent pilot plants, commercial operations at a scale of 200-400 megawatts are still several years away, assuming that there are no hitches.

There is no doubt that if GGE are to be realistically mitigated, LPG, CSG and probably UCG (each of which produce about half the GGE of 'dirty' coal) will smooth the transition from 'dirty' coal-fired dependency to variously 'clean coal' (using CCS), nuclear power, and renewables. Unfortunately, the Federal Government's CPRS (or any similar scheme) which would have hastened the transition has succumbed to politics and resides on the back burner<sup>12</sup>. 'Business-as-usual' is once again the name of the game: a real triumph for the systematic world-wide campaign to undermine climate change science; a real tragedy for the sustainability of the World, its people and its non-human biodiversity.

### **To paraphrase Neil Armstrong, this is one backward step for man and one giant reversal for mankind.**

[Part 2 will look at the nuclear option, 'renewables', the fallacy of the energy shortfall, over-population, and Australia's lead, need and greed.]

**Brian Marshall**

<sup>6</sup> Tom Arup, *Hefty bill to come from clean coal power*, SMH October 29 2009 News p3.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.globalccsinstitute.com/downloads/Reports/2009/worley/Foundation-Report-1-rev0.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ret.gov.au/resources/Documents/Programs/CS%20Taskforce.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.theajmonline.com.au/mining\\_news/news/2009/november/november-26-09/top-stories/coal-seam-gas-to-be-or-not-to-be-part-two](http://www.theajmonline.com.au/mining_news/news/2009/november/november-26-09/top-stories/coal-seam-gas-to-be-or-not-to-be-part-two)

<sup>10</sup> LNG is now used in many articles to cover LPG and CSG, but it is useful to distinguish between them because they are at totally different stages of commercial development.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew Murphy, *Underground gasification breaks to surface*, SMH April 9 2010 Business Day p7.

<sup>12</sup> Lenore Taylor, *Decision to put climate action on hold smacks of political cowardice*, SMH April 28 2010 News p5.

## MOUNTAIN MEMORIES by Wilson Alcorn

There is a shelter shed with tables in the Leura Cascades picnic area. Similar to the cages at the Taronga Zoo in the early days, they are made by putting wire netting over a basic frame. This is then pushed into various curves and then a heavy layer of plaster inside and out is painted earth colour. There are a few of these around the mountains. We built some steps here with a nonslip finish which turned out well.

Small boys found they could refill the old Leura Baths by closing the drain tap and diverting the stream with a sheet of roofing iron. Great fun, but Council had no insurance without supervision. The chief engineer had Council trucks fill in the baths. We grew nice lawns and put in picnic tables and barbeques. We also planted some natives (Banksias and Casuarinas).

The cascades were crossed by simple bridges (2 bearers and 4x1 inch cross-planks). We lost two of them in what the Tourist Bureau called a "Spring Shower". The Falls Lookout was the point where

the track turned off to the Federal Pass in the valley. A trapdoor gave access to a vertical ladder and by edging along a slippery ledge another ladder. These were used by Water Board workers en route to sewerage treatment works below. We used them at times but it was dangerous with a backpack on. All gone now and just as well as sewerage pipes were old and leaking. All treated now in lower mountains.

The small park was surrounded by giant trees (Eucalyptus oreades) and a willy-willy brought several crashing down on the tables, luckily at night. We had to call in the removal gang with long-arm chainsaws, trucks etc, to clear them. I was walking down with the area ranger as we had some lads on a work scheme to tidy up small branches with hand saws. I said to Frank "Is that lad sitting on the branch he is cutting off?" Just then, he fell about three feet to the ground. Would he have done the same 40 feet up?

The Mayor at the time I retired



decided to install a brass plate and plant two trees to the Alcorn brothers' (Wilson and Graham) time on the tracks. We managed to get two young Eucalyptus oreades but sadly, after the event appeared in local paper, the plate and trees were stolen two nights later. Such is fame! We put in two Acacias but they only live about 30 years.

The walk down the Cascades and on to the Federal Pass is very pleasant. You have the choice of climbing up the Giants Stairway at the Three Sisters, or carrying on to catch the Scenic Railway up.

**Wilson Alcorn, former Head Ranger for Blue Mountains City Council, looking after Blue Mountains walking tracks.**

## 100% Renewable Energy Campaign

This national campaign had its local launch on Sunday 2 May, with members of Katoomba Area Climate Action Now, Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Transition Blue Mountains participating.

The next step is to undertake community surveys to gauge public opinion on renewable energy and convey those thoughts to our local politicians. Watch out for our street stalls over the coming months and at the Winter Magic festival on Sat 19 June.

Anyone who would like to be involved in the campaign can contact Sue Morrison on [president@katoombacan.org](mailto:president@katoombacan.org) or phone 0418 292 672. For more information about this campaign see [www.100percent.org.au](http://www.100percent.org.au)

**Sue Morrison, President,  
Katoomba Area Climate Action Now**



## SATURDAY BUSHWALKS

**Proposed Program for week at Newnes  
July 12 to 16 (Booking details on Page 12)**

**Monday** - after arrival and lunch - tour of National Park track around the ruins at your own pace. Grade 2.

**Tuesday** - 9am departure. Drive to parking near the Wolgan River ford to start walk. Walk up the railway track bed to Glowworm Tunnel to the Pagoda Track (lunch) and return via the Old Coach Road - 8 km - Option of a further 6 km to finish the walk down the Wolgan River Valley back to Newnes while the drivers and other walkers return by car - Grade 3.

**Wednesday.** 9am departure. Donkey Mountain adventure - opportunity for an extended trip to this delightful wonder. Grade 3/4.

**Thursday** - 9am departure. Newnes to Perries Gully via the Philosophers track and possible cross to Pipeline pass track and lookouts - 9 km, grade probably 4.

**Friday** - 9am departure. Mystery Mountain. That little hill directly opposite Newnes Hotel? Steep and a few scrambling climbs with sensational views from the top. Short but spectacular. Probably Grade 3.

### From the Newnes Cabins information:

We provide doonas, pillows, blankets, but you will need to bring your own linen & towels.

## Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

One of my most unforgettable bird experiences was on a stormy summer's afternoon in 2000, watching flock after flock of strikingly beautiful black and gold Regent Honeyeaters flying down from the escarpments to a patch of flowering ironbark in the Capertee Valley. A dramatic thunderstorm had forced us to take a break from tracking some of the birds which had been fitted with tiny radio transmitters, and we sat in the car watching in amazement as they congregated in the treetops bathing in the wet leaves. As they wheeled around we counted at least 150 birds. To the best of my knowledge, no-one has seen a bigger number of Regents together in the last 20 years or so.

A hundred years ago, the Regent Honeyeater was a common bird of the box-ironbark woodlands west of the mountains. Historical accounts indicate the woodlands would be filled with the soft bell-like calls of thousands of Regents at times when there was a good flowering event. Today you are extremely lucky to find even a few.

Regent Honeyeaters are "rich patch specialists", which means they must move around the landscape in search of the very best patches of flowering trees - trees which by nature flower erratically (for example, White Box *Eucalyptus albens* may flower well only once every 4-5 years). So it follows that they need a variety of nectar trees, particularly on the richer soils (also favoured, of course, for agriculture). As too many of their food options have disappeared, so too have the birds. The recent long drought meant that they had a number of poor breeding seasons and their numbers have continued to plummet, despite a lot of excellent work by volunteers in habitat restoration. The latest estimate is that there may now be fewer than 250 mature individuals in NSW. Consequently, there is a Preliminary Determination to uplist the Regent Honeyeater to Critically Endangered.

The Regent is the most worrisome of a list of birds of our local area which have recently had their status changed. Another nomadic nectar-feeder, the Little Lorikeet, was listed as Vulnerable in NSW in 2008. This year we have seen a number of other birds added to the NSW threatened list, including Flame Robin, Scarlet Robin, Varied Sittella, Little Eagle and Spotted Harrier.

One of the best things we can do to help birds is to become involved in the twice yearly tree-planting weekends in the Capertee Valley. These not only will help to ward off the extinction of Regent Honeyeaters, but a whole suite of other declining birds. The next one is coming up on 21-22 August - contact me for details. Imagine how wonderful it would be to once again witness huge flocks of Regent Honeyeaters filling the treetops.

**Carol Proberts** [origma@westnet.com.au](mailto:origma@westnet.com.au)

Regent Honeyeater  
photo from  
Wikipedia



## Membership Application Form

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....

Address: .....  
.....PC .....

Phone(s) .....

Email .....

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$25 Concession (Senior/Student)\$15  
Household \$30 Concession (Senior/Student)\$20  
Corporate (open to negotiation) \$100

Bushwalkers only:  
(\$20 per walker per annum) \$.....

Donation (tax-deductible) \$.....

TOTAL AMOUNT INCLUDED \$.....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline): Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Web or database management; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Society administration.

**I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:**

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....

ENQUIRIES: Phone (02 4757 1872  
Email: [membership@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)

Please cut out and forward this form with your cheque or money order to:

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.**  
**PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls NSW 2782**

## MOUNTAIN MIST

Oh mountain mist!

How I love to watch you from my window  
as you roll over the great escarpment.

You blanket our world of streets and houses  
bringing a gentle start to the day.

Happy anticipation is a morning walk  
clad in your light coat.

**Myf Young**

**March 1998**

**BLUE MOUNTAINS  
CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.

**BMCS Dunns Swamp mid week camp May 10-14**

Report by Jim Percy

We had a successful week at Dunns Swamp with a total of eleven campers  
For 4 nights there was 5 – Jo, Karen, Ros, Bob and Jim  
For 3 nights there was 2 – Judy and Peter S  
For 2 nights there was 2 - Margit and Emanuel  
For 1 night there was 2 - David and Peter M

Jo and Ros counted a total of 42 birds for the week

Monday was occupied with travel and setting up camp, although Bob and I managed an evening paddle - smooth waters made for great reflections in the fading light

Tuesday am 6 did the Weir Walk loop with a side excursion to the magnificent Pagoda Lookout

Tuesday pm was too windy for paddling so we did a quick survey of the Waterside Walk

Wednesday am Now 7 strong we tackled the Waterside Walk to the Gudgegong Picnic area and after exploring some local pagodas we travelled across country to the River Gauging Weir and back on the tracks. Peter did a quick recce of what lay beyond the first wall and promised some excitement for the morrow

Wednesday pm after lunch Bob and I, with Jo as escort, kayaked upstream to see if we could find the reported cave with aboriginal hand paintings. This meant landing the kayaks and following a faint track to the cave. The cave appears to have a couple of sets of paintings but serious graffiti has spoilt it somewhat. Bob and I then continued to paddle upstream till we could progress no further – quite an exciting time with snags above and below the water attempting to block progress. I was lucky enough to spot an Azure Kingfisher twice, once on a branch and then swishing for insects across the water. Earlier, Jo while paddling quietly upstream, had the pleasure of following a platypus for some distance

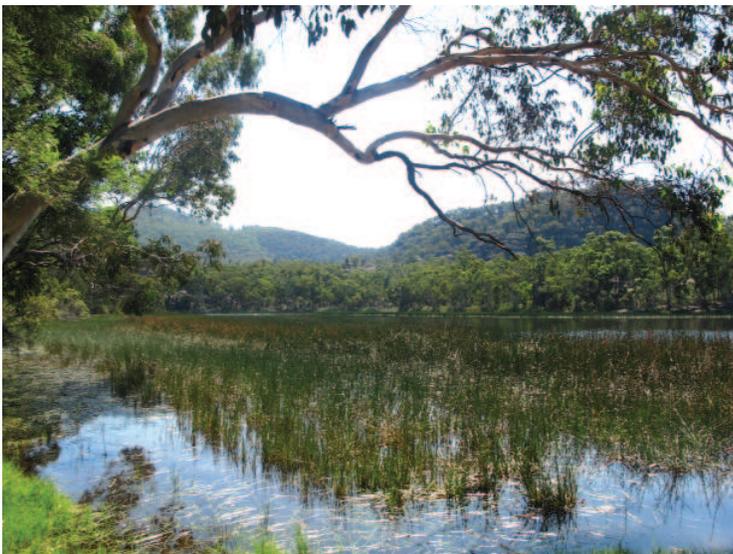
Thursday am The intrepid 7 now decided to go to the cave across country, which required travelling to the gauging station again and generally exploring along the northern bank of the creek, with some cutting across country to avoid the larger bends. A magnificent pagoda was our stop for morning tea with Ros spotting a platypus in a pool far below us. The surrounding hills and cliffines made it appear that we were in a centre of a huge crater. After a series of adventures, including meeting another party which vanished without trace in the vicinity of the cave, as no party was reported missing we assume they made it back. We had a good look around

the cave area and then headed back.

Thursday pm After a late lunch some walked with the new arrivals and most of the originals had done the tracks numerous times ‘but they are always nice’ to quote Karen as she sets off yet again, this time with David.

Some paddling was done also. Jo spent a long time studying another Azure Kingfisher, perched on a tree stump at the end of the Waterside Walk. As they are strongly territorial, We assume there are three different birds as Margit saw another past Platypus Point, whilst paddling quietly.

Friday It is now pack up time with most deciding to get away early. Jo paddled while Jim packed and Jim paddled while Jo finished the packing and prepared lunch. David did a last short walk and Peter and Judy did another expedition to the pagodas beyond the Gauging station weir and reported some magnificent views and valleys



Cudgegong River at Dunns Swamp

## Down the Wallaby Track — a backward glance, with John Low

### THE WHITE LADY OF MT. VICTORIA

For probably more than 100 years the figure of a mysterious woman, carved into the face of a rock by the side of a bush track at Mt. Victoria, has danced to a soundless music. Hidden for much of this time by moss and scrub, she was cleaned up and given a white dress some decades ago by an unknown admirer. She attracted a new audience, becoming the town's celebrated 'white lady' and though her purity and visibility have waned significantly in recent years you can still find her dancing on her rock stage along the path to Fairy Bower.

But who was this woman with the power to inspire such admiration? It is a question invariably asked by those who encounter her and while a categorical answer may never be forthcoming there is at least one very good suggestion. In the early 1990s the Mt. Victoria & District Historical Society announced that it had found in its collection a photograph of a dancing woman that matched the mysterious image in the bush behind the Toll Bar Cottage. Dated 1908, the photograph is of Emily Hutchinson-Cooper, the daughter of George and Margaret Cooper, owners of the 'Grand Hotel'.

Emily was born in Sydney in 1878, almost a decade before her father purchased the Fairfax family's 'Manor House' in Mt. Victoria. On the back of the Jenolan Caves tourist boom, he developed it into the town's premier accommodation house with its own coach line and stable of 80 horses. Emily was a talented and versatile musician, accomplished as a singer, violinist and pianist and musical entertainments were a common feature of life at Cooper's Grand Hotel.

In June 1900 she and her sister performed for a Vice-Regal



party on their way to the Caves that included Lady Mary Lygon, well known as a friend of Edward Elgar and probably the subject of his 13<sup>th</sup> Enigma Variation. She was in Australia to assist her bachelor brother in his duties as Governor and it may well have been through her influence that Emily made her debut as a soprano in Sydney the following year. For six years from 1901 to 1907, "under Vice-Regal patronage", she headlined at an annual concert in the city.

The photograph, taken the year Emily was married in Katoomba and now displayed at the Mt. Victoria museum, depicts an

attractive, vivacious young woman in a stage costume of cream dress and boots, 'kicking up her heels' and thoroughly enjoying the experience. While somewhat faded, it bears a strong enough similarity to the image on the rock to justify serious consideration of the society's claim to have solved the mystery. In any case, until a better solution appears, it will be Emily I think of whenever I pass that rock on the way to Fairy Bower or Cox's Cave.

John Low ([johnlow@iprimus.com.au](mailto:johnlow@iprimus.com.au))

The Mt Victoria & District Historical Society museum at Mount Victoria Station is open 2-5 pm weekends and school and public holidays.

### MARRANGAROO

By Ken Dean

When the ranges fold like silken sheets,  
dark blue in evening light,  
And ancient sandstone ramparts stand,  
as a fortress, to guard the night

As peppermint gums and stringy barks,  
keep watch on the dying day,  
A retreating line on the rock face sulks,  
illumed in the sun's last rays.

And a stillness lies on this mountain place,  
that can flood my heart and soul,  
With joy that comes with a magpie's song,  
or the cricket's drumming roll.

As the last of the tufted pigeons rise, to turn  
on their homeward track,  
They fill the air with that drumming beat, to rise  
'gainst the ranges black.

The cooling evening breezes pause, as they  
fondle the she-oak stands.  
And fresh cut stars, like tear filled eyes, flood  
the skies as by command.

Should a distant flicker of passing light, draw  
my eye from the changing hue --  
My heart will always with joy, return  
home to Marrangaroo

### THE WEDGETAILED EAGLE

By Ken Dean

Master of the thermals rising.  
Effort and display despising,  
Prince of crags, by rock face gliding.  
Lord of all the bushland places  
Ruler of less noble races,  
Eyes that see, and brain that traces,  
All who enter his domain.

Master of the ridge and valleys  
Wings the air as forth he sallies,  
Prince and keeper of life's tallies.  
Hard of eye, proud, uncaring,  
Sharp of talon, lordly bearing,  
Life and death are his for sharing,  
With all who enter his domain.

Poems from Ken Dean's book, "Broken Waratahs".

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942 email [mauricekerkham@hotmail.com](mailto:mauricekerkham@hotmail.com) or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

**SATURDAY WALKS:** Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Before attending ring the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy 4758 6009 or email [jp34@tpg.com.au](mailto:jp34@tpg.com.au)

Date	Details	Contact	Meet at	(km)	Grade	Map
Jun 12	<b>Noble Canyon and Glowworm tunnel, return via the grotto.</b> Carpool - 4wd preferred.	Bob 4757 2694	Mt Vic Station 8.30 am	10	2/3	Ben Bullen/ Cullen Bullen
Jun 19	<b>Oronga Ridge to Wongarra Ridge via the canyon.</b> Some wading, steep parts with slippery/ unstable sections. Protective clothing necessary. <b>Book in by the preceding Thursday.</b>	Hugh 0423 309 854	Contact leader. Party limit of 8 (wilderness area)	7	4	Mt Wilson Series 3. Never go off-track without a map!
Jun 26	<b>Pierces Pass to Blue Gum Forest.</b> 470 m descent and ascent	Bill 4758 8545	Mt Victoria Station 7.30 am	3	11	Mt Wilson
Jul 3	<b>Wiseman's Ferry - Finches Line of Road to Old Northern Road.</b> Car pool with free ferry.	Peter 4751 9637	Springwood Station car park, 8 am	3	11	Lower Portland/ St Albans
Jul 10	<b>Lawson Ridge to side ridge to Urella Lookdown.</b> Steep descent 150m to Jims Crk, steep ascent with some scrambling 140m.	Jim 4758 6009	Lawson Station CP (north side), 8.30 am	13 4off trk	3/4	Katoomba
Jul 12-16	<b>Midweek Monday to Friday at Wolgan Valley - Newnes Holiday Cabins.</b> Cost approx \$25 per person per night. Confirmed booking required by June 15 with deposit \$25. Party limit of 9.	Jim 4758 6009	The proposed program is on page 8. We will try to get the walks away by 9.15 each day.	Var	2, 3 3/4	Ben Bullen/ Mt Morgan
Jul 24	<b>Forward Notice.</b> Christmas in July - Jemby Rinjah 12.30 pm, 336 Evans Looking Road, Blackheath. \$40 pp, 3 course lunch. Deposit \$20 on booking.	AnneMarie 4759 2172	Walkers meet Evans Lookout CP at 10 am and decide destination on the day			
Sep 13-17	<b>Forward Notice.</b> <b>Deep Pass mid week camp</b>	Jim 4758 6009	Contact leader for directions and possibilities	Var	2, 3	NPWS Brochure

**MONDAY LEISURE WALKS:** Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Judith Dyer, 4758 6310, [judithbushwalker@hotmail.com](mailto:judithbushwalker@hotmail.com)

Date	Details	Grade	Contact	Meet
Jun 14	<b>Colosseum, Medlow Bath. Public Holiday.</b> Great views over Megalong.	3	Phil 4787 5560	Hydro Majestic, Medlow Bath, 9.45am
Jun 21	<b>Dark's Common, Lapstone Zig Zag.</b> Historical walk.	2	Heather 4739 1493	Glenbrook Station car park 9.30 am
Jun 29	<b>Red Hands Cave, Campfire Creek Circuit.</b> Aboriginal rock art site.	2	Ros 4733 3880	Glenbrook Station car park, 9.30 am.

**Contact Judith Dyer for July program**

**THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS:** Walks of 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Gail Schwedler 4782 1215 [platypusprotected@yahoo.com.au](mailto:platypusprotected@yahoo.com.au)

Jun 10	<b>Minnie Ha Ha Falls, North Katoomba.</b> Walk to waterfall to see regenerating vegetation.	2	Joan c/o 4782 1215	Opposite BM Council Chambers, Katoomba, 9.30 am.
Jun 17	<b>Haystack Lookout, Bells Line of Road.</b> Easy walk along original Bells Line of Road, then 10 minutes "bush bash" to a splendid lookout.	2	Phil 4787 5560	Mount Victoria Station, 9.45 am. Car pool.
Jun 24	<b>Lapstone Zig Zag/Dark's Common.</b> Historical walk. Bring lunch.	2	Maurice 4739 4942	Glenbrook Station car park, 9.30 am
Jul 1	<b>Empire Pass, Lawson.</b> Short loop walk past wonderful waterfalls. Some steps.	2	Phil 4787 5560	Lawson Bowling Club car park, 9.45 am
Jul 8	<b>Birdwood Gully, Springwood.</b> Walk through rainforest and unusual rock formations.	2	Maurice 4739 4942	Springwood Station car park, 9.15 am
Jul 15	<b>Bonnie Doon, Katoomba.</b> Clifftop walk with views.	1/2	Joan c/o 4782 1215	BM Council Chambers carpark, 9.30 am.

