

WHO'LL BAT FOR THE FLYING FOX?

At the July meeting of the Conservation Society, we learnt about the Grey Headed Flying Fox. The Grey-headed Flying-fox is a keystone species for the long-range pollination and seed dispersal of native trees. It lives on the east coast from Bundaberg in Queensland, down to eastern Victoria. Habitat loss and culling have greatly reduced their numbers so that they have been listed as a vulnerable species. At the meeting, Anja Divljan, from the University of Sydney reported that the NSW Government issues licences to orchardists but many have exceeded their quota. She presented data to conclude that almost a third of the wounded took some hours to die. The RSPCA is campaigning to have shooting banned. Victoria does not issue licences and Queensland has stopped shooting flying foxes because the practice is "inhumane". Many are orphaned as a result (photo from abc.net of mum and baby). The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is one of 60



organisations supporting the campaign to ban shooting of flying foxes. Ed Biel, an orchardist from Oakdale near Sydney, who is on the Government review panel, said "I don't support killing animals

willy-nilly (but) at the same time, I am very frustrated when I hear arguments from the ultra-green end where they don't even want farmers to have the right to protect the food they grow." Dr. Kerryn Parry-Jones also from the University of Sydney helps run a nursery for wounded and orphaned bats on the Central Coast. She lamented the absence of "real monitoring in place" resulting in "an uncontrolled shooting situation," and predicted the grey-headed flying fox would be "functionally extinct" in the wild by 2050. "We see shooting as an absolute last resort," said John Dengate, a spokesman for the Department of Environment and Climate Change which recommends that farmers cover their orchards in nets. Fiona

NATIONAL TREE DAY

National Schools Tree Day on 31st July was an opportunity for students to help protect our environment. By planting native trees and shrubs, we will help to combat climate change, provide food and shelter for wildlife and make our schools better places to come to. This year over 300,000 volunteers planted more than a million native trees and shrubs around the country. At Katoomba High Year 7 and 11 planted 50 trees. Daniel



LYRE LYRE

On 25 June bushwalkers from the Conservation society joined Carol Probetts for a lyrebird walk near Pulpit Rock at Mt Victoria. Christine Davies recalled that "in past years the resident lyrebird put on a wonderful concert". At a creek crossing they saw an Eastern Yellow Robin and White-browed Scrubwrens, but no sight or sound of a lyrebird. "Unexpected bird calls were those of Noisy Miners, unusual in the upper mountains.....There were lots of lyrebird scratchings, some old dancing mounds, but no lyrebird". They wondered if the rock climbers track had forced the resident lyrebird to move elsewhere. " We were nearing the end of the



walk, when suddenly there was an influx of little birds—a most marvellous mixed flock" of Treecreeper Thornbill, Honeyeater, Spinebill, Varied Sittella and a pair of Rock Warblers, "Even if you don't see what you set out to see, there is always something special on a Bushwalk", Christine said. Alastair

AGE OF STUPID

A Film Review The Age of Stupid is a new documentary about climate change and how it will impact people in the future. It is set in the year 2055, an era where most of the world has been destroyed by floods (due to global warming). An old man (played by Peter Postlethwaite), who is one of the few surviving humans, looks back on the 'past' from his mysterious archives located somewhere off the coast of Norway. Personally, I found this film informative and also quite entertaining. Unlike some documentaries, it is quite dramatic and has several cartoons in it so it grabs your attention right from the beginning. Where the film fell down was that it tended to be overly 'apocalyptic' and negative about the future. Also, the character stories seemed somewhat disjointed. Despite these flaws, it is excellent and I would recommend it to anybody wishing to understand the climate change issue and how it impacts people from various socioeconomic groups across the world. Michael



WASTE OF A DEBATE

On Wednesday the 26th of August, senior environment teacher at Katoomba High Mr Yates and three year 7 students, Kyle Antaw, Jack Chard and Connor Hansen, attended an environmental debate at the conference centre in Parramatta Park. The junior KHS debating team took on Seven Hills High in the first round. The topic was that we should prepare for climate change instead of reducing carbon emissions. The students knew the topic and prepared arguments for both sides, while the side they were on was decided by the toss of a coin. Our team was on the affirmative side while Seven Hills High was on the negative side. The KHS team was successful in defeating Seven Hills High, so they proceeded to the second round against Auburn Christian School. The second topic was that zero waste is impossible, we will always need landfill. This time, the team was on the negative side arguing that zero waste isn't possible. Unfortunately our team was narrowly defeated, missing out on the finals. Our students came 4th overall and were happy with their results. Liam



WATER SURVEY

At this year's winter magic festival students from Katoomba High school participated in a stall to conduct a survey of passerby's to find their opinion on which was better: Blue Mountains tap water or bottled water. Laurie Sharman had this to say about the day "it was very interesting to hear what different had to say about it and I would like to do it again next year even in the freezing cold". 179 bottles were tested 58 preferred bottled water and 56 preferred tap water and the rest couldn't tell the difference. Daniel

DUCK SHOOT?

In June this year, the Hon Robert Brown of the Shooters Party introduced a bill into the NSW parliament. which if passed would allow hunters to shoot native birds in NSW National Parks such as: Shelduck (picture), Grass, Wood, Hardhead, Pink-eared, Water Whistling and Black Ducks; Blue-winged Shoveler Chestnut and Grey Teal; Brown and Stubble Quail; Australian White and Straw Necked Ibis; Black Swan Bronzewing and Topknot Pigeons; Galah; Little and Long-billed Corella; Purple Swamphen Sulphur Crest Cockatoo. Find Strobos at www.bluemountains.org.au



STIR FRY SOON

After months of hard work, clearing weeds, digging, clearing up rubbish and constructing retaining walls, stage one of the new vegetable garden is finished. "We selected a position with plenty of sunlight and close to the support unit", said project manager Katoomba High School student, Joshua Luken. "The building of this garden has taught us so much



about how to plan the layout of the garden, how to use a range of tools safely, how to use maths to plan and build the retaining walls and some horticultural knowledge on what plants to select for winter planning" Josh added. On Friday afternoon KHS students planted the first crop. This included broccoli, cauliflower, garlic, asparagus, carrots, onions and bok choy. We expect our first harvest in Spring we can't wait to make a delicious stir-fry! KHS PRESS TEAM

GM-SPECIAL REPORT

The above story is all about organic food but does genetically modified food pose a threat to Human Health and the Environment? No says a recent government report. Whether genetically modified foods are harmful to humans or a benefit to our health has been debated in our own Council chambers recently about whether the Blue Mountains should become "GM free". Recently the Australian government released a report based on the health and environmental issues of GM foods and its potential to Australian farmers. Due to this report it seems likely NSW and VIC will lift the ban in GM crops. What is GM? It's quite simple, it is food produced from any crop or animal that has been genetically altered during its production using modern techniques of gene technology. This can enhance crop yields, eradicate diseases and create drought resistant plants. Because of this some people say it is a risk to public health and may upset the balance of

nature. Jude Carman, from the University of Adelaide, said "Studies show that rats fed a diet of GM canola had a recorded increase in their liver weight of about 16%". We should be demanding further testing because when you look at the safety aspects, we just don't know what the impacts may be. Make up your own mind! Trent



QUOLL CORNER

Menura's Song

I'm Menura! I'm Menura! - The clever lyre bird,
I've the greatest store of talent,
But then, you've surely heard;
I sing songs of every kind,
I'm the cleverest in the world,
I'm master of the dance,
Have you heard me mime, perchance?
I'm Menura, the minstrel of the bush.
I'm Menura! I'm Menura! - I think you'll all agree
My entertainment's best around,
You won't spy me in a tree,
I love dancing on the ground,
I need only clear a space
Then I sing and dance with grace,
I'm the lyre bird, Menura,
I'm Menura, the minstrel of the bush.

By Clive R Roebuck

Find the birds from the 'Duck Shoot' story

O B S G C H S E I T
O L K N O A W S B G
T A C I R L A H I R
A C U W E A M O S E
K K D E L G P V C Y
C S L Z L L H E M T
O W E N A I E L P E
C A H O Y A N E G A
J N S R J U L R P L
K R W B N Q H N L H

Time for a Power shift

By Natalie Toms and Noni Trevail

On the first weekend of the holidays the two of us went to an environmental conference held at the Sydney Western University in Parramatta and the University of Technology in Sydney. There we were taught political campaign strategies for addressing climate change.

Power shift was really about demonstrating to young people from across Australia how to be pro-active, raise your voice and make a difference. Up to 1,500 young Australians converged for the three-day national climate change summit, most of these people being 15- 25 years old. Power shift was also about placing pressure on politicians to do something, and to show that the young people of Australia, or the world, care for the environment and the world we live in.

There were plenty of guest speakers, such as Tim Flannery and the premier of South Australia, who announced what was being done to make Australia a greener place. These weren't the only speakers; plenty of passionate young people stood up to say what they felt needed to be done such as the effecting a lot of residents.

Although we didn't get to go on the first day, the second was still fun, as well as the second. Everyone knows the show 'So You Think You Can Dance,' right? Well the two of us participated in a flash mob dance with A-live, which included former finalists from this show. Over a thousand people converged outside the Sydney Opera House to show this dance, and emphasise just how serious the young people are about addressing climate change.

We, as the young people of Australia, have a really important role to play in terms of building the climate change movement. It's our future that will be affected if we don't do something now. In other words, young people have the most to lose when it comes to climate and energy issues, and its up to us to make a difference, and persuade the politicians to make one too.

POWERSHIFT

