

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



PROMOTING THE BLUE MOUNTAINS...



Kerry Fryer has been the Executive Officer of Blue Mountains Tourism Ltd since September, 2000 while also being Vice-Chair of the Australian Regional Tourism Network and a Member of the Centre for Regional Tourism Research. She has managed a wholesale business, been the owner/builder/operator of a Ballina Beach Resort and spent eight years with Tourism NSW.

Kerry will be speaking at our July Monthly Meeting about the Greater Blue Mountains Drive, the National Landscape Program and Blue Mountains Tourism.

The Blue Mountains is said to be the third most popular tourist destination in Australia after the Great Barrier Reef and Uluru. Tourism is, therefore, a major factor in regional economic development planning.

Can we suggest that the Tourist Industry in the Blue Mountains and Conservationists should have compatible agendas?

THIS IS A VERY TIMELY MEETING IN VIEW OF THE JOHN O'NEILL REPORT
(see page 7 of this *Hut News*)

MONTHLY MEETING 7.30pm
FRIDAY 25 July, 2008

Conservation Hut, Fletcher Street
(far west end) Wentworth Falls

From the President ...

Greetings! As usual, I have been involved in many issues but the **G**Planning changes have been particularly prominent. The legislation was passed by the NSW Parliament about two weeks ago so we now have to mitigate the impact for our environment.

I am currently writing the Society's submission on the draft *NSW Housing Code for exempt and complying development*. **HEY, DON'T stop reading** – it's more engaging than you think!!

The Code outlines where 'complying' single-storey houses can be built without being approved by Council or being open to comment by a neighbour or any member of the public. Some areas are excluded from complying development but the draft code does not clearly exclude Environment Protection zones, Living Bushland Conservation zones or some of our 'environmental constraint areas' (buffers, slopes). These areas need to be excluded because development must be tailored to suit the environmental constraints of the block (and thereby minimise sedimentation, and protect adjoining swamps or ecological communities). Plonking a pre-approved house on the site as if it was a flat, cleared block in the city just isn't good enough!

Similarly, we oppose tennis courts and small dams being classified as 'exempt', thus not needing any assessment before construction. This may be OK in Dubbo but not in many places in the Blue Mountains.

In short, we are working to make the planning changes actually reflect the unique circumstance of a city surrounded by a World Heritage Area rather than approaching development in a simplistic 'one size fits all' manner. I'll keep you informed on our progress. **Tara Cameron**

REVIEW OF OUR MONTHLY MEETING, FRIDAY 27 JUNE 08

A major study to record the distribution and abundance of, and threats facing, native animals of the Greater Southern Sydney Region was undertaken by DECC and the SCA between 2002 and 2007. Project staff mapped fauna habitat and surveyed animals, and assessed their conservation status in the bushland around southern Sydney, Wollongong and the southern Blue Mountains. **Kylie Madden**, Fauna Programs Officer with DECC came along specifically to speak to the report she has compiled on *The Fauna of the Blue Mountains Special Areas*, (ie Blackheath, Katoomba and Woodford Creek). In a sophisticated yet lively and informative *Powerpoint* presentation she pointed to the nine vertebrate species of most concern: the Stuttering Frog, Regent Honeyeater, Leura Skink, Littlejohn's Tree Frog, Spotted-tail Quoll, Broad-headed Snake, Barking Owl, Large-eared Pied Bat and the Large-footed Myotis. Most are suffering habitat loss, although the snake is a victim of bushrock collection and the quoll of feral predators.

The study provides information to help the community ensure the long-term survival of these animals and reduce the impact of pests. The full report in a magnificent five-volume array of photos, charts, maps and recovery plans can be most directly accessed by Googling *Terrestrial Vertebrate Fauna of the Greater Southern Sydney Region*.

After supper the film, *Rivers of Shame 2*, was screened, presenting the grim threats facing the rivers, catchments, aquifers, irrigation schemes, (and road bridges!) due to subsidence, uplift and cracking of surface rock resulting from underground longwall mining. Even our food production is at risk! The film is the latest effort by the *Rivers SOS Alliance* of some forty groups of conservationists and agriculturists to continue to raise community horror at the damage, and to bring the State Government to the point of mandating a safety zone of at least 1km around all rivers in NSW. **If you are able to host a screening for friends and family, please email ronwit@ozemail.com.au for a copy of the disc.** **RW**

STOP PRESS: NATIONAL PARKS UNDER SIEGE! See enclosed flyer & report on page 7...

HUT NEWS

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Letter of the Month – July 2008

Our regular request to members
for campaign action by letter writing
by *Robin Mosman & Rosemary Lathouris*

THE ABC of CLIMATE CHANGE – AUSTRALIA, BANGLADESH AND COAL

Last month's *Hut News* carried a report on the largest proposed open-cut coal mine in the world, the Phulbari Coal Project in Bangladesh (see *Issue No. 249, June 2008*).

The site was originally discovered by BHP in the 1990s; the currently planned funding is dependent on the Asian Development Bank (ADB); and Australia is the fifth biggest donor to the ADB. Australia will have a big say in whether the mine goes ahead.

Send a letter to
The Treasurer,
The Hon Wayne Swan (*who is a governor of the ADB*)
PO Box 6022,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600

Tell him how concerned you are about the proposed development, making some or all of the following points:

- *Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change. Scientists estimate a one-metre sea-level rise would flood 20% to 50% of the country.*
- *Over its lifetime the mine will add some 1.2 billion tonnes of CO₂ to the world's atmosphere.*
- *For these reasons, it is particularly important to ensure that all funding provided by the Asian Development Bank supports renewable energy production, and withholds support for climate-intensive development projects like the Phulbari Coal Project.*
- *The Project is expected to directly and indirectly affect nearly half a million people, and result in widespread environmental destruction of land, 78% of which is agricultural.*
- *The Project is being vigorously opposed by many thousands of affected people in Bangladesh.*
- *The mine will bring little benefit to the people of Bangladesh, since it is foreign-owned and most of the coal would be exported.*
- *The 6% royalty stream will be largely offset by the loss of some of the country's best agricultural land.*
- *The ADB's own Energy Policy (1995) states that the Bank should actively promote environmentally sound mining practices. Support for this project clearly contradicts this policy.*
- *The Australian Government has a responsibility to make the ADB accountable to its own policy.*

To read more, go to <http://www.aidwatch.org.au>



THE BLUE MOUNTAINS REALLY NEED YOU...



on our Land Use Sub-Committee to ensure each and every land development takes place under legitimate environmental scrutiny and regulation. A former member had this to say of his experience:

"During my time on the Consoc Land Use Sub-Committee I dare to say that I learned enough to be quite useful. The highlights of my learning process were the field trips to potential trouble spots with Lyndal Sullivan and Bushcare Officer, Clive Barker. I learnt in this practical way what aspects of siting, drainage, roading, and creek, swamp and bushland protection to look for. The reading and applying the Council rules then became so much easier."

If you are interested in joining this group please ring Tara Cameron (BMCS President) on 4751 1130.

The major upgrade of the Blue Mountains Sewerage Reticulation is approaching a highly satisfactory completion. Ross Coster has been the BMCS representative on the Sydney Water Community Working Group for twelve years. This is his (slightly edited) report on the trials, tribulations and triumphs of the process. Thanks Ross, and congratulations on a splendid effort on our behalf.

In the late 1980s, the State Government promised the people of the Blue Mountains a major upgrade to sewerage reticulation through the Sewerage Backlog Program. This program required:

- Drilling a 3m-diameter unlined Tunnel from Springwood to North Katoomba
- Upgrading of the Winmalee Sewage Treatment Plant (to 18 megalitres per day dry-weather capacity)
- Connection of the Tunnel to Winmalee Sewage Treatment Plant
- Diversion of the sewage flows into this Tunnel
- Closure of Sewage Treatment Plants at Springwood, Hazelbrook, Wentworth Falls, South Katoomba and North Katoomba
- Construction of a pipeline from Glenbrook to Penrith
- Closure of Glenbrook Sewage Treatment Plant
- Upgraded reticulation throughout the Blue Mountains
- Connection of thousands of additional properties to the new sewerage system.

During drilling of the Tunnel between Wentworth Falls and North Katoomba, the contractors encountered heavily fragmented bedrock with significant ground water inflows, and with such difficult topography, it became uneconomical to extend the Tunnel beyond North Katoomba.

At this point Sydney Water formed a Community Working Group to formulate a plan for upgrading sewerage in Medlow Bath, Blackheath and Mt Victoria.

Di Shanks was the initial Consoc representative on this Committee, but in about 1996 she resigned and I was appointed as the replacement.

Over the next few years we came up with a design for upgrading sewerage in the Upper Blue Mountains that involved:

- Sewerage reticulation in Medlow Bath (there was none in place)

- Upgrading reticulation in Blackheath and Mt Victoria
- Upgrading Blackheath Sewage Treatment Plant to meet 'Class P' receiving water standards
- Closure of Mt Victoria Sewage Treatment Plant
- Pressurised sewage mains from Medlow Bath and Mt Victoria to the upgraded Blackheath Sewage Treatment Plant

The selected design met several objectives of the Community Working Group:

- Local residents wanted to treat their sewage locally rather than export the problem to another area.
- Environmentalists wanted to maximise the scope for future effluent re-use.

• Everybody wanted to limit the opportunity for large-scale development of the Upper Blue Mountains, which has for decades been limited by the sewerage infrastructure.

However, the selected design was controversial as it continued release of treated effluent into Hat Hill Creek and therefore the Grose River. It was lobbied against by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, the Total Environment Centre, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, all on the basis of that effluent release.

The Ministers concerned (Bob Debus was one of them) rejected the plan, and sent us back to the drawing board.

The Community Working Group then examined a range of options for connecting the Upper Blue Mountains to the Sewerage Tunnel at North Katoomba.

The final option selected involved:

- A pressurised sewage main from Mt Victoria to Blackheath
- Closure of Mt Victoria Sewage Treatment Plant
- A (larger) pressurised sewage main from Blackheath to Medlow Bath
- Closure of Blackheath Sewage Treatment Plant
- A bore from Medlow Bath to North Katoomba
- Upgraded reticulation in Mt Victoria and Blackheath
- Low-pressure reticulation in Medlow Bath.

The bore was the tough part as it had to be 2.4km long (a new record), fully lined (to prevent ground water infiltration) and pass underneath the drinking water dams at Cascades. As completed the bore consists of a 600mm fully-lined primary bore, a 400mm fully-lined backup bore and a pair of new Tunnel portal alcoves in the North Katoomba Tunnel.

The total project cost is about \$155 million, including the reticulation works.



Ross is a top contributor to the work of BMCS. He was for five years a member of the Management Committee, and now through his software development and electronic repair business, Mt Hay Technology in Lawson, he maintains the Society email list, prints the Hut News mailing labels and accommodates the Society Nursery on land at the rear of his office.

Late in June 2008, Sydney Water plans to switch flows from the Blackheath Sewage Treatment Plant into the new pressurised main. New reticulation in Blackheath and Medlow Bath will then begin.

Reticulation of Medlow Bath is being done using a Low Pressure system.

Rather than using gravity to drain sewage away from each property to large common sewage pumping stations, each property will have installed a 700 litre reservoir (or 'pot'), a macerator and a pump.

The pump sends macerated sewage to a low-pressure main in the street, where it travels under combined pressure from many residential pumps to a gravity point. Sydney Water installs, owns and maintains the equipment; the resident supplies power for the pump (about \$25 per year).

Low pressure has several advantages:

- It is cheaper – it can be installed in the footpath or road bed, at shallow depths, and can travel uphill, whereas in rugged terrain gravity involves massive trenches.
- It allows connection of properties that are below the nearest gravity point.

Switchover of Blackheath Sewage Treatment Plant is in fact planned for 24 June 2008. Switchover of Mt Victoria Sewage Treatment Plant will occur later in the year. Then additional properties in Mt Victoria will be able to be connected.

By January 2009 the project will be complete. It is important that Sydney Water be made aware of any site remediation works that are required well before that date!

One of our recent Monthly Speakers noted how the Easter Islanders destroyed the natural environment of their island by cutting down every tree to serve gods that do not exist. Australians are destroying their natural environment in service of a god called economic growth. But does that god really exist?

Since 1991, we have been told by Canberra and the media that the Australian economy has been growing at around 3%-5% every year. If that was true the increased wealth would have to go somewhere. Some economists have even suggested that economic growth of that order should generate increased per capita income of around \$9,000pa, in real terms. Given inequality of income, we could say that perhaps \$7,000pa of that could go to the top 2% with most (but not all) of the rest receiving only \$2,000pa. That would mean that most of the working population, working before and since 1991, would now have net real increased purchasing power of around \$34,000 after 17 years of that economic growth.

We can ask ourselves, how many continuously employed people do we know that now have net real purchasing power of \$34,000 or more than in 1991?

Over the same period, inflation of at least 3%pa has been admitted together with an increase in the money supply of around 9%pa. That supply increase seems to be credit-cum-debt creation via bank loans and credit cards.

We can also ask ourselves, how can there be any net benefit to Australia from that proclaimed growth if inflation has increased in line with that growth and debt has increased three-fold? **All that has increased, it seems, is access to debt instruments by greater numbers.**

Australian consumer debt, at 160% plus of average incomes, is now among the highest in the world. Firstly, it may also be worth noting that wages as a percentage of national income in Australia are now the lowest in the history of that statistic. Secondly, a public company CEO in 1975 could expect to earn seven to eight times average earnings, while in 2007, more than 70 times, plus super, access to private aircraft and holiday homes. Experienced executives can now rise into the higher reaches of a Top 100 corporation and be paid \$150,000 to \$300,000pa. At Divisional General Manager their income can increase five-fold. For the next hop to say, Executive Director, their income can double. And the next step to, say Deputy Chief Executive their income can double again while most of the corporate workforce, many with the same tertiary education, can labour long and hard for much less than \$150,000pa. The workaday people down the line fare even worse.

Corporate Sector wealth creation can also be questioned, even after accepting that profits are privatised and the costs, particularly with pollution, too often socialised. It was once the practice to frown on corporations having total debt of more than 60% of shareholders' funds. The much too usual thing now is for corporations to have debt of more than 90%-120%.

The Corporate use of margin loans is even more revealing. The Australian Stock Exchange has reported that it knows of at least \$75 billion of margin loans (only a small percentage of the purchase price of the share is actually paid) to corporate directors to buy shares in their own companies (expenses are all tax deductible) thus increasing the market value of those shares and allowing those directors to appear successful while also making a killing by gradually selling their artificially priced shares to the mugs, namely those who manage our superannuation funds.



How is all this debt funded to provide the illusion of economic growth and prosperity? We only have to notice that money has been virtually free in Japan and the USA (negative real interest rates from inflation being higher than the very low interest rates). An Australian bank could borrow US\$800m in 2001 at 2.5%, deposit around A\$1500m into their coffers (the exchange rate was then about 50c) and credit-create that up to A\$13,500m (for every \$1 cash deposit a bank can easily lend up to \$9-\$10). The bank's gross profit on the A\$1500m component is around 72%. The gross profit on the \$11,000m component (the amount credit-created) is almost 100%. With credit card interest of 16%-22%, those gross profits are astronomical! If they have to write off some of that debt they get a tax loss. They can then sell that written-off debt to subsidiaries who make token recovery efforts and in turn write off more tax losses – a practice that allows the Banks to also do very well with their bad debts.

We are told the great success story of the debt-free Commonwealth Government, made possible by the sale of the people's assets, including Telstra,

Qantas and the CBA, to the people. Our taxes established these institutions and capitalised them over the decades. The Government was only the custodian of those assets yet the politicians assumed ownership and got the Australian people to wipe out Government debt by buying assets they already owned, thus providing the illusion that the Australian economy is well managed.

We are continually told that we cannot be too aggressive in seeking to save the environment or resist climate change for fear of reducing economic growth, but we could be just as deluded as the Easter Islanders. The god called economic growth may not really exist and all this credit creation debt may only be increasing the asset prices of houses, land, buildings and shares, adding to landfills and polluting waterways while not returning any real benefit to most of the population.

David Hall – BMCS Publicity Officer

BMCS Admin Officer, Rob Baigent, attended the second session of the Whitlam Institute Energy Security Symposium in June. The speakers were Dr Beverley Ronald, Group Exec-Energy, CSIRO, Dr Allen Lowe, Exec-Director CRC for Coal in Sustainable Development, and Ian Dunlop, CEO Australian Association for Peak Oil. **Rob said:**

All three were optimistic about the human race surviving, but emphasised that some drastic changes are required very quickly. These 'conclusions' emerged:

1. The world has passed **Peak Oil**.
2. There is no shortage of fossil fuels overall – there are massive reserves of gas and shale oil in particular.
3. Australia is extremely well-endowed in fossil fuels (except oil), and should concentrate its efforts on making efficient, zero-emission use of coal and gas.
4. Australia has a critical shortage of expertise to be able to make the necessary rapid changes.
5. For security we need diversity – hundreds of small power generating systems using diverse energy sources rather than the few massive generators we now have.
6. Global security requires energy/emissions equity.
7. Current market-economy drivers have become strategic risks.
8. Oil depletion, water depletion, food production limits and climate change are converging to produce a very unstable world.
9. The atmospheric CO2 concentration should probably be limited to 350ppm, not the 450-500ppm which seems to be the current aim.
10. A new, powerful, world-governing body is required.

Kanagaloon etc Borefields

The Minister for Emergency Services & Water, Nathan Rees, has said that Sydney's water-saving efforts and the easing of the drought conditions with recent rainfall have allowed the Government to halt construction of groundwater borefields at Kangaloon in the Southern Highlands and Leonay and Wallacia in Western Sydney. Hooray! The key campaigner, *Save Water Alliance*, is ecstatic in proclaiming, "At a time when Sydney people are about to cop a surcharge of approximately \$170 per household to pay for the Desal. plant, everyone would be overjoyed that the Government has opted to divert the \$120m earmarked for the borefields to **generously** subsidise the purchase of 300,000 water tanks for urban use. The *SWA* has written to thank Consoc for its support, commenting that **Brian Marshall's** "excellent report on the SCA Environmental Assessment added weight to the NO Vote."

Holysome Water

In another context, Groundwater Champion, **Brian Marshall**, has been quoted by none other than Shakespeare! How so? Well not in so many words, for as WS said, "Words fly up, my thoughts remain below." No, Shakespeare drew this picture:



You see Brian hit the jackpot on the letters page of *The SMH* on 11 June. He pointed out that World Youth Day registration will guzzle 2.2m bottles of water, costing \$500 per kilolitre for the "local" product against \$1.85 per kilolitre for our superb tap water. And he said that 65 per cent of the PET bottles would be sent to the tip. **Roll on – our Drink Tap Water** campaign.

Lithgow Regional Subcommittee

Dr Ian Wright, whose presentation on Grose River pollution at our Monthly Meeting was reported in the May edition of *Hut News*, has been appointed to conduct water testing in the Upper Cox's River catchment. This is the next step in the endeavour to track, monitor and control the quality of water emanating from industrial sources licensed under the Protection of Environment Operations Act 1997, as reported in this column last month. Consoc is funding the testing.

Letters to the Editor (Short)
Always Welcome

Victoria Pass & River Lett Hill

The RTA has been conducting a series of 'community consultations' in Hartley, Lithgow and Mt Victoria on the upgrading by realignment of the GWH between Mt Victoria and Lithgow. The extensive declared 'study area' begins at Brownton Oval and includes Mt Vic. township and the Heritage Roads off Mt York which are part of GoS2. It does not include Newnes Plateau. It was possible to infer from the meeting at Mt Victoria on 17 June that the economic route had already been decided and that the consultation process was a piece of window dressing. However, political imperatives consequent on diverse lobbying could yet endanger the Plateau and Consoc will monitor progress, while urging protection of the Heritage Roads.

A Chat to Phil Koperberg

At a productive meeting with our State Member, **Tara** and **Brian** outlined our *Drink Tap Water* campaign, emphasised the environmental folly and extra cost implications of routing the GWH realignment along the Causeway towards Newnes, and asked an opinion on the Bells Line of Road proposal. Phil expressed no confidence that the latter would proceed. He also undertook to relay our concern to the Minister about uncontrolled trail biking on Newnes Plateau and showed interest in visiting the GoS2 region.

Brian expressed concern at the lack of response from DoP (Mr Sartor) in relation to the Sydney Construction Material Strategy. Planning Reforms were also discussed and our criticism of the North-West Sub-regional Strategy in respect of 7000 additional homes for the Blue Mountains LGA was also taken onboard.

Upcoming Council Elections

Consoc, through **Bart Beech**, is preparing to again publish the voting records of all Councillors on the existing Council in respect of all building projects larger than four units where approvals were not unanimous. This information will be of primary assistance to our Land Use Subcommittee and becomes a useful public indicator of voting intentions on other environmental matters. In June, **Tara** will be meeting with the 'other' Phil, Mr Pinyon, General Manager of the BMCC, to discuss the LEP 1991 review and other land-use issues.

Wildlife Protection Areas

Consoc Management Committee has voted unanimously to support at this time the BMCC declared position on the creation of Wildlife Protection Areas (WPAs) in the LGA, namely that Council is to thoroughly

examine the overall feasibility of potential WPAs before initiating any trials or establishing such areas.

Springwood Town Centre

Consoc made a submission on this issue in September 2007, and there is opportunity for us to speak to it at a forthcoming public meeting. As well as advocating that the BMCC should retain ownership of the Civic Centre precinct, we suggested that:

- Council should provide firm guidelines, rather than mere suggestions, in relation to the sustainable building practices;
- there are concerns that the development of the Southern carpark could increase runoff and erosion into Magdala Creek catchment;
- there should be strong links to bushwalks such as Fairy Dell, Deanii Reserve and Springwood Creek;
- indigenous native planting should be adhered to in accordance with the policy in Springwood Master Plan.

SCA Catchment Management

We have joined the Colong Foundation and NPA in conditionally supporting the Draft Sydney Water Catchment Management (General) Regulation 2008. In a letter to the Minister, Nathan Rees, we emphasised that the Water Board should have powers to prevent the removal of rock, sand and stone on private land in pristine drinking water catchments. We asked for regulation that ensures adequate control of vehicles, cycling and horse-riding. We suggested that the SCA should have the power to remove farm buildings and works on reasonable grounds. And we supported the use of small camp fires and being able to swim in Schedule 2 catchments.

Flying Fox 'Protection'

The Grey-Headed and Black Flying Fox are listed as vulnerable under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act, but it is still possible to obtain a shooting licence. A NSW Nature Conservation Council policy formulated in 2002 called for shooting to be replaced by more sustainable measures by 2004. It is now 2008. The Society, through **Ilan Salbe**, has asked the DECC to consider, unless there are compelling arguments to the contrary, following the Queensland example in stopping licensed shooting. **RW**



Rockeries: a running postman with yellow buttons?

Macquarie dictionary defines a rockery as “a mound of rocks and earth for growing ferns or other plants” and every garden, no matter how small, can afford to have one or more of these interesting features. The design can be left entirely to the individual but the key feature is that a rockery is a place to display a variety of small, interesting plants amidst the texture of rocks. They have the added bonus of providing safe refuges for small creatures like skinks and, if near a pond, for frogs. As they are normally built up, they are excellent for hosting plants which like well-drained conditions.

Our Consoc nurseries can offer a variety of small plants eminently suited for a rockery. *Brachycome multifida* (cut-leaf daisy) has mauve flowers with a yellow centre and also comes in a white form. Related *Brachycome dilatata* has more divided leaves and darker flowers and both form attractive small clumps with some flowers for most of the year. Their compact nature can be maintained by pruning away old growth at the end of winter.

Chrysocephalum apiculatum (yellow buttons) has numerous small yellow-orange flowers, again for most of the year, and by similar pruning can form a compact mass. The combination of this species with the Brachycomes provides nice colour contrast both with flowers and foliage. *Rhodanthe anthemoides* is a perennial bushy plant with numerous small (about 25mm in diameter) white flowers which prefers a somewhat moister situation.

Helichrysum scorpioides produces pretty yellow compact flower heads on stalks about 20-30cm tall in autumn while two other daisies *Helichrysum elatum* (white Paper daisy) and *Bracteantha bracteatum* (yellow pa-



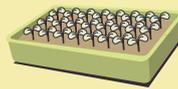
per daisy) are both taller and produce papery flowers which can be dried. *Podolepis hieracioides* is a plant from the higher parts of the Blue Mountains and has large showy yellow flowers on stalks up to 70cm tall in summer.

While all the above are from the daisy family there is a range of other types suitable for rockeries. For small trailing plants or ground-covers we recommend *Kennedia prostrata* (running postman), so named because of its scarlet flowers borne in spring and *Acaena novae-zelandiae* (bidgee-widgee) which grows rapidly and has attractive bright green foliage and reddish-brown burrs. If you like the unusual why not *Daviesia alata* a low strappy plant with no discernible leaves and clusters of deep orange flowers with red and yellow markings?

These are just a selection of suitable rockery plants in our nurseries and we invite you to come and choose when we re-open in August. Until then, good gardening!
Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager

A NEW HOME FOR OUR PLANTS

We have some leads, but the Society's nurseries still need to confirm an area over which to construct a shade-house to store around 30,000 plants for RTA contracts. Preferably mid- to lower-mountains because of a more favourable climate to enhance growing. A disused Council-owned site or a private block we could lease for several years would be ideal. **Please contact: Kevin Bell 4787 6436 or kevinbell@eftel.net.au if you have any ideas.**



Andy Gardiner
on descent

LOOK, this!s an onopordum!



Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group, part of the Bushcare Network, meets on the second Saturday morning of each month, 9am till noon. Tools and gloves are provided, instruction on weed identification and treatment is given.

You bring a hearty snack, a beverage and a wanton will for weed wasting! **Ring Karen Hising: 4757 1929**
But if you can't make it to our site in Wentworth Falls, please consider finding a Group nearer to your home at website: www.weedsbluemountains.org.au/bushcare_groups.asp or phone Lyndal Sullivan at: **BMCC Bushcare Group 4780 5528**

Too much canyon scarcely enough!

A sublime day, crisp air and that clear blue sky we know in autumn, and 23 Consoc walkers joined Bob van Reyswood for the Saturday May 31 walk.

Split into two stages, the first negotiated Noble Canyon and the ever-changing aspects of a ravine once eroded by roaring torrents – as evidenced by a ‘path’ where two or three could sometimes walk abreast, this often beneath tantalizingly narrow crevices reaching far above. A fairly normal canyon, you say? Yes, that’s OK, but nowhere near enough! Amazing!?

Marvellous!?! Come on – this one starts with Stupendous and leaves you bereft of adequate superlatives! Tree-ferns, intimate creek crossings beneath beetling orange cliffs – WOW!!

Morning tea was taken at a precarious rock ‘look-out’ viewing the stern south side of Donkey Mountain in the Wolgan Valley. After lunch, the second stage wound through Glow-Worm Tunnel where the little critters put on a fine display for us. Bob led us to more great valley views thence out via the delicious ‘Grotto’ – more ferns in the coolth of the gully as we followed the stream upwards.

A great walk – after the 10m descent into the Canyon with a tape for security not overly difficult, or taxing, considering the rewards. Sincere thanks to the five drivers who faced the challenge of descending pot-holes and rising petrol prices for the benefit of others. I hope they were reimbursed. And thank you, Bob, Great Chief of the Kwakwaka’wakw.
Hugh Spiers

NATIONAL PARKS UNDER SIEGE!

The final report by John O'Neill (*Review into Tourism in New South Wales, April 2008*) was released to the public in early June. The terms of reference required a comprehensive analysis of the marketing, infrastructure, regulatory and planning environments of the NSW tourism industry. Need for the report reflected the premise that global tourism is a growth industry with economic and social benefits that include an enduring demand for employees. It also reflected the view that NSW is missing the boat due to government-imposed regulatory and planning constraints.

The report's far-reaching recommendations embrace the notions that tourism is good for the economy, its growth should be facilitated through government expenditure (public money), and planning and regulatory aspects must be streamlined.

The report contains environmental concerns:

- It requires the NSW Government to achieve world's best practice in rapid and efficient processing of development applications by the Department of Planning and local government. (This spawns the 'Sartor' approach to consultation!)

- It requires agencies whose areas of responsibility affect the tourism industry (e.g. NPWS) to ensure that, within three years, their 'tourism-friendliness' at least matches comparable agencies in Victoria and Queensland – implementing the change is to be overviewed by the Minister for Tourism and the NSW Tourism Council, and to be approved by Cabinet.

- It stipulates that Government should commit to a proactive policy of opening State assets (national parks, forests, lands) to tourism – the policy should woo those paying to sustain and enhance the assets, as opposed to 'focusing on protecting those assets from people'. (A one-eyed view of the role of parks!)

Yet the most disturbing aspect is one of omission – the report totally disregards greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. 'Growth-is-good' and 'business-as-usual' concepts are supplanted by 'growth is paramount regardless of consequences'.

Bob Beale's article (*Nature's not sacred, let's use our national parks, SMH, June 13 2008, p15*) is a response to the O'Neill proposal to expand commercial tourism in national parks. He promotes "conservation through sustainable use", which he explains as an apparently contradictory strategy that "seeks to maintain a

natural resource by exploiting it". Then, having cited a couple of examples of 'successful' commercialisation (such as exploiting mountain gorillas in Rwanda), he concludes that there is no practical reason why more commercial activities such as regulated hunting and controlled harvesting of fruits and plants (not just tourism) should be excluded from parks.

Bob's article also portrays the downside of commercial exploitation of parks. For example:

"Clearly, there are limits to commercial-scale tourism... if, say, a certain fast-food chain wanted to erect a big yellow M on top of the Three Sisters,"

"Many conservationists are understandably excitable about any threat to our parks: our history is littered with sorry examples of brutal land clearing, mindless development for profit, or simply stupid government policies that leave ecological ruin in their wake."

"A tough protectionist stance... appeals because it accommodates our deep distrust of amoral commerce and keeps a firm grip on hard-won conservation gains."

He seemingly believes that the Iemma Government and commercial enterprises comprehend the meaning of moderation and can be trusted to balance environmental needs against the 'dollar-god'. This is naïve. There is a clear pattern of modifying legislation to countermand long-standing checks and balances that enable meaningful community input.

Reflecting prevalent beliefs in Government, DECC has established the Tourism and Partnerships Branch with a clear mandate to promote sustainable tourism through partnerships with business, government and community.

By the time this article appears, the principal environmental groups (including BMCS) will have met in Sydney (on 25 June) to plan a joint response and overall strategy. Watch this space!

In the meantime, please contact Morris Iemma, Verity Firth and Phil Koperberg. Tell them how much you deplore the Government's veneration of the tourism dollar, its adherence to 'business-worse-than-usual', and its apparent disregard for the natural environment and the exigencies of GGE and climate change.

Brian Marshall, National Parks Officer

Email: thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au, office@firth.minister.nsw.gov.au, bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au **Snail-mail:** NSW Government, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney 2000

Assurance on Insurance at the Bushwalkers' Luncheon

A 'Thank You' Luncheon for our bushwalk leaders was held on Sunday 8 June at Woodford Academy, the 'oldest' building in the Blue Mountains. It was hosted by the Walks Convenor and the President, Tara Cameron. Some 25 people attended.

Harry Ostendorf, who is the regional manager of National Trust (NSW), (ie responsible for *Woodford Academy, Everglades* and *Miss Traill's House* in Bathurst), gave us a history of the property, an invitation to look over the house and a request that we report any sightings of the elusive 'ghost'.

Denise Kruse, (pictured left) who is the NSW Bushwalking Confederation Insurance Officer, was the occasional speaker. Denise began by explaining the roles of Personal Accident and Public Liability Insurance and assured us that we are all covered for both. She commented that the paperwork we are currently

using is quite satisfactory and agreed with the Bushwalk Co-ordinators' decision to re-instate the "Risk Waiver" as a document signed by all members on joining and then annually, implementation to be the responsibility of the Co-ordination Committee. The argument here is that a waiver signed at the start of each walk is not necessarily taken seriously by the signee.

Denise endorsed the form initiated by leader Jim Percy which

calls for walking "Incidents", no matter how minor, to be recorded for future reference, as they may be required. She emphasised that conversely walkers should make leaders aware at the outset of any medical problem which may affect their performance, eg. diabetes, vertigo, or a heart condition.

Regarding grandparents bringing their grandchildren on walks. Denise explained that as they are not parents or legal guardians, the child's parents should sign the Child Risk Waiver form, giving the grandparent authority over the child whilst on the walk.

Jim Percy then discussed implementing training for all leaders, which will incorporate some basic first aid and navigation. The first meeting will be held in July, probably to be attended by the four co-ordinators, two regular walkers from each group and the Walks Convenor.

That was the signal for the BBQ to begin. First course was cooked and eaten outdoors, before rain drove us under cover for dessert, coffee and a closing chin wag.

A subsequent Consoc Management Committee endorsed the actions taken at the meeting, and agreed to the funding of first-aid courses subject to sensible limitations. The Committee also resolved that as guidelines and essential documentation were now confirmed to be in place, the Bushwalker Co-ordination Committee is henceforth empowered to administer all aspects of the walking program. Implicit in this decision is the assurance that matters outside the guidelines will be brought to the MC by the Walks Convenor.

Liz van Reyswood, Walks Convenor



BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalkers' Guide, which explains the numbered Grades, can be found on the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au, or will be posted on request.

For further information please contact the Walks Convenor, Liz van Reyswood, on 4757 2694, email bushwalks@bluemountains.org.au, or by mail at PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Before attending a bushwalk, please discuss the walk with the contact person or group co-ordinator (see below) SATURDAY WALKS

Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Before attending ring the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy, 4758 6009 or email jp34@tpg.com.au

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|--|--|-----------|-----------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| July-26 | Wiggins Track, Glenbrook Ck
Magdala Ck (2) – 9km | Bob | 4757 2694 | Map: Springwood | Meet: Springwood Stn | 9.00am |
| Aug-2 | Tableland Rd to Lions Head L/O
& Pass back to Tableland Rd (4) | Jim | 4758 6009 | Map: Katoomba | Meet: W/Falls Stn | Contact
Jim |
| <i>12km. Steep and scrambling descent. Easier return option available. Car swap required.</i> | | | | | | |
| Aug-9 | Sublime Pt via West St Track
Copeland Pass, Lindeman Pass
Gladstone Pass, Fairmont (4) | Ron Witho | 4757 3984 | Map: Katoomba | Meet: Gladstone St Leura | Contact
Warwick
4757 1354 |
| <i>7 km. Slight but safe exposure, scrambling descent, visit base of Gordon Falls. See Dash's Cave. Car swap required.</i> | | | | | | |
| Aug-16 | Popes Glen, Anvil Rock,
Pulpit Rock (2) – 6km | Sue | 4787 8887 | Map: Mount Wilson | Meet: B/H Neighbour Ctr | 9.33am |

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS

'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The new Group Co-ordinator is Judith Dyer, 4758 6310, or email judithbushwalker@hotmail.com

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|---|----------------------------------|---------|-----------|--|--|---------|
| July-21 | Glastonbell, Dargan (3) | Phil | 4787 5560 | Meet: Mt Victoria Station | | 9.00am |
| <i>The mighty Cathedral, the alluring Linking Cave and much more.</i> | | | | | | |
| July-28 | Xmas in July, Everglades (1) | Mary | 4787 6584 | Meet: Leura Station | | 11.00am |
| <i>The special seasonal event. Can also meet at Everglades at 12.00 noon. Book and Pay Birgitta 4784 3191</i> | | | | | | |
| Aug-04 | Blue Gum Swamp, Winmalee (2) | Maurice | 4739 4942 | Meet: Springwod Civic Centre Carpark | | 8.45am |
| <i>A wonderful Blue Gum Forest</i> | | | | | | |
| Aug-11 | Bi-Centennial Park, Homebush (1) | Heather | 4739 1493 | Meet: Inside ticket barrier, Strathfield Station | | 9.17am |
| Aug-18 | Darks Common, Glenbrook (3) | Maurice | 4739 4942 | Meet: Glenbrook Commuter Carpark | | 9.30am |

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS

Walks conducted to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, lunch if noted, and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Simone Bowskill, 4757 3416, email simbow@tpg.com.au or ring Maurice Kerkham, 4739 4942.

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|--------------------|---|------|-----------|---|--|---------|
| July-17 | Bonnie Doon (2) | Joan | 4782 5966 | Meet: Gearins Hotel, Katoomba | | 10.00am |
| July-24 | Glastonbell Split Rock,
Cathedral Cave (2) | Phil | 4787 5560 | Meet: Mt Victoria Station | | 10.00am |
| July-31 | Minnehaha Falls (2) | Joan | 4782 5966 | Meet: Gearins Hotel, Katoomba | | 10.00am |
| Aug-7 | Undercliff Walk & Den Fenella (2) | Phil | 4787 5560 | Meet: Wentworth Falls Stockyard Carpark | | 10.00am |
| Aug-14 | Castle Head, Narrow Neck (2) | Joan | 4782 5966 | Meet: Gearins Hotel, Katoomba | | 10.00am |
| <i>Bring lunch</i> | | | | | | |

MEMBERS' MEMORANDA

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Helen Gillam	Blackheath
Ian Glover	Blackheath
Barbara Menier	Narrabeen
Adrian Menier	Narrabeen
Sue Morrison	W/ Falls
Kalang Morrison	W/Falls
Kittani Morrison	W/Falls
Milo Morrison	W/Falls
Tallah Morrison	W/Falls
Nazri Sirat	Blackheath
Susan Tweedy	Blackheath
Erika Semler	W/Falls

There are still many members whose email address I don't have, so if you would like to be notified of Society news simply email me at the address shown.

OF HUT NEWS DISTRIBUTION, T-SHIRTS AND CALICO BAGS

A member recently asked me, "Why am I the last to receive *Hut News*?" Upon enquiry, I found that he had seen it in Springwood Library before he'd received his own copy. This can indeed happen. About 850 copies are printed each month. Of these, some 650 are mailed out on the first Friday of the month and the rest are used to spread the word and attract new members. About 120 copies are placed in the foyer of the Conservation Hut and another 80 are distributed to libraries, bookshops and neighbourhood centres. I normally do this on the weekend immediately after the *Hut News* is put in the mail. This is what our member saw.

We also spread the word via our stalls at community events throughout the Mountains. On 21 June we had a stall at *Winter Magic*. Jessica O'Connor, (see photo) one of our innovative stall volunteers, has suggested we should sell Society T-shirts and calico bags. Doing this commercially is expensive, especially for the quantities we require, so if anyone can help us overcome this problem, please contact me.

Ilan Salbe, Membership Officer



MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES: Ilan Salbe 4759 2372 membership@bluemountains.org.au